

THE CREATOR CONSULTATION



THE CASE FOR CREATORS

HOW ARE CREATORS POWERING THE UK'S ECONOMY?

Creators are a growth engine for the UK. They're building businesses, attracting global audiences, and exporting UK culture to the world. In 2023 alone, YouTube's creative ecosystem contributed over **£2 billion to UK GDP** and supported more than **45,000 full-time equivalent jobs**.¹

YouTube is an exporter of the British creative industries, providing a global stage for diverse British talent from all over the UK. Over **80%** of watch time on content produced by channels in the UK comes from outside of the UK.

However, the systems that support entrepreneurship – from access to finance to skills training – weren't built with Creators in mind. If the UK wants to remain a global creative leader, it must recognise the role of Creators and give them the tools to succeed.



Subscribe

“ Creators form such an important part of our economy yet we could still do more to give clear pathways for young Creators to develop the skills and resources needed to reach their full potential. We should support and nourish young, aspiring Creators at the start of their journey who want to explore a variety of options and pathways, and in turn help them build teams which will help open the right opportunities to them. ”

– Amelia Dimoldenberg

 / @ameliadimoldenberg



WHAT DO CREATORS NEED TO THRIVE?

In order to better understand the barriers and opportunities facing the UK's Creator ecosystem, Public First and YouTube launched a national Creator Consultation. **Over 10,000 Creators responded with their views**.²

From this process, we've identified **five key areas** that could unlock the next wave of growth and innovation for the creative economy:



Government
Recognition



Industry
Representation



Training
& Skills



Access
to Finance



Filming
Infrastructure

¹ YouTube's Impact in the UK, 2023 https://www.youtube.com/intl/ALL_uk/howyoutubeworks/progress-impact/impact/

² Note that this research defines "Creators" as individuals creating content across all platforms, and not specific to YouTube.

FOREWORD

Creators are shaping culture, connecting communities, and building businesses in every corner of the UK. They are filmmakers and journalists, educators and entertainers, entrepreneurs and activists. In 2023 alone, the YouTube creative ecosystem contributed £2 billion to the UK's GDP and supported over 45,000 jobs - and this is just the start of the opportunity.

To further unlock the Creator economy's potential, YouTube partnered with Public First to launch the Creator Consultation. This was a first-of-its-kind initiative to explore the barriers to growth affecting Creators in the UK, and to deliver their feedback directly to government and industry leaders. Almost 10,000 UK Creators from across the nations and regions participated, and their message was loud and clear: they still feel excluded from policy conversations, by the wider industry, and from the infrastructure that supports traditional creative sectors.

YouTube will play its part here. We are launching a "Creator Incubator" with the prestigious National Film & TV school, to help deliver the technical skills that the next generation of Creators need and continue to work closely with Trade Bodies to significantly contribute to the protection of digital creators and the further professionalisation of the industry.

But change cannot happen in isolation. We will only succeed with a concerted, collective effort. We are therefore calling on the UK Government to build on the foundations set out by the Creative Industries Sector Plan to ensure the UK continues to be a great place for Creators to thrive. As a starting point, we recommend appointing a named ministerial lead, and acknowledging Creators in official economic statistics. Without this recognition, we risk leaving Creators out of key opportunities for growth.

Thank you to all of the Creators who took the time to contribute to this important research. I will keep working with stakeholders across the sector to champion the Creator economy.

— **Alison Lomax**

Managing Director, YouTube UK & Ireland



CREATORS NEED GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION

Creators don't feel recognised by the Government.

Despite making significant contributions to the UK's social and economic landscape, policymakers have not recognised the full potential of the UK Creator community. This lack of recognition has a real impact, leaving a critical subsector of the creative industries unheard and undermining their potential to support the Government's growth mission.

56% of respondents think that UK creators like themselves **do not have a voice in shaping government policies and regulations that impact their work.**

"I would ask the Government for a simple acknowledgment that Creators are capable of the same, if not more, success and contribution than other mainstream fields."

