



Dame Caroline Dinenage
Culture, Media and Sport Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

19 December 2024

Dear Dame Caroline,

Thank you for your letter. We welcome that the Committee is continuing its inquiry in British Film and High-End Television, given the strength of the sector across the entirety of UK and its potential to contribute to economic growth. We were delighted to provide written and oral testimony as part of your evidence gathering.

The UK is an important home for Amazon. Since 2010, we have invested over £4.2 billion in the UK Creative Industries. These investments supported more than 16,000 jobs in 2022. We look forward to contributing towards the continued growth of the Creative Industries over the coming years. For example, since we spoke to the Committee, Amazon MGM Studios announced its acquisition of Bray Studios, our first fully owned studios outside the US.

Amazon has spent above 1% of production budgets on skills and workforce development initiatives on shows completed between 2021-24. We are incredibly excited about our future investment in the UK and are delighted to be bringing so many tentpole productions not just to our long-term homes at Shepperton Studios and Bray Studios but right across the UK. For example, we are currently filming Guy Ritchie's *Young Sherlock* in Cardiff. We will be increasing our total spending on skills and workforce development initiatives commensurate with our wider investment in the UK. This target should be measured over the long term, to provide the flexibility necessary for studios to take the fast decisions on productions that will keep the UK at the forefront of global growth of the screen sector.

We welcome the Committee's focus on skills and training investment. Ensuring we have a strong, vibrant and diverse workforce is essential to driving continued, and sustainable, investment in the UK. Industry already recognises this, with Amazon alongside 27 other organisations participating in the recent Film and TV Skills Taskforce. The members of the Task Force come from across the screen sectors – broadcasters, streamers, studios, unions, membership bodies, screen agencies and skills organisations. It found that over £100million was invested in skills and training by Taskforce members in 2022.

The Taskforce also highlighted the importance of scrutinising *how* the industry is investing, not just how much. We would urge the Committee to consider the same. For example, the Taskforce found that 1,000 additional apprenticeships could be created annually in the film and TV industry with reform to the Apprenticeship Levy. We believe the current policy focus on skills should be about industry working in partnership with Parliament and Government to ensure that the money being spent is being invested in the right way; rather than focusing on a specific percentage or arbitrary number.

As evidenced by the Taskforce, continued investment in skills and training is already happening but it is also important that this is shared across the whole industry. Whilst we appreciate we have been asked to set out our investment in part due to our oral evidence earlier in this inquiry, we would also urge the Committee to use the evidence base of the Taskforce, which is industry wide, rather than data shared by a handful of individual companies.

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We see our contribution to skills and workforce development as a critical part of our operations, and it has grown with our wider investment footprint. We are thoughtful about how we help drive opportunities across the breadth of the UK and have partnerships with some of the UK's most important cultural institutions as well as hyper-local programmes working closely with the communities around our main investment hubs.

One way we have created opportunities is through 'Prime Video Pathway', our £10 million commitment to broaden access to the sector and provide more opportunities for those from diverse backgrounds. Pathway has provided opportunities for over 1,000 people, targeting 50% of places for those based outside of London, and is uniquely built so that we're not just training for Prime Video but for the wider industry, with our trainees and apprentices working on other broadcasters and streamers content, including the BBC's *Call the Midwife*. We are also a sponsor of the London Screen Academy, and have created a dedicated Prime Video bursary scheme with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the first streamer to do so. In 2025, we will be focusing on how to best support upskilling out-of-work freelancers, as well as continuing to widen access to the creative sector for those from underprivileged backgrounds.

We have helped create over 300 apprenticeships across the UK Creative Industries. We have over 60 in-house apprentices supporting our creative businesses including our sports, commissioning and production teams. Our alumni have gone on to different roles within Amazon as well as moving across the industry, including to the BBC. As well as creating our own in-house programme, we have utilised our ability to transfer up to 25% of our apprenticeship levy pot to external organisations and pledged £2 million to create an apprenticeship levy transfer fund dedicated to supporting small businesses across the creative industries to take on their own apprentices. This has included working with the UK Screen Alliance as well as Screen Skills and the Department for Education on a pilot which saw us fund apprentices to work across industry productions, including Channel 4's *Derry Girls*. We also are helping the National Film and TV School pilot becoming an apprenticeship provider for the first time.

We are, furthermore, thoughtful about ensuring we provide opportunities in all the communities where we operate. By early 2022 we'd directly invested over £50million in the Scottish screen sector, creating over 750 jobs, of which 60% went to Scottish nationals, and 60 traineeships. Alongside our national skills programmes, we therefore also work closely with our local communities. We are a proud member of the BFI Berkshire Screen Cluster, a hyper-local partnership between Resource Productions (Berkshire-based training provider), Shenfield Studios, and Reading College to provide local Berkshire residents trainee placements on Amazon MGM Studios' productions. We also have a multi-year partnership with Watersprite, the world's largest, most accessible, student film festival, and supported the full redesign of Windsor College campus facilities, developing a new teaching space with state-of-the-art creative facilities. Our Ascend global crew training program launched in 2022, which is developing talent pipelines and providing career opportunities to new entrants into the film industry.

We look forward to working alongside the Committee to help the UK's Film and High-End Television sector go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MA", written over a horizontal blue line.

Monica Ariño

Director of Public Policy

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