



**CREATIVE  
ACCESS**

**Annual impact report  
2022 – 2023**

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In 2022, we celebrated our 10th anniversary. This was a chance to not only take stock of our progress over the past decade, but also look to the future and see how we can continue to increase our impact and drive further change in the years to come.

It was so energising to see hundreds of our alumni all excelling in their chosen careers and genuinely making an impact on the creative industries. It's extremely gratifying to see how many continue to participate in Creative Access events and initiatives, helping to inspire the next generation.

It is this 'paying it forward' that is the foundation of the Creative Access community, relying on the continued support from our alumni and our many employer partners.

Building on these strong relationships, we are shifting our strategic focus to the whole career cycle; to supporting individuals from groups under-represented in the sector as their careers continue to develop, evolve and flourish. We will be working with our employer partners to tackle diversity not just at entry-level but at every level to ensure there are positive, relatable role models and decision makers from all backgrounds who will ensure talent at all levels continue to thrive in this vibrant, wonderful sector we all work in.

Times are undoubtedly challenging for many at this time, but we remain steadfast in our mission to build a creative economy that reflects the society it serves.

We hope you will join us in this new, expanded mission.

Josie Dobrin

Founder and executive chair, Creative Access





# Our mission

We aim to see a day when the UK's creative economy will truly reflect and represent our society. Our mission is to enable people from communities that are under-represented in the creative economy, in terms of ethnicity, disability and lower socio-economic status, to access careers and thrive.

## Our values

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to access careers and thrive in the creative economy, regardless of their background or beliefs. We ask our employer partners to commit to bringing in and uplifting talent from communities under-represented in the sector by:

- Widening the talent pool to include candidates from all backgrounds
- Investing in staff from communities that are under-represented in the creative economy to enable them to thrive and progress to senior positions
- Creating an inclusive workplace where everyone, whatever their background, feels welcome and valued



**"ITV was one of the first organisations to work with Creative Access and to this day, we are proud to house the team in our offices. Through our long-standing partnership, we have placed over 120 individuals in paid internships at ITV, will deliver over 500 mentoring partnerships by 2025 and this year we've been delighted to expand our work together under the banner of the new ITV Academy, which has been created to make it easier for people, particularly those from under-represented groups, to access and apply for jobs, training and development."**



Sonny Hanley, Director, ITV Academy





# The story so far

Creative Access was co-founded in 2012 by three people – including current executive chair, Josie Dobrin – out of a frustration at the lack of representation in the creative economy.

The group set out to change the conversation around diversity and inclusion in the sector. They persuaded leading employers in publishing, TV, film, theatre and beyond to partner with Creative Access and invest in people from communities under-represented in the sector.

Now 10 years on, we work with employers across the creative industries and now the wider creative economy – from household names to small, independent organisations and start-ups the length and breadth of the UK.

## 2022 – 2023 Highlights

- Celebrated our 10-year anniversary with our alumni community – including 200 of our original interns
- Launched our new steering committee to provide a pathway to non-executive leadership
- Supported over 60 individuals with funding through the second year of our Career Development Bursary, supported by McLaren Racing
- Won Diversity and Inclusion Champion at the Recruiter Awards
- Conducted research into the challenges and barriers to progression faced by disabled people working in the creative economy



# Our impact

At the start of 2023, we developed and launched a new impact framework to track the impact of each of our programmes and services, plus the overall combined impact of these interventions on our mission and on the creative economy.

While the new framework has only been in place a few months, it is already showing us the positive impact of our work and critically where we need to focus and further develop our services for the future.

## Impact for individuals

Our unique combination of training, mentoring and career development support is having a significant impact on career progression and optimism, but we have more work to do in enabling increased access to networks and contacts.

### In the last year:

- **634** participated in mentoring programmes as either mentors or mentees
- **332** supported through our career development programmes
- **3,460** received careers advice and employability training

### After participating in a Creative Access programme, individuals from under-represented groups reported:

- **85%** increased confidence to progress
- **90%** increased optimism about progression
- **82%** increased skills and knowledge needed to progress
- **50%** increased access to contacts and networks



## Impact for employers

**As a result of partnering with Creative Access, employers reported:**

- **88%** attribute partnering with Creative Access in the last year as having a positive impact on their progress in DE&I
- **93%** have an increased understanding and awareness of DE&I
- **86%** cite an increase in inclusive recruitment practices
- **90%** say they are inspired to take further DE&I action



## Consultancy support

We provided consultancy support to multiple organisations to help them shape their diversity, equity and inclusion plans, set benchmarks and hold themselves to account. This has included working with The Publishers Association to running a series of consultations and draft their new industry Inclusivity Action plan; and supporting BAFTA to develop Employee Resource Groups.