Creator, between 100,001-500,000
Subscribers/followers, North West

"An entire industry exists here, yet it feels like it's barely acknowledged."

Creator, between 100,001-500,000
Subscribers/followers, Scotland

"There is a significant absence of support, legislation, funding and regulation when entertainment is created by a digital Creator compared to a production company or traditional entity."

Creator, between 10,000-50,000
Subscribers/followers, London

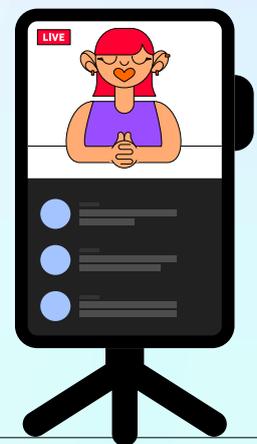
GIVING CREATORS A VOICE: WHY TRADE BODIES MATTERS

Trade associations give industries a voice – helping to represent their interests to governments and other institutions. From UK Music to techUK, these organisations act as a bridge between businesses and policymakers, offering insight, coordinating consultation, and advocating for their sector.

In 2023, the Digital Content Association (DCA) was set up to play that role for Creators, but is still early on in its development. Currently, it lacks the funding and institutional support to match the scale or seriousness of the sector it represents and requires funding from major platforms.

Influencer Marketing Trade Body (IMTB) is another organization dedicated to building a robust, sustainable future for influencer marketing, which is a critical source of finance for Creators today.

To ensure Creators have the voice they deserve, all major platforms should commit to long-term support for the Creator sector trade bodies – giving them the resources and stability they needs.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport should **formally acknowledge the Creator ecosystem under a Minister's roles and responsibilities**, preferably the Minister of State for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism.
- The Department of Culture, Media and Sport should have a **dedicated "Creator" category** to its regular economic estimates publications, enabling the Government to better understand how the Creator sector contributes to the UK economy.
- The Department of Business and Trade should appoint an **International Creative Industries Champion**, including a remit for celebrating British Creators overseas.
- The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office should consider a **"Creators are GREAT" strand of the GREAT campaign**, to boost the international presence of UK Creators.
- The UK Government should provide Ministers, parliamentarians and officials with **clear guidance on how to fully leverage Creators** in their communications strategies, and include leading news Creators in Government communications, alongside traditional media outlets.

“ It's tough as creating news on YouTube is still not treated as a serious profession. There needs to be more acknowledgement of the effort and care we put into our work. ”

– Georgina Findlay

 / @TLDRNews



CREATORS NEED INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

Creators are at the heart of the UK's modern creative economy, yet they still feel like outsiders. Many spoke about a lack of respect for their work, or feeling looked down on by more traditional creative institutions. The lack of recognition can be isolating - cutting Creators out of professional networks, funding opportunities, and the spaces where creative policy is shaped. This represents a missed opportunity for the creative economy. A closer working relationship between Creators and the wider Creative Industry could offer both parties a significant comparative advantage on the global stage, as they leverage their ideas and audiences to bring British culture to the wider world.

43% of respondents think the value of UK creators is **not recognised by the broader creative industry.**

"There is a huge lack of respect for Creators. I think if the broader creative industry knew what my week entails, the hours I work, the different jobs I have to turn my hand to, they'd be shocked!"

