

FILM BARKING AND DAGENHAM
MAKE IT HERE PROGRAMME

IMPACT REPORT



2025

**FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM**
MAKE IT HERE

Prepared by

**ANNA WILSON &
CONNOR MAY**

Prepared for

THE MBS GROUP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT **1**

AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME **2**

PROGRESS TO DATE - ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES 2025 **3**

DIGITAL REACH & MARKETING **4**

KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES **5**

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS **6**

A man in profile, wearing a black jacket, is operating a professional camera on a set. The camera is mounted on a rig with various attachments, including a microphone and a light. The background is a bright, busy studio environment with other people and equipment visible.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Launched in 2022 with support from film studio operators and owners MBS Group and Hackman Capital Partners, the 'Make It Here' programme is paving the way for the growing Film & TV Industry presence in East London. Created in partnership with Barking & Dagenham Council, the initiative set out ahead of the studios' opening to build a diverse, skilled pipeline of local crew and position East London as a premier filming destination.

At its heart, the programme tackles the industry's pressing skills and diversity gaps while ensuring the borough's communities benefit through training, career pathways, and supply chain opportunities. Barking & Dagenham, one of the UK's youngest and most diverse boroughs faces high unemployment and barriers to entry into creative industries. 'Make It Here' is breaking those barriers by connecting residents with productions, building local talent databases, and opening doors to hands-on experience and vocational training.

Already, these efforts are reshaping perceptions of East London as an accessible hub for film production and unlocking opportunities that once felt out of reach. This report highlights the programme's achievements to date and sets out priorities for the year ahead.

CONTINUED AIMS OF THE 'MAKE IT HERE' PROGRAMME

* PLACEMAKING

Elevate Barking & Dagenham as a go-to film destination, backed by a supportive ecosystem that delivers for productions today while shaping the skills and business infrastructure needed for tomorrow.

* ECONOMY

Position the new studios as more than just a workplace: an anchor institution that fuels inclusive growth, strengthens local supply chains, and ensures the community shares in the benefits of a thriving creative economy.

* SKILLS AND DIVERSITY

Providing unique and meaningful training opportunities to create a strong pipeline of production crew and talent from Borough, ready to support visiting productions.



PROGRESS TO DATE: ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES 2025

Building on three years of momentum, 2025 has been a landmark year for the Make It Here programme. Our mission remains clear: open doors for underrepresented groups, strengthen East London's creative workforce, and ensure the community shares in the benefits of a thriving film sector.

Talent Pipeline

We've deepened partnerships with schools, training providers, and community organisations, sparking interest in film careers and guiding diverse young people into industry pathways that once felt out of reach.

SCHOOLS AND CAREERS

Film Enterprise Competition 2025

Delivered by Film Barking & Dagenham and LBBD's Inspiring Futures programme, the Film Enterprise Competition has grown rapidly in its second year.

Growth & Reach

- Last year: 7 schools, 18 pitch submissions, 2 films premiered at Vue Cinema to an audience of 196.
- This year: 20 schools, 30 pitch submissions, 2 films premiered at Vue Cinema to an audience of 278.

Learning & Resources

Teachers embedded Film B&D's digital resources into lessons across literacy, numeracy, drama, and even new film clubs—bringing film into the classroom in creative ways.

Pitch Day Event

Eight shortlisted groups (4 primary, 4 secondary) pitched their ideas in a Dragon's Den-style event at Make It Barking, judged by a panel of industry experts including composers, directors, and virtual production specialists.

Winners

- Beam Primary School – One Moment
- Dagenham Park Secondary – Inter Demon

Both winning teams enjoyed a full production journey: script refinement, three days of filming with professional crews, and for the first time, secondary students shooting on a real Dagenham film location. Students directed, produced, and collaborated with crews to bring their vision to life.

✨ 20 schools engaged

🎬 30 film pitch submissions

🏆 2 winning films

👤 Hundreds of pupils inspired



OUTCOMES

21 Schools

engaged with the Film Enterprise Programme

56 Students

Pitched at the Film Enterprise Pitch Day Event, in front of a panel of industry judges

386 Students

Benefitted from academic resources, taught over 2-months in schools.