# Our programmes

## Our community

This year we have continued to invest in reaching more individuals from groups under-represented in the creative economy through our community outreach programmes with universities, youth groups, community groups and other partners. We now have over 87,000 individuals registered with us of which around 27,000 are actively looking for roles in the sector.

## Career development programmes

Our career development programmes for those at entry and mid-level have provided training and career support for over 300 individuals from groups under-represented in the creative industries this year.



**I understand that CA is always by my side and very transparent, which brings an element of comfort and self-development!**

Adam, Creative Access intern



## Steering group

In October we launched our Steering Group; a new initiative bringing together a group of 16 exceptionally talented Creative Access alumni.

This year-long programme provides a leadership pathway for participants from under-represented communities to becoming trustees or non-executive directors of other creative organisations, social enterprises or charities.

The group has undertaken a training programme, including workshops on leadership, financial governance, the role and responsibilities of non-executive directors and shadowing a working board meeting.

## Employability support, training & skills

We held employability sessions attended by almost 3,500 people. These sessions provide a mixture of employability support, training and skills sessions on topics including how to write a covering letter, create a CV and how to navigate the creative industries.



**Using Creative Access as a tool to look at jobs in the creative industry is effective and [...] no matter what you are currently studying you can get jobs in the creative industry if you apply yourself.**



Student at Loughborough University





## Masterclasses and events

Creative Access hosts monthly masterclasses for those in our community, which provide networking opportunities and training on the soft skills needed to navigate and progress in the creative industries.



In the last year we hosted 10 masterclasses attended by over 500 people – a mix of virtual and in-person – at ITV Leeds, the Financial Times, the V&A, the National Theatre and Warner Music.



**I took away the advice to develop my transferable skills, and to be my authentic self at interviews. I was given great interview advice from the panel. I've realised I should reflect on what I've learnt, when answering interview questions.**

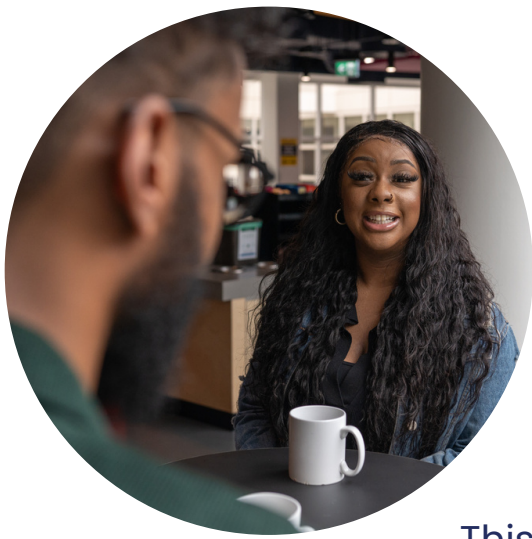


Financial Times Masterclass attendee

We also hosted two large-scale networking events at Soho House, supported by Channel 4, for our intern and alumni community to celebrate our 10-year anniversary.







## Mentoring

Research shows that people from communities that are under-represented in the industry who advance the furthest in their careers, all share one characteristic: a strong network who nurture their professional development.

This year we have run 8 mentoring programmes with different organisations, including universities, industry bodies and companies, such as Penguin Random House, ITV, CAA, Kingston University and Greenwich University. Over 634 people (mentees and mentors) have participated.



**For someone who started off with no contacts within the media industry, I have not only learnt so much from a professional who has the job I'm trying to achieve, but gained numerous contacts within the industry.**

Fabiana, ITV mentee



## Career Development Bursary



We ran our Career Development Bursary in partnership with McLaren Racing for the second year running. We were able to more than double the funding from year one and awarded £50,000 to more than 60 individuals from under-represented groups to purchase new laptops, driving lessons and photography and film equipment to support their career progression.



