

4Skills

Finding, nurturing and growing the UK's next generation of creative talent

February 2024



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Introduction

At Channel 4, we believe it is vital to create opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds to pursue successful and exciting careers in our industry and to invest in talent right across the UK, with a particular focus on the Nations and Regions. That is what 4Skills is all about and since its launch in 2020, we have provided over 93,000 training, development and learning opportunities – 57,000 of them in 2023 alone.

Channel 4 now has a greater presence in the Nations and Regions than ever before. Over the past 12 months, we have expanded our 4Skills portfolio to provide additional support to independent production companies through our Business Boost initiative, as well as enhancing our provision for freelancers.

In 2025, we will go even further; doubling our investment in skills to £10 million. We believe that for many young people, if you can't see it, you can't be it. This report sets out how we are providing proper access to the creative industries to people from all walks of life and playing a key role in supporting the UK's vibrant and innovative creative industries.

Sinéad Rocks,
Managing Director, Nations
and Regions, Channel 4

February 2024



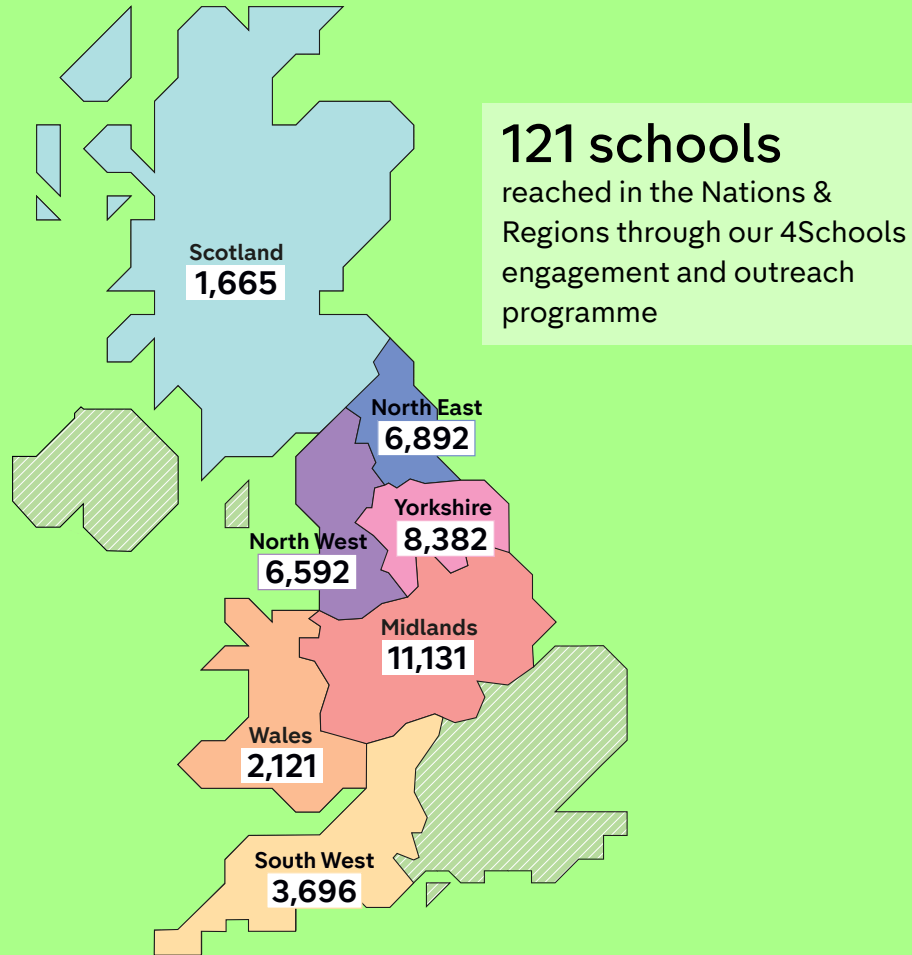
"We believe that for many young people, if you can't see it, you can't be it. This report sets out how we are providing proper access to the creative industries to people from all walks of life and playing a key role in supporting the UK's vibrant and innovative creative industries."

Sinéad Rocks
Managing Director, Nations and Regions,
Channel 4

2023 highlights

57,000+

training, learning and development opportunities (up from 28,000 in 2022), including 40,000+ 11-to-16-year-olds reached via 4Schools:



High impact schemes

4Skills offered full-time, fully paid training to young people taking their first steps in our industry including **41 apprentices**, **30 Content Creatives trainees** and **28 Production Training Scheme trainees**

£5m

investment to offer training, development and learning opportunities. This annual investment will double to £10 million by 2025

Freelancer Focus

In October 2023, we launched a two-week programme to support the freelance community, covering everything from pitching to CVs to finance to wellbeing. Take up for the programme was high with over 7,200 attendances across the 20 sessions

4Skills Business Boost

Nine Nations and Regions independent production companies received consultancy support and tailored training through 4Skills Business Boost – focused on leadership and management, slate development and diversifying their revenue

4Schools

Channel 4 launched 4Schools in 2022 with the aim to engage directly with students and raise awareness of careers available in the wider TV production and digital sectors.

