

# South West Manifesto for creative and cultural industries



# The South West Manifesto

Trade unions have a proud record of representing people who work in the creative, cultural and leisure industries. Such vocational employment can be immensely satisfying but it is often precarious and poorly paid.

The trade unions can be small but highly specialised and tuned to serve the particular interests of their members.

They have come together with the support of the South West TUC to make the case for their sector and the importance of their members' work for the life of the region.

The South West has a rich tradition of creativity and economic planners often herald the sector and its importance. But the sector is fragile and under-resourced.

This Cultural Manifesto challenges assumptions about the arts and proposes a number of ideas that would enhance this vital sector.



# Manifesto for Culture

## South West Creative Arts

The life of everyone in the South West is enriched by the creative arts, culture and heritage. The region has much to celebrate and be proud of. The arts and creative industries are at the heart of what attracts people to live, work, study and visit the region.

This Manifesto promotes the cultural life of the region and values those who work for it. The sector relies on a wide range of people often working very long hours and on precarious employment. Poor pay is a feature of the industry and, sometimes, no pay at all. New technology offers some great opportunities but also carries risk of exploitation.

The cuts in public spending have hit the art world. It is seen as an easy target with funders having little if any statutory duties. South West councils cluster at the bottom of the league table in arts funding with the region falling a long way behind London. Relying on commercial interests can prove fragile and good events, festivals, drama, venues and space where art can flourish have closed or are under severe pressure.

This creative manifesto is from the trade unions that represent workers across the cultural and creative industries. Smaller unions such as the Artists' Union, BECTU, Musicians' Union,

Equity, the National Union of Journalists, National Society for Educators in Art and Design and the Writers' Guild promote the professionalism of their members and campaign against those who expect them to work and perform for little if anything.

## Arts education

Schools, faced with a devastating squeeze on spending, have axed arts education. Teachers must concentrate on a narrow curriculum and the demands of national tests leading to the decline in drama, music and art. Instruments, art materials and museum visits have been sacrificed. This is despite growing evidence on the importance of creativity in the changing world.

Imagination and artistic talents are predicted to be the attributes people will need more of in the future. The Arts Council highlights that engagement in structural arts and culture improves the cognitive abilities of children and young people, drama and music improves literacy and early language acquisition<sup>1</sup>.

Funding for adult and community education has been savaged in the last ten years and opportunities for people of all ages to learn art subjects or develop their passion for art, music and drama have been curtailed.

## South West Local Authority Arts Funding

Investors in arts, museums and heritage based on figures local authorities provide to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Place	£per person per week
City of London	70.68
Exeter	.53
Cheltenham	.40
Bristol	.26
Swindon	.25
Weymouth & Portland	.23
Plymouth	.19
Gloucester	.19
Poole	.18
North Devon	.17
Torbay	.14
Cotswold	.13
Stroud	.12
West Dorset	.12
South Somerset	.10
Christchurch	.10
East Dorset	.09
Cornwall	.08
Mendip	.08
Wiltshire	.08
Taunton Deane	.06
Bournemouth	.06
Sedgemoor	.04
West Somerset	.04
East Devon	.03
West Devon	.03
North Dorset	.03
Teignbridge	.02
South Gloucestershire	.01
Tewkesbury	.01
Mid Devon	.01
South Hams	.01
Bath & NE Somerset	.00
Forest of Dean	.00
Isles of Scilly	.00

Source: [www.50pforculture.org/statistics](http://www.50pforculture.org/statistics)

## Class and income barriers

There are many barriers to a career in the creative industries. Social class and income are significant, starting with access to teaching in schools and the reliance on private lessons. A BPI survey found state schools have seen a 21% decrease in music provision over the past five years<sup>2</sup>. Children from low-income families are half as likely to learn an instrument, according to recent research by the Musicians' Union<sup>3</sup>. The cost of equipment, instruments and materials prevents many from developing their talents.

Families with a total household income of less than £28k are half as likely to have a child learning an instrument as more affluent peers with a family income of £48k or more.

This stark disparity exists despite similar levels of interest from both groups of children. Cost is currently the greatest barrier to learning, with over two-fifths (41%) of those from lower income families saying lessons are beyond their household budgets.

Cost also impacts on how children learn. Those from low and mid-income families are more likely to teach themselves, missing out on the benefits of a specialised tutor, exposing a clear need for music provision in schools.

