

HLL WBF

Hwylusydd Lles
Well Being Facilitator

Uniting for healthier productions



Wellbeing facilitators in action across Wales' screen sector

Jess Lancashire, March 2026



EQUITY



**Cymru Greadigol
Creative Wales**





Uniting for healthier productions

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“Poor mental health, bullying and insecure working conditions have been recognised as persistent challenges across the creative industries workforce for many years. Too often, talented professionals have been expected to absorb chronic pressure in silence. Trade unions have consistently called for more decisive action to ensure that workers can operate in environments that are safe, fair and respectful. As has been widely acknowledged, meaningful progress requires partnership but it also requires leadership”.

Philippa Childs, Head of Bectu

 Over the past four years, Wales has taken an important step forward. Through an innovative social partnership model, led by unions and developed alongside Welsh Government and industry, practical interventions have been tested to strengthen wellbeing at both an individual and structural level. This report sets out what has been learned and demonstrates the potential of this approach to move beyond rhetoric and embed lasting change, positioning Wales as a sector that values not only creative excellence, but the workforce that makes it possible.



Executive summary



Poor mental health, bullying and insecure working conditions have been longstanding and widely acknowledged challenges across the creative industries workforce. For too long, responsibility for managing these pressures has fallen on individuals rather than systems. In Wales, trade unions took the lead in developing a different approach, working in social partnership with Welsh Government and industry to test practical, structural interventions that strengthen wellbeing at its source.

Between 2022 and 2026 CULT Cymru and 6ft from the Spotlight CIC united to run a Wellbeing Facilitators (WBFs) pilot funded by Creative Wales. WBFs were placed on 52 productions across

scripted and unscripted genres, with a further 21 productions choosing to self-fund the role. The model combined independent, confidential support for the workforce with proactive risk assessment, leadership engagement and clear escalation pathways. Over time, the pilots expanded to include a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator and broader consultancy support, demonstrating growing sector demand and confidence in the model.

Feedback was clear. Producers reported greater confidence in meeting their duty of care, earlier identification of risk and stronger leadership decision-making under pressure. Workforce respondents highlighted the value of having an



independent and trusted point of contact, contributing to increased psychological safety and reassurance at work. More than 95% of respondents expressed support for continued use of the role.

The pilots also reinforced a central lesson: wellbeing is not a “soft” issue but a structural one. It is shaped by working hours, insecurity, power imbalance and commissioning pressures as much as by individual experience. Sustainable change therefore requires more than crisis response. It demands early intervention in pre-production, integration of mental health and stress risk assessment into company processes, clear standards and accountable leadership.

Four years of delivery have demonstrated that union-led social partnership can move the conversation from rhetoric to action. The opportunity now is to consolidate and scale this work, embedding wellbeing into the fabric of production practice across Wales and ensuring that safe, fair and respectful working conditions become the norm, not the exception.

What is wellbeing?





There is no single agreed definition of wellbeing in the screen industry; it draws on public health frameworks, workplace regulation and sector initiatives. The World Health Organisation defines mental wellbeing as the ability to realise potential, cope with normal stresses and work productively. In the UK, the Health and Safety Executive frames wellbeing through the management of work-related stress, shifting focus from individual resilience to workplace conditions.

Unions and sector bodies such as the Film & TV Charity and CIISA further emphasise structural factors including financial insecurity, bullying, safe environments and professional conduct. Wellbeing reflects the interaction between individual experience and production conditions, requiring both cultural and structural responses.



The law

 In the UK screen sector, wellbeing is shaped by three overlapping frameworks: health and safety law, equality and harassment law, and working time regulations, which apply differently in a freelance-heavy industry.

Health and safety law requires productions to manage risks, including foreseeable stress and fatigue, for employees, freelancers and contractors. Equality law protects against discrimination and harassment, with a proactive duty since October 2024 to prevent sexual harassment. Working time regulations set rest and hour limits for employees and workers, though not usually the genuinely self-employed i.e. those that have control over their working hours; excessive hours may still create liability under health and safety duties.

Wellbeing is therefore underpinned not only by culture but by clear legal duties, even within freelance-dominated sectors.

Desire for change

 In 2020, as the industry was hit by the impact of the COVID pandemic, the industry recognised that short-term responses were insufficient and sought structural, preventative solutions.

Between 2020 and 2022, CULT Cymru and 6ft from the Spotlight brought a wide range of industry partners together to identify practical, tangible support that could support individuals at point of need and longer-term cultural change.

From this collaborative work, the wellbeing facilitator role was identified as a sustainable and scalable innovation that could be spearheaded within Wales.

"There's a tendency for employers not to take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of freelance workers. But, especially in a workplace that puts an emphasis on accuracy and working quickly and to a tight deadline, this step is to be welcomed."

