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# 2014/15 Survey of Scotland's Playwrights

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Analysis Paper

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Fraser White, November 2015

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# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## 1. Introduction

Playwrights' Studio, Scotland and the Scottish Society of Playwrights commissioned Christine Hamilton Consulting to undertake a survey of Scotland's playwrights as part of a wider programme of research and consultancy. The aim was to better understand the context in which playwrights operate and to uncover more about individual needs.

The survey sought to gather quantitative and qualitative information and data around a few key themes: plays, productions and commissions within and outside Scotland; professional development needs and opportunities; playwriting as a source of income; and demographic data about those working within the sector in Scotland.

The survey was distributed to a closed group of 186 playwrights who either live in Scotland or have a strong Scottish connection. 129 responses were obtained in total (69%), 106 of which were complete (57%), making it one of the most comprehensive surveys of Scottish playwrights ever carried out.

The information and data was gathered and analysed by Fraser White on behalf of Christine Hamilton Consulting.

## 2. Respondent demography

### 2.1 Place of residence

The survey attracted responses from playwrights living across Scotland and beyond:

Almost 40% live in Glasgow and 21% in Edinburgh

23 of Scotland's 32 local authority areas are represented by survey respondents' places of residence

9% of responses are from playwrights who live outside Scotland

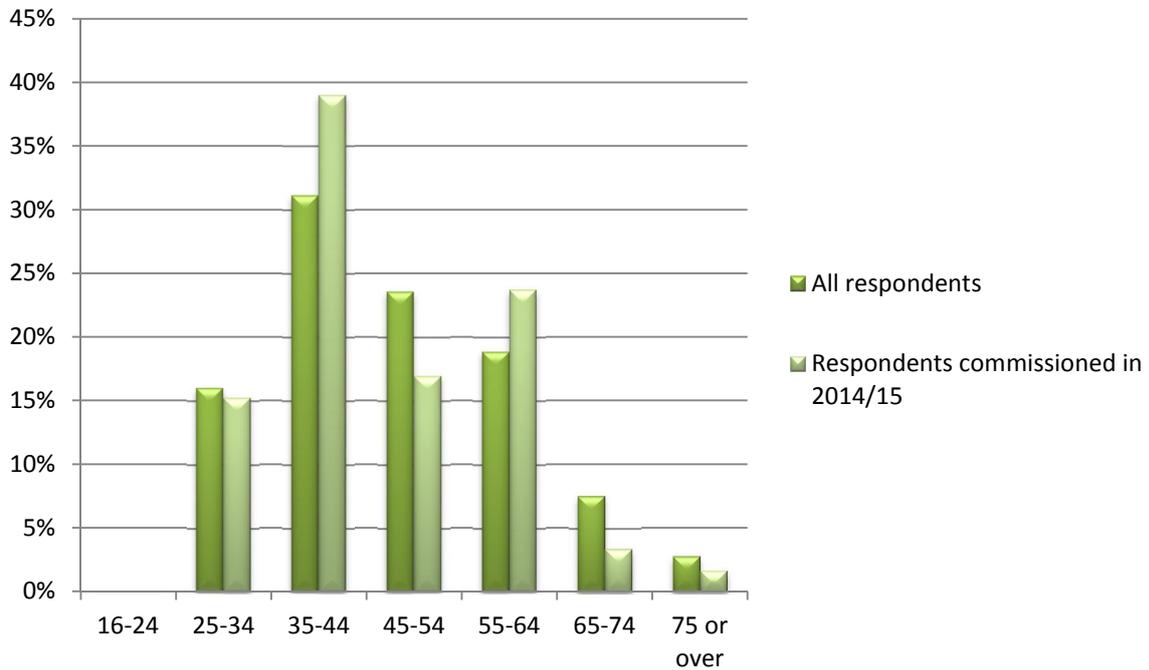
### 2.2 Age ranges

The largest responses were from playwrights aged 35-44 and 45-54 (31% and 24% of the total respectively). Fewer responses were received from those at the youngest and oldest ends of the age range categories: no responses came from playwrights under 25 while respondents aged 75 or over represented 3% of the total survey response.

When the age range analysis is applied only to respondents who were commissioned to write plays in 2014/15, the overall spread is similar. Those

aged 35-44 and 55-64 become proportionally better represented, however, with the other age ranges slightly less well represented.

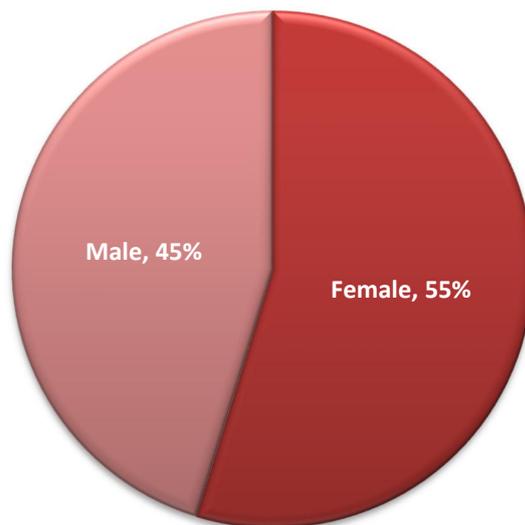
**Chart: Age ranges of respondents**



### 2.3 Gender

55% of respondents were female and 45% male.

**Chart: Respondents by gender**



When analysis of gender was applied only to those who had received commissions within or outside Scotland in 2014/15, the distribution was marginally more evenly split: 53% were female and 47% male.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they are transgender. 106 respondents answered the question: one is, two preferred not to say, and 103 are not.

## **2.4 LGBT**

Of 106 respondents who provided such information, 14 (13%) described themselves as LGBT, 89 (84%) said they are not LGBT and three (3%) preferred not to say.

## **2.5 Ethnicity**

93% of the survey sample are white: 60% consider their ethnicity to be white Scottish, 22% white British, 4% white Irish, and 8% any other white ethnic group (i.e. a white ethnic group that was not specified in the survey ethnicity headings).

3% of respondents are Indian Scottish or Indian British.

One respondent is black (Black Scottish or Black British).

The three remaining respondents detailed their ethnicity descriptions under the headings 'any other Asian ethnic group', 'any mixed or multiple ethnic groups' and 'any other ethnic group'.

## **2.6 Disability**

106 respondents responded to a question asking if they considered themselves to have a disability. Five (5%) preferred not to say, six (6%) said they have a disability and 95 (90%) said they do not have a disability.

## **3. Commissions within Scotland**

The survey identified 152 Scottish commissions in 2014/15.

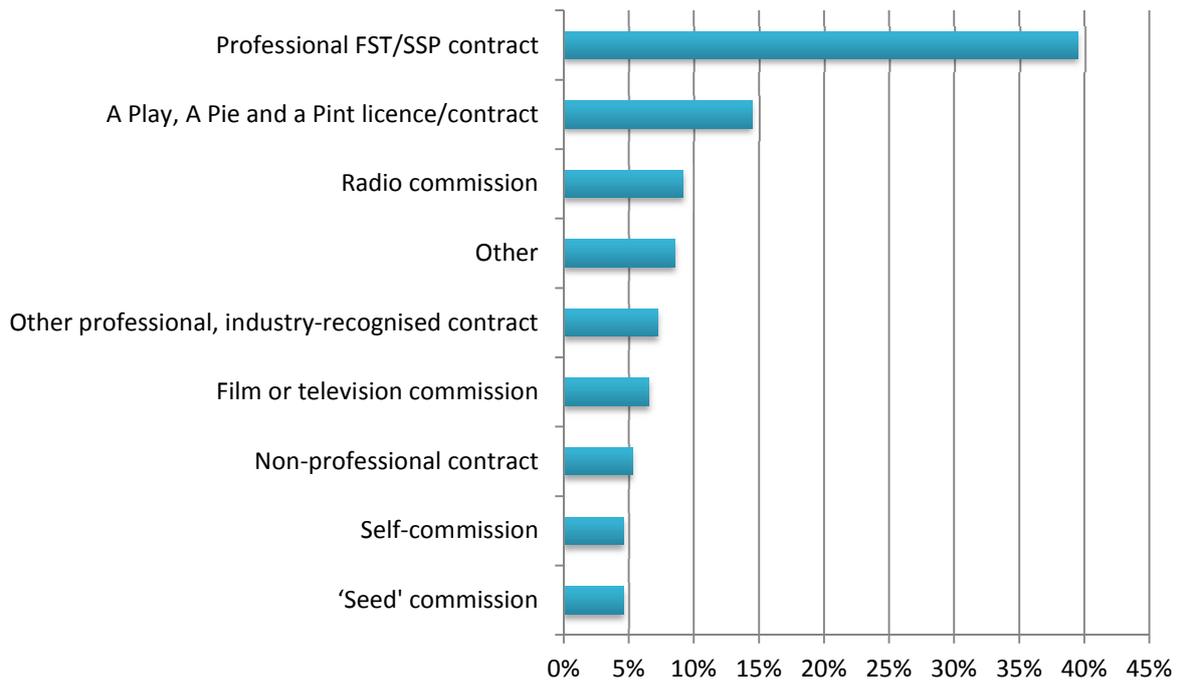
### **3.1 Types of Scottish commissions**

Scottish commissions were most commonly 'professional FST/SSP contracts'.

A Play, A Pie and A Pint licences and contracts were also commonly taken up by survey respondents.