**This bursary has opened the door to more resources and unlocked a new level of confidence in me. It's an incredible feeling to know that your visions are believed in and backed by others!**

Glenda, architecture graduate and artist





## Case study: Breaking down barriers into publishing with Penguin Random House

### Challenge

Publishing remains tough to access for those from under-represented groups with only 17% from ethnically diverse backgrounds and two-thirds (66%) from privileged backgrounds.

### Programme

In 2022, Creative Access and PRH committed to set up 500 mentoring partnerships by 2025 to support aspiring talent from under-represented groups. The programme aimed to break down barriers, develop skills and confidence, and build new connections in publishing.

### Impact

To date, the programme participants report the following:

- 100%** have improved their knowledge and understanding
- 98%** have boosted their confidence
- 90%** have had support applying for new roles in publishing
- 84%** have expanded their industry contacts and networks



**Through mentoring fresh talent, you come to understand that publishing can seem intimidating. While the industry still has a way to go, at Penguin Random House we're using this knowledge, specifically from the PRH and Creative Access publishing mentor scheme partnership, to inform a better experience for those looking to get into the industry.**



Claire Thomas, director of organisational development and talent,  
Penguin Random House UK

# Our employer partnerships

We are proud to partner with over **750 employers**, working together to build a creative economy that reflects UK society.

This year have welcomed 172 new organisations into our network and have been delighted to continue our long-term partnerships with ITV, Penguin Random House, Sky, McLaren Racing and White Cube.

## Recruitment & listings

This year we have placed **157** people from communities under-represented in the creative industries into paid internships. We have also recruited for **12** intern cohorts for employer partners across the sector, including Sky, ITV and Cambridge University Press.

Almost **2,500** roles were listed on our jobs board of which over a quarter (27%) were at the mid to senior level, where we are now focused on really driving change.



**We've been incredibly impressed with both the calibre of candidates you've put forward (better than any recruiter we've worked with), and the responsiveness and excellent communication from your team throughout the process. We're looking forward to working with you again!**