Original Advisory Group



Cymru Greadigol
Creative Wales



Current Advisory Group



The Wellbeing Facilitator (WBF) role

 The WBF role was introduced as an impartial and confidential role that equally benefits the employer and workforce by providing structured support to productions seeking to strengthen psychological safety and meet their duty of care obligations. Operating independently from line management, the facilitator acts as a confidential point of contact for cast, crew and contributors, while advising producers and Heads of Department on preventative approaches. The role is not therapeutic; it focuses on identifying risks, supporting early intervention and signposting to specialist services where appropriate.

Across the production lifecycle, the facilitator works proactively to anticipate pressure points, clarify behavioural expectations and address issues before they escalate. The aim is to support safe, respectful and sustainable working environments, bridging legal responsibilities with day-to-day production practice.

“As well as having the ability to monitor stress levels, and feed back to senior production team, the WBF was key to allowing production crew to offload and decompress with a neutral member of crew.”

“All productions should have a WBF the same way that all football matches need a referee. This is part of the industry that has been neglected for far too long and history shows the results of that quite clearly.”



Pre-production

- Set policies and reporting routes
- Conduct mental health and stress risk assessments
- Identify sensitive content risks
- Identify individual wellbeing needs



Production

- Provide confidential support for the workforce and the production
- Support producers and Heads of Department
- Identify and de-escalate conflict early
- Implement risk control

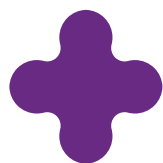


Post-production and broadcast

- Support post-production teams
- Manage sensitive content risks
- Plan post-broadcast care
- Capture learning and feedback

