

News story: Creative sector receives record boost of £700 million pounds

Britain's world-leading creative sector has benefited from over £700 million pounds of support from government in the last year, [official statistics](#) showed today.

The award-winning TV series "The Crown" and award-winning film "Lady Macbeth" are among the productions to have made use of the High-End TV and Film Tax Reliefs respectively.

Creative Sector Tax Reliefs were introduced to help UK businesses in these highly skilled and innovative sectors thrive at home and abroad.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the government's announcement to expand its support for the creative sector. The reliefs enhance the UK's creative sector industries, including video games, animation and high-end television.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General said:

From film directors to video game developers, UK creative leaders are championing British culture and innovation both at home and abroad.

This tax relief provides vital support to our world-class creative industries as they continue to boost growth across the country and create top quality entertainment that we can all enjoy.

The creative industries employ two million people across all parts of the UK. These tax reliefs are helping to ensure creative sector companies can continue to hire people and boost local economies.

Creative Industries Minister Matt Hancock said:

The UK's creative industries are one of our biggest success stories. They play a vital role in shaping the UK's image and reputation at home and abroad, and through initiatives like the tax relief scheme, we are creating the right environment for this dynamic sector to flourish and thrive.

Britain's creative industries are growing faster than the rest of the economy and we want to keep it that way.

Amanda Nevill, CEO of BFI, commented:

Worth £4.3 billion to the economy, UK film is the country's fastest growing sector, employing over 66,000 people.

The UK is one of the world's most important production hubs and the tax reliefs for the screen industries have enabled this unprecedented growth across the country, creating jobs and supporting businesses from Belfast to Bradford.

Vitality, they have also allowed creativity to flourish and our world class filmmaking talent to shine with productions from Trainspotting and Lady Macbeth through to Wonder Woman and Game of Thrones.

John McVay, Chief Executive of Pact, said:

The creative sector tax relief has played an important part in attracting inward investment, and helping to grow the successful UK TV production industry, with benefits to all parts of the UK. It has helped our members stay competitive in an ever-growing global marketplace.

Over 2,070 films, 295 videogames and 205 high-end TV productions have benefited from the tax reliefs since their respective introductions. The figures also show for the first time that 1,750 theatres have benefited from the support available.

There are currently seven different reliefs available to the creative sector; film, high-end TV, animation, videogames, children's TV, orchestra and theatre.

[News story: Dangerous occurrence at Broad Oak level crossing](#)

Train passed over Broad Oak automatic half barrier level crossing, with barriers raised, near Canterbury, 29 June 2017.

At around 10:20 hrs on 29 June, a train, already braking because the driver had recognized the hazard, passed over the level crossing with the barriers raised. The last road vehicle had crossed around 12 seconds earlier.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will shortly be made available on our website.

Press release: Outbreaks of Koi herpesvirus (KHV) disease in 2017

KHV is a serious viral disease of fish, and is notifiable in the United Kingdom. It affects all varieties of common and ornamental carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), and can result in large scale mortalities.

Fish with KHV disease may show the following signs, especially when water temperatures are between 16 to 28 degree centigrade:

- necrotic (white or brown) patches on the gills
- rough patches on the skin and sloughing mucous
- sunken eyes

You must [contact the FHI](#) if you suspect an outbreak of KHV. This includes fish with the above signs, or deaths of carp or carp hybrids.

There is no risk to public health.

New outbreaks

When laboratory testing confirms KHV disease at a site, the FHI place statutory controls to limit the spread of the disease. These controls restrict movement of animals and ensure equipment is disinfected.

Disease controls have been applied at:

Finished outbreaks

Sites with KHV disease must undergo a 4 year monitoring programme. The FHI visit these sites to look for evidence of disease and to inspect compliance with the conditions of the statutory controls in place. The controls are removed if the disease doesn't reoccur during this period.

Some sites choose to cull and disinfect their stocks, rather than have 4 years of monitoring.

Further information

You can:

Background

Koi herpesvirus (KHV) is a notifiable disease under [The Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009](#). KHV outbreaks have been subject to statutory control in Great Britain since 2007. The UK maintains a surveillance programme for this disease.

When the FHI confirm an outbreak, they take steps to control and, wherever possible, remove the disease. This may involve movement controls on susceptible species in the area, enhanced biosecurity, culling of fish, and cleaning and disinfecting of the premises.

Site operators must write to the FHI to get permission to move live fish into, out of, or within the designated area, and to make material changes to the site or site activities. This also applies to fish eggs and gametes.

[News story: New improvements for rail passengers in Wales, the midlands and the north](#)

Passengers in Wales, the midlands and the north will get faster and more comfortable journeys quicker under new plans announced by the government today (20 July 2017).

The Department for Transport is setting out plans for new trains on the Midland Main Line, Great Western Main Line and in the Lake District with increased seats and better on-board facilities.

Modern bi-mode trains will be used on Great Western and Midland Main Line, with passengers in Wales benefiting from new Intercity Express trains which will each deliver over 130 more seats and faster services.

Long distance journey times from Nottingham and Sheffield will also be reduced by up to 20 minutes in the peak, with the train operator in the Lake District beginning work to trial an alternative-fuelled train in this World Heritage Site.

