



INSIGHT PRODUCER'S TOOLKIT

A toolkit of filmed recordings,
helpful advice and useful links

Delivered by:



Funded by:



INTRODUCTION

The Insight Producer's Toolkit is a resource of recordings, helpful advice and useful links; all delivered in bitesize digestible chunks.

Inspired by the Insight producer programme, the toolkit includes covering important stages of the filmmaking process including the various areas of film business, industry well-being and the evolving trends within the independent sector.

Whether you are venturing in to new areas of content creation, need a reminder in moments of uncertainty, or require a nudge in the right direction the Toolkit should provide you with the resource you need.

The Insight Producer programme was a professional development scheme for emerging producers on the cusp of their debut feature. The programme was delivered by Screen Yorkshire, funded by BFI NETWORK. The programme ran two iterations for two different cohorts - the first taking place between 2020 - 2021, and the second taking place between 2022 - 2023.

The Insight Producer Toolkit is designed to be an up to date resource and we may update the content with more conversations in the future. If you have some feedback, or you have an idea about something new we could include in future editions of the Toolkit, please let us know! bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk



Screen Yorkshire's **Caroline Copper Charles** and **Jo Schofield** discuss their hopes for the toolkit and **Chris Hees** gives an insight into the process of bringing so many minds together in one place.



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/toolkitintroduction



BFI NETWORK exists to support, develop and fund early career screenwriters, directors and producers. Made possible through National Lottery funding, BFI NETWORK collaborates with film organisations and leading cultural venues across the UK to provide short film production and early feature development funding, industry-backed professional development and networking support to producers, writers, and directors over 18 in age and not in full time education.

Since September 2013 this has meant:

- Funding for short films in live action, animation, immersive and documentary
- Funding for early feature development t Award nominations, including BAFTA and Oscar® wins for supported work
- A variety of professional development opportunities for writers, directors and producers including masterclasses with world-renowned filmmakers such as Steve McQueen, Luca Guadagnino, Julie Dash and Carol Morley

The best way to get in touch with BFI NETWORK is via the website [bfi.org.uk/network](https://www.bfi.org.uk/network) where filmmakers can:

- Use the BFI NETWORK Funding Finder to discover and apply for UK-wide funding opportunities
- Connect with their local film hub and Talent Executives
- Sign up for the latest filmmaking news

Contact bfinetwork@bfi.org.uk

MEET THE FUNDS

“... it is difficult to step up from a £15,000 short to a £2m feature and expect to know how to manage that” but the film teams are there to support you.

Executives from the BFI, BBC Film and Film4 give an insight in to how they work with and support producers and the importance of ongoing relationships.

The following discussions offer an introduction on how the film fund teams work with producers, with each company giving an honest portrayal of their process from development to production, their capacity and how they're finding talent through direct relationships.

MEET THE FUNDS



“our strongest mandate is that we need to be there where the commercial sector is not...”

“it’s about finding that sweet spot where you’re not compromising the vision...”

**Director of BFI National Lottery
Filmmaking Fund, Mia Bays**

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/miabays](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/miabays)



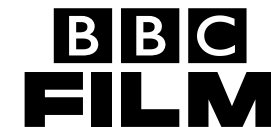
“generals are really useful to get a sense of your taste...but then come back to us with something specific”

**Development and Production Executive,
Amy O'Hara**

“it happens on projects, there’s one script that makes you feel you’ve taken a step backwards but the one that follows is ten times better... that space is built in to the process”

Production Manager, Leanna Smith

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/filmfour](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/filmfour)



“we are reactive to talent and driven by talent, but also proactive to the needs of the BBC as a broadcaster.”

“we’ll collaborate with a team to find out what the best process is, and we’ll talk about what the next best step is to get us closer to production”

Head of Development, Claudia Yusef

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/bbcfilm](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/bbcfilm)

DOCUMENTARY, ANIMATION AND IMMERSIVE STORYTELLING

A deeper look at documentary, animation and immersive storytelling, offering an insight in to how producers work within these areas and the funding available.



Working with DocSociety

Hannah Bush-Bailey talks about the role DocSociety plays in the non-fiction world, how their new BFI Doc Society Fund is responding to the sector and how a producer works with the organisation.

"we support independent filmmakers through grant funding, labs, impact work, field building and free resources..."