The story



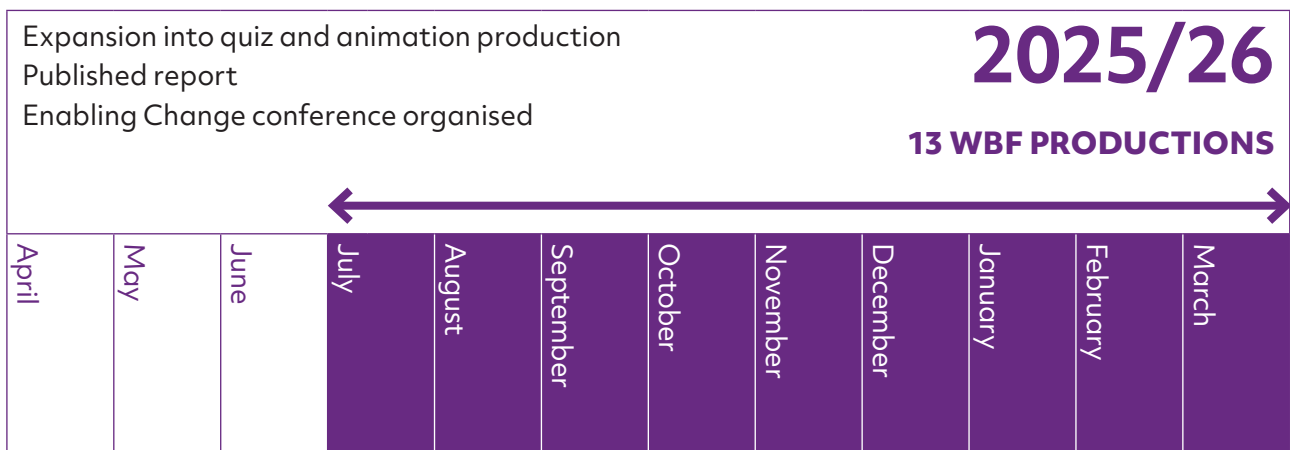
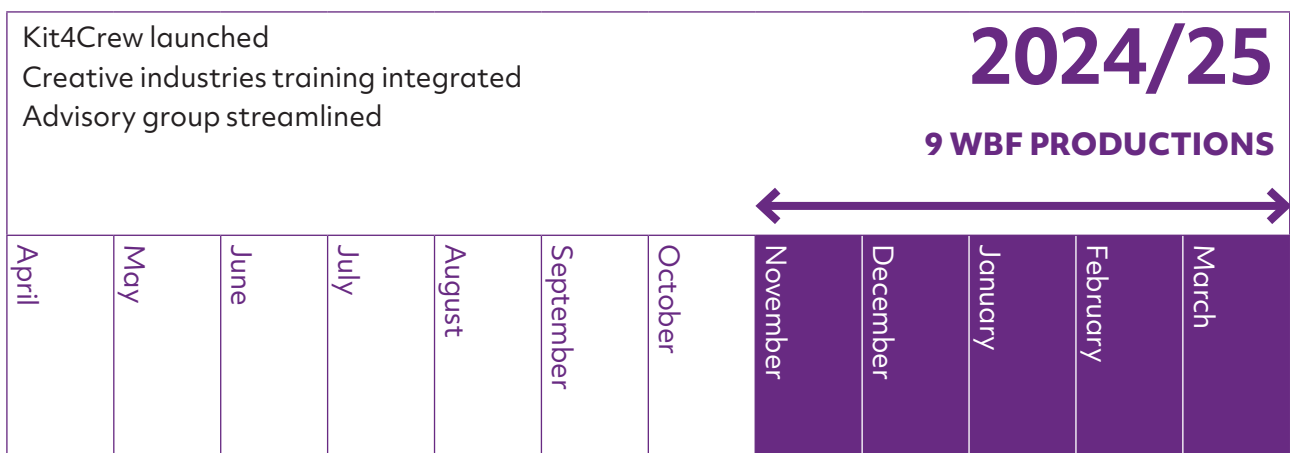
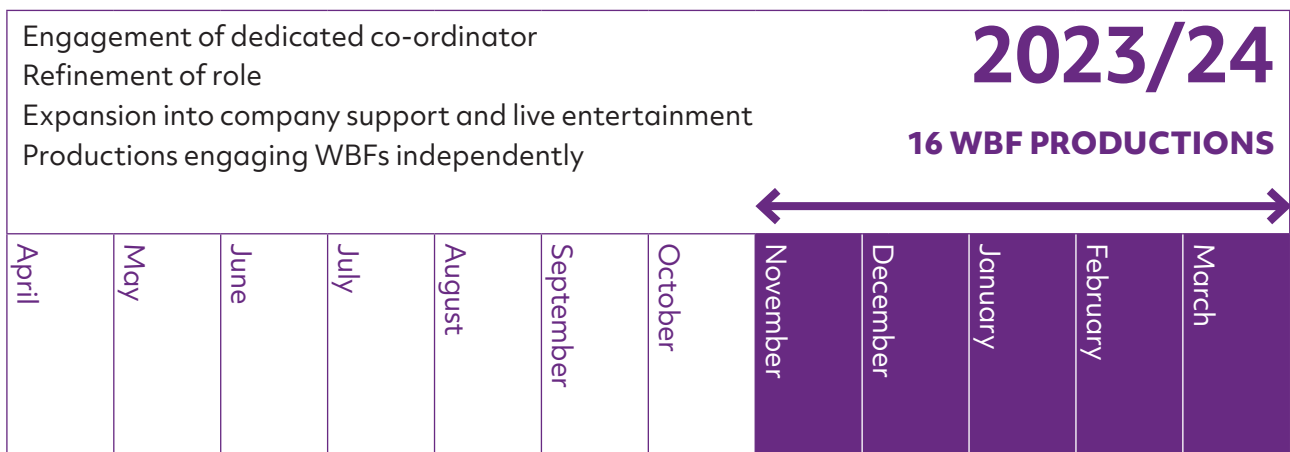
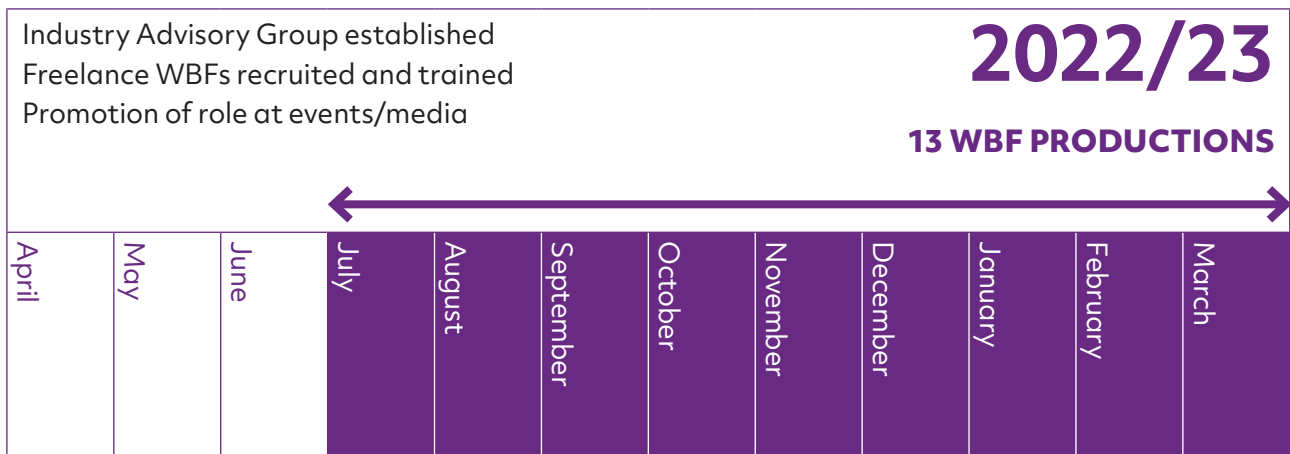


The screen industry in Wales is characterised by a large number of production companies, many operating with few, if any, permanent staff and relying heavily on freelancers.

Alongside Wales-based productions, larger projects are attracted to the nation through Creative Wales, the Welsh Government agency that supports the sector through location services and production funding. Initiatives such as It's My Shout also provide voluntary work experience opportunities, often working with vulnerable trainees.

