Creative England Chief Executive

I am excited to share with you this overview of Creative England for 2017-18. As you will read, we remain passionately committed to finding new talent and helping that talent to build businesses and create new amazing stories, content, products and services. Our Annual Report will hopefully give you a tiny flavour of the impact we’ve had and the many creative projects we have supported throughout the past year.

The creative and digital industries play a vital role in England’s economy, but they also contribute to creative and cultural wealth and health; they drive innovation and generate jobs, profile and growth. Our aim at Creative England is to support creative talent to flourish, investing in creative ideas and early stage businesses. Our vision is for our country’s creative businesses to be the most successful and innovative in the world.

As highlighted in our annual review, Creative England has increasingly looked to find innovative ways of supporting creative talent; working with brands, broadcasters, content partners and other platforms to grow and scale-up creative enterprises and the talented people who build them.

One way we do this is through investing in great ideas and great companies through our Business Investment Programme. Our first fund was fully invested in May 2017 and in total deployed over £16.8m across 5 years, leveraging a further £51m of further private sector investment. Originally created as a programme distributing grants, we re-designed the programme to incorporate a no-to-low interest rate loan product and equity investment and are now actively re-investing our capital back into the creative industries.

In 2017-18, we launched our multi-year campaign Be More Creative, celebrating the innovators and pioneers that are at the forefront of creative innovation across the length and breadth of the regions. Comprising of everything from high-profile speakers and panel discussions, to regional companies showcasing their successes, these events bring together local creatives, policy makers, businesses and brands and truly shine a light on some extraordinary companies.

We are also proud of the many individual writers, directors and filmmakers we support – many of whom did exceptionally well in 2017-18 – with numerous BAFTA and BIFA nominations and wins. It’s gratifying to see how well films such as Lady Macbeth, Jawbone and The Levelling performed, and we are delighted to have played a part in the career development of the amazing talent behind those titles.

Creative England aspires to reach out across the country, acting as a catalyst to break down the barriers that can inhibit people realising their ideas. I’m incredibly proud of the impact we have had – both of the stories we’ve helped to reach new audiences and the businesses that our investment has helped to build.

All of this is made possible by the incredible team at Creative England, who I’d like to thank for the continuous positive attitude, hard work and passion that makes Creative England the dynamic constantly evolving organisation it is. I also want to thank our board of non-executive directors and the whole host of public and private partners we have had the pleasure of working with over the past year.

We have had a tremendous year and I do hope you enjoy reading about it.

Caroline Norbury MBE

Chief Executive Foreword
Throughout the year we have seen creative businesses scale-up, first-time filmmakers take their projects to international festivals and enjoy box office success, and games and digital companies receive prestigious industry awards. Here is an overview of our key successes this year.

April 2017
Raising Films launch Close, a development programme for filmmaker parents and carers in the English Regions supported by Creative England

Games company Mad Fellows releases Aaero, a rhythm-based flying adventure, to strong reviews

Living Lens, one of our first investee companies, closes a £1.3m investment round towards their next stage of growth

Solutions for Retail Brands, a Creative England supported company, secure six figure investment for US expansion

May 2017
iFeatures films Lady Macbeth, The Levelling and Spaceship receive their UK national release

26 aspiring filmmakers are announced for shortFLIX, the short film development programme run in partnership with Sky Arts and National Youth Theatre

Alex Rose Games releases Rude Bear Resurrection and later wins Gamespot’s Game of the Year Editor’s Choice Award

Creative England’s Regional Growth Fund closes with £7.9m invested into over 100 companies

Real Gods Require Blood becomes the first British short film to premiere at Cannes Critics Week in eight years

June 2017
Barclays Eagle Lab Flight closes, with the supported companies given the opportunity to pitch to investors

God’s Own Country, developed through iFeatures and part-funded by Creative England, wins the Michael Powell Award at Edinburgh International Film Festival after screening as the Opening Gala film. The Full Story wins best short, The Marker has its premieres, and England is Mine is the Closing Gala film

July 2017
Our ‘Be More Creative’ campaign launches with ‘Be More Leeds’, a celebration of the creative industries fuelling the Leeds City Region

We invest in East Sussex-based TuringLab and Manchester-based NorthCoders as part of our iAmDigital Fund with the Nominet Trust, aimed at building the next generation of inclusive digital leaders

We take a cohort of producers and location managers on a familiarisation tour of some of Cheshire East’s most interesting, historical and varied filming locations, in partnership with Cheshire East Council

We invest £157,000 in nine indie games companies in Leeds City Region as part of GamesLab Leeds

We Are Human raises £320,000 in an early seed round. The business is a comprehensive video CV and video interview platform.
October 2017
We hold the ProConnect Manchester Converge, an event on how games, TV, film, and digital companies can thrive by working together.

