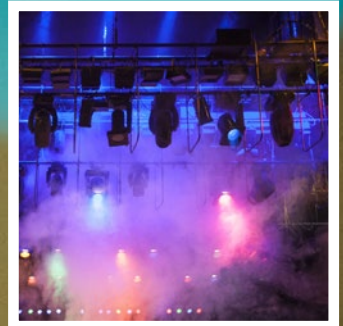
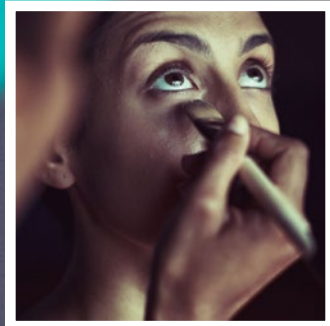




CIISA

The Creative Industries
Independent Standards Authority



Annual Report

2024/25

Contents

1. View from the Chair	1
2. Chief Executive Officer's foreword	2
3 Year at a glance	4
4. Global picture	5
5. Boardroom changemakers	6
6. Financial snapshot	14
7. CIISA Standards - a landmark moment	18
8. Impact through services	24

View from the Chair



Baroness Helena Kennedy KC LT

It is my great pleasure and privilege to be CIISA's Chair, a role I assumed during the dynamic period of organisational growth and development covered by this report.

Thank you to founding Chair, the irrepressible Dame Heather Rabbatts. Her love of the creative industries and determination that everyone must be held accountable for their behaviour in the workplace – irrespective of their seniority or power – led to the creation of CIISA.

CIISA has a clear sense of purpose: it is here to raise standards, rebuild trust, and close the accountability gap that has persisted for too long in the creative industries. The simple fact is people want and need an independent body to which they can turn – even anonymously – for advice. The fear that there will be consequences for making a complaint are too great for those, often freelancers, who have little power up against established figures.

CIISA's role as an independent body is to augment other structures in a positive way. It will support more organisations to adopt a consistent level of good practice and provide an essential backstop for where processes or

reporting mechanisms either don't exist or have failed. CIISA offers the creative industries – for the first time – the opportunity to identify and stop serial perpetrators working across multiple projects and hirers. This is an urgent and essential intervention.

The strategic focus for 2025/26 is to continue engaging positively and constructively with partners at every level across the creative industries to make it happen.

Bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour have no place in the creative industries. We are grateful to the many partners who are supporting CIISA and demonstrating their commitment to protecting the brilliant people who power British creativity; in doing so they are shifting the paradigm.

As Chair I want to thank the CIISA team and my fellow Board for their committed and diligent work throughout 2024/25.

Chief Executive Officer's foreword



Jen Smith

In setting the course for a Standards Authority in its start-up phase, my focus is on driving the organisation forward. CIISA's momentum is vital in establishing the strong foundations needed for us to deliver meaningful change for the creative industries.

But this report also acts as an important moment of reflection for CIISA, as we look back on what was a momentous year.

First, I must acknowledge the committed engagement and steadfast support we have received from so many creative industry organisations and individuals. Without their leadership, we would not be here. The willingness of so many to generously devote their time, expertise and wisdom to help us build CIISA into a focused and resilient force for good has been exceptional and we are enormously grateful.

So too I must acknowledge the support of the Secretary of State, The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Women and Equalities Select Committee and also the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee all of whom have recognised the vital role CIISA will play in upholding and improving standards of behaviour in the UK's world-leading creative industries.

The year saw CIISA develop and publish our corporate strategy, business plan and costed

prospectus, and appoint CIISA's first Board chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy KC LT and CIISA's Board of Finance, chaired by Lyndsey Jackson Deputy Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. Establishing a robust governance framework ensures CIISA continues to develop in a careful and considered way with the highest standards of strategic oversight and scrutiny. We developed and published our Services Guide, outlining the range of interventions, services and support that CIISA will offer to help drive up standards and protect the creative workforce, initially across music, theatre, film and TV. Structuring and designing CIISA's services has involved engagement from many of CIISA's stakeholders, freelancers, and experts working in this specialist field and we are hugely grateful for their input.

2024/25 saw CIISA start to make a real impact for industry too, with the publication of a first set of unified standards for the

creative industries. These provide a framework setting out the minimum standards of behaviour expected across the creative industries to ensure safe and inclusive working environments. The CIISA Standards were developed and finalised through an open consultation process and the committed support from our Standards Advisory Committee. The Standards are now being widely adopted, with the BBC and ITV embedding them within their commissioning processes and other organisations exploring how to integrate them into procurement and partnerships agreements. We are proudly working with organisations across the creative industries to embed them and create tailored and practical guidance and resources that will benefit the sector as a whole.

An important learning from the year was around the limitations of CIISA's opt-in voluntary funding model. While we were able to secure the funding necessary to fulfil our fundamental business objective of setting and embedding shared Standards for the creative sector within our anticipated timeframe, it became clear that the process of doing so was too slow, too unpredictable and too labour-intensive to be sustainable for CIISA in the long-term. We are looking forward to moving into our next phase with a model of registration. Proven in other sectors, a registration model enables our stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to

working with CIISA and supporting the drive to improve the sector's working culture and upholding the CIISA Standards.

And finally, this work done well is always a collective endeavour, and I extend my personal thanks to the brilliant CIISA team who continue to work very hard, enabling us to move forward positively.

But my last word is to the many people trusting and willing us onwards to deliver this vital missing piece of the creative industries infrastructure.

As CIISA continues to evolve, we are resolute in our determination to close the accountability gap that has proved so damaging to our creative sector. It is an oft-used phrase but no exaggeration at all to say that the UK's creative industries are truly world-leading. They are recognised by government as key drivers for economic growth in the modern industrial strategy and they are a vital force for good in our society, helping us to better understand our lives and our world.

We know how urgent CIISA's services are because of the number of enquiries we already receive from people who need our help.

As CIISA's June 2025 report, *Unlocking Growth Through Accountability*, demonstrated, the cost of workplace conflict in the

UK's creative industries is around £1.8 billion each year and impacts around 700,000 people. This is a shocking – and avoidable – waste.

The brilliant people who power our extraordinary creative sector deserve a safe place that will support the whole ecosystem and drive up standards to make workplace harm a thing of the past. CIISA is that place.

CIISA Year at a glance 2024/25

1st

First-ever unified CIISA Standards for the creative industries developed and launched



CIISA's Services Guide co-created and published



International research into safeguarding for creative industries published

600

Over 600 stakeholder meetings

700

Over 700 consultation responses

20

20 Standards Advisory Committee members engaged

5

5 Board members recruited

4

4 CIISA Board of Finance members recruited

2

2 Board Advisors engaged



International Community of Practice established



Business Plan and Corporate Strategy published



Investment Prospectus setting out 2024-26 activities and costs published

3

Evidence given to 3 Select Committees

4

4 Standards Advisory Committee meetings

Global picture

January 2025 saw the publication of CIISA's first international benchmarking of safeguarding for the creative industries.

Clara Gallistl, an independent cultural policy adviser, interviewed over 40 representatives from organisations around the world, including government bodies, trade unions, creative sector consultants, private companies and NGOs. Drawing these interviews together with extensive desk research, the report set out key commonalities and also differences within local and regional legal, cultural and economic frameworks.