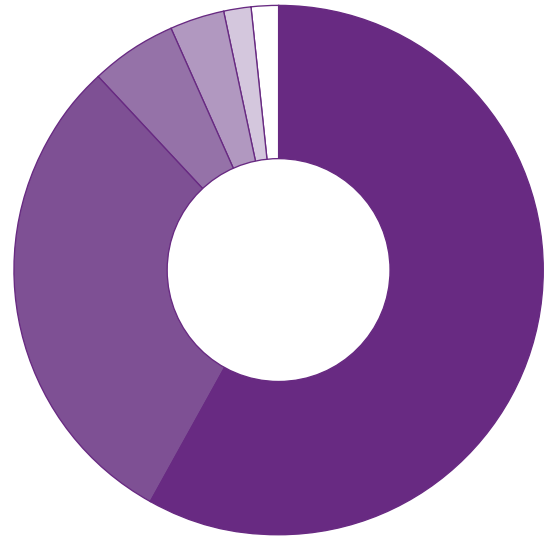
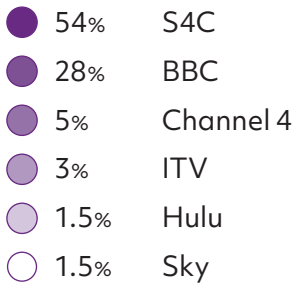
Within this landscape, the WBF pilots evolved over time, including engagement of a dedicated Mental Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator after year one, a model unique to Wales, and expansion into animation during the fourth pilot, reflecting both sector need and growing ambition.

The pilots helped stimulate wider sector engagement, leading to initiatives such as Kit4Crew and leading to the funding of Wellbeing Facilitators on a further 21 productions beyond those supported directly through the pilots.

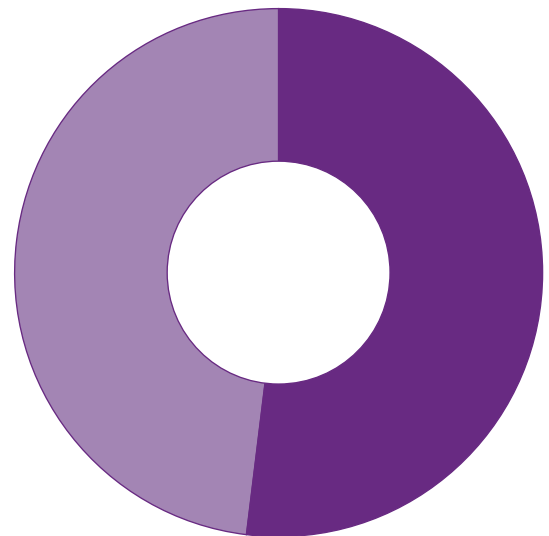
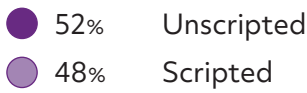


WBFs were placed on 52 productions over four years. The following pages present key data for this pilot sample, with full production details on pages 18 and 19.

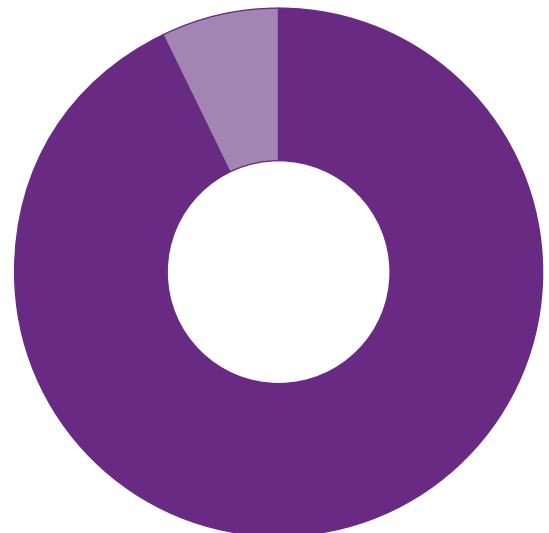
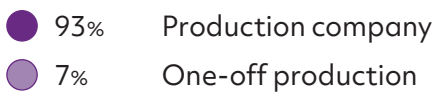
Commissioners



