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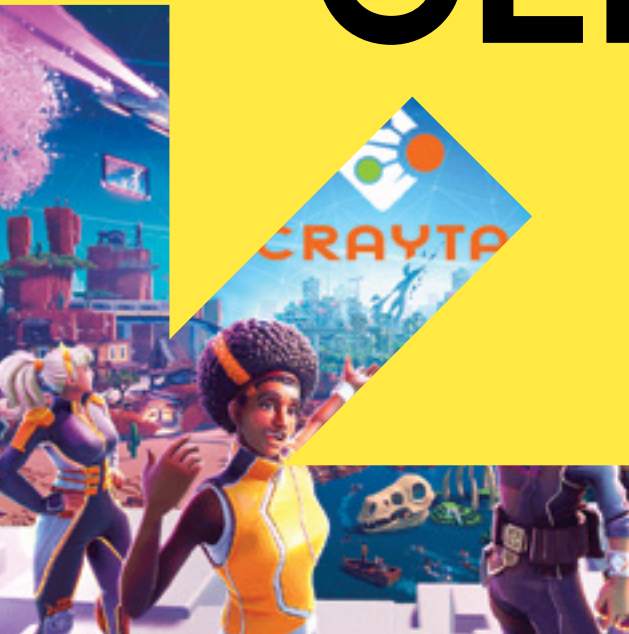


Independent Evaluation of Create Central

Executive Summary End of Year 2
September 2022



CREATE CENTRAL



Create Central brings together some of the most successful TV, Film, Games, and wider creative content¹ leaders, stakeholders, and partners in the West Midlands.

The full evaluation report can be found on the Create Central website.

We encourage you to share this summary and the full report digitally. Where we have created a limited run of hard copies for our events we have used recycled paper.

Images in and around Digbeth and at the Creative Cities Convention by photographer Jas Sansi.

Written and prepared by Jonathan Todd, Rhiannon Davies, BOP Consulting and George Bramley, WMREDI – following commission by Ed Shedd, on behalf of Create Central's Executive Board.



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¹ Create Central defines the 'creative content sector' as film, television, games, animation, branded-content, vlogger/influencer, VFX, immersive tech and those businesses directly in the supply chain.



Home of Original Storytelling

Filmed in Wolverhampton: John Boyega in Steve McQueen's 'Red, White and Blue' © BBC/McQueen Ltd



Evaluation of Create Central

The first year of Create Central (up to March 2021) established the potential of this distinctive organisation to deliver for the West Midlands.

The second year (up to March 2022) more fully realised this potential, with increasing delivery for the region. It is well-placed to strengthen this delivery in coming years, building on the strategic foundations established over its first two years.

Create Central has benefitted from funding from British Film Institute's (BFI) National Cluster Growth Fund. Create Central has delivered on the key measure of success for the National Cluster Growth Fund by leveraging additional investment in the cluster, resulting in additional employment and improved sector performance across the cluster. The National Cluster Growth Fund is financed from National Lottery funds. This evaluation comes at the end of what was initially intended as the last of two years of funding from the National Cluster Growth Fund. There has been an extension of the overhead funding of the programme by an additional year, to allow for the completion of programme delivery that had been disrupted due to Covid-19 over Create Central's first two years.

This disruption has not prevented Create Central growing its delivery over these two years. But as Create Central moves into its third year, it is necessary to establish its longer-term financial and organisational future.

This future will build upon the distinctive organisational structure established over the years covered by this evaluation – with a clear strategic focus and growing delivery for the West Midlands.

The first two years of Create Central have established a distinctive organisation in various senses:

...as Create Central moves into its third year, it is necessary to establish its financial and organisational future beyond the National Cluster Growth Fund.

Establishing a Distinctive Organisation



² www.createcentraluk.com/members#champions
These champions are Sir Lenny Henry CBE, Marverine Cole, Adil Ray OBE, Steven Knight CBE, Harinder Sangha, Jessica Symons, Ed James, Angela Ferreira, Dean Lovett, Genea Lynch.

