



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

Thursday 10 May 2018

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Thursday 10 May 2018

CONTENTS

SCREEN SECTOR	Col. 1
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CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
13th Meeting 2018, Session 5

CONVENER

*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

*Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con)

*Mairi Gougeon (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)

*Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green)

*Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)

*Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP)

*Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Graham Fitzpatrick (Screen Education Edinburgh)

Linda Fraser (Hit the Ground Running)

Alison Goring (National Film and Television School)

Seetha Kumar (Creative Skillset)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Peter McGrath

LOCATION

The Adam Smith Room (CR5)

Scottish Parliament

Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

Thursday 10 May 2018

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:05]

Screen Sector

The Convener (Joan McAlpine): Good morning and welcome to the 13th meeting in 2018 of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee. I remind members and the public to turn off mobile phones. Any members using electronic devices to access committee papers should ensure that they are switched to silent. We have received apologies from Tavish Scott MSP.

Our main item of business today is an evidence session as part of the committee's inquiry into Scotland's screen sector. We will focus today on the development of skills and training. I welcome our witnesses, who are Seetha Kumar, chief executive of Creative Skillset; Graham Fitzpatrick, creative development officer with Screen Education Edinburgh; Alison Goring, the Scotland head of the National Film and Television School; and Linda Fraser from the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union's vision project and the drama training programme hit the ground running.

I will start by asking a general question. The focus for our inquiry came from the screen sector leadership group report, which was commissioned in response to parliamentary concern about the screen sector and which is being used as the basis for building the new screen unit. That report identified a number of issues in the area of skills and training and asked for a review of skills and training, which is now under way. What should the review's priorities be? What are we doing well at the moment in skills and training in the screen sector in Scotland and what could we do better? Basically, what should the review focus on?

Linda Fraser (Hit the Ground Running): Where to start? I would like the priority to be starting at the start, because what we lack in Scotland for our sector is a basic strategy from which we can get our ducks in a row, line up the chain of provision that currently exists and fill any gaps. We have some great initiatives that work really well, but we are not connected and the funding is not connected. The convener mentioned priorities, but the priority for me is the basics, as a starting point.

Alison Goring (National Film and Television School): I agree with Linda Fraser. In the past, individual training projects have been good, but the provision has tended to be funding led, so only the priorities at a certain time have been funded. Those priorities are sometimes not necessarily Scotland's priorities but priorities that have been set elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I also think that we have been quite fragmented and not consistent. Because funding has been such an issue, something that has worked well one year will just not be available the next year. The issue is structural. We need to have a far more strategic approach and far more consistency.

The Convener: You referred to Scotland's priorities. Are there specific priorities that are more important in Scotland than elsewhere in the UK?

Alison Goring: As the screen sector leadership group pointed out in its evidence, one of the problems that we have is that our landscape can change very quickly. We can have a year with a lot of productions that means that suddenly there will not be enough people to fill a certain crew position. However, that can change very quickly. Our priorities for specific roles are not the issue, because it is more about the long term. We can train people for a particular role that is a particular need this year, but it might not be such an issue next year. I do not know whether that makes sense.

Graham Fitzpatrick (Screen Education Edinburgh): I agree with Alison Goring and Linda Fraser that it is a structural issue. Some great work has been going on and there are some great schemes, particularly hit the ground running. The NFTS is a welcome development.

My organisation belongs to the film access network Scotland, which includes partners in Glasgow, GMAC Film, and the Station House Media Unit in Aberdeen. We all work with young people at school age up to late teens. We receive funding such as cashback for creativity, which is focused on the Scottish index of multiple deprivation areas and reaching low-income youngsters. The aim is diversion from crime and to use creativity to build confidence and skills.

Our work goes through the whole pipeline up to the British Film Institute film academy, which is a great scheme focused on 16 to 19-year-olds. Another scheme is moving image arts, which we have run for three years and is focused on a Northern Ireland A level. It is an out-of-school, school-year-long qualification that is focused on all aspects of film—technical aspects, film history and film theory.

The big issue is that, at the end of the pipeline, we have prepared people for college and university, and they tend to be lost in that system

for three or four years. They come out at the other end in high numbers, and there are not many opportunities for them. Not every young person that we deal with should go down the academic route. Some are more suited to apprenticeships—modern apprenticeships and foundation apprenticeships for the younger age group, which we are starting to look at.

A lot of good work is happening and we have all worked with thousands of youngsters across the country over the past five or six years. There are a lot of talented youngsters who want to continue and work right across the creative industries of film, television and advertisements. For example, a team is filming at the Parliament today. We need to match all those skills with where the individuals can go and where the pipeline can take them next. It has not been completely connected. That is not the fault of all the great people working in the area. Everyone is working hard, but they are full-on with their own work. Someone is needed at a more strategic level to link everything up and take all that talent through.

The Convener: The point about apprenticeships has been made by many of the industry professionals from whom the committee has taken evidence. There is a suggestion that there are a lot of people doing media studies at university but not enough people training in the many practical skills that the film industry needs.

Seetha Kumar, do you have some general comments about our strengths and weaknesses?

Seetha Kumar (Creative Skillset): Before we even talk about skills, we need cohesiveness among three things. The first is infrastructure, and I know that Scotland has the Pentland studios coming, which is great. Secondly, there is content. Although inward investment is important, on-going content needs to be developed within any nation state. If that does not happen, there is no baseline from which to continually upskill people, and to act like a solid nursery slope. Thirdly, cohesiveness has to be considered across all screen types. Rather than look at film, I would look at film, television—and all the genres within it, such as children's TV, which is a brilliant nursery slope—and games. That way, creativity can truly flourish and people can move around between different careers. We need that tripartite and cohesive approach, and a genuine think about how to attract inward investment.

Alison Goring made the point about fluctuations in demand, which we all have to deal with, so there has to be a responsive business intelligence system on skills that understands the baseline of what is needed but can respond to changing shifts in need. People's jobs are dependent on responding to what is needed at a moment in time. Different genres can suddenly become very

popular. Science fiction is popular one moment, then there can be a lot of work on royal and regency subjects. People have to be able to upskill and meet the needs. That way, people's talent, dreams and aspirations can be fulfilled.