The valuable research highlighted both the global connectivity of the creative industries, and the shared challenges in keeping its talented workforce safe.

CIISA has identified a clear need and hunger for more collaboration in this space and has acted on the report's recommendations. An international Community of Practice, designed to connect like-minded initiatives to share good practice and drive consistency, is now in place with its first meeting convened and chaired by CIISA in June 2025.



Boardroom changemakers

In July 2024 CIISA established its formal governance structure and appointed its founding Board.

Chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy KC LT, the Board comprises legal and regulatory expertise, and creative industry experience across a number of sectors.



I felt it was important to contribute to raising standards and strengthening a culture of integrity

Nazir Afzal OBE

Nazir Afzal OBE was Chief Crown Prosecutor for North West England and formerly Director in London. During a 30 year career, Nazir has prosecuted the most high-profile cases in the country and advised on many others, leading nationally on several legal issues including Violence against Women and Girls, child sexual abuse, and honour-based violence. He is currently Chancellor of the University of Manchester – the largest one site university in the U.K. – and Chair of Salford’s Lowry theatre.

What drew you to serve on CIISA’s Board?

I believe the creative industries thrive on collaboration, imagination, and trust – and those values can only be sustained when people feel safe, respected, and supported in their work. Having seen both the incredible potential of these industries and the challenges around accountability and behaviour, I felt it was important to contribute to raising standards and strengthening a culture of integrity.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

My career has been about amplifying the voices of the unheard, of bridging the accountability gap, of tackling the trust deficit and upholding decency and integrity in public life. My time with CIISA is an extension of that.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

CIISA will make a real difference to the everyday lives of people working in the creative industries. Too often, talented individuals have felt they had to put up with unacceptable behaviour or leave the industry altogether because there was nowhere safe to turn. By offering an independent and trusted place to turn to, CIISA gives people the confidence that they will be listened to and treated fairly. That support can be life-changing – it means people can focus on their work, their creativity, and their careers without fear. In the long run, this will help build healthier, more respectful workplaces where everyone has the chance to thrive.



I believe the organisation has the framework and methods for tackling these unacceptable behaviours

Jane Preston

Jane Preston has worked within the creative industries as a ballet dancer, actress and, for the past 20 years, as a multi award-winning television producer, director, executive producer and journalist. Jane mentors young filmmakers and sits on the board of Women in Film and Television (WFTV).

What drew you to serve on CIISA's Board?

Bullying harassment and discrimination is embedded in many workplace cultures within the creative industries. I wanted to serve on CIISA's Board because I believe the organisation has the framework and methods for tackling these unacceptable behaviours and creating a safe, positive and productive workplace environment.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

I've worked in television for over 20 years and have witnessed repeated bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace. These behaviours invariably go unreported and unchecked because people feel there's currently no safe and effective place for freelancers and staff

members to register concerns, without fear of a detrimental impact on their reputation and career. CIISA provides a desperately needed intervention, and a framework of professional Standards, that will change and improve outcomes for everybody working in the creative industries.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

CIISA is, literally, a game-changer. Its framework of professional Standards can improve the working lives of people within the creative industries by embedding a culture where everybody is respected and protected. It is a force for good.



I have witnessed first-hand the profound imbalance that can arise when creative excellence is allowed to eclipse fundamental duties of care

Dr Kienda Hoji

Dr Kienda Hoji is a music industry lawyer, consultant, and academic with over 30 years of experience in the music and entertainment industry. His career is marked by a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy against discrimination.

What drew you to serve on CIISA's Board?

As someone who has worked for many years within the music industry – both as a lawyer and an artist manager – I have witnessed first-hand the profound imbalance that can arise when creative excellence is allowed to eclipse fundamental duties of care. The creative industries produce work of extraordinary cultural and social value, yet too often, the circumstances in which these works are produced fall far short of the dignity, safety, and fairness that every individual is entitled to expect.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

My professional experience gives me a multi-layered perspective on the realities of the creative industries. As a music lawyer, I have long been engaged in safeguarding the rights and interests of artists, ensuring that contracts, relationships, and industry practices uphold principles of fairness and accountability. As an artist manager, I have worked closely with creators on a daily basis, witnessing not only the brilliance of their work but also the vulnerabilities they can face within professional environments – particularly in freelance contexts where protections are limited.

My experience as a university academic leader has given me insight into how the challenges of the sector are perceived by students and emerging professionals. I have seen how concerns about workplace culture

can deter talented individuals from pursuing their ambitions. CIISA's work has the potential not only to reassure these young people that they can pursue their creative ambitions in safe and respectful environments, but also to empower them as agents of change – protected as they take their first steps into professional life.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

I believe that CIISA has the potential to deliver transformative change across the creative industries. Importantly, it will provide reassurance to freelancers who make up the majority of those working in the sector that they are not without protection or recourse. In doing so, CIISA will enable the industry to focus on what it does best: producing work of extraordinary cultural and social value, free from the shadows of misconduct.



CIISA will do good by helping to prevent bad, focusing on supporting businesses to do the right thing

Guy Parker

Guy Parker is Chief Executive of the ASA (Advertising Standards Authority), the UK regulator of ads in all media. Responsible for executing the ASA's strategy – AI-assisted, collective ad regulation – he oversees all functions of the ASA system. Guy is also President of the International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation, the global platform for advertising self-regulation, a Board member of the Fundraising Regulator and a member of its Standards Committee, responsible for the Code of Fundraising Practice.

What drew you to serve on CIISA's Board?

Pound-for-pound, the UK's creative industries are the best in the world. So it was no surprise to me that so many key businesses in our film, music, TV and theatre sectors were the first globally to confront – collectively and systematically – bullying and harassment behaviours that, sadly, have been too common around the world for too long. CIISA's core mission could not be more important: creating consistently safe workplaces for the industry professionals who deliver the creativity that enriches our lives.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

My experience running the ASA, the UK's advertising regulatory system, helps me contribute to CIISA's strategic thinking on how best to strike the right balance

between independent regulation and self-regulation. Independent oversight is, of course, vital. And I'm a big believer too in the buy-in, sense of shared ownership and, of course, funding that flows from the industry having a stake in its own regulation. It doesn't come easy, of course. CIISA rightly has big ambitions and not every business moves at the same pace. But get it right, and the rewards will be huge.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

CIISA will do good by helping to prevent bad, focusing on supporting businesses to do the right thing. It will safeguard the UK's incredible talent, including the many freelancers who work in the sectors. And it will send a vital, positive message to the UK's all-important future talent pipeline.

Board Advisors

CIISA's Board is able to draw on the expertise of two eminent Board Advisors. The advisors offer high level expertise and industry oversight that ensures consideration of broader industry developments and concerns.



We understand how decisions land on the ground and where the sector's heading

Cliff Fluet

Cliff Fluet is a Partner at Lewis Silkin LLP, a leading law firm for creative, innovative, and brand-focused businesses. He has over 25 years' experience in advising clients on digital media, brand entertainment, creative technology, and innovation, and leads Lewis Silkin's Media & Entertainment practice, sitting on the Management Board responsible for innovation. He is a subject matter expert on AI, immersive entertainment and distributed ledger technologies in CreaTech.

How would you describe the role of CIISA Board Advisor?