³ BFI, Creative England, ScreenSkills, Ukie, PACT, British Film Commission, and others.

⁴ Film Birmingham, Crew Birmingham, Silicon Spa, and skills and talent providers across the region.

Focus

Create Central has deliberately focussed on the creative content sector, rather than a narrower focus on the screen industries sector or a broader focus on the creative industries. This focus has been effective in the first two years of Create Central. Looking ahead, it may be appropriate to consider whether enhanced delivery from Create Central could entail a broadened focus encompassing adjacent sectors to creative content (eg music, fashion, design), although this has not to date been discussed by the Create Central Board. This might enable Create Central to broaden its impact and unlock a wider range of funding opportunities.

Membership

Bringing together leaders from across the creative content sector of the West Midlands, who have volunteered their time to serve as members and are pioneering a model of collaborative leadership for the creative content sector in the West Midlands. The approach was consolidated in the second year of Create Central with the appointment of Create Central Champions “to act as global roving ambassadors for the region”.² Private sector backing for Create Central extended beyond these ambassadors (eg, partnership with developer on Creative Content Hub). Nonetheless, the ambassadors are emblematic of private sector backing for Create Central and received a warm welcome from Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands:



I can't think of a better group to help raise the profile of the West Midlands both within the UK and abroad, and I know they will help grow our creative sector from strength to strength.

Partnership with Key Public Sector Agencies

Alongside the private sector leadership of Create Central, the organisation benefits from public sector funding via the National Cluster Growth Fund, which is supplied by the BFI as an arms-length body of government and the National Lottery Distributor for the screen industries, and a close relationship with key public sector organisations in the West Midlands, including the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC) and the three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that serve the region.

The supportive Mayor chairs WMCA, which has helped to give momentum to Create Central. However, these public sector agencies may be reorganised, following publication of the government's White Paper on Levelling Up in February 2022. In coming years, it will be important for Create Central to establish effective ways of working with these reconfigured agencies, allowing Create Central to best contribute to regional ambitions for levelling up and economic development.

Credibility and Legitimacy

This combination of private sector leadership and public sector partnership has given Create Central legitimacy and credibility in both the public and private sectors. This has enabled Create Central to benefit from partnership arrangements and relationships with key national sector bodies³ and existing sector intermediaries in the region.⁴ These arrangements deepened and extended over the second year of Create Central. We provide more detail on the background and approach of Create Central in Chapter 1 of the full report (available on the Create Central website).

Year One



Image credit ESL

Laying the Foundations

With Chapter 3 of the full report detailing Year 1 activities, the foundations of this distinctive organisation were laid over Year 1 and delivery began during this period. The case studies that are presented in the report showcase key achievements over Year 1:

Production and Inward Investment Strategy

Create Central created a strategy that unites stakeholders in the region and provides a clear proposition to investors considering investment in the region.

Securing a Five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BBC

Create Central secured specific commitments from the BBC as part of a long-term partnership to increase its investment in the West Midlands and reassured the BBC that these investments will be complemented by coordinated activity and interventions in the region.

Establishing the Create Central Brand

Create Central is positioning the West Midlands as “The Home of Original Storytelling”. This branding unites the history of the region (eg Shakespeare, Tolkien) and the Create Central ambition, as expressed in our Theory of Change (Chapter 2 in the full report), that the region be “recognised and celebrated as a national and international creative content sector leader”.

This creative content sector leadership is intended to decisively move the region beyond disparate activity in different geographies and sectors of the West Midlands and enable the creative content sector in the region to embody the Create Central brand.

Creative Content Hub

Create Central was fundamental to unlocking the investment that will bring the Hub, a 50,000sqft campus facility for independent TV producers and creative content developers, to the burgeoning creative destination of Digbeth, Birmingham.