In order to do that, we have to ensure that the education that exists is truly relevant to the changing needs of our sector—Graham Fitzpatrick made the point well. Some of that is very practical and practitioner based, and apprenticeships lend themselves to that. Some of it needs to be responsive, because consumer patterns are changing and digital work flows are changing. It is about how we collaborate to make sure that excellence remains excellence. There is a lot of work to be done, but the first step is to get the tripartite approach to work seamlessly.

09:15

The Convener: Is the screen unit in a good position to bring together that fragmentation? Should it be the organisation that tackles that?

Alison Goring: Yes, it should be. It is best placed to do that because, apart from anything else, it cuts across all the different elements that make up our industry. There needs to be a holistic approach. We should not be seen in isolation, because we are part of the whole.

Linda Fraser: I welcome the proposals for the screen unit. Training and skills have to sit with it, so that any strategies that are put in place are in balance with the aspiration for growing the industry at the same rate.

Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): As you understand it at the moment, do you think that the screen unit will have the capacity to take a lead on skills and training in the sector? Are the resources that are being announced for the screen unit sufficient and will you get the share that you require?

Linda Fraser: There has not been enough detail in what has been released so far for me to be able to comment on that. Some figures have been published, but I do not know the basis on which they were reached or the plans that sit behind them. I understand that an individual who works in the screen unit will have responsibility for skills development, but I have no more information about their remit at this stage.

Seetha Kumar: I echo those comments. I do not know too much, although I have met Scott Donaldson and David Martin.

Reflecting on the changes that my organisation has been through during the past two years—we are just coming out of a bit of a turbulent time—we are entirely industry led and we work with practitioners. Our board is entirely industry led and

our councils are entirely practitioner led, so we are always close to the coalface. If there is a way of enabling that within the screen unit, it would be incredibly helpful and would enable its success.

Claire Baker: I do not know whether you have had a chance to look at it, but the screen unit published a lengthy document, which includes 12 action points, three of which relate to skills and training. Seetha Kumar talked about her organisation being industry led and close to practitioners. As a group, did you have input into the 12 action points? If you have had the chance to study them, what do you think of the three that focus on your sector?

Alison Goring: I did not have any input into the document. From where I am with continuing professional development and practice-based training, action point 7 is the most relevant. There is not a lot of detail about the plan but, as Seetha Kumar said, it absolutely has to be industry based. Whatever the strategy is, it has to come from the industry and be responsive to its needs. Although there is nothing wrong with what I see in action point 7, it is quite vague. It does not talk about work-based placement training at any level. It talks about short course provision and progression of the existing workforce, but it does not talk about how we might do that. It feels a bit vague.

Claire Baker: You might have seen that the committee published an interim report at the weekend in which we argue that there should be an independent stand-alone unit. One reason for that is to do with concerns about the role of the public sector agencies on the board. We are not convinced that Creative Scotland is the best place for the screen unit to sit. Does the panel have any thoughts on that? The issue came to my mind because you were stressing the importance of the practitioners in understanding the industry. We have concerns that the current model does not allow that to the extent that is needed.

Linda Fraser: I welcome the interim report whole-heartedly. There has been a lot of talk of fragmentation in our industry as a whole, and for training it feels as though we have fragments of fragments. Hit the ground running is an independent training provider, and I was invited to become a job-share partner in a role with BECTU—the union—delivering short courses and continuing professional development initiatives supported by the BBC. It has been very difficult to maintain any continuity of delivery provision for the area that I work in, which is specifically with people who want to work in entry-level positions in film and television drama.

The training came about because I found that there was a real gap for people coming out of education or from other routes—they had no routes into our industry. It is very precarious at the

start, and very difficult for people to get an opportunity to work in the industry unless they already know somebody who works in it. To deliver that training over the past 10 years, we have had to be agile in securing funding sources. We have had funding from Creative Skillset, and for the past seven years we have mainly been funded by BECTU vision, which is funded from the Scottish union learning fund, thanks to the Scottish Government. We have had other funding sources as well, with Creative Scotland contributing at times.

I generally have between 10 and 15 partners on board to fund our courses, and we do not do very much. We run an average of three training courses a year, but it is a vital route for a lot of people to get into the industry. It should not be that difficult. It is very industry connected. We have industry practitioners on every course that we run and we are well known in the industry; over the years, the course has been recognised and become a useful addition to people's CVs. Such initiatives should be part of an infrastructure that provides pathways.

As Graham Fitzpatrick pointed out, a lot of good things are happening, but we need some infrastructure that lets us connect them better and support them in the longer term. We have run other successful training initiatives over the years, but there is no consistency in the funds available to let us repeat them. We do great work on building channels and reaching out to people who have not otherwise considered working in the industry, but we lose momentum when we finish a project and there is nowhere to go for the funding to repeat it and build on it. Most of what we have done in the past 10 years has been pilots.

Alison Goring: Following on from the talk about priorities, what we need is consistency. Programmes of the kind that Linda Fraser has been running need to happen again and again. We need to train people continually, so that the pipeline is constantly flowing. As Linda said, we have very successful pilots and then there is nothing. That lack of consistency has been the problem.

Graham Fitzpatrick: It is exactly the same in education and the out-of-school sector. We do some really great work with young adults, but most of our life is about funding, reporting and outcomes. That is all good valid stuff, but in our area the big priority is diversity and inclusion. It can take three or four years to turn a young person around or to give someone from a black and minority ethnic community the confidence to come into the creative world. It is about supporting them.

A really great scheme that SEE collaborated on with GMAC Film and SHMU was the FIND—film

industry network and diversity—scheme, which is mentioned in the committee's briefing paper. However, there was only one year's funding. We had just started to make all the connections with industry and to put people from the priority groups into the industry. Those groups were people on low incomes, young people living in rural areas—along with Eden Court, we work with people in the Highlands who are very isolated, which involves a different way of working, but they still want to work in the industry—young women, people with disabilities and people from the black and minority ethnic community. It took a full year with 12 young people to get them ready, and they are all now continuing in the industry, but the funding then ran out. One-off funding came from the Scottish Government through the film skills fund, but that funding was not repeated.

Great work is being done but, year on year, organisations are struggling just to survive. For example, I run an organisation and work only three days a week, because we do not have the infrastructure to keep going with a full-time team. There needs to be a serious look across the board to see what works, and then we need to support that.

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): I want to ask Seetha Kumar about Creative Skillset and the training levy. You collect the training levy from organisations that create productions over a certain budget. How is that levy distributed to the best effect? How do you represent Scotland with that money?