"the two routes of funding through the BFI are grant based funding, and are open on a rolling basis"

"...over the past 4 and a half years we have supported over 61 projects... we want our funds to be transformative"

"We are definitely hands-on in a supportive way... that level of support varies depending on what stage you're at"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/docsociety



Hannah Bush-Bailey



The Ever Changing World of Immersive Content

Senior Creative Producer, John Rose-Adams talks about finance structures, the wider world of immersive storytelling and how these industries are not so different for producers.

“the immersive way of making things, often feels like you’re in development the whole time... but a lot of it is familiar. A lot of the visual language is similar...”

“you don’t have to feel like you need to learn a whole bunch of new stuff... you just get to know new people and professions”

“we are exploring the medium still... we’re not getting to fix distribution model, it’s moving all of the time because all the perimeters are still changing...”



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/johnroseadams



John Rose-Adam

Producing Animation

Helen Brundson talks about the role of a producer within animation, how now is a great time to enter the industry and gives advice on where to find funding.

"...there's still lots to do... but there's never a better time to have a voice for independent animation and showcase the breadth of work that is out there"

"communication is key between producers and directors, producer and executives... you have to open yourself up to being vulnerable in terms of not knowing"

"...part of the pipeline can be shipped elsewhere, helping the process of financing..."



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/helenbrundson



Helen Brundson

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Paul Grindey runs through the different sources of finance and runs through a recoupment waterfall. Lee & Thompson's Christos Michaels also offers advice on the stages of closing finance and we also talk to sales companies about adding value to your package.



Sources of Finance & The Recoupment Waterfall

Paul Grindey of View Finder runs through the different sources of finance, where to find them and how to use them effectively for a finance plan. Paul also discusses the recoupment waterfall and what to expect when putting one together.

“Before you start accessing what types of financiers are right for your film, you should ask yourself what value your film has”

“it’s important you have the stamina and passion for your own project but you also need to have a measure of objectivity to regard that project in light of what it costs to make and how you can extract that value from the market”

“Banks are there to lend, but they won’t take creative risks... some financiers take a riskier position but they get rewarded for that if the film performs”

“for agreeing terms in the recoupment waterfall... once you get below the level of the senior lender or bank it becomes a question around what the risk profile is that the lender is adopting”

“there’s no hard and fast rule...”



Paul Grindey



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/paulgrindey

Working with a Lawyer and Closing A Film

Lee & Thompson' Head of Film, Christos Michaels gives an insight in to how lawyers are there to support producers and talks us through the daunting process of closing a film; what to expect and how it's less complicated than it seems if you are prepared.

"...the good news is, the more you do of these agreements the easier they get"

"the best deals are where everyone thinks they've done ok... getting the fare deal for everyone is usually the best way forward"

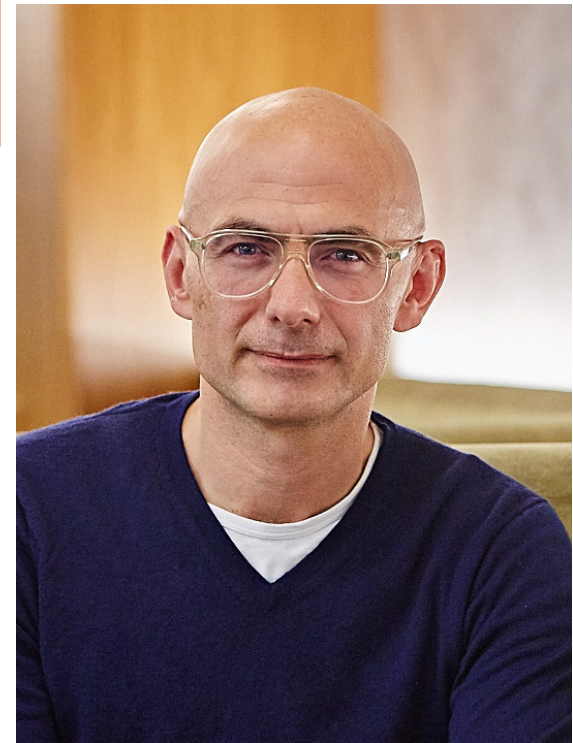
"closing a film feels daunting when you first start it... why it seems a nightmare is because at the very point you're about to produce the film, you have to deal with this process. Doing both is hard... you have to plan for timing, and anticipate how long you need to close everything off."