There were a variety of other types of contracts and commissions in Scotland in 2014/15, as illustrated in the following chart:

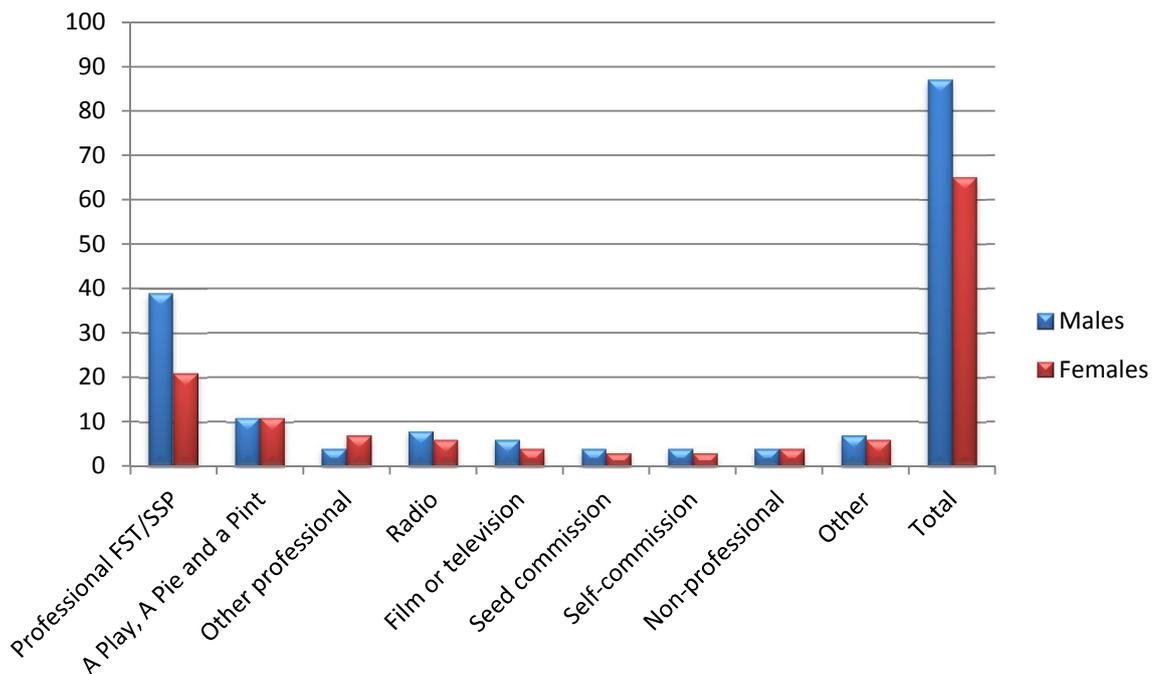
**Chart: Scottish commissions by contract type, 2014/15**



Men received more Scottish commissions than women within our survey sample: 87 (57%) went to men and 65 (43%) to women.

Similar numbers of each type of commission went to men and women except for professional FST/SSP contracts: of the 60 identified in the survey, 39 (65%) went to men and 21 (35%) to women.

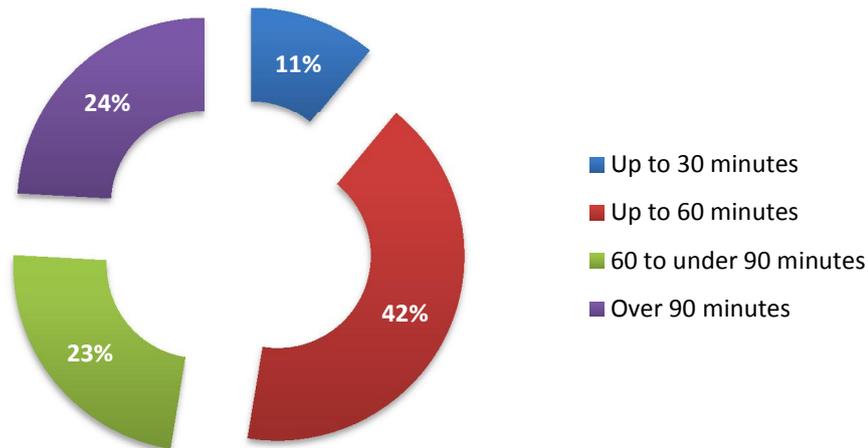
**Chart: Scottish commissions by contract type and gender, 2014/15**



### 3.2 Lengths of Scottish commissions

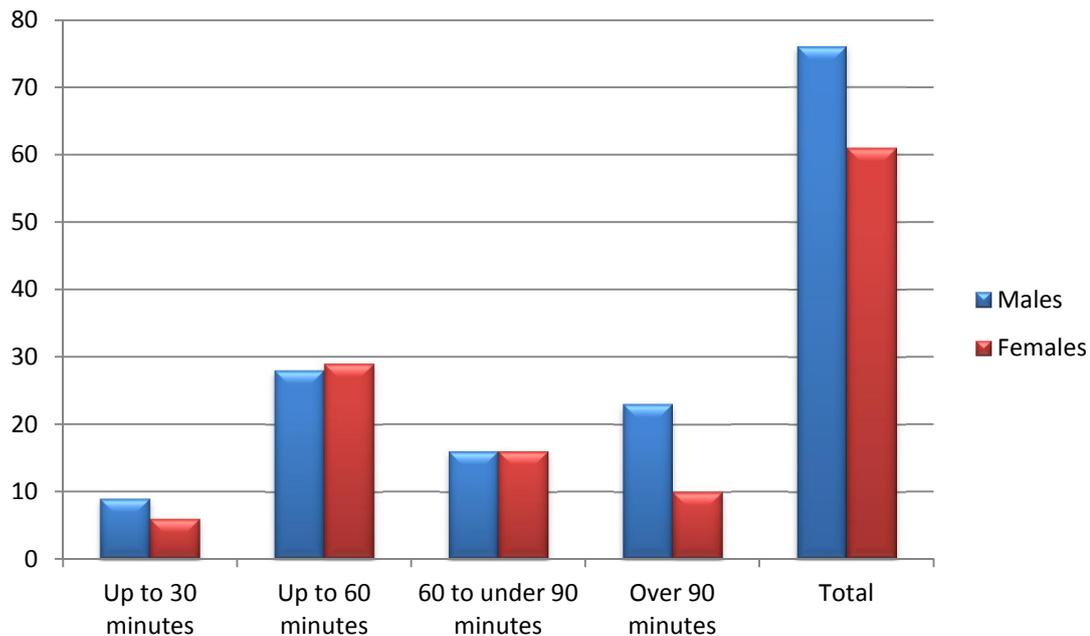
The most common category of Scottish commission length was 'up to 60 minutes', which made up 42% of the total. Marginally less than a quarter of Scottish commissions were '60 to under 90 minutes' and a similar proportion were 'over 90 minutes'. 11% of Scottish commissions were 'up to 30 minutes'.

**Chart: Scottish commission lengths, 2014/15**



Survey responses suggest that females received more short commissions than men (60% of commissions up to 30 minutes went to women) while men were commissioned to write more long plays (70% of commissions over 90 minutes went to men).

**Chart: Scottish commission lengths by gender, 2014/15**



### 3.3 Commissions LGBT, BAME, Disability

Of the 59 respondents commissioned to write plays in 2014/15 who answered the equalities monitoring questions:

- Nine (15.3%) said they are LGBT (and one preferred not to say)
- Two (3.4%) said their ethnic group or background is non-white
- Two (3.4%) said they consider themselves to have a disability (and three preferred not to say)

### 3.4 Scottish co-written commissions

Eleven of the commissions in Scotland were co-written.

## 4. Commissions outside Scotland

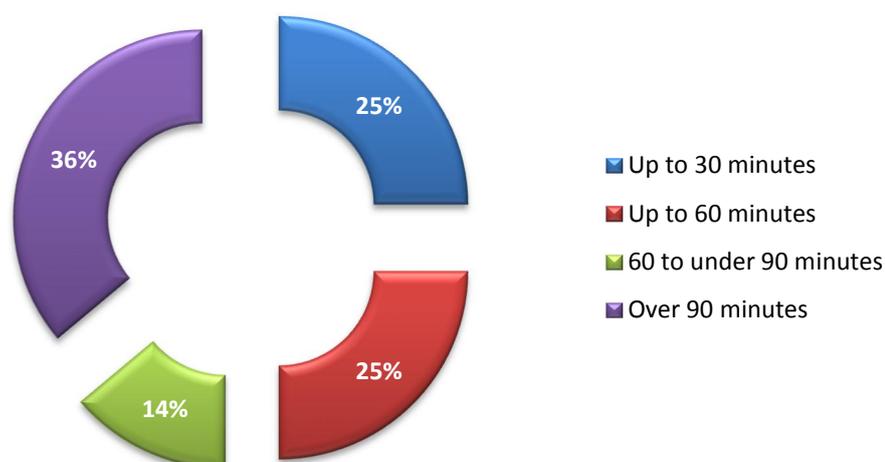
### 4.1 Locations of non-Scottish commissions

The survey identified at least 36 individual playwriting commissions from non-Scottish organisations and venues in 2014/15 from countries including England, the United States, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Italy.

### 4.2 Lengths of non-Scottish commissions

The most common category of non-Scottish commission length was 'over 90 minutes', which made up 36% of the total. A quarter were 'up to 30 minutes' and another quarter were 'up to 60 minutes', while 14% were '60 to under 90 minutes'.

**Chart: Non-Scottish commission lengths, 2014/15**



#### **4.3 Non-Scottish co-written commissions**

Two of the non-Scottish commissions identified in the survey were co-written.

#### **4.4 Translated non-Scottish commissions**

Three of the non-Scottish commissions were translated into another language.

### **5. Productions**

57 playwrights (49%) wrote at least 98 new plays that were produced in Scotland in 2014/15.

21 playwrights (18%) wrote 21 new plays produced outside Scotland in 2014/15.

34 playwrights (29%) had at least 62 second or subsequent productions produced in Scotland in 2014/15.

29 playwrights (25%) had at least 68 second or subsequent productions produced outside Scotland in 2014/15.

23 playwrights (20%) said they had written plays originally produced in Scotland that went on to tour beyond Scotland in 2014/15.

### **6. A little more about respondents' work in 2014/15**

17 (15%) said they had plays published.

19 (17%) worked as writers on devised shows.

22 (19%) were employed as dramaturgs.

110 (97%) write in English, 38 (34%) in Scots and five (4%) in Gaelic. Two writers specified other languages they write in, namely French and Croatian.

Seven (6%) translated plays in 2014/15: into English from Russian, German, Italian and Quebecois; into Scots from Quebecois; and into Gaelic from English.

56 (50%) said they had presented work as a 'work in progress' in 2014/15:

- 41 respondents (36%) said they had presented 66 pieces of work as rehearsed readings.
- 33 respondents (29%) said they had presented 48 pieces of work as scratch or platform performances with some staging.
- Six respondents (5%) said they had presented 12 pieces of work as some 'other' kind of work in progress performance.

