

Creative industry reliefs triumph at the Oscars®

World War I epic '1917' triumphed on Sunday 9 February at the Academy Awards®. From cinematography to sound, films made in the UK and supported by the government's creative sector reliefs were top of the list at the film world's most prestigious awards ceremony.

According to British Film Institute (BFI) figures, 2019 saw the highest-ever spend on film and high-end TV production in the UK at more than £3.6 billion. Since 2007, when the current creative tax reliefs for films started, more than 5,000 claimants have benefitted.

These highly-skilled and innovative industries support growth across the UK: BFI research has shown that every £1 given in tax relief in the UK generates more than £7 in return for the UK economy.

Film and high-end TV tax reliefs are just 2 of the 8 different kinds of creative reliefs that the government offers to productions that are formally certified as British, funding everything from orchestras to museums. HMRC closely monitors creative industry tax reliefs through a specialist team to ensure they are operating correctly and that claim rules are properly adhered to.

As well as film, animation and high-end TV reliefs, the government offers creative tax reliefs that could benefit certain children's television programmes, video games, theatrical productions, orchestral concerts, or museum or gallery exhibitions.

Pippa Harris, producer of the 3-time Oscar®-winner '1917', which benefitted from creative reliefs, said:

The UK film and high-end TV tax reliefs have been absolutely crucial [both] in terms of supporting the UK production industry... On '1917' alone, we were able to give employment to over 1,200 crew and more than 1,000 cast, stunt performers and supporting artists.

As well as the direct employment a major film creates, there is also a large economic benefit for the regions where shooting takes place. In the case of '1917', we shot across the UK in 12 separate locations, from Glasgow down to Salisbury Plain.

It's not just live-action movies that have benefitted from creative industry tax reliefs: animation specialists such as Oscar®-winning studio Aardman, known for 'Wallace & Gromit' and 'Shaun the Sheep', have also taken advantage of film and animation tax reliefs.

Kerry Lock, Finance Director of Aardman, said:

These reliefs are often a key part of financing, and some projects simply would not have been produced had they not been available. This helps us to continue to produce in the UK and develop and nurture talent.

Jesse Norman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Like the rest of this year's awards season, Sunday's Academy Awards® highlighted the amazing talent of the UK film industry.

Creative sector tax reliefs have supported these internationally-acclaimed productions, and ensured that the UK remains a world leader in supporting creativity and innovation in the film industry.

In 2017, our creative industries made a record contribution of more than £100 billion to the UK economy. They play a key role in ensuring that it, and the UK arts scene in general, remain dynamic, diversified and daring.

[United Kingdom Security Vetting \(UKSV\): our latest updates](#)



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We have updated our pages with the latest information and worked to make them clear and informative.

- the top 10 links at the top of our page provide quick access to the most commonly viewed guidance
- the flow of guidance has been revised to provide a step by step journey through the vetting process

- addition of 2 new pages; [Existing clearance holders](#) and [Privacy and data protection](#).

We have also added the following new documents:

- a hints and tips document for how to log into your portal, including information on how to recover or reset your username, password and pin or unlock your account has been added to the [guidance for subjects \(applicants\)](#).
- a hints and tips document for completing your security questionnaire has also been added to the [guidance for subjects \(applicants\)](#). This document provides advice on how to complete some difficult sections of the form which we have identified as being a sticking point for users
- a guide for how to conduct a Vetting Status Information check via your sponsor portal has been added to the [Guidance for sponsors](#) section
- a sponsor hints and tips document has been added to the [guidance for sponsors](#) section.

Work is on-going and we will update our pages when necessary with the latest information.

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[Strict new measures to protect vulnerable children in care](#)

Putting children under the age of 16 in unregulated accommodation will become illegal, under new plans announced today by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson to drive up the quality of children's social care.

Minimum standards will also be introduced for unregulated accommodation, which provides accommodation but not care.

Proposals to stop children in care from being placed in inappropriate accommodation will be published as part of a consultation, tackling growing concerns about the number of under-16s being left at risk of exploitation.

Under the strict new proposals, the Government would also introduce national standards for unregulated accommodation to improve the quality and security of the placements. This will mean that where this is used appropriately for young people aged 16 and over, safety and quality is prioritised.

The consultation also proposes new legal powers for Ofsted to crack down on illegal unregistered providers – those providing care for children without being registered to do so – and new measures requiring councils and local

police forces to work together before placements in unregulated settings are made out of area, putting the interests of young people at the heart of decisions.

