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Creative Industries Campaign

An Urgent Call to Recognise Podcasting and Audio
as a Core UK Creative Industry

October 2025



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Foreword

At AudioUK, we have worked tirelessly to urge the Government to recognise the enormous economic and cultural value of podcasting and audio.

While it was not a surprise to be left out as a formally recognised creative industry in the Sector Plan, it was still hugely frustrating - especially given the clear evidence we provided around the sector's rapid and continuing growth and impact.

As a sector that reaches billions of people - both in the UK and internationally - and has strong roots and economic impact across the UK, being excluded from targeted support feels like a major oversight.

The campaign invites all creators, listeners, cultural organisations, and policymakers to join the call to action and help elevate podcasting and audio to its rightful place in the national creative economy.

Chloe Straw
CEO, AudioUK

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The Podcast and Audio Industry

Podcasting and audio in the UK is thriving - creatively, culturally, and commercially.

From award-winning investigative journalism to chart-topping entertainment series, UK podcasts and audio are consumed by global audiences and provide a vital platform for diverse British voices while projecting British creativity and soft power on a global stage.

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The number of people listening to podcasts in the UK has more than doubled over the last 5 years, and growing hugely particularly in under 24s.



£5bn

The industry in the UK is worth up to an estimated £5 billion annually, thanks to its wide reach and capacity for IP development and exploitation.

20-30%

It is one of the fastest growing Creative Industries in the world, exceeding 20 - 30% annual expansion rates versus the single-digit or mid-teens typical elsewhere.

