Creative Workforce
for the Future:
Evaluation Report

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Acknowledgements and Executive Summary

Acknowledgements:

This programme (delivered by the Watershed and UWE Bristol) sincerely thanks the partners and participants who were involved. Partners included: Knowle West Media Centre, Creative Youth Network, Spike Island and Rising Arts Agency, Bristol Museums and The Guild Bath. Thank you to all creative SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) that were part of the programme. A special thank you to the young creative professionals whose knowledge, experience and bravery contributed so much to our key learnings.

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1.0 Executive summary:

Creative Workforce for the Future (CWFTF) was a pilot project in Bristol and Bath, UK that ran from October 2020 to March 2021. The project was a pilot for the larger Workforce for the Future (WftF) programme which is an £8 million programme to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area in tackling current and emerging skills needs. Its primary purpose was to support SMEs in the cultural and creative industries (CCI) to develop more inclusive employment practices, so that the workforce of the future reflects the diversity of modern Britain. The project was aligned to and worked within a wider project - Bristol+Bath Creative R+D - funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Creative Industries Clusters Programme (CICP). Industry partners from the Bristol+Bath Creative R+D programme had asked to explore the problem of social exclusion in the sector which is one reason this programme was initiated.

This programme was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

The programme had a two-pronged approach. Firstly, it worked with creative SMEs to gauge and enhance inclusion readiness. Secondly, it worked with a cohort of young - aged 18-30 - creative professionals (CPs) who were of Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic[1] origins and/or from a disadvantaged socio-economic background. These groups are under-represented in the creative and cultural industries and the programme aimed to develop relevant, skill enhancing and, where possible, longstanding placement opportunities with creative SMEs.

Delivering CWFTF, an ambitious pilot, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests, was complex and significant learning and insights were gained from this experience.

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[1] We acknowledge the highly problematic categorisation system of self-identification at play here, which is often used by arts and cultural institutions. This reflects historical use of terminology. See Inc Arts, '#BAMEOver–A statement for the UK', first published September 2020, https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQkg5IIoeAqMjMF6VW-eIEtEUEgK3GLudW1meE2DILbJPZYPiP0dO3Qwx6YVxBFxOhI1KEp5swpok80/pub

Key results and challenges:

CWFTF delivered positive results:

- As a direct result of the programme 10 out of 13 young CPs secured paid work, whether PAYE full-time, part-time or freelance.
- The cohort of CPs were generally positive about how the programme has helped them to develop their skills.
- Most of the CPs stated that they had a better understanding of the creative sector as a result of this programme.
- Overall the cohort of CPs felt well supported by the programme but this was inconsistent.
- Most creative SMEs felt that the programme enhanced their awareness and approach to inclusion readiness.
- Most SMEs actively laid out plans to change their organisations to be more inclusion ready.

CWFTF also unearthed and encountered challenges:

- There was a concern that some of the SMEs and one hub were not ready to engage with the CPs.
- There were some instances of exclusion, tokenistic gestures, cultural insensitivity, bias and microaggressions that negatively impacted experiences for some of the CPs.
- In one particular case, it was not clear when CPs would be paid and they had not been paid on time.
- Some CPs were not as well supported through the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 as they should have been.
- In some cases the pressures placed on SMEs, CPs and hubs by the pandemic reduced levels of engagement.

Recommendations:

From the experiences of CPs, SMEs, mentors, hubs and the Talent Network team, based on this evaluation, we make the following recommendations.

For programmes aimed at addressing inclusion in the sector:

1. Processes aimed at producing inclusive change need to be co-designed with the people who will be affected by them. In this case the CPs who were placed on the programme and the SMEs who would benefit.
2. Challenging and changing exclusion is a long, slow process, rarely amenable to short-term project funding timescales.
3. Creative and cultural industries tend towards being highly networked but with very different kinds of enterprises and organisations. This project set out to model that ecosystem in design but this created communication difficulties, inconsistencies and led to variable qualities of experience for project participants.

4. This programme tried to balance the needs of the SMEs and the CPs who were being offered what the project hoped were 'inclusion ready' placement opportunities. In this the project was only partially successful. The training needs of companies, to change processes and environments, and those of the CPs to get meaningful training and development opportunities turned out to be incompatible in terms of timescale, mode of delivery and communication work for all involved.

5. The SME is not always the most appropriate unit of engagement for the creative industries where, in the Bristol and Bath region, a significant portion of the workforce are freelance and many others are the founders of micro-businesses or studios.

6. It is important to ensure that any creative/cultural hubs that are participating in these programmes are indeed inclusion ready.

For creative SMEs aiming to be inclusion ready:

1. Inclusion change processes need trusted leadership and visible role models who understand that having an employee from a background that might be deemed as disadvantaged is not synonymous with this employee being an inclusion ambassador. This means they are not expected to be the authority on inclusion, they are part of 'The Company' to gain professional experience.

2. CWFTF tested the idea of inclusion readiness - how prepared are companies to not only widen their recruitment horizons but to retain diverse talent by addressing deeper workplace issues such as microaggression or other forms of day-to-day discrimination. Individual and institutional readiness will reveal differences and is to be respectfully held. The work is hard and can be overwhelming - it will be a matter of small, manageable interventions that can strategically add up to a more inclusive future.

3. Many of the SMEs used the programme as a catalyst for a current rapid growth period and to inform that growth inclusively; they understood the long-term need to embed learning from the programme that aligned with their forward-thinking business strategies. Many of the SMEs felt it was important to ensure they and/or their content are attractive to current and future audiences and workforce demographics.

4. Challenging and changing exclusion is painful and can bring up many difficult feelings for those involved. Care capacity needs to be built in as standard. Inclusive reflection requires those involved to feel confident, comfortable and to identify with those around them. Where those involved feel least comfortable, they should listen actively first.

There's a foundation of an incredible programme, but the entire industry needs to go through a cultural shift in order for this programme to be truly successful for the individuals coming through. Then also the industry needs to recognise that there's a whole generation of these people that are going to be in the workforce and that will have a detrimental effect on the culture within the workforce, because they are not prepared to have these amazing changemakers enter their building. The young people are unapologetic and they will either leave or protest, or they will make their own organisations which will then thrive and that will ultimately be the demise of archaic organisations -which is happening now. This programme has the foundations of mitigating all of that, all the ingredients are there, they are just in the wrong places at the moment.
– Independent researcher.

The CWFTF Talent Network hosted by Rife introduced me to a really tight network of creatives and as someone who was new to Bristol this really helped me feel welcome and part of a community straight away. The placements I did at Spike Island and Bricks Bristol led on to more freelance graphic design work the following year and my placement facilitated my production of a really polished rebrand project which has become a key piece in my design portfolio. CWFTF and its relationship with Rising Arts Agency (which I was invited to join through the CWFTF programme) have been pivotal in these early stages of my design career here in Bristol. The connections I made throughout the year have become long-lasting and ones I still reap the benefits of now.
– Creative professional.

Animation company:

This company stated the importance of working with their network on inclusion to ensure fairer opportunity and embedded culture change across the industry ecology. They are tackling issues of potential nepotism in their recruitment pipeline by partnering with local organisations to support a fairer application process for under-represented groups. The company have designed a Diversity Charter with their staff and external partners to announce their commitment to progress on the inclusion agenda. They set up a task force of volunteers that *"are really keen to see meaningful change and just inspire as many people as possible to work in the industry that maybe feel like it's unattainable for whatever reason".* They stated: *"We didn't want to presume that we knew everything, we wanted to make sure we were getting their wider feedback continuously through this."* They are implementing inclusive practice through several initiatives including *"running industry talks [to] encourage people to showcase their role"* in schools and colleges. It is important to them *"to be authentic and actually tell the story about how we all got into the industry ... nobody has the same story".* As a part of this action, they are discussing placement options with the West of England Combined Authority's Workforce for the Future programme. As a direct result of the Creative Workforce for the Future Programme, the company benefitted from the new perspectives that the individuals brought the company, they stated:

"It's so important to have new perspectives, new voices, new ideas, and both candidates were full of that. It was great to see their enthusiasm, their passion and their ideas coming across, but also that they could voice them."

Introduction

2.0 Introduction:

Creative Workforce for the Future (CWFTF) was a pilot project in Bristol and Bath, UK that ran from October 2020 to March 2021. The project was a pilot for the larger Workforce for the Future programme (WftF). WftF is an £8 million programme to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area in tackling current and emerging skills needs. The programme provides capacity to empower SMEs in the West of England to better prepare and plan for, as well as take a more active role in realising, their workforce for the future. The programme was funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme in England. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the Managing Authority for the England ESF programme. West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is the Co-Financing Organisation (CFO) for WftF, matching £4 million ESF funding with £4 million of its own investment funds.

CWFTF's primary purpose was to support SMEs in specifically the CCI to develop more inclusive employment practices, so that the workforce of the future reflects the diversity of modern Britain.

The project was aligned to and worked within a wider project - Bristol+Bath Creative R+D - funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Creative Industries Clusters Programme (CICP). Industry partners from the Bristol+Bath Creative R+D programme had asked to explore the problem of social exclusion in the sector which is one reason this programme was initiated. The programme specifically targeted SMEs for two reasons. Firstly, they represent the bulk of businesses in the UK, making them the highest contributor to employment across organisational types. Secondly, they represent a significant bulk of organisational types in the CCI (Pratt and Virani, 2015). While the CCI are a large net contributor to the UK economy, recent research has shown that they also perpetuate inequalities and social exclusion in a number of ways (see: Brook et al. 2020); thus, an intervention of this type is long overdue. Interventions aimed at bringing people into any sector of the economy like the CCI usually come in the form of apprenticeships - which when executed correctly can have some impact. Unfortunately, apprenticeships aimed at the CCI are few and far between. Interventions which do exist to tackle exclusion in the workforce usually come in the form of recruitment policy which can end up being tokenistic exercises that merely mask the problem.

In light of these challenges, this programme aimed to look beyond tokenistic approaches to inclusion and adopt an 'affirmative action' methodology equipping SMEs to engage with talent from target groups which are currently under-represented in the creative and cultural workforce. In particular individuals from Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic origins and/or from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds were recruited.

It built on methodologies developed through Bristol+Bath Creative R+D as well as other programmes, discussed later, which allowed for the assessment of 'inclusion readiness' within teams, processes, resources, structures and cultures to deliver more inclusive futures. This approach, which will be described in more detail later in the report, is designed to embed a next generation cohort of inclusion-positive professionals within the industry over the lifetime of the project.

The delivery of the project was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which forced most, if not all, activities to move online. Moreover, the events surrounding the murder of George Floyd by police officers in America, and the subsequent waves of protest connected to Black Lives Matter, forced the programme to face difficult questions surrounding the everyday lives of people of colour specifically. These events changed the ways in which the programme was delivered and, in some instances, forced it to ask different - deeper - questions about how to deliver inclusion practices in an effective, meaningful, sincere and impactful way. This meant reflecting upon the programme's official aims not only from the vantage point of SME needs, but for creative and cultural workers from the aforementioned groups as well - this will be discussed in more detail later. At the same time, these events exacerbated the vulnerabilities associated with being a creative SME and again forced the programme to engage with business development and resilience questions while at the same time thinking through effective inclusion practice for businesses in a notoriously precarious and unstable sector (see Virani, 2023).

In the end the programme achieved its aims (see 2.1 below), and it also engaged in deeper work - sometimes intentional and sometimes unintentional - which highlighted that much more continuous work is needed, not only to make the CCI more diverse, but to also retain that diversity and ensure that it permeates all organisational levels within the sector.

The CWFTF programme, although long planned, received the funding go ahead with only a very short lead time as the funding needed to be dispensed within set one year time limits. This led to a very challenging onboarding process for the partnership with recruitment dominating the start of the programme. No sooner were these issues resolved than the COVID-19 pandemic forced the country into lockdown - see **Appendix A** for challenges associated with setting up the programme. The programme teams were able to work with SME partners through the transition to online working. The majority of whom were on furlough or trying to rescue their businesses during this period. SMEs were asked what delivery formats would be most useful for them and what commitments they could feasibly make. Programme content was then re-designed to incorporate this. It allowed the programme to re-launch in a robust manner, which resulted in solid traction and engagement from most SMEs as the right support was offered at the right time.

The cohort of CPs within the programme had a different response. For most of them the pause caused anxiety. Reports of creative companies on furlough and uncertain futures for the sector resulted in critical questioning about the first round of industry placements and their future. In addition, the disproportionate numbers of deaths in Black and Asian communities in the UK due to COVID-19 reignited awareness of the systemic racism that pervades all areas of life. These conditions produced additional stress, anxiety and justifiable anger for some of the cohort of CPs.