This major engagement project, which works with schools to open up the the creative and digital industries to 11-to-16-year-olds, has thrived since it launched, reaching over 40,000 students in 2023 (up from over 23,000 in 2022) and operating in at 121 schools.

4Schools provides a wide range of resources and content online including videos, lessons plans and quizzes aligned to their curriculum needs, for schools to use in their own time. In addition to these broader resources, the programme delivers face-to-face careers workshops and assemblies.

Expansion of the 4Schools programme in 2023 ensured that it covered almost twice as many schools in England, Scotland and Wales compared to 2022, and the plan is to expand further to include

schools in Northern Ireland in 2024.

The programme prioritises those with a higher percentage of free school meals. This ensures that Channel 4 has the greatest impact in the areas that can benefit the most from social mobility.

As part of the 4Schools initiative, a group of 30 students had a surprise opportunity to quiz England Manager Gareth Southgate at a mock press conference at their school



"It's been an amazing opportunity for our students, they will have learned so much from this and the day will have provided some brilliant inspiration for their futures."

Jo Bell
Headteacher

Work experience

In January 2023, we introduced our virtual work experience programme in an effort to enhance accessibility and engage with a larger audience. Geared towards 16-to-24-year-olds (though there is no upper age limit), the self-paced programme is free and can be completed on a phone, tablet, or laptop. This format eliminates barriers for those who may find it challenging to allocate a week for in-person work experiences, supporting our aims in 4Skills to target groups under-represented in broadcasting.

Collaborating with GetMyFirstJob, Channel 4 oversees the programme, which delves into critical stages of bringing a TV show to fruition – from concept development to securing sponsors, determining broadcast schedules, and evaluating success.

The program involves participation from five distinct Channel 4 teams: Commissioning, Legal and Compliance, 4Sales, 4Studio, and Consumer Insight.

Each team set a task, and participants receive feedback, a certificate, and an opportunity to join a virtual Q&A with Channel 4 employees to explore broadcast careers further.

The overarching goal of the programme is to dispel myths, showcase the value and excitement of a career in media, and highlight the diverse array of roles available.



“I really enjoyed my experience as it gave an in-depth study into a career in film and TV and encouraged me to explore jobs that I may not have considered before I completed this.”

Nancy
Virtual work experience participant

In its pilot year, more than 2,000 individuals successfully completed the free programme. We relaunched the initiative in January 2024, now featuring expanded content and modules to drive further engagement



Apprenticeships

At Channel 4, our apprenticeship programme plays a central role in our strategy to advance equity and inclusion. Aligned with the 4Skills vision, we are currently supporting a greater number of apprentices than ever before.

As of February 2024, we proudly host 56 apprentices across diverse departments. These include the 4Studio and Policy and Public Affairs teams in Leeds, 4creative and Product in London, Sales Operations in Manchester, and Commissioning in Glasgow.

Throughout a period of 14-36 months, apprentices are involved in one of our departments, actively contributing to a variety of in-depth projects crucial to their Level 2, 3, 4, or 6 qualifications.

Tailored specifically to address under-represented groups within society, these programmes make a substantial contribution to Channel 4's overarching equity and inclusion objectives.

In 2023, a record 41 apprentices embarked on long-term apprenticeships, strategically based across all our offices in Leeds, Glasgow, Bristol, Manchester and London



"I would recommend an apprenticeship to anyone with a creative flare because you learn so much – all in a supportive environment."

"My time at Channel 4 has been extraordinary. My day to day is always changing, fun and new. Everyone is so kind, supportive, encouraging, and welcoming. There is so much diversity and inclusion here, you will never feel out of place."

Aimee

Digital Production Apprentice, 4Studio

"If you're looking for something different and uni isn't the way to go, I would highly recommend Channel 4."

"I joined during lockdown, and I've grown up and developed within Channel 4. I think my favourite thing about my apprenticeship at Channel 4 was the people. Everyone is so creative and driven. I felt like I was with the right crowd. You can still grow and become your own person while working for a team that cares about you and allows that freedom you need."

Krishaan

Former Pictures Apprentice, now Pictures Assistant at Channel 4



Production Training Scheme

Channel 4's Production Training Scheme is a year-long, fully paid training programme which places trainees at independent production companies across the UK.