The educational attainment of parents also plays a factor in whether children will pick up an instrument. Nearly half (48%) of children who have parents educated to university level will learn an instrument, compared with one-fifth (21%) with only secondary school education.

<sup>2</sup> BPI 2019  
<sup>3</sup> Musicians Union 2018



lDestroy

photo: Jess Hurd

Once embarked on a career the costs of travel and performing for little, if any, fees exacerbates the divide between those who can afford such a career and those who cannot.

## Diversity

Inequality remains a blight on society and a barrier to economic progress. Culture can provide the most visible features of the polarisation of society but it can also be the driving force for diversity and the advancement of marginalised communities.

Public funding for the arts has been criticised for unequal support for classical and traditional culture. Parts of the South West have a rich base for classical music and opera. Some make positive and pro-active measures to seek entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds but more is possible. Schools need resources to sufficiently encourage children into the arts otherwise this social mobility is further restricted.

Activities and events to celebrate diversity have struggled under austerity.

Trade unions have supported initiatives such as the Respect Festivals, St Paul's Carnival, Pride events and other community led events.

There is limited capacity of community groups, relying on volunteers, to cope with the complex aspects of event organising. This has been made worse by the lack of council advice and support as well as the demands of an under-resourced police force who must view such events for their income-generating opportunities rather than their community value.



Misty in Roots

photo: Jess Hurd

Trade unions are campaigning to tackle the inequality in the creative world. The Writers' Guild found only 16% of working film writers in the UK are female and only 14% of prime-time TV is written by women.

In its 'Manifesto for Casting' the actors' union Equity makes the case for widening access to opportunities. It highlights the discrimination that continues in the industry and how social class remains a barrier to an acting career. Much of the arts world is too concentrated in London, reinforced by skewed funding patterns.

Trade unions welcome the

enquiry into social mobility in the sector being conducted by the Performers' Alliance All-Party Parliamentary Group, engaging MPs and Peers from across the political spectrum. It will recommend measures that can be taken by government, industry and others to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to break into and progress in these careers.

### The creative economy

Outside London and the South East, the South West has the second highest regional employment in the creative sector. Heritage employment in the region is the greatest outside of London<sup>4</sup>.

Local Industrial Strategies, developed by Local Enterprise Partnerships and the West of England Mayor champion creative industries yet show little understanding of the dynamics at the core of the creative environment. Business support schemes are welcome but must be seen in the context of funding cuts and art space closures. The creative arts at local level are the essential seedbed from which creative industries grow.

The Arts Council calculate for every £1 of salary paid by the arts and creative industries, an additional £2.01 is generated in the wider economy<sup>5</sup>. Creative industries boost community engagement and cohesion but they cannot rely solely on volunteers. Public funding is vital to ensure access for all and to champion the cutting edge work which feeds the creative economy. From community festivals, to local choirs they often need outreach workers and low-cost facilities to practice and perform. It is here that

the inspiration, resources and networks are generated which lead to creative success. Universal and inclusive access to the means of producing, viewing and learning about the arts provides the foundation from which these industries are forged.

Art funding sometimes includes school visits and community involvement, but it is often transitory cash, here today gone tomorrow. There is a lack of consistency, sustainability and project legacy.

Local authorities, despite financial pressures, are best placed to offer sustenance anchored in the community to provide a long term strategy of support. In their role as commissioners of local services, planning authorities and landlords they could do more to help. They could (and sometimes do) act as champions of local arts and culture, working as strategic brokers, advisers and critical friends to create a more cohesive culture for all. However, many of our public spaces, where creativity can flourish, have been privatised and sterilised in the cause of commercial gain. The freedom to perform in city, town and shopping centres has been reduced by private management companies and a homogenised view of the world. Art and music offers high streets opportunities to attract visitors. The pier approach in Bournemouth is a great event space but the showcase for local musicians has now stopped.

South West arts has a strong base for traditional, 'high-brow' arts but it has also been driven by a challenging, subversive culture. The street art of Bristol, the anti-

**Verity by  
Damien Hirst  
in Ilfracombe**



photo: Jess Hurd



establishment origins of the Glastonbury festival, West country folk to drum and bass, the artists of Cornwall, and the radical authors and poets from across the region have launched initiatives that have grown to multi-million pound projects as well as a network of community based facilities and hubs.

