Introduction

Screen Facilities Scotland (SFS) is a collaborative consortium of 27 businesses formed in order to support and promote screen industry facilities companies based in Scotland. These businesses are essential to Scotland’s industry and a huge benefit to the wider visiting production base.

Formalised in 2012, SFS works hard to raise awareness of the large variety of facilities based in Scotland and of the knowledge and expertise available to productions shooting here. We are passionate about the success of our industry and are committed to providing the professional services that our industry demands. We welcome the opportunity to comment on recommendations of the Screen Sector Leadership Group following the publication of its report in January 2017.

Leadership, Strategy and Support

What is your view of the current leadership of the screen sector through Creative Scotland and other supporting bodies?

It is essential that our industry is lead with forward thinking and robustness. It is also essential that leadership has first hand experience of current industry and its needs as well as a true understanding of the value of the industry to our economy. Having an increased Screen Unit that fully engages with other agencies and considers the issues surrounding barriers to growth in our facilities’ businesses would benefit our members greatly. SFS members would encourage acknowledgement and a greater understanding of the vital role that the Scottish service companies provide.

What are your views on the availability of funding for all content development?

Content development is indeed important however it should also generate production activity resulting in work for both crew and facilities. Can we be sure for example that the current model of script development does this?

Whilst we welcome further public sector funding and commitment for growth from broadcasters the fact is that these investments quite often do not filter down and benefit our members directly. SFS members champion Scottish spends and would welcome the reassurance that the Screen Unit would work hard to ensure as much funding as possible awarded was indeed spent locally.

How can OFCOM work to support the sector in its new role as regulator?

SFS member companies have been looking to address the issue of ‘Lift and shift’ for some time and have discussed at length the frustration that the BBC licence fee collected in Scotland spent is less than that of other UK regions. As BBC regulator, OFCOM could look to address the loopholes that currently exist and in turn ensure
regional spends are exactly that. A genuine increase in regional spend gives our companies the growth in income that can go toward investing in skills and new equipment as well as providing more services and making Scotland more attractive to shoot in.

**Talent Development, Skills and Training**

_How can Scotland nurture and retain domestic talent?_

By encouraging more work and that of quality productions happening in Scotland. Talent has historically headed South and at times overseas in order to gain more experience on a wider range of projects and those of a scale that they would not normally have the opportunity to work on in Scotland. We need to make sure that skills are retained in Scotland in order to build a growing and sustainable workforce.

_How can development, skills and training keep pace with the ever changing needs of the industry?_

By engaging with industry businesses and practitioners on a regular basis we can ensure that we are continually up to date and growing our much needed skills base.

_Do Scotland have the requisite level of domestic talent to accommodate an increase in productions coming to the country?_

Scotland does not have the level of talent to deal with an increase in productions currently. More than 2 - 3 large size productions shooting in Scotland leaves us short and is an issue. Skills Development Scotland are currently investigating the skills gaps, however this could be carried out more regularly in order to ascertain that the issue is being addressed. When an increase in productions happen, crew who are less experienced have stepped up perhaps sooner than they may have done as a result of lack of experience which has detrimental results for both crew member and producers.

_Do you feel enough investment is present for the purposes of training specialist skills?_

An investment for training in facilities companies’ staff would be enormously helpful in ensuring that our services are the best that they can be. We want to encourage confidence in the skills that Scotland’s crews and facilities staff have and for there to be no doubt as to the quality of those skills. Further investment in training courses such as the successful ‘Hit The Ground Running’ course run by Linda Fraser and the Screen NETS training with Kay Sheridan would also help students transfer from traditional courses into the industry. Current SFS members have had positive experiences of working alongside the likes of the Screen NETS course. The announcement of the National Film & Television School base in Scotland is encouraging and welcomed. Further investment could help facilities companies to work with training providers in order to deliver courses which encourages a joined up industry.
Infrastructure, Intelligence and Maximising Benefit to Scotland

*What improvements to the current studio requirements are needed? How might this be achieved?*

There is no doubt that we are in need of an international class studio. This is now urgent. This can be done by establishing swift decisions from planning to development ensuring we do not miss out any longer.

*What kind of facilities are needed and where?*

A wide variety of spaces are required. We need to be able to compete on the world stage in the provision of space to accommodate large scale feature films and high end drama as well as smaller spaces to facilitate smaller budget projects. Space for facilities companies, parking, as well as production office space would be required.

SFS has identified a lack of data from industry facilities services and is working to address this.

We are happy to forward this information when collated.