2.1 Aims and approach:

The primary aim of this project was to support creative SMEs in the CCI to develop more inclusive employment practices. One of the ways this was achieved was by supporting employers to recruit and develop talent from under-represented groups and by bridging the gap from education to work.

Although part of Bristol+Bath Creative R+D, the programme also built upon learning from past programmes such as REACT and Network for Creative Enterprise, as well as learning from established engagement practices across the programme's partnership (Rife at Watershed, Knowle West Media Centre, Creative Youth Network, The Guild (Bath) co-working space, Spike Island and Bristol City Council's Bristol Museums). Taking into consideration the needs of the SMEs in the region, the project was designed as a light-touch programme of inclusion readiness continuous professional development (CPD). Senior management were invited to join a series of interventions including workshops with experts in specific topics, conversations through panel sessions, facilitated small group work, one-to-one surgeries and a carefully curated placement with one of a cohort of CPs from an under-represented group supported by the CWFTF team. The project also needed to prepare this cohort for the realities of working in the sector and with creative SMEs that might not have engaged with inclusion work. More details of the methodological approach is discussed later.

Inclusion readiness for creative SMEs involves taking SME leadership on a careful journey of learning through a specific focus on inclusion. Merely diversifying a workforce does not achieve inclusion which, in the experience of the programme, is much more about culture change within organisations. The value of inclusion has been embedded into the heart of the Bristol+Bath Creative R+D programme, which hosted the CWFTF project. Learning from this programme was adopted here and involved the development of a slow methodology to assess 'inclusion readiness' within teams, processes, resources, structures and cultures to deliver more inclusive futures. This approach is designed to embed a next generation cohort of inclusion-positive professionals within the industry.

Taking into consideration the impact of COVID-19 on the creative sector, the programme had an additional focus on transferable skills development. This equipped workers to adapt to an uncertain business landscape and changing work practices, as well as on reconfiguring networks in the region to ensure that social distancing did not slow down progress towards SMEs creating more inclusive pathways into the workforce.

Literature Review

3.0 Literature review:

3.1 SMEs, the creative economy and COVID-19:

Literature shows the importance of SMEs to the macro-economy - they have a considerable impact on employment growth (OECD, 2019). In fact, in a majority of OECD[2] countries, enterprises with between five and 99 employees account for more than 50% of total net employment creation (OECD, 2019). In the UK the common concept of an SME includes close to 99% of all firms and about 60% of employment (HM Treasury, 2008). There are 4.8 million businesses in the UK and over 99% of them are small or medium-sized, employing less than 250 people. Of these, 4.6 million, or 96%, of all businesses are micro-businesses employing up to nine people (Rhodes, 2012). Moreover, small and medium-sized enterprises are responsible for 65% of employment and 57% of Gross Domestic Product within the UK (Madsing, 1997; Pratt and Virani, 2015). Data from other countries is similar. There is no question of how important SMEs from all sectors are to the UK and indeed the global economy.

Since the CCI are made up of primarily SMEs (including micro-businesses), their importance to the UK economy cannot be overstated. That being said in the west of England 42% of the creative workforce is made up of freelancers. The UK's creative sector was a strong engine of growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its rate of growth was five times that of the national economy contributing almost £13 million every hour (DCMS, 2020). It employed over 2 million people and contributed £111.7 billion to the economy (Virani and Blackwood, 2021).

The sector was, and continues to be, badly affected by the pandemic. According to the UK government each sub-sector of the creative industries faces distinct challenges. For example, performing arts, including theatre and live music, were some of the first to be affected by social distancing policies as a way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. There are also regional variations where London was projected to be hit the hardest. At the time of writing this report, London was projected to have lost close to 109,800 jobs and see a £14.6 billion drop in creative industries Gross Value Added (GVA) while the wider South East was projected to lose 82,000 jobs and see a £4.7 billion drop in creative industries GVA (CIF, 2020). The South West, where this project was located, was also projected to be hit particularly hard (see Virani and Blackwood, 2021). Thankfully these projections did not materialise thanks to government intervention, nevertheless the impact of changing audience habits and new forms of production has left the sector particularly vulnerable (www.parliament.uk July 2020). Unsurprisingly the combination of the pandemic and the important societal changes needed to be made arising from the murder of George Floyd had implications for the delivery of the project.

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[2] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

3.2 Diversity in the workforce:

Prior to the pandemic numerous studies have highlighted the importance of diversity in the workforce of specifically large firms as a way to increase long-term competitive advantage (Deloitte, 2013; Glassdoor, 2014; Forbes, 2015; McKinsey, 2018). Interestingly there is a dearth of research in this area when it comes to SMEs, and even more so when it comes to creative SMEs (Pratt and Virani, 2015). Research which does exist shows a connection between a rise in productivity and cultural diversity, however, the research attributes this to the hiring of low-skilled workers for sectors of the economy such as seasonal businesses, agriculture or retail (Brunow and Nijkamp, 2016). In another study it was found that actually there are more significant positive effects of cultural diversity on productivity and revenues due to culturally diverse high-skilled workers (Brunow and Nijkamp, 2016), which is more indicative of the type of work within the CCI. According to the research different skills and experience, problem-solution aspects, and cultural-specific knowledge of an employed high-skilled workforce give establishments a competitive advantage (Brunow and Nijkamp, 2016). Moreover, work by Ozgen et al. (2016) shows that the concentration of people with diverse socio-cultural backgrounds in particular geographic areas may boost the creation of new ideas, knowledge spillovers, entrepreneurship and economic growth. Relatively recent work has also shown how social inclusion practices benefit the sector and the ecosystems that they are connected to which pave the way for growth and sustainability (Virani et al. 2018; 2023). While numerous, mainly quantitative, studies exist discussing the lack of diversity in the CCI (with some key works being discussed in the next section) a pressing and concerning gap in the literature exists. This needs to address the specific effects and impacts of non-inclusionary practice for and on workers within specifically the creative industries; especially those workers from perceived disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups. As such this report makes a timely and long overdue contribution.

3.3 Inequalities in the CCI:

Unfortunately, employment in the CCI is characterised by stark inequalities relating to gender, race, class, age and disability (Virani and Gill, 2019). As Dave O'Brien (2018) has argued 'the arts and [creative and] cultural sector in the UK is currently not at all representative of the population as a whole'. Indeed, it has been found that inequalities are often significantly worse than in other more traditional sectors (Brook et al., 2020). While the lack of ethnic and racial diversity in the CCI is stark (Arts Council 2018; Hunt et al., 2015), class distinctions also exist. Brook et al. (2020) found that only 18% of people working in the arts had a working-class background, and in publishing, film and TV this was only 13%. Gender inequalities also exist and are characterised in multiple ways. There are distinctive patterns of exclusion or under-representation that are contingent on sub-sector or field. For example more tech-oriented fields are male dominated, however there are marked patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation within senior leadership roles in industries such as theatre or television or the music industry (Virani and Gill, 2019). In general, women are much less likely to be seen in what can be understood as the 'top' creative roles although this is beginning to change. Nonetheless, the gender pay gap perpetuates, often stifling progress, and is also worse in creative fields than it is in the rest of the economy (see ONS 2018).

3.4 Apprenticeships and the CCI:

Interventions aimed at bringing people and talent into the CCI workforce rely on apprenticeship models. In fact, this has been a priority area for government as a way to support and bolster creative economic activity for a number of years now (Bazalgette 2017). However, the reality is that even though government has made a sizable investment into apprenticeships through the Apprenticeship Levy[3], the value for the CCI is still being weighed (PEC, 2019). This is for a number of reasons: Firstly, the number of apprenticeships taken in disciplines aligned to the creative industries remains extremely low across all UK nations; secondly, approximately half of the funds allocated to the Levy will be lost due to the peculiarities of the creative and cultural sector where many businesses just do not meet the eligibility requirements associated with it. Thirdly, there is a fragmented approach to apprenticeships which negatively impacts their effectiveness. Finally, given that the sector is dominated by SMEs and micro-businesses, short-term project-based working and freelancing, businesses will have fewer employees who are eligible to be apprentices and are likely to face additional challenges in delivering them (Bazalgette 2017; PEC, 2019; Nordicity and Smith, 2017). The reality of working in the CCI, especially at early career stages is that there exists a paradox - an oversupply of workers, especially freelancers, but a shortage of future-facing skills. According to the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (2019) the future effects of technology and other megatrends need to be fully understood. This is both in terms of growing demand for certain roles, but also changing skill needs within occupations, with an increasing need for design, data, digital and 'fusion' skills. Thus, any programme aimed at tackling exclusion in the CCI workforce also has to address skills training that will be needed in the near future, the result of which increases the competitiveness of workers.

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[3] The Apprenticeship Levy is a UK tax on employers which is used to fund apprenticeship training. Introduced at the start of the 2017/18 tax year, it is payable by all employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million, at a rate of 0.5% of their total pay bill. It is collected through the Pay as you Earn process alongside other employment taxes.
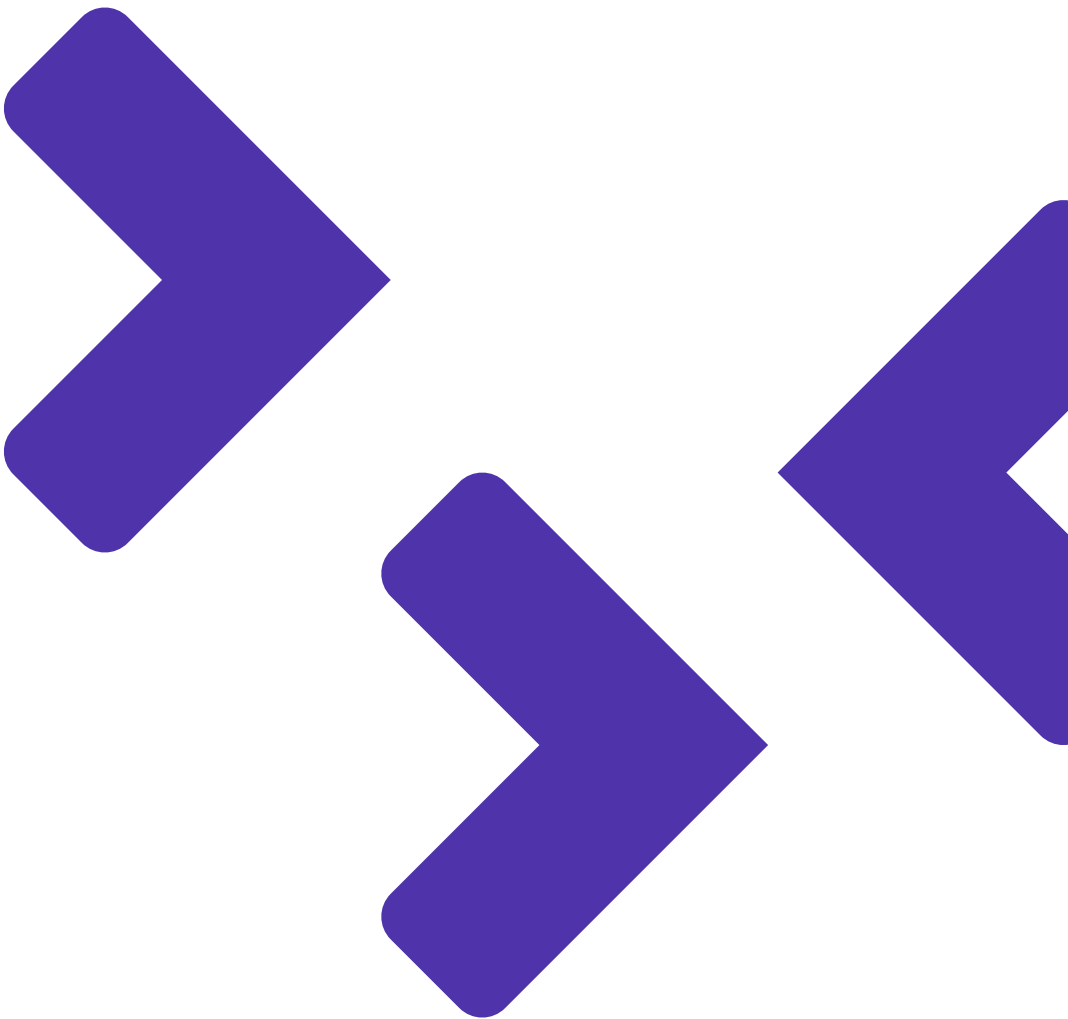
Structure and Design of Programme

4.0: Structure and design of programme:

4.1 Structure:

The structure and design of the programme was aimed at two groups of participants: (1) senior management/ownership of creative SMEs and (2) young (18-30 years old) CPs from Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic backgrounds and/or from a disadvantaged socio-economic background. The project was not opened to disabled people because disability comes with specific sets of challenges that would not have been able to be addressed during this pilot, mainly due to budget restrictions. The idea was to bring these groups together slowly through a process of preparedness and readiness, which was provided by the Delivery team who were embedded into the ecosystem - see **Figure 1.** The programme was delivered through six cultural/creative hubs[4], 13 creative professionals (CPs) who were placed within the hubs and then placed within a cohort of creative SMEs.