The board's rightly rich in legal and regulatory expertise. I bring an industry lens – 30 years in house, in practice and as a strategic advisor – so we understand how decisions land on the ground and where the sector's heading. My role is to make sure what is agreed works in real life.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

I've worked across the creative and digital industries with talent, producers, independents and large organisations, and I've been close to sensitive, high profile matters.

That breadth helps us keep CIISA's approach practical, trusted and easy to use.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

The industry needs a trusted, independent place to raise concerns and get advice. CIISA fills that gap. A consistent, impartial service makes it easier to speak up, lift standards and protect people and productions – and that's good for a healthy, vibrant industry.



Supporting the board in socialising CIISA's work, and galvanising support and commitment from the industry

Sara Putt

Sara Putt established Sara Putt Associates in 1989, where she remains as Agent and Managing Director. Sara is Chair of BAFTA where she has been a Trustee since 2014. Sara is also a Trustee of the Film and TV Charity and sits on the Advisory Board of the British Film Commission. She was previously Deputy Chair of Women in Film and Television where she served on the Board for eight years. Sara has also produced a number of short films including the BAFTA-nominated *Tattoo*.

How would you describe the role of CIISA Board Advisor?

Very much around support and challenge. Bringing my knowledge of the industry and those working in it to assist the board in scoping out the most effective role for CIISA, and also supporting the Board in socialising CIISA's work, and galvanising support and commitment from the industry.

How does your professional experience inform your work with CIISA?

Having looked after freelance film and TV talent for over three decades I am only too aware of bullying, unprofessional and bad behaviour which is all too prevalent. I am also aware of how afraid the freelance community is to call out such behaviour for fear of losing future employment; and therefore how vital an

independent body such as CIISA is to move the dial on this pervasive problem.

What kind of impact do you think CIISA will have?

Bluntly, game-changing. In protecting both employees and freelancers and, equally importantly, the employers themselves.

CIISA Board of Finance

In addition to the Board, 2024/25 also saw the recruitment of CIISA's Board of Finance. The decision to adopt a two-company funding model was designed to keep the collection and distribution of funding at arm's length from CIISA's operations and costs. This helps to guarantee CIISA's independence and provides additional scrutiny and oversight to provide assurance to stakeholders.



Lyndsey Jackson (Chair) is the Deputy Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, the charity behind the world-famous Fringe. Lyndsey's work focuses on securing the long-term sustainability of the Fringe and its ecology, to ensure it can deliver on its vision to give anyone a stage and everyone a seat. Lynsey's career to date includes event and theatre production, youth engagement and co-creation, governance and strategic planning, finance and fundraising, digital innovation and commercialisation.



Emma Morgan has over 20 years' experience working in television as a multi-award-winning executive producer of unscripted documentaries and popular factual formats, and has held senior roles at some of the UK's leading independent production companies including Lion TV, Firecracker Films, Mentorn, Oxford Scientific Films and TwoFour. She currently works as a consultant at LumoTV (formerly the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust).



William Heminsley is currently the Content Finance Director in ITV's Media & Entertainment division having previously worked as the Head of Finance for Scripted production at BBC Studios and in corporate finance at the BBC. Prior to that William worked in public practice having originally trained as a chartered accountant with the National Audit Office.



Matthew Todd is the Royal Albert Hall's Director of Programming where he oversees all performances on the main stage, including the RAH's engagement work, tours programme, and the production and technical team. Previously, Matthew was Education & Community Director at the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Director of Our Music Story Ltd.

Financial Snapshot

2024/25

In April 2024, CIISA began the first year of its two-year corporate strategy period. The financial forecast for this period was updated in October 2024 to reflect revised activities and taking account of ongoing developments in the funding process.

Income generation has been slower and more labour-intensive than expected, as CIISA works to embed understanding across the screen, theatre and music sectors of its aims and proposed services.

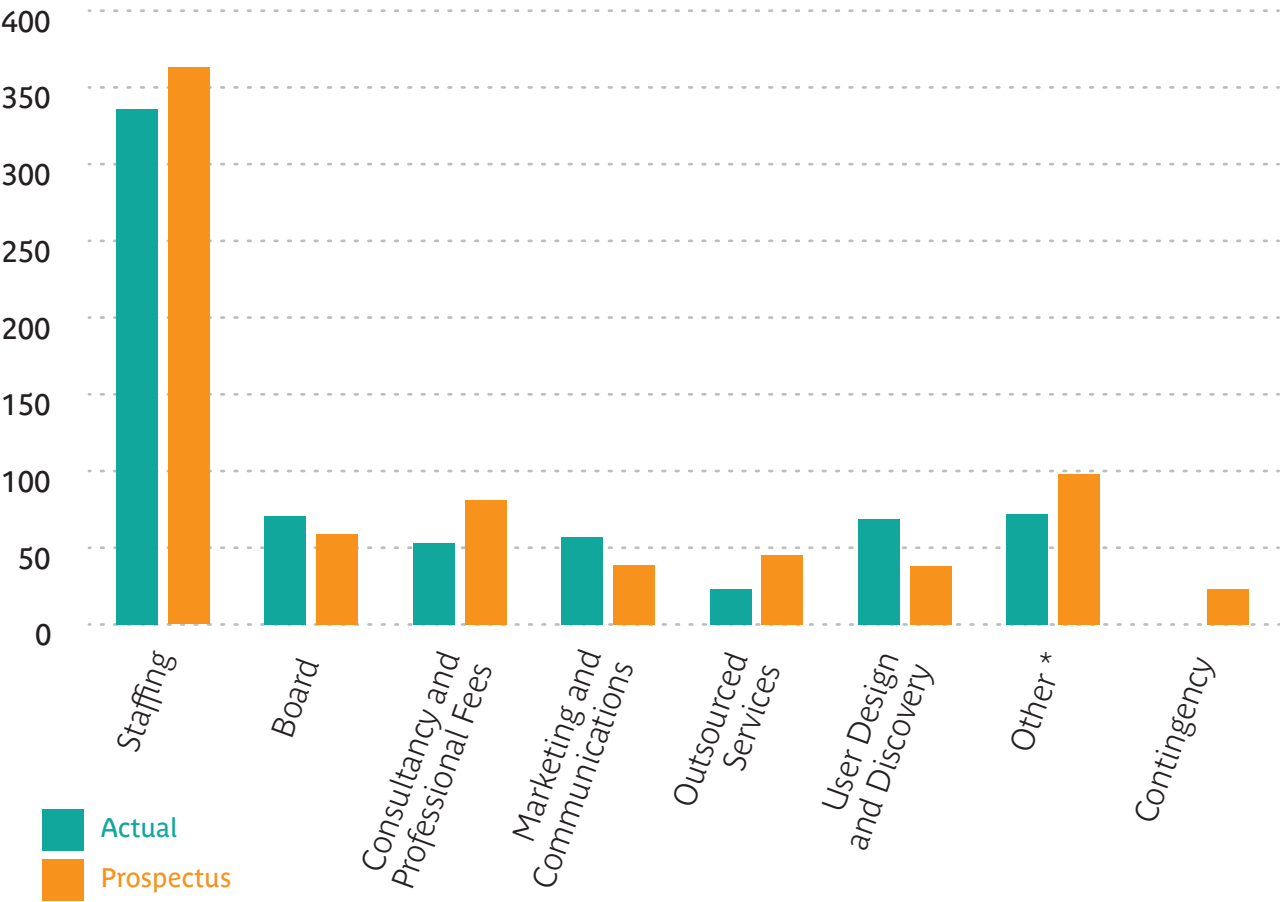
A significant amount of activity has been achieved during the 2024/25

financial year, with a lean team of employees, board members, consultants and outsourced services, including some pro-bono support.

