

## **Stan's Cafe Open Space November 2017**

### **How to retain skills within the region?**

Laura Killeen, General Manager at Stan's Cafe, raised this question. This is based on experience of finding it difficult to find production and technical skills within the Midlands region. That isn't to say there isn't any but it feels like we have a small pool of resources, or we don't know about the wider resources that may be within the region. The discussion was mainly focused on technical and production skills but was opened out to discuss other perceived skill shortages.

Suggestions to retain skills within the region:

- Make the Midlands more appealing.
- Appropriate salaries.
- Opportunities.
- Apprenticeships for people in the region and a follow on legacy from this.
- Large institutions, such as Midlands Universities, should promote the region to graduates and work with arts organisations to keep them in the region.
- Up-skilling of people who are here. Is this viable with current resources and funding? Could there be a consortium of arts organisations to apply for funding to enable this?
- Retraining people to have dual skills. For example, actors to have technical skills. Would actors want to do this?
- Greater support network in the region for individuals who work within production and technical roles. For example, Frontseat Media no longer exists because there needed to be a supportive network from other organisations to ensure the sustainability of Frontseat Media. It would be good to have Frontseat Media contribute to this discussion.
- Value and recognition of what is a skilled role.
- Consider people's end goal/career needs and how does the Midlands sector help them achieve that?
- Budget projects/programmes effectively to reflect skillset needed for that project/programme of work.
- Consider people's/staff wellbeing. Technical and production roles are hard work and can sometimes be lonely.

There was a discussion that it can be difficult to know what resources and skills are in the region and what is the most effective way to share this knowledge?

- Could there be a central communication tool or database?
- East Meets West facebook group has become very effective in sharing opportunities within the region.
- Need visibility of opportunities and how to effectively share that across the sector?

Is this a Midlands question, and has another region got this right, or is this an issue for all regions?

What can we do to help address this?

- We could host an Open Day where we invited technical/production companies and individuals to meet with the sector and find out what resources/opportunities we have.
- Look at forming a collective to apply for funding for a training programme.
- How would the above be administrated? We would need to manage people's expectations. This could be helped through the clarification of language used for job roles. Be clear on what the role is and what skills are needed.
- Organisations and individuals with websites could have a page on their website about opportunities and production/technical resources they have or are looking for.
- Blog posts from people undertaking those roles in the industry, to use as an advocacy tool.
- Show that the technical/production roles can be creative. Especially when working with independent companies.
- Laura Killeen and Pippa Frith discussed trying to do a recruitment drive in 2018.