

# THE FUTURE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

## A SPOTLIGHT ON GREATER MANCHESTER

REPORT 2021



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## A SPOTLIGHT ON GREATER MANCHESTER

## INTRODUCTION

### Agility, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, resilience and innovation.

These are the recurring themes within this report, providing immense hope and aspirations for the 'creative industries'. The term covers an array of subsectors: music and the performing arts, crafts, advertising and marketing, architecture, design and fashion, film, TV and radio, IT, video games and immersive technology, and publishing. We focus on six sub-sectors, their impact on the North of England and the UK, the barriers we face, solutions, and the vast opportunities that await.

The sector has not been immune to the challenges we have all faced since early-2020. Nevertheless, businesses and individuals have reacted swiftly and creatively, making changes in their business models and propositions, mobilising networks to navigate through these unprecedented social and economic times.

Amongst the difficulties that arose from COVID-19, you will see the adaptability and sheer resilience of the creative sector. New ways of working have emerged, providing fruitful and innovative results for companies, employees and the consumer. Collaboration has also been a supremely positive by-product of lockdown. Disappearing borders, and preconceived notions

of geography being shattered, allowed us to work with anyone, anywhere.

The North of England's creative industries are world-class and dominate much of the national and international creative space. These industries are the backbone of the UK economy and contributed £115.9bn in gross value added (GVA) prior to the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The industry is a cornerstone export and the face of the nation on the international stage. Prior to the pandemic, the creative industries were growing four times faster than the rest of the economy.<sup>2</sup>

The creative sector provides an abundance of talent. Along with this knowledge and innovation, comes swathes of commercial opportunity. The sector is evolving at pace and the pandemic only expedited this. Reimagined working and increased regional, national and international collaboration, meant creative industries forged pathways for creatives to innovate, expand the economy and monetise creative solutions. The North West was the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and now it is at the forefront of a new one. Greater Manchester alone is home to 19,000 digital, creative and tech companies,<sup>3</sup>

with 156,000 people working in creative and digital roles across the North West<sup>4</sup> – as part of a creative ecosystem that contributes £6.5bn in direct regional GVA, making the region the highest performing creative cluster outside of London.<sup>5</sup>

The Government recognises the value and importance of the sector, having provided funds to protect these vital industries. National funds include tax relief, apprenticeship incentives, a £500 million Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, and the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund.

It is a good start, but it is not enough.

The projected risk from the pandemic is too high. Stark figures from the Oxford Economics Project showcase a "cultural catastrophe". It may be too soon to evaluate the impact of COVID-19, but these numbers suggest that investment is needed to protect creative industries if the whole economy is to Build Back Better.



**Sarah Novotny, Head of Digital,  
Creative and Tech Sector Business  
Support, GC Business Growth Hub**

### In the North West<sup>1</sup>

# £900m

loss (13.2%) in GVA  
due to the pandemic

### In the UK<sup>2</sup>

# £12bn

(10%) of the creative  
industries GVA was  
lost in 2020 alone

# 112,700

creative industries jobs  
are set to be lost by  
the end of 2021 (one in 20)

***“The creative sector  
permeates every  
single industry.”***

Irene Graham OBE, CEO, ScaleUp Institute

# MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS

This report is based on insights from the industry professionals below, who all contributed to the 2021 Creative Leaders Festival. This flourishing event aims to connect, inspire and energise professionals from across the North of England and is hosted by GC Business Growth Hub.

- Matthew Benson, Commercial and Marketing Director, Firesprite
- Simon Benson, Immersive Technology Consultant, Talent for Tech
- Kevin Blancoe, Head of Partnerships Nations & Regions, Channel 4
- Nathan Clark, Director, Brudenell Presents
- Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE FRSA, Business Development Director, The Blair Project Ltd
- Steve Connor, Chief Executive, Creative Concern, Board Member, Greater Manchester, LEP
- James Copson, Creative Director, Anattic
- Lorna Davidson, CEO, Redwigwam
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- Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive, Manchester Central Convention Complex
- Dave Hopkins, Policy Advisor for the West of England, IPO UK
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- Paul Leyland, Investment Manager, Maven Capital Partners
- Sandy Lindsay MBE, Chair, Tangerine Communications, The Juice Academy, Northcoders
- Ian Livingstone CBE, Chairman, Sumo Group plc
- Sacha Lord, Night Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester, Parklife/The Warehouse Project
- Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL, Chair Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) & NP11
- Dave Moutrey, Director and CEO, HOME
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- Vicky Roberts, Head of Communications, vTime
- Mark Skipper DL, Chief Executive, Northern Ballet
- Imogen Tazzyman, Executive Creative Director, McCann Manchester
- Jenny Tooth OBE, CEO, UK Business Angels Association UKBAA
- Denise Turner, Director of Research and Insight, Newsworks
- Sam Whitear, Creative Industries Programme Manager, GC Business Growth Hub



**WATCH**  
THE OPENING OF THE  
CREATIVE LEADERS  
FESTIVAL

# FILM AND TV

Alongside the behemoths in MediaCityUK, other boroughs in Greater Manchester are also producing film and TV that is being viewed worldwide. The Vectar Project in Stockport, and Space Studios based in West Gorton are both making a name for Greater Manchester through content. Cheshire-based The Hut Group (THG) is also investing in Mancunian space for its ICON development at Manchester Airport. Although there is production pedigree and history, with ITV Granada having been located within the city centre since the 1930s, the latest growth

has been further bolstered by the BBC's recent announcement to relocate further London-based services, and increase the number of staff at the MediaCityUK base beyond the current 3,500.<sup>6</sup>

Production and projects may have ground to a halt during the first few months of lockdown, but the sector has now shown signs of bouncing back. With a backlog of demand, many projects that need delivering and more deals being secured – the work available is not the problem, it is the lack of skills and staff.

## Success Spotlight: SPACE STUDIOS<sup>3</sup>

Contributes to the film and production industry

**£19.5m GVA**

**270 jobs**

Produces on-location spend of

**£6.5m**

Stage space (across eight stages) of

**17 acres,**  
(105,000 sq. ft.)



**WATCH**

FILM AND TV LOOKING  
THROUGH THE LENS



## Film and TV in the UK<sup>4</sup>

- £21.6bn GVA
- In 2019, UK films earned £10.3bn globally
- £8.6bn generated in exports of goods and services
- TV made £16.36bn in 2019
- £1.7bn generated by video in 2020

*“Greater Manchester boasts almost one million sq. ft. of formal production space, making it one of the most significant media hubs on Earth.”*

Sam Whitear, Creative Industries Programme Manager, GC Business Growth Hub

ANATTIC

## CASE STUDY

### Creative Scale-Up helps Anattic to bounce back from Brexit and COVID-19 challenges

Anattic is a Manchester-based video production company which specialises in commercials and documentaries. Founded in 2015, it enjoyed steady growth until a 50% drop in turnover in 2019 due to uncertainty around Brexit.

In 2020, it took part in the Creative Scale-Up Programme from GC Business Growth Hub and it came away ready to expand into new markets, gaining the knowledge and confidence

to develop its financial, marketing and recruitment strategies.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Anattic has rebounded strongly, getting back to growth and hiring a new member of staff to grow its business development activities. It now has plans to expand further afield while strengthening its reputation and client list at home in Manchester.

# IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY AND GAMES

## According to the UK Immersive Tech: VC Investment Report, 34% of investors want to invest in VR/AR post-COVID-19.<sup>7</sup>

PwC has predicted that immersive technology, including virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), is set to contribute \$1.5 trillion towards the global economy, with the UK generating \$69.3 billion and creating 400,000 new jobs by 2030.<sup>8</sup> These are astronomic figures for a sector that has been deemed gimmicky or unmonetisable in the past.