"have a plan B... in film there is often one or two elements that are shaky. It helps you keep on track"

"the process has lots of people... it can get fraught but having a sense of humour and a can-do attitude is something that helps"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/christosmichaels



Christos Michaels

PRODUCTION

We hear from Insight Producer Alumni on life during and after the programme, Aisha Bywaters talks to us about working with producers as a Casting Director, and Jennifer Monks shares her advice for the challenging final stages of pre-production. We also hear from the team behind Teen Club who talk to us about their producing partnership.



Insight Producers - Alumni

Producers Lorine Plagnol and Rami Pantoja are both Alumni of the Insight Producer Programme.

Rami Pantoja is a Kent based producer who started life working his way up the production ranks and working within post production. He talks to us about the opportunity the Insight Producer programme gave him at such a crucial time in his career.

"I had done shorts but I felt I needed more formal development so Insight was really useful."

"the programme built my confidence, and I felt like I had a little stamp of approval"

"doing the insight programme helped me define myself and my taste as a producer"

Lorine Plagnol talks to us about her time on Insight, and the importance of peer support. We also talk in detail about her journey with making Dalton's Dream as it revolves from one story to another.

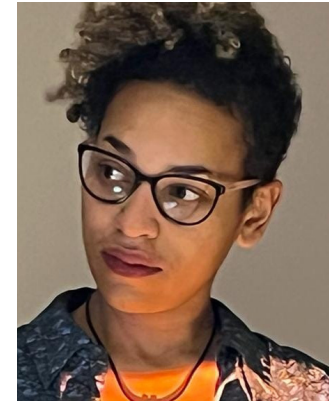
'The Insight Programme was a very supportive one. It kicked off during covid and the other participants became my window in to the world and industry. It gave me the tools to plan for the future, but also helped me realise whether I've been doing it more or less right so far'

'I feel like every producer is doing things slightly differently, and each film needs specific things so having both access to professionals and your cohort was extremely helpful'

'As a cohort, giving each other support is priceless'



Rami Pantoja



Lorine Plagnol

» RASP FILMS »

SUN
GAZER



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/ramipantoja

vimeo.com/bfinetwork/lorineplagnol

The Pre-Production Period

The stages of pre-production and closing collide at a frightening pace, but The Fold's Jennifer Monks offers advice on how to deal with those moments, and how a strategic prep diary and building a strong communicative team around you can make all the difference. The conversation is full of advice about cash-flowing pre-production, workplace policies, and the importance of getting deal memo's and CAN's signed before contracts.

"...there are quite a few things that can catch you out... but I think the most important thing to understand is the relationship between you and your Line Producer"

"you need to request money from financiers before closing ends... you need to make sure you've planned the cashflow with your line producer and accountant."

"a debut director may not be expecting the volume of conversations that will come in... you need to support them and their diary to make sure each new Head of Department gets a page turn"

"When you get in to prep you'll start having weekly meetings with your Production Executives... these are about allowing them to share the burden that your under so they can help you"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/jennifermonks



Jennifer Monks



Doing it Together

Teen Club was established to fulfil the joint interests and passions of producers Loran Dunn, Sorcha Bacon and Savannah James-Bayly – the trio talk about the benefits of working as a team, the importance of trust and their reasons for partnering up.

“we realised through pitching the first project that we really enjoyed working with each other... it felt sensible to follow the joy,”

“we have a shared language, and the trust was already there”

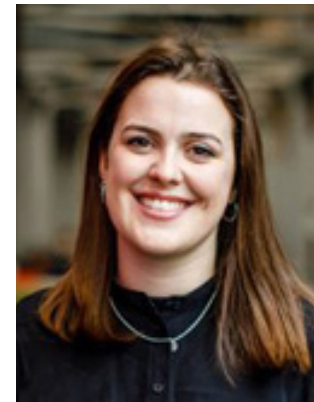
“we all have our strengths, and if some of us are busy doing another project, we can pick up where others left off... when there are three of you, there is always a forward motion”

“find people where there is a mutual respect... and when you talk to them you find it really energising”

“so much of producing is about protecting other people from the stresses of the job, and this is the first time that it felt like we all pick each other up... but we can also be very vulnerable.”