ProConnect Manchester reaches 268 TV freelancers who all receive mentoring and one-to-one support for their businesses.

CE50 company Hammerhead VR collaborates with Microsoft and Digital Catapult to open Dimension, one of the world’s most advanced volumetric & 3D capture studios.

Dan Kokotajlo, director of Apostasy, wins the IWC Filmmakers Bursary at London Film Festival, while Kingdom of Us wins the Grierson award.

We attend the British Film Commission’s annual UK Film and TV Week in New York, alongside the UK’s national and regional screen agencies, meeting a host of US studios, networks and production companies, providing a direct opportunity to highlight to industry decision-makers the world-class infrastructure, crews and locations available in the UK.

November 2017
EPIC Challenge Fund launches, offering grants and product/service development grants to SMEs operating in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Imaginariam Studios releases Planet of the Apes: Last Frontier on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Android and Microsoft Windows.

Creative England supported Snapinvity wins the 2017 Nokia Open Innovation challenge.

December 2017
We partner with Facebook & Creative Review to deliver ‘Be More Boss’, a campaign celebrating female-led companies with bespoke and original digital artwork by Kate Jones.

God’s Own Country and Lady Macbeth win 9 British Independent Film Awards between them.

Previous Future Leader and CE50 company Lockwood Publishing opens a new studio in Leamington Spa.

Digital Accelerator company SenseEye raise £3.5m in Series A Funding round.

We award follow-on equity investments into portfolio companies CrowdFunder, Seenit and Covatic.

iFeatures’ Lady Macbeth wins the Discovery prize at the European Film Awards.

January 2018
GamesLab Leeds invests £150,000 in 15 indie games companies in the Leeds City Region.

Digital Cities, in association with the British Council, connects the UK with six countries of the Western Balkans, launching with a conference in Budva, followed by a schedule of visits and events in London, hosted by Creative England.

We partnered with the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Fourth Industrial Revolution for an event at parliament, with speeches by Caroline Norbury MBE, the Rt Hon Matt Hancock, award-winning narrative designer Alex McDowell and Alan Mak MP.

Lady Macbeth, God’s Own Country, Jawbone and Kingdom of Us all receive BAFTA nominations.

Emerging Fund supported filmmaker Colin O’Toole wins BAFTA for Best Short Film.

Emerging Talent Fund supported Westwood, a documentary on celebrated fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, premieres at Sundance in the World Documentary Competition.

CE50 company Creatisink releases Shu, a beautiful and engaging platformer game, on Nintendo Switch.

Bec Evans, co-founder at Prolifiko, is named as a top Female Founder of Tech by Business Cloud.

February 2018
We hold ‘Be More Manchester’, a creativity celebration, across two days with speakers including writer and poet Lemn Sissay MBE, Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, film and music producer Ged Doherty and Caroline Norbury MBE.

14 Western Balkans creative and digital SMEs come to the UK to learn best practice from SMEs in Bristol and Manchester.

Features relaunches and reopens to applications for the 2018 programme with a revised lab structure.

We produce a promotional short film for New Forest District Council to encourage filming in the region, premiering at an event in New Forest. The film featured broadcaster and film critic, Mark Kermode.

March 2018
Creative England’s GamesLab Leeds supports 42 indie games companies via workshops and grants in Leeds City Region to release new IP.

‘Be More Stoke’ takes place with Jawbone Producer, Mike Elliott and Director, Thomas Napper talking about their experience whilst filming in the city along with speakers from the BFI, Social Media Makes Sense, Sarahhead Interactive and Rabbit Punch Films.

Digital Cities, in association with the British Council, continues with a two-day final UK summit for 69 industry and city administration participants from across the Western Balkans and the UK, in Birmingham.

The West Midlands Production Fund relaunches to find great British content across film & TV.

Toxic Games releases O U B E 2 with a complete redesign of how the puzzles work and increased complexity.

August 2017
CE50 company Evidential secures Innovate UK grant money to develop a major new research and development programme for its AR product.

CE50 games studio Millyk Tea secures investment from Tencent, one of the world’s leading investment funds based in China.

Previous Future Leader and CE50 games studio Nomad Games releases Fighting Fantasy Legends, a role-playing card game set in the world of Fighting Fantasy.

Knowledge Bites and Hertfordshire ProConnect support 178 micro-businesses and sole traders.

September 2017
Mayor for the West Midlands, Andy Street, announces the reopening of the West Midlands Production Fund at the CIC’s national Creative Production Fund West Midlands.