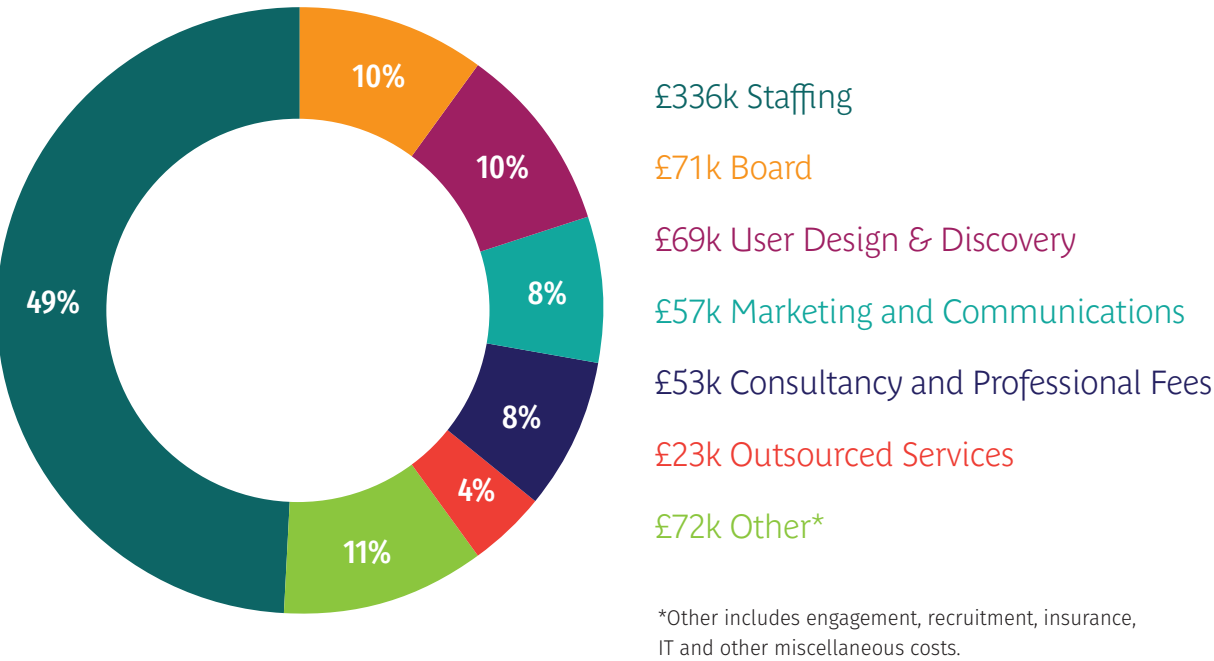
With sound financial stewardship, CIISA enters 2025/26 in a relatively strong position.

Total Combined Expenditure - £'000

Actual 2024/25 vs Prospectus Forecast 2024/25



Breakdown of combined expenditure - £681k



CIISA & CIISA Board of Finance Combined Results

In its first year of operation, CIISA BoF achieved **£852k in funding income**.

CIISA and CIISA BoF had a combined **expenditure of £681k**. The majority of costs were headcount related, utilising consultancy and outsourcing

services for additional support. Variances against forecast were predominantly due to timing differences.

The combined post-tax surplus for the year was £129k and with a closing **reserve of £194k**.

Closing cash was £433k. This includes some early contributions for the 2025/26 financial year.

Figures are taken from the Financial Statements. These can be found on the Companies House website.

Looking forward

Business plan & budget 2025/26

During the second year of its corporate strategy, CIISA is building on the strong foundations laid in its inaugural year. The 2025/26 business plan outlines the next phase of CIISA's development as it moves towards launching its operations.

Key objectives are:

- Launching the flagship Reporting Service

- Expanding the reach and impact of the CIISA Standards
- Strengthening governance and operational resilience
- Ensuring financial sustainability
- Shaping the 2026-29 corporate strategy

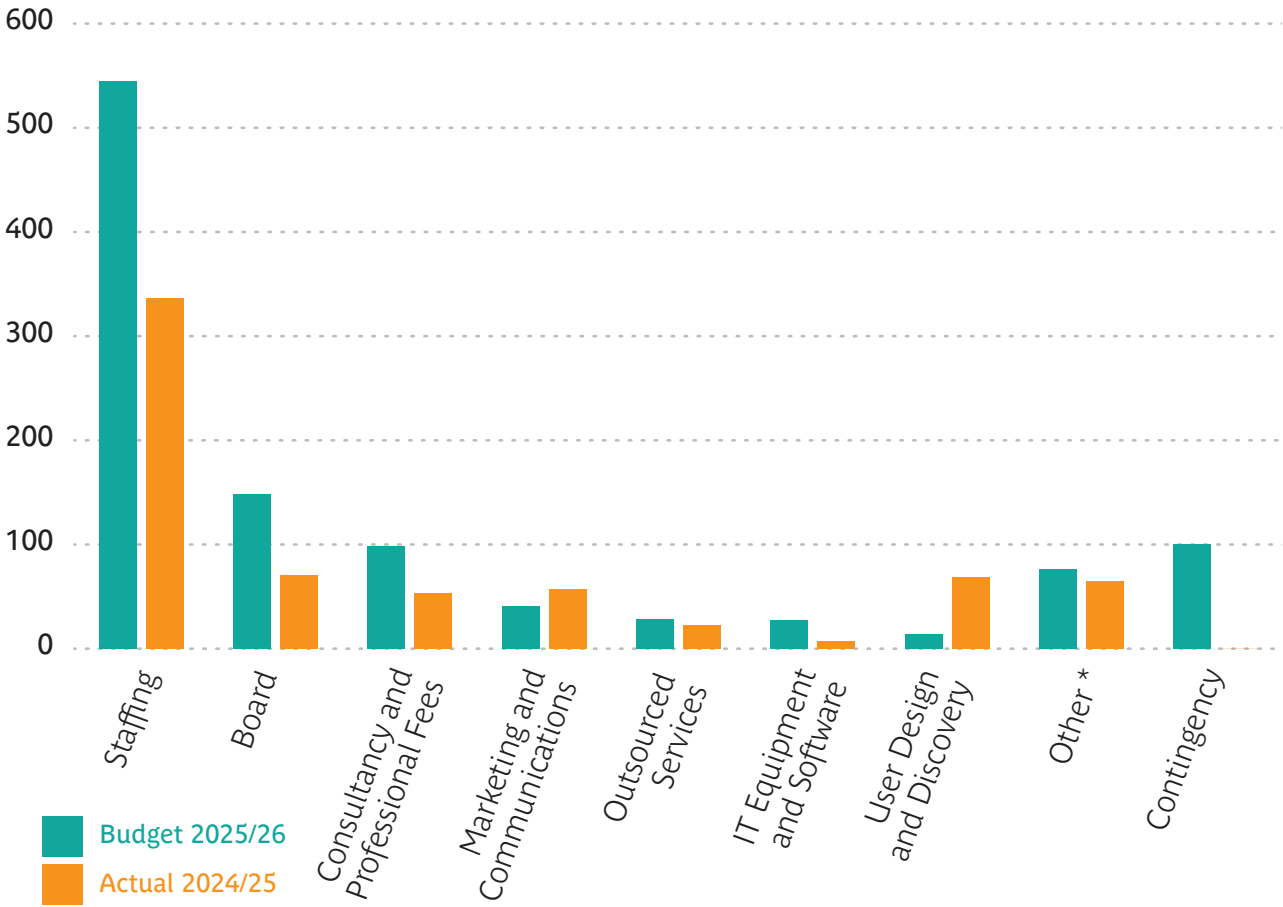
Full details of the business plan can be found on our website: ciisa.org.uk/ciisa-business-plan.