The flagship scheme, which has run for more than 15 years, is designed to provide entry level opportunities in TV production. It has a particular focus on encouraging applications from under-represented groups in the UK production sector.

Through the Production Training Scheme, Channel 4 provides intensive training bootcamps, regular development sessions and mentoring supported by ThinkBIGGER!. Trainees gain valuable experience through their day-to-day roles in the production companies.

The Production Training Scheme expanded in 2022 and 2023 to support two cohorts per year – one focused on Scripted companies and the other on Unscripted. In 2023, 28 trainees joined the schemes' two cohorts (12 Scripted and 16 Unscripted), which are focused on offering opportunities

to candidates who are ethnically diverse, disabled or from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

"The scheme helped me find confidence in my own abilities, leading me to secure a staffed Junior Researcher role."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time on Channel 4's Production Training Scheme 2022-2023, which helped me get my foot in the door of a competitive industry with Red Sauce in Manchester. During my time on the scheme, I gained experience on a range of different shows. The wonderful team at 4Skills and ThinkBigger! made me feel completely supported throughout the process, giving me freedom to explore and develop my skills."

Megan

Former Production Training Scheme Trainee, now Junior Researcher at Red Sauce TV



Spotlight on Paralympics Production Training Scheme

In 2023, Channel 4's Paralympic Production Training Scheme recruited 16 disabled trainees, offering the opportunity to launch their broadcast careers with 12-month placements – and some will go on to work on the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games.

The trainees will spend a year working as trainee production co-ordinators or as researchers working on sport, entertainment, factual entertainment and factual productions at indies based throughout the UK including in Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Chepstow, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester.

"Sports production is one area where we really need to increase the numbers of disabled people playing key roles behind the camera. This scheme will help to give a much-needed career boost to talented people from all over the UK."

Pete Andrews

Head of Sport, Channel 4

"I am extremely grateful for the Channel 4 Paralympic Training Scheme for giving me an entirely new outlook on what I can achieve as disabled person in this industry."

"I am both learning from the supportive team around me and applying my skills to the projects I work on. Alongside this, I am able to speak about my disability with others, fulfilling my dream to be part of the movement to educate others around disability representation both on and off screen."

Maisie

Paralympic Production Training Scheme Trainee



Content Creatives

For those who might not typically consider a career in the creative industry, Channel 4 launched its Content Creatives scheme. This is aimed at young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds who have a passion for creating digital content.

In 2023, 30 people took part in a six-month fully paid programme. It consisted of eight weeks of training with SharpFutures – a specialist social enterprise company supporting diverse young people into employment – followed by a 16-week placement.

As well as offering placements with 4Studio, Channel 4's Leeds-based social first content division, Channel 4 also partnered with creative organisations in West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester to offer a range of exciting placements to successful candidates including Chief (Manchester), Social (Leeds and Manchester), Boutique (Leeds), Finn (Leeds), and Visions (Manchester).

Over 80 trainees have been through the scheme in total (since the launch of the pilot in 2021) and have gone on to creative careers with 4Studio and ITN and digital agencies such as We Are The Allies, McCann, Dubit and Dentsu, as well as roles in TV production.

"I am a multimedia producer at Channel 4 News now. In ways, my work is similar to what I did at 4Studio except now I'm working for news instead and I love it. I make TikToks for a living (and more)!"

"I was interested in developing my digital skills so Content Creatives seemed like a great opportunity. I've also always wanted to work for Channel 4 since I heard it was opening in Leeds. My favourite thing about the course was the people. We all came from different backgrounds – we weren't all from creative backgrounds – so people brought different ideas and skills."

Mahnoor

Former Content Creatives Trainee, now Multimedia Producer at Channel 4 News



National Film and Television School

Channel 4 is committed to developing the skills and progressing the careers of those already in the creative industries. This is helping to address skills gaps and to support the growth of production based in the Nations and Regions.

Channel 4 has a long-standing partnership with the NFTS to deliver training opportunities that have a clear impact across the Nations and Regions.

In October 2023, we launched Freelancer Focus, a two-week programme to support the freelance community, covering everything from pitching to CVs to finance to wellbeing. Take up for the programme was high with over 7,200 attendances across the 20 sessions.

In addition to this, we delivered two weeks of free online training sessions and masterclasses covering topics focused on business leadership and management in TV production,

storytelling and script development. Over 3,200 opportunities were offered for participants to engage in the diverse range of sessions, featuring insights from industry professionals.

We launched a series of unmissable free career events and taster days across the UK to give those under-represented in the industry an opportunity to find out more about careers in film and television – often those less glamorous roles that get overlooked but that are critical to productions. These events offer the opportunity for attendees to develop their TV career and grow their network.