Before COVID-19, there had been an aggressive commercial push to introduce VR and AR to the masses, with trial stations set up on high streets and other high traffic areas for consumers to see what these technologies could do. As a result of lockdown, companies were forced to find alternative opportunities and adapt. With the introduction of the Oculus 2 headset, VR

was brought to mass market for everyday users when previously it had been out of reach for many.

VR and AR thrived during lockdown. More and more people wanting to remain connected in an ever-isolated world turned to technology to keep these connections alive. Increased leisure time, a desire to stay connected and the inability to leave your house all contributed to the growth of the sector. VR allowed the social aspect of life to flourish, as well as the workplace. Providing new ways of collaborative working and hosting consumer and employee-led events, VR and AR have now been hailed as exceptional remote training tools, allowing users to simulate real-life situations to gain new skills.

Manchester Metropolitan University's Creative AR and VR Hub has been supporting research and development (R&D) in immersive tech across some of the region's heritage sites and within the tourism industry (in addition to sports, education and health). In 2019 the hub's efforts in tourism were awarded by the world's leading travel trade show, ITB Berlin, for creating an attitude change towards VR. A research award of this calibre is unequivocally promising for the region and demonstrates the value Greater Manchester brings to immersive tech.

With 8,000 employees and more than 250 SMEs, MediaCityUK is one of the UK's fastest-growing tech hubs, and has the potential to accelerate the region's recovery post-COVID-19.



***“As well as new users, there is a change of perception... COVID-19 removed the ‘why’ and changed it to ‘why not’.”***

Vicky Roberts, Head of Communications, vTime

***“AR is still niche, but the applications that will come from the AR world will have the potential to touch and help a lot more industries. It needs to be the solution that is right for the project – not just shoehorning something to fit the tech.”***

Vicky Roberts, Head of Communications, vTime

***“Those VR headsets already in the home almost became the Wii Sports of the lockdown.”***

Simon Benson, Immersive Technology Consultant, Talent for Tech



*“The video games industry is a great British success story and ticks all the right boxes for the new economy – creative, digital, knowledge-based, high tech, high skills, high salaries, export-focused, IP-creating and regional. What’s not to like?”<sup>10</sup>*

Ian Livingstone CBE, Chairman, Sumo Group plc

**WATCH**  
THE GAMES INDUSTRY  
GAME ON!

The games industry has been a success story during the pandemic and has seen phenomenal growth, approximately five times ahead of where it should be. The industry grew 30% in 2020 and generated over £1 billion more than the previous record in 2018; a surge in the popularity of Esports contributed to this success<sup>9</sup>. Lockdown brought with it legions of new and loyal gamers, exposing people who never would have had contact with games before.

Since early-2020, the sector has demonstrated its adaptability and robust infrastructure by immediately acclimatising to remote working and utilising the power of international collaboration. Within Greater Manchester, companies such as Equinox Studios are actively recruiting and many

North West companies, like Firesprite Games, are outgrowing premises; a truly outstanding achievement during a global pandemic.

There are challenges with hybrid working as for every sector. Capturing the organic moments during development is hard to replicate across digital mediums, as are creative brainstorming and monitoring mental health. These are all factored into the leaders’ thinking about emerging from the pandemic, yet are not insurmountable problems. A shortage of senior skilled staff is a more pressing issue.

Predictions for the future of games are in line with those in immersive tech; wearables and ‘gaming on the go’ are the foreseen trajectory.

**“Gaming is not a poor cousin to TV and Film.”**

Matthew Benson, Commercial and Marketing Director, Firesprite

### Gaming in the UK<sup>5</sup>

- £2.6bn GVA - 2x greater the revenue of both France & Germany
- More than 20,000 people employed in the sector
- 2000+ games businesses across the UK
- By 2023, market value expected to reach £5.4bn
- £3.2bn in digital game sales in 2019

### Gaming GVA across the North of England<sup>5</sup>

- £85.8m – Newcastle
- £66.1m – Manchester
- £38m – Liverpool
- The North East games industry has the largest economic impact outside of London and the South East.



### CASE STUDY

#### Creative Scale-Up Programme helps Huey Games to build on lockdown successes with ambitious growth plan

Huey Games is a video game development company from Manchester. Having built up a strong client base through its work converting games onto different platforms and developing limited-edition bundles, it has set its sights on expanding by creating more original games.

Huey Games took part in the Creative Scale-Up Programme as part of this journey towards expansion. After completing the modules while thriving due to the increased investment in video games during lockdown, Huey Games is well-positioned to grow. With the help

of the programme and the ongoing mentorship it received, Huey Games has developed a new business plan, doubled the size of its team and is on track for 2021 to be its best year yet.

#### Impacts

- 350% increase in staffing levels
- 43% growth in revenue since 2018
- Recently celebrated a milestone 40,000 sales for Nintendo Switch port

# THE PERFORMING ARTS AND NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Of all the creative industries, the performing arts have arguably demonstrated the most tenacity and flexibility.

Not forcibly closed since the 16th Century, theatres and live performance venues risked permanent closure if they did not react with urgency to the new normal. Cross-sector collaboration between academics, technology, arts, science, environmentalism and conservation has been pivotal in creating a community mindset amongst industry leaders; all supporting and working together to ensure the health of the arts is maintained.

The adoption of digital technologies has been a large growth area for the use of livestreams, pre-recorded and outdoor performances.

These innovations, accessed by a paywall or a 'pay-what-you-feel' scheme, provide key learnings for the future in terms of pricing and accessibility. Without the intervention of digital platforms and hybrid performances, theatres would never have reached audiences on a global scale. Livestreams viewed by millions worldwide compared to a few hundred, not only opened doors commercially – from a cultural standpoint, they have allowed people from all socio-economic backgrounds to access a type of culture that may have previously been out of reach.



*“Digital is the thing that’s made a difference for all of us... we’ve been teaching our academy classes online... we’ve even choreographed new ballets over Zoom... it’s amazing what the technology can allow us to do.”*

Mark Skipper DL, Chief Executive, Northern Ballet

Though Government funding has been pivotal for some, many smaller venues, and the freelance ecosystems that support the performing arts, have not benefitted. Some establishments in the North West reinvested money from recovery funds and furlough schemes back into the community, preserving the local theatre ecology of freelancers and production crews.

Beyond the pandemic, it is evident that new ways of working will have a profound effect on the performing arts industry. The blended approach will be adopted by some going forward, creating valuable revenue streams for a crucial cultural sector.

*“Without arts organisations, cities are poorer not just metaphorically – but literally.”*

Dave Moutrey,  
Director and CEO, HOME

## Success Spotlight: HOME MCR<sup>6</sup>

Impact on Greater Manchester economy 2019/20:

**£24.9m**

Annual GVA benefits from local employment:

**£12.3m**

Annual GVA benefits from HOME as a significant visitor attraction:

**£11.2m**

Annual benefits to local supply chain:

**£1.4m**

Social benefits:

**8,149** volunteer hours delivered by **285** volunteers, resulting in **£77,600** of social capital

**£1m** health and wellbeing cost savings

## THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY (NTE)<sup>7</sup>

**5th**

LARGEST SECTOR  
IN THE UK

**420,000**

NTE EMPLOYEES IN  
GREATER MANCHESTER

**One in Five**

VENUES ON THE HIGH-STREET  
ARE PERMANENTLY CLOSED

**750,000**

SHORTFALL OF JOBS

**620,000**

UK JOBS HAVE BEEN LOST AS  
A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC

The hospitality sector and Night Time Economy (NTE) saw the most devastating consequences out of all the creative industries. With bars and restaurants only able to serve takeaways, and limitations placed on opening times and customers, there were only fleeting moments of respite for a sector pummelled by consistent financial and job losses.

The NTE is diverse and eclectic. One of its greatest assets is the low barriers to entry and potential for inclusivity. Out of all the creative subsectors, it is the NTE and hospitality industry that has the potential to speak to and reach the largest cross-section of Greater Manchester.