Innovation and Cross-sector Working

Create Central has used its BFI funding to attract additional investment that will allow it, in partnership with other agencies in the region, to respond to societal challenges (eg mental health, climate change). These are important first steps on the journey envisaged by our Theory of Change of creating “a fully converged West Midlands creative content sector at the forefront of innovation”.



Growing Delivery for the West Midlands

Deepening the Production and Inward Investment Strategy

This strategy was complemented in Year 2 by strengthened production services in the West Midlands, including the continued development of the WM Production Services Group. These services build on existing stage/studio space and crew mappings undertaken by Create Central, as well as a partnership with Creative England, which supports those seeking to film in the region. This strategy is already helping to secure additional investment and filming in the region, as explored in more detail below.

Building on the Five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BBC

In Year 2 of Create Central, these efforts:

- Secured a commitment to bring all four strands of MasterChef to the region from 2024, in a landmark 6-year deal, as well as a new primetime drama series and a new primetime entertainment series, both to be announced.
- Established a creative partnership with BBC Three and BBC England to commission three new works in the West Midlands from independent production companies based in the region.
- Were consolidated with additional strategic partnerships, including with Channel 4 and ITV.

Announced in April 2022, a new collaboration between Channel 4 and Create Central to support and grow the West Midlands' TV production sector is a consequence of work undertaken by Create Central in Year 2. This partnership includes a £30K More4 linear content development fund, a £20K digital development fund and a Channel 4 West Midlands Open Day event.

Create Central partnered with ITV and match funded two production placements for the drama Stonehouse, which was filmed in the region. These placements were awarded to candidates who had attended Create Central Bootcamps.

Growing the Create Central Brand

Month-by-month growth of Create Central social media platforms. From a blank slate in 2020, there are now over 2,000 Twitter followers, 1,600 LinkedIn followers and 1,300 Instagram followers.

The Create Central brand was strengthened in the West Midlands by delivery of events across the region. Create Central established some pattern of event delivery in the autumn of 2021, although this was impacted by the Omicron wave in winter 2021/22.

The key achievements of Year 1 were built upon in Year 2. Chapters 4 and 5 of the full report show how this was done.

Year Two

**The Create
Central brand was
strengthened in
the West Midlands
by delivery of
events across
the region.**





The Create Central brand also helped to win the Creative Cities Convention for Birmingham, with this convention, in turn, further building the Create Central brand. 250 delegates and speakers participated in the Creative Cities Convention 2022 in Birmingham. This is an industry-backed conference celebrating content production and distribution across the UK – with backing from the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, 5, and PACT.

With hosting from Kirsty Wark and Qasa Alom, the event reflected on key issues for the creative content sector in the West Midlands, eg building skills pipelines outside of London and celebrating the work of screen agencies across the UK. The Creative Cities Convention is clear on the importance of Create Central to bringing this about:



Thanks a million to Suzie Norton and the Create Central team for supporting and encouraging us from start to finish.

Progression of the Creative Content Hub

An £18m facility, based in the former Bond building in Digbeth and scheduled to open in Autumn 2022. Alongside this, while Create Central is not involved formally in the development of Digbeth Loc, Create Central supported conversations about the studios at a strategic level regionally. MasterChef will be filmed at Digbeth Loc.

Innovation and Cross-sector Working

Year 2 saw numerous achievements relevant to this, including:

- Positive Realities: Announced in Year 1, Year 2 saw the delivery of the winning project, Urban Jungle AR, an augmented reality platform hosting a series of virtual performances.

Innovate: Create – an innovation project that worked with Birmingham 2022 Festival, National Express and others. Built around challenge briefs.

The Birmingham 2022 Festival has led to two commissions – one around statues and another around engaging 9–12-year-olds with the festival, while the National Express challenge seeks to encourage the sustainable use of public transport.