FIGURE 1: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE – PARTICIPANTS AND COMPONENTS.

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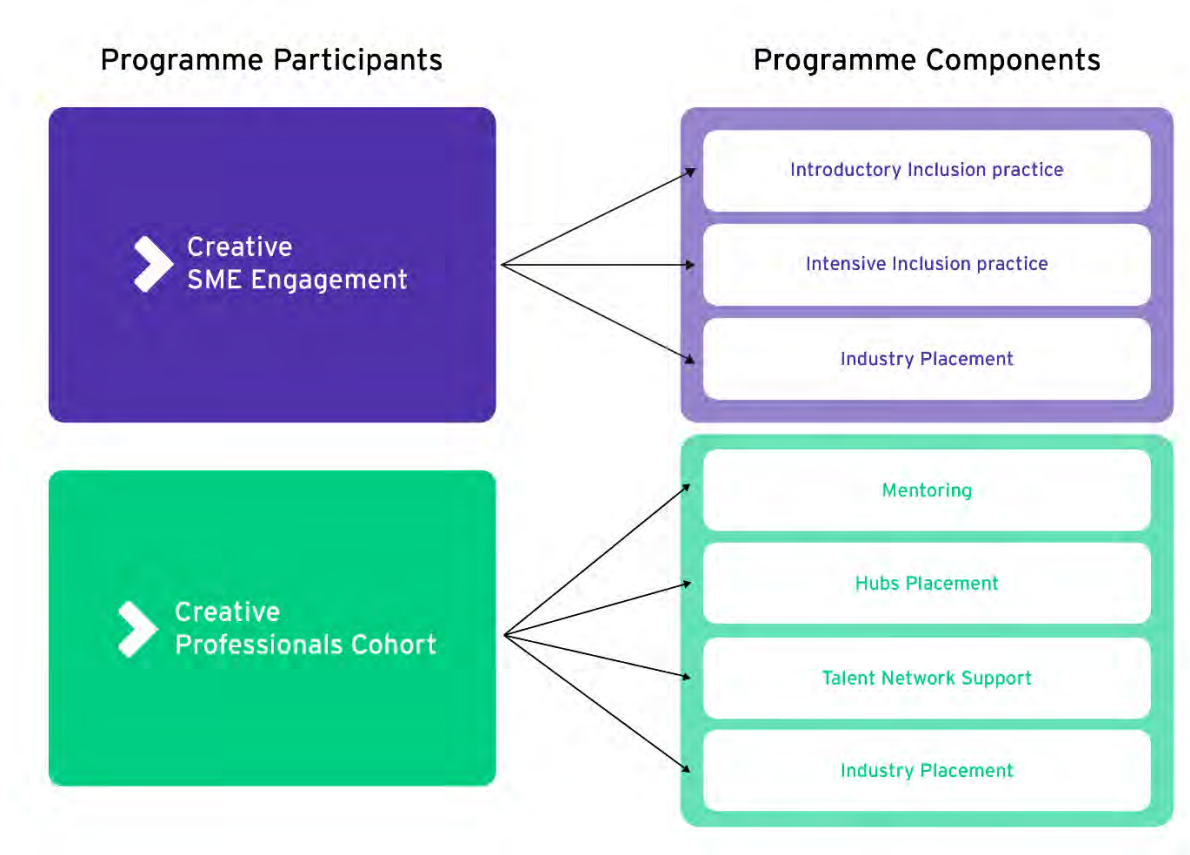
[4] Creative and cultural hubs afford and provide creative and cultural workers elements of soft and hard infrastructure in order to facilitate entrepreneurial activity in the CCI. They are usually locally embedded and play an important role in local communities and work ecosystems. For a critical analysis of hubs see: Gill et al., 2019; British Council, 2016).

At the heart of the CWFTF programme was the longstanding partnership between UWE Bristol and Watershed which is built on a mutual understanding of each organisation's work cultures, infrastructures, and capabilities. The robust financial resilience, research expertise and specialised networks on the one hand mixed with agility, iterative processes and access to a wide range of communities on the other resulted in fertile conditions, minus external challenges, for programme foundation work.

Six creative/cultural hubs - Rife Magazine at Watershed, Knowle West Media Centre's creative agency Eight, Creative Youth Network, Spike Island and Bristol City Council's Bristol Museums - brought unique talent development and creative skills offers adding strength to the network as a whole.

Each hub employed a 20hr/week mentor, or several mentors dedicated to the placement journeys of the CPs cohort. These CPs had two types of placements, a placement within the hub and then two industry placements. Regarding placements in their hubs, they engaged with programme development and industry brokerage for follow-on placements as well as very specific skills areas unique to each hub, including event production, digital content creation, film production and social media and marketing. Spike Island operated on a slightly different model by subcontracting some of the mentoring time to Rising Arts Agency in order to help develop Spike Island's practice for engaging with young people.

A Network Producer (NP), based at Watershed, worked closely together with the Project Support Officer based at UWE Bristol to support the network as a whole. The NP was tasked with co-ordinating the day-to-day operation of CWFTF, facilitating the partnership and brokering industry placement links. The NP also worked closely with a Senior Business Relationship Manager for Inclusion, who was responsible for delivering the SME inclusion continuous professional development (CPD). The NP role was instrumental in connecting and steering the complementary, but distinct, ways in which the partners supported CPs, while ensuring that programme delivery outputs were met.

The Talent Network worked closely with mentors, the NP and the cohort of young ZCPs to build a programme of support that was responsive, created a space for care, and that offered a range of offers at different scales that matched the diverse needs within the cohort.

The Senior Business Relationship Manager for Inclusion brokered the relationships with creative SMEs interested in joining the inclusion readiness programme and worked closely with the NP to identify SMEs who could match well with the skills sets and career goals of the cohort of creatives. See **Appendix B** for structure of roles and responsibilities for CWFTF.

4.2 SME engagement:

The Delivery team ran an intensive inclusion programme design sprint in January 2020. After rounds of consultations with experts in the field, a programme of inclusion was developed to engage with creative SMEs from the region. This resulted in an effective and meaningful programme of CPD for creative SMEs in the west of England while also partaking in a placement programme - See **Appendix D** for a detailed breakdown.

The inclusion framework was shaped to take SME leadership on a careful journey of learning, particularly focusing on inclusion since 'diversifying' in itself has little structural effect on creating a healthy, sustainable workforce where all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources and have agency in the organisation's success.

With legacy and retention at the heart of its design, the programme aimed to plant seeds at leadership level. Working from the personal, through the lens of lived experience and embodied practice, the Delivery team equipped people with the tools to understand and implement the theories around inclusive practice offered on the CPD programme. The formats of the CPD were tailored to SMEs needs and capacities and three strands of work were developed: introductory inclusion practice, intensive inclusion practice and industry placement.

4.2.1 Introductory inclusion practice:

The introductory inclusion practice introduced participants to notions of workplace culture, welcoming difference and articulating value. Sessions were typically framed around basic principles, including:

- Unconscious (group) bias.
- Recognising micro behaviours and impact.
- Unpicking language.
- Induction practices.
- Creating a culture of belonging.
- Supporting authenticity.
- Interrogating decision-making structures.
- Building trust and valued relationships.

4.2.2 Intensive inclusion practice:

The intensive inclusion practice built on the basic practices and delved deeper into utilising theoretical materials into practice. Sessions were to be framed around more in-depth theoretical materials, including:

- Equality and diversity legal framework.
- HR policies and processes and how to support.
- Managing challenge and change.
- Communicating difference.
- Tools for retention.
- Supporting transitions.
- Long-term duty of care.
- Accessing networks and widening the 'bubble'.

4.2.3 Industry placement:

Up to 24 companies had the additional opportunity to host a funded placement with one of the cohort of CPs after a careful process of matchmaking.

Unlike most other placement programmes, particularly those focussed around 'increasing workforce diversity', the approach here allowed for SMEs to focus on their inclusion CPD and the relationship building for the potential placement, keeping legacy and retention at the heart of the work. Management of the payroll, recruitment, skills audit, support with creating a meaningful work package, evaluation and monitoring was centralised in the CWFTF team, rather than at SME level.

This allowed for a learning environment which was dynamic and responsive to the evolving relationship between the potential placement participant, cultural/creative hub and dedicated mentor. It enabled CPs to focus on their goals and professional journeys, rather than becoming involuntary inclusion ambassadors.

4.3 Creative professionals' development:

4.3.1 The placement model:

Although Bristol and Bath have the reputation of being well-networked places, which supports collaboration and creative development, these networks can be very exclusive. The precarious nature of creative work, and a reliance on low-pay or no-pay entry-level jobs, generates exclusion in the sector. The cultural and financial capital required for creative people to participate in this semi-formal economy is unevenly distributed and contributes to exclusions based on uneven intersections of gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality.

Those who can afford to develop careers that rely on low wages or infrequent work are often the ones who can afford to survive long enough to establish a sustainable career. This means that these networks often reproduce themselves with the same kinds of people doing the same kinds of jobs in the same kinds of places. This is not only inequitable, but also creatively unsustainable.

CWFTF offered 48-week-long paid placements to 13 CPs aged 18-30 from a Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic background and/or from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, as these groups are under-represented in the CCI workforce.

Applicants could apply to one of five cultural hubs with a unique development placement offer in a range of disciplines including: digital content creation, event producing, marketing and video production.

While applicants applied directly to the five cultural hubs, the application mechanism was centralised and managed by Watershed, ensuring the risk associated with sensitive data management processes was minimised.

All applicants were offered the same baseline package, regardless of which hub they applied for including:

- Support from a dedicated mentor for 48 weeks.
- Bristol living wage on a training contract.
- Support with developing their experience, CV, portfolio and industry contacts.
- Access to and active participation in a network of peers (called the Talent Network, powered by Rife[5]) offering opportunity, industry expertise and advice during and post programme.
- Support with connecting to creative businesses and the provision of a dedicated mentor to work with participants throughout their placements.
- Support with understanding the tools and know-how to sustain a career in a creative business environment, whether in employment or while freelancing.
- A 24-week placement at a cultural hub (phase 1).
- Two industrial (SME) placements (phase 2).

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[5] Rife Magazine is part of Watershed, one of the hub partners, and a platform by and for young people in Bristol.

4.3.2 Role of mentoring:

Mentors were expected to feed into the wider programme through sharing learning and best practice, feeding into the delivery of the Talent Network programme of events as well as liaising with line managers and relevant CWFTF team to support CPs with overcoming barriers to working with placement SMEs. They also supported their programme participants through regular contact time, goal setting, action planning, transitions, confidence and resilience building and more practical HR support such as making sure that they were getting paid on time.

Their mentor continued working with them throughout their external placements to support transitions, career development and their experience within the companies. The mentors met regularly with the programme NP and Talent Network team to support industry matchmaking. The role of the mentor was crucial as the more intensive and often bespoke way of working created an in-depth profile of the CPs, including nuanced aspects that are so important for matchmaking.

4.3.3 Role of hubs:

Hubs acted as hosts throughout the entire placement period and hence placement participants would liaise with their hub about day-to-day working requirements, payment and any other HR issues.

Most of the hub partners have strong portfolios of engagement with young people in the creative industries, this allowed the programme to build cohesive best practice around managing a cohort of CPs who are currently under-represented in the creative sector.

Each hub had a unique placement offer, ranging from digital content creation, creative producing, film making to event production.

4.3.4 Role of Talent Network:

Routes into the creative industries are often not linear and young people need ongoing, personalised post-training/placement support to build resilience, their networks and get careers advice.

Through Rife magazine's practice a co-created live Talent Network was designed and created with three principal goals:

- Supporting the cohort of CPs throughout their placement journey across hubs and for some time post-programme in addition to hub-specific support.
- Creating a lasting peer network of creatives ready to work or in work.
- Building resilience and support in overcoming barriers.

Co-creation with young people has always been core to Rife's practice and through the CWFTF programme CPs had a platform to have their voices heard and be included in elements of the design, and feedback on the delivery.

