

BFI announce latest Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF) production slate

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[Pictured: Makeaway Takeaway for CITV]

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Twelve new production awards for preschool to teen commissions from Channel 4, E4, Channel 5, CITV and S4C

Tuesday 7th July: The BFI has today announced the latest production slate of awarded projects through the Government funded Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF), demonstrating the positive impact the Fund is having on the youth television sector.

The BFI has confirmed they awarded a total of 18 projects with production funding applications within the YACF's first year, (from April 19-April 20), with a committed spend of £11,520,428. A further seven have been awarded so far in Year 2 (from April 2020- present) although official funding figures for Year two have yet to be released. Awards continue to build exponentially across factual entertainment, drama, current affairs and entertainment and details of further awards made in Year two will be announced in due course.

Following the initial nine projects [announced](#) in 2019, the latest slate includes a mix of 12 new series and specials for Channel 4, E4, Channel 5's Milkshake!, CITV and S4C, including cult comedy puppet series '**Don't Hug Me I'm Scared**' (Blink Industries, Channel 4), '**MakeAway Takeaway**' (Dot to Dot, CITV) and '**Winnie & Wilbur**' (Winduna, Milkshake!). This slate also includes two quick turnaround projects for E4, one of which - '**Letters In Lockdown**' - aired in June. The newly announced production projects include a mix of programmes addressing concepts of acceptance and tackling issues impacting young people across the UK, including race, identity, gender, disability and socio-economics, reflective of all UK culture.

Jackie Edwards, Head of the Young Audiences Content Fund at the BFI, said: "*We're proud of the range of projects we've been able to support within our production slate, nurturing stories and concepts we feel will enrich television for young audiences. Throughout the first year, we have been overwhelmed by the quality of the production applications that have secured a broadcast commission and I'm hugely excited about the exciting new UK talent we have been able to support.*"

The fund contributes up to 50% of the production costs for projects that have secured a broadcast commitment from a free-to-access, Ofcom regulated service with significant UK-wide audience reach. This exciting second YACF slate embraces all techniques, genres and audiences up to the age of 18, from animation, mixed media and live action and genres including creative arts and crafts, pioneering game shows, surreal comedy, factual and educational programming.

An ever-increasing range of producers and broadcasters are engaging with the Fund. In the first 12 months since its launch in April 2019, the UK production community have submitted 42 applications, all with broadcast commitments, underlining that the Fund has become an integral part of the young audiences production landscape.

The Young Audiences Contend Fund has awarded production funding to the following projects within this slate, summarised by broadcaster:

Channel 4:

- Blink Industries' part-educational programming, part-existential nightmare, '**Don't Hug Me I'm Scared**'; a mixed-media trip that moves from kids-show pastiche to fever-dream horror in the blink of an eye. Building on the cult YouTube show, which has been viewed over a quarter of a billion times, the Channel 4 series will follow Red Guy, Yellow Guy and Duck as they continue their disastrous learning journey. This puppet musical extravaganza is helmed by original creators Becky Sloan, Joseph Pelling & Baker Terry.

Fiona McDermott, Head of Comedy, Channel 4, said: *"Don't Hug Me I'm Scared is a uniquely pitched show from one of the most creative production companies around. Ideas that come with such a strong identity and established following are incredibly rare but they are really important factors when it comes to making content for younger audiences. We were desperate to endorse this glorious genre-blending-puppet-tour-de-force and with the YACF we found the perfect partners to make that a reality. We're thrilled to be making this series with them both."*

E4:

- Afro Mic Productions' '**Letters in Lockdown**' captured six incredible stories of young people from across the UK amidst the Covid-19 lockdown who were inspired to write to their loved ones in these challenging times. The series showed first-hand teenagers' experiences through their words and how they have coped with the lockdown. Showcasing wellbeing, mental health and mindfulness, this documentary series informed the audience about different people's lives, experiences and points of view, which can be representative, reflective and relatable.
- Mother's Best Child's '**Grime Therapy (w/t)**', a brand-new animated series featuring the UK's leading Grime stars, talking openly about mental health, and how to cope with it. They'll draw on personal experience and offer science-based techniques and mental tools to help you deal with things like worry, uncertainty, boredom, loneliness, conflict and anger. Shining a light on mental health issues among teenagers, the series is relatable and representative, giving a platform to under-represented groups from the UK.