Loran Dunn



Sorcha Bacon



Savannah
James-Bayly



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/teenclub



Working with a Casting Director

Aisha Bywaters talks about her role as a casting director, the importance of relationships and how she works with producers. We talk in depth about when and how a producer should approach a casting director and then the process that follows.

'I know cast who have a love of independent cinema, or those who like creature comforts. We need to know how to approach them'

'It's very hard to get through to people if you don't have a relationship... If you know me and my work, an agent might get a sense of a project'

'We have no idea why some people pick films or not... It can feel very personal, but we create a list and then go down the list one by one.'

'My favourite way to work is in a collaborative way, if you want to hire me as a recruitment consultant it's the worst version of my job and it doesn't utilise a casting directors skill set and experience... This is your film, I'm not here to get the actors I want'

'You don't want to get in to a situation where you're just in a cue and waiting. But you can take the qualities of a known actor and try to persuade a sales company that a new actor, who might have won a BIFA is worth looking at'



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/aishabywaters



Aisha Bywaters

INCLUSION, SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLBEING

Three of the most important topics within film and television and as talk turns to action we receive an insight in to the work being done across Inclusion, Sustainability and Wellbeing. Keir Powell-Lewis shares thoughts and useful links for producers keen to play their part in making a more sustainable industry, Leon Oteng talks to us about the steps being made for diversity within production at the BFI, Sophie Freeman introduces the Film and TV Charity's Whole Picture Toolkit and wellbeing coach Kate Maxwell shares her thoughts on how to achieve a work-life balance.



Inclusion Across Production

Leon Oteng is the Production Inclusion Manager at the BFI, he gives us an insight in to the work the organisation is doing to make productions more inclusive. A lot has been achieved across the industry, and we're beginning to see a real culture change, but more needs to be done and that's the responsibility of everyone in the industry.

'Institutions have realised things need to change, but jobs like mine shouldn't necessarily exist in the future. It should be blended in to what producers do'

'Just saying you want to action things isn't actioning things, there has to be physical work done. And accountability is a key word'

'...films should be more reflective of society today but you don't have to do that in every way.'

'Having someone with lived experience is important. You should have a diversity rich film crew and cover your blind spots'



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/leonoteng

Usefull Links

www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry



Leon Oteng

Disability and Accessibility in the Film Industry

Melissa Johns introduces us to Triple C and DANC, and talks us through the impact being made in the area of accessibility and inclusivity across the film industry. From hiring access coordinators and taking training courses to using the correct terminology and encouraging an industry culture change, Melissa talks in an honest and candid way, encouraging us all to do what we can to make what change we're capable of.

"all of the things we do need to link up for us to change the industry for the good and so it's actually long-lasting change"

"everyone can really play a part, even if it's just changing terminology... there's so much they can do to make a difference"

"when you make your space accessible it works for everyone"

"I don't have a problem with quotas. If we're not doing it organically we need to start somewhere. So make pledges and say them out loud so you're accountable for them."

"we're not starting from scratch, just make sure you're engaging with disabled led companies"

 vimeo.com/bfinetwork/triplec



Melissa Johns

Sustainability

BFI's Keir Powell-Lewis talks us through one of the most important current topics within film and television – how we make film and television a more sustainable industry. He talks about the work being done across the sector, and where filmmakers can find support.

“...there are a number of specialist working in specific areas and have some really good knowledge, so it's our job is bring them together so the impact is bigger”

“with sustainability there are two sides to it: the thinking and the doing and they work in tandem... build in sustainability from the start”

“sustainable decision making in production is not always additional costs... and that's a common misconception in the industry”



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/keirpowelllewis

Usefull Links

[blog.bfi.org.uk/long-read/setting-the-scene/
environmental-sustainability-and-meeting-net-zero/](https://blog.bfi.org.uk/long-read/setting-the-scene/environmental-sustainability-and-meeting-net-zero/)

wearealbert.org/production-handbook/



Keir Powell-Lewis

[Inclusion, Sustainability and Wellbeing](#)

The Film and TV Charity

Sophie Freeman from The Film and TV Charity introduces the Whole Picture Toolkit, an essential resource for promoting mental health during the production of films and television series.