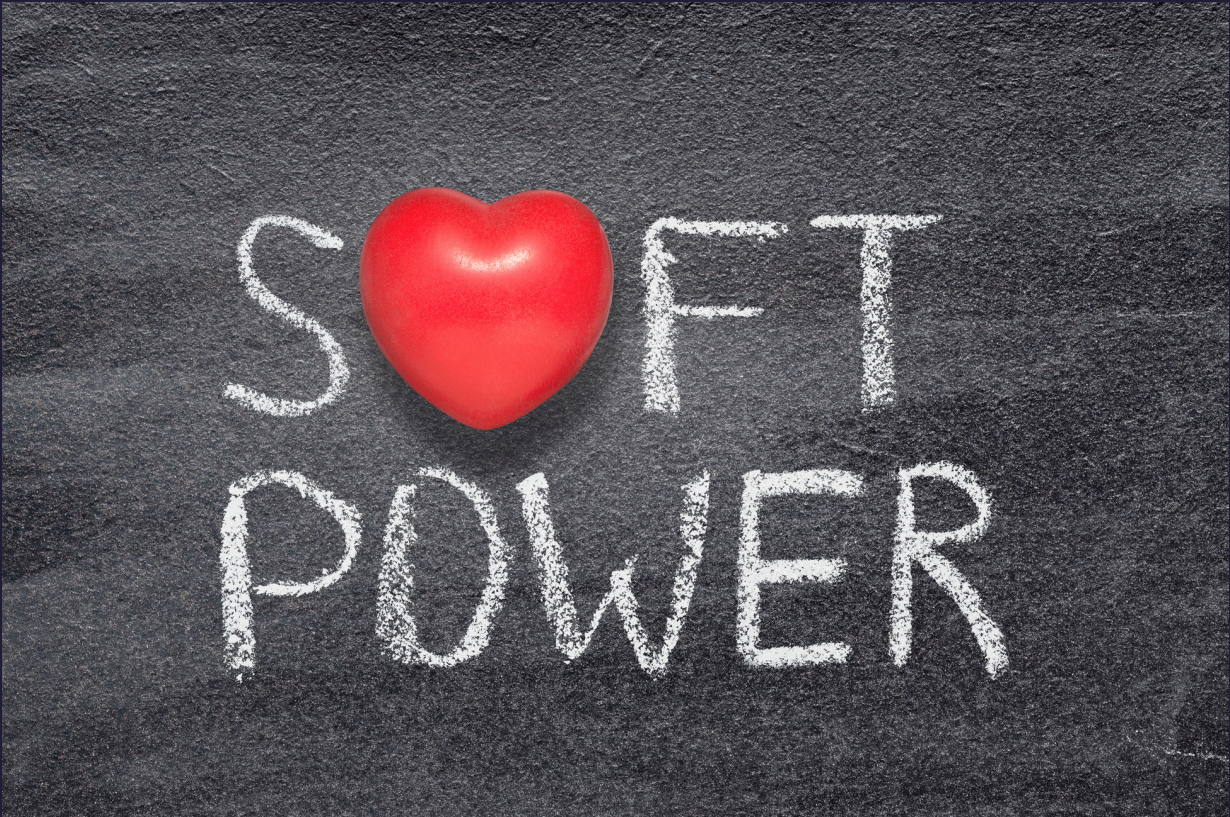


50%

Over 50% of AudioUK member businesses are outside of London, creating jobs, providing training, and platforming local stories and voices.



It is a key UK export. Shows like *The Rest Is Politics*, *The Rest Is History*, *Traitors: Uncloaked*, *Kill List* and *The Magnus Archives* reach billions of listeners worldwide with influence on a global scale.



The Campaign

Despite UK talent and production expertise being globally recognised for its quality and popularity, the podcast and audio industry remains unprioritised, particularly when compared to other creative sectors:

- There is minimal mention of podcasting and audio across the 80 pages of the Creative Industries Sector Plan - despite the significant cultural and economic value it brings.
- Podcasting and audio receives no access to tailored public funding or investment, unlike film, TV, digital games, and more.
- The sector is largely excluded from policy conversations at the Creative Industries Council - the very body designed to shape the future of our creative economy.
- Data around our workforce is largely absent from national creative labour surveys. There is no SIC code for podcasting and audio.



The Campaign

Through this campaign, AudioUK are advocating for the Government to:

- Formally recognise podcasting and audio as part of the Creative Industries.
- Include a seat for a podcasting and audio representative on the Creative Industries Council, not just at sub-group level.
- Introduce targeted support, including a Tax Relief, and Global IP Fund, to fuel growth and investment, nationally and internationally.
- Commission a workforce and economic impact study of the podcast and audio sector as specified in the Creative Industries Sector Plan.
- Ensure future strategic plans fully incorporate the potential of podcasting and audio across skills, exports and regional development. Include a new SIC code for podcasting and audio.

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The Response

Over 400 businesses signed the open letter, representing over 12,000 employees across the sector. A broad and diverse group, including media organisations, radio producers, independent film makers, regional studios, and production companies signed. Full list [here](#).

MPs and Mayors across England and Scotland were written to by AudioUK members underscoring a significant regional footprint and impact in areas beyond London. To date, we have had a 50% response rate, ranging from acknowledgement of receipt, all the way to tabling of questions in Parliament sittings.

A successful podcast advertising campaign was run with the help of multiple podcasting platforms, including Goalhanger, the Guardian, Wondery, Sony, and Rusty Quill, delivering millions of ad impressions globally, and getting people talking.

440+

**Signatures to the
open letter**

Representing over 12,000
employees

MPs

**50% response
rate**

Ads

**Millions of
impressions**

Case Study: Goalhanger

Success across video, audio and more

Founded in 2013, Goalhanger is now the UK's largest independent podcast company, with over 1 billion streams and hit shows including The Rest Is Politics, The Rest Is History, and The Rest Is Football.