### **New technology**

Augmented and virtual reality, artificial intelligence, machine learning and automation offer exciting opportunities in the creative sector. But it carries risk for workers. The video effects and games industry is now a massive employer, worth more than the music and film industries put together. But it relies on a supply of eager young creative workers who are prepared to work long hours. On the launch of one big game, the boss boasted of staff working 100-hour weeks. The sector is known for 'burning out' workers with high levels of churn. Technology and the

'cloud' means that people can be expected to be 'always on' until they crash out with stress. Some repetitive functions can be sent 'offshore' to be carried out anywhere in the world where labour is cheapest.

### **Employment status**

The industry relies on a lot of freelancers and this can mean independence for creative workers or bogus self-employment leaving them vulnerable to be treated unfairly. Young people trying to carve out a career are told they will get on thanks to their creative skills but with little transparency in pay and conditions they are often used because they are the cheapest.

### **South West film production**

The South West is the creative hub for many blockbusters and TV hit shows. The BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol produces world-beating programmes. Aardman's animations are enjoyed by millions of people around the world. These iconic

centres help sustain many other creative businesses and attract some amazing talent. They should use their status by also demonstrating the highest standards of employment conditions including recognising trade unions and paying no one less than the real living wage. The arrival of Channel 4's creative hub confirms the value of Bristol's vibrant arts and cultural strength.

### **Arts and culture as a visitor attractor**

Around a third of all inbound visits involve engagement with the arts and culture. The glorious coast, countryside and historic landmarks attract millions of visitors to the South West but it is the arts that sustain and entertain them. A number of places have realised the value of art to bring in visitors. The Tate at St Ives attracts thousands who pay between £8.50-£13.00 admission in contrast to the free Tate in London.

Ilfracombe welcomed Damian Hirst to the north Devon town and his striking artwork on the harbourside attracts many people into the town. Banksy's *Dismaland* attracted 150,000 visitors from around the world to Weston-super-Mare and boosted the local economy by £20m. Plymouth's Theatre Royal has installed the stunning sculpture, *Messenger*, by Cornish artist Joseph Hillier.

### **Music tourism**

A survey commissioned by UK Music in 2016 identified a direct and indirect spend generated by music tourism of £295 million in the South West during the previous year, with a total of 851,000 visitors which helped to support 3,658 jobs in the area. The cultural, social and economic impact of



festivals such as Glastonbury is huge and provides a significant boost to both local tourism and economies. As a further example, in the same survey Exeter alone hosted 49,000 attendees at live music events, generating £6 million and supporting 64 jobs in the city. The contribution of musical events and music tourism to the South West is significant and should be supported in every way possible,

### Heritage South West

The South West has more ancient monuments than any other region. Stonehenge is one of the most visited heritage sites in the country with more than one million people going to the stones every year. The city of Bath is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Heritage is an important source of economic prosperity worth around £3.1 billion to the region's economy. The sector employs more than 53,000 people supporting 25.4 million visits<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Historic England 2018



Stonehenge



Costumes at the Bottle Yard

### Location South West

The South West has lots of sites for film locations and some places have sought to develop production facilities close at hand. Locations become visitor attractions as people enjoy seeing where favourite films and TV programmes were shot.

Port Isaac in Cornwall has almost become the village of Portwenn for real following the popularity of the TV series *Doc Martin*. *Poldark* highlighted the glory of Cornwall and locations such as Charlestown appear in many films. *Star Wars* came to the Forest of Dean as did *Harry Potter*. Villages in Wiltshire have been turned into many a period drama.

The initiative to develop the Bottle Yard studios in Bristol brings welcome employment to south Bristol. Its nine film studios and production facilities have helped grow associated businesses.

There will often be tensions between economic improvement and the supply of low cost business units. 'Gentrification' risks impacting on creative workspaces in particular. Planners need to work with local communities and the users of existing work spaces to accommodate such needs and balance the development of affordable housing and other commercial interests.

### Art and culture for health and well-being

Art and culture can be of significant value for the health and well-being of people of all ages. The NHS recognises that creative activities can benefit patients with a wide range of conditions. Matt Hancock the Health Secretary recently announced new investment in this area declaring: access to arts and social activities improves people's mental and physical health. Art and music can be especially valuable to dementia sufferers.