CIISA & CIISA Board of Finance Combined budget 2025/26

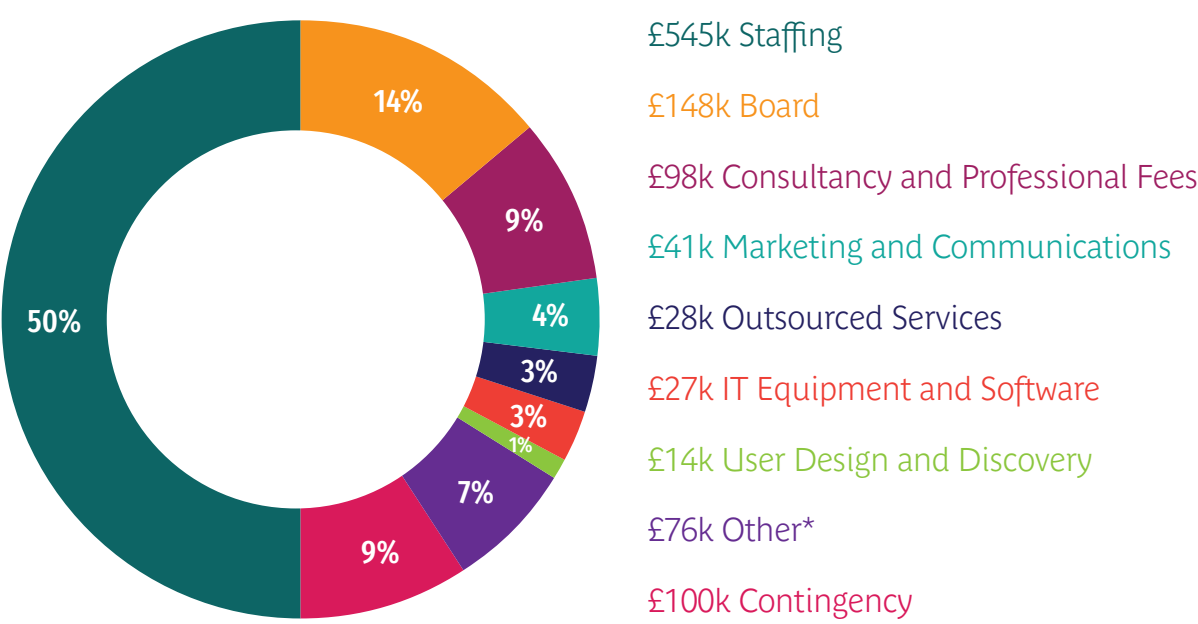
CIISA and CIISA BoF has a combined **expenditure budget of £1,077k**, excluding costs to launch the Reporting Service (c£500k). As CIISA expands its activities, costs will inevitably increase year-on-year and as with 2024/25, the roll-out of budgeted activities will be income dependent.

Total Combined Expenditure - £'000

Budget 2025/26 vs Actual 2024/25



Breakdown of combined expenditure - £1,077k



*Other includes engagement, recruitment, insurance and other miscellaneous costs

Next corporate strategy period 2026-29

During 2025/26, CIISA will begin to shape and financially plan for its next strategic chapter: CIISA's 2026-29 corporate strategy. This will include wide-ranging engagement across the sector to ensure CIISA is centred on the needs of the people it serves.

Overarching objectives for the period are:

- Expanding into more creative industry sub-sectors

- Publishing data and insight reports
- Launching early intervention and dispute resolution services
- Introducing new Standards-related services, including training, assurance reviews and accreditation
- Socialising and embedding CIISA's registration model
- Financial longevity, including building reserves

- Shaping the 2029-32 corporate strategy

More detail on the corporate strategy will be released later in the year.



The CIISA Standards - a landmark moment

An overview by journalist, Stuart Kemp

The arrival of an operational, industry-uniting body to prevent and tackle workplace bullying and harassment, including discriminatory behaviour in less than three years is testament to the desire, passion and hard work of a dedicated team and sector leaders keen to drive positive change.

ORIGIN STORY

In late 2022, Time's Up UK founders Barbara Broccoli CBE and Dame Heather Rabbatts asked the British Film Institute's Director of Culture and Inclusion Jen Smith to take the lead on setting up a new body to prevent and tackle bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour across the film and television industries.

It was an ambitious ask but one fuelled by a fierce desire from industry leaders to provide an independent place for

people to report experiences of poor behaviour, bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Rabbatts – a qualified barrister who has held a number of senior executive positions including as a Governor of the BBC, a senior executive at Channel 4 and the Chair of US and UK production company Shed Media where she oversaw its sale to Time Warner – was well-placed as Time's Up UK Chair to recognise the necessity for creating CIISA.

"Time's Up UK proposed the idea for CIISA back in 2021 in response to numerous allegations of bullying and harassment that came to light and were being played out in the media, allegations of abuse in the music industry, in film and TV and beyond," Rabbatts explains. "It was clear to us then that there was no just process for either the complainants or those accused. We understood that only by creating a body which stands fully independent, with processes and investigations informed by legal

standards of confidentiality, can there be confidence and trust, and more broadly, for the integrity of the industry to be assured."

On the other side of the initial desire for such a body was legendary film and theatre producer Barbara Broccoli, who began working in the production and casting departments at EON Productions, the company set up by her father Albert R. 'Cubby' Broccoli and Harry Saltzman in July 1961.

Barbara and her brother Michael G. Wilson have produced the last nine James Bond feature films and have produced and executive produced several independent film projects. Broccoli has also produced successful stage productions in the USA and

London including Once (2012 Broadway, 2013 West End), winner of eight Tony Awards, including best musical, and Fleabag (2019 Soho Playhouse NYC).

Broccoli, a Board Director of Time's Up UK, was equally determined to see the creation of such an industrywide independent body.

MISSION POSSIBLE

Although Smith was initially on secondment from the BFI, had no staff or infrastructure and was only armed with initial start-up capital of £65,000 from the major UK broadcasters, plans to create an Independent Standards Authority (ISA) rapidly began to solidify and gather momentum. ISA ambitions quickly expanded from being a body for those working in the film and television

sectors to also include the music and theatre sectors.

"It was impossible for me to turn down the unique and important opportunity to take Dame Heather Rabbatt's vision of a safer working environment for the creative workforce through the establishment of an independent body," notes Smith.

Just over three months on, with Smith working flat out to raise financing for the next stage of development, the organisation changed its name to CIISA to reflect its broadening ambitions. By April 2023, Smith formally left the BFI to continue to grow CIISA, setting about her task supported by burgeoning good will from creative leaders and industry workforce.