God’s Own Country has its UK release, achieving critical acclaim and box office success.

Fantasy releases Bloody Zombies.

Paw Print Future Leader and CE50 games studio secures investment.

Snaptivity wins the 2017 Nokia Open Innovation challenge.

Coatsink wins the Discovery prize at the European Film Awards.

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We work to influence policy across the creative industries landscape at a national and regional level, as a key agent in creative clusters across the country. We understand our industry at every level, so we advocate for creative people and businesses in key decision-making forums whilst also working on the ground, with hundreds of businesses and content creators across the country.

This year, in partnership with the All Party Parliamentary Group on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, our Westminster reception was addressed by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who outlined how the creative industries were powering the next era of innovation.

Alongside this, Metro mayors Andy Burnham (Greater Manchester) and Andy Street (West Midlands) supported our events in their respective regions, both highlighting the creative industries as a critical factor in the growth of their thriving cities.

Creative England’s vision is for our country’s creative businesses and talent to be the most successful and innovative in the world. We create a platform for new voices, building economic growth that benefits our nation.

We do this by supporting creative people and creative businesses, connecting them to the money, the markets and the networks that help them thrive.

By helping creative individuals and businesses achieve their full creative and commercial potential, we identify future opportunities to grow the economy and generate jobs.

Put simply, we influence, we invest and we create

Creative England takes a slightly different attitude alongside their offer. Yes, there are other organisations that can be approached for finance but Creative England have a greater understanding of how time-critical decisions can be regarding finance to the film business.

– Sean Marley, Mad as Birds Films Producer

Whilst the creative industries are thriving in the UK, we can’t afford to stop there. Standing still is falling back. Our creative exports continue to grow, but studies show that our growth rates are behind our international competitors and so it is imperative that the UK continues to invest for growth.

To enable these businesses to innovate and export they need investment and specialist advice to support their business growth and improve productivity.

– Joel Kemp, Lockwood Publishing Co-Founder & Director

When we needed finance, outside of the local regional development grants (which have been disappearing since 2008), Creative England is unique in offering 0% unsecured loans, to finance games and creative media to get off the ground.

– Sean Marley, Mad as Birds Films Producer
We invest in storytellers, technologists, innovators and makers with ideas that bring change, disruption and new IP to the creative industries.

Creative England addresses the market failure that prevents small creative businesses from getting the early finance they need to scale-up, by providing the vital first steps on the ladder of growth with investments up to £250,000.

As a specialist investor with sector-specific knowledge, we invest in businesses earlier and at lower levels than traditional venture capitalists. In doing so, we are building a pipeline of businesses that are growing to become strong candidates for further investment.

Our investments empower this talent to accelerate change and push the boundaries across multiple sectors in multiple forms – storytelling, immersive entertainment, technology, healthcare, ed-tech, fin-tech and many others. Alongside investment we also provide business support to creative companies across the country at every level, with meaningful development programmes such as ProConnect in Hertfordshire and Manchester, EPIC in Cornwall and Gameslab in Leeds.

Supporting talent to flourish across the country is paramount and many of our film projects reflect the voices of those who often do not see their experiences presented within the mainstream media.

iFeatures, our world-class industry film initiative for new feature film writers and directors, supported by BBC Films, the BFI and Creative Skillset, has unearthed some unique voices and reimagined independent filmmaking. iFeatures developed films such as Lady Macbeth, The Levelling and God’s Own Country achieved both critical and commercial success this year.

We have supported new talent from every part of the country to connect to audience and tell stories that reach far and wide – from love and loss on the Yorkshire Moors and Somerset Levels to secrets and lies on East Anglia’s Broads and Fens, from alien abduction in the suburbs to grief in a northern shed; from crimes of passion in period Northumberland to the criminal underworld in contemporary Birmingham.

Whilst commercial and critical success is valuable, the focus of our approach is to develop and support. Our aim is not to “pick winners” – instead it is to support the stories and the creative practitioners that speak to a broad range of audiences and who have found something new and fresh to say.

In a changing world it’s more important than ever to drive opportunity and representation in the creative industries. We are using our regional DNA as a company to make sure that every corner of England can express its voice and ambitions to the world.

Without Creative England and their understanding of the industry, and the economic climate, we would not have been able to do what we’ve done’
– Jessica Holyland, Duck Soup Films Co-Founder & Director of Finance and Operations

Without Creative England, I don’t think we would have got off the ground. They offer us so much more than cash. That is so valuable to us. Without the money from Creative England, this wouldn’t have come together. Creative England gave momentum and a level of security and maturity
– Nick Pinks, Covatic Co-Founder & CEO
INFLUENCER: Championing the creative industries

We work proactively to find people who have talent but not the money, connections or even the recognition of their own potential. Just as importantly, we celebrate talent by raising the profile of people and businesses that struggle to get the recognition they deserve.