## **7. Playwriting as a source of income**

Commissions provided higher playwriting income levels than royalties for most respondents in 2014/15.

48% of respondents said they were not commissioned to write any plays in 2014/15: it is therefore unsurprising that a similar proportion (45%) of survey respondents said they did not earn anything from commissions in the same financial year.

56% of 'active' playwriting respondents (those with commissions in 2014/15) earned more than £5,000 from playwriting, 41% more than £10,000 and 22% more than £20,000.

Other arts employment appears to play the biggest role in topping up active playwrights' earnings: almost 70% earned something from employment of this kind and 22% said they earned over £10,000 from this type of work in 2014/15.

For most of Scotland's active playwrights, income from playwriting alone is insufficient to sustain them: median earnings (i.e. the earnings of the 'average' playwright) fall in the £5,000 to £9,999 range.

Other forms of work are important in supplementing the incomes of Scottish playwrights. Minimum median earnings are in the range of £10,000 to

£19,999 and maximum median earnings exceed £20,000 when these are taken into account.<sup>1</sup>

## **8. Agreed rates of pay**

42% of respondents said they received Scottish Society of Playwrights/Federation of Scottish Theatres agreed rates of pay, while 58% said they did not receive agreed pay rates.

On further analysis, it appears that some assumed the SSP/FST rates to be the rate for full commissions and that A Play, A Pie and A Pint rates were therefore in breach of an agreement since they received a lower rate. In fact A Play, A Pie and A Pint pays a rate separately agreed by SSP.

The agreed question was badly worded. For a full list of companies and organisations that commissioned playwrights in 2014/2015 see Appendix 1.

Explanatory comments from respondents revealed some key themes around agreed rates of pay:

- In some cases the nature of the work meant writers were content not to seek Scottish Society of Playwrights/Federation of Scottish Theatres agreed rates.
- Others who worked for less than the agreed rates did so because they felt it was necessary to gain opportunities to work and develop their writing.
- Several respondents highlighted that written work for A Play, A Pie and A Pint at Oran Mor achieves different rates.
- Some respondents said the rate they were paid was dependent on the work's success at generating income and keeping costs down.
- Others pointed to the fact that devised shows can lead to writers achieving rates of pay lower than those agreed by SSP and FST.

## **9. Professional development opportunities**

In 2014/15, out of our survey sample:

- 23% had undertaken mentoring-based development.
- 19% had undertaken dramaturgy-based development.
- 20% had taken part in a residency or attachment to an organisation.
- 18% had participated in a writer's retreat.
- 29% had used a bursary or grant to develop their work.

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<sup>1</sup> See full report for an explanation of calculation of 'minimum' and 'maximum' median earnings

All 23 respondents who participated in mentoring programmes considered the experience to be 'very useful'.

Writers' retreats, residencies/organisational attachments and dramaturgy opportunities were each accessed by similar numbers of respondents. The vast majority rated these experiences 'very useful', although the proportion was lower for dramaturgy (80%) than for writers' retreats (95%) and residencies/attachment to an organisation (90%). All other respondents rated these opportunities 'quite useful'.

87% rated grants and bursaries 'very useful' for their professional development, with the remainder considering them 'quite useful'.

### **9.1 Playwrights Studio, Scotland**

Playwrights' Studio, Scotland has four main aims. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they think it currently achieves these aims:

- To strengthen and provide vital support and resources to Scotland's playwrights
- To actively promote Scotland's playwrights, playwriting and plays
- To facilitate critical thinking about playwriting, plays and playwrights through debate, discussion and advocacy
- To increase the efficiency and sustainability of Playwrights' Studio for the benefit of Scotland's playwrights

For all four aims a significant majority (71%-86%) said Playwrights' Studio was doing 'quite' or 'very' well. Similarly, for each aim only 3%-4% felt it was not doing well.

### **9.2 Scottish Society of Playwrights**

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had benefited from any of the following from the Scottish Society of Playwrights:

- Advice on commission or pay rates
- Advice on contracts
- Lobbying on behalf of playwrights
- Dispute resolution

A majority of surveyed playwrights have benefited from Scottish Society of Playwrights advice on commission or pay rates (64%) and lobbying (62%). 45% have drawn on the society's expertise and support for contracts advice and 28% for dispute resolution.



# FULL REPORT

## 1. Introduction

Playwrights' Studio, Scotland and the Scottish Society of Playwrights commissioned Christine Hamilton Consulting to undertake a survey of Scotland's playwrights as part of a wider programme of research and consultancy. The aim was to better understand the context in which playwrights operate and to uncover more about individual needs.

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The information and data was gathered and analysed by Fraser White on behalf of Christine Hamilton Consulting.

## 2. Respondent demography

### 2.1 Where respondents live

The survey attracted responses from playwrights living across Scotland and beyond.

Almost 40% live in Glasgow and 21% in Edinburgh (These figures are substantially higher than the cities' population shares of 11% and 9% respectively, but are probably generally reflective of Scotland's playwright populations).

All but nine of Scotland's 32 local authority areas are represented by survey respondents' places of residence (Of these, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Dundee are above average in terms of general population size and therefore stand out as areas that may have been expected to generate responses).

9% of responses are from playwrights who live outside Scotland.

Local authority area	Responses	Local authority area	Responses
Glasgow	51	North Lanarkshire	1
Edinburgh	27	Orkney	1
Highland	4	Perth & Kinross	1
Midlothian	4	Shetland Islands	1
Scottish Borders	4	South Ayrshire	1
East Dunbartonshire	3	Stirling	1
Fife	3	Aberdeen	0
South Lanarkshire	3	Aberdeenshire	0
North Ayrshire	2	Angus	0
Renfrewshire	2	Clackmannanshire	0
West Lothian	2	Dundee	0
Argyll & Bute	1	Inverclyde	0
Dumfries and Galloway	1	Moray	0
East Ayrshire	1	Na h-Eileanan Siar	0
East Lothian	1	West Dunbartonshire	0
East Renfrewshire	1	Outside Scotland	12
Falkirk	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>

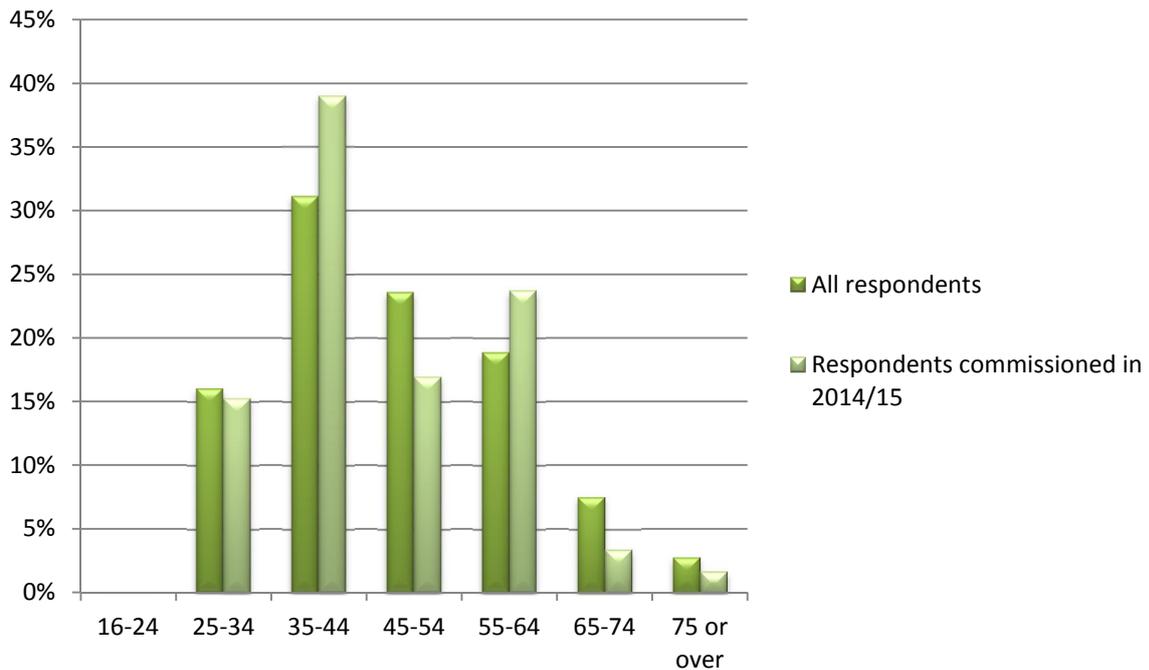
## 2.2 Age range

There were sizeable responses from most age ranges. The largest responses were from playwrights aged 35-44 and 45-54 (31% and 24% of the total respectively). Fewer responses were received from those at the youngest and oldest ends of the age range categories: no responses came from playwrights under 25 while respondents aged over 75 represented 3% of the total survey response.

Age range	Responses	%
16-24	0	0%
25-34	17	16%
35-44	33	31%
45-54	25	24%
55-64	20	19%
65-74	8	8%
75 or over	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100%</b>

When the age range analysis is applied only to respondents who were commissioned to write plays in 2014/15, the overall spread is similar. Those aged 35-44 and 55-64 become proportionally better represented, however, with the other age ranges slightly less well represented.

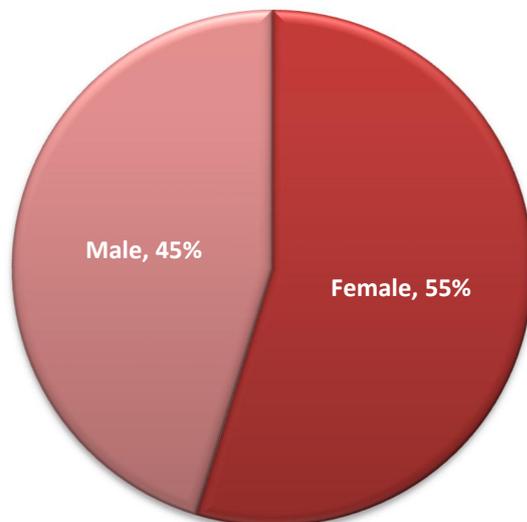
**Chart: Age ranges of respondents**



### 2.3 Gender

55% of respondents were female and 45% male.