35 Students

Took part in 6x Days worth of filming within schools.

278 Students

Teachers and Parents attended premiere screening of Winning Films at Vue Cinema.

FILM ENTERPRISE SCREENING



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

To build on the success of our school's programme, we've created a Collaborative Education Framework, to help transform how East London learners connect with the film industry. By bringing together FE and HE providers, industry professionals and creative partners, we've built a year-long programme that blends academic learning with real-world experience. Learners benefit from masterclasses, workshops, peer networks, portfolio project and on-set opportunities that inspire confidence and open doors to future careers.

What We've Achieved

- Connected learners directly with industry professionals and real production environments
- Delivered inclusive, interactive experiences that bring classroom learning to life
- Enhanced academic pathways with practical, hands-on skills
- Raised career awareness and built clear routes into employment
- Boosted confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills

Our Education Partners

Barking & Dagenham College • Brook Sixth Form • Final Checks Hair & Make Up Academy • New City College • Ravensbourne University

Set in Motion – Set Ready Training & Production Simulation

100 learners took part in a two-day immersive training at Eastbrook Studios, collaborating across seven departments to produce a promotional film. The experience sharpened skills in health & safety, planning, creative problem-solving, and teamwork.

Locations Masterclass – Josh Faux (Fightland)

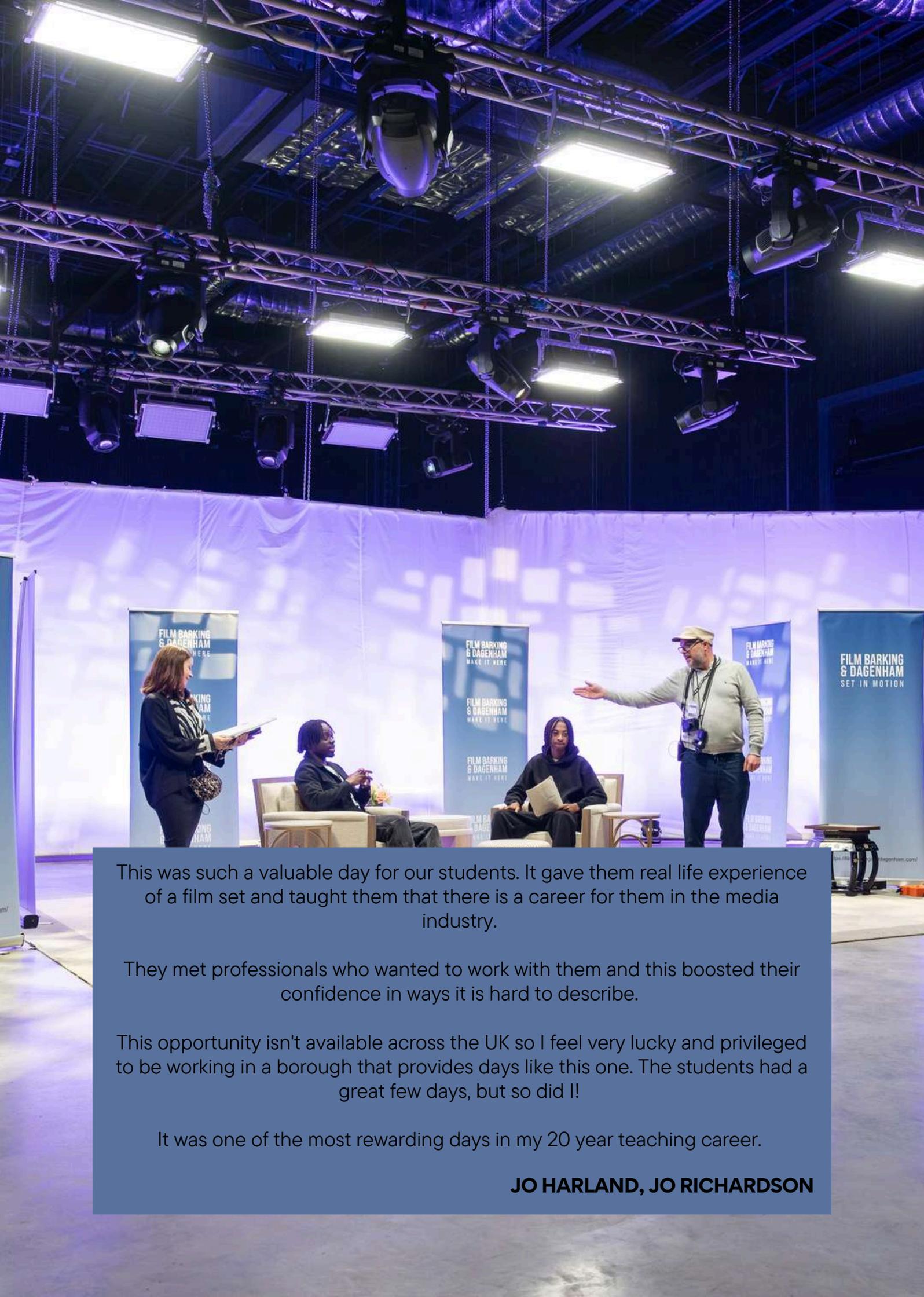
85 learners joined an online masterclass with Location Manager Josh Faux, gaining insider knowledge and practical tips on breaking into one of the industry's most dynamic departments.