We pride ourselves on discovering and supporting creative talent in the regions outside of London, and our focus this year was to shine a light on the innovative work that can be found in creative clusters across the country.

We continue to establish ourselves as a significant thought-leader and talent accelerator. Through CE50 – our annual showcase of 50 of the most interesting and innovative creative producers and entrepreneurs – we shine a light on the future creative leaders who are making a real impact on the growth and prosperity of our creative industry sector.

In July 2017, we launched our multi-year regional campaign ‘Be More Creative’, an on-going celebration of creative talent showcasing our country’s most creative hubs. We started in Yorkshire with ‘Be More Leeds’ with high-profile industry leading speakers including Nicola Mendelsohn CBE, co-chair of the Creative Industries Council and VP EMEA of Facebook, Iain Smith OBE, Chair of the British Film Commission, Sally Joynson, CEO Screen Yorkshire and Leeds-born BFI Chief Executive Amanda Nevill CBE, really helped to highlight the opportunities for Leeds to make a big impact on the creative industries.

We have since taken ‘Be More Creative’ to two more cities, Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent. ‘Be More Manchester’ ran across two days, exploring the exciting opportunities for creative growth and celebrating the voices, companies and organisations from the region. In Manchester, we explored ‘The Future of Storytelling’ to a room packed out with creatives, policy makers, businesses and brands to hear industry-leading speakers, including an inspirational poem from Lemn Sissay MBE. Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham announced findings from the NESTA Creative Nation research on how the creative industries contribute to the economy of the region, followed by an insightful discussion with ex-Sony Music CEO and Chairman of the BRIT Awards, Ged Doherty.

‘Be More Stoke’ featured insightful talks from talent working across film, TV and games in the region, including Mike Elliot of EMU Films, producer of Jawbone, a Creative England-backed boxing film shot in the region. This event was held in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Platform, Stoke & Staffordshire’s moving image cluster organisation.

But we don’t just focus on the domestic. In January we were thrilled to partner with the British Council on the ‘Digital Cities’ programme, promoting collaboration and learning between city administrations and digital entrepreneurs in the UK and the Western Balkans. The programme succeeded in connecting digital business networks and creative hubs from across the UK and the Western Balkans, culminating in working relationships and shared projects across the nations, which were presented at the final conference in March.

We also partnered with Creative Review and Facebook to create the ‘Be More Boss’ campaign. Together, we sought to encourage more female-led businesses to seek investment by celebrating some of the female leaders spearheading innovative and exciting work within the creative industries, collaborating with GIF artist and photographer Kate Bines to create cutting-edge digital art, profiling four female leaders within the tech and digital industries. The campaign took place primarily on Instagram and was published in the December issue of Creative Review.

INFLUENCER: Championing the creative industries
Our investment programme is successfully delivering the ambitions of the industrial strategy and helps create good jobs in the areas where they’re most needed, building a more inclusive economy and addressing the productivity challenge by helping businesses scale-up and sustain.

INVESTOR: Growing and Scaling Innovative Businesses

Our focus on early-start investment provides the necessary fuel for creative businesses who often struggle to attract the finance they need.

Originally designed as a programme distributing grants, we re-designed strands within the Business Investment Programme to incorporate a no-to-low interest rate loan product and equity investment. This enables us to utilise returning funds to invest in and support even more creative businesses across the country, and during 2017-18, we recouped £1.6m in loans to re-invest in digital businesses.

GamesLab is our flagship development programme for new and emerging micro games studios. Currently concentrating on the cluster of games start-ups in the Leeds City Region, in 2017/18 we supported 70 companies.

Through our ProConnect programmes in Manchester and Hertfordshire we have supported over 400 film and TV freelancers and micro-businesses looking to put their business on a more sustainable footing.

18% of the games companies we are working with are female-led

19% of the companies are led by people from black and minority ethnic communities.

Highlights include The Guardian listing Ava Airborn by LaserDog as one of the ‘Top 12 UK Games’ at the flagship games expo EGX and a deal between Fierce Kaiju and Oculus.
Creative England aspires to reach out across the country, acting as a catalyst to break down the barriers that can inhibit people from realising their ideas. We work with a diverse range of local partners all around the country to build the ecosystems that attract inward investment, support business and bring people together for mutual benefit.