*“This is a great dawn for our sector and will out the less convicted employer, while raising the ones that are taking industry standards seriously.”*

Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive,  
Manchester Central Convention Complex

*“One hospitality worker told me she walks 45 minutes at 4 am to get home rather than take a cab as her hourly rate is too low. Something has to change.”*

Sacha Lord, Night Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester, Parklife/The Warehouse Project

Business leaders within NTE are highly aware of the need to change certain practices. With key industry figures, such as Night Time Economy Advisor Sacha Lord, insisting we need “to look after our employees a lot better” and reduce the “churn” of staff, there is work to do in terms of incentivising a prospective workforce. Now is the perfect time to make this change.

### IMPACT OF COVID-19 on GM’s NTE<sup>8</sup>

**90%**

of GM’s NTE businesses closed

**7%**

only offered reduced services

**66%**

of NTE business in GM expected to make redundancies including 80% of restaurants

**18%**

of GM jobs were in sectors that were shut down due to COVID-19, higher than any other

**+1/3**

of businesses will not be able to achieve pre-pandemic levels

**PARKLIFE**

**80,000**

TICKETS SOLD IN 78 MINUTES  
BUT OVER 4,000 JOBS LEFT  
UNFILLED

A surplus of available jobs combined with high, pent-up demand means prospective employees have the opportunity to be discerning and choose where they want to work. Greater Manchester is the first city to pledge to pay hospitality workers, both full and part-time, a living wage. The region also promises to enhance transport links, ensuring workers finishing in the early hours of the morning have access to affordable and safe ways of getting home.

Safeguarding employees post-pandemic is also a priority for the sector, with further pledges by Sacha Lord to launch drop-in surgeries for everyone within hospitality. From health and safety workers to bar staff, employers and operators, these surgeries are designed to enable people to harness their transferable skills, seek advice and employment.

Appetite for hospitality will never go away, as was evident in the multitude of live streams from DJs and night clubs made available to people worldwide during the UK's lockdowns. The united front from industry leaders provides a beacon of hope for the NTE in the months to come.

*“Free trial shifts are free labour... best practice means being grown-up, taking big steps and pledging to be better.”*

Lorna Davidson, CEO, Redwigwam

## Success Spotlight: UNITED WE STREAM<sup>9</sup>

**10 weeks / 207 hours**

**£477,000**

RAISED FOR GM'S NTE

**107 businesses**

INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS  
SUPPORTED IN GM

**353**

ARTISTS PERFORMED

**1m**

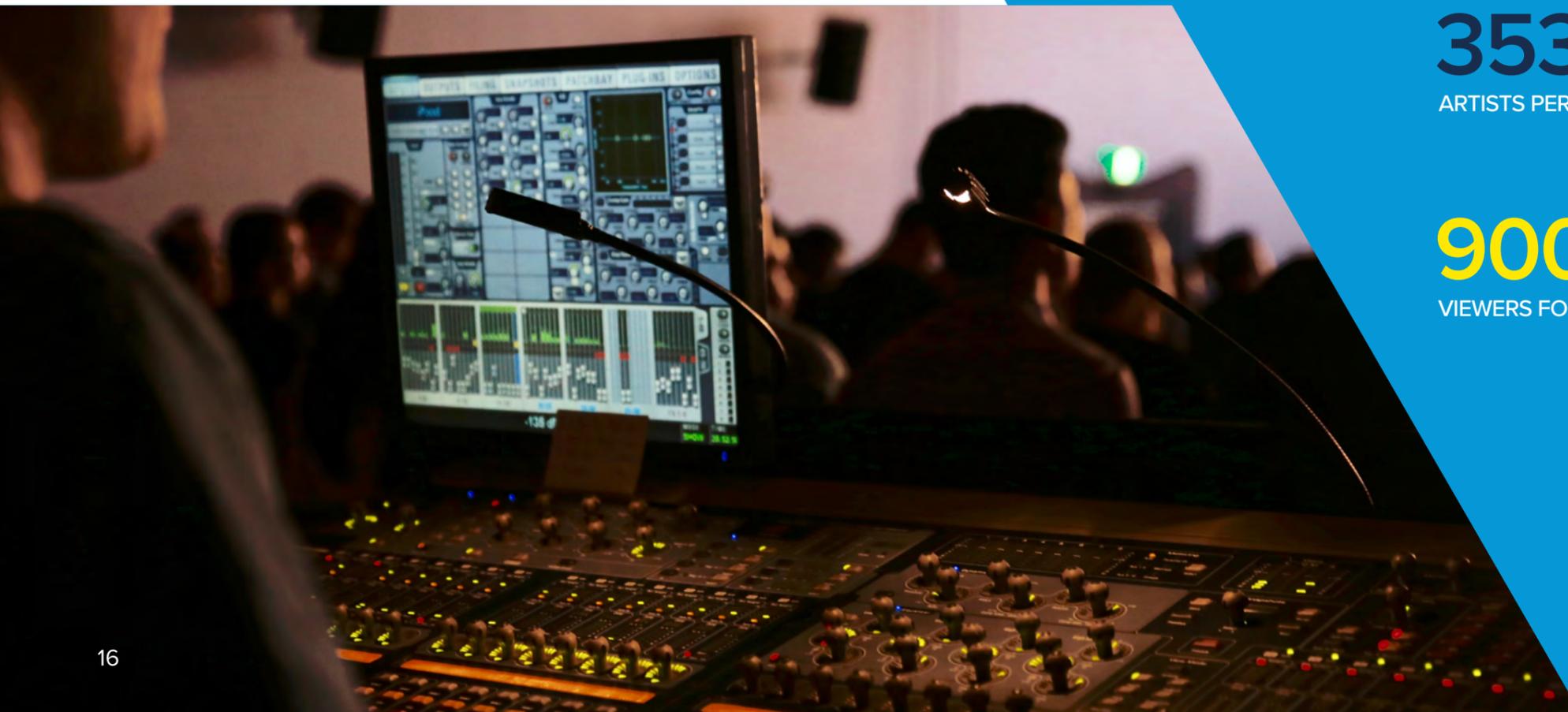
VIEWERS OF HACIENDA  
HOUSE PARTY

**900,000**

VIEWERS FOR HOMOELECTRIC

**+15**

COUNTRIES WITH VIEWERS



# AGENCY LANDSCAPE AND CONTENT CREATION

In the face of fierce competition and the challenges that have become apparent since the onset of the pandemic, the volume of buoyant creative agencies in Greater Manchester illustrates the tenacity and resilience of the sector.

It is also a testament to how much business there is; there is no shortage of agencies and there is no shortage of clients.

As with other creative sectors, agencies are committed to hybrid working, allowing recruitment nets to be cast nationwide. Nevertheless, there is a growing focus on acknowledging the value of apprenticeships and training new graduates within the region. Many larger agencies in Greater Manchester, committed to nurturing homegrown talent, have even opened their own academy or developed internal programmes, such as integrated communications agency Tangerine and the Juice Academy, MC2's University of Life for employees, and Manchester International Festival's The Factory Academy.

Currently, the biggest threat to agencies are brands that are establishing creative departments in-house. With more employers taking training into their own hands, it is only natural for companies to develop their own in-house offering.

Content creation reached a new stratosphere during lockdown – the rise of TikTok only serves to prove this. As social media and digital platforms evolve, the content that creatives produce needs to reflect changing audiences and their consumption patterns.

It is important to recognise that content and platforms are so intrinsically linked that the product needs to be marketed, created and consumed differently. All content should evoke a response from the audience; personalisation, representation and inclusion are key. Traditional print outlets are faced with these challenges and are having to adapt at speed to ensure relevance amongst their readerships. Online bloggers and influencers face the opposing problem of verifying and adding a layer of credibility to their content. Synergy needs to exist between the two, and is starting to emerge.