Production Sets & Office Visit – Fightland

20 learners enjoyed rare behind-the-scenes access to the sets and production offices of Fightland, meeting key crew members and experiencing the creative process up close.

Overview

Over 100 learners engaged in transformative experiences this year, stepping onto real sets, pitching ideas to professionals, and discovering the breadth of careers in film. The Collaborative Education Framework is not just about learning; it's about unlocking ambition, building confidence and setting East London talent in motion for the future.



This was such a valuable day for our students. It gave them real life experience of a film set and taught them that there is a career for them in the media industry.

They met professionals who wanted to work with them and this boosted their confidence in ways it is hard to describe.

This opportunity isn't available across the UK so I feel very lucky and privileged to be working in a borough that provides days like this one. The students had a great few days, but so did I!

It was one of the most rewarding days in my 20 year teaching career.

JO HARLAND, JO RICHARDSON

NEW PARTNERSHIPS & GRANTS AWARDED

This year we've strengthened our impact by working with external partners to secure new grants and funding, bringing world-class training opportunities to East London and ensuring our community has the skills to thrive in the screen industries.

Mayor's Fund for London – Into Film: Insight into Locations

20 offered hands-on experience with equipment, met Location specialists, and discovered pathways into this dynamic department.

BFI Film Academy – Set Ready Training

20 East London learners took part in an action-packed workshop featuring a masterclass, industry networking, and a behind-the-scenes tour of Eastbrook Studios.

GLA – New City College Skills Bootcamps (£10,000)

A targeted initiative to boost local learners' on-set skills, preparing them for entry-level roles and employer engagement opportunities.

Local London – Trailblazers Grant (£30,000)

Delivered Security for Screen Training for 20 residents, including SIA accreditation, Health & Safety, First Aid, and Fire Marshall training—plus a two-day Location Marshall Bootcamp to equip participants for entry-level positions in the industry.

Outcomes

Through these partnerships, over 50 learners have already gained direct access to professional training, industry networks, and accredited qualifications. These grants are not just funding programmes—they are investments in people, in futures, and in East London's growing reputation as a place where talent can truly make it here.

- **£40,000 secured in new grant funding**
- **4 major partnerships established**
- **50+ learners trained through funded programmes**
- **Hands-on access to studios, sets & industry professionals**