Seetha Kumar: On the training levy, I go back to my point about everything that we do being industry led. I will use the high-end TV levy as an example. All levies work in fairly similar ways, but I think that the high-end TV levy collects the maximum amount at the moment, and the film levy comes second. The levy is voluntary and linked to the tax credit. We collect the levy, and there is also a council, which is entirely made up of industry representatives and rotates its membership. We look at skills shortages across the UK and where the pain points are.

The truth is that business is booming so much just now that, even with the money that we have, we cannot keep up. There is not enough money; that is a fact. Everyone is talking about shortages and gaps. With the money that we have, we try to work UK-wide and look at skills gaps and shortages to try to meet the skills needs.

In Scotland, we have done quite a lot of work with the trainee finder. We ensure that we come up here to recruit—that is my understanding from talking to my film and high-end TV teams. We try to ensure that trainees work across the UK. The industry is UK-wide, so we need to work

collaboratively across the UK. That is how the training levy works.

There are other initiatives with the training levy, such as the make a move initiative. We have had significant success with one particular Scottish candidate. I do not want to mention her name, but I think that she is working on "Les Misérables". She has moved up to become a producer.

We have different initiatives, all of which try to take a strategic look at where the skills gaps and shortages are, which is what committee members have talked about. What should the interventions be? Every year, we have a strategy setting out where we need to intervene, and why, and what impact that would have. Does what we do work? If it does not, we need to know. We need to respond with agility to what the needs are.

Rachael Hamilton: Is there a Scottish pot of funding? If there is, do you know what the allocation is?

Seetha Kumar: It does not work like that. We look across all the skills needs. We do not disaggregate the money and look at what money goes to Scotland, because productions work everywhere. We tend to collect the money and then ensure that we distribute it where there are gaps. We do that with Northern Ireland, Wales and all the different regions.

Graham Fitzpatrick: The committee might not be aware of this, but Screen Education Edinburgh has been given money from the high-end TV levy to work alongside Linda Fraser on a hit the ground running event. We will take a group of six young people who are living in poverty and, at the end of their cashback journey with us, they will do a special hit the ground running event at the end of this year, which will move them into high-end TV. Funding for such events is very welcome, but it comes randomly.

Rachael Hamilton: I have a wider question for the panel. Is it easy to apply for the levy funding that is allocated to Scotland?

Linda Fraser: Creative Skillset has different strands and approaches to its funding. As far as I am aware, at the moment no funds are available to apply for. As Seetha Kumar said, Creative Skillset identifies specific areas and asks for applications from strategic partners. Creative Skillset uses a variety of approaches, to which we respond in order to secure further funds.

09:30

One of our challenges as training providers is Creative Skillset's model for distributing the funds based on skills shortages. It is kind of too late by that point, because when there are skills shortages in areas such as first assistant directors,

production accountants or other higher positions—I speak specifically from my experience in film and television drama—the change is not going to happen overnight. We would like to have an infrastructure in Scotland that allows us to train everybody all the time. We need a strategy that identifies all the different areas, because such a diversity in skills is required to make a television drama. We need channels and pathways for new entrants to receive quality training and support to grow that base, so that we do not have the consistent skills shortages that we face at the moment.

Forty years ago, Scotland led the way in designing a model for on-the-job training called the NETS programme—the new entrants training scheme. It has been delivered on and off for the past 40 years, subject to funding being available, and it is widely respected in the industry as a great model for quality, for reaching out to people to apply for it and giving them an opportunity to work across all the different areas of film and television.

That is key for us in Scotland, where practitioners work on both film and television drama, whereas in other areas of the UK, they might specialise. A lot of the funding opportunities that come via Creative Skillset's different funding pots are specifically only for film or only for television drama, and that can be difficult for training providers, because we need to apply for funding specifically to train people for film but we need our new entrants to work across film and television in order to be best prepared for life working as a freelancer in Scotland.

Rachael Hamilton: Are you saying that it would be great if Creative Skillset could widen the criteria so that the applications for funding could cover those skills that are required in the industry overall?

Linda Fraser: I do not know that it is just Creative Skillset's responsibility to do that. My aspiration for the screen unit is that it will be all down to the strategy, which has to come first. There are various different funding pots from Creative Skillset, Creative Scotland and Skills Development Scotland, and the apprenticeship levy is also coming. It would be great to have a skills strategy and then look at the funding sources and perhaps pool them, or find a way of ensuring that each level of intervention is covered and supported. It is easy to ask for more money, more money, more money, but my observation is that we could be working a lot more strategically to ensure that there is no duplication of provision and that instead we have everything covered.

Seetha Kumar: I would like to clarify a couple of things for the committee. I came on board about two and a half years ago, around the time that Creative Skillset lost 80 per cent of our

Government funding. We have been on a path to modernise the organisation, which is entirely industry led, as I said. We now get money from an industry levy on high-end TV and film, and we get a little bit from children's programmes and a small bit of money from non-scripted programmes. Last year, we won the BFI 10-point plan award, which focuses on how to build infrastructure for the future in terms of skills.

In this period, we have refocused our vision and mission to do only screen. In practice, however, because of the source of the money and because it is limited, a lot of what we do is focused on film and high-end TV, and those are the areas of growth. I am well aware that non-scripted programmes, which cover a multitude of genres, are an important nursery slope, and we are working out how to generate income to invest in that big area and support it effectively, because it covers a big bulk of the television schedule. The other area that I am looking at is games.

We have gone through a very challenging period and we are now coming out of that. We now have a coherent strategy and we are trying to work strategically and smartly with partners across the UK.

I would welcome an industry-led Creative Scotland—I say that in the nicest possible way—taking the opportunity to look across the sector and tell us what it has identified, ask what we have identified and see how we can work together to win together. In the end, that would mean success at both the industry level and the individual level.

Mairi Gurgeon (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): The committee has heard evidence that jobs in the screen sector should be more widely promoted. In my experience of school, people are not made fully aware of the sheer breadth of opportunities and the different types of careers that are available. I am interested to hear how the screen unit could do something about that. How do we change that situation and better promote the breadth of roles that are available?