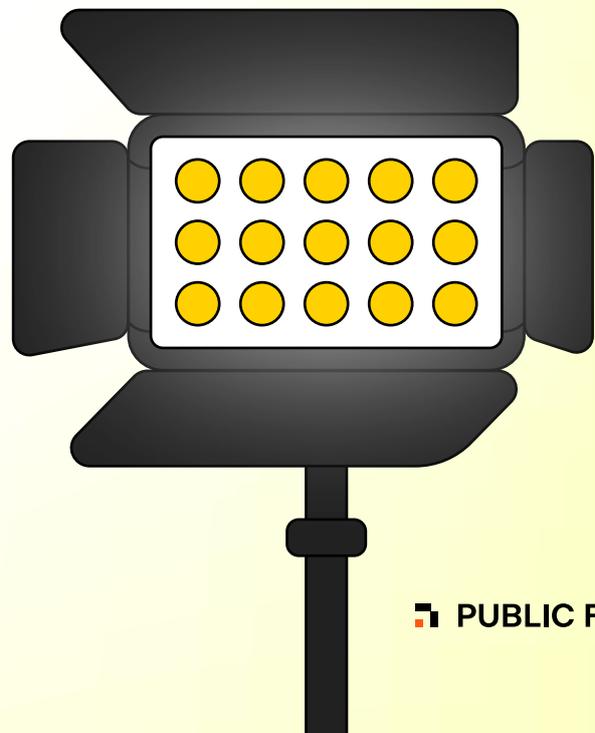
Creator, between 100,001-500,000
Subscribers/followers, East Midlands

"Much of the creative industry simply doesn't recognise Creators as being in the same league."

Creator, between 10,000-50,000
Subscribers/followers, North West

"Creators are viewed as being below the creative industry. There's outrage or disdain when Creators have access to these spaces."

Creator, between 100,001-500,000
Subscribers/followers, East of England



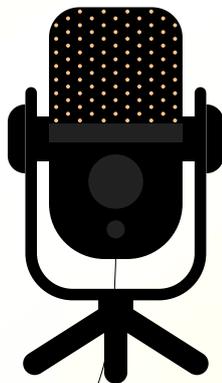
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport should **build on the foundations laid by the Creative Industries Sector Plan** and ensure Creators are represented in the Creative Industries council.
- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport should release **new guidance for government-supported heritage institutions** to ensure they are leveraging Creators in their communications strategies.
- The UK's creative and cultural bodies should review their policies and explore where there is **opportunity to collaborate with Creators**, in order to reach new audiences, support emerging talent, and strengthen the UK's global cultural influence.
- The DCA should continue to **work closely with Creative UK and other bodies representing the Creative Industries** should ensure that they capture Creator perspectives in their representations to Government.

“ I would love to see digital and social content spoken about more highly. You have these TV shows that are still winning Emmys with maybe half a million streams on them, whereas YouTubers are creating content that gets literally hundreds of millions of views with zero recognition from the traditional world. ”

– Brandon Baum

 / @heyBrandonB



CREATORS NEED TRAINING & SKILLS

UK Creators are some of the best in the world at making great content; but they lack adequate support for training and skills development. This ranges from technical and creative competencies that are specific to Creators, through to business skills and financial literacy that are required for any growing SMB. Better access to training and resources would help more Creators grow their platforms, hire teams, and build next generation production studios.

Only 17% of respondents think UK creators receive adequate support **training and skills development** (for creators and/or employees).

“Training programmes specifically targeted at Creators are needed. I run programmes teaching businesses how to do this, but a financially accessible programme would be a great way to kickstart people into the Creator sector.”

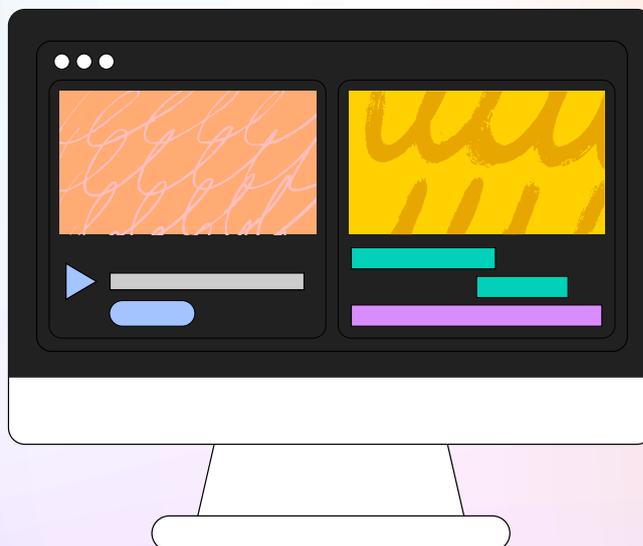
Creator, between 50,001-100,000
Subscribers/followers, East of England

“Creative business training, such as YouTube strategy, social media management, or graphic design, would definitely help.”

