

## WRITTEN EVIDENCE SUBMISSION

Submitted to: Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

Subject: Safety Skills Development in Scotland's Screen and Broadcast Sector

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### Why Safety Skills Matter for Scotland's Screen Sector

Film and TV productions present significant safety risks to workers, with recent high-profile incidents including a fatal shooting on the set of *Rust* (2021), life-altering injuries suffered by Andrew Flintoff while filming BBC's *Top Gear* (2022), and a collision involving a camera operator which paused the Glasgow-based production of *The Flash* (2021).

As Scotland seeks to expand its screen workforce and build a globally competitive sector, there is an urgent need to prioritise safety as a core skill essential to establishing workforce resilience, economic growth, and industry reputation.

### Evidence of Systemic Skills Gaps

Traditional safety training is important in setting compliance standards, but it is focused on box ticking and is not sufficient to address the multiple challenges currently facing the sector. Industry data highlights pervasive safety concerns and skills gaps across the screen workforce and research indicates the benefits of innovative approaches to safety training:

- **76% of performers** report having been injured at work, leading to recommendations for industry-wide investment in safety skills development.<sup>1</sup>
- **75% of UK crew** report that their own safety, or that of a colleague, has been compromised at work, with **over two-thirds** expressing concern about people being promoted without adequate safety experience or qualifications.<sup>2</sup>
- **50% of screen workers** are on freelance contracts yet safety incident data is drawn from full-time employees, resulting in systemic under-reporting.<sup>3</sup>
- **37% of freelancers** plan to leave the industry in the next five years if working conditions do not improve.<sup>4</sup>
- **85% of participants** in the *Set Ready Safety* immersive training pilot experienced a significant shift in their understanding of safety on set, with **100% recommendation** for wider rollout.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Injury Prevention Consultancy, [The Show Must Go on Safely](#), March 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Bectu and Mark Milsome Foundation, [Crew Safety Survey](#), November 2023.

<sup>3</sup> [BFI Statistical Yearbook](#), 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Screen Industry Voices, [Freelancers: Building Workforce Resilience for Growth in the UK Film and Television Industries](#), April 2025.

<sup>5</sup> University of Glasgow, [UofG launches next-generation safety training to transform culture in UK screen industry](#), June 2025.

## Key Recommendations

### Embed Enhanced Safety Skills in Scotland's Talent Pipelines

As demand for content rises and the freelance workforce expands, it is imperative that enhanced safety skills are integrated across:

- FE/HE film and TV courses
- Apprenticeships and early-career schemes
- Employer-led inductions
- Management and stepping up programmes

### Invest in Immersive and Experiential Safety Training

The application of immersive simulations and actor-led scenarios draws on proven models in other high-risk sectors in which experiential safety training is delivered in a controlled environment:

- Energy
- Construction
- Healthcare
- Emergency Services

### Tie Public Funding to Demonstrable Safety Culture

Productions in receipt of public funding and investment should be required to demonstrate robust safety culture and protocols in the form of:

- Safety skills development plans
- Evidence of accredited safety training and qualified safety advisors
- Robust communication, monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- Transparent sharing of learnings on project completion

## Conclusion

Scotland's screen sector contributed £627.1m to the economy in 2021 and there is an ambition to increase this to £1bn GVA by 2030/31 with a target of 20,000 FTE crew.<sup>6</sup> Achieving this growth depends on a skilled, resilient and safe workforce capable of working in complex, high-pressure and fast-paced environments. The evidence demonstrates that safety skills are not a peripheral concern but a structural requirement for sustainable sector expansion and the recommendations set out above provide a coherent pathway for embedding a safety-first culture across the screen and broadcast sector.

## Contact Information

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<sup>6</sup> Screen Scotland, [Strategy to 2030/31](https://www.screen-scotland.org.uk/strategy-to-2030-31), March 2024.