UK Games Industry Workforce Demographic Survey

Executive Summary

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Foreword

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From their counter-culture origins in the 1970s, video games and interactive entertainment have grown to become a global cultural phenomenon, part of the daily lived experience of billions of players worldwide.

With this reach comes two responsibilities. The first is to use the extraordinary creative medium of video games to tell stores and build worlds that reflect and celebrate the full breadth and diversity of cultures and identities. We have an unparalleled opportunity to use the power of interactivity to build empathy and understanding.

The second is to model the best of what a Creative Industry can be in terms of inclusivity, representation and opportunity. We must lean into the realisation that truly great games are built by diverse teams in which everyone is empowered to do their best work.

In the words of a leading diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) specialist, “there is no diversity without data”. It is in this spirit that I am pleased that once again Ukie has been able to support a UK Games Workforce Demographics Survey, led by Professor Mark Taylor.

Perhaps the term ‘Census’ brings to mind biblical comparisons of a comprehensive audit. This is not that. It is necessarily a snapshot at a moment in time when the industry itself is experiencing a period of huge upheaval.

Nor should the data points presented here be taken in an overly-simplistic way. For example, the skewing towards an older profession points to challenges in creating opportunities for career-entry candidates while also highlighting the UK’s great strength in senior leadership talent.

A report of this scale and complexity requires a nuanced and considered response. We cannot afford simply to spectate the challenges it highlights – we must come together to take concerted action to change them. That is why is am pleased that Ukie will be working with the Strategic Partners of our *Raise the Game* initiative to develop a considered long-term plan that responds to this report.

I hope that this report will constitute a valuable contribution to the UK games industry’s thinking about how we can all do more to model the kind of inclusive, welcoming and supportive industry that I know we all aspire to be.

Executive summary

The 2025 UK Games Industry Workforce Demographics Survey is the third edition of work characterising the UK games workforce, following previous editions in 2019 and 2021. It is published by Professor Mark Taylor, commissioned by and delivered in partnership with Ukie, the trade association for the UK's games and interactive entertainment industry.

The report arrives at a moment of significant change. Since the workforce last participated in this research in autumn 2021, a period characterised by a wave of acquisitions following strong sales during the Covid-19 lockdowns, the UK industry has experienced large-scale redundancies and studio closures, a contraction in investment capital, the discontinuation or reduction of several major UK games events, the suspension of many company DEI programmes, the introduction of a new immigration regime following the UK's departure from the European Union, and changes to government policy regarding trans people.

The period has not, however, been one of uniform decline: the UK remains one of Europe's largest games markets, the Video Games Expenditure Credit has strengthened support for domestic development, and flexible working is now an established feature of industry practice.

The survey covers respondents' roles, working patterns, personal characteristics, and attitudes towards their workplace and the wider industry. It also examines the experiences of people who have left a job in the UK games industry in the last three years and includes a dedicated section on the international make-up of the workforce.

Following consultation with industry representatives in summer 2025, this edition introduces new questions on job losses, length of time spent working in the games sector, and job-relevant training, whether undertaken independently or provided through respondents' workplaces.

After data collection, further analysis was carried out on several topics, including the distribution of characteristics across seniority levels, the impact of job losses, and the international workers in the UK.

The survey received 1,610 responses between November 2025 and January 2026, down from 3,603 in 2021. It is best understood as a snapshot rather than an exhaustive audit: the findings reflect the experiences of those who took part during a period of significant upheaval, and because both the industry and the respondent base have changed since previous editions, they should be read on their own terms rather than compared directly with earlier findings.

This executive summary presents the key findings of the research and is published alongside the comprehensive report, which should be consulted for the full picture of the survey results.

LGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent representation is strong, but ethnic minority representation is lower than the general population

The results show that 48% of people are over the age of 35. Only 7% of our sample were 25 or younger, though overall this is younger than the population in work. This pattern repeats itself in levels of seniority, where 6% of respondents are in junior roles in 2025.

Representation of White people among respondents is 88%. People of mixed or multiple ethnicities are 5% of the sample, the same as Asian people, while the number of Black people is 1%. This means the respondents have a higher representation of White people than the UK workforce, with Black people significantly under-represented compared to the 5.45% in the broader workforce and Asian people also behind the working age population's 7.4%.

Almost a quarter of participants hold a nationality other than British. 16% of people were from the EEA and 8% from the rest of the world. Of these international workers, 50% held pre-settled status in the UK, while 17% were on a long-term work visa such as the Skilled Worker Visa.

Women make up 33% of respondents, with a further 5% of people identifying as non-binary or other gender. Women are significantly below the UK workforce figure of 49%, but their representation in our sample is comparable with the UK information and communications industries as well as other European games industries. 6% of the UK games industry is trans, with 2% of respondents describing their gender as male or female and 4% selecting non-binary or describing their gender in another way.

Respondents to the survey included substantial representation of LQBTQIA+ people compared to the general UK population, at 33% of the workforce. This is significantly greater than the most recent estimate for over-16s in the UK, which places lesbian, gay and bisexual representation at 3.7%.

Participants feature much higher numbers of workers from a background where a parent or carer had a managerial or professional job, at 64%, than the overall workforce, at 37%.

Reporting of people with conditions affecting concentration, such as ADHD, was 27% and of autistic people was 16%. These estimates are higher than their equivalents in the general population: around 12% for ADHD and 0.9% for autism against a backdrop of higher national rates of positive ADHD screenings and autism diagnoses and an increasing awareness of these conditions in general.