**Chart: Respondents by gender**



When analysis of gender was applied only to those who had received commissions within or outside Scotland in 2014/15, the distribution was marginally more evenly split: 53% were female and 47% male.

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they are transgender. 106 respondents answered the question: one is, two preferred not to say, and 103 are not.

## 2.4 LGBT

Of 106 respondents who provided such information, 14 (13%) described themselves as LGBT, 89 (84%) said they are not LGBT and three (3%) preferred not to say.

## 2.5 Ethnicity

93% of the survey sample are white: 60% consider their ethnicity to be white Scottish, 22% white British, 4% white Irish, and 8% any other white ethnic group (i.e. a white ethnic group that was not specified in the survey ethnicity headings).

3% of respondents are Indian Scottish or Indian British.

One respondent is black (Black Scottish or Black British).

The three remaining respondents detailed their ethnicity descriptions under the headings 'any other Asian ethnic group', 'any mixed or multiple ethnic groups' and 'any other ethnic group'.

Ethnic group	Number	%
White Scottish	64	60%
White British	23	22%
Any other white ethnic group	8	8%
White Irish	4	4%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	3	3%
Any other Asian ethnic group	1	1%
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	1	1%
Any mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1	1%
Any other ethnic group	1	1%

The ethnic diversity of the survey sample is broadly in line with the general Scottish population. The 2011 Census found that 96% of the population is white and marginally less than 3% are Asian. No other ethnic group makes up more than 1% of Scotland's population.

## 2.6 Disability

106 respondents responded to a question asking if they considered themselves to have a disability. Five (5%) preferred not to say, six (6%) said they have a disability and 95 (90%) said they do not have a disability.

### 3. Commissions within Scotland

#### 3.1 Scottish commission and contract types

67 out of 129 respondents (52%) said they were commissioned by theatres or organisations based in Scotland to write plays in 2014/15.

Eight of the 67 respondents who said they received Scottish commissions did not progress beyond this question in the survey. The numbers of commissions detailed below therefore apply only to the 59 respondents who went on to provide such information (32 of which are female, 27 male).

120 individual playwriting commissions were received across a broad range of Scottish-based theatres and organisations in 2014/15.<sup>2</sup>

Taking into account replies where the respondent did not specify what the commissioning organisation was, the survey indicates they received 152 Scottish commissions in 2014/15.

The table below details commission types from the 59 respondents receiving Scottish commissions who provided information about them:

**Table: types of Scottish commissions and contracts, 2014/15**

Type of commission	Number of commissions	% of commissions	Number who received at least one commission of this type	% of 59 who received a Scottish commission with at least one commission of this type
Professional FST/SSP contract	60	39%	36	61%
A Play, A Pie and A Pint licence/contract	22	14%	20	34%
Radio commission	14	9%	8	14%
Other professional, industry-recognised contract	11	7%	10	17%
Film or television commission	10	7%	6	10%
Non-professional contract	8	5%	7	12%
'Seed' commission	7	5%	7	12%
Self-commission	7	5%	7	12%
Other	13	9%	12	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

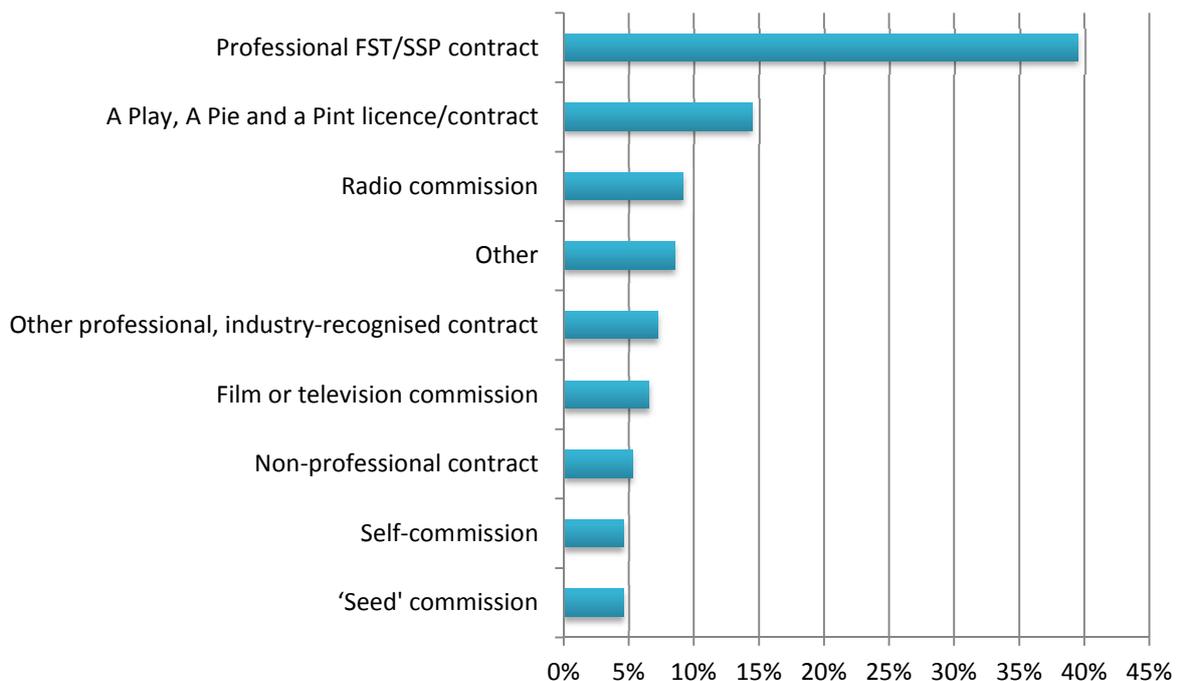
Scottish commissions were most commonly 'professional FST/SSP contracts': 39% of commissions were identified as such by respondents, while 61% of those who received a Scottish commission had at least one of this kind in 2014/15.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 for details

A Play, A Pie and A Pint licences and contracts were also commonly taken up by survey respondents: these represented 14% of all commissions, while a third of playwrights who received a Scottish commission had at least one such contract in 2014/15.

There were a variety of other types of contracts and commissions in Scotland in 2014/15, as illustrated in the following chart:

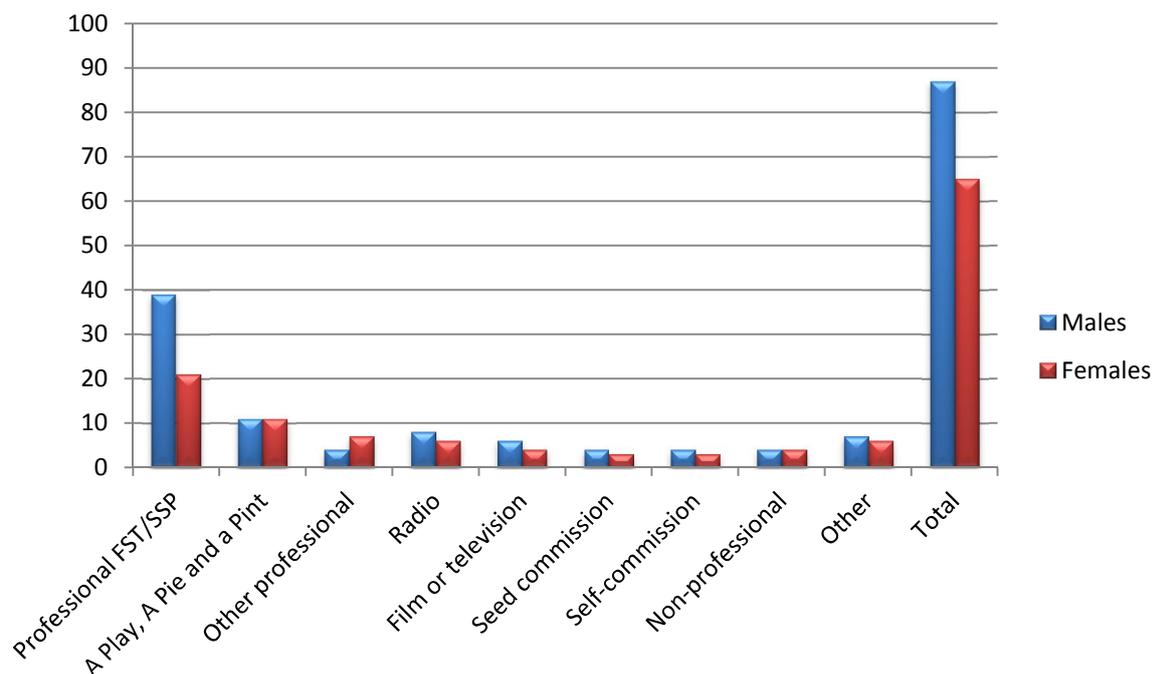
**Chart: Scottish commissions by contract type, 2014/15**



Men received more Scottish commissions than women within our survey sample: of the 152 commissions identified by contract type above, 87 (57%) went to men and 65 (43%) to women.

The chart below shows 2014/15 Scottish commissions by gender. With one clear exception, similar numbers of each type of commission went to men and women. The exception is professional FST/SSP contracts: of the 60 which were identified in the survey, 39 (65%) went to men and 21 (35%) to women.