These initiatives require a supply of creative professionals who can be trained to serve the social care interests. Culture and creativity give us the tools to find out more about ourselves, to challenge preconceptions, to grow emotionally and intellectually. They are the vehicles through which we are able to articulate otherwise inexpressible feelings and thoughts about our place in the world. We are enabled to



Poldark - a South West success



Kerry McCarthy Bristol East MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Performing Arts

scan the virtual maps of our lives, to make adjustments, come to terms with limitations, make ourselves more resilient and adaptable. This helps to create the grounding for a healthy society.

### Work not play

All too often creative professionals are expected to work for nothing. Festival organisers have to pay for stages, toilets, security and the rest but some will then pack the bill with musicians who are expected to perform for the exposure rather than proper pay rates.

With income from CD sales falling and illegal downloads a feature of the music business, artists rely on earnings from live performances. There is a lack of respect for creators' rights with some consumers and businesses using content without permission or payment.

The NUJ is committed to ensuring that the right of its members to be treated fairly is upheld and that they are

paid properly for their work. #Useitpayforit is the hashtag for its campaign to encourage amateurs to understand the value of the photographs and videos they provide to news organisations.

There is a growing trend to expect writers to work for free. Sometimes it is dressed up as 'pre-writes' and 'sweepstake pitching' but for professional writers trying to sustain a career it can mean weeks of time-consuming research and work for no pay.

There is massive demand from young people to find careers in film and video games and the like. Some employers take advantage of this by offering unpaid, or very poorly paid, internships and long trials. The TUC has found that young workers feel unable to challenge poor conditions. It is working on new digital ways to provide advice and build collective support.

The South West TUC urges unions themselves to 'practise what they preach' by paying writers, photographers, artists and performers the agreed union rates for the job.

### Venues

Having the right mix of venues and performance spaces is vital for the cultural life of a place. Publicly funded venues have been hit by cuts and many rely on a combination of commercial, public and charitable support. Some of the iconic venues in the region have recently been, or are going through, significant refurbishments, such as the Hall for Cornwall, Brewhouse Theatre in Taunton, Old Vic in Bristol and the Theatre Royal Bath.

Colston Hall is undergoing major work and trade unions

welcome the decision to re-open it under an alternative name that doesn't carry the legacy of Bristol's slave trade.

Some venues have been forced to close and others are under threat due to a lack of funding, hikes in rent and business rates or pressures from development.

New housing development in proximity to music venues have led to noise complaints from residents. A survey in 2015 found that up to half of Bristol's 90 music venues were affected by neighbouring developments.

Bristol has a young population and a reputation for nurturing musical talent. It has the highest number of musicians relative to population in the UK according to the Performing Rights Society.

Bristol City Council tried to insist developers paid for sound-proofing of the Fleece venue but this was turned down by the courts of appeal. Other venues such as the Thekla, The Fiddlers and





Louisiana feel threatened by nearby developments.

Publicly funded art can be controversial especially at a time of austerity. Trade unions will not jump on the tabloid press attacks on such initiatives and any value for money assessment must take into account wider issues around well being and the advancement of the arts. The last Labour Government allowed new public buildings a proportion for art and this should be protected where. The same applies to public art on road development highways and other public space.

### Night economy

Bristol City Council has recognised the importance of the night economy and has established an advisory panel to consider the challenges posed by it.

It needs to provide a focus for the workers involved in this economy including those in transport, health, hospitality and entertainment, as well as identifying threats which may impact upon cultural business such as music venues who operate within the city.

The vibrancy of the night economy relies on music and culture yet the workforce is often under-valued.

### Brexit

The creative and cultural unions share a deep concern over the impact of Brexit on their members' rights at work and ability to tour around Europe.

The freedom to travel for work is a critical aspect for many performers and unions will press for a system that maintains this right.

### The value of unions

Unions representing workers in the creative and entertainment industries have proved the most adaptable and responsive. They have proud histories. For example, the National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) origins can be traced to 1888, when a group of art school principals recognised the need to raise the standard of art teaching and improve the status of art teachers. The Musicians' Union was founded in 1893, Equity is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year and the Writers' Guild its 60th.

Unions provide a powerful voice for workers in the sector and negotiate with employers.



Equity's magazine celebrates its 90th birthday

The Broadcasting and Entertainment union (BECTU) recently secured a ground-breaking agreement with the motion picture industry. It came as a result of a successful partnership between union reps, producers and employers' associations. Workers at all levels in camera, lighting, costume, hair and make-up, locations, art department, props and more, will have the benefit of a range of workers rights and protections.