More Skills Delivery

This was an important advance in Year 2, with four Bootcamps delivered:

- Content Creation for Business (June – July 2021)
- TV Production (August – October 2021)
- Video Games Production (October – November 2021)
- The Host Broadcast Training Initiative (HBTI) which has a specific focus on training up new talent for the Commonwealth Games (December 2021 – ongoing). There have been 34 participants across the first three Bootcamps, whilst to date around 125 people have been engaged with the HBTI bootcamp.

Consultation for this research has consistently revealed stakeholders that are struck by the achievements and expertise of the people involved with Create Central.



CreateCentral



Looking Ahead

These stakeholders are impressed with the way that Create Central adapted to Covid-19 and has laid the foundations during Year 1 and 2 for stronger delivery over subsequent years.

Create Central has been successful in attracting high-profile backers and building a strong brand. These successes created expectations in the West Midlands about what Create Central could achieve in Year 2 and beyond. Managing these expectations was a challenge for Create Central in Year 2 and beyond.

Year 2 saw the board agree to the development of a longer-term strategic plan for Create Central that will define its role and structure over this period. This will revisit each of the dimensions of the distinctive organisation that we describe above:

Focus

To remain focused on the creative content sector or to broaden into adjacent sectors (eg music, fashion, design)?

Membership

This will need to align with the focus of Create Central and its funding/business model.

Partnership with Key Public Sector Agencies

This partnership will need to be reconfigured following change at these agencies arising from the Levelling Up White Paper – with these partnerships also likely to play a role in the funding/business model of Create Central.

Credibility and Legitimacy

These have been established by Create Central over its first two years but Create Central may need to build a larger team to meet expectations for delivery over coming years.

Due to Covid-19 disrupting activities in the first two years of Create Central, team funding for Create Central has been provided from the BFI's National Cluster Growth Fund running in to a third year. Year 3 will allow Create Central to build on the accelerating delivery achieved over Year 2.

Many of Create Central's achievements over Year 1 and 2 have, however, been strategic – with greater potential for Create Central to deliver for the West Midlands over the longer-term, rather than in the form of immediate delivery over these first years. The BFI's National Cluster Growth Fund enabled these strategic relationships to be formed over Year 1 and 2 – but it will be necessary for Create Central to leverage these relationships and secure alternative, longer-term funding to build on Year 1 and 2 in future years.

The full impact of Year 1 and 2 will, therefore, depend on the extent to which the region is able to take advantage of the potential for longer-term delivery that has been established over these years. In turn, this depends on what emerges from Create Central's 10-year strategic plan, especially its focus, organisational structure, and funding/business model.

This report focuses on Year 1 and 2 of Create Central and these years have established strong foundations for delivery over this coming decade.

A red-tinted photograph of a busy event space. In the foreground, a person's shoulder and arm are visible. In the background, several people are standing and talking. A red carpet is visible on the right side, bordered by a gold stanchion. The overall atmosphere is that of a high-profile event or exhibition.

Case Studies



BBC announces MasterChef will be coming to Digbeth. Jon Swain Managing Director of Shine TV, Tim Davie Director General BBC, Dan Lee MasterChef Professionals winner, Steven Knight CBE, Andy Street Mayor of the West Midlands.

Collaborative Leadership

Project: BBC Partnership Agreement

Following a consultation with industry, Create Central Members identified very early on that a historic lack of investment in the region from public service broadcasters had resulted in the West Midlands being left behind, when compared to media hubs like Manchester and Cardiff.

Create Central ensured that the BBC engaged with the region's public and private sector partners to gain grassroots support for their plans outlined in *Across the UK* to formally establish a long-term partnership.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, who has been instrumental in securing the BBC agreement, said "BBC has made some significant commitments to our region. It was great to welcome Tim and his team to the West Midlands as we continue to strengthen ties with the BBC and work together to bring their commitments to life."

Create Central was key in facilitating conversations and providing the strategic engagement necessary to maximise the catalytic impact of the deal for the region's creative content sector of today and of the future.