“Before the scheme I didn’t know about script editing. Two years on, I’ve just finished a stint as Assistant Script Editor on Doctor Who.

“The Channel 4 Production Training Scheme has opened up a world of opportunities to me, and the NFTS Screenwriting Finding Your Voice course was also amazing. As a result of completing the NFTS course, I wrote my first pilot script, developed my writing confidence, and learnt from other brilliant writers. Having the opportunity to build a solid network of writers on the course is something I will always be grateful for.”

Rasheed

Former Production Training Scheme and NFTS trainee, now Assistant Script Editor



Momentum

Channel 4 works with award-winning organisation We Are Parable to deliver Momentum, a mentoring and training programme for 60 Black TV, filmmakers and content creators across the UK. Now in its third year and additionally supported by Sony Pictures Television, Momentum offers nationwide opportunities to creatives, with over 50% of this year's cohort coming from outside of London.

In addition to creating new opportunities for Black TV, filmmakers and content creators, Momentum participants are paired with a mentor. They are also provided access to masterclasses and discussions with experts from across the industry, as part of a comprehensive guide on how to advance their careers.

Investigative Journalism

Channel 4 supports budding investigative journalists through our partnership with De Montfort University for its MA degree in Investigative Journalism. Offering industry standard teaching as well as a range of scholarships, the MA's mission is to unearth the next generation of investigative filmmakers from under-represented sections of British society.

Over 100 graduates have passed through the programme, many of whom have secured journalism jobs as well as winning industry awards for their work. This includes Hamza Syed, who joined *This American Life* (one of the most prestigious shows on American public radio, and the makers of the podcast *Serial*) and Rakeem Omar, who won the Communities Award at the Regional Press Awards.



Factual Fast Track

Factual Fast Track is a reputation-building career development programme that fast tracks established, ambitious Producers and Series Producers to help them move up the career ladder and work on larger scale and higher budget productions in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the West. The Fast Track package includes paid production and broadcast placements, bespoke training and commissioner and peer mentoring.

The schemes – which are funded by Channel 4, the BBC, S4C, Screen Scotland, Creative Wales and Northern Ireland Screen – provide networking opportunities to help raise the Producers' profiles, training sessions to extend their skills, and mentoring support to build their confidence to help them become business winning Series Producers.

SuperSizer

SuperSizer, a professional development programme based in the Nations and Regions, is delivered by TRC. The programme, now in its seventh year, supports the growth of Development Executives to win high value commissions and develop ideas of scale for the next big returning series, with the aim of transforming indies in the Nations and Regions.

“Channel 4’s steadfast support helps us to create meaningful impact and widen opportunities for under-represented talent into our industry.

“Their commitment to supporting training initiatives across the Nations and Regions has been invaluable for TRC. With Channel 4’s support, we work with production talent at all levels, helping Development Executives supercharge factual ideas on SuperSizer, Series Producers to step up to network productions on Factual FastTrack, and opening doors to creative people from all walks of life through training schemes such as FormatLab and Rad.”

Claire Scally

Managing Director, TRC



Supporting writing talent

4Screenwriting

Over the last 13 years, 4Screenwriting has taken on over 150 new writers, pairing them with an industry script editor to develop a pilot episode script and then introducing them to key contacts within the TV drama industry. The course has a focus on working with new and unheard voices, helping to identify new talent for Channel 4 and the industry as a whole. Recent success stories include scheme alumni writing on Channel 4 Drama shows from *Hollyoaks* and *Ackley Bridge to Screw* and *Queenie*.

New Writers Scheme

In 2022, 4Skills launched The TV Drama New Writers Scheme (West and South West). The pilot scheme offered a unique opportunity for new writers to gain the skills needed to forge a successful writing career, and tell stories that reflect the diversity and creativity of the West and South West of England. In 2024, we will expand the scheme to support more new writing talent across the UK. The

scheme will be centred around three Channel 4 Nations and Regions Hubs – Bristol, Leeds and Glasgow.

New Writing North

Channel 4 and New Writing North have worked in partnership since 2014, offering aspiring television writers nine-month funded placements at independent production companies through the Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards. The Talent Development Partnership, produced by Channel 4 and New Writing North with independent production companies, is a three-year programme of support for new and emerging television writers in the North of England.

Running from 2022-2024, the programme offers awards, script development, writers' roadshows and workshops, and the formation of the Northern Talent Network.



4Skills

4Skills is Channel 4's nationwide training and development programme. Based in Channel 4's HQ in Leeds, 4Skills is opening up opportunities behind the camera in broadcasting, with a particular focus on young people from under-represented backgrounds.

Contact us: 4Skills@channel4.co.uk



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