WORK EXPERIENCE

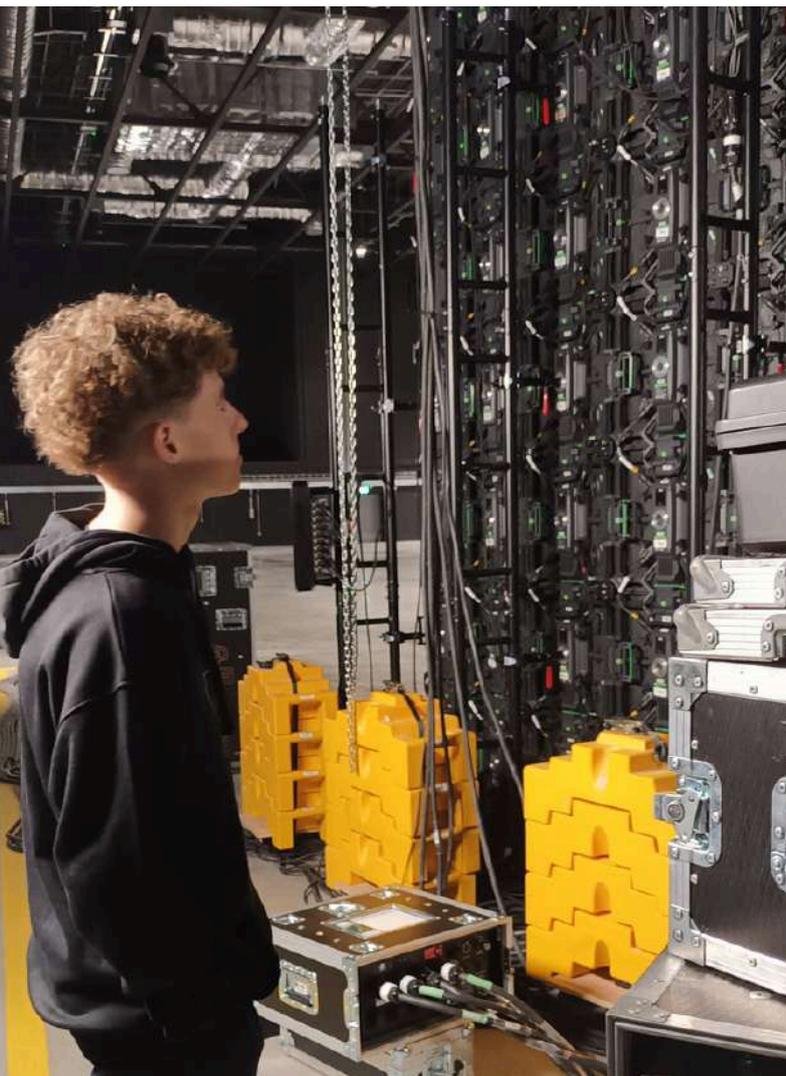
Creating real opportunities for young people to step inside the world of film is at the heart of Make It Here. Work experience placements give students a chance to see the industry up close, build confidence and spark ambitions for future careers.

Barney – Year 10 Placement

Local student Barney spent a week with the Film Office, gaining first-hand insight into how productions are managed across the borough. From learning about location services to shadowing professionals, Barney experienced the fast-paced environment of film administration and discovered the breadth of roles that keep productions running smoothly.

Jo Richardson School – Prizewinning Pupils

Two pupils from Jo Richardson School, who demonstrated outstanding commitment to future screen careers, enjoyed a unique two-day placement with a behind-the-scenes film crew documenting Set In Motion. Working alongside professionals, they learned how crews capture the energy of large-scale training initiatives, developed technical skills, and saw how storytelling comes to life through documentary filmmaking.



DEPARTMENT SHADOWING – LIVE PRODUCTIONS

Unrivalled Access, Massive Opportunities

Few experiences can match the thrill of stepping directly onto a live film set. In 2025, 14 learners from Barking & Dagenham were given extraordinary access to shadow professional crews across multiple productions, an opportunity that offered rare, hands-on insight into the industry's inner workings.

Learners immersed themselves in the departments that sparked their passion including Art, Camera, Lighting, Production and Hair & Make Up, gaining practical skills, observing professionals at work, and building confidence in real-world environments.

- **Independent Film** – Wildwood – 5 learners shadowed across Camera, Lighting, Production, and Hair & Make Up, seeing how independent films bring stories to life.
- **Independent Film** – Twist of Fate – 3 learners gained hands-on exposure in Production and Hair & Make Up, learning the demands of fast-paced shoots.
- **Student Films** – 4 learners supported Hair & Make Up teams, honing technical skills while contributing to emerging talent projects.
- **Untold Fable Commercial** – 3 learners shadowed Camera, Lighting, and Production crews on a commercial shoot, experiencing the precision and creativity of high-end advertising.
- **Ghostwriter Technical Recce** – JJ Abrams Production (Art Department): 1 learner joined a high-profile recce, experiencing the creative planning behind a major production.