To create a sense of community and avoid working in isolation, CPs were embedded in the programme as a whole through participation in intensive professional and personal development labs that brought together the entire cohort to connect with cultural hubs, industry and each other. This included regular check-ins and meet-ups as well as evaluation. The labs were designed iteratively throughout the programme, to ensure that relevant content was offered at the right time.

4.3.5 Industry placements:

Unlike most other placement programmes, the approach here allowed for SMEs to focus on their inclusion CPD and the relationship building with the potential placement CPs, keeping legacy and retention at the heart of the work. Management of the payroll, recruitment, skills audit, support with creating a meaningful work package, evaluation, monitoring and so forth was the responsibility of each hub with support from the CWFTF team, rather than at SME level. This made for a very attractive offer for companies, and it set the programme apart from most other placement and diversity schemes. SMEs were required to commit to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which included duties and behaviours such as:

- Attending and sharing with the wider workforce, inclusion sessions run in the CDP programme with subject areas including unconscious bias, inclusive workplace culture, inclusion and diversity theory.
- Making time to talk with the hub and programme staff.
- Being open, willing to learn and have difficult conversations.
- Preparing and managing the placement which included having a clear role and title, thorough induction plan, equipment provision, releasing the creative professional for mentoring sessions and professional development and agreeing to CWFTF programme processes for the eventuality of escalation, grievances or other issues during the placement.

Methodology
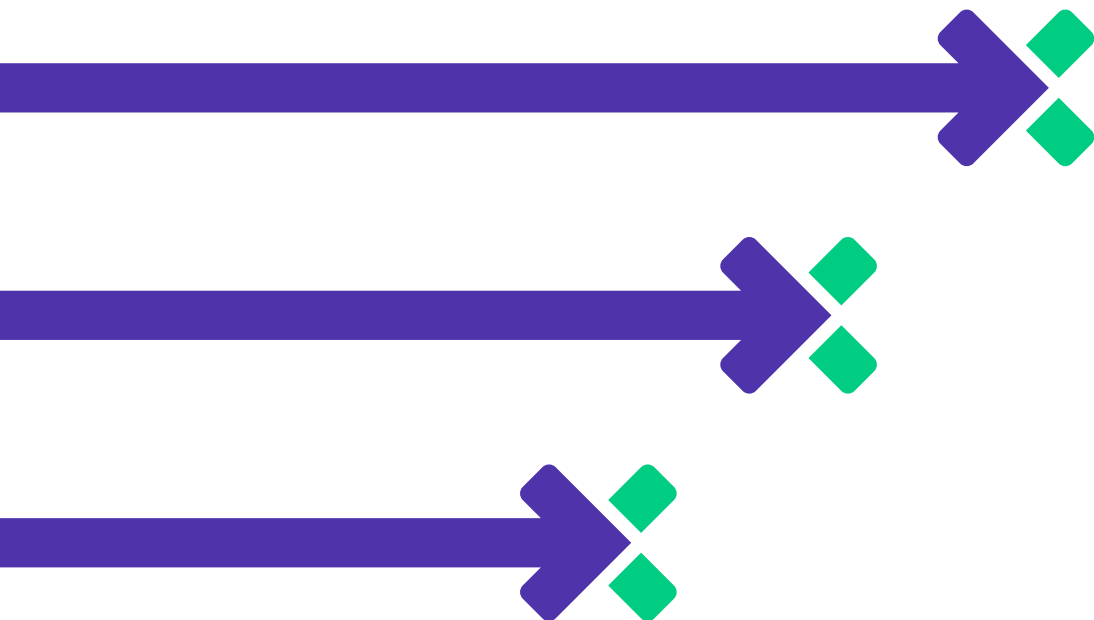
5.0 Methodology:

The main methods of data collection for this evaluation were: interviews (primary data), analysis of exit interviews undertaken by the programme (secondary data) and analysis of reflection sessions (secondary data). All participants have been anonymised for the purpose of the evaluation.

TABLE 1: CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS' PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS

Creative professionals' professional backgrounds	Creative Producer
	Film Maker
	Digital Content Creator
	Digital Illustrator
	Editor
	Audio Producer
	Visual Creator
	Sound Designer
	Designer

TABLE 2: SME SUB-SECTOR

SME sub-sector	TV/Broadcasting Production
	Digital Publishing
	Design
	Specialist Technology Design
	Museum and Heritage
	Motion Picture Post-Production
	Film Production
	Entertainment
	Festivals
	Advertising
	Performing Arts
	Animation Production
	Web and Software Design
	Arts
	Education Support
	Journalism
	Cultural
	Creative Technology
	Marketing and PR

5.1 Interviews and thematic analysis:

Interviews were undertaken with: SMEs (8), CPs (5), mentors (4), hubs (1) and the Talent Network team (1). A total of 19 interviews were used to generate primary data for analysis - see Table 3. Each interview lasted from one to two hours. Interviews were conducted by two separate independent researchers: one who had recent experience of working with SMEs and one who had experience of working with young people from under-represented backgrounds. The Evaluation team also analysed 19 programme exit interviews (secondary data) which were undertaken by the Delivery team as part of the programme. A total of 38 interviews were used to undertake analysis for this evaluation. For the participants in the programme (SMEs and CPs) interview questions were open ended and primarily involved trying to understand what the experience of the programme was like, what were its strengths and where were the challenges. For the Programme Support teams (hubs, mentors, and Talent Network) questions primarily centred on where the strengths and challenges existed in the programme, again these were open-ended. The interviewers brought their own levels of experience and expertise to the table and the evaluation took these into consideration when co-designing questions. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed using Otter.ai. Oral and written consent was given by interviewees. Interview transcripts were analysed by the independent researchers in order to look for emerging themes across the cohorts. These themes were then extrapolated to make the bulk of the analysis and subsequent recommendations.

TABLE 3: INTERVIEWS

SMEs	8
Hubs	1
Creative professionals	5
Mentors	4
Talent Network	1
Programme exit interviews with SME, mentors, CPs	19

5.2 Analysis of reflection sessions:

The evaluation team also analysed data produced through reflection sessions that were part of the programme. Towards the end of each placement period the Delivery team invited placement hosts and staff to a two-hour reflection session designed to capture the learning, but also to give the opportunity to SME peers to reflect and learn from each other through this process - see Table 4.

The focus of the reflection was framed around their inclusion journeys and SMEs were asked:

- Have you or your organisation changed your understanding of what inclusion in the workplace means as a result of engaging with this programme, and specifically the placement component? If so, how? If not, why not?

- What has been the most challenging part of being involved in the placement component of this programme for you and your organisation and what can be done or have you done to address this challenge?

- What has been the biggest impact for your organisation throughout this process?

Watershed's Inclusion Producer chaired and hosted the session discussions. The sessions resulted in interesting insights to parallels between SMEs, areas that need further development, challenges and impacts of connecting CPs to industry in symbiosis with taking part in an inclusion readiness CPD programme.

TABLE 4: REFLECTION SESSIONS:

Reflection Session/Workshop	Date	Number of participants
Summer industry placement reflection SMEs	14 October 2020	11 SMEs
Creative professionals group feedback workshop	8 December 2020	13 Creative professionals
Celebrating and reflecting on creative professionals' journeys	15 December 2021	12 Creative professionals
Autumn industry placement reflection SMEs	20 January 2021	10 SMEs
Programme reflection session	10 March 2021	21 SMEs

Analysis

6.0 Analysis:

6.1 The experience of the creative professionals:

The CPs benefitted from the experience through gaining skills, knowledge and experience through the training and placements. They have a strong understanding of the value that they have gained from the programme and the SMEs, hubs and mentors. This includes confidence, networks and skills.

- As a direct result of the programme, 10 out of 13 young CPs have secured paid work, whether PAYE full-time, part-time or freelance.
- The cohort were generally positive about how the programme has helped them develop their skills.
- Most of the cohort stated that they had a better understanding of the creative sector as a result of this programme.
- Overall the cohort felt well supported although this was inconsistent.

The cohort have felt the most support from their mentors, as well as the programme teams, most hubs and most SMEs. They have a strong understanding of their worth to the sector as a workforce and as talented and brave individuals working with the other stakeholders on this programme to improve inclusionary practice in the sector. The value they have created can be measured positively through the work they carried out, the knowledge and expertise they shared, reciprocal constructive feedback, increased confidence and most gaining employment as a direct result. The value they brought to the programme is a resource to support further inclusive growth initiatives in this sector.

However, the cohort experienced challenging and uncomfortable experiences in the programme, facing instances of interpersonal, institutional, ideological and internalised bias and cultural insensitivity.

- There was a concern that some of the SMEs and one hub were not ready to engage with the CPs.
- There were some examples of exclusion, tokenistic gestures, bias, cultural insensitivity and microaggressions that negatively impacted experiences for some of the CPs.
- In one particular case, it was not clear when they would be paid and that they had not been paid on time.
- They were not as well supported by the programme through the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 as they should have been.

These experiences for the cohort occurred at different stages within the programme and with different organisations - some of which were part of the programme support infrastructure. This illustrates why the programme (and future programmes) should have included the CPs into its design from the start. While the programme teams put inclusionary practice in place to fight these systemic issues, it does not take away from the fact that they exist, have existed and have been a part of the experience and burden for some of the CP cohort. Overall, the CP cohort reflected that many of the problems in the programme would have been mitigated had there been more time to co-design structures, processes and programmes with them.

6.1.1 Career pathway and skills development:

The cohort benefitted from the workshop training alongside the placements. In particular they *"loved the values work"* and the practical sessions from Business Skills for Creatives where one CP stated:

> *"I've learned that I need to go with my instincts … especially around the work that we've done recently around boundaries, knowing your worth and knowing what your values are, and that we have choices, there are always choices."*

The programme has helped most of the CPs become more defined in their career pathways with one CP stating, *"Basically 100% I feel more confident, comfortable and I've got a strong pathway"*, and another stated, *"I have such a big variety of skills that I didn't have before, now I've got so many new ideas and goals"*.

For some of the cohort, it became clear that they did not want to do certain jobs, such as editing for film or animation work and for others it opened them up to different pathways or expanded their existing pathways. Some of the cohort had to transition to remote working part way through the first placements, which some felt was a positive learning experience. The cohort learnt remote working and digital skills during this time which they felt has set them up for the current working climate. They felt they developed independence, leadership and confidence in their skillsets and expanded networks due to their involvement on the programme.

6.1.2 Understanding of the sector:

Most of the cohort stated that they had a better understanding of the creative sector as a result of this programme, specifically within the two to three sector-specific organisations they worked in, such as journalism and animation, rather than an overall understanding of the creative sector. One CP stated:

> *"I was able to attend meetings at a high level and get to know how things are developed, how they're negotiated price-wise, and what money is allocated where and [how to] fight for a project to be greenlit."*

Another CP stated:

> *"Being surrounded by other creatives was massively motivating, inspiring, just hearing about stories of people that had worked there and the other artists … it really did have an aura of experimentation and self-expression, which was wicked. I love being around that."*

Some of the cohort understandably felt they could have gained a better understanding from being in the physical working environment, rather than a digital environment, as the informal conversations and opportunity to ask more questions would have been available.

6.1.3 Feeling valued by the sector:

The experience of being valued was inconsistent across the duration of placements where one CP stated: *"There was one meeting where I didn't feel like my opinion was valued, there was a lot of talking over me, I tried to contribute a couple of times and I didn't feel as valued as I should have."*

The cohort have a good understanding of how they were valued by the SMEs and the programme teams for their digital native talent, their cultural and generational insights and their individual creative contributions to the SMEs as well as their overall valuable contribution to the programme. They indicated that being heard and listened to was a contributing factor to being valued within the workforce where one CP stated: *"I was definitely trusted in creative decisions [and] I was always able to speak up if I thought things could be done differently."* Most of the cohort reflected that they felt welcomed in their placements where one CP stated: *"Everyone just seemed keen to get to know me on an individual level."* Others felt less welcome - another CP stated:

> *"Because it was a bigger team, it was a bit like I'm new and this is what I'll be doing, rather than knowing people. Because of social distancing I couldn't fit in the office ... So I was sat in the co-working space."*

Some of the cohort felt they were given complete autonomy in their work, this occurred mostly in youth and community-focused organisations that were modelled to produce these outcomes. Some of the cohort felt they were included in designing the work packages or curating the task lists that they carried out according to their interests and talents, this occurred in private and third sectors, even if SMEs were agency organisations. However, some CPs were given task lists to complete according to the needs of the organisation and some were given what they felt were menial and monotonous work.