Emma Parish, business director,  
Kindred Agency

Kindred 



National  
Portrait  
Gallery

opera  
north

CURTIS BROWN



SOUTHBANK  
CENTRE



barbican



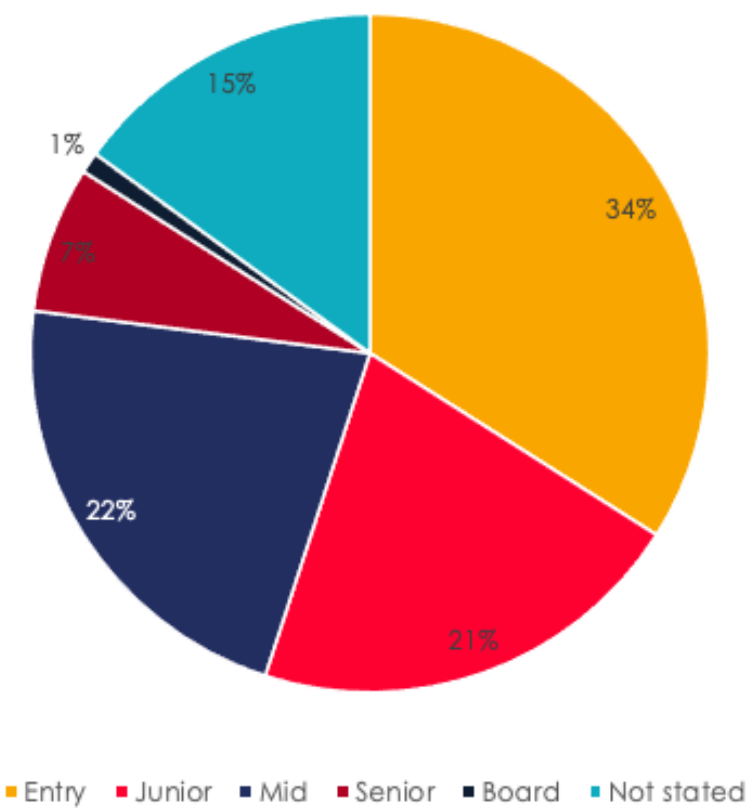
Discovery

WHITE CUBE

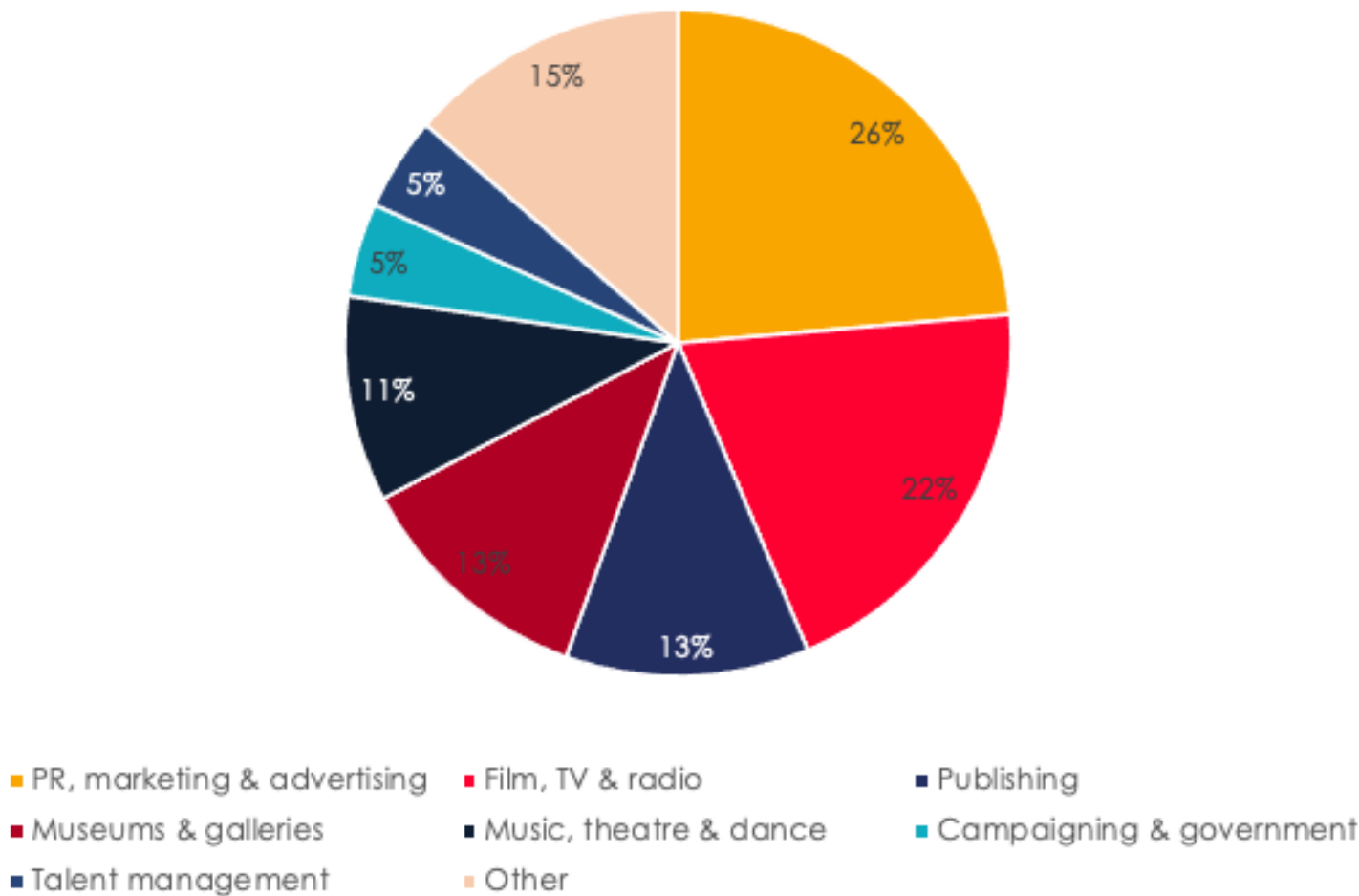




# Roles listed by level



# Roles listed by sector



## Building inclusive cultures through training

In the last year, we have trained over **3,000** people this year via **168** bespoke employer training sessions and open workshops.