**Chart: Scottish commissions by contract type and gender, 2014/15**



### 3.2 Scottish commission lengths

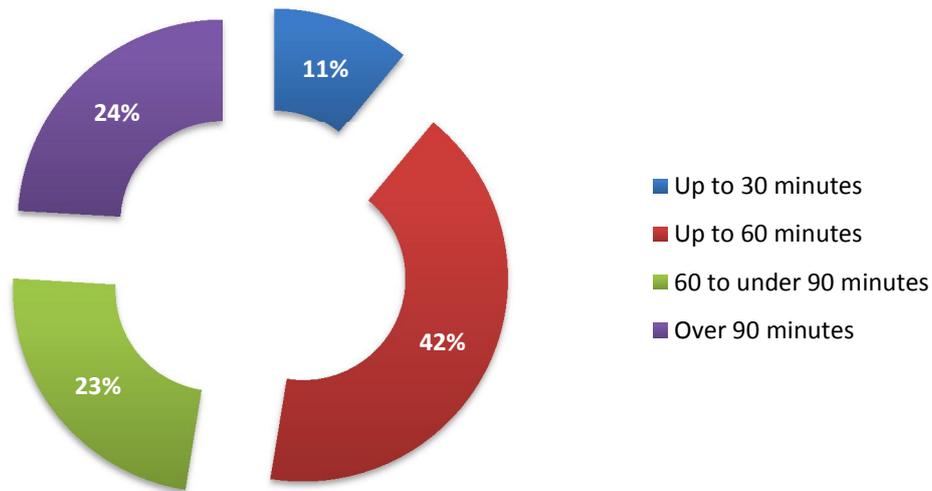
Respondents gave information about at least 137 (see footnote 3 below) commissions in Scotland according to Scottish Society of Playwrights bandings as follows:

Length	Commissions	%
Up to 30 minutes	15	11%
Up to 60 minutes	57	42%
60 to under 90 minutes	32	23%
Over 90 minutes	33	24%
Total <sup>3</sup>	137	100%

The most common category of Scottish commission length was ‘up to 60 minutes’, which made up 42% of the total. Marginally less than a quarter of Scottish commissions were ‘60 to under 90 minutes’ and a similar proportion were ‘over 90 minutes’. 11% of Scottish commissions were ‘up to 30 minutes’.

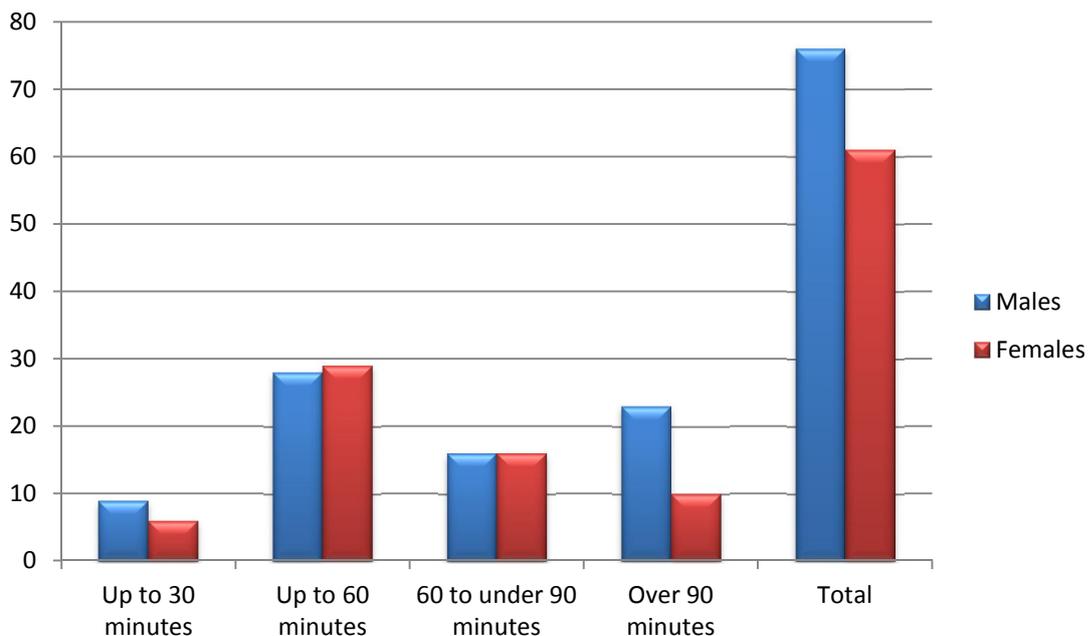
<sup>3</sup> One respondent was commissioned to write ‘five or more’ plays of 60 to 90 minutes. Another response showed a respondent was commissioned to write ‘five or more’ plays of over 90 minutes. The totals and percentages given assume the number of commissions to be five of each type because the specific number was not identified.

**Chart: Scottish commission lengths, 2014/15**



The chart below shows Scottish commission lengths by gender. Of the 137 commissions identified in this way, 76 (55%) went to men and 61 (45%) to women. Survey responses suggest that females received more short commissions than men (60% of commissions up to 30 minutes went to women) while men were commissioned to write more long plays (70% of commissions over 90 minutes went to men).

**Chart: Scottish commission lengths by gender, 2014/15**



### 3.3 Commissions: LGBT, BAME and Disability

Of the 59 respondents commissioned to write plays in 2014/15 who answered the equalities monitoring questions:

- Nine (15.3%) said they are LGBT (and one preferred not to say)
- Two (3.4%) said their ethnic group or background is non-white
- Two (3.4%) said they consider themselves to have a disability (and three preferred not to say)

Cautionary note: the numbers of commissioned respondents identifying themselves as either non-white or disabled are so low that conclusions about representativeness should not be drawn on the basis of this information alone. Also, it should be noted that inconsistencies in the way respondents answered survey questions are clear: for example, while non-white respondents identified only two commissions by contract type, the same respondents identified at least seven commissions when giving information about commission lengths.

Out of 152 commissions identified by commission/contract type (see table in section 3.1):

- 31 (20.4%) went to respondents who said they are LGBT
- Two (1.3%) went to respondents who identified their ethnicity as non-white
- Five (3.3%) went to respondents who said they have a disability

Out of 137 commissions identified by length of commission (see table in section 3.2):

- 21 (15.3%) went to respondents who said they are LGBT
- At least<sup>4</sup> seven (5.1%) went to respondents who identified their ethnicity as non-white
- Five (3.6%) went to respondents who said they have a disability

### 3.4 Scottish co-written commissions

Eleven of the commissions in Scotland were co-written, which is 7%-9% of the total.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> One of the non-white respondents said they were commissioned to write 'five or more' plays of over 90 minutes

<sup>5</sup> Eleven co-written productions is: 7% of the count of 152 that includes those where the respondent did not identify the commissioning organisation; 9% of the 120 identified by name in response to another survey question; 8% of the 137 detailed according to production length banding

## 4. Commissions outside Scotland

### 4.1 Locations of non-Scottish commissions

19 respondents (16%) were commissioned to write plays by theatres or organisations based outside Scotland in 2014/15. Of these respondents, 10 are female and nine are male.

Respondents specified 29 individual playwriting commissions (18 for men and 11 for women) they received from non-Scottish organisations and venues in 2014/15 – 22 from England, two from the United States, and one each from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Italy.<sup>6</sup>

### 4.2 Lengths of non-Scottish commissions

Information provided by respondents about their non-Scottish commissions according to the following bandings suggests there were at least 36 of them in 2014/15:

Length	Commissions	%
Up to 30 minutes	9	25%
Up to 60 minutes	9	25%
60 to under 90 minutes	5	14%
Over 90 minutes	13	36%
Total <sup>7</sup>	36	100%

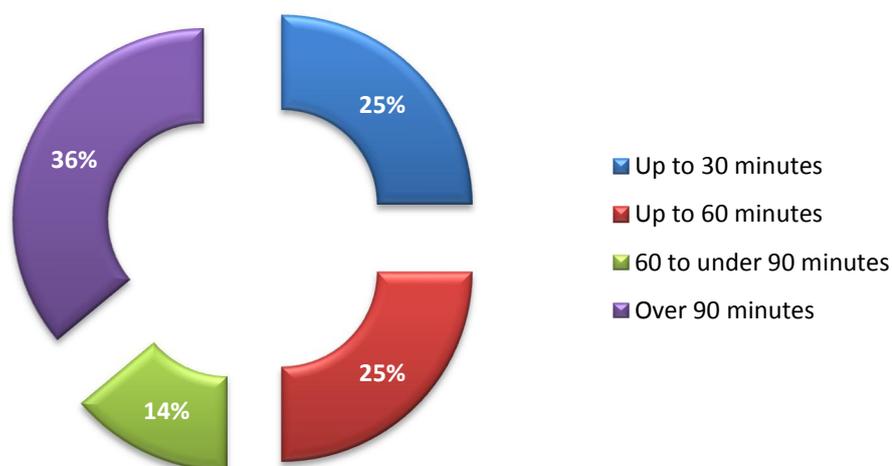
The most common category of non-Scottish commission length was 'over 90 minutes', which made up 36% of the total. A quarter were 'up to 30 minutes' and another quarter were 'up to 60 minutes', while 14% were '60 to under 90 minutes'.

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 2

<sup>7</sup> One respondent was commissioned to write 'five or more' plays of over 90 minutes. The total and percentage given assume the number of commissions to be five because the specific number was not identified.

**Chart: Non-Scottish commission lengths, 2014/15**



#### **4.3 Non-Scottish co-written commissions**

Two of the non-Scottish commissions identified in the survey were co-written, which is 6%-7% of the total.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.4 Translated non-Scottish commissions**

Three of the non-Scottish commissions were translated into another language, which is 8-10% of the total.<sup>9</sup>

### **5. Productions**

Among our survey sample of 116 respondents who provided responses to these questions:

57 playwrights (49%) wrote at least 98 new plays that were produced in Scotland in 2014/15.<sup>10</sup>

32 (56%) of the playwrights whose new work was produced in Scotland in 2014/15 are female and 25 (44%) are male.

52 (53%) of the 98 new plays produced in Scotland were written by a female and 46 (47%) by a male.

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<sup>8</sup> Two co-written productions is: 6% of the 29 identified by name in response to one survey question; 7% of the 36 detailed according to production length banding

<sup>9</sup> Percentages calculated on the same basis as footnote above

<sup>10</sup> Two respondents had 'five or more' new plays produced in Scotland in 2014/15, so the total number of new plays could be higher than 98

21 playwrights (18%) wrote 21 new plays produced outside Scotland in 2014/15.

17 (81%) of the playwrights whose new plays were produced outside Scotland in 2014/15 are female and four (19%) are male.

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34 playwrights (29%) had at least 62 second or subsequent productions produced in Scotland in 2014/15.<sup>11</sup>

12 (35%) of the playwrights with second or subsequent productions produced in Scotland in 2014/15 are female and 22 (65%) are male.

25 (40%) of the 62 second or subsequent productions were written by a female and 37 (60%) by a male.

