

soundwaves

UK Audio Production Industry News – Autumn 2021



Report shows an Audio Production Tax Relief would benefit the economy

A report published by AudioUK in July made the case that an Audio Production Tax Relief (APTR) would enable the UK to fully take advantage of the growing international investment in digital audio content such as podcasting and audiobooks.

[The report](#), submitted to HM Treasury and the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, detailed the rapid growth in these formats.

Podcasts in particular are now being heavily invested in platforms such as Spotify, Acast and Audible. They are also used by major international brands and broadcasters to promote products and services.

A tax relief would directly reduce the amount of tax paid on a production which met certain criteria. The increased investment it attracted would not only benefit audio production but related creative sectors.

The report contains financial analysis from the specialist consultancy Communications Chambers, which estimates that the introduction of an APTR would result in a net gain to the Treasury in terms of its overall contribution to the economy.



Kellie While, Chair of AudioUK, said: *“Our members are beginning to see the benefits of the growth in podcasts and audiobooks – as entrepreneurs they’re looking to grow their businesses using their long-established expertise in audio production.*

But it won’t be long before other nations begin to develop their own capacity in podcasting - we are already seeing one or two examples of other governments’ support for this.

So now is the right time to introduce this tax relief, so our creative economy can benefit fully from growing international investment.”



Chloe Straw appointed as new AudioUK Managing Director



In June Chloe Straw was [announced](#) as the new Managing Director of audio producers’ trade association AudioUK, taking over from Will Jackson who held the post for almost seven years. Her background is in audio production, working with companies We Are Grape and Somethin’ Else, plus experience with the BBC and others. She previously served on the AudioUK Board and worked with its Audiotrain programme.

Upon her appointment **Chloe Straw** said: *“It will be an honour to represent the sector’s outstanding talents across podcasts, radio and audiobooks. My ambition is for AudioUK to represent the full diversity of audio production companies and talent across the UK, at an incredibly exciting time for the industry.”*



Audio Content Fund enters third year of pilot phase with 13 new projects

The Audio Content Fund (ACF) recently announced the seventh round of successful bids, showcasing a range of ideas for broadcast on commercial and community radio stations.

[The ACF](#) is a pilot scheme funded by a £3m grant from the UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. Bids are made to the Fund by audio production companies and need to have a guarantee of broadcast on a commercial radio station or network of community stations.

The scheme is now in its third and final year and AudioUK and Radiocentre are putting the case to government to continue the Fund, which is now well established and has benefited audiences.

The Government was sufficiently pleased with the Fund's effectiveness to award two additional tranches of funding to provide two further programmes during the pandemic, one for general entertainment and information and the other on exploring themes around loneliness.



'One Year Like This' related people's lockdown experiences

An ACF survey of the successful production company bidders found that the Fund created or supported a total of 4,301 freelancer days plus 28 full-time jobs and 141 part-time jobs.

Tim Wilson, AudioUK's Board representative on the Audio Content Fund, said: *"The ACF has clearly demonstrated its value to audiences, who can hear a great new range of exciting programmes on their favourite stations. It's been a huge success and we very much hope it will continue on a permanent basis."*



Audiotrain attracts large online audiences but warns of funding gap

The coronavirus pandemic accelerated the [Audiotrain](#) skills programme's move into online training, with positive results. Sessions on such subjects as remote recording attracted over 300 learners. Initially set up with Government



assistance, Audiotrain is completely now self-supporting and while it continues to provide important courses this lack of public funding is indicative of a gap in Government skills support for creative content production, which focuses on screen-based content such as video games, film and so on. AudioUK is currently talking to Government about enabling audio production to be included in its support in future.



Other news in brief...

- **Somethin' Else**, the UK production company founded by Jez Nelson and Sonita Alleyne, was bought in June by **Sony Media Entertainment** to extend its global audio production activity.
- **AudioUK's COVID-19 safe working guidelines** are being used by audio producers to continue working as safely as possible while the country continues to see cases of **coronavirus**.
- **Ofcom's UK Podcast Survey 2021 data** showed that 50% of people in the UK have listened to a podcast, with **25% now listening to podcasts on a weekly basis**.

Soundwaves is produced by AudioUK, the trade body for the independent audio production sector. The sector has 200+ SMEs based around the UK producing high-quality podcasts, radio programmes audiobooks and other audio-led content. For more information on us or this newsletter, or to meet with us, please contact Tim Wilson, AudioUK Lead on Policy and Regulation: tim.wilson@audiouk.org.uk



www.audiouk.org.uk
#weareaudiouk