Genre

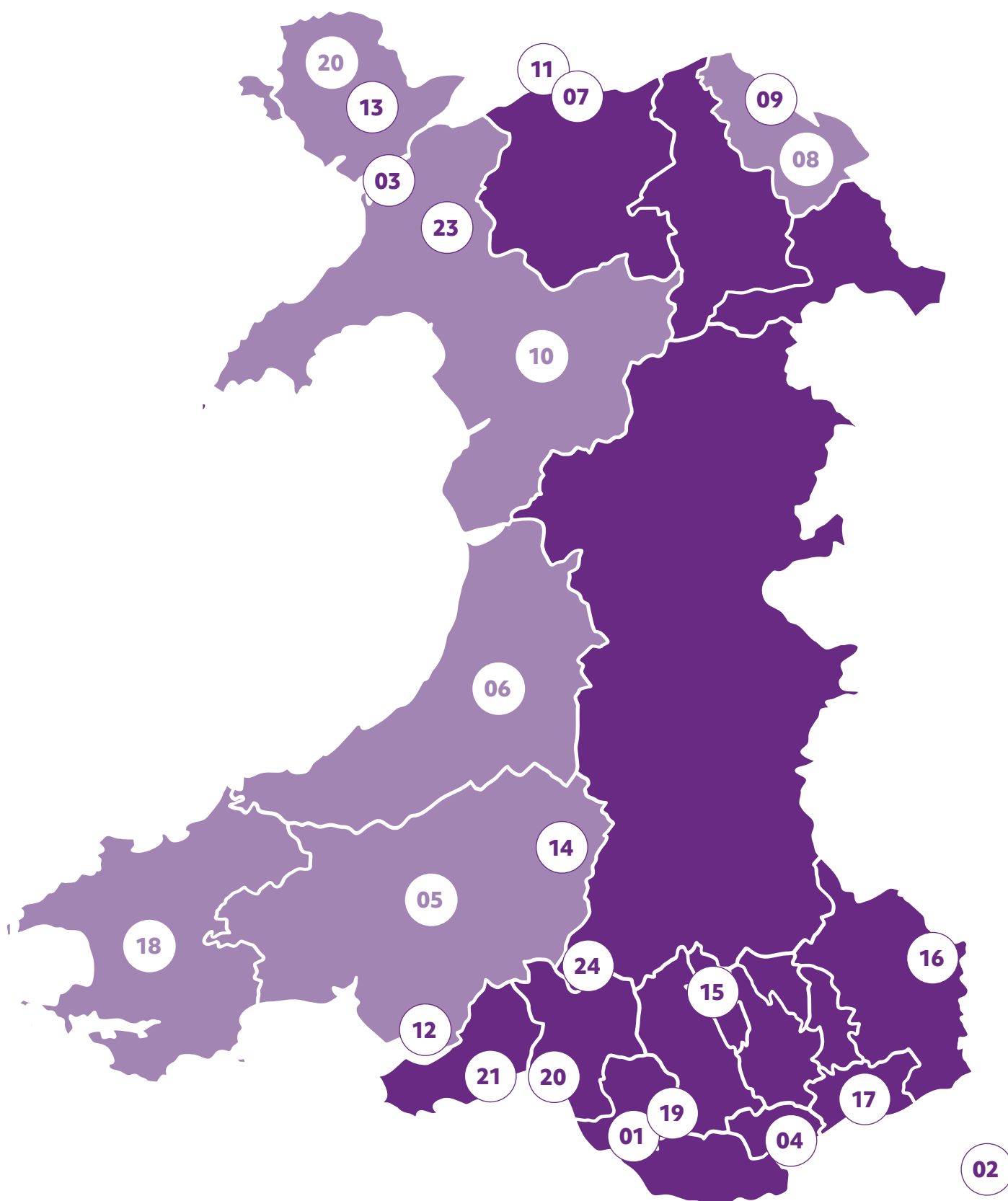


Production type



Production map

List of locations on opposite page



Production locations

01	Bridgend
02	Bristol
03	Caernarfon
04	Cardiff
05	Carmarthenshire
06	Ceredigion
07	Colwyn Bay
08	Denbighshire
09	Flint
10	Gwynedd
11	Llandudno
12	Llanelli
13	Llangefni

14	Llandovery
15	Merthyr Tydfil
16	Monmouth
17	Newport
18	Pembrokeshire
19	Pencoed
20	Neath Port Talbot
21	Swansea
22	Ynys Môn
23	Yr Wyddfa
24	Ystradgynlais
	<i>Locations across GB*</i>
	<i>French Alps*</i>

**Not included on map*

Kit4Crew

Following identification of the need for warm and wet gear for crew working a nightshift (in particular younger workers) the WBF discussed it with Bectu's South Wales Freelance Branch. Real SFX bit the bullet and set up Kit4Crew – gathering new or unworn clothing to be shared with those who need it. Kit4Crew bins are being distributed by Real SFX in studios across Wales and the UK.



Production company	Production	Pilot	Genre	Commissioner
Afanti	Cân I Gymru	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
Aria Studios/ Rondo	Bariau	24/25	Scripted	S4C
Bad Wolf	The Winter King	22/23	Scripted	ITV
	Doctor Who	22/23	Scripted	BBC
BBC Studios	Death Valley S2	25/26	Scripted	BBC
Black Light	Cleddau	23/24	Scripted	S4C
	The One That Got Away	23/24	Scripted	BBC
Boom Cymru	Creisis	23/24	Scripted	S4C
Capten Jac	Aberfan Doc	25/26	Unscripted	S4C
Chwarel	Great House Giveaway	22/23	Unscripted	Ch4
Chwarel/ Cwmni Da	Gogglebocs Cymru	22/23	Unscripted	S4C
	Gogglebocs Cymru	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
Clerkenwell Films	Dead Point	25/26	Scripted	Ch4
Cwmni Da	Ffit Cymru	22/23	Unscripted	S4C
	Radio Fa'ma	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
Darlun	SOS Extreme Rescues	22/23	Unscripted	BBC
	Amour a Mynydd S1	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
	Amour a Mynydd S2	25/26	Unscripted	S4C
Fiction Factory	Pren ar y Bryn (Tree on a Hill)	22/23	Scripted	BBC + S4C
H is for Hawk Ltd	H is for Hawk	24/25	Scripted	Ch4
Harpo Productions	Black Cake	22/23	Scripted	Hulu
It's My Shout	Various	23/24	Unscripted	S4C + Hansh + BBC
	Various docs	24/25	Unscripted	S4C + Hansh + BBC
	Summer Scripted	25/26	Scripted & Unscripted	S4C + Hansh + BBC
ITV Believe Me Ltd	Believe Me	25/26	Scripted	ITV