Working from home is the norm, ethnic minorities have less access to job progression

Responses to the survey showed that 41% of people that work in organisations employing fewer than 100 people. 61% of people work mainly from home with 41% of workers required to spend some amount of their weekly hours in a specified location.

This 61% of people working from home exceeds the 15% of the broader UK workforce. Higher rates of promotions and more diagonal moves (changing jobs to a more senior position) were reported by White people. Hours worked in the games industry align with the UK average, and 29% of people reported working over 50 hours in at least one week in the last year.

Diversity narrows the more senior the role, but LGBTQIA+ representation is substantial even at the highest levels

Representation of White British people increases as roles become more senior. Ethnic minorities see particularly low representation in senior leadership roles in organisations with more than 24 employees, at only 6%.

By nationality, the picture is different. There are more people with EEA nationality in mid-level and senior roles than there are in lead and senior management, but with British being the most common nationality in each. Nationalities from the rest of the world are relatively flat across different seniorities, between 7% and 9%.

Junior roles align more closely with the most senior roles, which have the highest representation of White British people and UK nationals. This may be due to the UK's new visa programme following the exit from the European Union.

Around a quarter of senior leadership roles are held by women, which is below the 49.3% of women found in senior off-screen roles in the television industry. LGBTQIA+ representation declines with seniority to a minimum of 15% in senior leadership of larger companies, but this still exceeds the 3.7% of over-16s who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Anxiety and depression are most common in mid-level and senior roles. Roles outside of the seniority structure, such as freelancers, had the highest representation of autistic people, at 37%. Conditions affecting concentration, such as ADHD, broadly become less common as seniority increases. Disability follows a similar pattern, but with a marked outlier among senior leadership in smaller organisations, where 13% of people consider themselves disabled.

The results also show that social background is broadly consistent across different seniority levels, with one notable exception. Senior leaders at larger organisations are the least likely to have grown up in a household where a parent or carer held a managerial or professional role. This is likely attributable to age, as senior leaders tend to be older, and their parents were of working age during a period when managerial and professional occupations made up a smaller share of the workforce.

Job losses have hit the industry significantly in the past three years

One of the most significant ongoing patterns in the modern global games industry is widespread staff redundancies and studio closures and so the survey included questions regarding people's experiences with job losses. These findings do not represent the full impact of job losses on the UK industry as the sample is likely to have missed those who lost their jobs and did not find a new job in UK video games.

22% of our participants told us that they had been affected by a job loss in the past three years. This comprises people who were made redundant, whose place of work closed down and people who reached the end of a fixed term contract. Half of people who left a job, including those who left to take up a new job, had started a new one within three months. Those who had experienced a job loss were more likely to be intending to leave the UK games industry when asked about their future plans, with those who were searching for a new role for over a year the most likely of any group to be planning to leave.

Job losses were not experienced evenly across the UK industry, with people with marginalised characteristics consistently more likely to have been affected

Ethnic minorities were more likely to have lost a job than White British people, as were other White ethnic groups. People with nationalities of outside the EEA were also more likely to have lost a job than UK and EEA workers. 29% of non-binary people had lost a job, followed by 23% of women and 20% of men, while LGBTQIA+ people were more likely to have lost a job than straight people (26% vs 18%) and trans people more likely than cis (30% vs 20%).

Younger people were more likely to have experienced a job loss, with those aged 30 and below the most affected. People aged 26-30 were the most likely to be looking to leave the industry of all age groups by a significant margin.

People who reported having mental health conditions were more likely to have experienced a job loss than those without, but people with and without physical health conditions experienced equal rates of job loss. People who consider themselves disabled are more likely to have lost a job than those who do not.

Job roles also had some marked differences, where 44% of writers had experienced a job loss, followed by 31% of artists and 30% of game and level designers. People currently working in smaller organisations, especially with 1-2 employees, are more likely to have experienced a job loss prior to taking up that role and those currently working in work-for-hire or co-development are also more likely to have lost a job previously.

People are positive about where they work, but confidence in the industry is low

Attitudes are broadly positive, but the number of people agreeing that the UK games industry is a great place to work is only 38%, compared with 70% stating that their employer is a great place to work. Responses were very mixed on how the UK games industry as a whole handles inappropriate behaviour. Women and non-binary people are less positive than men about both their workplaces and the UK industry.

Turning this evidence into action

The findings in this report are clear about the pressures the UK games industry has faced since 2021. Respondents described the effects of job losses, difficulties hiring internationally, and the toll on mental health of job instability and watching colleagues made redundant — and their view of the industry as a place to work has worsened as a result. The pride people take in making games has not disappeared. But pride alone is not a plan.

This survey, built on the generous participation of more than 1,600 workers, tells us where change is most needed. That knowledge carries an obligation to act on it. Ukie, through Raise The Game, is committed to making the games industry open, inclusive and accessible to all. In response to the issues this data raises, Raise The Game has assembled a coalition of industry-leading strategic partners, Into Games, Many Cats Studio, Melanin Gamers, POC in Play, Safe in Our World, Special Effect, Code Coven, Limit Break, Games Leadership, and Women in Games, amplifying their work through Ukie's channels and backing it with a dedicated fund.

Together, these partners will develop an action plan that responds directly to what this survey has found, so that the next generation of games professionals enters an industry that is equitable and safe for everyone. The action plan will be published in due course and updated as the work develops.