Niyi Akeju

FAST FORWARD

At the end of 2023, Smith made a key strategic hire, bringing in Andrew Medlock as CIISA Chief Operating Officer. Medlock joined the nascent CIISA as a senior leader with over 15 years of operational and strategic experience in improving social justice for the public through his work with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, which investigates complex complaints

about the NHS in England and UK Central Government.

“In the last three years I was there (the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman), I was tasked with setting up a Standards Authority structure,” Medlock explains. It was the perfect dress rehearsal for his work with CIISA.

Medlock created a detailed operational blueprint, informed through engagement with CIISA’s co-creation council, freelancers and other key stakeholders, to set out in detail what CIISA could offer. He also spearheaded key documents including the corporate strategy, business plan and a prospectus setting out how CIISA would meet its objectives and how much that would cost.

The CIISA board was appointed in 2024 and is chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy, the renowned barrister, broadcaster and Labour member of the House of Lords.

SETTING STANDARDS

Another key appointment for CIISA came in the form of the recruitment of Niyi Akeju as Head of Standards Development and Stakeholder Engagement in May 2024. Akeju was brought in to lead on the development and publication of the all-important CIISA Standards.

With over two decades’ experience in the creative industries, Akeju brought specialism in stakeholder relations, communications, and programme development and oversight from working at organisations including the British Film Institute (BFI), BBC, ScreenSkills, and 11 years at BAFTA where she devised several longstanding industry-supported initiatives.

“I had a stakeholder map with about 200 different organisations on it, and I met with around half of them over the period of developing the Standards,” Akeju says, explaining her initial work. “I decided that the most important thing was to first understand the lay of the land and then identify who would be helpful to have on our standards advisory committee so it was representative but focused and not too unwieldy.”

The absolute necessity was to corral expertise from a cross section of the creative industries (CIISA is initially focused on film, television, music and theatre) and also different perspectives, some freelance and special interest groups, trade bodies and unions, and also some big institutions.

After a few months of conversations, an impressive roster of experienced, authoritative and engaged executives and industry experts from across the creative sector assembled, ready to put in the hard yards required to come up with the CIISA Standards.

Sitting at the very heart of CIISA, the Standards framework sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected across the creative industries to ensure safe and inclusive working environments.

Akeju set about planning and staging the Standards Advisory Committee meetings with the first held in July 2024. “We had the second one in September, another in October, and then fourth post consultation in February 2025,” Akeju explains. She also held a series of workshops in October 2024 with organisations representing freelancers to check the relevance and relatability of the Standards before launching the wider industry consultation.

“Everyone who joined the committee showed up at all the meetings,” she says. “It was a very impressive turnout every time and signalled the industry appetite to come on board.

“We also had a fantastic responseto the industry consultation with over 700 individual engagements, and almost 200 substantive responses from across film, television, music and theatre, from lighting designers to costume designers,

Members of the Standards Advisory Committee:

CIISA (Chair)	ITV
The Association of British Orchestras	The Musicians’ Union
Attitude is Everything	National Theatre
BAFTA	Pact
BBC	The Production Guild of Great Britain
Bectu	Royal Exchange Theatre
Black Lives in Music	Royal Shakespeare Company
The Film and TV Charity	Sony Music
Freelancers Make Theatre Work	TV Industry Human Rights Forum
Help Musicians	Warner Bros. Discovery

from composers to opera singers and from puppeteers to producers. Over half were self-employed. It was affirming to see that – even before we made changes based on the consultation feedback – 80% of respondents felt the expectations in the Standards were clear and 76% could see how the CIISA Standards were relevant to them and their experience working in the creative industries.”

“In theatre specifically, given the project-based nature of productions where creative teams form temporarily across different venues and companies, it is important that CIISA has recognised that the distinctive working patterns and diversity of the sector’s workforce will benefit from specific approaches within the unified framework,” Standard Advisory Committee member Sandeep Mahal, Deputy Executive Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company says. “We’re making sure theatre’s voice is central to this

work. This represents an exciting opportunity to build on the excellent work already happening across individual organisations.”

CIISA’s Standards represent a fundamental shift from fragmented approaches to unified accountability.

“As well as the work around creating conditions for inclusion and safety, we see enormous value in accessing industry-wide data systems that will enable organisations to benchmark their workplace culture against sector-wide trends, identify emerging patterns of concern, and measure the effectiveness of interventions,” Mahal explains. “This industry-wide data approach will enable organisations like ours to move beyond isolated incident management to understanding systemic issues, support evidence-based decision making and demonstrate tangible progress to stakeholders.”

For Judith Webster, Chief Executive, Association of British Orchestras, it was an eye-opener that unified standards didn't already exist across the creative industries, other than separate codes of conduct at individual organisations.

The CIISA Standards have seen "the whole industry come together to define expectations and behaviours and acknowledge the breadth of people and contexts which need to be covered," Webster says. "Addressing accountability issues for freelancers and the wider workforce is key."

Black Lives in Music Chief Executive Dr Charisse Beaumont noted "the music industry operates like the wild west, no rules, no accountability, no real consequences for bad behaviour. Without standards, without a code of conduct, there is only chaos."

Beaumont described it as a must to "build a framework that protects people from discrimination, that educates and prevents bullying and harassment. Standards that do not just react, but proactively safeguard the dignity of every individual are essential."

Unified standards are the key. "Yes, there are pockets of good work happening across the industry but there is no single place people can turn to and know they will get the help they need," Beaumont adds. "Support. Investigation. Mediation. That is unique. There may be dozens of phone lines, but only CIISA stands with the individual

while also driving systemic change across the entire creative industry."

Paul Hawkins, Interim Managing Director of Attitude is Everything, an organisation that connects disabled people with music and live event industries to improve access, thinks the need for unified standards is far greater now than it has been in the past.

"The nature of portfolio careers and increasing crossover between media forms and the ways creative industries work has meant there are more people freelancing across multiple industries and that's really highlighted the gaps," Hawkins says. "There are multiple creative industries where unsafe working environments, unmanageable working hours, abrupt and aggressive management styles and cultures of abuse and harassment have been the expectation rather than the exception and the unacceptable has been justified under the guise of 'you should feel lucky to have this role as other people would love to do it'."

Hawkins says where CIISA has been effective is understanding any wider provisions in place before designing the Standards.

"The standards very clearly work in tandem with employment law, the role of the EHRC and the work of ACAS and HR departments without replicating or replacing those standards. I think the key gaps CIISA's Standards can address are ensuring that employers know how to create a workplace culture that minimises the risk of incidents

of bullying and harassment and creating a mechanism to take action when multiple issues are happening in multiple organisations where the same individual is involved but not an employee. Given the prevalence of freelance roles across the creative industries, this is a vital safeguard." Liz Jeffery, VP, People Experience for Sony Music UK, believes the CIISA Standards bring together the various standards and examples of best practice that already exist and makes them accessible to more people in the creative industries, "improving safety and providing assurance to all." As an early CIISA backer, BBC Content HR Director, Anna Shackleton says, the BBC "fully endorses the CIISA Standards, both within our organisation and by requiring our production partners to do the same." She notes that "it is only by the whole industry coming together that we will achieve our collective aims of driving change and delivering best practice across the UK creative industries."