Navi Lamba, Digital Commissioning Exec for E4 said: *"It's been so brilliant harnessing all the creativity inspired in our indie partners over the last few months. We've commissioned a mixture of animation and live action, hearing the stories of real people across the country and those of well-known faces in music and TV."*

CITV:

- **'Don't Unleash the Beast'**, produced by Tiny House Productions and CPL Productions, a Red Arrow Studios company, is an ambitious game show set in a mythological underground world where a team of three treasure seekers undergo a series of challenges in order to find an ancient lost treasure. One tiny snag... a ferocious and foul Beast is guarding the treasure - make a wrong move and all his might is unleashed! Each game will test the participants in areas of problem solving, skill, physical prowess, teamwork, communication and knowledge. The show will promote healthy attitudes towards competition, physical activity and working together.
- Dot to Dot Production's arts and crafts series **'Makeaway Takeaway'**, a brand-new comedy art and craft series for 6-12 year olds, encouraging creativity, through arts, crafts and making, with an emphasis on sustainability through recycling, reusing, upcycling and reclaimed materials. Presented by artist and comedian Bec Hill, each week, Bec will take the audience and her 'takeaway' customers on a comical journey packed with unique and inspirational art ideas, as she experiments with unusual materials, finds a home for junk, and uses her funny bones to make us laugh along the way.
- Aardman's animated sitcom for 5-11 year olds, **Lloyd of the Flies**, mirrors contemporary life for children and families across the UK. It is estimated that there are some 10 quintillion (10,000,000,000,000,000,000) individual insects alive at any one time. This is a story about one; Lloyd B Fly is a housefly and middle child of 453. He lives with his parents, little sister PB and their 225 maggot siblings in the rotting apple they call home, located in a quiet suburban fruit bowl. The series offers a fresh British sense of humour, giving a sense of what it's like living in a UK based family dynamic, from the point of view of a young teenage boy.

Paul Mortimer, CITV said: *"The YACF has been immensely supportive of UK producers in the Indie sector. The partnerships that this new funding model has enabled have brought UK creativity amongst content makers for young audiences to the fore, greatly benefiting CITV and others. The latest CITV commissions*

announced today enrich our output with new British series in multi genres across live action and animation."

Channel 5's Milkshake!

- Winduna Enterprises' **'Winnie & Wilbur'**, an animated comedy series based on the Winnie the Witch books by Valerie Thomas and Korcky Paul, published by Oxford University Press. The series extends the world of Winnie the Witch in original storylines that follow the loveable and haphazard witch Winnie and her long-suffering black cat Wilbur on their mad escapades. Winnie & Wilbur is brimming with magic, mayhem and music to surprise and delight its target audience. The series will be made in Scotland in association with SellOutAnimation whose team have worked together on multiple BAFTA and Oscar nominated series and films . It is produced with the support of the Scottish Government and National Lottery through Creative Scotland and showcases strong on-screen representation of Britain.
- Fourth Wall Animation's **'Milo'**, an animation series that displays a sense of humour reflective of UK culture. Milo the cat lives with his family in a drycleaner's called Scrubby's. Inside the drycleaners is a mechanical robot called Suds who houses all of the clean clothes. Each episode, Milo and his best friends Lofty and Lark try on a different outfit from Suds, which are all vocational. The trio is transported to the world of that vocation where they have fun and learn about the specific job role. There is strong on-screen diversity through gender, regionality, faith, race and socio-economical representation and it's the first series commission for Fourth Wall Animation.
- Saffron Cherry Productions' **'The World According to Grandpa'**, a humorous, imaginative creative storytelling format designed to inspire children to laugh and learn through relatable intergenerational relationships and visually engaging animation and live action mix. It features beautiful 2D animation with each of the 25 episodes prompted by a question posed by one of the three grandchildren, Stanley, his sister Connie or their cousin Louie. These are all genuine questions asked by children, gathered from numerous author visits to schools and answered by our twinkly eyed Grandpa, played by Don Warrington. His explanations are always playful, 100% untrue and engaging.
- Wyndley Animation's **'Circle Square'**, a comedy animation about a circle of houses and a circle of friends. Promoting a sense of community, celebrating differences, teamwork and problem solving. It reflects a cross section of a neighbourhood, the families that live there and helping each other out.