### Learning unions

Workers in the entertainment sectors need access to good training. Often self-employed, they cannot rely on an employer and in a fast-changing environment they need the latest skills. There is a high level of reliance on self-learning using online tutorials. This carries the risk of excluding those who lack digital skills.

BECTU and the NUJ offers a



# The South



Olly Alexander, actor, dancer and lead singer with Years and Years, is an international success story from the Forest of Dean. He is a champion for LGBT rights and greater diversity in the industry. Olly supports the call for more investment in South West arts and welcomes this Manifesto.

menu of courses for freelance members such as finance, building web sites and maximising online presence. They offer members access to public liability insurance.

Specialist training in editing and new software is available and initiative courses such as training for professional hair and make-up artists working in film and TV with BAME make-up and hair.

BECTU offers a Creative Industries Safety Passport designed specifically for workers, employed or freelance, working in film, TV, theatre and live events.

The Musicians' Union offers training and support for freelance members and a menu of options including time management and body language.

Equity membership includes many benefits such as

insurance and work-related legal advice. Courses on offer include how to make the most of remote auditions, helping members look their best.

## Voice

This report confirms the need and value of empowering creative and cultural workers. Their voice needs to be heard by employers, funding agencies and industry leaders. We recognise the importance of arts, heritage and culture but that must include respecting those who work in the industries.



[www.artistsunionengland.org.uk](http://www.artistsunionengland.org.uk)  
[info@artistsunionengland.org.uk](mailto:info@artistsunionengland.org.uk)



**BECTU**  
BROADCASTING  
ENTERTAINMENT  
CINEMATOGRAPH &  
THEATRE UNION

[www.bectu.org.uk](http://www.bectu.org.uk)  
[info@bectu.org.uk](mailto:info@bectu.org.uk)  
02920 666557



[www.equity.org.uk](http://www.equity.org.uk)  
[southwestengland@equity.org.uk](mailto:southwestengland@equity.org.uk)  
02920 397971



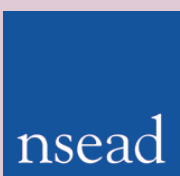
[www.theMU.org](http://www.theMU.org)  
[cardiff@theMU.org](mailto:cardiff@theMU.org)  
02920 456585

# West Manifesto for Culture

## We are calling for:

Culture greatly enriches the life of people in the South West, and contributes hugely to our regional economy. As trade unions, we aim to build a coalition of support for greater investment in the arts across the South West by:

- Building a coalition of support for greater investment in the arts across the South West
- Supporting the **50p for Culture** campaign for local council investment in the arts and heritage
- Ensuring grant funding builds sustainable support for the arts
- An integrated local government policy framework to support the creative arts as powerful engines for attracting investment, raising aspiration and building stronger, healthier communities
- Demanding professional artists, musicians, writers and cultural workers are paid properly and not asked to perform for free
- Enabling trade union organisation in the industry to set good standards for training, working conditions and fair treatment
- Paying at least the real Living Wage
- Maintaining freedom to travel and tour for work after Brexit
- Building the campaign for greater recognition and support for arts education at all levels of schools
- Lobbying for every child to have access to free instrumental music lessons in schools
- Supporting a range of measures to improve diversity in all aspect of the artistic world
- Advocating the health benefits for engagement in arts and culture and the place for arts professionals in the health and social care system



National Society for  
Education in Art and Design  
[www.nsead.org](http://www.nsead.org)  
[info@nsead.org](mailto:info@nsead.org)  
01225 810134



[www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)  
[info@nuj.org.uk](mailto:info@nuj.org.uk)  
020 7843 3700



Public and Commercial  
Services Union  
[www.pcs.org.uk](http://www.pcs.org.uk)  
[southwestregion@pcs.org.uk](mailto:southwestregion@pcs.org.uk)  
0117 925 1600



Writers' Guild of Great Britain  
[www.writersguild.org.uk](http://www.writersguild.org.uk)  
[admin@writersguild.org.uk](mailto:admin@writersguild.org.uk)  
020 7833 0777

# TUC South West

Church House, Church Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7BD  
0117 947 0521 [southwest@tuc.org.uk](mailto:southwest@tuc.org.uk)  
[www.tuc.org.uk/southwest](http://www.tuc.org.uk/southwest) @swtuc