Written evidence submitted by Directors UK

About Directors UK

1. DIRECTORS UK is the single voice of British screen directors representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,000 members. In our role as a Collecting Management Organisation (CMO), Directors UK represents the overwhelming majority of working film and television directors in the UK. DIRECTORS UK campaigns for the rights, working conditions and status of directors in the industry and works closely with fellow organisations in the UK, Europe and around the world to represent directors’ rights and concerns. It also promotes excellence in the craft of direction both nationally and internationally.

Inquiry response

2. Directors UK is pleased to see that the Government is looking to introduce proposals to tackle the gender pay gap and welcomes the opportunity to comment. Although we do not feel in a position to comment in great detail on the terms of the inquiry we do want to highlight an area that is of great significance to us and our members.

3. Our primary concern is that any initiative considers the situation for freelance workers, who are often overlooked when work-force studies are conducted and initiatives introduced. Our concern is that no one really knows the position regarding the gender pay-gap among freelancers.

4. The Creative industries are one of the best-performing sectors in the UK and in Europe. They provide one of the strongest areas for economic growth. The Creative industries in the UK and Europe are heavily reliant on creative individuals (especially creative leaders like writers and directors) to create, originate, visualise and produce new works. The majority of these are freelance. As an example, the television industry has moved away from a permanent staff-based model and the use of freelance workers has expanded to the point where 40% of those working in television are freelance\(^1\). Almost all of our 6,000 TV and film director members are freelancers.

5. The working conditions for freelance creative individuals in the UK and

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\(^1\) [Creative Skillset Employment Census of the Creative Media Industries](https://www.creative-skillset.org/)
Europe are getting worse. If we are to realise the full benefit of the creative industries – both economically and culturally – we need to do more to afford creative individuals the same levels of support and encouragement that we give to permanent staff employees. This will ensure that we provide an environment where freelance creators commit their careers to creating the best works here in the UK.

6. Freelance directors’ in the UK have to endure many problems with contracts and employment conditions. This makes it hard to attract and keep talent in the UK, and affects our ability to produce and export our creative work. Directors UK calls for employers to include freelance staff in all HR monitoring of the work force and for greater transparency regarding recruitment practices and pay.

7. This lack of monitoring of the freelance workforce was found to be a significant issue in our recent research report exploring the gender employment status of TV directors in the UK. In 2014 we published a research report ‘Who’s Calling the Shots? Women Directors in British Television Production’ looking at the employment levels of women directors in UK television production. Our research showed that women make up 27% of the membership of Directors UK, yet the research found that women directors were significantly under-represented compared to men in many key programme genres with just 14% of Drama; 8% of entertainment and comedy; and 16% of children’s programmes having been directed by women. Indeed, a large number of the UK’s leading drama, entertainment and comedy programmes had never had a woman director across the entire run.

8. When we took our findings to the broadcasters and production companies they were shocked to learn of our results: they did not know there was such under-representation of women directors as there had not been a consistent and systematic monitoring of freelance staff within broadcast and production companies. We are now working with the broadcasters and production companies to improve and address this.

9. As the Government is focusing on the pay gap faced by women over 40 it may be of interest to note that our research found that there

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were more women TV directors in the age range 35-44 than in any other age group.

10. Directors UK is currently in the early stages of undertaking research into TV directors pay and within this will explore the issue of gender pay gap. We have received a number of anecdotal accounts from our members of the existence of a gender pay gap, and we have seen some evidence – both independently-sourced and from our own members – of a gender pay gap of around 10% overall. However, the size of the data sample in both cases is too small to provide us with sufficient detail about precisely where the problem lies across genres, regions, age ranges etc. We therefore feel that we need to undertake some more detailed research in order to produce a sufficiently robust set of data.

11. In terms of published information about gender and pay in the film and television sector we would point you towards the following research and organisations who can provide more information:

- **Creative Skillset Workforce Survey 2014** – which found that permanent staff earn on average almost £11,000 more than freelance workers, while women earn £3,000 less than men. [http://creativeskillset.org/assets/0001/0465/Creative_Skillset_Creative_Media_Workforce_Survey_2014.pdf](http://creativeskillset.org/assets/0001/0465/Creative_Skillset_Creative_Media_Workforce_Survey_2014.pdf)

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