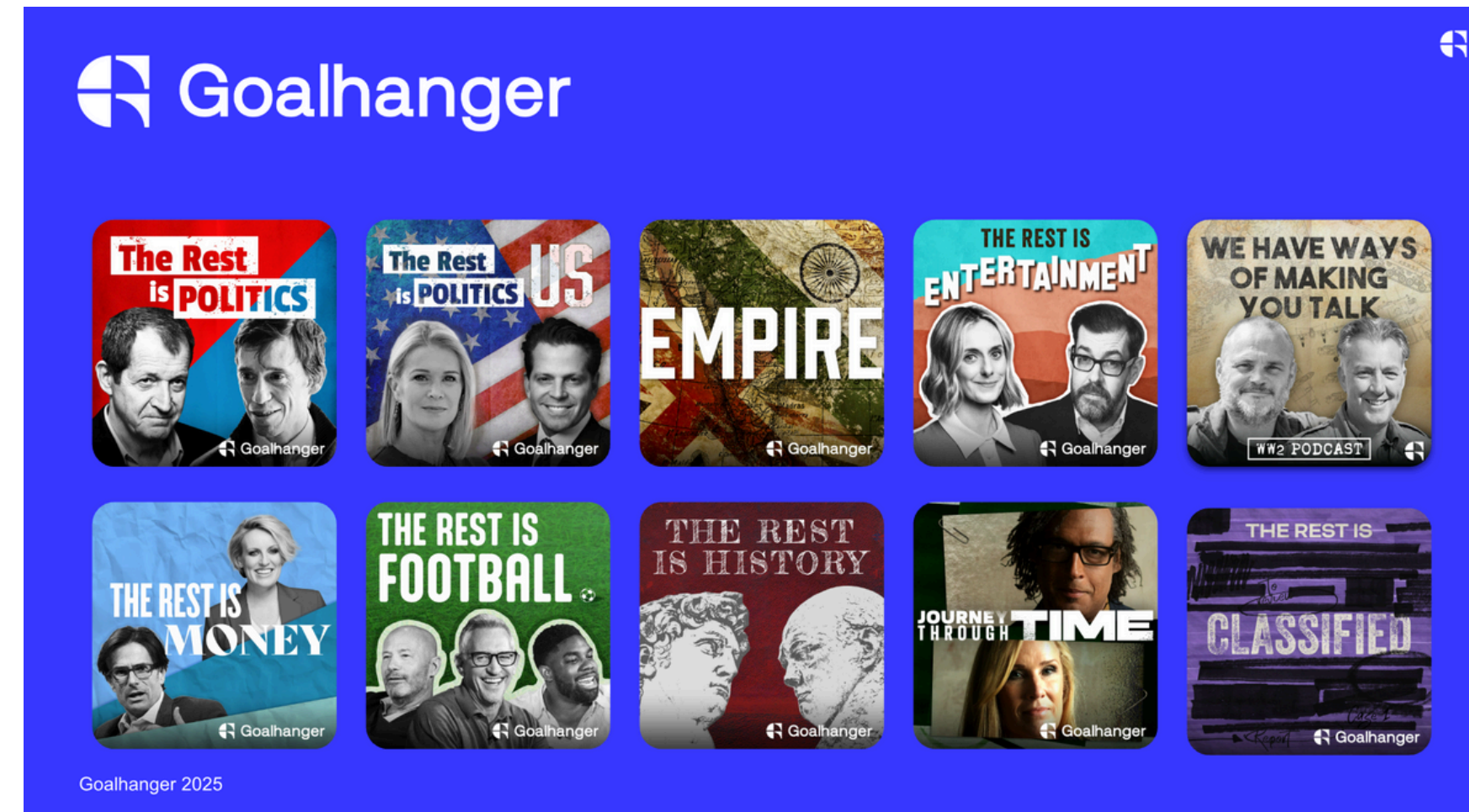
Their reach is global:

- UK & Ireland remain their biggest audience
- North America now accounts for 30% of streams
- Strong growth in Australia, New Zealand, India, Germany, the Netherlands & France

From touring The Rest Is History in the UK, US, and Australia, to selling out London's O2 with The Rest Is Politics, Goalhanger shows how podcast-first brands can thrive across audio, video, live events, and beyond.

Dominic Sandbrook and Tom Holland of The Rest Is History have been recognised in The Hollywood Reporter's Podcast Power Players 2025, listed among the 44 most influential figures in global podcasting. One of only two UK entries.

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30%

30% of listeners come from North America.

Live Events

The Rest is Politics live show sold out the O2 arena.

1bn streams

Hit shows include The Rest Is Politics, The Rest Is History, and The Rest Is Football.