Create Central Member Mark Hughes-Webb, Create Central Vice-Chair Alison Warner, GBSLEP Interim Deputy CEO Ed Watson take a tour of The Bond: Creative Content Hub

Project: The Bond: Creative Content Hub for the West Midlands

Create Central Members envisioned a creative content hub that could act as a lightning rod for new production, training, innovation, development, meet the commissioner events and networking opportunities for the next generation of production talent. Creating a halo effect and providing a beating heart for Birmingham's creative cluster.

Through extensive lobbying and advocacy activities for the region we attracted and engaged Oval as a commercial partner for the project. Oval Real Estate and Oval Developments identified The Bond in Digbeth as the site for the new creative content hub and Create Central played a pivotal role in negotiating a £3 million grant from GBSLEP's Local Growth Fund programme.

This funding helped bridge the financial gap, enabling the project to be delivered. The £18 million facility, based in the city's historic Creative Quarter, is a flagship project for Create Central and will be our new HQ.

Networks & Connections



Winner Grace Peters-Clarke

Project: Bridport Prize Black Writer Residency

With a view to fostering stronger links with the publishing industry, a key source of material for the screen industries, Create Central was proud to support the Bridport Prize Black Writer Residency - an opportunity for new writers of African or African Caribbean heritage over 18 who live, work or study in Birmingham and The Black Country.

Create Central Member Kit de Waal (author of prize-winning, internationally bestselling novel *My Name is Leon*, now also a film for television) will be offering support and advice to the winners. And with help from Create Central they have been able to get new laptops for their work.

Kit said, "I am delighted to be part of the Black Writer in Residence Project with the Bridport Prize. Opportunities like this can make a huge difference to a writer's work and career and to have these first awards going to writers from the central region is very dear to my heart."



Scarlett Kefford of Script Sirens

Project: Bursary Tickets for Under-represented Writers to Attend the Birmingham Film Market

Create Central aims to support under-represented creatives to develop their networks and establish connections that can grow their businesses. The Birmingham Film Market (BFM) is a pitch, sales and network event, linking film, TV and digital content makers from the West Midlands with the industry figures who get projects made and sold.

Create Central supplied four tickets to the event for under-represented filmmakers through the Back In programme and Script Sirens Writers Group.

Michael Ellis (Back In Alumni), Sara Myers and Scarlett Kefford (Script Sirens) attended the event and took advantage of the opportunity to gain advice and pitch their ideas to industry leaders.

Scarlett Kefford said "It was a truly invaluable experience! So grateful to have been able to take part – fantastic connections made!"



Project: Support to Help BBC's Radio Indie Development Fund Engage with WM Businesses

Part of Create Central's long-term partnership with the BBC in the region is about connecting the BBC with local businesses that require some advice and support to take them to the next level in growing their portfolio of work.

For the BBC's annual Radio Indie Development Fund (£250,000) Create Central provided support to host an event to promote the fund in the region. It resulted in success for two of the winning companies from the BBC Three development programme and a further three companies from the region.

The successful WM indies are:

- Must Try Softer – Birmingham
- Glenvale Media – Birmingham
- Common Story – Warwickshire
- True Thought Productions – Leicester/ Coventry/ Birmingham
- Acclaimed Content Limited – Birmingham

Tony Pilgrim, Head of Business and Change at BBC Radio & Music said "The inaugural recipients with their ideas and projects will help us and the audio production community to champion new talent, increase diversity and be more representative of audiences."

Innovation

Project: Positive Realities: XR for Youth Wellbeing, Coventry UK City of Culture in 2021

A key part of Create Central's remit is to create opportunities for the creative content industries to partner with other industries, like automotive or healthcare, to grow their business.

For our first innovation pilot Create Central partnered with StoryFutures Academy, the UK's National Centre for Immersive Storytelling, to give six West Midlands creative companies the opportunity to explore innovative new approaches to health and wellbeing for Coventry City of Culture in 2021.