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29 playwrights (25%) had at least 68 second or subsequent productions produced outside Scotland in 2014/15.<sup>12</sup>

10 (34%) of the playwrights with second or subsequent productions produced outside Scotland are female and 19 (66%) are male.

18 (26%) of the 68 second or subsequent productions produced outside Scotland were written by females and 50 (74%) by males.

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23 playwrights (20%) said they had written plays originally produced in Scotland that went on to tour beyond Scotland in 2014/15. Countries visited by Scottish productions in that year include England, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, United States, Canada, New Zealand, China, India, Brazil, Jamaica, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Trinidad.

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<sup>11</sup> Two respondents had 'five or more' second or subsequent productions produced in Scotland in 2014/15, so the total number could be higher than 62

<sup>12</sup> Five respondents had 'five or more' second or subsequent productions produced outside Scotland in 2014/15, so the total number could be higher than 68

## **6. A little more about respondents' work**

113 respondents provided the following information about their work:

17 (15%) said they had plays published in 2014/15.

19 (17%) worked as writers on devised shows in 2014/15.

22 (19%) were employed as dramaturgs in 2014/15.

110 (97%) write in English, 38 (34%) in Scots and five (4%) in Gaelic. Two writers specified other languages they write in, namely French and Croatian.

Seven (6%) translated plays in 2014/15. They translated plays into English from Russian, German, Italian and Quebecois; into Scots from Quebecois; and into Gaelic from English.

56 (50%) said they had presented work as a 'work in progress' in 2014/15:

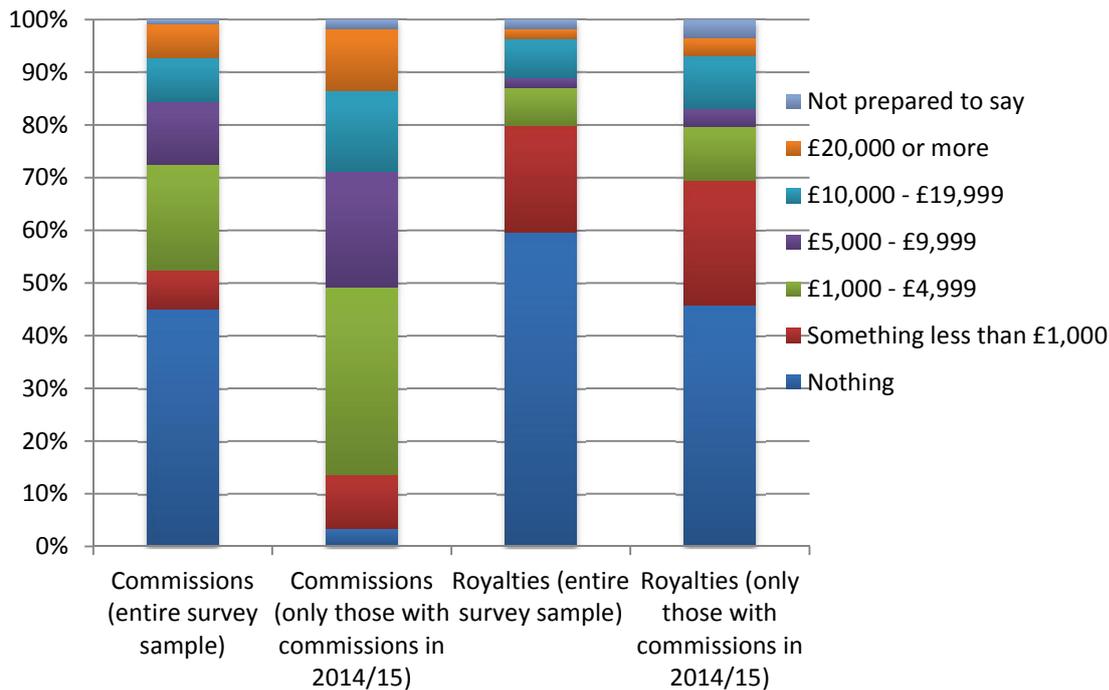
- 41 respondents (36%) said they had presented 66 pieces of work as rehearsed readings.
- 33 respondents (29%) said they had presented 48 pieces of work as scratch or platform performances with some staging.
- Six respondents (5%) said they had presented 12 pieces of work as some 'other' kind of work in progress performance.

## **7. Playwriting as a source of income**

Respondents were asked to provide approximate information and data relating to their 2014/15 earnings from: playwriting; associated activities such as mentoring and dramaturgy; grants, bursaries and residencies; other arts employment; and non-arts employment.

Broad earnings categories (nothing at all; something less than £1,000; £1,000-£4,999; £5,000-£9,999; £10,000-£19,999; and £20,000 or more) were designed to gather insights into approximate earnings from a range of types of employment without over-burdening respondents with details and complexity, nor excessively prying into their private finances.

**Chart: Earnings from playwriting commissions and royalties, 2014/15**



The chart above breaks down respondents' playwriting earnings in 2014/15 into commissions and royalties, and compares the responses of the entire survey sample against only those who said they were commissioned to write a play or plays in 2014/15.

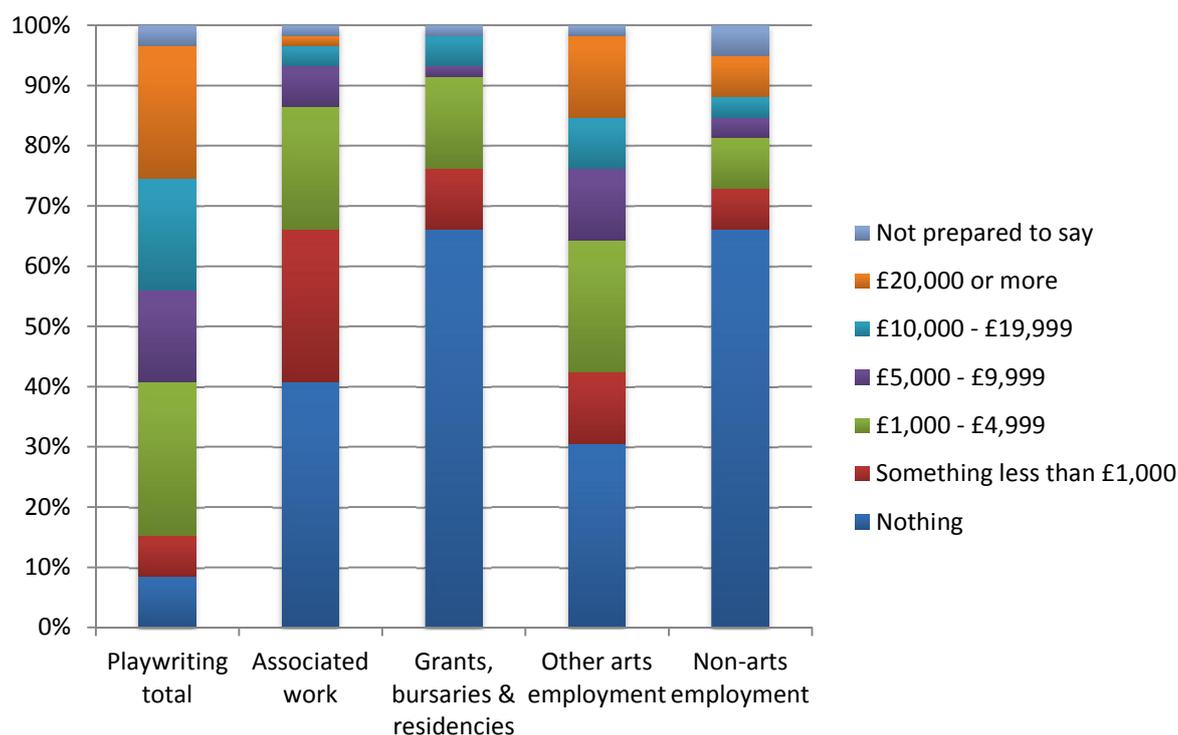
It shows that, for most respondents, commissions provided higher income levels than royalties. Of the entire survey sample, 80% earned less than £1,000 from royalties (60% earned nothing at all, 20% something less than £1,000) compared with 52% who earned less than £1,000 from commissions (45% nothing at all, 7% something less than £1,000).

The comparison of responses across the entire survey sample against only those respondents who were commissioned to write plays in 2014/15 demonstrates the impact that 'non-active' playwrights could have on earnings analyses. Given that almost 48% of respondents said they were not commissioned to write any plays in 2014/15, it is unsurprising that a similar proportion (45%) of survey respondents said they did not earn anything from commissions in the same financial year.

The following earnings analysis therefore focuses only on information and data provided by respondents commissioned to write plays in 2014/15. It is also worth highlighting that for the rest of this section all straight playwriting earnings (commissions, royalties, competitions, etc.) are grouped together under a single 'playwriting' heading.

The chart below provides an illustrative overview of responses to the earnings questions.

**Chart: Playwrights' earnings across a range of employment categories, commissioned respondents 2014/15**



### 7.1 Some observations:

8% said they earned nothing at all from playwriting (i.e. commissions, royalties, competitions and the like). It is unclear whether this is due to respondents working for nothing, payment being received in other financial years, respondents being inconsistent in answering questions, or some other reason.

56% earned more than £5,000 from playwriting, 41% more than £10,000 and 22% more than £20,000.

Other arts employment appears to play the biggest role in topping up active playwrights' earnings: almost 70% earned something from employment of this kind and 22% said they earned over £10,000 from this type of work in 2014/15.

### 7.2 Median earnings analysis

The broad earnings response categories in the survey make it impossible to assess individuals' total earnings. It is possible, however, to project the minimum and 'maximum' possible earnings of an individual according to their responses (up to a 'maximum' of 'more than £20,000'). For example, a response of 'something less than £1,000' was replaced with £1 to project minimum earnings and by £999 to project 'maximum' earnings.