24/7 Support Line
on **0800 054 0000**



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/ftvc

Mental Wellbeing and the Human Givens

Kate Maxwell is a group coach and facilitator who works with talent executives, creative producers and individuals to provide transformative coaching for innovators and creators across the arts, culture and tech sector. In this zoom Kate talks about mental well-being, human givens and gives us advice on taking a moment, and striking a balance in work and life.

“resilience as a skill is more about getting through difficult situations, while the human given theory is focused on well-being and care for yourself and others, regardless of how tough a time it is...”

“it’s about balancing what you need as a whole human being, not just as someone who has a job, makes money and makes films”

“it’s very British, it’s modesty to a fault... but to acknowledge the things that have gone well, to acknowledge moments of praise or acclaim, that’s not vanity or arrogance...”

“having an articulated life purpose is not needed in order to feel like you’re doing something with purpose and intention.”



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/katemaxwell

KM



Kate Maxwell

Human Givens

- **Security** – safe territory and an environment which allows us to develop fully
- **Attention (to give and receive it)** – a form of nutrition
- **Sense of autonomy and control** – having volition to make responsible choices
- **Emotional intimacy** – to know that at least one other person accepts us totally for who we are, “warts ‘n’ all”
- **Feeling part of a wider community**
- **Privacy** – opportunity to reflect and consolidate experience
- **Sense of status within social groupings**
- **Sense of competence and achievement**
- **Meaning and purpose** – which come from being stretched in what we do and think.



MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

Andrew Snook talks about the importance of capturing marketing assets before it's too late, Síle Culley introduces the process of Audience Design and Bankside's Sophie Green gives us an insight in to how sales companies work with producers. We also hear from Vicki Brown, the BFI's new Senior Executive for Sales and Distribution, who talks about her work as the founder of Milk Tea.



Marketing Assets for Film

The pressure of production often means independent films find it difficult to capture those elements for marketing and selling a film - Andrew Snook, co-founder of Silk Factory, talks about the importance of collecting AV assets from an early stage and the strategy that might coincide with a film's release.

"being on a project as early as possible gives us an opportunity to advise on the sort of content we should be capturing... begin with the end in mind"

"the audience changes... the objective is always the same"

"...with an independent film you have the opportunity to take a few more risks"

"it's such a great opportunity if you can plan in advance, and worth its weight in gold"

"A traditional trailer might not make as much of an impact as a simple but effective tweet or tiktok... you should always embrace social media and digital platforms"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/andrewsnook



Andrew Snook

SILK.FACTORY

Audience Design

Audience Design is a relatively new term to a lot of producers but it's growing popularity and impact in both television and film is seeing great results at every stage of the process. Síle Culley talks about the process of working with an Audience Designer such as herself, the importance of audiences in general and when we need to start thinking about them as producers and film teams.

For those interested in Audience Design should look in to the course at Torino Film Lab and the International Film Institute.

"we always recommend you think nice an early about who your audience will be, and what can grab their attention..."

"Audience Design is like a toolbox of different exercises, challenges, conversations or brainstorming sessions that you have to understand exactly what the film is in terms of themes, the core of the story etc"

"we don't want to be stepping on the toes of distributors or creative agencies but it is important [in development] to already think about visuals"

"...more and more public funders and screen agencies are asking 'who is your audience' or 'what is your market strategy', even in development"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/sileculley

Audience Design

with **SÍLE CULLEY**



Síle Culley

Marketing & Distribution

How To Hook A Sales Company

Bankside Films' Sophie Green tells us what sales companies are looking for, the strength of visual materials when approaching her and how Bankside prefers to work with producers.

"we always like to see things early, but at the same time it does need to be cooked - it has to be a developed script that feels market ready"

"we have seen a real need for producers, particularly with early stage talent, to have their sales agents on board early... we can bring our expertise to the conversation before you have started making those key decisions like cast"

"there has to be a significant reason for me to have the wider sales team read a project to consider"

"pitch decks are good as long as they are succinct, visuals are really useful and I want sizzles to be really directly relevant"

"[Bankside working as an Executive Producer] is very tailored, it depends on the needs of the team and the project... I would bring my experience and relationships from the finance front and work with the producer [closely]"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/banksidefilms



Sophie Green

Milk Tea – Building Inclusion, Communities and Audiences

Vicki Brown is the BFI's Senior Executive for Sales and Distribution, and also runs Milk Tea with producer, Chi Thai. Milk Tea's aim is to screen the best of East and Southeast Asian cinema in the UK. Vicki talks to us about the aims of the organisation and the importance of bringing a more diverse set of films to theatres. Her role at the BFI also offers a fantastic insight in to the wider role the organisation plays in what content is made and screen in the UK.