A prototype budget of up to £120,000 was on offer to deliver the audience facing experience, with resources in kind from Create Central, StoryFutures Academy and Coventry City of Culture Trust to match, with support from the BFI awarding funds from the National Lottery.

After workshops with local young people, training from StoryFutures Academy and a rigorous selection process, Amrit Singh, Creative Director at Rebel Creatives and Nigel P. Harris, Creative

Director at JellyBob were chosen as the winning team that would collaborate on a web-based augmented reality project called "Urban Jungle".

They worked closely with partner agency, Positive Youth Foundation and a cohort of "Digital Ambassadors" between the ages of 16 and 25, who co-curated a series of place-based experiences and stories that spoke to their lived experience of Coventry in 2021.

The result was Urban Jungle AR - a smartphone augmented reality platform which hosts a series of virtual performances by established and up-and-coming talent - from spoken word and grime artists to dance and circus performers, viewed using a smartphone or mobile tablet at locations around FarGo Village.

Akin to "virtual busking", Urban Jungle uses innovative but accessible technology to raise the profile of young talent, offering them a platform in high-profile locations across their city.

Watch the video

Positive Realities winners Amrit Singh and Nigel P Harris

Right: Create Central's Video Games Production Bootcamp pilot was created to help the region's video games industry discover new talent, and to support local people to get a flavour of what to expect in the industry.





Project: Innovate:Create – Powered by the Innovation Engin3

Challenge briefs are open to limited companies based in the West Midlands and offer the opportunity to win support packages that include development grants to produce innovative pilot projects in collaboration with a range of international brands like the Commonwealth Games Festival 2022 and National Express.

Further challenges will be released over the course of the year in collaboration with a variety of organisations covering sectors including sport, technology and healthcare and will focus on new challenges and opportunities for innovation by creative companies in the region.



Skills Development

Developing a Model for Our Bootcamps

Create Central Members identified a lack of industry-ready talent as an issue for all the creative content sectors in the region. There is a gap between the academic world and the world of work that is not helping the skills shortage for industry.

With a view to addressing that issue Create Central engaged with industry to develop a series of Bootcamps that meet their needs, provide a more diverse and inclusive talent pipeline and give young people in the West Midlands the skills, contacts and opportunities to start their careers.

Created with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), which is funding the training, this model supports stronger connections between training providers and industry and enables an open dialogue about what skills are in need and what paid opportunities are open in the region.

Project: Video Games Production Bootcamp Pilot

The Bootcamp was developed in partnership with the games industry and course lead Gina Jackson OBE. This small pilot was delivered by North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College's Digital Skills Academy in Coventry, it resulted in a permanent job in the games industry for one of the seven 'campers.



Savhanha Nguyen taking part in the 2021 TV Production Bootcamp, photo courtesy of Common Story

Project: TV Production Bootcamp Pilot

Create Central's TV Production Bootcamp pilot was created to help the region's screen industry discover new talent and to support local people who would like to start a new career as a TV researcher, production co-ordinator or runner.

Create Central Members who work in the TV sector helped to shape the bootcamp content and offered real-life work experience for existing gaps in their businesses, with a guaranteed job interview at the end.

Aresa Foster, from Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, said: "I applied for the TV Bootcamp knowing that I wanted to pursue a career in TV production management. It was great hearing from so many industry professionals, gaining new knowledge and landing work opportunities within TV that I couldn't have achieved without the bootcamp."

The bootcamp consists of an intensive month-long programme, delivered by Solihull College & University Centre, followed by a real-to-life work placement in one of the region's top TV companies.

Colette Foster, CEO of Full Fat TV and Create Central Member said, "The Bootcamps scheme has turned out even better than any of us had hoped. With the film and television industry opening up again, we want to keep the momentum of getting people into the industry and giving them opportunities to stay in the industry, because the TV industry needs great people, and we want great people working with us."