UK broadcaster ITV's Jane Wroe, People Director, Corporate Services says, "it's thought that over two million people work in the creative industries for thousands of different organisations large and small so it's not surprising that each organisation will have created its own approach. The creation of CIISA will help ensure that in the future the expected conduct and standard of behaviour across the creative industry is clear, consistent, and applied rigorously."

"We've made it clear that we expect all producers and third parties to comply with the CIISA Standards in order to create consistently safe and inclusive workplaces," Wroe adds.

The Standards also recognise the range of working environments in which harmful behaviour can occur, from rehearsal rooms, to social media posts, to wrap parties, this is a vital step towards normalising better behaviour everywhere and removing exceptions to the rules.

"At the start of 2024, CIISA was still just an idea. It was just a set of really well-meaning principles that needed to be put into shape," CIISA COO Medlock notes. "To look back at the last financial year and see that we created the first ever unified set of Standards for not just one part of the creative industries, but for the whole of the creative industries, is something to be proud of."

END OF BEGINNING

"The Standards were crafted with great care and consideration through detailed and extensive collaboration with key bodies in the film, television, theatre and music sectors, including our supportive Standards Advisory Committee," says Baroness Kennedy. "They represent a landmark moment, to provide consistency and coherence to what can be a challenging environment to navigate."



"We are really proud at Time's Up UK to see how far CIISA has come since we first conceived the idea back in 2021," says Broccoli. "We are committed to a standards authority to ensure a working environment of dignity and respect. I'm so pleased to see CIISA making that vision a reality and am excited to see it support our sector long into the future."

"Time's Up UK powered the concept supported by only one member of staff, a tiny amount of seed funding and a truckload of goodwill from creative leaders and workforce, so to see it becoming a reality, embraced across film, TV, theatre and music, setting universal standards for the creative sector and launching services that will support our colleagues to navigate really challenging situations, is truly thrilling," notes Rabbatts. "Our brilliant creative workforce will be safer thanks to CIISA."

MORE TO COME

With the Standards up and running since February 2025, CIISA is now moving forwards with a series of industry-wide initiatives while planning long-term strategies to support the fast-developing creative industries.

In the early stages of 2026 CIISA's core team will be engaging on formulating and publishing a three-year strategy, taking it up to 2029.

"We'll be ever-evolving and using feedback from people who use our services and the industry to continuously improve and strengthen what we offer," says Medlock. "We felt that a three year period will be perfect for that. Come 2029 we can take stock and see what work is needed to support this fast-moving sector so we can develop and grow CIISA to meet this."

All in good time.

Impact through Services

CIISA is being built with - not just for - the people who will use it. Its services are fundamental to its ability to effect change. A key area of focus throughout 2024/25 has been designing and building services that are user-led and responsive to need.

CIISA published its Services Guide in March 2025 setting out a range of interventions to uphold and improve standards of behaviour in the creative industries.



Andrew Medlock
Chief Operating Officer

The industry-endorsed CIISA Standards, launched in February 2025, will underpin all of CIISA's subsequent services. Now adopted widely across the sector, the Standards set out the minimum requirements for safe and inclusive working environments across the creative industries. CIISA is now working with a range of organisations to embed these and create sector-specific guidance and resources.

Scheduled for the end of 2025/26, subject to funding, is CIISA's confidential reporting service where individuals and organisations in the creative industries can report concerns and get support on how to resolve them. Further services to follow include early interventions to resolve disputes, alternative dispute resolutions such as mediation and arbitration, and in exceptional circumstances, independent CIISA-led investigations.

The launch of each service has been carefully sequenced for CIISA to assess need and capacity at every stage, ensuring it can meet demand and grow its support in a sustainable way.

CIISA's Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Medlock has been central to this service design. With a background in social justice and regulation, Andrew brings cross-sector experience to the application of robust, objective standards, reporting and investigations structures. Here Andrew discusses CIISA's service design process and priorities.

How CIISA determined the services that are needed

Consultation has been key. Since early 2024, we've been engaging with people across the creative industries to understand what they need from CIISA. Through group presentations and panel discussions, to one-to-one meetings and deep-dive workshops we got a real sense of people's priorities.

We built our proposals and took them back out into the community - engaging with freelancers, trade bodies, and networks - to help us refine our plans and prioritise services in the order that would deliver the most meaningful impact.

This process culminated in CIISA's Services Guide, published in March 2025, setting out what we plan to deliver and how we intend to roll it out.

How industry engaged with the development of services

In 2024, we launched our Co-Creation Council to bring together a diverse range of experience and sector expertise, from trade bodies representing freelancers to multi-national organisations, to help inform CIISA's development. They advised us on the kinds of services we should offer, but also challenged us to think critically about how to address the gaps in existing systems.

The whole team have taken part in hundreds of direct engagements across the film, TV, music and theatre sectors. These conversations have been hugely formative in listening, understanding, and exploring how CIISA can add real value to what already exists, rather than duplicate or disrupt what's working.

We invited input and scrutiny to help stress-test the development of our Services Guide, now published. We understand how challenging this work is and we are committed to getting it right.

Our user-led research is key in testing, refining and evolving what we build, ensuring our services are shaped by the people who will use them.

What freelancers told us they wanted

In a snap survey in Spring 2024, we heard from over 800 professionals working across film, TV, music, and theatre - 91% said CIISA is needed in their sector.

Top priorities voiced in the survey were: a truly independent place to report concerns, free from industry influence (73%); impartial, confidential investigations into concerns, carried out with integrity (72%); clear information and advice on how to take action (64%).

Freelancers in particular told us they want CIISA to set robust standards for workplace behaviour - backed by training, guidance, and accreditation.

These priorities have been consistent throughout our design phase. At the heart of it all is the clear need for a genuinely independent reporting service that puts people, not institutions, first. In 2025, we commissioned PA Consulting for our first user-led research programme, working directly with potential service users to inform the design of our confidential reporting service. That research, available on our website, outlines the many concerns workforce have about reporting harm through current structures. From CIISA they want a service that is independent, sensitive to their needs, dependable and credible. Interestingly much of what we've heard isn't only about process - people are rightfully concerned about purpose. Respondents want CIISA to hold the industry

to account, to challenge the status quo and to be a catalyst for meaningful cultural and behavioural change.

How we decided which services to switch on first

Through all the surveys, consultation, conversations, and ongoing engagement, one message has clearly stood out: people want a truly independent, safe space to report their experiences, without fear, without bias, and without repercussions.

So we know CIISA's first service to launch will be an Independent Reporting Service. That will be the backbone of everything that follows - giving people a place to turn to now, while also helping us understand demand and shape future services for a sector where this kind of support has never existed before.

That will develop to encompass an advice function - offering individuals and organisations practical, tailored advice on how to navigate issues and concerns. This reflects what stakeholders have consistently asked for - clear, compassionate, real-time guidance to help nip things in the bud before they escalate.

Looking ahead, CIISA will help organisations to resolve individual matters - and we've worked hand in hand with industry voices to get the timing of these services right. This includes the need to conduct a small number of independent



investigations into serious and complex cases.

We know this is a big step. That's why we're taking the time to design a process that is clear, fair, and trusted by all sides.

How CIISA can support small companies and larger organisations

Our Standards and Professional Services will be of real value here so a lot of our current focus is to make these as practical, accessible and relevant as possible.