We have seen a 66% increase in the uptake of neurodiversity training on last year. In response, we have developed a series of initiatives to create more inclusive workplaces for neurodiverse staff, including specific line-manager training and reflective peer-support sessions facilitated by our expert team of clinical psychologists.

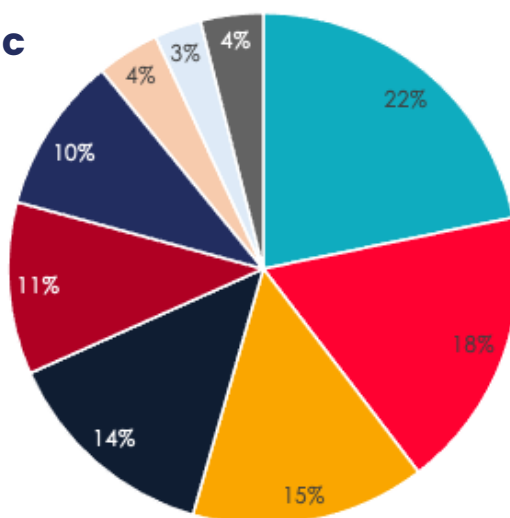
**“The course made me feel not only confident, but overall positive which was incredibly necessary.”**

Fremantle training participant

**“The session was very much tailored to our specific requests. It was extremely useful to have the time to discuss together specific ideas and scenarios which we as a team had experienced while benefiting from the trainer’s skill to facilitate.”**

Fidelio Arts

### Training by topic



- Coaching or other content
- Introduction to EDI
- Disability & neurodiversity
- Allyship
- Mental health
- Anti-racism
- Class in the workplace
- Inclusive recruitment
- Microaggression



# Mo Siewcharran Fund

In 2018, Mo Siewcharran's husband, John Seaton, launched a memorial fund to support internships for young talent from ethnicities under-represented in theatre, publishing and music industries.

The Fund contributes to the salary for a six-month traineeship and support is provided by Creative Access.

Since 2018, the Fund has supported 32 trainees. In 2022 – 23, £34,000 was given to fund 8 internships. Its impact can be clearly seen: two-thirds (63%) of interns supported by the Fund have stayed on at their host organisation at the end of their traineeship, whilst 9 out of 10 (89%) trainees placed continue to work in the same sector.

**This grant will enable us to offer a production assistant internship to a young person from an under-represented community and introduce them to the commercial theatre management sector. It is key that we open a door to a wider range of individuals to ensure that theatre, and the stories told on our stages, represents our society as a whole.**

Dave McNeilly, head of production,  
Mark Rubinstein Ltd.



**The opportunity gave me a path into the industry and the role I was hoping for. The support I received has been invaluable, and I'm very grateful that it allowed me not only to gain experience, but led to a permanent position**

Mila, publishing trainee at Profile Books in 2021



# Creative Access team

We continued to grow the Creative Access team and now have 20 full-time team members and work with a network of consultants to deliver training and other services. Key hires and promotions this year include:



## **Bibi Hilton, chief executive**

In September 2022, we welcomed a new Chief Executive, Bibi Hilton. Bibi was previously managing director of award-winning comms agency, Golin, and President of Women in PR. She brings with her over 20 years' experience working in the creative industries with organisations including Unilever, Cadbury and Adobe.



## **Yasmin Hemmings, acting head of programmes**

Yasmin Hemmings started her career as an intern through Creative Access at the London Symphony Orchestra. After working at the Barbican, she re-joined Creative Access and this year was promoted to acting head of programmes, where she oversees our career support programmes, mentoring, Career Development Bursary and university partnerships.



## **Ella Darlington, head of marketing and communications**

Ella joined us from the Octopus Group, part of the Publicis network, to oversee all of our marketing and communications.



## **Bhavini Goyate, programmes manager – alumni**

Bhavini joined us from the Clore Leadership to oversee our alumni community and our Career Development Programme for those at mid to senior levels.



# Creative Access data & insight

We are continuously working to improve understanding of the creative economy and the people who work or aspire to work in it. This year, we have commissioned four pieces of research with our community. This insight helps improve our own services and is a free resource for the wider industry, media and other stakeholders.

## **Creative Access disability report 2022**

At the end of 2022, we commissioned a survey in consultation of all those within the Creative Access community who identified themselves as disabled, Deaf or neurodivergent.