6.1.4 Hub and mentor support:

The cohort felt supported by most of the hubs in various ways, they felt it was a safe place to start their first placements and a place where they could experiment with creative autonomy and for some of them this was their first workplace experience. They noticed some of the hubs increased efforts in delivering diversity and inclusion initiatives within the workforce. Most of the cohort reported that the hubs were incredibly supportive in professional development and provided further opportunities and encouragement beyond the contract that empowered the individual. This was especially appreciated given the challenges that the pandemic caused for many hubs where the loss of space caused by lockdown measures translated into a significant loss of revenue placing some at risk of closure. One of the CPs had a negative experience at their hub and reflects that they felt undervalued and excluded through lack of recognition of skills, communication and transparency and only being tasked with work to do with their identity and inclusion, rather than focused on using or developing their talents. Another CP stated that the term 'trainee' was used a great deal in the hub and being handled differently, like a young person instead of being treated like a colleague. This highlights the importance of ensuring that organisations that are tasked with delivering the programme are indeed ready to do so. In this particular instant the hub that was tasked to look after the placement was not inclusion ready, and this should have been spotted at programme design stage.

The cohort felt well supported by the mentoring relationships held during the programme. They valued that the mentors enabled the CPs to identify personal goals, that they were honest and open and it was an especially important way to support new people into the workforce. The mentors were vital for the CPs to have holistic and emotional support during the challenges of the programme and wider global events. It was important to the CPs that the mentors were representative to be able to relate to their lived experience. One CP highlighted that the mentors played an advocacy role on behalf of them which strengthened the relationship between the mentor and CP because this was based on trust and transparency. One CP stated:

> *"I found the relationship with my mentor probably the most important part of my experience of CWFTF. It is great to be exposed to lots of different opportunities and skills, but I think I can only connect things, and properly learn from those experiences, if I have that space for reflection, with somebody who also knows the sector."*

Most of the cohort highly valued the Meshworks newsletter[6] which was a positive legacy of the programme, the CPs were happy to be kept in the loop for future opportunities. The CPs stated they would like ongoing support including careers, CV and portfolio advice, opinions on contracts, a meeting and practice space and continued mentoring support.

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[6] The Meshworks newsletter (2021) was co-created by the CWFTF cohort and partners and powered by Rife. It exists to provide creative businesses and freelancers with the resources and support that can enable them to work in the creative industries. The newsletter and the wider Meshworks network provides content, support and community to enable emerging creatives to thrive in the creative and cultural industries.

6.1.5 Peer network support:

The cohort stated that the peer network was a valuable component of the programme and continues to be important to their career and network development. One CP stated:

> "I feel I can approach a few different people from the cohort, because everyone possesses different skills in the creative industry, that I can approach any of them to help out with different projects that I could be working on."

This network was particularly important in supporting the challenging nature of this pilot. They also recognised the value of the interdisciplinary practices within this newly formed ecology that will support their future careers. In addition, they stated that their prospects and networks have expanded through this programme.

The cohort also valued the connections they made with the other stakeholders and the benefit of having a wider network for mutual opportunities and collaborations.
One CP stated:

> "This programme has provided me with the necessary skills and knowledge that I need, and also the contacts and the environment that is needed. I would not have had access to that prior whereas now I have access to the creative sector and people within it. It has drastically improved (my opportunities), such as being invited to different programmes and different schemes that are happening that wouldn't have happened without the context and the knowledge around the greater workforce."

6.1.6 SME readiness:

There was a concern that some of the SMEs were not ready to engage with the CPs. In one particular instant the CP felt that the SME approached inclusion and diversity change in a tokenistic way where the CP stated:

> "It wasn't all staff … there was however definitely a social divide. I could feel it just [in] what they were talking about, referencing things and not saying what it actually meant and knowing that I hadn't that background or gone to the shows. Which was difficult … I don't normally find that hard. I think the worst thing was that it just felt like, when I spoke to [the employer] it felt like, change wasn't on the cards, she completely accepted the way they were and didn't want to change. The fact that it wasn't diverse or inclusive - I think that was the worst, because I was like, why am I here? It wasn't just in that chat, it was also when we were in larger meetings, there were people from all different places … it was just kind of awkward. They would say things about who they want to work with and not being inclusive. They would ask me directly if I know anyone from that background and it felt tokenistic and like that role would tick a box for them. It was really awkward, and I didn't feel like I was there to be their inclusion box ticked. That's what it did feel like that for me at times. Use me as a gift to sort of find other people or make their organisation look a bit better. That's how I felt. I didn't want to be there because you shouldn't just look, like deliberately look, for people to say that you can tick a box in your organisation, that's not okay. And that is 100%, or one of the conversations was, that's what they were looking for. I'm not here for this, I'm here on a placement to learn and be inspired."

Some SME representatives appeared to be unavailable during the beginning of the programme, potentially due to business challenges and caregiving responsibilities as a result of the pandemic, which negatively impacted on a CPs experience entering the organisation. The time pressure on the programme also had an impact, some CPs felt that the rush into placements meant it was difficult to embed culture change appropriately. There were also examples of cultural insensitivity, bias and microaggressions that negatively impacted a few CPs' experiences.

The SMEs were from a variety of sectors which was both a positive and negative experience for the individuals of the cohort. Some CPs felt the hubs were a soft start and in their later placements they were met with really high expectations. The cohort recommended *"more of an education and ensuring [the SMEs] have a better understanding and information"* before placements. It was reflected that although the programme was successful in formalised metrics, it is clear that the culture of some of the organisations proved that they were not ready to accept the CPs. That being said, most of the SMEs were visibly engaged with the programme and tried their utmost to embed the changes that they were learning through the programme.

6.1.7 Communication:

There were numerous issues with transparency and communication. Several of the cohort felt the communication between the hubs, Programme Delivery team and SMEs could have been improved. Many would have liked to have one-to-ones with the Programme Management team. There seemed to be some issues with communication that led to the CPs feeling isolated from hub leads, SMEs and the programme teams. One CP stated: *"Because of the whole confusion during the programme, actually very often, I felt really disempowered and not really sure what I was doing."* However, this was not experienced by the whole cohort. Another stated:

> *"I think part of the reason I felt quite disconnected from the Programme Delivery team was mainly because of my own neglect of the communications. I was more interested in communicating with my current placements."*

Many of the CPs stated there were communication issues during the management of the placements which left them feeling confused, pressured to take placements, subjugated to unregulated amounts of work and rushed. One CP stated: *"It would have been good to be able to join the placement on time."*

6.1.8 Timescales:

Some of the CPs felt that the placements could have been longer/evenly spread. One CP stated: *"It just wasn't long enough for me to get my teeth into it properly."* Another CP stated: *"Spending a long time with one organisation to create a clear training plan, clear expectations and being treated as an employee, then that will be a different [experience]."* Another CP stated: *"Two placements weren't long enough to get to know an organisation, more one-to-ones would have been better and helped me feel more connected."*

6.1.9 Co-creation process:

Many of the cohort felt the programme would be more inclusive if their experience were prioritised over the SMEs in terms of focus and resource and if they were more involved in designing the programme. One CP stated:

> *"We were actually told that the SMEs were the main [priority] and that was problematic, because without us there wouldn't be a programme. We just felt undervalued and that we were just basically guinea pigs to just make this happen, that was very hard for all of us."*

One CP stated: *"The goals and the vision of the programme seem different than in my interview."* This exacerbated concerns about representation which reduced the cohort's trust in the programme overall. As one CP stated:

> *"The inclusion work was led by someone that didn't look like us, and was telling us how inclusion works in a work industry. And we thought: 'You're not the right person to be telling us' and also could not actually, when asked to explain what inclusion meant to them."*

The cohort reflected that the programme responded to issues raised but their reflections on how well this was done vary significantly. Once the cohort flagged issues up, the programme teams put meetings and feedback structures in place to mitigate the damage. For some, changes felt *"too little too late"* while others felt that it *"has been really honest and transparent"* and issues that were brought up were resolved quickly. Conversely, one CP stated:

> *"I feel like some of our complaints weren't taken that seriously and that was really hard for us to carry on working in that environment. And also in light of the landscape of what was going on globally, it was especially hard."*

They fed back that the programme had to adapt to accommodate younger and more representative voices in the Delivery team, directly from this cohort, and that training must be embedded fully.

6.2 Creative SMEs:

The SMEs who engaged in the training were able to share tangible examples of how they had benefitted from the programme and the steps they had taken as part of the programme. It is also clear that the organisations that engaged the most were those who gained the most impact from the programme. The impact of the pandemic of course affected levels of engagement by SMEs. The most engaged SMEs were generally companies that were motivated by inclusive industry trends and regulations (in TV and film production), those that already had a strong programme of working with young people and those that already had diverse content within their programme. These tended to be the organisations that were able to define and share their proud moments and give tangible examples of their next steps and plans for inclusion. One organisation acknowledged that most placement schemes rarely have the appropriately allocated resources to fully support the organisation and individuals on this journey. The company felt the training programme framework was comprehensive and supported them to deliver positive and meaningful placement relationships with the CPs working with them.

For the film and TV companies that participated in the programme, there is a clearly articulated need and call to action to tackle challenges of equality, diversity and inclusion in their sub-sectors. As a leader in the sector, Channel 4 Productions has set out a strategy to drive diversity and inclusion and set an example for their peers. The BBC has set targets of 8% of the workforce recruited to identify as disabled, 8% LGBT, 50% female and 15% of the workforce to be from a 'BAME' (language used by organisation) background. One of the programme's participating companies are expanding their audiences and workforce and are aware of the shifts that are happening in the industry in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion regulations and the huge selection of channels available to explore content and attract audiences. The organisation stated that: *"Changes that have been brought in on an industry-wide level [will be] so transformative."*

6.2.1 Catalyst for growth:

Many of the SMEs used the programme as a catalyst for a current rapid growth period and to inform that growth inclusively. The SMEs understood the long-term need to embed learnings from the programme that aligned with their forward-thinking business strategies. Many of the SMEs felt it was important to ensure they and/or their content are relevant to current and future audiences and workforce demographics. For example, one theatre company took part in the programme at a time of rapid growth, where they were creating a new business arm of public consultancy aimed at academia, built environments and the health sector. They saw the programme as an opportunity for growth and a desire to hire their first employee *"in an inclusive way"* and they felt the programme gave them the confidence to *"think about growth differently"* aligning their expanding workforce plans directly with their new value proposition of *"authentically bringing lots of different voices"* to the table.

One production company highlighted that the programme was an opportunity to learn how to embed inclusivity into their recruitment, retention and staff welfare processes as they grow their team. It was important to them for their processes to be *"robust, open and transparent"* to attract and retain their desired workforce, stating that they were *"very influenced by the programme"* and able to input the ideas and learning from it into their processes as it sat along their growth period in real time. The programme was successful in supporting the SMEs' understanding of the importance of driving inclusive growth to stay relevant to audiences and the workforce, with one company stating they *"don't see how companies can't engage with making their workplace inclusive - people just won't want to work there"*. Embedding inclusion practices is imperative to be able to grow creative and cultural organisations sustainably.

CASE ONE: Animation studio

This company in Bristol creates numerous successful shows. The Head of Production (HoP) stated that the company is *"going through an unprecedented growth [stage]"* and acknowledges a pitfall to be aware of during the speed of this growth is nepotism; to *"fall back immediately onto our existing networks and contacts"*. However, HoP is clear that they need to ensure the overall workforce is diverse which also ensures authentic onscreen representation. HoP is therefore working to ensure a person from an under-represented background is recruited into the senior position as Assistant Director on one of their flagship shows. HoP feels the CWFTF programme has given them the confidence, language and framework to avoid exclusionary practices and to deliver a recruitment strategy that supports the company's need for inclusive growth.

6.2.2 Return on investment:

It was important to the organisations that the time and resource commitment they allocated to the programme was worth the investment. Many of the organisations felt that the training programme was well delivered, and one organisation stated they felt *"highly invested in it"*. Another felt there was plenty of room for reflection and feedback. One company stated there were *"a lot of opportunities to participate"*. A few of the companies stated that the programme required too much commitment in terms of administration, however, this is understandable as those companies tended to be micro-SMEs and/or struggling with capacity because of the pandemic and challenges associated with caring responsibilities, redundancies, restructuring or staff being furloughed on the Job Retention Scheme. For example, one company stated that they found the programme challenging as the year had been *"incredibly stressful [with] a huge increase in workload and a young family, [their] capacity and work-life balance shifted dramatically"*.