The table below shows the minimum and maximum possible median earnings (i.e. the point at which half of respondents earned more and half earned less) of respondents who were commissioned to write plays in 2014/15:

**Table: Minimum and maximum median earnings bands (respondents with commissions in 2014/15)**

	£5,000 to £9,999	£10,000 to £19,999	£20,000 or more
<b>Playwriting</b>	■ Min ■ Max		
<b>Playwriting + associated activities</b>	■ Min	■ Max	
<b>Playwriting + associated activities + grants, etc</b>	■ Min	■ Max	
<b>Playwriting + associated activities + grants, etc + other arts employment</b>		■ Min	■ Max
<b>All earnings, including non-arts-based employment</b>		■ Min	■ Max

### 7.3 Conclusions about playwriting as a source of income

For most of Scotland's active playwrights, income from playwriting alone is insufficient to sustain them: median earnings (i.e. the earnings of the 'average' playwright) fall in the £5,000 to £9,999 range.

When each of the respondents' earnings responses are individually projected according to their minimum and 'maximum' levels it becomes clear that other forms of work are important in supplementing the incomes of Scottish playwrights. Minimum median earnings are in the range of £10,000 to £19,999 and maximum median earnings exceed £20,000 when these are taken into account.

The above earnings figures may sound low and they should therefore be treated with caution. As the Office for National Statistics states, '*Self-employment income is generally underestimated in surveys since their income generally comes from a wide variety of different sources which can be difficult to recall exactly*'<sup>13</sup>. ONS surveys found that median self-employed income was £207 per week, which is around £10,700 per year, in 2012/13.

## 8. Agreed rates of pay

59 respondents who said they had been commissioned to write plays in 2014/15 and felt the question was applicable to them gave insights into the extent to which they were achieving Scottish Society of Playwrights/Federation of Scottish Theatre agreed rates of pay:

<sup>13</sup> *Self-employed workers in the UK, 2014*, [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

42% of respondents said they received Scottish Society of Playwrights/Federation of Scottish Theatres agreed rates of pay, while 58% said they did not receive agreed pay rates.

On further analysis, it appears that some assumed the SSP/FST rates to be the rate for full commissions and that A Play, A Pie and A Pint rates were therefore in breach of an agreement since they received a lower rate. In fact A Play, A Pie and A Pint pays a rate separately agreed by SSP.

14 out of the 33 respondents who said they did not achieve SSP/FST agreed rates for all playwriting work had received A Play, A Pie and A Pint contracts. Explanatory comments from 12 of these playwrights shows that these performances are indeed at least partly responsible for the low proportion who said they received agreed pay rates:

- *I was paid commensurately with those rates with the exception of the seed commission/work-in-progress showing and also my Play Pie Pint script, which were at lower rates.*
- *PPP rates are fixed below SSP rates*
- *Not Oran Mor but they've got an opt out don't they?*
- *Play, Pie and Pint pays substantially less.*
- *Oran Mor Classic Cut adaptations £850 (inc royalty)*
- *Play, Pie Pint pays well under the SSP/FST rates*
- *Oran Mor was...whatever they pay, sorry, can't remember*
- *Play, Pie and a Pint*
- *The PPP does pay these rates as far as I'm aware and two of my plays were commission and performed there.*
- *a Play, a Pie and a Pint paid the standard agreed licence fee but all other contracts were SSP/FST*
- *Play Pie and Pint is the only one that makes this a 'No'.*
- *The Oran Mor was on the Play Pie and Pint contract and so lower than these figures.*

The agreed question was badly worded. For a full list of companies and organisations that commissioned playwrights in 2014/2015 see Appendix 1.

Explanatory comments from respondents revealed some key themes around agreed rates of pay:

In some cases the nature of the work meant writers were content not to seek such rates:

- *My twitter play work was essentially free. I also did a lot of referendum writing which was free.*

Others who worked for less than the agreed rates did so because they felt it was necessary to gain opportunities to work and develop their writing:

- *I think that most playwrights (myself included) do / would work for less than agreed rates - there's the incentive of development / wanting to get work on etc. It's a bit of a slippery slope.*
- *I budgeted for a fee but decided the cash was better spent on paying professional rates to professionals... In future applications I will be including the minimum fee for myself as playwright since everything I've done to develop plays has been speculative... [This development] was key to feeling confident enough - as a playwright. I now have enough evaluation and feedback to move forward, and I sincerely hope - get a fee.*

Some respondents said the rate they were paid was dependent on the work's success at generating income and keeping costs down:

- *Profit share production*
- *Commission was for writing and production. I was paid after all other costs were met*

Others pointed to the fact that devised shows can lead to writers achieving rates of pay lower than those agreed by SSP and FST:

- *The idea that [making a devised show in a group] is somehow less work than writing a play is a myth that we need to shatter.*
- *As it was devised/collaborative/community-based - there seems less clear-cut rate of pays for this kind of script/work*

## **9. Professional development opportunities**

Respondents were asked whether they had undertaken any of the following professional development opportunities in 2014/15. It should be noted that slightly different numbers of respondents answered each question:

- 23 out of 102 (23%) had undertaken mentoring-based development
- 19 out of 101 (19%) had undertaken dramaturgy-based development
- 20 out of 102 (20%) had taken part in a residency or attachment to an organisation
- 18 out of 101 (18%) had participated in a writers' retreat
- 30 out of 104 (29%) had used a bursary or grant to develop their work

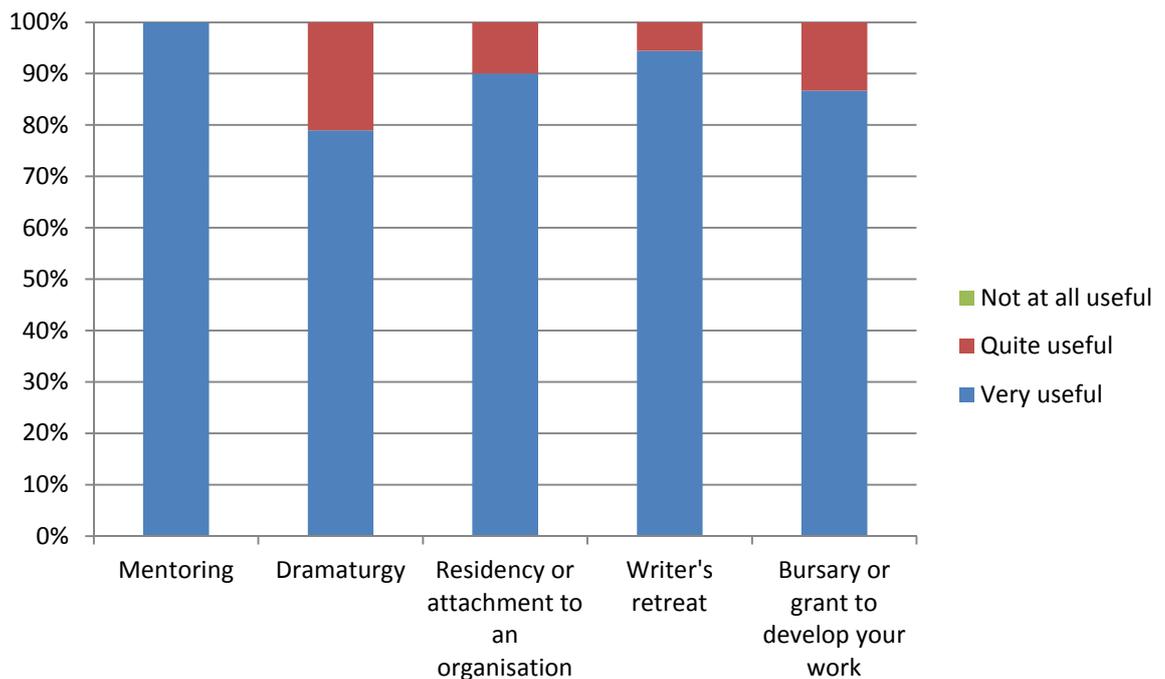
Those who had used them could then rate these opportunities 'very useful', 'quite useful' or 'not at all useful'

The chart below shows that, among those who accessed these professional development opportunities, mentoring appears to have been the most highly regarded. All 23 respondents who participated in such programmes in 2014/15 considered the experience to be 'very useful'

Writers' retreats, residencies/organisational attachments and dramaturgy opportunities were each accessed by similar numbers of respondents – 18, 20 and 19 respectively. The vast majority rated these experiences 'very useful', although the proportion was lower for dramaturgy (80%) than for writers' retreats (95%) and residencies/attachment to an organisation (90%). All other respondents rated these opportunities 'quite useful'.

Bursaries and grants were accessed by 29% of the sample in 2014/15 and it was the single most commonly accessed category of professional development opportunities. 87% rated grants and bursaries 'very useful' for their professional development, with the remainder considering them 'quite useful'.

**Chart: Professional development opportunities' usefulness, 2014/15**



Ten respondents provided details about 'other' professional development opportunities they undertook in 2014/15. Nine of these were rated 'very useful' and one 'quite useful':

- *TWR residency + IETM self-funded (with support from TWR)*
- *Rehearsed reading*
- *I teach and practise a form of meditation*

- *Use of space at Playwrights Studio Scotland*
- *I have not worked with a dramaturg, but I have worked a lot with a choreographer and dancers and I find that incredibly useful for the rest of my work*
- *I'm in a group of writers who support each other in terms of development and dramaturgy. We use Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process to offer each other feedback.*
- *I took myself away to Argyll for 3 weeks in October to write and it was very productive. I have close associates who have agreed to read my work and provide notes which I take seriously.*
- *Director course*
- *Creative Writing tutor at North Highland College/University of Highlands and Islands*
- *Writing workshops at The Tron Theatre, Glasgow*