- Only a quarter feel they have access to the contacts and networks needed to progress their creative career (vs. 62% of general respondents)
- 88% cite the two biggest barriers as: lack of employer understanding of 'reasonable adjustments', and awareness of disability issues among colleagues
- Over three quarters would like more flexible working and training for line managers in supporting disabled employees to thrive

## **The Language of Discrimination**

We collaborated with global communications agency FleishmanHillard to explore the extent and impact of accent bias and found that over three quarters (77%) of respondents working in the creative industries have felt they had to change their accents in the workplace – specifically when dealing with clients. Meanwhile 89% felt prematurely and sub-consciously judged by others based simply on their accent and manner of speech.

## **Freedom or working for free? Freelancers in the creative economy**

We found that – despite the creative industry's heavy reliance on its freelance workforce –

- 1 in 2 freelancers 'don't feel supported by employers' that they work with.
- Freelancers ask for reasonable adjustments & employer training to thrive
- 50% of freelancers don't feel supported by the employers they work with
- 1 in 5 (22%) became a freelancer due to negative experiences in a perm role
- Disabled individuals 30% more likely freelancing after negative perm role experience
- 54% say they're offered a day rate or salary below their level

## Thrive survey 2023

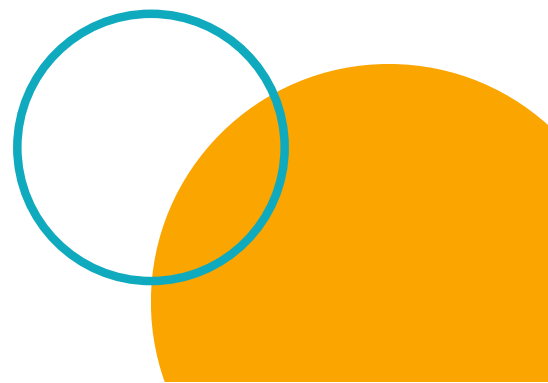
In April 2023, we ran our second annual Thrive survey, which provides a snapshot of individuals' confidence and optimism about their career progression in the creative economy and to understand what stage employers in the sector are at in their diversity, equity and inclusion plans. Key findings included:

### Individuals:

- 96% of our alumni are still in the creative economy two years after the completion of a programme with us
- 98% ranked one area of support received from CA as either 'significant' or 'very significant' to the progress of their careers.
- Individuals in receipt of services from CA are much more likely to report career progression in the last 12 months than individuals who have not received services

### Employers:

- Almost three quarters had either a DEI lead or a dedicated DEI team in their organisation
- 60% had increased spend on DEI in the last 12 months
- When asked about the current DEI focus, 45% said effort is mainly focused on entry level positions
- In future, 70% said addressing the lack of diverse talent across all roles in the organisation was key



# Future goals

The last year has been a time to reflect on our impact over the past decade. We're hugely proud of the progress we've made to change the face of the creative industries together with our community and our employer partners. But there is still much work to be done. We've identified four key priority areas for the coming year:

**Driving diversity at all levels:** Our 2023 Thrive data shows individuals from under-represented groups want and expect organisations to be driving diversity and inclusion at all career levels. We will be building the services, training, career support and processes to support this.

**Career support for individuals from under-represented groups:** Our data shows a third of people from under-represented groups cannot see career progression opportunities ahead and do not have access to the contacts they need to progress. We will be re-launching our career support programmes combining mentoring, networking and training, to address this.

**Disability:** In our recent report, 88% of disabled people said their biggest barrier to career progression was employers' lack of understanding about adjustments to help them work better and only 27% said they felt optimistic about progression. We will be supporting and helping disabled people and those from intersectional groups access greater opportunities and progress.

**Freelancer support:** We will be focusing on the particular challenges faced by freelancers. Half of freelancers in unscripted TV out of work and three quarters struggling financially, according to Bectu data; this is a group we want to particularly support to ensure they stay in the sector.

We will be doubling down on ensuring our work drives a tangible impact on our mission and for the individuals and partners by investing time and resources in impact data capture, tracking and reporting to enable us to continue to improve and evolve our services and programmes.

Bibi Hilton

CEO, Creative Access







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