With community journalism on the rise, the allocation of one Northern correspondent by national news corporations based in London appears redundant and ineffective. Cooperation and collaboration between local journalists and influencers is being leveraged in a new, revolutionary way that is far more relevant to audiences. Consumers are now seeing relatable content that reflects their lived experiences, driving engagement and consumption. In addition to individual driven content, safeguarding mass audiences for local news outlets, such as the Manchester Evening News, is pivotal in securing answers to crucial local questions and problems. Having the backing of a large readership allows regional outlets to pressure external bodies. Local media and its preservation are crucial for the Greater Manchester creative ecosystem.

*“We have to think about content as scriptwriters as well as publishing, TV, games and films. By encouraging storytelling at a young age, it helps feed every one of our industries and that is collaboration: sharing opportunities and stories to drive engagement irrespective of the content delivery platform.”*

Sam Whitear, Creative Industries Programme Manager, GC Business Growth Hub

*“In a world of platforms, we often think we are marketing to devices, but we are marketing to people and creating content for people to consume. Sometimes we get lost.”*

Denise Turner, Director of Research and Insight, Newsworks



**WATCH**  
THE POWER OF  
PUBLISHING

# CHALLENGES

Despite the resilience and agility demonstrated by creative industries, it is clear that there will be short, medium, and long term challenges for the sector, such as access to finance, diversity, talent pipeline and digital confidence. Creative industries are exceptionally self-aware in recognising certain barriers and are working towards instilling processes and programmes to mitigate these.

## Diversity and Inclusivity

The creative industries shape and reflect the current state of society and culture through their outputs. Demonstrating diversity and inclusivity is pivotal within business, industry and in what we produce. Greater Manchester has a rich tapestry of diverse, lived experiences that can only prove advantageous to the creative industries.

Diversity goes beyond race and gender; it incorporates age, background, disabilities and ways of thinking. Being truly diverse and inclusive goes further than just hiring. Like so many sectors, the creative industries typically underserve these communities and still lack thorough representation.

Ways of recruiting and recruitment collateral need to be changed to appeal to a wider audience. Talent search has always had a superfluous focus on university degrees, when apprenticeships and relevant experience could have the same, if not more, relevance to the role. By prescribing the need for a degree, sectors are instantly severing ties with whole groups of prospective employees. Incentives for job referrals within companies should be re-examined, as these provide a limited talent pool, based on the values and characteristics of current employees.

*“We were getting out of the digital skills gap before COVID-19 and I fear we will be back where we started.”*

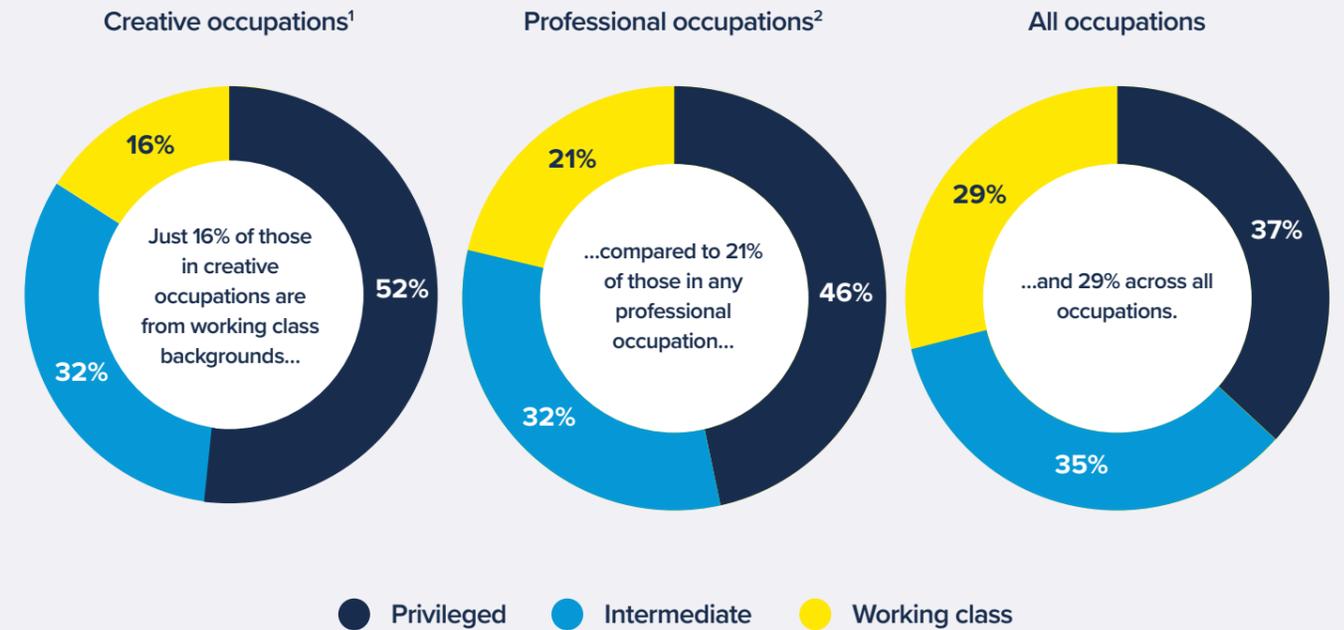
Sandy Lindsay MBE, Chair, Tangerine Communications, The Juice Academy, Northcoders

*“Diversity and inclusion is starting from the place where you recognise that every single person is born with a talent.”*

Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE FRSA, Business Development Director, The Blair Project Ltd



Class origins of workers in creative, professional and all occupations, 2019<sup>10</sup>



Greater Manchester is 25% ethnic minority and if this is not reflected in the workforce, then there are clear underlying issues. Rather than hiring people to fulfil quotas, businesses must cultivate an environment of free thinking to amplify minority voices and empower them to make business decisions. Advertising job roles on platforms that minority communities use, rather than, for example, LinkedIn, could also yield better results for diversity. Removing language that is too gendered and omitting desired skills can all help to make a company feel more inclusive.

The GVA of the creative industries is the product of the new ideas that individuals create and collectively bring to market. Diverse thinking and inclusivity are essential for these to come to fruition. We need to ensure we have the ecosystems in place to remove barriers to entry, hear voices and propel ideas into funding opportunities or positions for investment. Innovation needs new thinking and diversity is central to this.

The pandemic also reiterated the deep divide between the North and South – economically, in mortality rates and in digital accessibility too. The ‘new normal’ shifted many of our daily interactions online, leaving those without access to digital technologies feeling increasingly isolated and out of touch. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, along with Greater Manchester LEP, created a Digital Inclusion Action Network to tackle digital inequality in the under 25s and over 75s. The Action Network will make Greater Manchester one of the first city-regions in the world to equip all under 25s, over 75s and disabled people with the skills, connectivity and equipment to get online.

***“Diversity is not a problem to be solved, it is the solution to the problem.”***

Imogen Tazzyman, Executive Creative Director,  
McCann Manchester

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

*“Looking at the last 12 months, we have seen that businesses who champion inclusivity and diversity in their workforce have actually performed better in the whole pursuit of sustaining and propelling themselves in the pandemic. It is beyond culture, more than a fashion; it is helping the business’ bottom-line. Diversity is a competitive advantage and there is now, in crude terms, a business case for it.”*

Sarah Novotny, Head of Digital, Creative and Tech Sector  
Business Support, GC Business Growth Hub

***“Who is being represented and what stories are being told whilst drawing upon different voices only serves to make end products better, richer, and more meaningful. We live in an inherently diverse world and if we don’t create work that reflects that, then we will get left behind.”***

Imogen Tazzyman, Executive Creative Director,  
McCann Manchester

***“Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard.”***

Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy

# SKILLS AND PLACES

Attempts had been made to stimulate interest in the creative industries among Greater Manchester's schools in the run-up to 2020, to nurture ecosystems and develop talent pipelines.