Creator, between 500,001-1,000,000
Subscribers/followers, Scotland

“If there were support groups to help newly emerging Creators learn how to use different platforms and start monetising their work, it would make it much easier for them to get started.”

Creator, less than 10,000
Subscribers/followers, Wales



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Skills England and comparative bodies in Scotland (Skills Development Scotland), Wales (Welsh Gov Dept for Education) and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Skills Council) should develop a new accreditation system for **modular training** – recognising short, practical courses that develop **business, creative and technical skills**. As part of the National Skills Service, these “micro-credits” should be eligible for support through the Growth and Skills Levy.
- The Department for Education should commit to **high-quality creative education and financial literacy** embedded in England’s Curriculum Review.
- The Department for Business and Trade should explore how to best support Creators to **access business advice through the planned Business Growth Service**.
- The Department for Business and Trade should ensure that more institutions are offering Creators access to the 90% Government-funded **Help to Grow Management Course**.
- The DCA should build community resources for Creators, such as a “**professional advice hub**”, providing resources such as links to business training as well as legal, tax and negotiation advice. This service should also include a dedicated ‘**Creator Link platform**’ hosting profiles and job adverts, connecting freelancers to Creators.

“ It took me so long to hire an editor because I didn’t really know how to do it. There’s no Creator-specific advice anywhere on how to put a contract together. There’s no guidance on that whole business and management side of being a Creator. ”

– Dr Becky Smethurst

 / @DrBecky



CREATORS NEED ACCESS TO FINANCE

Creators are ambitious entrepreneurs: but can struggle to access the capital required to accelerate their journey. Many find it difficult to open accounts, secure loans or apply for grants. On top of that, financial rules and requirements – from filing taxes to proving business expenses – are often hard to navigate. Without better access to finance, the UK risks stalling the growth of a dynamic and globally competitive Creator economy.

Only 7% of respondents think UK creators receive adequate support with **access to business loans/capital.**

“[Creators need] help filling out US tax forms. Every YouTube Creator earning money on the platform in the UK has to fill out an IRS form, e.g. the W-8 BEN form. [...] Help with even simple things like which company structure to select, as US company structures do not match English ones.”

Creator, over 1 million
Subscribers/followers, North West

“It would be amazing to have some sort of grant available to Creators to help buy equipment and begin their journey. Starting out can be expensive.”

Creator, between 500,001-1,000,000
Subscribers/followers, Scotland

“Lots of organisations I deal with do not seem to understand that a Creator’s income can fluctuate massively from month to month, which makes it difficult to get loans, benefits, etc.”

Creator, between 100,001-500,000
Subscribers/followers, North East

**QUIET
ON SET**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- HMRC should ensure SIC codes better cater to the Creative Industries, with a clear **category for “Creators”** and update the Business Income Manual to provide better guidance to Creators who need to do a self assessment tax return, including guidance on any common international tax implications. This guidance should be cascaded across other Government communications such as ‘tax help for hustles’.³
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), AHRC, and Innovate UK should review their eligibility criteria to ensure that **Creators are eligible for grants** from research and innovation funding.
- The Department for Business and Trade should continue to prioritise new efforts to **tackle late payments**, for example by enabling the greater use of e-invoicing and pushing ahead with common standards. This will reduce the time it takes small businesses and sole traders to get paid.
- The Department for Business and Trade should review its various funding schemes and capital incentives to ensure that **Creators can access support through existing financial schemes** like the British Business Bank’s Start Up Loans programme, Annual Investment Allowance and Full Expensing.
- The DCA should **bring Creators together with** representatives from financial services firms and accounting companies, to examine what steps could be taken to **unlock Creator’s access to finance**, ensuring that there are both personal and business finance products available for them.