Production company	Production	Pilot	Genre	Commissioner
Kailash Films	Echoes of Biafra	23/24	Unscripted	BBC
Little Bird	Rookie Nurses	22/23	Unscripted	BBC
	y Tŷ Gwyrdd	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
Mojo Productions	Gwyliau	24/25	Scripted	S4C
	Parc Glan Gwil	25/26	Scripted	S4C
Osprey TV	Ar Led	24/25	Unscripted	S4C + Hansh
	Ar Led	25/26	Unscripted	S4C
Panad Productions	Y Fisor	23/24	Scripted	BBC + S4C
Peggy Productions	Lost Boys and Fairies	23/24	Scripted	BBC
Picl Animation Ltd	High-end Animation	25/26	Scripted	
Prison Transport Films Ltd	Havoc	24/25	Scripted	Sky
Rondo	Rownd a Rownd	22/23	Scripted	S4C
	Rownd a Rownd	23/24	Scripted	S4C
	Various	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
Severn Screen	Steel Town Murders	22/23	Scripted	BBC
Slam Media	y Llinell Las	23/24	Unscripted	S4C
	Consultancy/ Production Support	24/25	Unscripted	S4C/ BBC
	Quiz + Various	25/26	Unscripted	S4C
South Shore	Various	23/24	Unscripted	BBC
Southshore	Matt Willis Doc	25/26	Unscripted	BBC
SwnlId / Joio	Y Sŵn	22/23	Scripted	S4C
Telesgop	Consultancy	25/26	Unscripted	S4C + BBC
Tinopolis	Cymru Waw!	25/26	Unscripted	S4C
Triongl TV	Y Golau (The Light in the Hall)	24/25	Scripted	S4C/ C4
	Consultancy	24/25	Scripted	S4C
Truth Department	Smoking Shores	23/24	Unscripted	Ffilm Cymru

In addition to the productions listed above, between 2023 and 2026, a further 21 productions self-funded a WBF.

Feedback





Qualitative and quantitative feedback was gathered at the end of each production supported by a pilot funded Wellbeing Facilitator. This data and insight was shared with Creative Wales to secure the continuation of the pilots.

Feedback covered a spectrum of experiences and it is important to acknowledge that just as the individual experience of wellbeing on production varies, so does the individual perspective on the role of a Wellbeing Facilitator.

Feedback from producers

 **How would you score your overall experience of having a wellbeing facilitator on your production?**

4/5

Across productions, producer feedback consistently pointed to three areas of impact: increased confidence in managing complex situations, earlier identification and de-escalation of risk, and clearer alignment between duty of care and day-to-day delivery pressures.

The presence of a Wellbeing Facilitator was valued not simply as individual support, but as a practical resource that strengthened leadership decision-making and created space for constructive conversations under pressure. While experiences varied by production, the overall sentiment reflected a shift from reactive problem-solving toward more preventative and considered practice.

>95% of respondents would consider using a Wellbeing Facilitator on future productions.

“Even though we were a bit sceptical before starting the scheme, implementing it was much easier than expected, and the support from the cast and crew was positive.”

“We are definitely keen to have a WBF on our production again, but unless S4C include it as a line in the budget it will unfortunately be impossible to achieve.”

“Afanti were delighted to be part of this pilot and the WBF contributed positively to the culture and communication within the company. Would highly recommend this is continued in the future.”

Feedback from the workforce

 **How would you score your overall experience of having a wellbeing facilitator on your production?**

4/5

Feedback from the workforce reflected the value of having a visible, independent and confidential point of support within the production environment. Responses frequently described increased reassurance, improved confidence to raise concerns, and appreciation for early intervention before issues escalated.

While individual experiences varied, the overall sentiment suggested that the presence of a Wellbeing Facilitator contributed to a greater sense of psychological safety and fairness. For many, the role was not simply reactive support, but a signal that wellbeing was being taken seriously within the production.

>95% of respondents would like to see a Wellbeing Facilitator used on future productions.

"I feel like someone has touched base with me and offered support in an industry where you are very much left to your own devices. Having the wellbeing officer being an independent person and not an employee of the company I think is crucial to the role functioning correctly, because you don't feel intimidated about sharing."