This progress was slowed due to lockdowns. Since the pandemic, a surplus in talent and shrinking job openings allowed many companies to hire creatives with senior experience. These discerning employers reduced the opportunities for entry-level jobs in a drastic way, thus putting career changers, school leavers and graduates at a disadvantage.

The success of online learning during the pandemic cannot be understated. It has allowed training providers, like the Juice Academy, to go from servicing the region to servicing the UK, and the swift action from academic institutions to move online is applaudable. However, there are some negatives for remote learning that should be addressed. Practical courses need practical time, allowing the students to practise and explore the technology. The social aspect of studying has also been removed. Creating peer networks and learning from each other is pivotal within creative industries, and something that has been forcibly denied to an entire cohort.

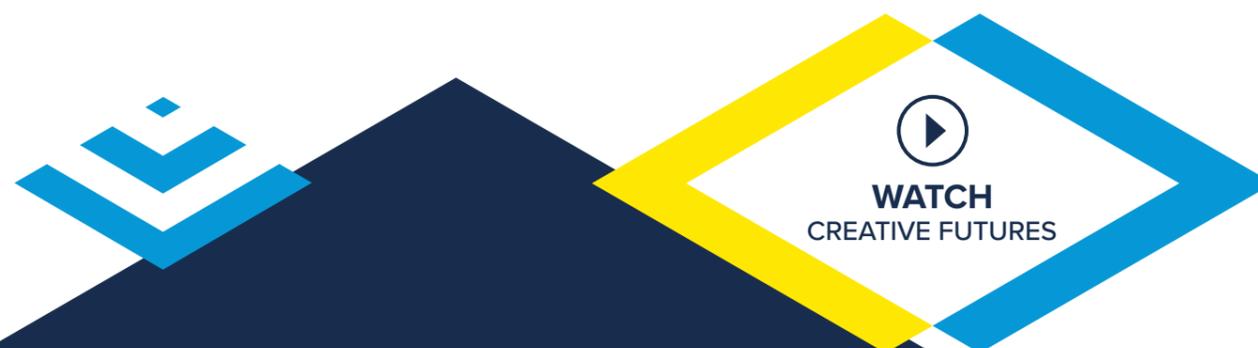
Encouragement from young adults' key leaders is pivotal if we are to recruit the next generation of creatives. The sector needs to amplify success, opportunities and a diverse range of career paths. The pandemic highlighted the breadth of misunderstanding when it comes to the creative industries, ignoring freelancers and ecosystems that are the linchpins of the sector. It is down to creative leaders to make the invisible visible, and make career starters understand and realise that this is a viable path. There is a binary view from some employment and Government institutions about what graduates can bring to the table having studied a particular specialism. Calls have been made to amplify the interdisciplinary talents of creative students and the value they bring to the economy, and to frame non-linear pathways positively. Action needs to be immediate, especially as there has been a 30% decrease in uptake of arts subjects at GCSE and A-Level in recent years. With the current issues surrounding examinations, the effect of this decrease is yet to be accounted for.<sup>11</sup> Universities are also concerned about the future interest in the arts if talents are not commercially appreciated.

*“When we start something new, we have industry right at the heart of it. Even before we have written a title, we are thinking of industry. This is how you get a collaborative approach.”*

Creative Director, MediaCity UK University of Salford Campus

In addition to training, apprenticeships, mentorship programmes and public/private sector project funding, facilitating connections between potential employees and businesses and offering advice is valuable experience for young professionals. There is always a risk that enterprises may have to migrate because of a shortage of skilled personnel. Young people's education needs to be directed towards equipping them with the abilities to embrace creativity, critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. Future employers will find these transferrable skills exceptionally valuable.

Gaming is 35% more productive than any other industry and should be viewed as a valuable aspect of the economy, but currently it is not. There is media negativity shrouding the sector, preventing recruitment. The games sector is dominated by white men and there needs to be more accessibility, diversity and inclusivity. Games are played by all genders, played globally, attracting customers from all backgrounds; so the teams making these games need to reflect this. Achieving diversity can only start by addressing careers and skills.



*“We have a responsibility for helping to develop and support talent outside of London from entry-level work experience and trainee schemes to supporting people on the job and developing their careers without the need to gravitate to London to develop and progress their careers.”*

Kevin Blacoe, Head of Partnerships, Nations & Regions, Channel 4





***“Moving to London in order to progress should be optional, not conditional and there is a long way to go to make that a genuine reality.”***

James Copson, Creative Director, Anattic

The December 2020 announcement of the £2.5 billion skills fund will provide some aid in upskilling the region. An additional £95 million will be made available to give adults free access to level 3 qualifications. Whilst this will break down some barriers to entry, the responsibility is also within industry to ensure job descriptions are inclusive, the right training opportunities are in place internally, and the correct channels and mindsets are being used to find employees.

Alongside levelling up skills, there is a great need for equality amongst all areas in Greater Manchester. The city is well known across the world and attracts global business and investment, yet the rest of the region is often forgotten. Much of Greater Manchester has not enjoyed the growing profitability experienced in the city and has even suffered as a result. For parts of Greater Manchester with lower productivity, pay and living standards, there

is an urgent need for access to jobs, education, housing, health and transport, which requires sustainable development and immediate action. We encourage global players to invest in our homegrown talent, but we must invest in the wider region as well.

Nine Greater Manchester councils (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) have recently agreed to create the Places for Everyone Plan 2021. The Plan will ensure the prosperous future and development of the region, its economy and its people. Feeding into this regional plan for equality is the national levelling up agenda. The regional and inter-regional disparity in the UK is greater than any other comparable country, making an already compelling case for change even more significant. More investment is needed if we are to sustain the creative industries and promote diversity within the sector.

***“During the pandemic, we have suffered as there is a lack of understanding of the breadth of roles that support events... there is so much that forms our ecosystems.”***

Shaun Hinds, Chief Executive, Manchester Central Convention Complex

Recently, a large focus has been placed on coding. Whilst coders are vital, without creative input, coders will not be able to provide the gaming industry with what it needs. Due to the lack of positive perception surrounding the games sector, industry leaders have found it difficult to reach out to schools with an aspirational message about a lucrative career in games. Consequently, companies are forced to recruit from outside the region, sometimes even internationally.

Even with the best retention strategy, it will be impossible to retain all employees, and some will naturally move on to seek out other opportunities. We can, however, mitigate premature departure and misguided perceptions of better progression in the South East by demonstrating the value the North brings. 51% of graduates<sup>12</sup> choose to stay in the region. This should be capitalised on by employers and encourage businesses to be present at career fairs to highlight the value of a creative role in the North.

***“Part of university and any training is the alumni; the people you meet on it, developing a network and making friends for life. The whole ability of building a circle of creatives is my one worry about remote working.”***

Sandy Lindsay MBE, Chair, Tangerine Communications, The Juice Academy, Northcoders

# DIGITAL CONFIDENCE (CYBER SECURITY)



In shocking data gathered by the DCMS Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2021, four in 10 businesses were victims of a cyber-attack in the last 12 months and less than 46% of businesses could even identify a breach.

Worryingly, some businesses are experiencing attacks at least once a week, indicating that the frequency and threat trajectory of cybercriminals is still far greater than companies realise. Along with a fiscal cost of a cyber-attack, there may also be data losses which are far more difficult to account for. Threats to clients' and employees' privacy has dramatic effects and can be used in future scams. Of the businesses that experience attacks, one in five suffer financially and over a third experience some sort of negative impact, such as loss of time and resource.

***“It is not a case of ‘if’, but ‘when’.”***

Neil J. Jones, Managing Director,  
North West Cyber Resilience Center

Cyber security needs to be at the forefront of any business strategy, and remote working has exacerbated the need to have robust cyber security measures. Using personal devices to access work leaves many companies vulnerable, as only 23% of companies have a cyber security policy covering home working. With many small companies not able to provide work devices, employees had to use personal laptops and phones for remote working. Only 18% of businesses have a cyber security policy

on how to use personal devices at work despite nearly half using them. Disconcertingly, the importance of cyber security had not increased due to COVID-19 for 84% of businesses.