Linda Fraser: Using one-off pots of money, we have done some outreach work, including free-to-attend, open-to-all roadshows around Scotland, with seminars on all the roles that there are in the film and television drama sector. We have done work to try to connect with college and university courses. We find that the focus in further education and higher education means that students come out with a narrow view of being a writer, producer, director or camera operator, when of course there are so many other roles. We have tried to find ways to address the issue, but they have been small, one-off approaches. There are developed models for how that can work.

It has come up in previous committee evidence that there could be a CPD framework for lecturers in FE and HE to enable them to better understand the breadth of the different roles that are available. We have to remember that it is not just about media courses. We require skills from across the board. We have done some work with a careers stall reaching out to FE colleges where we try to encourage people who are studying to be accountants, plasterers or electricians to think about joining our industry. The difficulty is that we cannot guarantee that there will be work. We can struggle to find people. The “Outlander” trainee programme offers trainee placements for electricians, plasterers and painters to try to find a pool of people who will consider working in our industry and transferring their skills. A film education programme would help people to see it as a viable career option.

Alison Goring: We need to start earlier. We need to be in schools. I have been into schools with Into Film to do a talk. It was fantastic. I talked about my previous role in production, so it was very specific. However, it was a one-off—I do not know how many of those talks Into Film manages to deliver.

Just last week I had an email from a media teacher in Falkirk who was keen to connect with the National Film and Television School and get us to come in to talk to the pupils about the possibilities for career opportunities in the industry, the pathways and how the pupils should be preparing for those.

There is a lot of work to be done on engaging with the schools and with parents and careers advisers. Traditionally, parents have tried to keep their kids away from the industry. Although it is still a precarious industry, it is also a precarious world; we live in an environment of zero hours contracts and portfolio careers, so it might be that working in the creative industries and screen sector is not as dangerous as it once might have seemed.

We also need to start much earlier if we want to address diversity.

Graham Fitzpatrick: I echo that. There is a lot of good work in certain parts of the country. There is a lot of good work in Edinburgh because we are heavily funded by the education department and the communities and families department of the City of Edinburgh Council. We have a responsibility to support all the media studies teachers in Edinburgh in their CPD and the classes that they deliver on what the industry is.

The BFI film academy scheme has been brilliant over the past five years. In particular, it is good that the qualification has elements of Creative Skillset’s occupational standards and so on. It involves teaching young people who are aged

between 16 and 19 about what is required in relation to time management, risk assessment and working practices. However, a big part of the scheme, which is also part of the cashback stuff for later years, involves teaching people about all the different roles. There is a hotchpotch—good stuff is happening in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, but provision elsewhere is a bit sketchy.

There is a big issue to do with the qualifications in the school system in Scotland, which was mentioned in the committee papers. Screen Education Edinburgh offers three qualifications, none of which is Scottish. For the more participatory stuff, we run the arts award, which is from Trinity College London—it is an England-based qualification. It is run by a lot of arts organisations up here.

We also run the Northern Irish A-level, which has for the past 20 years been rated the best film qualification in Europe for young people up to school-leaving age. The A-level is really good; it covers all the areas and it focuses on young people being creative. They work in groups but, rather than just doing that, they also make their own content. They do not work just in teams; they do all the roles themselves. The qualification also covers film history and film theory; it is forgotten that film is an art form, too.

A big issue in Scotland is that film is mixed up with literacy. It is valid to learn about the media, including radio and print, but each form is different. Film has been the poor relation for many years. In the school system, students can learn drama, music, art and design, and dance, each of which is treated as a stand-alone creative art form and can be taught only by someone who has studied that subject. However, teachers of English teach film in Scotland. Organisations such as ours do a lot of CPD to try to upskill teachers, but young people are missing out on a lot of elements.

Provision needs to start at primary school. The film unit would have to take the lead, but I say in the same breath that, if it is a stand-alone unit, the Government will have to understand the other elements—all of us in this area who are teaching young people. There are elements in Creative Scotland, for example—there is a creative learning team that deals with young people, and there are the cashback activities. A stand-alone unit could mean that the baby is thrown out with the bath water, unless the Government takes a strategic approach and realises that different interests have pots of money. The committee could talk to education representatives, for example, to help to get that right across the board.

Jackson Carlaw (Eastwood) (Con): You have introduced the subject that I am interested in discussing. I am sorry that Rick Instrell is not here,

as he made a detailed submission on education, which also came up in evidence a fortnight ago. It is a long time since I was at school but, when you referred to teaching about dance, drama, literature and the media, it occurred to me that the idea then was that those subjects had a body of historical work that went back centuries, whereas the body of work in film was more limited. However, we now have a century of world film—an international culture stream is available—that could be as substantially represented in the curriculum as the other art forms are. All the techniques, skills and ways of approaching that combine to make a challenging, significant and relevant curriculum syllabus.

You suggested, as Rick Instrell's submission did, that Scotland is slightly behind and that the conversations that have taken place have not got past the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which has damped down any Government interest in emulating the experience in other parts of the United Kingdom. You have partly addressed this but, in the curriculum, where do you see the parameters of what is relevant?

09:45

My second question relates to "Outlander", which has already been mentioned. We had an opportunity to go and tour the studios, and it was fascinating to see all the different creative skills involved and the departments that have been set up. People who had no previous experience now have specialised experience in carpentry, plaster work, costume and other fields as a commercial function of that production. I saw on Twitter this morning that "Outlander" has just been renewed for another two seasons. If it has brought in £300 million through three seasons, there will possibly be another £300 million going into the Scottish economy.

Long-running series seem to be key to the content aspect, which you talked about earlier. Is that a function of those productions or is there a way of putting the cart before the horse with regard to the curriculum and the way in which you try to build up the skill sets? I think your argument was that you need the content before you can be certain that you will be able to sustain the development of the different skills. Graham, will you comment first, on the academic part?

Graham Fitzpatrick: On the school part, we need to step back from just focusing on the industry and jobs, because there is another aspect to do with health and wellbeing and being creative. As you know, with the changing landscape of jobs and uncertain futures, one of the key factors for young people's learning is creativity skills. Those are at the heart of film making, and so are group work, learning from others and appreciating

others' opinions. We have worked in Polmont prison, where we have had really great experiences with people who have never listened to anybody in their lives suddenly taking that on.

We need to consider film in the broader sense, as an art form. I would argue that it is the most accessed art form by young people today, outside popular music—interestingly, that is not really taught in schools either. Music in schools is kind of stuck in the seventeenth century. It is about the art forms being relevant and about the transferable skills. The rest of it comes later.