Our talent development programmes have produced a host of critically-acclaimed content and through our partnerships with BBC Films, Sky Arts and the BFI we are able to find and accelerate some of the country’s most interesting new voices.

shortFLIX is a first step for young people looking for a career in media and an opportunity for them to make their short film. It provides aspiring new filmmakers aged 18-25 with the skills and tools they need to gain access to the industry and develop a short film, which is then broadcast on Sky Arts.

Following an open call to talent, with ambassadors Noel Clarke (Star Trek into Darkness, Adulthood, Kidulthood), Riz Ahmed (Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, Four Lions, Jason Bourne) and Ellie Kendrick (Game of Thrones, The Levelling, An Education), over 350 applicants were whittled down to 26 participants who underwent training and intensive development, gaining significant practical skills and experience. The final five filmmaking teams then received £10,000 to create their films. Ladies Day, Nosebleed, Batty Boy, Losing It and Together. They were all broadcast on Sky Arts on 24th May 2018 and made available for download across Sky’s on-demand services for 6 months.

In 2017/18, Creative England-backed films received BAFTA nominations for Lady Macbeth, God’s Own Country, Jawbone and Kingdom of Us; multiple BIFA wins, and others including a Grierson Award for Kingdom of Us and an Empire award for Jawbone.

Features is quickly becoming the UK’s first-rate launch pad for new feature filmmakers. Features films have not only been critically acclaimed, they have also performed commercially – with Lady Macbeth receiving distribution in 23 territories and achieving $5.5m global box office, and God’s Own Country (developed via Features and funded through Creative England’s Production Fund) achieving the most successful British debut opening weekend in UK cinemas for over 20 years.

Creative England also supports new talent in games and May 2017 saw Alex Rose Games release Rude Bear Resurrection to a number of high-praising reviews. Elsewhere Nomad Games released Fighting Fantasy; Paw Print Games released Bloody Zombies; and Toxic Games released VR title Q.U.B.E. 2. Nottingham-based Lockwood Games, who Creative England has supported via the Business Investment Programme, have enjoyed tremendous growth thanks to their hugely popular game Avakin Life and this year opened a new development studio in Leamington Spa.

There were ten wins at the 2017 BIFAs and BAFTA nominations for Lady Macbeth, God’s Own Country, Jawbone and Kingdom of Us; a Scottish BAFTA win for The Levelling; Hope Dickson Leach (The Levelling) and Dan Kokotajlo (Apostasy) winning the IWC Schaffhausen Filmmaker Bursary Award in association with the BFI in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

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Investments & Financial Overview FY 17-18

Total investment
£4,605,242
£4.6m has been invested at year end 2017/18

£2,939,571
Digital & Games companies

£1,665,671
Film projects

Statement of Comprehensive Income

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<th>2017-18</th>
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<td>Income</td>
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<td>Direct Expenses</td>
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<td>GROSS SURPLUS</td>
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<td>Operating Costs</td>
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<td>SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR</td>
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Digital & Games Companies:

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<td>Awards</td>
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Statement of Financial Position

2018        2017

FIXED ASSETS
Tangible assets  £29,948  £37,332
Investments  £150  £150
TOTAL  £29,998  £37,482

CURRENT ASSETS
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year  £9,132,201  £1,754,465
Current asset investments  £7,354,206  £9,491,025
Cash at bank and in hand  £9,842,141  £9,960,580
TOTAL  £18,110,548  £21,205,870

Creditors: amounts falling due within one year  £9,797,814  £11,818,590
NET CURRENT ASSETS  £8,312,734  £10,387,280

TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES  £8,341,832  £10,424,762
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year  £7,540,677  £9,667,227
NET ASSETS  £801,155  £757,535

CAPITAL AND RESERVES
Income and expenditure account  £801,155  £757,535

Included in the group cash amounts above are the following balances held on trust and committed for specific investment activities and cannot be used to fund general activity: a) £2,074,464 (2017: £1,908,972) Lottery (British Film Institute) Funds b) £5,458,382 (2017: £5,004,205) Regional Growth Funds c) £2,528,074 (2017: £2,111,810) Advantage Media Production/ West Midlands Production Funds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Organisation Name</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>iFeatures 4 Production - Various Titles</td>
<td>iFeatures Limited</td>
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<td>The Dynamite Room</td>
<td>Stray Bear Productions</td>
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Partner support

Our activity is supported by a variety of partners including the National Lottery, the BFI, the Regional Growth Fund and the European Regional Development Fund. In addition, we would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their generous support in 2017–2018:

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- Silicon South
- Sky Arts
- Social Tech Trust
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- University of Plymouth

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22 — Annual Report