This consultation has been launched to take action as a matter of urgency, ahead of the wider upcoming care review committed to as part of the Government's manifesto. The Education Secretary confirmed today that this review will be independently led, and look widely across children's social care with the aim of better supporting, protecting and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people. We are moving forward with the review, making sure that it reflects the experiences of those who have needed a social worker or been in care, and will be setting out more details in due course.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

There are no circumstances where a child under 16 should be placed in accommodation that does not keep them safe. That is unacceptable and I am taking urgent action to end this practice and drive up the quality of care provided to all vulnerable children.

Social workers and council chiefs have to make difficult decisions about the children in their care, so it's important that we agree an ambitious approach to these important reforms to bring about lasting change in children's social care.

While unregulated accommodation can be the right option for some older children, acting as a stepping-stone for young people towards living as an independent adult, the Education Secretary is taking action due to concerns that some of this provision is not good enough, and is particularly concerned about the number of younger children being placed in this provision.

The introduction of new national standards will set a benchmark for unregulated provision, rooting out poor quality. The consultation will run for eight weeks, allowing the sector to have a say in the way measures are brought forward, including:

- banning the use of independent and semi-independent placements for children and young people under the age of 16;
- driving up the quality of support offered in independent and semi-independent provision, through the introduction of national standards;
- ensuring young people's interests are appropriately represented by their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO);
- introducing new measures so that local authorities and local police forces liaise before a placement in this provision is made; and
- giving Ofsted new legal powers to crack down on illegal providers.

More than 6,000 looked-after children and young people in England are living in unregulated accommodation, with up to 100 under 16s living in unregulated provision at any one time.

Under the plans, legislation will be amended so that Ofsted can take legal action before prosecution and issue enforcement notices, which will result in illegal providers either being forced to close, register or face a penalty.

The consultation follows a letter sent to all local authorities by the Education Secretary in November, setting out his concerns about under 16s being placed in this provision and asking them to make sure that all children in their area are in safe and suitable accommodation.

Last autumn the Government announced an extra £1 billion for child and adult social services, and the Conservative party manifesto committed to continuing this funding for every year of this parliament to make sure vulnerable young people get the support they need.

Yvette Stanley, Ofsted's National Director for Social Care, said:

We welcome this consultation and await the outcome with interest. Ofsted has long-held concerns about the rise of unregistered children's homes. Some of our most vulnerable children are living in places where we don't know if the people caring for them are suitable or skilled enough to meet their needs – this isn't acceptable. We've also called for better assurance about the quality of unregulated provision for older children. We need a system where children are getting high quality care and support, with the right level of oversight. Ofsted stands ready to play its full part in achieving this.

Mark Russell, Chief Executive at The Children's Society, said

The numbers of children being placed in unregulated accommodation is on the rise, making this consultation both timely and essential. We are pleased the government is looking carefully at this issue and recognising the wider issues at play, such as the shortage of places where they're most needed.

Children are often placed in these settings in an emergency and out of their home area, where they may not get the support they need and can be at particular risk of going missing and being criminally or sexually exploited. All accommodation for children in care has to be suitable for their needs and no child should be placed in accommodation where they are not safe. It's vital that quality standards are introduced across the board. This consultation should lead to tangible changes which address these issues and ensure all children get the help they deserve.

Negotiations are the only path to peace for the Israelis and Palestinians

Thank you very much, Mr President, and welcome to the Security Council for Belgium's presidency. I join others in welcoming President Abbas and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, and thanking the Secretary-General and Mr Mladenov.

Mr President, as we've heard today, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has blighted an entire region and untold lives. To this day, its implications are felt across the Middle East and around the world. It is almost as old as this Council and has gone on for far too long.

Mr President, the UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear and has not changed: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

The United Kingdom's commitment to the resolutions of this Council is unwavering – and we support what the German representative said about Israel's security.

We need to acknowledge progress towards meaningful peace has stalled. The absence of dialogue risks a prolonged political vacuum that will only fuel instability and extremism.

Israelis and Palestinians deserve better; they deserve a durable resolution that provides all with dignity and security. Palestinians deserve self-determination and freedom from occupation. Israelis deserve to live free of terrorist rocket fire, and a future characterized by fruitful cooperation with their neighbours in the region.

This can only be achieved by finding a path back to negotiations, and securing the settlement that is acceptable to all parties. No other path to peace exists.