This programme gave learners unusual access to world-class productions, from Hollywood blockbusters to independent films and commercials. For many, it was their first time on set, a massive opportunity to see their chosen departments in action and to imagine themselves as part of the industry.



PAID OPPORTUNITIES – FREELANCE EMPLOYMENT

One of the most exciting outcomes of the Make It Here programme has been seeing local people step straight into real, paid jobs on set. In 2025, 23 trained marshalls and runners (all graduates of our Set Ready initiatives) secured freelance employment across commercials, feature films, TV shows and special events.

These roles are more than just entry-level opportunities: they build resilience, confidence, and practical skills, while giving participants their first industry credits. Each credit adds them to our new Crew Database, opening the door to future employment and long-term careers in film.

- **Fatal Fury Commercial – 2 Marshalls**
- **Netflix TV Drama: Legends – 6 Marshalls**
- **Insight Locations Training Day – 2 Marshalls**
- **Channel 4 TV Show: The Syndicate – 2 Marshalls**
- **Criminal Record - 1 Marshall**
- **Eastbrook Studio Tours – 11 Marshalls**

Round-Up

From commercials to feature films, from studio tours to prime-time TV, these placements show the incredible opportunities now available for East London talent. For the first time, local residents are not just watching the industry from the sidelines, they are part of it, gaining credits, building networks, and proving they can thrive in the fast-paced world of film.

This is the start of something bigger: a growing workforce, a stronger local economy, and a new generation of crew who can proudly say they made it here.

SALARIED EMPLOYMENT & BROKERAGE

Screen Industry Jobs advertised through B&D Works (local job brokerage service) and Film Barking and Dagenham:

- **STAGE HAND**
- **VP CLIENT SERVICES**
- **STUDIO FACILITIES HANDYPERSON**
- **STUDIO OPERATIONS ADMIN**
- **MBS EQUIPMENT COMPANY, DAGENHAM WAREHOUSE ASSISTANT**





COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

100 Students

Took part in SET IN MOTION production 2x Day simulation at Eastbrook Studios

20 Students

Had the opportunity to tour Fightland Sets at Eastbrook Studios.

85 Students

Attended an online Location Department Masterclass, lead by ALM Joshua Faux

13 Students

from Final Checks Hair and Make-Up Academy lead the Hair, Make-Up and Costume Dept on SET IN MOTION



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING OUTCOMES

15 Learners

In Department shadowing across:
Camera, Lighting, Production and
Hair and Make-Up

23 Marshalls

Secured freelance employment on
live Film and TV productions

3 Learners

Undertook Screen specific work
experience with Film Barking and
Dagenham and BTS Film Crews

5 Job Offers

For salaried roles at The Wharf and
Eastbrook Studios & MBS
Equipment



FACILITIES & SUPPLY CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Building Services for a Stronger Film Industry

To power East London's growing film sector, we've developed two cornerstone resources: the Crew Database and the Production Directory. Together, they are transforming how productions connect with local talent and services, ensuring that filming in Barking & Dagenham delivers real opportunities for residents and businesses.

Crew Database – Unlocking Local Talent

Our searchable Crew Database identifies both seasoned professionals and early entrants, giving productions a direct route to crew up locally. Applicants can create detailed profiles, upload portfolios, and share availability, providing employers with a comprehensive, ready-to-use resource.

Production Directory – Growing the Ecosystem

The Production Directory promotes and develops the wider ancillary services that make filming possible. This includes:

- Expanding the borough's portfolio of film locations.
- Building a local business database relevant to the film sector.
- Hosting information sessions and events to help businesses in related industries understand and meet production needs.

This directory is already helping productions source everything from specialist providers to facilities, while giving local businesses a platform to step into the film economy.

Snapshot of Progress

56

Registered

Local Business on Production
Directory

176

Registered

Onto our Crew Database

Location Library

- Promoting a diverse library of locations facilitates productions doing as much filming as possible in Borough.
- We continue to work within the local area and local businesses and institutions to expand our locations library.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SCREENINGS & EVENTS

Film is not just for those who work in the industry, it's for everyone. That belief has guided our community engagement work, ensuring that the growth of film activity in Barking & Dagenham brings joy, pride, and inspiration to local people across the borough.