“The Fund is an incredibly important initiative that opens doors on a number of new avenues, enabling us to push boundaries and expand our roster of high-quality British UK originated content,” Louise Bucknole, VP Programming Kids, ViacomCBS Networks UK said. “For the first time in a number of years, we’re able to bring live action drama and entertainment formats back to Milkshake!, putting more real kids on screen, which in turn supports our ambition to increase representation of kids up and down the UK. In addition, we’ve also commissioned a number of new standout animations and are working with new companies as a result of the fund. We’re looking forward to broadening our net further to work with more new partners from across the UK.”

S4C

- Cwmni Da Cyf Welsh language historical factual series **‘Hei Hanes!’** (Hey History!) brings history, drama and vlogging together in an anarchic social network inspired format for 8-13-year olds, bringing Welsh history to life in an engaging and contemporary way.

Young historical characters from the Celtic age right through to the 1990s will give personal accounts of their lives in the guise of YouTubers, which will connect to our audience in a language they understand. Every episode will focus on a different character, giving the impression of having been filmed entirely on smartphones or webcams by the characters themselves. As part of the commission, Hei Hanes is offering a job in the production team to a person from a BAME background who is new to the creative industries.

- Sali Mali 2’s **‘Sali Mali’**, a 2D early learning Welsh language series, representative of today’s children’s lives and experiences in Wales, highlighting acceptance and celebration of others with differences among mixed communities.

Sioned Wyn Roberts, Commissioner for Children’s and Learning, S4C said:

“I am delighted that another two Welsh language projects have been supported by the YACF. The fund enables us at S4C to constantly improve quality and breadth of our offering to children and young people of all ages. The BAME mentoring scheme on Hei Hanes is a new and exciting development that would not have been possible without the fund.”

The YACF has remained open for business amidst the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, welcoming new funding applications from producers as well as supporting existing development and production activities. Awards are still being

made regularly and as ever, the team welcome programme ideas that specifically help young people in the UK understand the world around them and offer a chance to see their lives, in all their diversity, reflected on screen.

During lockdown, the Fund team launched the See Yourself on Screen Challenge, a UK-wide competition for 4-18 year olds which called on young people from all corners of the UK to create and star in their own mini-TV show, reflecting their own lives and stories. Hundreds of entries were received and having received 1-to-1 virtual masterclasses from the likes of Reggie Yates, Harry Hill, Jessica Hynes and Rob Delaney. The mini-TV shows made by the 15 overall will now premiere on national TV across Channel 5's Milkshake!, CITV, E4, S4C (Welsh language) and TG4 (Irish language), airing from 8th July onwards.

To find out more about the Young Audiences Content Fund, please visit:

www.bfi.org.uk/yacf

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For further information contact:

Charlotte Prentice, Director, Multitude Media North

charlotte.prentice@multitudemedia.co.uk

Judy Wells, Press and PR Director, BFI

judy.wells@bfi.org.uk

Colette Geraghty, Senior PR Manager, Corporate, Industry and Partnerships, BFI

colette.geraghty@bfi.org.uk

About the Young Audiences Content Fund:

Managed by the BFI, the Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF) supports the creation of distinctive, high-quality content for audiences up to the age of 18. Up to £57 million over a three year pilot, will support the creation of distinct, high-quality content for children and young audiences to be broadcast on free-to-access, Ofcom regulated television channels and online platforms.

Financed by UK Government as part of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Contestable Fund, the YACF aims to provide new avenues for creators of original content and bring new voices to the market, and back content which entertains, informs and reflects the experiences of young people growing up across the UK today. www.bfi.org.uk/yacf

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

Press Contacts

grant.cunningham@itv.com

Viewer enquiries

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