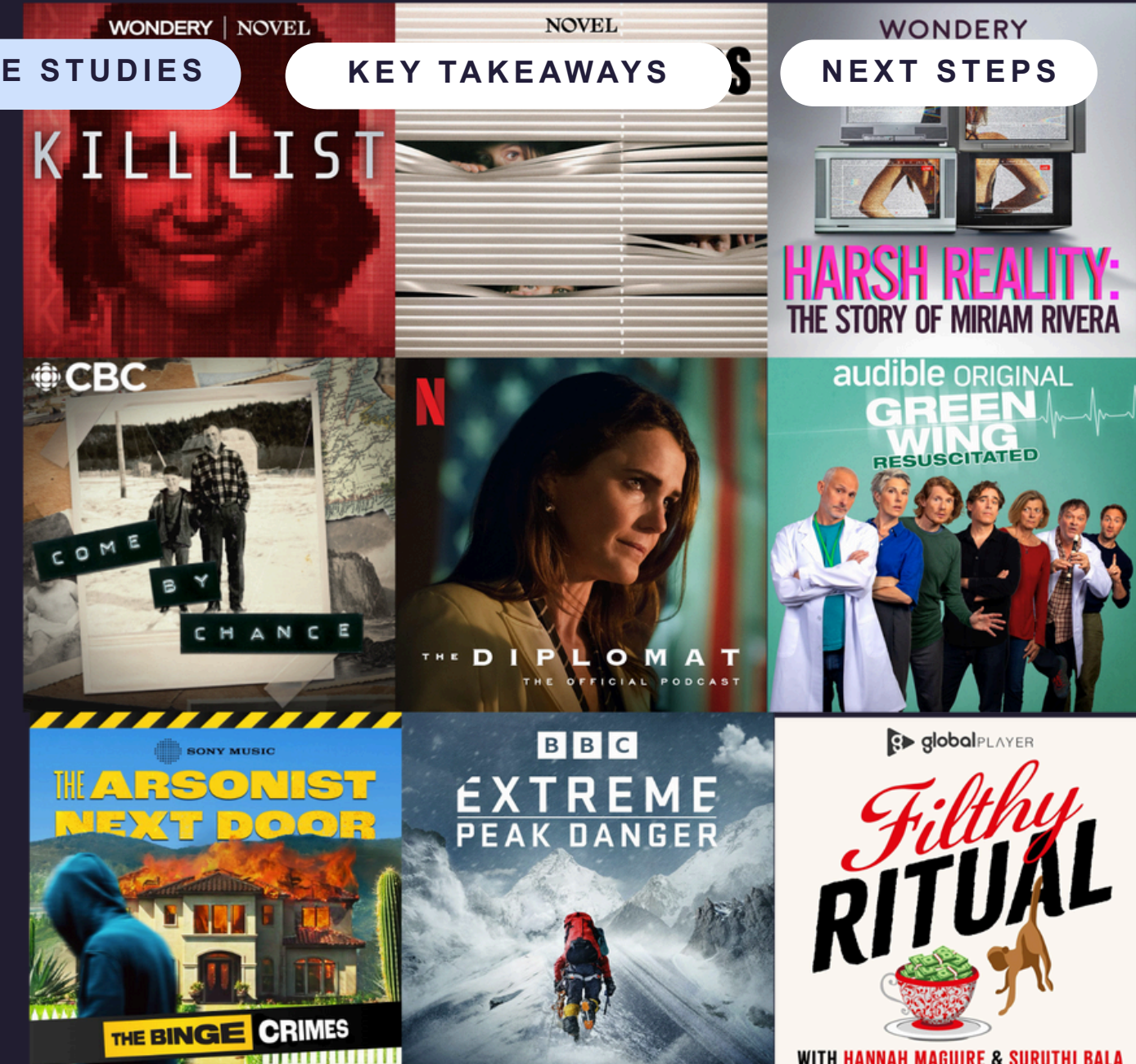
Case Study: Novel International Influence

Novel is one of the leading premium podcast companies worldwide. Founded in the UK, it is known for producing some of the best narrative podcasts of recent years.

Their shows have topped the charts in the UK, US, Canada, Ireland and Australia. They have delivered 6 global number one podcasts, been downloaded millions of times and work with clients worldwide.

Novel works with some of the biggest names in global media — iHeart, Audible, NBC Universal, Netflix — cementing its reputation as a UK creative powerhouse with global impact. By partnering with leading US platforms and networks, Novel showcases how UK podcasting isn't just competing on the world stage — it's setting the standard.

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Top 10

Novel shows have hit the Top 10 in non-English speaking marketplaces such as Norway.

Real World Impact

Kill List has resulted in 34 arrests and 28 convictions across 11 countries

6 Number Ones

6 global number one podcasts, their shows have been downloaded millions of times and they work with clients worldwide.

Case Study: Rusty Quill Intellectual Property

Podcasting is so much more than “just audio.”