A camper captures models on film for local business
Style By Kate

Project: Content Creation Bootcamp Pilot

This bootcamp was created to help young people with a talent and enthusiasm for producing eye-catching content for websites, blogs and social media, for platforms from Twitter to TikTok, YouTube to LinkedIn, to develop those skills into the start of a career in content creation.

Create Central Members helped to shape the content and businesses from a wide variety of industries offered real-life work experience for existing gaps in their businesses, with a guaranteed job interview at the end. Create Central and the WMCA teamed up with Solihull College & University Centre to provide the skills training.



Filed in the West Midlands, drama Stonehouse Joss Barratt / ITV

Project: Partnering with ITV in the West Midlands to Support New Talent

As part of our goal to create stronger relationships with public service broadcasters, Create Central partnered with ITV by match-funding two production placements, under their Step-Up 60 diversity initiative, for the Snowed In Productions drama Stonehouse, which was being filmed in the region.

The placements provided the opportunity to fulfil the duties of a more senior role on the production (and receive a programme credit for doing so), to give individuals experience of stepping up to assist them in their career progression.

Create Central suggested candidates that we had identified through our Bootcamps and events and they were interviewed by Snowed In Productions. Both of our candidates were successful and went on to take up the placements.

Chelsea Mills, who was able to work as Trainee Production Secretary, said "This role gave me a profound understanding of the essential responsibility of the production department to keep productions moving forward. Furthermore, the experience was a cherished lesson in how building great working relationships and communication with your colleagues can be a positive catalyst in developing a more efficient workflow and in building my own confidence."

Production & Inward Investment

Project: Creative Partnership with BBC Three and BBC England

Create Central Members in independent TV production identified a lack of development funding in the region as a major issue in holding back the growth of the small independent TV production sector.

As part of our goal to bring public service broadcasters into the region and strengthen our partnerships with them to invest in the West Midlands we established a creative partnership with BBC Three and BBC England to match-fund a development initiative.

Having initially committed to two commissions under the partnership BBC Three made three new commissions from West Midlands Indies as a result of the creative partnership with Create Central.

The commissions include a 4-part access series from Birmingham-based Full Fat TV that goes on shift with the youngest recruits to Leicestershire

Police, an obs-doc from Warwick-based Common Story that follows two friends from Bromsgrove who've turned cleaning up other people's waste into a successful business after they were furloughed from their desk jobs and a single film from Birmingham-based Acclaimed Content that focuses on 26 year old's Shannan's school for budding HGV drivers.

Fiona Campbell, Controller BBC Three, says: "Regional representation that reflects the reality of young lives across the UK is a key priority for BBC Three and these titles fully deliver on that. This scheme was initially for two single documentaries, but the quality of ideas was so high we decided to commission three titles and made one a series."

Create Central was integral to bringing these burgeoning indies to the process and supporting them to engage with the BBC to develop their ideas into commission-worthy proposals.

Queen of Trucks from Acclaimed Content





Local animators created the BBC Commonwealth Games trailer – It's a Brum Ting

Project: Engaging Commissioners with the West Midlands Animation Sector

Create Central invited local animation companies to come together for a series of roundtable/meet and greets with commissioners from organisations that have traditionally had less engagement in the West Midlands.

Through Create Central regional animation studios heard from, and had access to decision-makers from Disney, BBC Children's, BBC Ideas and Warner Media.

Michael Ford, Head of Content at Threewise Entertainment, said "As an out of London indie, opportunities to access commissioners and hear the latest "wants and needs" are always more limited than those companies based in London or adjacent to the commissioning hubs. Create Central's 'Meet the Commissioners' events have been incredibly valuable to Threewise and have already led to one-to-one conversations with commissioning potential."

Project: Engaging the Channel 4 Emerging Indie Fund with West Midlands Indies

As part of Create Central's goal to forge stronger relationships with public service broadcasters for the region we invited local independent production companies to come together to hear from Channel 4's Head of Indie Relations and Senior Portfolio Manager for C4's Indie Growth Fund. They heard in detail what Channel 4 was after and had the opportunity to ask questions and connect after the meeting.

