

Invest 2035 - Industrial Strategy
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London SW1A 2DY

Thursday 7th November 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

Invest 2035 - Industrial Strategy

Firstly let me thank you for recognising the importance of the creative industries to the UK economy. By selecting it as one of the eight key pillars of economic growth, you recognise the hard working professionals in our sector and their creativity which is the foundation for all its success.

Spotlight is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform, used by performers for marketing and advertising purposes. A Spotlight subscription fulfils a function for many performers, allowing them to showcase their skills and talent to those that may wish to cast them. We have been in existence for almost 100 years and we are an essential part of the success of the creative industries. It is therefore important that we respond to your consultation because we are uniquely positioned to provide an overview of the industry through our relationships with all areas of the industry from gaming to theatre, film to advertising and so much more.

Having reviewed the questions contained within the consultation, we are not in a position to offer the detailed information you seek. However, taking the consultation document as a whole, I would like to take this opportunity to caution against applying only financial targets to our sector. They are of course useful and necessary for an industrial strategy. However, it is important that creative risk is also protected as part of your goals. It is a crucial part of our sector's ability to succeed and be competitive, as well as protect our global influence. Creative risk has been essential to the development of many key outputs. Without the freedom to fail, the National Theatre would not have been able to create War Horse for example, nor would Six The Musical be a global phenomenon. Like many creative visions, the ability to explore an idea without having certainty in its success ensures the freedom to innovate and challenge preconceived ideas. It allows individuals to fully explore their creativity in a safe environment. This is integral to our sector and why we produce such highly talented performers. No creative person intends to fail, the intention is always to deliver their creative vision to a receptive audience. But the ability to fail and try again can lead to truly great cultural products and it should be protected in your proposals. I realise that this is a difficult thing to build into an industrial strategy but for the economy to realise its full potential, it is vital that it is tolerant of a certain level of risk. This is

certainly true for the creative industries as it will be to many of the remaining seven pillars identified in your strategy.

Spotlight understands that our world class talent comes from all four corners of the United Kingdom, and we agree that by encouraging creativity and access to the cultural offer, our sector boosts the whole economy and this is recognised through the work we have done in the different nations to support performers. On behalf of those performers, we also welcome the Government's commitment to improve relationships with the EU to allow improved investment. We would also ask as part of those discussions to address the issues preventing our performers being easily cast in roles beyond our borders within the EU. If we are to remain globally competitive, our voices delivered through our on stage and on screen talent, they must be able to travel easily and quickly to meet the demands of filming or other schedules.

We welcome your commitment to creating an ongoing and open dialogue between business, experts and policymakers as you review and adjust your Strategy to the needs of the sector and the economy. We would like to be involved in that dialogue with your Department going forward, not least because our experience of the sector will help you find the language to build in creative risk, but also because you have recognised the importance of technology, innovation and AI in the role of the Industrial Strategy Advisory Council. Spotlight has been working with industry partners on this issue for some time and have brought together experts to discuss the issues for our sector in our annual event, the Industry Forum. My staff have expertise in this area, and with our owner Talent Systems based in the United States of America, our experience and understanding is informed by that of our colleagues working with partners in American audiovisual production. It ensures that our understanding of the challenges and potential benefits of AI are informed by what is happening in America and it means that we are able to provide real and informed details to enhance any conversation on this issue.

We wish you well as you develop your Strategy and we look forward to working with you as you develop the detail for the Creative Industries.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Hood', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matt Hood
Managing Director