'Distributors are very good at projecting widely, but it's much harder for them to do the grassroots stuff and that's what Milk Tea is there for'

'It's all been very organic, a lot of stuff is through word of mouth. We benefit from an influencers groups within Milk Tea, which we call Alliance.'

'Distributors like the idea of a tastemaker that speaks to their own audience, it feels more authentic than just seeing a massive poster. We work with people who don't necessarily have a big audience, but have high engagement'

'We know who our target audience are but we don't want to stay within that echo chamber. We're there to celebrate story and filmmaking, it's to our benefit that audiences beyond our community are aware of these EC films.'



Vicki Brown



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/vickibrown



CO-PRODUCTIONS

Lizzie Gillett offers us an insight in to the process of making award-winning documentary 'Merkel' with international partners, and we are introduced to all three strands of the BFI UK Global Screen Fund.



Co-Production Case Study

From raising finance, going in to production and then sharing a film with audiences, it sounds like building the strong relationships is a key part of any co-production journey - Lizzie Gillett shares her experience of co-producing documentary Merkel.

"trust is a really big thing... it's complicated... but then again every film is"

"in some cases, co-productions can be more expensive... you have to be really strategic at the beginning; what can a co-producer bring, and what do they take"

"the global screen fund is brilliant and worked very well for Merkel but there are always hurdles"



vimeo.com/bfinetwork/lizziegillett



Lizzie Gillett

Introducing the BFI UK Global Screen Fund

The BFI UK Global Screen Fund (UKGSF) is designed to boost international development, production, distribution, and promotional opportunities for the UK's independent screen sector. Below, we hear directly from all the project managers who work across all strands of the fund.



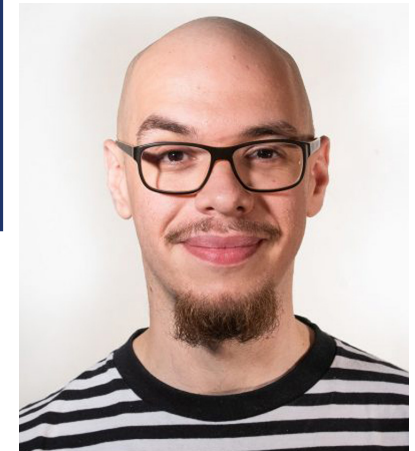
Attica Dakhil
International Co-Production

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfproduction](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfproduction)



Phoebe Hall
International Distribution

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfdistribution](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfdistribution)



Chris Filip
International Business Development

[▶ vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfbusiness](https://vimeo.com/bfinetwork/gsfbusiness)

For more information:

www.bfi.org.uk/get-funding-support/funding-support-international-activity/uk-global-screen-fund

[Co-production](#)

INDEX OF USEFUL LINKS

www.bfi.org.uk/funding-industry

www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights

www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry

www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfilm

www.film4productions.com/productions

docsociety.org/

blog.bfi.org.uk/long-read/setting-the-scene/environmental-sustainability-and-meeting-net-zero/

www.bfi.org.uk/get-funding-support/bfi-national-lottery-sustainable-screen

www.equity.org.uk/campaigns-policy/the-green-rider

www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-vision/creative-industries-sector-vision-a-joint-plan-to-drive-growth-build-talent-and-develop-skills

wearealbert.org/2023/08/21/award-winning-salt-water-town-addresses-climate-change-on-and-off-screen/



INDEX OF USEFUL LINKS

wearealbert.org/production-handbook/

wearealbert.org/editorial/

wearealbert.org/2022/02/01/were-working-with-the-welsh-screen-sector-on-a-screen-new-deal-transformation-plan/

www.filminginengland.co.uk/sustainable-production-practices/

filmlondon.org.uk/resource/guidelines-for-sustainable-filming

www.screenyorkshire.co.uk/

northeastscreen.org/

screenmanchester.com/

www.liverpoolfilmoffice.tv/

filmtvcharity.org.uk/

www.pact.co.uk/

bectu.org.uk/