Thanks to this new technology disruptive electrification works between Cardiff and Swansea, Kettering, Nottingham and Sheffield, and between Windermere and Oxenholme, will no longer be needed.

Passengers will benefit sooner and experience less disruption compared with putting up intrusive wires and masts along routes where they are no longer required.

[Bi-mode trains](#)

The government today also published the [consultation for the next East Midlands franchise](#), which will deliver reduced journey times for intercity services and more seats for long distance passengers at peak hours, as well as dedicated services and more capacity for commuters coming into London. The franchise will maximise the benefits of the upgrade of the Midland Main Line – the biggest investment in the route since it was completed in 1870.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are making the biggest investment in the railways since the Victorian era and upgrading services across the country, including in Wales, the midlands and the north.

Passengers expect and deserve high quality rail services and we are committed to using the best available technology for each part of the network, delivering significant benefits for those who use our railways.

Benefits along the specific routes include:

Cardiff to Swansea

From Autumn 2017, passengers in Wales will benefit from new Intercity Express trains which will each deliver over 130 extra seats, faster journey times and improved connectivity for South Wales to London with 40% more seats in the morning peak once the full fleet is in service.

Network Rail will also develop additional options to improve journeys for passengers in Wales. These will include:

- improving journey times and connections between Swansea and Cardiff, and South Wales, Bristol and London
- improving journey times and connections across North Wales
- direct services from Pembroke Dock to London via Carmarthen on new, state of the art Intercity Express trains
- station improvements at Cardiff Station
- station improvements in and around Swansea including looking at the case for additional provision

The Secretary of State also welcomed a proposal for Wales' first privately funded railway station at St Mellons. The department will work with the promoters of the scheme as they develop their plans to the next stage.

The first new Intercity Express trains will enter service from this Autumn and once the whole fleet is introduced and electrification to Cardiff is complete journey times between Swansea, London and other stations along the route will be approximately 15 minutes shorter.

Midland Main Line

The next operator will be required to deliver modern, fast and efficient intercity and commuter trains, including a brand new set of bi-mode intercity trains from 2022, maximising the benefits of the largest upgrade of the Midland Main Line since it opened in 1870. This will improve journeys sooner, without the need for wires and masts on the whole route, with further investment to come to ensure Sheffield is ready for HS2.

Benefits include reducing journey times on long distance services from Nottingham and Sheffield by up to 20 minutes in the peak and delivering over 1000 additional seats an hour in the peak into London, an increase of more than 50%.

Oxenholme to Windermere

Passengers in the Lake District will benefit from 4 direct services a day in each direction between Windermere and Manchester Airport from May 2018.

The government has announced plans to ensure passengers enjoy brand new trains from December 2019. Journeys between Windermere and Manchester Airport will be improved sooner and with less disruption to services and local communities. It also means there is no need to construct intrusive wires and masts in this National Park.

Statement to Parliament: Rail infrastructure funding: 2019 to 2024

I am today (20 July 2017) publishing my [high level output specification](#) (HLOS) and initial statement of funds available (SOFA) for the railway for control period 6, which covers the years 2019 to 2024.

The government is determined that the railway becomes more focused on issues that matter most to passengers – such as punctuality and reliability. A more reliable railway also plays a critical role in underpinning economic growth and bringing the country together. The government is committed to taking action to achieve these outcomes.

The HLOS is therefore focussed on the operation, maintenance and renewal of the existing railway – the areas of activity that will deliver a more reliable railway for passengers. The government is already delivering significant enhancements to the railway, including High Speed 2 and Crossrail and it expects to continue to invest in the enhancement to the wider rail network in the next control period. In light of the findings of the [Bowe Review](#), which emphasised the need to enable better planning, cost control and

alignment with the needs of users of the railway, government will take forward the funding of these enhancements separately. The government is developing a new process for delivering enhancements and intends to publish more information on this in the autumn.

On the basis of independent advice from the Office of Rail and Road, as well as from the rail industry, the government has agreed that an increased volume of renewals activity will be needed over the course of control period 6, to maintain safety and improve on current levels of reliability and punctuality, which in places fall short of the levels that passengers rightly expect. This enhanced programme of renewals will be supported by appropriate volumes of operations and maintenance activity required to maintain safety and improve the reliability and punctuality of train services.

Before committing to the specific levels of funding required, I have decided that the government requires more assurance on the likely costs of the work programme. Network Rail's progress on improving its efficiency in recent years has fallen short of my expectations. Improving efficiency is vital if we are to maximise the value of taxpayer spending on the railway in driving improvements for passengers and freight shippers.

The government will therefore carry out further work to examine the approach to setting appropriate levels of maintenance and renewals activity for control period 6 and to improving Network Rail's efficiency. This will enable me to confirm the extent of government's funding envelope through the publication of a statement of funds available by 13 October 2017. This work will draw on a number of sources, including the new independent review of progress on efficiency planning which the regulator has commissioned

Alongside the publication of the HLOS, I am issuing [new statutory guidance to the independent Office of Rail and Road](#). This sets out my priorities for rail regulation. These include supporting the ORR's work to improve Network Rail's efficiency and improving the experience of users of the railway.

I am arranging for copies of the HLOS and SOFA, and of the statutory guidance to the Office of Rail and Road, to be placed in the libraries of the House.