We totalled it up the other day, and over the past six years, SEE has worked with about 3,000 young people. A small percentage of them will head into work in the area, but what about the rest? For some, it is about turning their lives around; for some, it is about re-engaging with education; for some, it is just about gaining confidence; and some say, "I like this, but it's a hobby. I like film, but I'm going to study something else." We need to look at it in that broader sense.

Down the years, we have often been asked, "What's the point of training loads of people if there are no jobs?" The argument that I always make in response is, "Why do people have a passion for football?" Why do people start playing football at the age of eight? Why do they play until they cannot walk any more? Why do people coach for free? It is all because of their love of the game and keeping active and healthy. Only a very small percentage of people will play in the Scottish Premiership. It is the same for art forms, because they are about life as well. People are allowed just to appreciate dance, music and so on.

Having said that, it would be great to have a lot more television productions and films. There is a whole other debate once people are in the industry, and a lot of us who are in education are also film makers. People have to be in education to survive. There is a block that prevents people from going from shorts to features, because we have no infrastructure for low-budget features in Scotland. All those things need to be addressed in order to raise the game for everybody.

Jackson Carlaw: Would anybody like to comment on the broader "Outlander" point?

Linda Fraser: If you mean about "Outlander" providing fantastic opportunities to train people in specific skills that we have not had in Scotland, it has been a fantastic vehicle for that. Placement-based or work-based training is widely recognised to be what works best for our industry, but people have to come with certain skill sets to begin with in order to be new entrants to our industry, so it is very helpful to have a stable vehicle for delivery of that training.

Jackson Carlaw: What has happened there is a consequence of existing content and a commercial requirement for those skill sets. We hope that some of the skills are now held by people who will leave “Outlander” and go on to other places in the industry, so they will be available to other productions that come to Scotland. Is the route to such training and development opportunities a function of the content already being here, which then provides the opportunity that creates the skill sets? If so, is there a way to do it the other way round? That is what I am trying to understand.

Alison Goring: It is both. As Seetha Kumar said, we need to have the content so that people can have work-based or placement-based training. “Outlander” is one of the few continuing dramas that we have, and even with that, everyone has to wait to find out whether it will be recommissioned. “River City” is the only continuing drama in the country. We need to have more content—and more content that will be repeated consistently—so that we can build up training, as they have done on “Outlander”. People have moved through the ranks and got full-time jobs there, and indeed elsewhere in the industry. At the same time, we need to build up the workforce so that we can attract more work into Scotland.

Jackson Carlaw: Is that what Pentland and other studio capacity opportunities potentially offer? For that skill set development, what is better—the commissioning of a seven-year international streamed television series, with the certainties that that projects forward, or a major Hollywood production locating in Scotland, out of Pentland, with all the post-production facilities being available there, but as a one-off production, such that we then depend on the next thing coming along? You are almost saying that, at the stage we are at, the continuity aspect is the most beneficial thing that we can achieve.

Alison Goring: I think so, but I would not want to say that we should not have Hollywood productions. I do not really want to choose between the two.

Linda Fraser: From a training point of view, continuity is useful. One-off feature films are much more demanding—they are much more fast-paced and there is much less time for work-based training. The dynamics are different, given the speed at which television is made versus the speed at which films are made. However, that is just from a training point of view. From an industry point of view—

Jackson Carlaw: You need the colour as well.

Linda Fraser: Yes.

Seetha Kumar: We need to have an ecosystem, so we need both. We need continuity,

and “River City” is great because it is a brilliant nursery slope for drama.

Again, it is about deciding whether we want to focus on fiction—on drama in its multitude of forms—or whether we want to break out into post-production including visual effects and animation. Abertay has a thriving games sector. How do we join that to the screen sector? There are people who would like to move across.

Graham Fitzpatrick’s brilliant point about people’s passion for hobbies is so true. It is about people having a love for something when they are little and feeling that their passion can be ignited. At that age, people do not know about jobs, but if they are allowed to nurture their passion, they could end up being a creator on the world stage, and why not?

Jackson Carlaw: Wardpark Studios has four studios that are committed to “Outlander”. Skill sets are being developed, but those studios will not be available for anything else for as long as the programme runs. Is it important that, when Pentland Studios has a seven-shed studio capacity, not all seven studios are given over to long-term continuity projects, in the sense of the mix of business that they develop? Although we should ensure that there is such activity, which is healthy, there is a balance to be struck between that and the capacity for big feature films to come in. We should not find ourselves in a situation where we have built something new but, for example, an American series has come in and monopolised all the capacity—or would that be a nice problem to have?

Alison Goring: Yes, it would be.

Linda Fraser: It is not just about the studios; the commissioning conversation is important, too. Returning Scottish series provide a great training ground. I worked on “Taggart” for many years, and we miss the opportunities that it gave a lot of crew, writers, directors and actors.

The Convener: How will the National Film and Television School help to change the landscape? Can you share any of your plans with us?

Alison Goring: Yes. We had our first course last week, which was on documentary filming, so the doors are officially open. We have not touched on this so far, but the film school will offer a broad range of courses on film, television, drama and documentary filming, as well as on the technical and editorial aspects of production and eventually, I hope, games.

Thinking back to the conversations that we have been having about funding, consistency and priorities, I believe we are in a very good position because we are not dependent on funding in the same way that other training providers are, so we

can provide whatever the industry wants as long as there is demand for it and we can develop and deliver it. Also, we can do that consistently—if we do a successful course this year, we can run it again in six months' or a year's time. I hope that that will make a real difference. Once we have gone through our first year and seen how the courses have been received, what the demand is and what the response is, we will be able to work out what the key things are that people will want again and again.

We know that we will be delivering some of the courses that they do at Beaconsfield, because those are courses that people want. People will now be able to do them in Scotland and will not have to travel down to Beaconsfield. However, we will also be developing local content for Scotland. We already have plans. We are doing some art department courses, including a five-day introduction to the art department. It is likely to be aimed at art school graduates and possibly architecture graduates and people who have worked in graphics, and it will be high level in terms of the quality and the detail. It will not be a general introduction; it will be quite specific. People who do such a course will then be well placed to go in as a trainee or an assistant. I would like to develop that idea for different departments so that we have a raft of introductory courses as well as the other high-level stuff that we are going to do.

