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The first National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries to be established at The Backstage Centre, High House Production Park, Thurrock, and with partners nationwide, opening September 2016

It was announced today that the first, Government-backed, National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries is to be established at The Backstage Centre, High House Production Park, opening in September 2016.

Managed by Creative & Cultural Skills on behalf of a consortium of employers and industry organisations including Live Nation, Royal Opera House, White Light and the Association of British Theatre Technicians, the new National College will provide specialist training in the technical skills needed by the creative and cultural industries. This is in response to significant industry growth, with the creative economy growing at four times the rate of the national economy, and the value of the UK's creative industries exports standing at over £15 billion per year.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: 'the talent which brings plays, operas, and films to life on screen and stage is the driving force behind our world-leading creative sector. UK creative industries generate £71 billion in revenue each year and support 1.71 million jobs. It's not something we're just good at - we are the best in the world. We must continue to invest in the next generation of talent. That is why today I am proud to announce the National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries, which will train the technicians to support our country's next award winning directors, musicians and actors.'

The college is part of a new wave of employer-led National Colleges to help the UK develop world-class practical skills, with other colleges focusing on advanced manufacturing, digital skills, nuclear, high speed rail, onshore oil and gas, and wind energy. Up to £80 million of capital funding will be matched by employers over 2015-16 and 2016-17 – a potential total investment of £160 million by 2017.

Pauline Tambling, CEO, Creative & Cultural Skills, said 'this is a very exciting time for us all. There is an acknowledged shortage of highly qualified technical workers with hands-on industry experience, and there are rapid changes in the technology that technicians use to do their work. To be able to have a National College where we can train people in these often unseen skills, and to provide apprenticeships and industry experience, is absolutely vital.'

With headquarters at The Backstage Centre in Thurrock, the National College will provide opportunities for students to train alongside the professionals who use The Backstage Centre to rehearse, record and film. The National College will specialise in the delivery of Creative Apprenticeships working with Creative & Cultural Skills' National Skills Academy network of training providers to deliver across the UK.

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, said: 'to maintain the UK's leading role on the world stage, our education and skills system must inspire and support the next generation of creative talent. The Government is proud to back new entrants to the industry as they build the skills for success. The National College will complement our creative industries strategy by supporting apprenticeships and encouraging more creative businesses to offer top-quality training. It will equip more talented young people to follow their dreams and ambitions, boosting our economy and our cultural life.'

Paul Latham, COO, Live Nation, and Chairman, Creative & Cultural Skills, said: 'the creative industries need highly skilled people and I know that apprenticeships are a key way forward. Live Nation and I have been committed to this cause for a number of years now, and have championed this National College proposition as a means for the sector to get the people we need for the future'.

Alex Beard, Chief Executive, Royal Opera House and Chair of High House Production Park said: 'the creation of the National College at The Backstage Centre is a hugely important development in the breadth of opportunities now being offered from High House Production Park. We already have the Royal Opera House's sets and scenery built on site, and the new Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre will open in September. To have such a concentration of professional craftspeople and training facilities for both students and professionals in backstage and technical skills in one place is unprecedented and will help enormously in equipping people with the right skills for jobs in the creative industries. It adds to what the Park can offer to Thurrock's young people but will also be national resource for young people from across the country.'

Peter Bazalgette, Chairman, Arts Council England, said: 'Arts Council England supports the efforts of Live Nation, the Royal Opera House and fellow employers to create a National College at High House Production Park in Thurrock. The work consolidates High House Production Park as an important centre for young people to develop the technical skills that the creative and cultural sector needs. Here and elsewhere we'll work to secure the right pipeline of talent to ensure that the creative sector grows and flourishes long-term.'

Bryan Raven, Chair, SkillsScene and Managing Director, White Light, said: 'the theatre and live events industry has long backed the need to train up a next generation of talent. We are fully committed to high quality apprenticeships and skills training to the highest standards. The National College will help us achieve the higher level technical skills that the industry needs'.

Robin Townley, Chief Executive Officer, ABTT, said: 'the technical aspects of theatre and live events are incredibly exciting to work in and to have a National College will ensure that young people with talent and enthusiasm have the best opportunity to discover that world and gain the skills, knowledge and expertise that will allow them not only to be world leaders in the creation of performance but also future innovators in the production arts.'

Signe Sutherland, Principal, North Herts College, said 'I welcome the announcement of a new National College. As a member of the National Skills Academy network we welcome the opportunity to work with Creative & Cultural Skills and employers to raise awareness of the jobs in the creative industries and to provide learners with access to higher level skills delivered with the industry.'

Peter Jones, CBE, South East Local Enterprise Partnership, said: 'situated at High House Production Park in Thurrock, in the heart of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area, we highly value The Backstage Centre's innovative approach to training and sector development'.

Councillor John Kent, Leader of Thurrock Council, said: 'we welcome this enhanced role for The Backstage Centre, which will put Thurrock on the map as the place to come to train for a technical job in the creative and cultural industries'.

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Notes to editors

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National Colleges are being established by employer-led partnerships with Government support to provide specialist higher level vocational training in sectors critical to economic growth, where there are recognised skills gaps. They will set industry standards for training within their particular sector based on emerging and future technology, with learners able to use state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. Up to £80m Government capital funding is available over 2015-16 and 2016-17 to match employer investment. Other National Colleges announced today are for advanced manufacturing, wind energy and digital skills, adding to the already announced high speed rail, onshore oil and gas, and nuclear Colleges.

Creative & Cultural Skills gives young people opportunities to work and learn in the creative industries. In so doing, we ensure that employers benefit from a skilled generation of talent and continue on a course of economic growth. Our network of employers and training providers - the National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural - is open to those who are committed to the provision of high quality creative education and training, apprenticeships and careers advice. Together, we are building networks and delivering programmes that will enable a diverse and thriving creative sector. We've created over 3,500 Creative Apprenticeships in the UK since 2008, and we are committed to delivering a further 6,500 jobs by 2015. www.ccskills.org.uk

The Backstage Centre was opened in March 2013 by Jools Holland, and is a world-class training and rehearsal centre, providing the capacity to rehearse, install, develop and train. Since opening it has hosted a range of rehearsals including Leona Lewis, London Grammar and Bombay Bicycle Club, through to TV commercials and live broadcast. Designed and specified by industry experts, The Backstage Centre offers a unique meeting point for technicians, producers, creative teams and learners of all ages and at every stage of their careers. The Backstage Centre is managed by Creative & Cultural Skills. www.thebackstagecentre.com

High House Production Park is a charity established to support an international centre for excellence for the creative industries in Thurrock. It is a 14 acre site which includes the Royal Opera House's Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Covent Garden stage are made, Creative & Cultural Skills' Backstage Centre, and Acme Studios' High House Artists' Studios. www.highhouseproductionpark.co.uk