Rusty Quill, the creators of The Magnus Archives - a weekly horror fiction anthology podcast - were recently announced as the only English-language fiction podcast, and one of the few UK productions, to surpass 100 million downloads on Spotify

Beyond captivating listeners, they’ve built an international brand:

- £3M/year in official merchandise sales
- A roleplaying game adaptation raising \$3M via two crowdfunding campaigns
- Clothing collections
- Custom perfume scents inspired by the show

Rusty Quill collaborates across the creative economy: musicians for scores, graphic designers for artwork, product makers for merchandise, proving podcasting fuels and connects multiple creative sectors.

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100m

The only English-language fiction podcast and one of the only UK podcasts to have achieved over 100 million downloads on Spotify.

\$400k

They raised \$400k via crowdfunding for a supernatural mystery-solving, home "escape room" style board game.

£3m

£3m a year in official merchandise sales including apparel, perfumes and board games.

Case Study: Crossed Wires Festival Live Events

In its second year in 2025, the Crossed Wires Festival in Sheffield established itself as the “biggest podcast festival in the world” (Podnews). Creating huge opportunities for employment and economic impact in South Yorkshire.

Attended by over 20,000 people - with fans travelling from Denmark, Germany, the USA and Brazil - Crossed Wires became the world’s biggest podcasting celebration.

It put fans front and centre, capturing the buzz of a music festival while keeping the intimacy of podcasting. No wonder the Sunday Times called it “the Edinburgh for podcasts.”

Crossed Wires assembles the most in-demand names in podcasting across all genres, including entertainment, sport, comedy, and food.

All major platforms want to be involved in 2026, from BBC to Apple and Spotify.

This is just one example of how podcasting and audio are innovating, generating economic and cultural impact, and contributing to the UK’s creative economy.

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52

52 events covering all mainstream genres. For 2026 they're aiming for 8 major venues & 2 public squares creating a city centre takeover.

20,000

20k tickets sold in its second year. Next year they're aiming for 35,000 tickets and 80,000 in footfall.

55%

55% of the attendees over the weekend were from outside of South Yorkshire.

Case Study: Overcoat Media Local Stories

Overcoat Media creates high-quality, distinctive podcasts and audio, which reflects voices and stories often overlooked by mainstream media.

Based in Wales, they're closely connected to local communities and their stories, from regional history and culture to everyday experiences, which also resonate with people far beyond their locality.

Overcoat regularly seek opportunities to connect their local audiences with the bigger picture, for example the story of Reform UK's rise in Wales.

They employ local talent, as well as connecting a wider network of national and international talent - creating pathways for new talent to develop skills to help strengthen Wales' role in the UK's creative industries.

With plans to triple their turnover and a focus on developing original content, their goal is to grow a busy, creative base in Wales that pushes boundaries and offers a strong alternative to more centralised podcast and audio production.

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Local Talent

Each project supports a wide network of local talent and suppliers, directly benefitting the local economy.

International Reach

Many of their productions have found significant audiences overseas. This shows that local stories can travel widely and connect with people everywhere.

Key Takeaways

- The campaign represents a unified industry voice pressing for appropriate and representative recognition for the part we play in the prosperity of the UK creative industries.
- It highlights the sector's rapid growth, economic value, and global cultural reach, backed by compelling examples.
- The inclusion of an advertising campaign with significant reach demonstrates commitment to visibility and public engagement.
- The regional distribution of member businesses underscores how the sector supports UK-wide creative infrastructure and regional development.
- Lack of workforce data signals a research gap and justifies one of the government requests: commissioning a workforce and economic impact study.

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Key Asks for DCMS and government

1. Formally recognise podcasting and audio as part of the Creative Industries.
2. Include a seat for a podcasting and audio representative on the Creative Industries Council, not just at sub-group level.
3. Introduce targeted support, including a Tax Relief, a SIC code specifically for podcasting and audio, and a Global IP Fund, to fuel growth and investment, nationally and internationally.
4. Commission a workforce and economic impact study of the podcast and audio sector as specified in the Creative Industries Sector Plan - NB we are pleased to be working with DCMS currently on a piece of work to gather industry data.
5. Ensure future strategic plans fully incorporate the potential of podcasting and audio across skills, exports and regional development.