The Convener: You will be pleased to hear that the committee wrote a letter in support of the Glasgow Channel 4 bid and we cited the presence of your film and television school as one of Glasgow's many strengths.

Alison Goring: That is fantastic. I hope that, if Channel 4 comes to Glasgow, we will be able to build that partnership.

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I have a question for Seetha Kumar. You mentioned that it took a couple of years to get the transition after your organisation lost the Government funding. When the screen unit is created, what is your anticipated timescale for things to start operating in the way that you would like?

Seetha Kumar: It is difficult to compare the two. I walked into a situation where I lost, as I said, 80 per cent of my funding. At that time, the organisation covered a broad footprint across creatives including advertising, fashion and publishing. We needed to recalibrate, and we decided that we were going to focus on screen. We looked at the reason for that very carefully because, as we have heard, it is a very fragmented sector, but it is also a buoyant sector. It felt as though there was a potential need to do three things really well UK-wide. The first thing is

to be really clear about what the skills gaps and shortages are so that we can be responsive, and to horizon scan and have a clear narrative around screen and screen skills so that there is a coherent narrative across industry and Government, which is really important.

The second thing, which I think we have touched on, is about how we get people to enter the industry. That has two planks—first, how we provide careers information online in a portal, so that there is a wealth of job role mapping along with the outreach that we have touched on, and secondly how we enable people. The point has been made that it takes four to five years for somebody to feel confident that they can navigate what is a portfolio career.

The third thing is about CPD, which is important in our world given the speed of change. I always use the expression “To stand still, you have to learn”, because the world is shifting so fast. The question is how we define relevance.

We went through a really painful period of not having money and recalibrating our strategy and figuring it all out, which took us two years. I hope that, if the screen unit is set up with money, the right leadership and the right remit, although it will take a little bit of time to build up momentum, it will not be as painful as it has been for us, because it should not be.

Stuart McMillan: As others have done, you mentioned that the industry is too fragmented. Given the various organisations and the various strands of the industry, is there an argument not so much for it to downsize, but for a more cohesive approach? Could some of the organisations join together so that they can move forward and be stronger, or is the level of fragmentation fine, albeit that things will be better with the overarching screen unit?

10:00

Alison Goring: It is about bringing people together. It is not about simplifying things by making several groups into one, but it is about communication. Scotland is small enough that we should all know and be able to speak to one another. We are able to do that, so I hope that the screen unit or whoever is responsible for the skills strategy will lead a forum where we can all meet to ensure that we do not duplicate work but are joined up, and where we can talk about best practice. It is more about communication than about streamlining.

Graham Fitzpatrick: I agree.

Seetha Kumar: I agree. It is about partnership.

Stuart McMillan: At an earlier evidence-taking session, Tommy Gormley compared the industry

with the shipbuilding industry. Instead of launching a ship, you launch a film. You have spoken about the various other trades that are required, such as joiners, electricians and plasterers. I had a similar discussion last week in one of the schools in my constituency in relation to the Scottish Football Association cashback scheme. Not everyone will be a footballer and not everyone will be an actor, but we need to think about everything else that is behind them.

Alison Goring touched on careers advice and continuing professional development. What would you all like to happen to try to get the message over and encourage parents, schools and teachers that there is a wider aspect to the industry and that it is not solely about the people who perform in front of the cameras?

Alison Goring: It is about going into schools and forming relationships with careers advisers so that, when a pupil talks about becoming an electrician, the adviser knows that one of the places that they could do that job is in the screen sector. The same goes for accountants and all the other transferable jobs that we have talked about. We need to get across the wealth of jobs that exist, which Mairi Gougeon touched on. We are not just directors, writers, producers and cinematographers. Those of us who have worked in production have had lots of other jobs and found them really fulfilling as careers.

Seetha Kumar: On our website, which we are overhauling to make it more intuitive, we have job role mapping for certain areas. We have a little bit on the high end, and we have something that shows the visual effects family across production. We want to ensure that we map the range of job roles across the screen industry in a simple way so that someone who has never been in our sector and does not understand it can understand how it might work and then delve if they want to. There are different levels of curiosity. That is important because it means that we have somewhere to point to.

I agree with the points that Linda Fraser and Alison Goring made about outreach. We need to keep communicating at all levels. Into Film does a lot of work in schools, but there are other organisations. We also need to talk to careers advisers. We must enable people to realise the wealth of jobs that exist and then to have confidence about applying.

Many people think that the sector is not for them because, for years, it has been really hard to get into and has felt as if it is all word of mouth. There is now genuinely a recognition everywhere that we need to widen access and have a broad skilled workforce. That is a good thing, but the question is how we convey that and enable people to truly

believe that it could be for them. That will be a lot of work.

Stuart McMillan: It also sounds as though that will be quite expensive. How much additional resource do you anticipate will be required to do it?

Linda Fraser: It needs to be proportionate to the growth strategy for our industry. The leadership of the screen unit can play a role in ensuring that whatever investment is made in education and training is proportionate to the ambition elsewhere for seeking inward investment. A proportionate long-term strategy is required for growth.

Richard Lochhead (Moray) (SNP): I am trying to get a handle on the extent to which generating the supply of skills would attract productions to come to Scotland, which is different from hoping that productions come to Scotland to help us to train people up. Could you comment on that?

On a related point, I assume that, 20 or 30 years ago, computer-generated imagery was the big thing, and that the countries that had people trained in that would attract big productions. Given the fast development of the industry, are we thinking about the skills that will be required in 10 years' time, as technology advances, and the ways in which we can get ahead of the game so that we can have those skills available and can therefore attract productions that are expanding across the world?

Linda Fraser: On the first part of your question, we need to have the productions in order to train the people. The availability of trained crew will certainly encourage productions to base themselves here but, in order to get to that point, we have to have the productions on which people can be trained. Therefore, there has to be a strategic growth strategy.

Having traineeship and apprenticeship systems that produce trainees who can be used on productions is an incentive that we can offer to indigenous productions and productions that come here. However, we need to have in place the infrastructure that will enable us to do the outreach and select the trainees so that we can have them ready for productions when productions need them. Generally, productions with training opportunities appear at quite short notice.

Alison Goring: On the subject of changing technology, the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield does a lot of work on the cutting-edge areas. I hope that we will benefit from that and that we will be able to deliver whatever is required.