With support from the endowment and Council resources, we've delivered screenings and events that celebrate the richness of our community: LGBTQ+ culture, our Islamic community, Black History Month and the creative voices of East London.

These initiatives have done more than entertain, they've let our diverse residents know that filmmaking is for them too, and dispelled myths about the industry.

Highlights

- 230 residents attended community screenings at Boathouse Studios alongside panels and special events.
- Screenings and campaigns celebrated the borough's diversity and creativity, building civic pride and inclusivity.
- Social media engagement expanded reach, inspiring younger audiences and broadening awareness of opportunities in film.

Looking Ahead

In January 2026, Barking & Dagenham will host the first-ever Picture East Film Festival, a four-day cinematic celebration delivered in partnership with Film London. This landmark event will showcase local talent, welcome diverse audiences, and cement the borough's reputation as a vibrant cultural hub.



TESTIMONIALS



Set in Motion is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when industry, education, and community partners come together with a shared vision. This bootcamp simply wouldn't exist without Film B&D's commitment, creativity and belief in giving local talent real opportunities. We're incredibly proud to see this project come to life. Within a month of the first student engagement activity, our students have been in Eastbrook soundstages TWICE, on live productions and engaging with countless industry professionals both on-set and in seminar-style online sessions. This enhances and enriches the curriculum in a meaningful way for all education providers involved.

ANDY GREAVES, NCC

It's been such a great experience working with Film Barking and Dagenham on Set In Motion. The team have been supportive of Ravensbourne and the inclusion of the university in the pilot programme is a huge step forward for our progression of continuing to learn with industry and provide accessible creative higher education in London. The team have always been kind and supported us during Careers Fairs and our engagement work also. We are really excited to see the continued progress of our students in the Set In Motion programme and working with Film Barking and Dagenham more in the new year!

CAROLINE WILSON, RAVENSBOURNE

"Being a Marshall for Film Barking & Dagenham is always an energizing and inspiring experience. The team's professionalism and positivity makes it a joy to contribute and give my best"

CHARLEY JAI (LOCATION MARSHALL)

Working with Film Barking and Dagenham is always inspiring. The projects I have been involved with always have such passion and heart. I always feel like we are making an impact

ELLA BROAD, FILMMAKER



DIGITAL REACH & SOCIALS

333,400

Impressions across our Socials in the last calendar year

173 Professionals

Crew Database accessible for professional creatives in Barking and Dagenham and certain neighboring boroughs.

61,563

impressions on posts in the last 90 Days

10,450

Impressions on recent Eastbrook and The Wharf job ads

Curated Digital Presence

On major industry supplier platforms, including The Knowledge, Location Guide, and KAYS

1,425

Brand new followers across our socials



BRAND DEVELOPMENT

FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM
MAKE IT HERE

FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM

FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM
COLLABORATIVE
FRAMEWORK

FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM
SET IN MOTION

FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM
SCREEN SOCIALS

KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

The Make It Here programme has already achieved remarkable progress in the following areas:

Education & Pathways – A strong network of schools and training providers now supports clear routes into film.

Early Entrants – A growing pool of trained talent is stepping into roles such as Location Marshall, Production Runner, and Department Trainee.

Industry Engagement – A tested model for working with visiting productions has delivered real results, with paid placements and jobs secured for local crew.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

These achievements prove that East London’s creative pipeline is not just an ambition—it’s already taking shape. The foundations are strong, the momentum is building, and the opportunities are within reach.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

As with any ambitious programme, challenges remain:

- The borough needs more crew with the skills and experience to meet industry expectations.
- Colleges and universities require stronger, industry-relevant training provision with a clear line of sight to film careers.
- More work experience placements and entry-level opportunities are essential to grow and sustain the local workforce.



KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

ACTING EARLY, UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY

One of the most pressing challenges we face is the need to engage with productions and employers at the earliest possible stage. Too often, productions arrive in the borough with existing training partners or established networks already in place, limiting the scope for local entrants to benefit.

Early engagement is not just desirable, it is critical to unlocking future opportunities for the local talent.

