

Ref: GM/JH

5 May 2021

Paschal Donohoe TD
Minister for Finance
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2

Dear Minister Donohoe

I am writing to you on behalf of our members in the games sector in Ireland. As you may be aware Game Workers Unite Ireland, the trade union for those working in games, is a branch of the Financial Services Union.

We are keen to engage with you on behalf of our members in this sector. In respect of the tax incentive, Digital Gaming Sector Tax Credit which we understand is planned to be introduced and is stated to be similar to Section 481, Tax Credit for Film, Television and Animation, that is currently under consideration.

My colleague, John O'Connell raised this issue with the Tánaiste and separately with you previously.

As you will be aware one aspect of the section 481 tax incentive specifically relates to the maintenance and provision of 'quality employment'. Recent changes suggest employers will have to undertake a signed statement to this effect to be able to avail of this incentive.

The FSU would welcome this change and would like to see a similar position adopted for the games sector.

We would like to discuss with you the nature/definition of quality employment to ensure it includes a focus on eliminating low pay in the sector, providing secure contracts of direct employment, giving proper pension provision and supporting employer engagement with trade unions.

We have previously released a report on working conditions in the sector, available [here](#), that highlighted a number of worrying issues, including that:

- 64% of respondents have experienced low pay in the games sector in Ireland and 17% of respondents have experienced missed payments, while 45% note working unpaid overtime
- 55.5% of respondents have been required to work crunch time (overtime, often unpaid, towards the end of a project/deadline or near game release) in their jobs.
- 62% of survey respondents do not have secure employment contracts, while 43% of respondents note experiencing frequent job instability, including through lay-offs and impermanent contract status.
- 12% have experienced harassment and/or intimidation based on their gender, ethnicity, age, or sexuality. Furthermore, experiences of discrimination came in the form of interpersonal relations (20%), working conditions (10%), workloads (8.5%), pay and bonuses (8.5%) and more.

Positively, 65% of respondents want the support of an organised community of workers and 63.5% are interested in collective bargaining to improve wage standards. It is clear from the survey results that the rewards of the sector are not being shared equally and any state support should be linked to addressing this in tandem with developing this key sector.

Game development is an international industry and without the cultivation of decent quality employment in Ireland, our sector risks losing its best talent to international markets potentially negating the benefits of investment and incentives in the sector.

We are currently conducting a pay transparency report which we are happy to share with you.

We are happy to meet at a time of your convenience and look forward to positive engagement on this important sector of the economy.

Kind regards

Gareth Murphy
Head of Industrial Relations and Campaigns

Cc: Leo Varadkar, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media