



About the WGGB

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) is a TUC affiliated trade union that represents professional writers in the UK. We organise in the following sectors, film, television, animation, theatre, radio, books and videogames and have national agreements covering television, radio, film and theatre. We have 2,904 members including 1743 film and TV screenwriters.

WGGB has a typical union structure, led by a General Secretary and elected Officers and Executive Council representing our organising sectors and UK regions. Currently we have seven members of staff, Ellie Peers (General Secretary), Lesley Gannon (Deputy General Secretary), Kate Glasspool (Union Organiser), John Sailing (Union Organiser), Sarah Woodley (Communications Manager), Nadine Edwards (Organising Assistant) and Eleanor Dawson (Administrator member support). Our Executive Council officers are Lisa Holdsworth (Chair), Tim Stimpson (Deputy Chair), Gail Renard (Treasurer), and Sandi Toksvig (President).

We work collectively with trade unions and writer's organisations both here and abroad, including (but not limited to) the Trade Union Congress (TUC), International Affiliation of Writers' Guilds, Federation of Entertainment Unions (FEU), Performers' Alliance, British Copyright Council, British Screen Advisory Council, Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE), Creators Rights Alliance, Creative Industries Federation and World Intellectual Property Organisation.

Snapshot of our work during 2021

January: The Government's failure to agree travel rights for UK creators post-Brexit leads to calls from the Federation of Entertainment Unions, of which WGGB is part, to address the issue urgently ([read the joint statement](#)).

February: [BBC screenwriters receive over £1.2 million in payments](#) for viewings of their work on BBC iPlayer, in the latest pay-out from Writers Digital Payments, the not-for-profit scheme set up by WGGB and the Personal Managers' Association.

March: We launched our [contributory-publishing survey](#) with the Society of Authors (watch this space for the report and campaign in the New Year). We also negotiated an [above-inflation pay rise for audio drama writers](#) and announced that [Christopher Douglas has won this year's Tinniswood audio drama award](#) – run jointly by WGGB and the Society of Authors.

April: We protested against [cuts to Woman's Hour drama](#), present our annual [Olwen Wymark Theatre Encouragement Awards](#) and agree a deal with the National Theatre on [digital rights for playwrights](#).

May: During the Metro Mayoral elections we join forces with other unions and organisations to develop the [Creative Workforce Pledge](#), to protect the creative and

cultural life of each region and the creative workforce who have endured a challenging time during Covid.

June: We held our [second virtual AGM](#) – another huge success with record attendance. We also launched our [Competition or cut-price commission?](#) guide and join the campaign against [cuts to HE arts funding](#).

July: We responded to the Government's announcement that full reopening from lockdown will go ahead – [calling for the implementation of an insurance scheme for theatre and to extend the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme](#).

August: During the summer months our hugely popular [free online events schedule](#) - launched during lockdown – continued.

September: We launch three new publications, backed by leading writers – [Digital principles for theatre](#), [a guide to the 'created by credit' in TV](#) and [Creating positive collaborations](#) (for writers and directors – in partnership with Directors UK). This month also sees the launch of our [campaign to Save Channel 4](#).

October: We called on our members to join [Film Strike for Climate at COP26](#) as part of our commitment to [put the climate crisis at the heart of all we do](#).

November: We launched a new [online free training series for WGGB members](#). We also published our revised guidelines for videogames writers and those who work with them, alongside a WGGB survey which reveals that over [50% of games writers have experienced bullying and harassment](#).

December: [We support new guidelines for inclusive writers' rooms](#). We also announce our [29th Writers' Guild Award nominations](#), a bumper crop of British writing and writers covering two years following the cancelation of our awards ceremony in 2021 because of Covid. We are plan be able to livestream the ceremony for the first time to all our members in 2022.

Throughout 2021, we celebrated Black History Month, LGBTQ+ History Month, Disability History Month, UN Anti-racism Day and Heartunions Week – and [lobbying and campaigning activity](#).

On the industrial front

BBC

Audio – currently negotiating a pay claim and are campaigning for greater transparency on drama commissioning across all platforms.

BBC3 linear – new linear channel the terms have been agreed, it was an improved offer from the BBC includes a review on the valuation.

Script Agreement TV Online - negotiations will continue in the new year, no agreement reached it is opening the way to agree a template format agreement.

TAC (Welsh language Indies)

We are in negotiations updating agreement to include digital output and rationalise some of the fees

S4C (*Welsh language broadcaster*)

Pobol Y Cwm (CDS) reducing episodes from 5 to 3 per week for the next series, for budgetary reasons, WGGB will continue to campaign for alternative work for our Welsh members on the channel.

Netflix

Negotiations continue on the terms for episodic writers on Netflix originals.

Pact TV

Negotiations stalled due to Netflix negotiations, they need to resume to sign off on the revised TV agreement, outstanding issues include SVOD co-pro territories.

ITV

2% uplift agreed, PMA/WGGB want a virtual forum as we have several issues to discuss with the broadcaster, putting forward an agenda currently for that meeting. We have also raised issues relating to Covid safety production and bad practice creeping back in during this year especially in soaps.

Pact (Indies) - Film

Restart the Pact (Indies) Film negotiations on the template contract that will form part of a new agreement, and we now need to include updating the Screenwriting Credits Agreement.

Theatre

Theatre on the back of the Digital Principles, we have met with the TNC (National theatres) theatres and should agree a set of digital principles with them. A claim for an uplift in fees has been submitted.

Meeting with UKT on 17 Dec on digital principles and outstanding matters. A pay claim will also be submitted to the theatres.

Games

WGGB represented members in a dispute with anti-union games company Fusebox. The dispute(s) ended with approx. 30 people, including 15 writers, being made redundant. The redundancy predominantly effected staff who had complained about bullying behaviour and/or about sexist game content. The dispute was covered in the games press.

We launched Videogame's guidelines shortly after the dispute had ended, with coverage for those in the games industry press, notably Games Industry Biz, who were very active in covering the Fusebox story.

On the campaign front

Equality Writes – writers of colour

We have commissioned Inc Arts to research into Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) advocacy, and investigating the landscape of the past 10 years of screenwriting. Currently Inc Arts are gathering data on the experiences of writers of colour, to form the basis of a big WGGB campaign next year.

Audio drama campaign

Working with audio committee to create a campaign strategy to run a campaign on audio drama, a campaign group will be meeting shortly

Contributory Publishing Scheme – joint research project with Society of Authors

Other work

New Play Commissioning Scheme – a project working with theatres and playwrights to kick start commissioning of new plays, to counteract the effect of the pandemic on the theatre industry. We are working alongside UK Theatre, Independent Theatre Council, Society of London Theatres, TNC (National Theatre, Royal Court and RSC) on this project.

In addition to the above we have worked closely with our sister unions nationally and internationally on a range of issues, and have continued our lobbying activity throughout the UK and devolved nations.

In solidarity,

Ellie Peers
WGGB General Secretary