As a result, two West Midlands Indies were chosen as part of the programme, Full Fat TV (Birmingham) & Springboard (Birmingham). No local indies have ever been chosen to take part before.

Springboard Pictures co-founder Harshad Mistry said: "We are really delighted to be selected as one of Channel 4's Emerging Indies. It's a fantastic way to build our network with other indies across the Nations & Regions, who we'd like to collaborate with, particularly in the West Midlands."





We helped new local indies connect with the BBC Small Indie Fund

Project: Engaging the BBC Small Indie Fund with West Midlands Indies

As part of our long-term partnership with the BBC, Create Central was able to help the Small Indie Fund connect with a few key local independent production companies, allowing them to build their relationship and find out more about the BBC's requirements prior to their application.

As a result, two West Midlands Indies were chosen as part of the programme, Portopia and Cornered Tiger. No local indies have ever been chosen to take part before.

"Companies like these are the lifeblood of the UK's creative industry. Last year's fund led to dozens of ambitious commissions – and we have high hopes of this year's companies" said Helen Blenkinsop, Head of Commissioning Supply.

The successful companies receive a range of support packages including strategic investment, a BBC commissioning editor mentor and development deal to help them grow.

Communications & Events

Project: Bringing Creative Cities Convention to Birmingham

A key part of Create Central's remit is to bring major events to the region. The Creative Cities Convention, a firm fixture in the TV and media calendar, attracts top creatives, broadcast leaders and producers together to provide delegates with their insights to help shape the future of screen production and distribution outside London.

The Creative Cities Convention holds an annual contest to host the event and Birmingham was up against strong competition in Liverpool and Newcastle for 2022.

The Convention's Creative Director, Ruth Pitt, said "Thank you so much, we had an awesome time, and we definitely think this was the best Creative Cities Convention yet, helped along by the amazing support and inspiration provided by the Create Central team. The whole sector is so exciting in the West Midlands that we're only sorry we can't come back again next year!"

Create Central Champion Adil Ray & Creative Director Ruth Pitt at the Creative Cities Convention





Networking event at the Legacy Centre in Birmingham to celebrate Black History Month

Project: Networking Event to Celebrate Black History Month

A key part of Create Central's remit during our first years was to support creative networks throughout lockdown. Our 'Proud to be' networking event at the Legacy Centre in Aston was our first formal in-person event.

We showcased Black West Midlands creative talent throughout Black History Month with the #proudtobe theme, and that culminated in a well-attended networking event at the Legacy Centre.

We had some great guest speakers who highlighted amazing initiatives to support Black creatives in the West Midlands and gave industry the opportunity to network with Create Central Members, local talent and creative businesses.



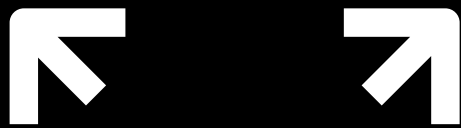
Create Central's social channels

Project: Social Campaigns that Deliver a Narrative for West Midlands Creative Industries Activity

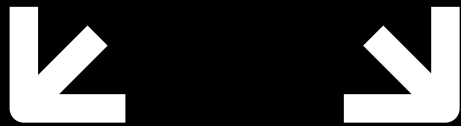
Create Central aims to promote the West Midlands as the Home of Original Storytelling. We started in 2020 with no brand recognition for the region as a place to create and grow innovative businesses.

As a result of our activities, we have seen an increase in recognition for the region and for Create Central. Our campaigns have been supported by Create Central Champions with huge reach such as Sir Lenny Henry, Steven Knight, Marverine Cole and Adil Ray.

Create Central is very active on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. As of the end of March 2022 we have accrued almost 5,500 followers.



CreateCentral



@createcentraluk
www.createcentraluk.com