6.2.3 Valuable workshops:

Many of the organisations had a positive perspective on the design of the programme - including the time and resources required to take part in the workshops. One organisation felt the programme was very valuable in terms of the difficult conversations that were held with peer organisations and facilitators. It was important to them that *"everyone is involved, rather than it being tokenistic ... it's about authenticity"*. They valued the fact that the facilitators were genuine and insightful in helping peers build knowledge and understanding in themes around inclusion and ethical working practices. One organisation stated:

> *"The more I learn, the more I realise there is to learn. Spaces like this where we are offered the opportunity to improve our key skills, listen and be listened to without judgement are crucial for me at the moment."*

One of the most valuable experiences was through a workshop facilitated by Dr Mena Fombo which forced participants to think about how they could give their creative professional the best first day possible. One organisation said as a result they *"feel more confident in some of the language around bringing up and talking about these complex ideas"*.

CASE TWO: Creative agency

This company is passionate about helping those who do not think a career in the industry is for them and breaking down barriers to access. They have been developing their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for several years and have been working with schools, young people and graduates as a recruitment strategy and to encourage them to be a part of the industry. They understand the importance of embedding change in the organisation and this programme has catalysed the senior team to gain a deeper understanding of inclusion. Like many companies, the working challenges of the pandemic highlighted that there were *"elements of the culture that weren't strong enough to give support to the people who needed it"* such as entry-level employees who have *"not had 10 years' worth of [experience] embedded in a [physical] creative environment"*. They acknowledge that the online remote working environment makes a difference for young new employees. The company stated that the programme was valuable in informing this thinking and development work. The next steps include reviewing core policies, redesigning their recruitment processes and work with external inclusion specialists to inform their strategy.

6.2.4 Placements:

All of the organisations that were able to receive a placement benefitted from doing so. One organisation said they were *"pleasantly pleased, our placement was passionate and had the willingness to think laterally and contribute"*. The company benefitted from the new perspectives that the individual brought to the company, the Senior HR Advisor of another company stated:

> *"It's so important to have new perspectives, new voices, new ideas, and both candidates were full of that. It was great to see their enthusiasm, their passion and their ideas coming across, but also that they [felt they] could voice them."*

Another organisation highlighted that the quality of work from the creative professional was *"so good, it brought them to tears"* and they felt confident enough to present it to the client, which they would *"rarely do, even with people that have been with [them] for five years"*. The work created *"added a whole new aspect"* to the collaborative project and the individual will *"come back as a freelancer and deliver that element of the project"*.

Those organisations who were able to receive a placement benefitted from taking part in the workshops alongside this experience. One organisation stated that the programme had *"exceeded expectations"* compared to other placement programmes. They continued:

> *"The difference with this placement was there was training going on for the companies that are providing it, [they] wouldn't expect so much training support from a training programme, as well as the trainee."*

Some organisations felt they would have benefitted from the training taking place before the placement. One organisation noted that:

> *"It was challenging [to factor in] the amount of time and prep that was required before the placement started and creating a three-month roadmap as a very small company is difficult as we don't know what might be happening in three months."*

Another stated the *"training sessions were quite demanding in terms of coming thick and fast"* alongside the placement.

After taking part in the sessions, one organisation made the decision they were not ready to have a placement. They stated: *"I thought we just, we can't offer somebody a good enough opportunity. No value is the value at the moment."*

CASE THREE: Arts charity

This company is an arts charity that supports children and young people to be creative in spaces and with CPs, through co-enquiry, within an action research context, with a variety of partners. The Director of Research (DoR) acknowledges that, as a small charity, it was difficult to make the time to support the placement over the period and attend the programme training simultaneously. However, this time was very much worth the investment and describes the creative professional that worked with them as an *"extraordinary person … [who is] very thoughtful, takes initiative and is able to manifest her creativity through her own creative producing … she lived up to all of my expectations, and more"*. DoR went on to highlight that it was important in the relationship to have trust and respect for one another to honour the complexity of the organisation's work and the quality of the placement experience. The placement was such a positive experience that the charity employed the individual.

6.2.5 Embedding change:

Many of the companies are already implementing EDI strategies and the programme has enabled them to develop their work further with expert facilitation and action learning through placements. One organisation stated:

> *"We are going to be able to better tackle this if we work with external bodies with this area of expertise. [The programme] really solidified the importance of working with an external organisation."*

One company had already been implementing a strategic plan and wanted to participate in this programme to focus on recruitment strategy, team training and policy updates, as well as ensure that they were integrated with the wider regional network that is prioritising EDI. They (along with other organisations) identified that the past year's events (especially Black Lives Matter events and inequalities exposed by the pandemic in 2020) had accelerated their awareness, and therefore their ability to effect positive change within their organisation. They have found that there is a more personal and emotional commitment to embed change from the staff as a result of these events. The organisation has been through a challenging time during the pandemic, including redundancy consultation, however, they have demonstrated their commitment to inclusion in making two EDI roles permanent within the organisation.

Some organisations stated there were infrastructural issues within their organisation or the industry that made it harder to embed changes. One organisation highlighted one of the barriers to embedding culture change were the timeframes in recruiting for fundraised roles and that it was important to *"build in processes when you're up against the line"* and that as a company they *"have to sit with that tension … there's the reality of timing and delivery and actually making things happen or not happen"*. One organisation identified that:

> *"Short-term intention is not very sustainable and actually doesn't contribute to long-term [embedded culture] change. To address the problem, which is so systemic, it needs to be embedded in everything that we do, rather than a token gesture of a placement."*

Part of this issue for this company is the precariousness of the pipeline within their sector, as secure jobs are *"quite few and far between"* with the sector being largely made up of freelancers, they state *"you don't see long-term change in that"*. One idea they were interested in developing with their network was to design and gain funding for a shared apprenticeship.

6.2.6 Working environment challenges:

The available working environments were a challenge to embedding culture change. Firstly, remote working stopped the CPs from fully engaging in company culture through immersion in the physical environment with their colleagues, which lowered the opportunity to embed change, network for further opportunity and gain impactful circumstantial learnings. Secondly, it hampered supporting them in their independent objectives, leading to an issue for some of the hosts in potentially not having their expectations of the skills of the placement met. One company highlighted that there was a gap between the skills, experience, and confidence of the creative professional and the expectations of the company on that person delivering in their role. This company were able to identify that the gap was mostly caused by the challenge of a remote working environment. They stated:

> *"[The placement] didn't understand the creative process [which] was something that could have been really easily resolved if we were face-to-face and we could actually spend a bit more meaningful time with them."*

CASE FOUR: Community arts organisation

This company is a socially engaged community arts organisation. The programme has successfully enabled change in the work culture in their organisation, in the form of EDI policy improvements; informed by conducting user research to gather data on their communities' thoughts and need for support regarding inclusion. They worked with the programme facilitators to design digitally inclusive workshops, delivered by the programme's inclusive facilitator organisations, including Rising Arts Agency and Diverse Arts Network. Notably, this work was funded using core rather than project-specific funding - further demonstrating their commitment to change. Their programme has changed to become *"much more targeted around talking about inclusion now … around the challenges of race and cultural difference"*. They feel more confident that they can advocate for change as a result of taking part in the workshops developed by CWFTF: *"Despite the fact that I might not sit in a position of power, I have the power to create change, even in a small way. It gave me the drive to continue and never give up."* The next steps include recruiting a diverse Board, using Arts Council England funding and support of the new Director. Although the company did not have a placement, it is clear that their actions have moved beyond tokenism to using tangible strategies to embed culture change in their organisation.

6.2.7 New inclusion networks:

The creative and cultural sectors in the region need to work together on inclusion priorities to have a real impact on fair representation of the creative workforce. The local ecology that has been formed as a result of this programme can be used to develop further initiatives to support this ambition. One company stated it gave them *"good links with other organisations and other people are going on a similar journey"* and was useful as a *"repetitive place to come back to the same conversation again and again and making sure it's prioritised in my mind to reflect on"*. Another company stated the *"real value is the connections made through the programme; it was one of the biggest impacts"*.

Some organisations have taken this inclusion practice into an existing network or joined, or created new networks focused specifically on inclusion. One organisation has started to develop more strategic partnerships with other charities, *"to tackle inclusion challenges within the city"*. Another organisation is also embedding inclusive change into the core of the organisation by working alongside partners, including a young people's creative and inclusive change organisation, to develop a young people's leadership project, diversify the Trustee members and ultimately create a three-to-five-year succession plan for the charity to be run by young people. The organisation stated the importance of creating a *"community of practices ... [to build] these amazing creative collisions ... that are really quite magical"* in developing inclusive ecologies. Some organisations felt they would have liked to engage in more peer-to-peer work.

6.3 Creative hubs and mentors:

There were six hubs on the programme: Spike Island (SI), Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC), Rife Magazine (RM), Bristol Museums (BM), The Guild Coworking Hub, Bath (GB)[7] and Creative Youth Network (CYN). Each hub had a mentor to support the CPs based with them. Their role was to support the CPs in placements within their organisation and then with other SMEs on the programme. Most of the hubs felt it was important that they were organisations who had expertise in working with young people to deliver the hub lead roles to ensure the CPs were supported appropriately. Some stated the programme made the organisation increase their focus on diversity and inclusion and embed it effectively into organisational structures and processes. They benefitted specifically from expertise gained from the recruitment process workshop - this positive feedback on the training was mirrored by SMEs. One organisation stated that inclusion has become the *"single most fundamental priority"* for their organisation. As a result, culture change in the organisation was included in every report, policy, procedure, funding bid and in every meeting as an agenda item.

Each of the hubs reflected the high value of the CPs in terms of relevant skills, market knowledge and experience that these companies may not otherwise have access to. Some organisations felt there was value gained from the extra resource and one hub said it enabled the company to increase its digital capabilities. They stated they had an *"epiphany of the genuine value"* that the CPs brought and they benefitted from their younger perspectives. One hub stated: *"We've realised that we focus so much on people having the right experience and not enough on the genuine value that people can bring, even if they lack that experience."*

Some of the hub leads stated they needed more clarity on their role and the implementation of the programme. One hub stated they would have liked to have a better understanding of how they would deliver their role and more strategic involvement in shaping the programme.

One important issue was that while most of the hubs identified as such there was one that could not easily be classified as a hub which meant that the level of engagement by this hub was lacking.

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[7] The Guild were adversely affected by the pandemic and were not able to carry out hosting activities.

6.3.1 Clarity:

The mentors reflected that the programme was an opportunity to *"take up meaningful placements in the creative industries"*. They highlighted their key outputs as mentors were to support the CPs in their personal development, independent learning and professional development to ensure they had a positive and meaningful experience. They felt their mentoring role was clear at the beginning of the programme prior to COVID-19. However, they also highlighted that their role later expanded outside of their mentoring responsibilities. They recommended the mentoring roles to shift to programme co-ordination roles because of this extra work. They also recommended a clear reporting structure between each of the mentors and their corresponding hubs. They indicated that there were areas of confusion in terms of placements with SMEs which held back the CPs and mentors from being able to have the full experience.

6.3.2 Placement preparation:

The mentoring process was valuable in preparing the CPs for placements in several ways including developing their values, building trust and confidence in their own work, managing their expectations, improving interview techniques, thinking through leadership skills and the ability to speak out during meetings against what they perceived as exclusionary practice. The mentors felt that they also brought value in enabling the CPs to obtain additional work within their placements, setting up as freelancers and gaining paid jobs by the end of the programme. They highlighted the value of providing an environment that allowed the CPs to be critical.

6.3.3 Training and support:

Most of the mentors called for a uniform training package, co-creating a mentoring induction and further support. The administrative burden of the programme was high and the mentors felt unprepared for that. Most of the mentors did feel supported by hubs in the mentorship process, however some identified that there were specific practical specialisms the mentors could not provide for the cohort.

They highlighted a lack of time deciding what the parameters for their mentorship entailed at the time and there was no baseline for performance, therefore it was difficult to measure progress. It was recommended by the mentors that the CPs should have been able to select mentors based on lived experiences, skill and aspiration.

6.3.4 Design:

Mentors agreed that it was important to have representation, lived experience and awareness of intersectionality in the mentoring team. Many of the mentors described a core challenge of the programme was that while its aims were to diversify a sector that was by and large homogenous, the Programme Delivery team did not represent that diversity. It was advised that the Programme Delivery team should have diversity and inclusion training as there was a lack of understanding of challenges faced by CPs from the programming staff.

In terms of additional staff, the mentors advised that there should have been one person managing just the mentors from the Programme Delivery team. They also recommended staff with specialist training in mental health and wellbeing to address the need for pastoral support. They also recommended re-examining the criteria for hubs and seeing if there is a more appropriate selection available.

A few of the mentors identified that there was not enough time to fully engage with the mentorship process, due to the impact of COVID-19. Another mentor identified a need for a longer recruitment process in the lead-up time and networking opportunities with the wider hubs and a set induction process. They felt the CPs needed an additional month or two of mentoring support and recommended scheduling in planning time with and for the mentors.