Knowing where to start is often a barrier for SMEs, in addition to the misplaced confidence that it will not happen to them. Simple steps, such as raising awareness and training staff on how to become cyber resilient, can dramatically benefit digital security. Whilst awareness is key, an SME also needs to have a business continuity model in place, in the same way you would need one for a fire or flood. In fact, a cyber-attack is far more likely to happen and needs to be taken seriously.

Updating computer systems, having effective passwords and good digital hygiene all increase a company's digital resilience. Allocating roles and responsibilities in a cyber security plan is also very effective in keeping a business safe. Data protection is an area of increasing focus for directors and senior staff, but cyber resilience goes beyond preventing breaches. Creating processes will crucially enable organisations to recognise, respond to and recover from incidents. Building protective software and deploying penetration tests are also helpful in minimising vulnerabilities, but can be costly. National and regional agencies provide many free resources

for SMEs to help safeguard their digital security. For example, the Cyber Resilience Centre in Manchester works in conjunction with Greater Manchester Police to offer regional companies the skills and knowledge to ensure best digital practice.

Without reporting crime, analysts and policymakers do not have the intelligence needed to detect trends, patterns, perpetrators and create preventative measures. Many business leaders are also unaware that the police are fully trained in helping businesses that fall victim to cybercriminals. There is also a reluctance to report crimes because of potential reputational damage and myths surrounding the loss of business, due to equipment seizures.

Investing in cyber security can be yet another barrier as start-ups pour all their time and energy into creating and monetising a solution or product. Creative industries are well versed in protecting their Intellectual Property (IP) and need to take the same steps with their cyber security processes. Devoting valuable time and money towards developers and coders could be a lifeline in protecting businesses online. Security teams within developers create a prevention-

driven mindset rather than finding a reactive cure. Developers trained in security mean safer and more productive coding. Investment and access to finance are vital to safeguard our creative industries online.

***“You want to be working with defined policies and procedures that you have adopted business-wide.”***

Paul Harland, EMEA Channel Solutions Architect, Snyk

**Average cost of all cyber security breaches in the past 12 months<sup>11</sup>**

SMEs:

**£8,460**

Medium & large businesses:

**£13,400**

**AS LITTLE AS 1-2%  
OF ALL CYBERCRIME IS  
CURRENTLY REPORTED  
NATIONALLY**



# ACCESS TO FINANCE

The creative sector, whilst being vital for our economy, is still met with many barriers for founders and start-ups wanting to access finance. One of the key issues for investment is the lack of understanding about the sector and its breadth of subsectors.

The tech sector and the solutions it brings, is far more attractive to investors, than creative industry businesses as the business plans, growth trajectory and monetisation can be valued more easily by investors, venture capitalists and other funders. The creative sector spans so many subsectors that are devastatingly underserved, despite feeding into and shaping our culture and society.

Whilst many start-ups have probably accessed one-off funds or grants, in reality these are not enough to sustain a business or project. Again, a lack of education in understanding the amount of finance required is a barrier to successful investments. Within creative industries, there is not the initial exponential growth that investors like to see, rather it is a step-change growth pattern. The difficulty of articulating the advantages of the creative sector will continue to grow unless there is an understanding of how it works and its growth cycle. A funding ecosystem needs to be established to permit creatives to access initial and follow-on funding, allowing them to grow rather than keep searching for new rounds of finance. Entrepreneurs should be mindful of how many investors they have and who they have on board, as this can have ramifications on products and services further down the line. Developing a funding ecosystem would mitigate these risks.

There is a shared understanding between institutional bodies such as Creative England, UKBAA, and industry leaders, that the right investors need to be connected with the

right subsector. This is, in essence, a cross-collaborative education piece.

Launched in June 2021, the Invest in Creative Toolkit was built in partnership with 55 contributors, reflecting the broad partnership and inherent need for funding in the sector. The free toolkit provides unparalleled and valuable information for existing and new investors to access and familiarise themselves with the creative industry and its subsectors. It visualises the economic impact and lucrative opportunities available.

Running parallel to this barrier is the lack of understanding founders and start-ups have when it comes to finding and securing finance, valuing their intellectual assets, and being investor-ready.

Creatives are disproportionately disadvantaged when it comes to securing funding, as investors do not have the depth of knowledge in comparison to other, more tangible sectors. Though the Investor Toolkit will bridge some of the gaps, entrepreneurs must relay information cohesively and simply, in conjunction with concretely setting out commercial viability. Passion is rife within the industry and needs to continue, albeit it needs to be harnessed to produce material an investor needs.

***“Only 14% of investors investing in the creative industries invest in the North of England.”***

Jenny Tooth OBE, CEO, UK Business Angels Association UKBAA

***“The success of the creative industries relies on efficient capital as opposed to refunding at the next milestone.”***

Thomas Renn, Managing Director at Bruntwood Science Park

***“Creativity is in everything we do. When we talk about tech, digital, creatives and culture they are all interlinked and support each other and the wider economy and community. It is vital we continue to develop bespoke support programmes, to help these businesses grow, which in turn will provide future careers, GVA and investment opportunities for the region.”***

Sarah Novotny, Head of Digital, Creative and Tech Sector Business Support, GC Business Growth Hub



***“You cannot mechanically break down a creative business via an algorithm or spreadsheet. You need to understand how the flow of the industry works to recognise the value.”***

Mike Perls MBE, Chair and Founder, MC2

***“Investors want to be better connected to the sector and its subsectors, have better knowledge and see more investor-ready companies... we have created the Invest In Creative Toolkit – built by investors for investors.”***

Irene Graham OBE, CEO, ScaleUp Institute

Entrepreneurs in tech may be well-versed in protecting and patenting their products, yet creatives working in the more traditional arts are not as informed about protecting IP or placing value on their assets. Everything from brand names and logos to design and client lists form part of the company’s assets and protecting these, regardless of the cost, should be treated as a priority. The Creative Scale-Up Programme prioritises IP protection and highlights this as a key element that investors look for to safeguard their investment.

Growth hubs give start-ups the access to experts that signpost public and private sector opportunities for funding. Being investor-ready is recognised by GC Business Growth Hub as a key barrier in securing finance; it provides Access to Finance classes, mentorship programmes and pitch practice to help nurture Greater Manchester’s entrepreneurial creative talent.



#### **CASE STUDY**

**GC Business Growth Hub support helps Vivid Creative through the shutdown of the tourist sector and prepare for global scale up**

Vivid is a brand and creative agency for the tourism and place sector based in Manchester. Founded in 2000, it had ambitious growth plans, including expansion beyond the UK market, so it signed up for the Creative Scale-Up Programme to gain the skills and knowledge needed to achieve this growth.

However, the impact of COVID-19 and lockdown on the tourism industry meant that Vivid’s plans had to be put on hold, so that it could focus on its business and support its clients through a period of unprecedented challenges. With the help of the modules on the Creative Scale-Up Programme and guidance and support from its advisors, Vivid has been able to get through 12 months like no other and is now ready to look to the future and get its growth plans back on track.