We know that for CIISA to really make a difference, organisations of every size and shape, and freelancers too, need to value the support we offer. We understand that each of the creative sub-sectors has its own rhythm, culture, and challenges. We've got really great partners already applying them on the ground in their businesses, whether that's in

a venue, festival, on a production or in a post-production house. They're feeding back to us what works and where there are gaps, and through that collaboration CIISA is developing guidance that feels authentic, actionable, and relevant. Whether you're running a theatre company with three staff, or a broadcaster with hundreds, our job is to ensure the Standards work for everybody.

Larger organisations often have dedicated teams to embed good practice. As an independent body, CIISA can help identify, recognise and share that good practice, adapting it where needed so it works for smaller organisations too – in the creative industries there are so many small and micro businesses which would value this help. In this way, we can help raise the bar across the sector while respecting different working realities.

Which Services are you most excited about and why?

In my experience across other industries, introducing and embedding professional services is where real, lasting change takes root. It's in the everyday decisions, the quiet moments of support, and the shared commitment to doing better that transformation truly begins.

By designing tailored, practical resources to help people and organisations embed the Standards, we're investing in the prevention of harm. Providing the tools to foster safe, respectful working cultures means if something does go wrong it can be resolved quickly – before problems spiral.

I also think our central, independent, safe reporting service is vital.

For the first time, we'll have a way to build a collective picture to understand what's really happening across the creative industries, and to track progress toward safer, more respectful environments. This matters deeply – not just for those working within the sector, but for the public too.

What has been the most challenging aspect of designing CIISA's Service model?

Of all our proposals, the idea that CIISA could carry out independent investigations has generated the most feedback. That's

understandable because this is the most formal – and potentially sensitive – part of our offer. And that's exactly why co-design and open engagement have been essential.

Robust testing and questions have pushed us to step back and challenge our own thinking: What do we need to put in place to ensure that any investigation process is robust, fair, evidence-based, and trauma-informed? How do we balance accountability with care? How do we centre the needs of everyone involved?

We've been especially grateful for the support of a dedicated group of representatives, who generously gave their time, insight, and experience to help us build a strong foundation. We've now refined an approach that meets the high standards required and we have created a detailed Frequently Asked Questions document to demonstrate how we will address important issues.

What's really encouraging is we recently received a thorough, independent review of our service model from a leading employment law KC. They described CIISA's proposed procedures as exemplary and noted the high standards of procedural fairness embedded throughout.

Investigations are complex and formal, and this is not a responsibility we take lightly. That's why it's vital we take the time to get it right.

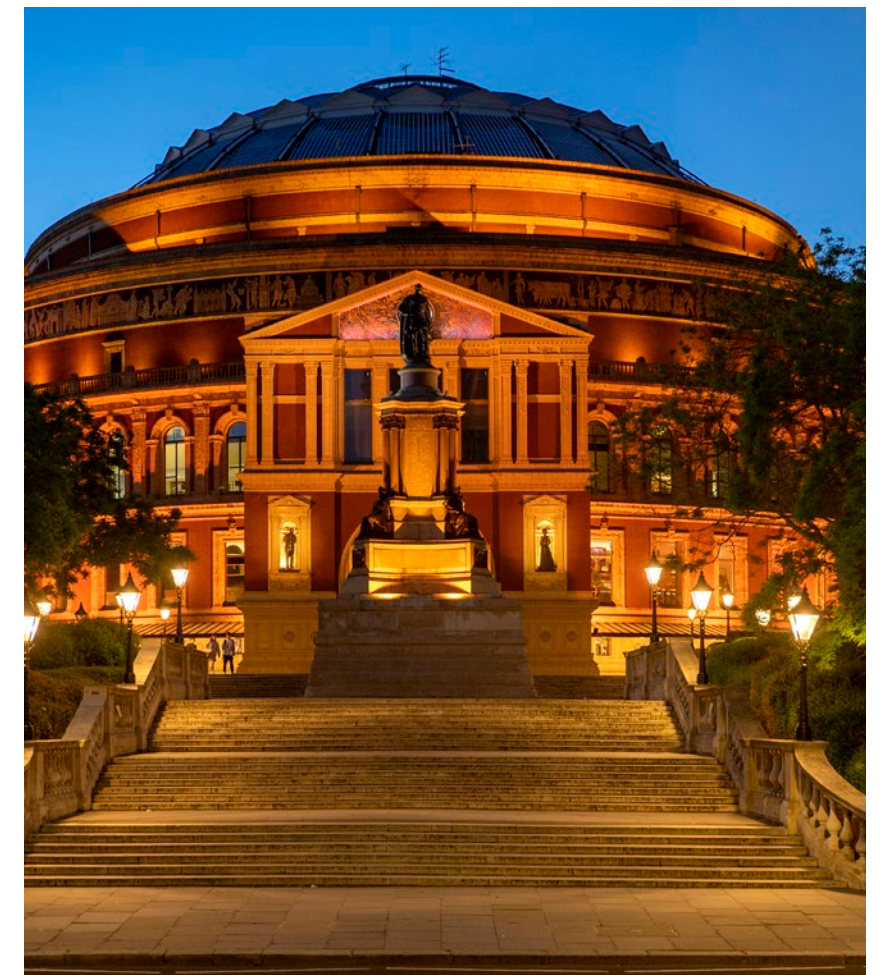
When will CIISA begin launching Services?

We are ready to move into the rollout of our Independent Reporting Service, followed by the carefully phased introduction of the wider support and accountability services the sector has helped us shape.

But to build something truly impactful, we need to invest in the people, systems, and infrastructure that will ensure our services are robust, trusted, and built to last. So sustainable, long-term funding for CIISA is vital.

We're working towards a new funding model that we hope will better secure our income so we can quickly move to launch our reporting service.

It's an exciting moment because CIISA represents the clearest opportunity to protect people, improve working cultures, and rebuild trust across the UK creative sector.



CIISA Services

SETTING STANDARDS

CIISA’s unified, industry-endorsed Standards adopted widely across creative sector

SUPPORT TO EMBED GOOD PRACTICE

guidance, training, organisational assessments, CIISA-approved accreditation schemes

ADVICE AND SIGNPOSTING

support for individuals and organisations seeking advice and help

REPORTING CONCERNS

independent, confidential reporting service where individuals and organisations can raise concerns

DATA AND INSIGHT

benchmarking and monitoring data around workplace conflict in the creative industries

EARLY INTERVENTIONS

acting to resolve emerging issues quickly and identify potential issues or patterns where organisations can take action

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

acting to provide resolution to disputes via mediation and arbitration

INVESTIGATIONS

independent investigations for only the most serious and complex cases, on request from organisations or where no other process exists

Photo Credits

Page 18: Courtesy Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, Photo: David Monteith-Hodge
Page 19: Orchestral Qawwali Project at Royal Albert Hall, Photo: Andy Paradise
Page 20: Hamlet Hail to the Thief at Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. Photo: Nicola Young (c) RSC
Page 23: Black Pumas at Royal Albert Hall. Photo: Andy Paradise
Page 26: Cirque du Soleil’s Alegria at Royal Albert Hall. Photo: Andy Paradise
Page 27: Royal Albert Hall exterior. Photo: Annabel Moeller



The Creative Industries
Independent Standards Authority

CONTACT DETAILS

info@ciisa.org.uk

Registered address:

22 Wycombe End, Beaconsfield,
Buckinghamshire,
HP9 1NB, United Kingdom