"It was always easy to talk to her, and her presence contributed to a respectful and responsible atmosphere."

What was learnt

 The ambition of the pilots was not only to develop the Wellbeing Facilitator (WBF) role, but to begin shifting the culture of the Welsh screen sector so that Wales becomes a destination of choice for both productions and the workforce through improved working practices.

The WBF role formed a central part of a wider ecosystem of support, working alongside training for employers, Heads of Department and the broader creative workforce.

Over four years and across 52 productions, the pilots have generated rich insight into the structural drivers of wellbeing and the different needs across the sector.

Drivers of wellbeing experience

 Wellbeing on productions is not defined by a single issue but by overlapping conditions that interact over time. The four domains opposite describe how wellbeing is experienced. Beneath them sit three structural forces that shape and often intensify those experiences across the sector.

01	Safety (physical and psychological) Long days, insufficient turnaround, inclement weather, night shoots and schedule volatility are structural features of production, not individual failings. Without fatigue mitigation and psychological safety (freedom from bullying, harassment, discrimination, fear and reputational threat), wellbeing interventions have limited effect.	
02	Stability (economic and temporal) Payment insecurity, uncertain contracts and unpredictable schedules create chronic background stress in a freelance sector. Predictable timelines, compliance with union-negotiated minimum terms and conditions, realistic scheduling and transparent engagement practices reduce strain more effectively than reactive support alone.	
03	Dignity (identity and moral alignment) Wellbeing requires respect across status, background, protected characteristics and caring responsibilities. It also depends on ethical alignment; pressure to compromise values or participant care creates moral strain that is often invisible but impacts retention.	
04	Agency and meaning (autonomy and creative purpose) High demand without control drives burnout. Clarity, consultation and meaningful creative contribution restore balance and strengthen resilience.	
Power distribution Hierarchies shape who absorbs instability and who can challenge unsafe conditions. Where reputational risk is high, fear of being labelled “difficult” suppresses concerns and undermines safety.	Precarity Freelance insecurity; gaps between productions and dependence on reputation and networks, amplifies stress and discourages reporting. Short-term support cannot resolve structural precarity.	Time pressure Compressed commissioning cycles and inflexible schedules intensify fatigue, conflict, ethical strain and poor recruitment practices. When speed dominates, wellbeing deteriorates across individuals, families and teams.

Power

 Power sits beneath every definition of wellbeing. It shapes who absorbs instability and who is insulated from it; who can say no to excessive hours and who cannot; whose complaint is heard and whose is quietly managed. In the screen sector, where hierarchies are steep and work is precarious, wellbeing is rarely distributed evenly, it tracks with seniority, security, reputation and access. Chronic stress is often patterned rather than random. Any serious conversation about wellbeing therefore has to ask not only what harms occur, but who carries the cost and who has the authority to change the conditions.

The pilot has also shown, however, that power can be a positive force for change. When senior leaders, broadcasters/ commissioners, Unions, Welsh Government, Heads of Department and respected crew actively champion wellbeing, cultural shifts occur more quickly and sustainably. Identifying and supporting advocates within different parts of the sector is critical to embedding new norms. Change accelerates when those with influence model safe practice, speak openly about wellbeing and use their authority to align expectations around scheduling, behaviour and care.



Variation in need

 Identifying the drivers of wellbeing is only the first step. The pilots have also revealed that support must be tailored to different groups, the different stages of the production lifecycle, different genres and different organisational models, demonstrating the ways in which a one-size-fits-all approach has been outgrown.

“The WBF was seen as a welcome addition by our crew and talent on the production. During this quite stressful time in the industry, the WBF was an individual that they could turn to, and they appreciated that.”

Different groups, different needs

Company Owner / Employer

Commercial risk, reputational responsibility and duty of care obligations require strategic guidance to embed wellbeing into business models and leadership culture.

Producers and Heads of Department

Leadership pressure and delivery responsibility require support focused on culture, communication and ethical decision-making.

Established Workforce

Sustained delivery pressure and career uncertainty require support that recognises cumulative strain and promotes sustainable working practices.

Actors and Performers

Emotional exposure and public visibility require safeguarding during production and protection beyond release.

Writers and Script Editors

Working in isolation and emotionally demanding storylines can create cumulative strain

“We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of ensuring the well-being of staff and contributors on TV productions that are becoming increasingly ambitious with dwindling budgets.”

On-Screen Contributors (Factual / Unscripted)

Vulnerability and reputational risk require structured safeguarding before, during and after filming.

Under-Represented Groups

Additional pressures linked to bias, isolation or heightened visibility require equitable access to safe reporting and independent advocacy and proactive anti-discrimination measures in line with Equality Act obligations and union equality policies.

Trainees and Early-Career Workforce

Heightened vulnerability due to status and short contracts requires visible, independent and proactive support.

Embedding wellbeing across the production lifecycle

Wellbeing support must be embedded across all stages of production, not limited to crisis response. Without early risk assessment, realistic scheduling and clear procedures in pre-production, later interventions become reactive rather than preventative.