6.3.5 Communication:

The mentors stated that there were multiple issues in communication that damaged the trust and confidence of the mentors, hubs and CPs. They acknowledged that COVID-19 overall played a role in the programme's communication breakdown. One mentor stated:

> *"There was lots that wasn't perfect but there was lots that was very good. And I do think - I really truly believe - that the pandemic was a big problem in that communication because we were doing work that requires body language and reading the room and how are people feeling and how, you know, there wasn't that once Zoom was off. You don't truly know what people are like the other side, whereas if you're in an office with them or even just with them in real life, you can read what's going on a bit more."*

One mentor recommended a collaborative induction process and a uniform approach to inducting the CPs into the hubs offering transparency about the structure of the program, staff and desired outcomes.

One of the mentors reflected that there were three points where communication breakdown occurred: At the start of COVID-19 when the funding was at risk, when the Black Lives Matter events of 2020 happened, and a feeling that some of the key delivery personnel's ability to define or articulate inclusion did not reflect the CPs' lived experience. One mentor stated, *"that caused some big issues, that sort of permeated and went throughout the rest of the programme".* The same mentor stated:

> *"What I would say is that it was literally the last session that we all had in the three days before the end of the programme, and a lot of the mistrust that had built throughout the programme was tackled straight on. And I think it was resolved, as well as it can be. For so unbelievably late within the programme. Yeah, there was a lot of honesty and accountability, which [while it] was great to see, I do think it was late, probably too late."*

6.4 Events of 2020:

The extraordinary events of 2020 heavily impacted the CPs' experiences of the programme and their own lives in a multitude of ways that cannot be fully covered here. One CP stated:

> *"I feel like some of our complaints around external microaggressions weren't taken that seriously. And it was really hard for me and for us to carry on working in that environment. Also in the light of what was going on, like, globally, it was especially hard."*

Broadly speaking the pandemic and the shift society had to make in work and life impacted the working conditions and opportunities for the cohort. The Black Lives Matter movement activity was heightened during this period, including the murder of George Floyd and the toppling of the Colston statue in Bristol, which was then thrown into the harbourside directly outside of the Watershed, the home of this programme. The impact of these events brought to light endemic exclusion and inequalities, and with that an urgency for change and action during the programme was intensely felt.

As a result of the restrictions of the pandemic in March 2020, the Programme Management Team quickly worked with the funders to ensure delivery and funding stayed in place by rewriting the proposal for the programme to reflect the new challenges faced. The difficulties such as remote working resulted in the need for allocation of IT provision and SMEs shifting their business models to survive the shock resulting in issues including competing caregiving priorities and large numbers of staff being furloughed. One hub stated, *"it was really hard to get companies to engage with the process in that moment".* However, this redirection happened as the CPs had just been recruited by the SMEs, steering the attention away from their experience just as they were starting their placements. One mentor stated:

> *"It was very, very intense, if we just dropped the programme we would have 13 unemployed young people who wouldn't be getting paid for this year - that was the consequence. We did it, there were definitely things that we could do better, but at the same time, I felt like the whole thing kind of felt more like firefighting. It was like we were never really ready for these days, we were just trying to get through it."*

The cohort missed out on the experience of organisational culture including day-to-day office activity, energy and atmosphere that gives a sense of belonging, space and time to speak to the team and socialising to build positive relationships, community and networking. Remote working enabled autonomy and development of leadership skills for some of the cohort, which was also recognised by the mentors and hub leads, but for others the transition to home working was difficult with limited internet connectivity and not enough space to work in shared and/or small accommodation.

Many of the CPs were angry that they were not given the appropriate time and care during the impactful Black Lives Matter movement. They stated that they needed to be asked what they needed in this time, especially when their sense of identity was being challenged. Importantly, some of the CPs felt that they were able to respond to the Black Lives Matter events of 2020 in their work, or that their hub organisation was responding responsibly to the trauma of the events, whereas others were not.
One CP stated:

> *"When the Black Lives Matter movement was happening, we did not hear anything from Creative Workforce For The Future. We do not get any inkling of: 'How are you guys doing? Do you need time off? Do you need anything that is anything we could do? How are you managing your workload with this happening?' We didn't have a meeting or anything and that to me is extremely exposing for them as a programme and truly showed that we are not valued or don't matter and Black lives or feelings don't matter to them and we are just statistics to help business look good."*

One CP stated: *"There was no space for us to share that or talk about [the Black Lives Matter events of 2020] or actually propose something else because it was negative."* They expressed frustration that the projects they were working on at the time felt *"socially irrelevant"*. They identified the difficulty of working within organisations who don't *"live/operate by their core values"* and that this was essential to feeling safe in a working space.

Conclusion and Recommendations

7.0 Conclusion and recommendations:

What was attempted on this pilot programme was unique in a number of ways. It tried to provide a way forward that faced, head on, the problems of inclusion within the creative and cultural industries in the Bristol and Bath region. By doing this it became apparent, as events unfolded in 2020, that the process had to be iterative and could not simply be achieved through linear CPD or apprenticeship models. The route to real inclusion readiness for the sector is highly sensitive, personal and bespoke. Each organisation and indeed each professional that was placed within these organisations had unique characteristics that needed to be understood through cultural frameworks that sometimes are not easily apparent or available. Likewise, the journey that the CPs undertook through the placement process uncovered dynamics within organisational culture that are too often brushed aside or not seen as important. By focusing on the process of inclusion readiness and indeed being included, the programme unearthed many facets of what needs changing within creative and cultural industries oriented working culture - and this includes the programmes tasked to support the sector such as this one. It was felt that only at this level could issues around social exclusion within the sector be addressed. The programme had to respond to changing internal and external dynamics quickly in order to stay alive. The events of 2020, mainly COVID-19 and the energy and sense of purpose galvanised by Black Lives Matter, highlighted a need to balance the internal and external organisational structures and ways of working of organisations but also of programmes such as this one.

While this programme was originally designed to focus on making creative SMEs 'inclusion ready', it quickly realised that this process heavily depended on the lived experiences of the CP cohort, which meant a deeper engagement with the issues around inclusion and exclusion for SMEs but also for the programme.

Recommendations include:

For programmes aimed at addressing inclusion in the sector:

1. Processes aimed at producing inclusive change need to be co-designed with the people who will be affected by them. In this case the CPs who were placed on the programme and the companies who would benefit.
2. Challenging and changing exclusion is a long slow process, rarely amenable to short-term project funding timescales.
3. Creative industries tend toward being highly networked but with very different kinds of enterprises. This project set out to model that ecosystem in design but this created communication difficulties, inconsistencies and led to variable qualities of experience for project participants.
4. This programme tried to balance the needs of the companies and the young professionals who were being offered what the project hoped were 'inclusion ready' placement opportunities. In this the project was only partially successful. The training needs of companies - to change processes and environments - and those of the young professionals in the cohort to get meaningful training and development opportunities turned out to be incompatible in terms of timescale, mode of delivery and communication work for all involved.
5. The SME is not always the most appropriate unit of engagement for the creative industries where, in the region this programme was undertaken, 42% of the workforce are freelance and many others are the founders of micro-businesses or studios.

For creative SMEs aiming to be inclusion ready:

1. Inclusion change processes need trusted leadership and visible role models who understand that having an employee from a perceived disadvantaged background is not synonymous with them being an inclusion ambassador, meaning they are not expected to be the authority on inclusion, they are with 'The Company' to gain professional experience.
2. CWFTF tested the idea of 'inclusion readiness' – how prepared are companies to not only widen their recruitment horizons but to retain diverse talent by addressing deeper workplace issues such as microaggression or other forms of day-to-day discrimination. Individual and institutional readiness will reveal differences and is to be respectfully held. The work is hard and can be overwhelming - it will be a matter of small manageable interventions that can strategically add up to a more inclusive future.
3. Many of the SMEs used the programme as a catalyst for a current rapid growth period and to inform that growth inclusively; they understood the long-term need to embed learning from the programme that aligned with their forward-thinking business strategies. Many of the SMEs felt it was important to ensure they and/or their content is attractive to important current and future audience and workforce demographics to sustain their organisation.
4. Challenging and changing exclusion is painful, and can bring up many difficult feelings for those involved. Care capacity needs to be built in as standard. Inclusive reflection requires those involved to feel confident, comfortable and to identify with those around them. Where those involved feel least comfortable, they should listen actively first.

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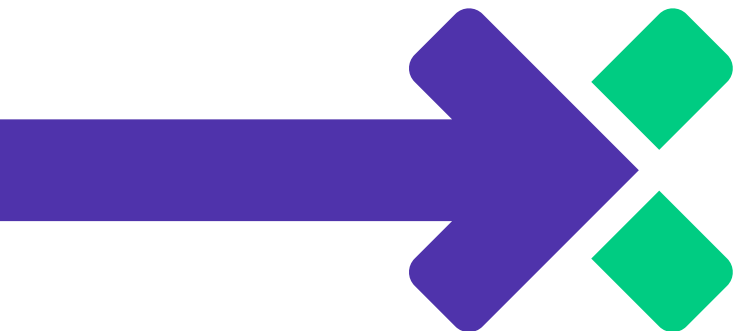
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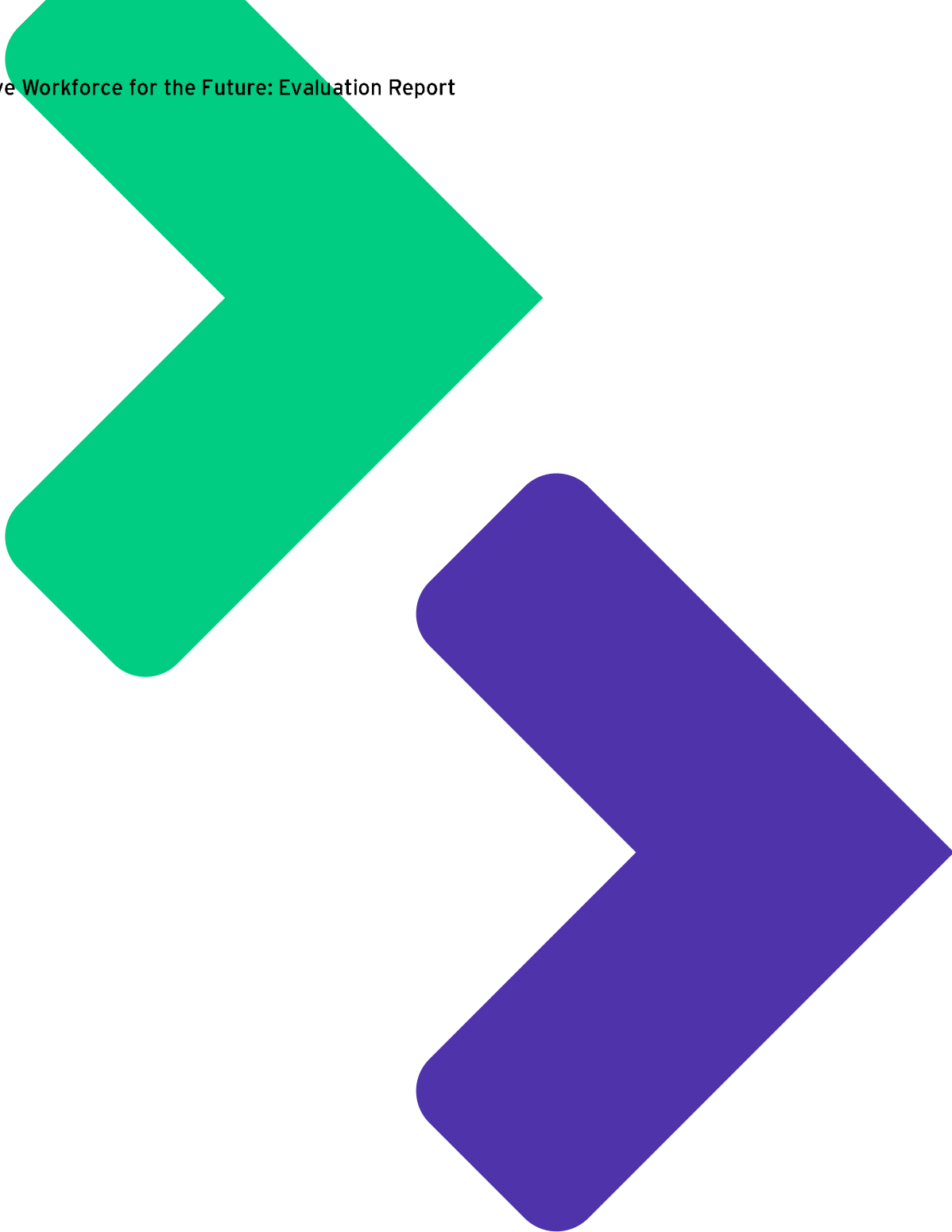
Appendices

9.0 Appendices:

Appendix A

Programme set up challenges

CWFTF built on an existing partnership through a creative business support programme called Network for Creative Enterprise. From experience on other multi-partner projects such as these, investing in relationship work to build cohesion in approach is key for running a programme.