## **9.1 Playwrights' Studio Scotland**

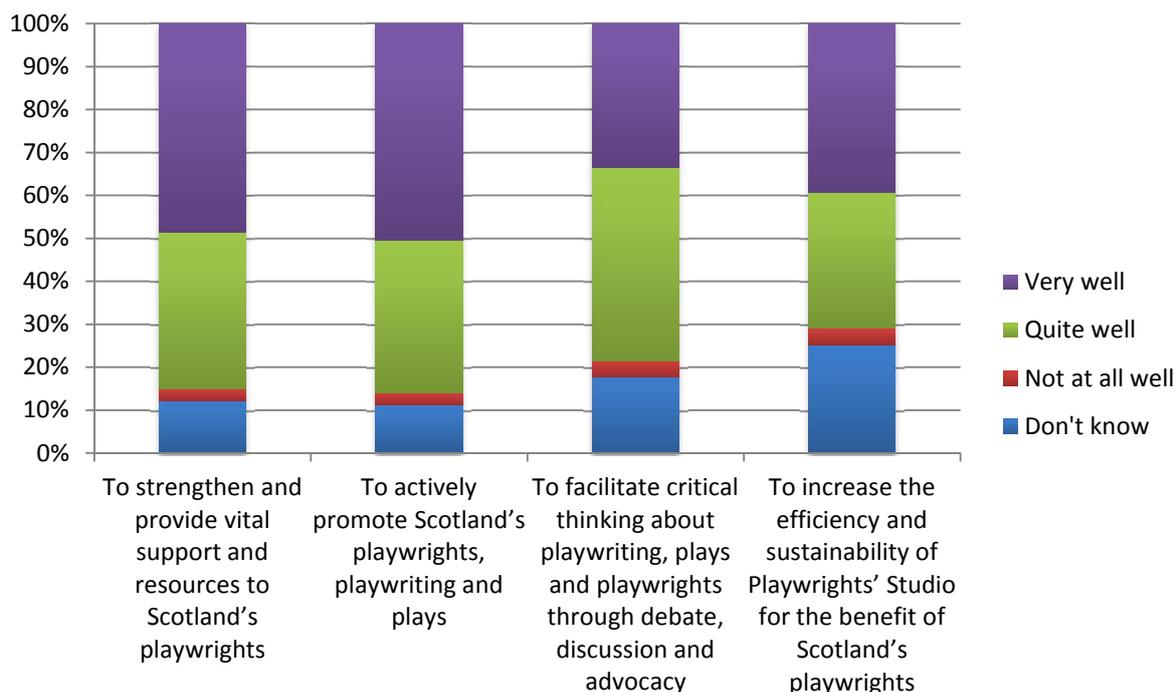
Playwrights' Studio, Scotland has four main aims. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they think it currently achieves these aims:

- To strengthen and provide vital support and resources to Scotland's playwrights
- To actively promote Scotland's playwrights, playwriting and plays
- To facilitate critical thinking about playwriting, plays and playwrights through debate, discussion and advocacy
- To increase the efficiency and sustainability of Playwrights' Studio for the benefit of Scotland's playwrights

For all four aims a significant majority (71%-86%) said Playwrights' Studio was doing 'quite' or 'very' well. Similarly, for each aim only 3%-4% felt it was not doing well.

However, the survey response does show a greater sense of confidence in Playwrights' Studio's success in relation to 'strengthening and providing vital support and resources' and 'actively promoting Scotland's playwrights' than for the other aims: around half said it is performing 'very well' in delivering these aims compared with 33% and 39% for 'facilitating critical thinking' and 'increasing the efficiency and sustainability of Playwrights' Studio'. This is largely accounted for by respondents who said they did not know the extent to which these aims were being achieved.

**Chart: How well Playwrights' Studio, Scotland is achieving its main aims**



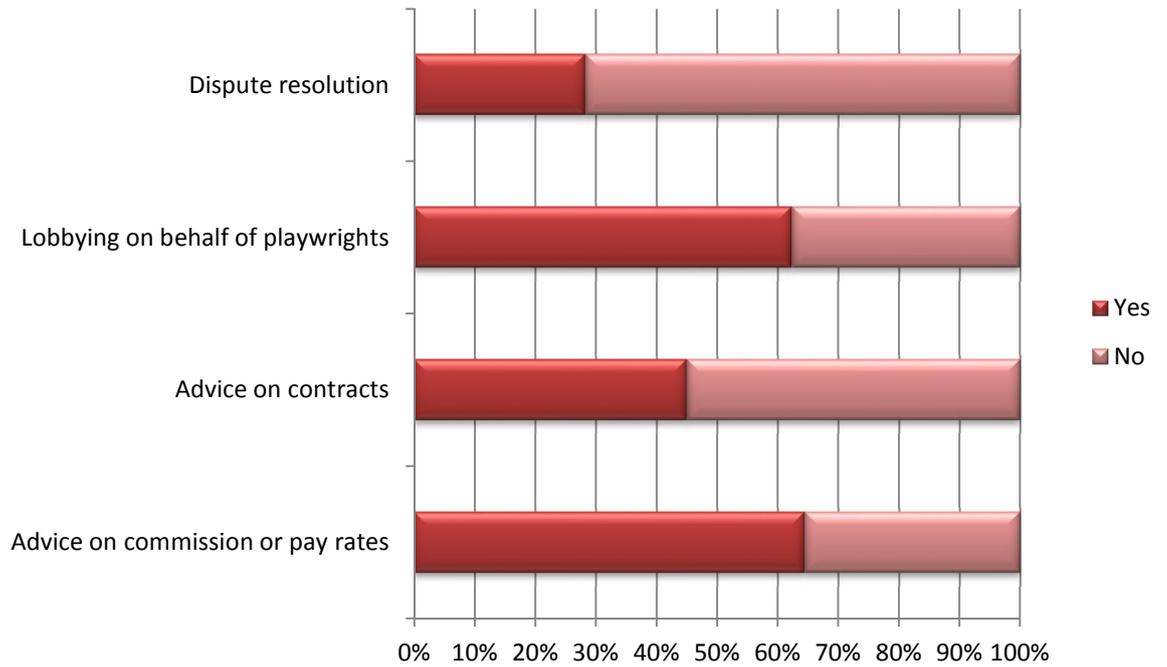
## 9.2 Scottish Society of Playwrights

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had benefited from any of the following from the Scottish Society of Playwrights:

- Advice on commission or pay rates
- Advice on contracts
- Lobbying on behalf of playwrights
- Dispute resolution

A majority of surveyed playwrights have benefited from Scottish Society of Playwrights advice on commission or pay rates (64%) and lobbying (62%). 45% have drawn on the society's expertise and support for contracts advice and 28% for dispute resolution.

**Chart: Has the Scottish Society of Playwrights benefited respondents in four key ways?**



## Appendix 1: 120 Scottish playwriting commissions

120 individual playwriting commissions were received across a broad range of Scottish-based theatres and organisations in 2014/15, detailed by respondents according to contract types as follows:

	Pro FST or SSP	Other Pro	PPP	Radio	Film or TV	Seed	Self-commission	Non-pro	Other	Total
Oran Mor (PPP)	1		10							11
BBC (BBC Scotland/Radio Scotland/Radio 4)				7	3					10
NTS	6					1			2	9
Traverse	4	1				2				7
Citizens Theatre	4	1								5
Glasgow Lunchtime Theatre			3							3
NTS/Citizens	3									3
Random Accomplice	2								1	3
Stellar Quines Edinburgh	3									3
Dundee Rep	1	1								2
Macrobert	2									2
Oran Mor/Traverse			2							2
Playwrights' Studio, Scotland	1	1								2
Scottish Opera		1							1	2
Tron	2									2
A Moment's Peace Theatre Company							1			1
African Caribbean Cultures Glasgow / Glasgow Life									1	1
Arts In Motion (Creative Scotland development grant)							1			1
Asylon Theatre	1									1
BBC Writersroom/Traverse Theatre						1				1
BBC/Endor productions (London)					1					1
Beacon Youth Theatre								1		1
Capital arts at Summerhall						1				1
Catherine Bailey Ltd for BBC Radio 4				1						1
Catherine Wheels	1									1
Company Chordelia		1								1
Creative Scotland							1			1

Eden Court	1								1
Fire Exit								1	1
Frozen Charlotte	1								1
Grinagog Theatre Company	1								1
Horsecross Arts	1								1
James Anthony Pearson/Creative Scotland								1	1
Just Festival (funded by Scottish Government)								1	1
Lemon Tree, Aberdeen	1								1
Lou Brodie (for Imagine)								1	1
Lung Ha	1								1
Magnetic North	1								1
Mull Theatre	1								1
Nutshell Theatre		1							1
Occasionally Cabaret	1								1
Oran Mor (lunchtime theatre)	1								1
Oran Mor Classic Cut			1						1
Oran Mor/Aberdeen Performing Arts			1						1
Oran mor/Traverse/Aberdeen Performing Arts			1						1
Out of the Blue Arts and Education Trust/West Lothian Council								1	1
Pachamama Productions		1							1
Penny Dreadful Films					1				1
Pitlochry Festival Theatre	1								1
Playpieces lunchtime theatre							1		1
Right Lines Productions/Creative Scotland	1								1
Rothesay Pavilion/Achievement Bute								1	1
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland								1	1
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland/Playwrights' Studio, Scotland	1								1
Royal Lyceum	1								1
Scottish Dark Sky Observatory/The New Club, Edinburgh								1	1
Sell A Door									1
Sleeping Warrior Theatre Company							1		1
Solar Bear									1

Sounds festival, Aberdeen									1	1
South Lanarkshire Council	1									1
Strangetown								1		1
sweet venues edinburgh for a fringe show this year									1	1
Tiger Aspect					1					1
Toonspeak	1									1
Tortoise in a Nutshell	1									1
University of Edinburgh	1									1
Unlimited		1								1
Visible Fictions	1									1
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>120</b>

## Appendix 2: Non-Scottish commissions

Commissioning organisation	Country
Artangel	England
BBC one drama	England
BBC Three/BBC Two co-commission	England
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry	England
Birdsnest Theatre Co.	England
English Stage Company (Royal Court), England, one full play commission, one ten minute play commission	England
Filter Theatre Company, London	England
Greyscale Theatre Company	England
Kenny Wax Productions	England
National Theatre Connections	England
National Theatre of Great Britain	England
Northern Stage, England. One	England
Old Vic Theatre Company, London	England
Royal Court	England
Royal Court Theatre	England
Sella A Door Theatre Co., London. 1 work	England
Sixteen Films, screenplay commission (funding from Creative Scotland)	England
Space 2	England
Unlimited theatre	England
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds	England
Writers Guild/Central School of Speech and Drama	England
young vic theatre, london	England
armadillo, rho italy	Italy
Field Day Theatre Company, Northern Ireland. One	Northern Ireland
National Theatre of Norway, Oslo	Norway
Abbey Theatre, Republic of Ireland. One.	Republic of Ireland
goldin+senneby, sweden	Sweden
Pepperdine university	USA