Richard Lochhead: Should that not be part of the strategy? You have also said that we do not

have a strategy in Scotland, which is why it is difficult to grasp why decisions are taken and who is taking them. If we want Scotland to be ahead of the rest of the world when it comes to screen productions in 15 or 20 years' time, we have to think now about the skills that will be required at that point and start training people in those skills, just as we would in relation to hospital surgery or information and communications technology. Who is taking those decisions about what is happening in Scotland? Is anything happening? Further, what are the skills that will get Scotland ahead of the game in, say, 10 years?

Alison Goring: I do not really know, but I suspect that the necessary skills will be those around augmented reality, virtual reality and immersive narrative. That is the kind of area that we are looking at. I know that, down at UWS, people are looking at doing work on that.

Richard Lochhead: Yes, but what is happening in Scotland?

Alison Goring: The UWS is the University of the West of Scotland, down in Ayrshire.

Richard Lochhead: Sorry. So work is happening on those skills.

Alison Goring: I believe so, yes, but we need to broaden it out. However, to a huge extent, the skills that we require now will continue to be used. Even in the next 15 or 20 years, the industry is not going to change so much that those skills will not be needed. Even though there will be technological advances in that timeframe—as you say, 20 years ago the big thing was CGI—we will probably be able to respond to those quite quickly. Once we have the intelligence that enables us to see what is going to happen next, we will be able to do that.

Linda Fraser: In past years, we have lacked specific data about the landscape of the industry in Scotland on which decisions can be made locally. Creative Skillset does skills surveys, and there are quite a few other surveys that come around from time to time, but, again, we lack the strategic consistency of an approach for collecting data that would enable us to get an overall picture of the landscape in Scotland. Generally, funding is based on the figures that Creative Skillset collates in relation to identified skills gaps in the UK, but that is not necessarily reflective of the situation in Scotland.

We therefore welcome the survey that is being done by Skills Development Scotland and Creative Scotland, but we very much hope that it will become an annual survey that is embedded in the industry. We are promoting the survey through hit the ground running and BECTU to get it out to freelancers and try to get a realistic picture of the landscape—a data or evidence-based picture—on

which decisions can be based. I know from experience that people at certain grades and in certain parts of the industry respond to surveys, but a lot of the freelance crew do not, because they work very long hours and that is not their thing.

Work has to be done to reach out to get responses so that the strategy that is built on the data is not biased towards just the people who responded. Further, the data that is collected should be available to the sector, so that we do not constantly have different surveys of the same people.

The Convener: Claire Baker has a supplementary on that.

Claire Baker: Linda Fraser's comments on Skills Development Scotland are helpful. Skills Development Scotland is one of the bodies that sits on the board, and we took evidence from it along with Scottish Enterprise and other key partners. I am struck by the fact that, at the beginning, you talked about a lack of strategy and fragmentation. Where does Skills Development Scotland sit in that? Is the issue not partly its responsibility? I appreciate that it is carrying out a survey and that some activities are taking place, but it is the key partner representing your sector in the new screen unit. Are you confident that it understands the sector well enough to carry out that role? What is your experience of working with it to this point?

Alison Goring: I think that Skills Development Scotland understands the sector. David Martin understands the sector and has a lot of experience in it and in skills development. However, my experience in the past few years has been that SDS's focus has been primarily on apprenticeships and therefore there has not been space for a wider discussion about skills development.

One issue that I am quite interested in is the flexible fund that was mentioned in the Government's consultation on apprenticeships. As far as I understand it, that is now available to employers, but it is for training that is delivered through further and higher education. I wonder whether that flexible fund could be more flexible so that it is more relevant to our sector, because if employers in our sector are looking for training, it will probably not be from colleges and universities.

I am sorry that that is a slightly separate point about apprenticeships. Until latterly and the discussion on the screen unit, it has felt as though SDS's focus has been firmly on apprenticeships. I do not know whether that is other people's experience.

Graham Fitzpatrick: We have not had a lot of dealings with SDS in our sector. Over the past few

weeks, we have been talking about the access sector, which we belong to, taking on foundation apprenticeships so that we would host young people and support them through their learning. That would maybe be younger people who are not ready for the college experience or for whom there are question marks around whether college is the best place for them. Because of the way that we work, we can work intensively with small groups.

There are more discussions to have on that. That is the main way in which we have been dealing with SDS, although at times we have done the certificate of work readiness with certain young people. That is our experience.

Seetha Kumar: I will answer that in two parts. We have worked with SDS on modern apprenticeships over the past two years. However, I want to focus on Linda Fraser's point about gathering skills data. We have started conversations with SDS and I hope that we can work collaboratively. Linda Fraser is absolutely right about the Creative Skillset censuses in the past. In my view—I would say this, because I come from a different world—those were not as business intelligent as they might have been. They were not responsive. Doing a survey once a year does not really show the pain points in a sharp and detailed way.

Our sector in general does not have an agreed approach to the lexicon—or taxonomy—of different job roles and classifications. The central Government data does not have that. In this new guise, we are trying to work in collaboration, so that when we look at job roles or skill shortages we can go into granular detail and the approach can be consistent across the UK—given that the industry is global.

Where SDS could be brilliant is in providing more detailed place-based data and sharing that when we do horizon scanning. The more collaborative that we are, the more it helps everyone. I would welcome a collaborative approach in which we know what SDS is doing, it knows what we are doing, and we share information and work together. If we do that, everybody wins.

10:15

The Convener: We have talked about SDS delivering apprenticeships. The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council has agreed to support a single network of colleges and universities across the creative industries to focus on the sector's needs. Are you aware of that proposal? If you are, what are your views on it?

Linda Fraser: I am aware of it, and it is a good thing.

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): I want to come back to the points about school education. The committee was impressed by the approach taken in Northern Ireland, both when we were on our visit over there and when it has come up in written and oral evidence over the last few weeks. There are several key differences in Northern Ireland, which has a thriving industry. It has far smaller population, and it is far easier to get around geographically.

Northern Ireland has taken a school-by-school approach: the industry has been able to work with individual schools to develop the culture and appreciation for the subject. It would be much more challenging to take that approach in Scotland, if we wanted to get round everywhere, and it would seem that making the approach through local authorities and Education Scotland would be more effective in getting that overall reach. Who is ultimately responsible for that?