By strengthening our stakeholder relationships and embedding ourselves as the go-to partner for early-stage careers, we can secure a stronger position in the industry and guarantee that residents benefit from every production that comes to the Borough.

NEXT STEPS – ACHIEVABLE & IN SIGHT

The year ahead is about momentum, collaboration, and unlocking opportunity. With Eastbrook Studios now in full swing, our focus is to position the studios, film locations, and the Make It Here programme as a one-stop shop for productions in East London, meeting industry needs while creating pathways for local talent.

SCHOOLS & CAREERS

Film Enterprise Competition – Our Flagship Schools Project

We will concentrate on the Film Enterprise Competition, a resource-efficient initiative that every school can join. This proven model inspires young people to explore the breadth of film careers, understand how to access them, and showcase their creativity through short films with an annual film screening to premiere their work.



KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING – BUILDING A WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE

The Make It Here programme is driving forward a vision of East London as a place where film careers are not only possible but thriving. Our focus is on building a skilled, flexible and resilient workforce that meets the needs of productions today and tomorrow.

Key Priorities

Developing New Talent – Attracting and training early-stage professionals to fill sector skills gaps and strengthen the borough’s talent pipeline.

Harnessing Transferable Skills – Opening pathways for electricians, carpenters and other trades to transition into film, expanding the pool of industry-ready crew.

Targeted Training Programmes – Scaling Bootcamps and collaborations to develop Location Marshalls, Studio Runners and Department Trainees, while introducing industry-recognised certifications to support long-term careers.

FACILITIES & SUPPLY CHAIN DEVELOPMENT – EXPANDING THE OFFER

To ensure Eastbrook Studios and visiting productions have everything they need, we are focused on strengthening local supply chains and expanding facilities across the borough.

Key Areas for Expansion

Crew & Supplier Network – Grow a responsive pool of local crew and suppliers to support filming production needs.

Sustainability – Support production with achieving their Sustainability and Diversity goals through the provisions of a diverse early stage careers workforce hungry for opportunities Connections at and through the council to support post-production recycling.

Business Database Growth – Continue building and aligning our business database with Eastbrook’s, creating a comprehensive resource for productions to source local services.

Location Development – Expand the number and diversity of filming locations available in Barking & Dagenham, ensuring productions can meet their external location needs with ease.

KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – OPENING DOORS, BUILDING PRIDE

Film is more than an industry—it's a shared cultural experience. Our community engagement work ensures that the growth of film in Barking & Dagenham is something everyone can enjoy and be proud of.

Community Newsletters – Regular updates will promote awareness of opportunities, ensuring residents feel connected to the borough's creative future.

Screenings & Media Clubs – Pooling resources with Council services, we will continue to support film screenings, media clubs, and cultural activities that foster civic pride and broaden access to jobs, training, and creative opportunities.

PARTNERSHIPS – STRENGTHENING INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

Collaboration is at the heart of the Make It Here programme. By forging new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, we are ensuring that East London's film sector is connected to the very best expertise, networks, and resources the industry has to offer.

Designers Guild of Great Britain – Bringing creative excellence and design innovation into our programmes, inspiring learners and productions alike.

Production Guild – Connecting our local workforce with one of the UK's leading professional networks, opening doors to employment and industry recognition.

ScreenSkill – Partnering to deliver accredited training and skills development, ensuring our crew are industry-ready and aligned with national standards.

Film London – Working closely to promote East London as a filming destination, securing funding, licences, and support to embed film activity across the borough.

Equipment Specialists – Building relationships with suppliers to provide access to professional kit, ensuring learners and productions benefit from world-class tools and technology.