It has been over a decade since the last direct negotiations, as we've heard today. A resolution of the issue has only become harder. Illegal settlements have expanded. Acrimony between Palestinian factions has deepened. If we try again, only in another half decade, a settlement will be harder still.

Our American colleagues have offered proposals for breaking this deadlock. These represent genuine desire to resolve this conflict. The United Kingdom does not believe these proposals are the end of the road, but we hope that they may lead to a first step. Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders owe it to

their people to give them due consideration.

Mr President, let me, if I may, extend the regards of my Prime Minister to President Abbas. President Abbas has long championed peace and dialogue. We have not forgotten.

All of us here today understand that the proposals put forward by the United States may feel very different to what has been discussed before. Time will be needed to digest them, and members of the Council should strive to provide this.

President Abbas has expressed serious concerns with the proposals. That is certainly his right. It is for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to determine whether the plan meets the needs and aspirations of those they represent.

But where there is disagreement, or even outrage, the only path to resolution is dialogue. The US proposals are now on the table. The United Kingdom looks to the Palestinian leadership to offer its own vision for a settlement, and to find a way of re-engaging with the negotiation process so that its concerns can be considered and discussed.

Mr President, let me be clear. Unilateral action by either party is unacceptable. The UK government, including our Foreign Secretary, most recently in his statement on 31 January, has made clear our serious concern about reports of possible moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel.

I have said in this Council before, and I repeat, that any such unilateral moves would be contrary to international law and damaging to renewed efforts to restart peace negotiations. We hope that President Abbas returns to negotiations, but if he cannot, that would not justify annexation. Any changes to the status quo cannot be taken forward without an agreement negotiated by the parties themselves.

Let me conclude, Mr President, by reiterating the contention of my Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. We must now take the first step on the road back to negotiations. There is no other way forward.

Thank you.

Coronavirus: Health Secretary's statement to Parliament

Madam Deputy Speaker, with permission, I would like to update the House on the response to the Wuhan coronavirus.

I have laid an instrument before the House to confirm the power we have taken to isolate those at risk of spreading the virus, and if necessary to keep them isolated, as part of our belt and braces approach to protecting the public.

The powers are proportionate and will help us slow down transmission of the virus and make it easier for NHS and public health staff to do their jobs.

The clinical advice about the risk to the public has not changed and remains moderate.

As of today, 8 people in England have tested positive for coronavirus.

All are receiving expert care from the NHS, which is well prepared and equipped to deal with this kind of situation.

Contact tracing of the first 4 cases has been undertaken rapidly and is now complete, while tracing for the latest 4 cases is ongoing.

This contact tracing itself identified 5 of the cases – a tribute to the skill and tenacity of Public Health England staff – as well as finding a further 5 British nationals in France who have also tested positive for the virus.

They are now receiving treatment, and the Foreign Office is following up with consular support.

On Sunday, 105 more British nationals and dependants from Hubei province landed safely at Brize Norton.

They are now in isolation facilities at Kents Hill Park in Milton Keynes and are receiving all necessary of the medical attention. I want to pay tribute to the Foreign Office, the MoD as well as Milton Keynes Council and MK Hospital and my own team for their hard work and efficiency in ensuing this all went smoothly.

And Mr Speaker, this is of course in addition to those now reaching the end of their isolation on the Wirral.

Turning to the efforts to contain the outbreak in China, the Foreign Office is advising against all travel to Hubei province and all but essential travel to mainland China.

Last week we issued new advice to all travellers returning to the UK from China, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

That advice is clear. If you develop symptoms of cough, fever or shortness of breath you should call NHS 111 and immediately self-isolate for 14 days, even if symptoms are minor.

If you have returned from Hubei you should self-isolate and contact NHS 111, even if you have no symptoms.

My officials discussed the incubation period with the World Health Organization this morning. The current evidence shows that a 14-day incubation period remains appropriate.

We will continue to monitor emerging evidence closely with our international partners.

Mr Speaker, as I said last week, dealing with this disease is a marathon not a sprint.

The situation will get worse before it gets better. We will be guided by the science. Be in no doubt, we will do everything that is effective to tackle this virus and keep people safe.

We are investing £40 million in vaccine research, are working with international efforts on therapeutics, and today I can announce to the House the immediate launch of a capital facility to support any urgent works the NHS needs for the coronavirus response, such as the creation of further isolation areas and other necessary facilities.

Finally Mr Speaker there are actions each and every one of us can take: simple but effective steps like washing hands and using tissues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we will take all necessary precautions to keep the public safe and I commend this statement to the House.