“ A lot of the Creators that I speak to do have issues with funding. I don’t really know if I’ve ever worked with a Creator who has managed to get a business loan for their content creation. I know Creators who have taken out personal loans, but that adds another level of pressure. It would be such a game changer if there were grants for Creators.

– Jade Beason

 / @jadebeason



CREATORS NEED FILMING INFRASTRUCTURE

Creators need places to film – but whether it’s public spaces or professional studios, access remains a challenge. Many told us they struggle with unclear rules around permits, and face resistance when filming in public. At the same time, studio space is often expensive, unavailable, or geared toward traditional production companies. This lack of accessible, Creator-friendly infrastructure is holding back both the quality of content Creators can produce – and the UK’s wider creative potential.

Only 9% of respondents think UK creators receive adequate support with **finding locations/ acquiring film permits.**

“[Creators] need more facilities in the creative space, such as additional studios available for rent.”

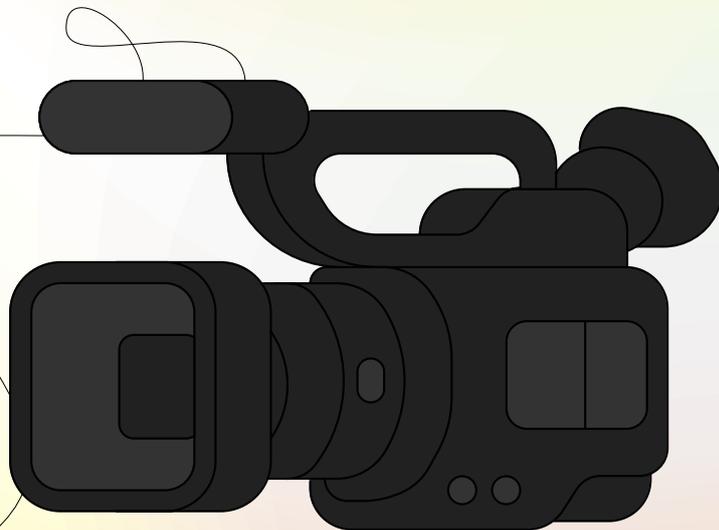
Creator, less than 10,000
Subscribers/followers, East Midlands

“Having access to local physical recording studios would make a big difference.”

Creator, between 10,000-50,000
Subscribers/followers, Scotland

“As a Creator who live streams, I would like some laws protecting us against people whose only aim is to stop us from filming in public spaces.”

Creator, between 10,000-50,000
Subscribers/followers, London



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“ It’s difficult to film in public places. Nearby businesses often feel that they can go beyond their land and try to kick Creators out. It’s also a really complicated system to get permission from the council to film, particularly if you want to use props like a ladder. I wish it was just easier to film.

– Max Klymenko

 / @maxklymenko



THANK YOU

We are grateful to the Creators and experts who contributed to this report and its findings. Your voices have shaped this manifesto and helped us make the case for stronger support for the UK's Creator economy. We're also grateful to the many experts, advocates, and industry partners who contributed their time, ideas, and feedback throughout this process.

ABOUT THE CONSULTATION

Public First ran an anonymous online survey of Creators between 7th December 2024 – 9th February 2025. In total, 10,104 Creators completed the survey, 9,465 of whom were based in the UK. Nearly two thirds of the UK-based respondents were from outside London and the South East.

ABOUT PUBLIC FIRST

Public First is an independent consultancy that works to help companies and organisations develop new policy proposals, better understand public opinion, and model their economic and social impact. Public First is a member of the Market Research Society and the British Polling Council and we abide by their rules and guidelines.