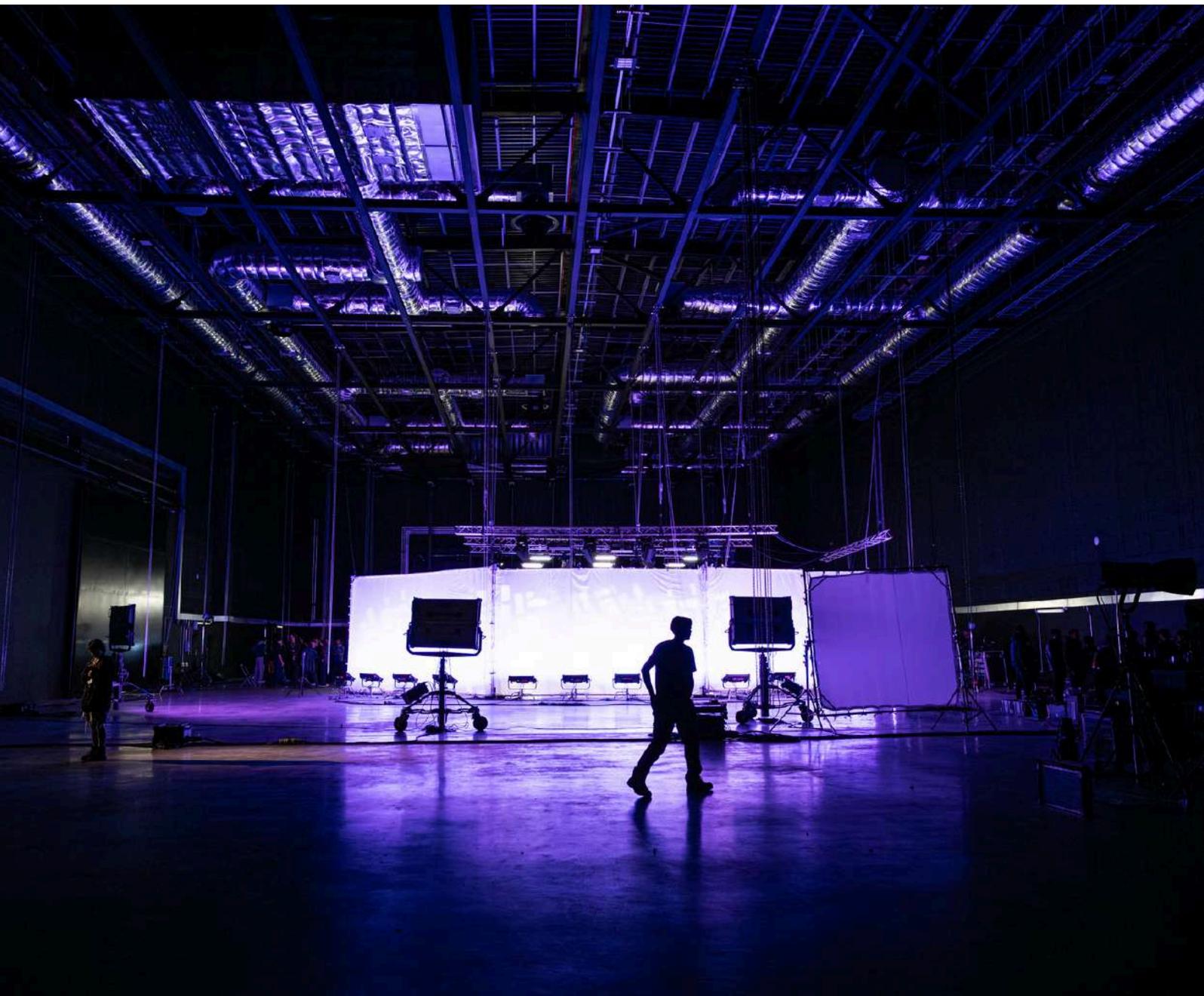
KEY LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

EARLY-STAGE CAREER FOCUS – BUILDING STRENGTH FROM THE START

While national organisations such as Film London, ScreenSkills and the BFI are working hard to tackle mid-level career gaps, the reality is that this challenge remains unresolved. That's why our focus on early-stage careers is both distinctive and powerful.

By concentrating on entry-level opportunities, we are carving out a unique position of strength—providing the very first steps into the industry that no one else is prioritising. From traineeships and marshalling to studio runner roles, we are equipping new entrants from our Borough with the confidence, skills and credits they need to begin their journey.

This approach ensures that when participants progress through the programme, they do so with a solid foundation, ready to seize opportunities and move into higher-level roles. It's a strategy that is inclusive, achievable and impactful, giving East London talent the best possible start in film.



**FILM BARKING
& DAGENHAM**
MAKE IT HERE