***“Investors engage more if you break the sector down, you don’t do justice to the opportunities in the subsectors if you are too broad.”***

Mehjabeen Patrick, CFO/COO, Creative England & Creative Industries Federation

***“Founders and creatives need to look at who is around them, who is in their advisor pool or peer network. Who can they talk to and share experiences with, as well as discuss the potential of the business? Entrepreneurs need to engage with all hubs, accelerator programmes and use all the tools available.”***

Jessica Jackson, Head of Investment, GC Angels

***“Founders and entrepreneurs are very good at talking about the solution they bring, but less able to talk about the context of the market in which they operate.”***

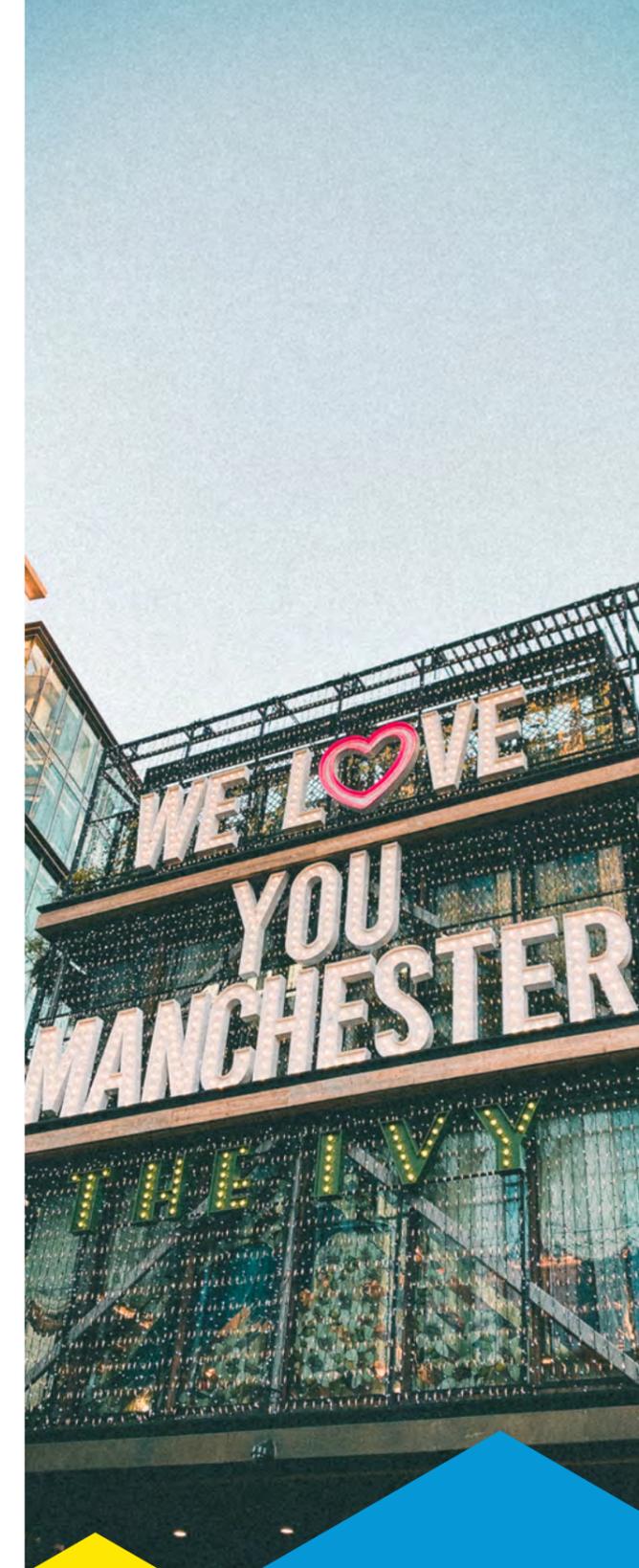
Ian Dixon, Senior Advisor - Access to Finance, GC Business Growth Hub

***“Intellectual Property should not be seen as a cost, it is an investment in your creativity and innovation”***

Dave Hopkins, Policy Advisor for the West of England, IPO UK

***“Would you be able to explain your business proposition to your nan?”***

Paul Leyland, Investment Manager, Maven Capital Partners



# THE OPPORTUNITIES

A new investment opportunity has emerged in the creative industries, as AI, virtual reality, augmented reality, the Internet of Things and big data combine to create unprecedented innovation.

Its growth over the last decade has allowed tens of thousands of companies at all stages (start-ups to prospective IPOs) to engage with a community that boasts a range of cutting-edge specialisms, fostering a collaborative and innovative community. The success of these flourishing industries directly impacts the general economic landscape of the region, with other industries beyond technology looking to invest.

The strong transport and commuter links mean Greater Manchester draws from a talent pool of 7.2 million people located within an hour's travel time from the city, on top of the 2.8 million people living within the city region. This expansive talent pool is sustained and enhanced by the attraction of young graduates enrolled in the five universities within the region of Greater Manchester. This is set to be further enhanced by the opening of the School of Digital Arts (SODA) at Manchester Metropolitan University in September 2021.

Creative businesses need to scale up and investment is crucial. Irrespective of this is the need for support in the forms of incubators, accelerators, growth hubs, networks and programmes like the Creative Scale-Up Programme (CSU).

CSU takes the raw talent of a business, harnesses its creativity and passion and turns it into investor-ready business acumen. It aims to empower creative businesses in the Greater Manchester region to realise their full growth potential and gain investment to take their business to the next level.

The CSU programme is producing investor-ready businesses that are equipped to scale up and do something remarkable with their product and service. All the businesses it works with are commercially viable, and it hones, listens to and nurtures aspirational creatives to ensure they project their opportunities for growth and profit in a translatable manner. We appreciate that not all businesses fit the criteria for the CSU programme and have partnered with DCMS on yet another venture to support more regional creative businesses, through the Creative Accelerator Programme.

*“As cultural and creative leaders, we add colour to people’s lives.”*

Nathan Clark, Director, Brudenell Presents

## The opportunity in the UK<sup>12</sup>

- 1,630 creative scale ups and scaling business in the UK
- 54% are involved in a range of markets around the world
- £43bn turnover
- 65% are innovating products, services or process at 2x the rate of larger firms
- Creative industries generated £30bn worth of exports last year

## The opportunity in the North West<sup>13</sup>

- 155 creative scale ups and scaling business in GM
- £2.29bn turnover
- 19,253 people employed

*“The Creative Scale-Up Programme is a whole basket of support for the creative industries in terms of helping them scale up, pitch, win more business globally and get to grips with trading globally.”*

Steve Connor, Chief Executive, Creative Concern,  
Board Member, Greater Manchester LEP

# INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION

Over the past decade, policymaking within Greater Manchester has allowed creative industries to thrive and become major economic drivers for the city.

The power of creative industries to generate international recognition for the city, and attract wider economic investment, is clear. COVID-19 presents a unique opportunity to galvanise the power of the creative industries to drive forward economic recovery on a wider scale.

Programmes like CSU are essential in providing the possibility for businesses to export internationally, enabling start-ups to access vital areas of expertise on how to leverage their product and service to international consumers.

As a natural progression from the CSU programme, GC Business Growth Hub offers the Global Scale-up Programme (GSU). This tailored programme presents SMEs with the limitless opportunities that being a global business can bring. Following on from CSU, teams will be ready for international expansion and be fine-tuned enough to secure investment. The Global Scale-up Programme catapults these businesses into global markets. Providing planning, testing, mentors, strategy and education, GSU creates an opportunity for creative businesses in Greater Manchester to benefit from an entire lifecycle of support.

Games are in a privileged position of hitting international markets as soon as they are uploaded, as gaming as a product has been replaced with a service. Some creative services, nevertheless, need to be transcended and redesigned to fit the needs of the new international market and new audience.

**Success spotlight:  
CREATIVE SCALE-UP  
PROGRAMME<sup>14</sup>**

Paus is a streaming platform for independent movie makers

- Paus now showcases over 2,000 filmmakers worldwide on its platform
- Over £1m of investment secured since completing the programme

*“If you are a tech business, your ambition should be national if not global. You should be looking far and wide and investors need to be doing the same.”*

Matt Latham, Co-Founder, Tickr

The Creative Leaders Festival attracts the greatest leaders from around the UK to impart valuable knowledge on a whole wealth of subjects including international expansion. The creative sector is built on shared experience and learnings, demonstrating the support these events bring. From international lawyers to titans of industry, and Chairs and Chief Executives of the sector’s most important bodies, the Creative Leaders Festival is curated with the needs of the creative start-up sector in mind. It emulates the networks we encourage the founders to join and create themselves.