CWFTF had significant funding agreement delays due to a shifting political landscape including Brexit and the 2019 UK general election. Hub partners were primed for a programme start in September 2019 to allow for sufficient recruitment time for project staff and the required time for placement call cycles. Contractual delays resulted in challenging partnership-building opportunities, especially with less agile organisations that were unable to commence. As a result of the delay and to ensure the feasibility of the programme Watershed led on a series of project set-up processes in October such as: branding, central placement application mechanisms, development of the minimum standard for the mentoring role and a statement of intent for the programme as well as SME engagement to seed interest in the programme. Hubs were able to join the programme risk free several months later and UWE recruitment for key roles commenced in December.

In response to the recruitment delays Watershed led on the inclusion programme design sprint to avoid further delay in the engagement with SMEs.

To avoid a shorter placement period, a shorter than usual recruitment cycle for placement creatives was initiated, from a minimum of 10 weeks to just four weeks, which is not good practice but allowed for a longer (paid) engagement for CPs.

The programme had been able to brief and onboard the partners from the partnership developed through Network for Creative Enterprise through the summer which aided through the stop and start process. However, both Bristol City Council and Creative Youth Network joined the partnership later and more time was needed to create cohesion across the hubs. A shared programme statement of intent was co-created in October 2019, setting out principles of shared working, but only four hubs were in the partnership at the time.

One of the key roles in the programme, the Senior Business Relationship Manager for Inclusion, was a newly developed role, created to bring specialist understanding of the creative and cultural industries sectors and methodologies for identifying SME inclusion needs. This role could not be recruited for until contracts were signed and did not commence until a few weeks prior to the nationwide lockdown.

Placement challenges

Right after the programme's delivery started, a nationwide lockdown was announced in March 2020. The hubs had to readjust to this situation while trying to continue their duty of care to the CPs on placements with them.

The programme teams and the CWFTF partnership bring a wealth of expertise around engagement with young people, partnership and cross-cultural working, digital delivery, audience management and research. When the programme was faced with the COVID-19 pandemic some of the key roles of the core team had only been recruited one month earlier due to the recruitment delays as discussed in the section 'Programme set up challenges'. SMEs and organisations were rushing to move their delivery online, while also trying to look after their workforce.

At the time the lockdown started the mentorship framework was in development. The next steps would have been to revise the first draft of this document and then introduce it to the mentors. Everyone would have fed back and added their own best practice, resources, and guidelines to finalise a framework that would have been co-created and ready to be adapted to every hub's approach and working culture. Unfortunately, the lockdown meant that most hubs and mentors had to concentrate on responding to the situation and thus creating the necessary support for remote working, redefining ways of communication and bespoke support for the cohort of young professionals took priority over the development of a common mentorship model. Regular mentor meetings could not commence until September, creating a gap in the collective support approach.

The CWFTF programme teams and partners decided to take a step back and focus on re-design and re-connection with the SMEs, the majority of whom were on furlough or trying to rescue their businesses. It became clear that we had to operate in a bespoke way in order for SMEs to see the value of the programme at this time. We asked SMEs what delivery formats would be most useful for them and what they could feasibly commit to. We then re-designed all of our content to incorporate this. It allowed us to re-launch the programme in a robust manner, which resulted in solid traction and engagement from SMEs as we could offer them the right support at the right time.

We also knew that due to the volume of staffing furlough, lack of network opportunities and the challenges of remote working we had to redesign the shape of placements. It was very unlikely that SMEs would offer physical placements in the summer period. We therefore considered alternative and remote placement scenarios to give the professional creatives and the SMEs the best opportunities we could within the placement period. Central to this was building relationships between our cohort of CPs and industry, a life learning approach to support both the creatives with developing their skills and the SMEs in their inclusion journeys.

Our cohort of CPs embedded in the hubs were understandably affected by global events as stated in the report. This, combined with the anxiety caused by lockdown, resulted in us putting in more mechanisms for feedback and investing in an additional role to overcome some of the lack of representation in our CWFTF teams and lack of inclusion practice through lived experience. This role was designed to facilitate some of the processes associated with the placement and to mediate through resolving any challenges that might arise, particularly around inclusion and take the emotional labour away from the CP. The aim was to take SMEs back to the learning on the programme and work out meaningful next steps that will support their company with good inclusion practices.

Appendix B

Structure and roles for programme delivery: CWFTF
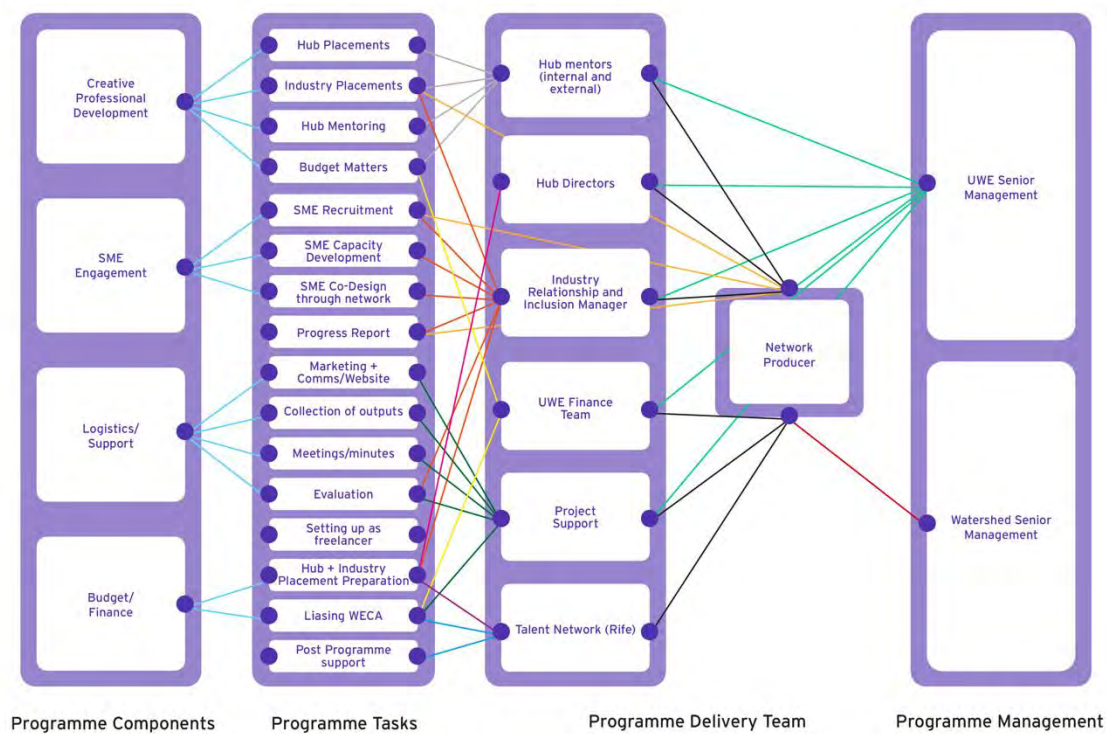
Appendix C:

Talent Network Programme Contributors (i.e panellists, consultants and workshop facilitators.)
Name
Silas Adekule
Jon Aitken
Joyann Boyce
Cai Burton
Michael Dowe
Derek Edwards
Dr Mena Fombo
Lily Green
Dionne Griffith
Jenny Grinsted
Euella Jackson
Mike King
Marissa Lewis-Peart
Sharmaine Lovegrove
Caroline McDonald
Chloe Meineck
Bobbi O'Gilvie
Stacey Olika
Mandy Parry
Samantha Payne
Muneera Pilgrim
Jazlyn Pinckney
Nikesh Shukla
Will Taylor
Jasmine Thompson
Gill Wildman
Channel 4
Bottleyard Studios

Appendix D:

Inclusion CPD Programme		
Month	Title	Facilitators/Panellists
February 2020	CWFTF intro session: The need for inclusion in the creative sector, the psychology of otherness and a chaired panel discussion around lived experience in industry.	Joyann Boyce, Michael Jenkins, Marissa Lewis-Peart, Jasmin Perry, Will Taylor.
February 2020	CWFTF intro session: The need for inclusion in the creative sector, the psychology of otherness and a chaired panel discussion around lived experience in industry. (Repeat)	Joyann Boyce, Michael Jenkins, Marissa Lewis-Peart, Jasmin Perry, Will Taylor.
May 2020	CWFTF reboot: the case for social inclusion.	Tarek Virani and Adibah Iqbal
June 2020	Unconscious bias and what can we do about it?	Elonka Soros (Creative Access)
June 2020	Fitting in vs belonging - inclusive work environments. Leading a culture of respect, inclusion and allyship.	Elonka Soros (Creative Access)
July 2020	Inclusive leadership starts with you.	Marissa Ellis (Diversily)
July 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
July 2020	Equality, diversity and inclusion in the creative industries: Reality check - theory meets practice.	Dr Mena Fombo
July 2020	Interactive inclusive leadership change canvas toolkit session.	Marissa Ellis (Diversily)
July 2020	Creating brilliant work placements - interactive session.	Dr Mena Fombo
September 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
September 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)

September 2020	Equality, diversity and inclusion in the creative industries: Reality check - theory meets practice. (Repeat)	Dr Mena Fombo
September 2020	Creating brilliant work placements - interactive session. (Repeat)	Dr Mena Fombo
September 2020	Connections, class and networks at work.	Dr Vanda Papafilippou (UWE), Olumide Osinoiki, Derek Edwards, Samantha Budd
October 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
October 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
October 2020	Recruitment & culture - best practice inclusive HR.	Dr Vanda Papafilippou (UWE)
November 2020	Difficult conversations about racism.	Samantha Budd and Jayne Saul Patterson
November 2020	Reflexive sense-making space > inclusive leadership coaching monthly session with small cohorts.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
November 2020	Recruitment & culture - best practice inclusive HR - interactive session.	Dr Vanda Papafilippou (UWE)
November 2020	Unconscious bias.	Interculture CIC
November 2020	Othering.	Interculture CIC
November 2020	Inclusive leadership - from talk to action.	Charlotte Von Bülow (UWE)
November 2020	Recruitment & culture - best practice inclusive HR (follow up session).	Dr Vanda Papafilippou (UWE)
November 2020	The business case for diversity.	Dr Helen Mortimore (UWE)

January 2021	Missing voices and missing stories - does your content reflect the society we live in?	Roseanna Dias, Nikesh Shukla, Sharmaine Lovehart
January 2021	From inclusive listening to action.	Anneliese Paul and Zahra Ash-Harper
January 2021	The business case for diversity. (Repeat)	Dr Helen Mortimore (UWE)
February 2021	From inclusive listening to action.	Anneliese Paul and Zahra Ash-Harper
February 2021	OnBoard: Bringing young people into governance roles.	Kamina Walton and Euella Jackson (Rising Arts)
February 2021	Inclusion and your organisation.	BeOnBoard
February 2021	Individual Board surgeries.	BeOnBoard
February 2021	Individual HR & recruitment surgeries.	Dr Vanda Papafilippo (UWE)

List of abbreviations

10.0 List of abbreviations:

AHRC - Arts and Humanities Research Council

CCI - Cultural and creative industries

CICP - Creative Industries Clusters Programme

COF - Co-financing organisation

CP - Creative professional

CPD - Continuous professional development

CWFTF - Creative Workforce for the Future

DoR - Director of Research

DWP - Department for Work and Pensions

EDI - Equality, diversity and Inclusion

ESF - European Social Fund

ESIF - European Structural and Investment Funds

GVA - Gross Value Added

HoP - Head of Production

LEP - Local Enterprise Partnership

NP - Network Producer

SME - Small and medium-sized enterprises

WECA - West of England Combined Authority

WftF - Workforce for the Future

Report Contributors

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Cèlia Dominguez	Creative Professionals

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  Jane Faram
  Rising Arts (co-mentors)

Creative Youth Network
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  Nick Young

Watershed
  Jo Lansdowne
  Vanessa Bellaar Spruijt

The Guild co-working space
  Tom Lewis

Watershed's Rife Magazine
  Hannah Higginson
  Adibah Iqbal

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  Bex Rose

Knowle West Media Centre
  Carolyn Hassan
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