Sustainable change requires policies and mental health risk assessments to be integrated into company practice; otherwise, WBF support risks becoming short-term and dependency-driven rather than building lasting capability.

Pre-Production

The most strategic point for intervention building relationships, embedding risk assessment, clear expectations and realistic scheduling before filming begins.

Production

High-pressure delivery requires visible, real-time support to identify problems, de-escalate conflict and provide confidential listening space.

Post-Production

Emotional and reputational impact often surfaces late, requiring structured debriefs and ongoing safeguarding beyond filming.

Different genres, different risk profiles

The pilot has shown that wellbeing risk varies by production genre. While embedded policies provide a consistent foundation, some formats require additional, layered support.

“Productions that require a high level of care and support need to be identified early on, and funding for WBF and other means of support should be available early in pre-production, and throughout post-production.”

Scripted Productions (Drama)

Large scripted productions often involve long schedules, complex hierarchies and intense delivery pressure. Emotionally demanding storylines can create cumulative strain for writers, performers and the workforce, requiring structured risk assessment and visible on-location and off-site support.

Unscripted / Factual Productions

Unscripted work brings teams into close contact with contributors whose experiences are being documented, creating ethical and emotional pressures. Support must extend beyond workforce wellbeing to include safeguarding and post-broadcast planning.

Sensitive or High-Risk Content

Projects involving trauma, vulnerable contributors or high public scrutiny require enhanced pre-production planning and post-transmission care to mitigate longer-term impact.

These variations highlight the need for a flexible, tiered approach, embedding core processes across all productions while scaling support where risk is higher.

Different production types, different structural needs

Organisational scale and commissioning structure shape how wellbeing can be embedded in policy and practice.

Broadcasters

Formal governance enables policy integration, but commissioning pressure can transfer strain downstream into production companies.

Established Production Companies

HR infrastructure may exist, yet heavy reliance on freelancers requires leadership alignment to translate policy into practice.

One-Off Productions / Small Production Companies

Limited capacity and informal systems make external facilitation and shared sector tools essential for consistency.

Supporting the wellbeing facilitator role in Wales



The pilots highlighted that Wellbeing Facilitators themselves require structured support to operate effectively and sustainably. The role involves exposure to conflict, distress, power imbalance and complex ethical situations; without appropriate supervision and professional backing, facilitators risk isolation or burnout.

Access to underpinning expertise including psychological insight, specialist advice and peer consultation proved to be a key differentiator in the pilots, strengthening both confidence and quality of intervention.

In particular, the availability of specialist support through 6ft From the Spotlight provided a layer of professional supervision and escalation that enhanced safeguarding and consistency. For a multi-year programme to succeed, this underpinning infrastructure must be formalised and sustainably resourced. Supporting facilitators is not ancillary to the work; it is essential to maintaining professional standards, managing risk and ensuring continuity across productions.

As the benefits of the Wellbeing Facilitator role become increasingly recognised by commissioners, employers and the workforce, greater standardisation and professionalisation are important. Some facilitators operate independently of the structured support provided by 6ft From the Spotlight; in these instances, consideration must be given to how both the Wellbeing Facilitator and those they support are appropriately safeguarded. This raises broader questions for Bectu, the creative unions and the wider industry around standards, supervision and accountability as the role continues to develop.

What next?

 Four years of delivery via CULT Cymru in partnership with 6ft From The Spotlight have demonstrated that the Wellbeing Facilitator model is both viable and valued. The pilots funded by Creative Wales and the Wales Union Learning Fund have shown that wellbeing can be strengthened through practical, embedded support; that production companies are willing to engage; and that collaborative social partnership with Welsh Government, employers, unions and industry bodies is possible in a constructive and forward-looking way.

As international interest in the WBF role grows, the next phase is not simply expansion, but consolidation and scaling. Building on the insight gained, a multi-year programme would formalise the infrastructure required to embed wellbeing into production practice across Wales. This includes strengthening pre-production planning that includes support for writers/script editors, integrating mental health and stress risk assessment into company processes, supporting leadership capability, and developing a tiered model of support responsive to genre and scale. It also requires sustainable

underpinning supervision and professional support for Wellbeing Facilitators themselves.

Wales now has the opportunity to move from innovation to integration. By embedding consistent standards, cultivating sector champions and aligning commissioning expectations with sustainable practice, the screen sector can position itself as a destination of choice for both production companies and the workforce. The learning from this pilot provides a strong foundation and can be shared with the wider creative sector. The task ahead is to build on it deliberately and collaboratively.





CULT Cymru is a joint-union learning programme funded via the Welsh Government's Wales Union Learning Fund and Creative Wales.

CULT Cymru and **6ft from the Spotlight** offer heartfelt thanks to all who have travelled this path alongside us, on this journey toward creating mentally healthier productions.

Siân Gale

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Bectu/Cult Cymru

Michelle White

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6ft from the Spotlight



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