So far in Scotland, within the industry, individuals and organisations have taken the initiative and tried to reach as many schools as they can, but there is no overarching strategy and responsibility, such as that which would come from a public body—I presume—to ensure that that approach is taken in every education authority. Who should take the lead on that?

Graham Fitzpatrick: That would be the education team in the screen unit—after the change in the organisation it will be whoever is in charge of education. Historically, going back to the days of Scottish Screen, there was a preference for going down the Northern Ireland route, but that was not taken up by the Government, Education Scotland or the Scottish Qualifications Authority. The industry body has been saying the whole time that that is what we need, but the education bodies have said that it is not. There is a kind of logjam that you guys might need to sort out.

The approach in Northern Ireland is based on more than just the individual schools, because it goes across the entire country and everyone takes up moving image arts. We ran that for three years. Our tutor team go over to Northern Ireland once a year, catch up for two days of training and catch up with the teachers that are delivering the programme. It is sad that that will end next month and we will not be able to run it again because of the wider set up in Creative Scotland. It is not the film team, but wider Creative Scotland that does not see its role as funding qualifications. However, we were using that approach beyond school age to help young people who really needed it, or who came from more challenging backgrounds, to progress into the industry or into university.

Overall, that will be the responsibility of the screen unit.

Ross Greer: On your point about the overall body of Creative Scotland not seeing the opportunity, is it your hope that the screen unit will revisit that?

Graham Fitzpatrick: I hope so. It would be a on a Scotland-wide basis. This year we have supported that approach in Eden Court in Inverness. It is quite sad that it will run in Inverness for a year and then stop. As I said, there is a hotch-potch of things that are happening.

It is important that the screen unit works with us to work with schools and education departments. We are lucky in Edinburgh, and the work there is strong because we are in agreement with and very much part of the education department, as we are heavily funded by it. Elsewhere there is a lot of work to be done.

Ross Greer: On a different note, looking at public service broadcasters, the BBC's responsibility—its public service—is to do more than just create entertaining content. There is a responsibility to create in-work opportunities to develop the industry overall. That seems to have happened quite successfully in the industry in Wales off the back of what spun out of "Dr Who" and "Torchwood". Does the BBC in Scotland have a clear sense of its responsibility to the wider industry and its responsibility for workforce development?

Alison Goring: I think that it does. It comes back to content. I think that the BBC understands that. Certainly, it has supported the drama training programme that Linda Fraser is running and which I used to run. However, it comes back to the programmes: we need the programmes for people to get that workplace experience on. I hope that with the investment and the new BBC channel, those opportunities will be there.

The Convener: Graham, you said that wider Creative Scotland did not understand the programme that you were running with Northern Ireland. What kind of conversations did you have with Creative Scotland around that? Presumably, it funded the programme at one point and then it changed its mind. Can you give us more detail about it?

Graham Fitzpatrick: The person who used to run the programme left back in October. Once the funding came through, we were asked to a meeting and informed that Creative Scotland was funding the programme for this year. It was the first time that Creative Scotland directly funded the programme. In the previous two years, the programme was funded by Scottish film education, which included a bit of money from BFI and money from Creative Scotland. It was a pilot and its role was to try out giving as much CPD as possible to teachers in Scotland in clusters.

The view of wider Creative Scotland was, "We'll fund the programme for this one year, but that is it, because it is not our role." The view of Creative Scotland was that the programme is to do with school, further education and higher education—it is linked to doing qualifications and so on. However, for a lot of the young people we work with, some of their only qualifications are with us, in film. We work with kids who have been in and out of school, kids who have been in care, and others who just need that qualification to get them towards film school at Edinburgh Napier University and so on.

It is a great programme. It would be worth while for it to be put in the Scottish curriculum and supported properly with the kind of infrastructure that Northern Ireland has. Over there, there are organisations that are similar to ours—there is the Nerve Centre organisation, which has one centre in Derry and another in Belfast. They support the infrastructure of moving image arts across Northern Ireland.

The Convener: And that is part of Northern Ireland Screen's remit.

Graham Fitzpatrick: Yes.

The Convener: Those opportunities have been lost in Inverness. That is another thing that we have touched on in this session—the need to reach out and provide training and opportunities right across Scotland.

I think that Linda Fraser mentioned the new entrants training scheme. She is not the only person to have praised it—we have a lot of written and oral evidence praising that scheme. From the tone of that praise, it sounds almost as though it is something from the past. Can you tell us what its current status is? Why are people talking about it almost as though it is something from the past? Why is it not still happening if everybody agrees that it is so great?

Linda Fraser: People are talking about it in that way because it has been running for such a long time. As far as I am aware, it was the first structured placement-based training programme in the UK. I think that it started in 1979, and it has been through different guises in the 40 years that it has been going. The way in which it has been delivered has changed, but it has the respect of the industry because many people have been through it—I have been through it. It provides a really valuable way into the industry for people who do not have any connections with it. Before that programme, the main way in was to be a family member or neighbour of someone working in the industry.

The last time that the programme was funded was through the screen skills fund, which came through Creative Scotland. There was £1 million

for skills. That was a number of years ago now, and it was delivered for about a year, with only four trainees.

Part of the model is that small numbers of individuals are placed within specific departments, which are identified based on what the industry's need is. It is specifically for drama, mostly, so it is about looking at the granular level and asking: where are the gaps coming up? It is about anticipating those gaps.

The programme has provided a constant stream of high-quality training, and there has been a really high success rate because of the recruitment procedures and the buy-in from the industry to train those individuals. We are suffering from the lack of it now. We have higher-level skills gaps because of the lack of continuity in providing that stream.

We are not a big industry. We can make interventions in very specific areas. We would struggle with a big increase in the volume of new entrants who were looking to work in the industry, in terms of our capacity to accommodate them. The new entrants programme is responsive to the needs of the industry but there was no repeat funding for the screen skills fund, and it is an expensive programme to run because it is fully funded for the individuals who are being trained.

The Convener: Given that we all agree that we are currently in a boom, I take it that we would all agree that if there was one thing that we could do, funding that programme—which everyone thinks is wonderful—is something that we ought to be doing pronto. I see that all the witnesses are nodding. I thank you all for giving evidence today. It has been absolutely fascinating. We now move into the private session.

10:26

Meeting continued in private until 10:45.

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