The CSU programme encourages entrepreneurs to think from the perspective of the new buyers in the new markets they are trying to infiltrate. With more flexible criteria for qualifying as a scale up, the programme appreciates the way the creative sector operates. Appropriate mentors and growth advisors are assigned to ensure the best commercial care is provided to the business.

Through shared learning and the pandemic, many businesses have already expanded globally either in terms of recruitment, digital platforms or services.

**WATCH**  
TAKING YOUR BUSINESS  
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

*“The Creative Scale-Up Programme allows businesses to tap into a wider economy of knowledge and be proactive in accessing peer knowledge to facilitate the business in filling in the gaps in leadership, the structure of processes and investment routes...it’s a whole different ball game running a business that goes from under 10 employees to over 30.”*

Sarah Novotny, Head of Digital, Creative and Tech Sector Business Support, GC Business Growth Hub

Since the Greater Manchester Creative Scale-Up Programme started...<sup>15</sup>

**1,355**

Creatives have been engaged with

Businesses on our programme have raised over

**£750,000**

**100+**

businesses signposted to further support



# ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT INTO THE SECTOR



*“The Investor market is frothy.”*

Matthew Benson, Commercial and Marketing Director, Firesprite Games

The launch of the investor toolkit, created in collaboration with UKBAA, the ScaleUp Institute and DCMS, showcases the appetite for knowledge and also the return the creative industry can bring.

Worth over £6.5 billion of GVA in the North West alone, the creative sector is extremely important and contributes a significant amount to the the region. Arts and culture in Greater Manchester generated substantially higher levels of GVA than any other industry in the North West – on average, almost five times that of Liverpool, the region’s second most important economic contributor.

These economic contributions are usually made by relatively intimate teams, further amplifying the investment opportunities. Small companies are achieving earth-shattering figures: Manchester-based, Playdemic, creator of the mobile game Golf Clash, employs 65 people, generates

approximately \$80m EBITDA and is one of Europe’s leading mobile games companies.<sup>13</sup>

The CSU programme understands that every business is different with a different story to tell. The programme nurtures companies from infancy to the point of scaling up and looking to secure investment. These initiatives are critical in the continuation of the creative sector, as no other free programme currently helps SMEs in this way. The Creative Scale-Up Programme works with SMEs who are seeking early-stage investment and helps founders understand everything, from the foundations of a pitch deck to a business plan. The CSU programme ensures

investors are seeing refined creative individuals who can clearly articulate the problems in the marketplace, the proposed solution and how commercially viable this is. GC Business Growth Hub works alongside Creative England, investors and mentors with creatives from the view of the investment opportunity rather than nurturing the product.

With a strong focus on asset protection, CSU works in conjunction with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) which provides a dedicated advisor to each of the SMEs on the programme to assess IP needs and assist in the development of an IP strategy. Recognising the importance investors place on registered IP and the confidence it provides, the CSU programme educates creatives on copyright law, trade marks, patents and licencing agreements. It also works with the IPO to maintain the importance and significance that tangible and intangible assets have to SMEs.

## Success Spotlight: EVIDENTIAL REALITY<sup>17</sup>

Founded in 2014, Manchester and Berlin based Evidential Reality provides expert witness services and developed EVITA, a VR training platform for police and first responders. The software uses AR to help preserve crime scenes.

**18 Employees**

**Investment secured from GC Angels**

**Total of £45,000 external funding**

**Over £1m in innovate funding**

**Received support from Creative England, GC Business Growth Hub and Digital Catapult**

**Part of UK IMMERSIVE TECH: VC Investment Report’s 21 companies to watch**

## Creative industries across the UK<sup>16</sup>

- Creative industries worth £115.9bn GVA to the UK Economy prior to the pandemic
- £46bn of exports per year
- 2.1m people employed
- 1m new jobs projected by 2030

## Creative industries across the North West<sup>16</sup>

- Creative industries worth £6.5bn GVA to the regional economy
- 156,000 people employed



# STRENGTHENING TO EXPORT ON A LOCAL LEVEL

The Greater Manchester LEP contributes the most out of any regional LEP towards arts and culture in the North of England: £430m in GVA and 4,000 jobs.<sup>14</sup>

It has focused its efforts on apprenticeships and the Kickstart scheme to secure as many people from disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds with creative industry jobs. There has also been a £14.9m investment in the School of Digital Arts (SODA), further poised to grow and nurture emerging talent. Part of Manchester Metropolitan University, SODA will drive the next generation of creative content by providing workspaces, networks, research and teaching. Over 1,000 students will be enrolled every year, studying animation, UX design, photography, games design and AI among other courses, forging relationships and collaborating with industry partners and leaders in Greater Manchester, the UK and worldwide. SODA has much more than just a degree pathway, demonstrating the new way education needs to approach the creative industries.

It is important that growth champions segment SMEs and be attentive to their needs at a local level; each stage of growth is different. GC Business Growth Hub's specialist Digital, Creative and Tech sector business support team assists businesses right from the start and creates environments for all stages of a start-up's lifecycle to international scale up.

R&D projects at Manchester Science Park cultivate a forward-thinking space full of creativity and diversity in the digital tech and life sciences sectors. Sectors like these are vital for growth and innovation. By connecting start-ups with universities and talent marketers such as Northcoders, they help them scale up and leverage talent. Manchester Science Park is crucial for the CSU programme as homegrown ideas are seeded and nurtured until fruition in such spaces. The CSU communicates with all regional hubs to connect like-minded individuals and empower them to grow.

Creating and fostering the condition for innovation is paramount for ongoing creativity in Greater Manchester. Alongside Manchester Science Park, there are countless tech hubs, incubators and accelerators across the region, forming essential parts of the creative ecosystem. Being shoulder to shoulder with businesses from different creative sectors develops an environment of free thinking, collaboration, knowledge sharing and enhances peer networks. Manchester Innovation Activities Hub (MIAH), opened by The Blair Project and Bruntwood, has forged ties with a leading global name in IT, Cisco, to upskill local talent. Without hubs keeping innovation and learning accessible to all, the sector cannot flourish. Innovate UK has been instrumental in creating a climate of innovation across Greater Manchester. Working with GC Business Growth Hub, Innovate UK provides large funding opportunities for those undertaking R&D in the North West.

Regional support is vital. Initiatives like the Creative Leaders Festival illuminate the need for regional collaboration and the recognition that regional bodies cannot exist in silos. As with the Northern Powerhouse, regional LEPs are seeking for further collaborative opportunities to make the creative North a stronghold.

***“A common purpose and common agenda are crucial for the success of our creative industries.”***

Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL, Chair Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) & NP11

## WHAT DRIVES LOCAL GROWTH?

There are three key drivers for growth:

- Access to skilled talent – this talent can be local through apprenticeships and internships but can also be based anywhere
- Access to clusters and hubs
- Access to locally connected growth capital – we need to build more angels in the investment community.

*“There are three more ingredients that come into play in terms of how the ecosystem behaves: knowledge sharing, collaboration and active university engagement.”*

*It is fantastic to see the work that Manchester Science Park and GC Business Growth Hub are doing for the start-up community. Scale ups want and need to access the right mentor programmes and peer groups in order to succeed. This is all happening right here in the North West.*

*Scale ups are international and very innovative, that is a fundamental aspect of our scale up economy. We want to see better opportunities to connect locally and there needs to be proactive engagement from within the ecosystem.”*

Irene Graham OBE,  
CEO, ScaleUp Institute



**WATCH**  
CREATIVE SCALE-UP CASE  
STUDY BUSINESSES

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maximise your growth potential:

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