



Lancaster University
Management School

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The Looking Glass

Mental health in the UK film, TV and cinema industry

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The Work Foundation wishes to extend our thanks to all industry workers who participated in the Looking Glass Survey and interviews, often discussing difficult and distressing experiences.

We also wish to thank members of the Industry Forum; Heads of Department, HR Directors and industry experts who spoke candidly about the challenges they have encountered and were constructive in their approach.

All of your insights and ideas have been invaluable in shaping this research.

Executive Summary

The success of film, TV and cinema in the UK is driven by the imagination, expertise and hard work of people working within the industry.

Against a context of growing concerns about the mental health of the UK workforce generally and the working culture and practices of this industry particularly, the Film and TV Charity commissioned the Work Foundation to understand more about the perspectives and experiences of those working behind the camera. The work sought to assess the prevalence of mental health problems; explore whether there are particular challenges associated with working life in film, TV and cinema; and consider how people working in the industry could be better supported to manage their mental health.

We conducted a survey, the Looking Glass, which received 9,399 responses, of which 4,877 responses included enough demographic information to enable detailed cross-sectional analysis. The high levels of engagement with the survey are a testament to the rising tide of feeling about this issue within film, TV and cinema.

The results make for sombre reading. Prevalence of mental health problems is higher among people working within this industry than across the UK.

87% of our Looking Glass survey respondents had experienced a mental health problem at some point in their lives compared with 65% across the UK (MHF, 2017).

64% of respondents had experienced depression compared with 42% of us nationally (MHF, 2017)

People working in film, TV and cinema had significantly lower levels of subjective wellbeing than national averages.

24% of respondents had deliberately harmed themselves. This is much higher than the national average of 7% (APMS, 2016).

More than half of the sample, 55%, had contemplated taking their own life, compared with 20% of people nationally (APMS, 2016). In addition, 10% of Looking Glass survey respondents reported that they had attempted to end their life. This compares with 7% nationally.

This ground-breaking new research has uncovered a series of underlying factors which may be contributing to this. These include industry culture, working conditions, and limited capability to provide workers with the support they need.



Two thirds
of Film and TV workers
have experienced
depression

compared with
two in five
people nationally



Conditions

Work is much more intense in this industry. 62% of workers in film, TV and cinema said work intensity negatively impacted their mental wellbeing.

People are more likely to work extremely long working hours: More than 1 in 8 in Film and TV work more than 60 hours per week (compared with 1 in 50 on average). The survey found that 57% of respondents felt that the lack of control they had over their working hours negatively impacted their mental health and wellbeing.

Work-life balance is a significant problem, preventing workers from taking care of their wellbeing through relaxing, exercising or spending time with friends and family. This was strongly associated with lower levels of wellbeing and experience of work-related stress.

There was a strong sense among Looking Glass survey respondents that work has become more intense over the past few years.

Culture

Incidence of bullying and intimidating behaviour within the industry is high (56%). This ranged from deeply personal criticism and humiliating jokes on a one-off basis to targeted abusive behaviour over an extended period.

The sense of competition within the industry is acute. This leaves workers feeling disposable and undervalued, and creates a barrier to forming trusting and meaningful professional relationships. There were many references to 'cliques' among respondents making Film and TV a difficult place to work for those who feel they don't belong. There are sharp power imbalances within the industry, which can create a culture in which it is difficult to speak out against inappropriate behaviour or to ask for help.

Outdated attitudes about mental health make it difficult for workers to get the support they need. 42% reported that fear of being judged had been a barrier to support, and 43% reported that they were worried they wouldn't be offered work if people knew they were experiencing a mental health problem.

66%
of freelancers
have considered
leaving
the industry due to
concerns over their mental
health and wellbeing

Capability

Many film and TV workers aren't getting the support they need to do their job well, and this is causing stress and difficulty at work. Respondents referred to a lack of recognition from their managers for the work they did. Several felt they received insufficient feedback on completed work, and many emphasised a tendency towards blame rather than constructive feedback or guidance.

- Two thirds of workers felt that people working on shows with vulnerable contributors receive insufficient support to manage their own mental wellbeing.
- More than half (55%) of workers felt those working with distressing or challenging content received insufficient support to manage their own wellbeing.
- Workers who have experienced mental health problems don't feel able to seek support within the industry, with just over one-third telling people they work with.
- Only 28% said that discussing their mental health problem at work had improved the situation; 54% said it made no difference and 5% said things became worse afterwards.

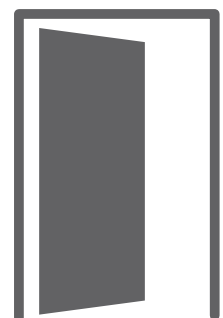
Despite the evident challenges in working conditions and culture in film, TV and cinema, many felt the industry lacks the capability to address these issues and provide workers with the support they need.

Workers at greater risk

The research found variations in results for some groups within film, TV and cinema.

In some cases, prevalence of self-reported mental health problems was higher, while in others, groups were exposed to factors such as extreme work intensity or insecurity, or workplace bullying, which are associated with experiences of workplace stress and low wellbeing:

- Freelancers
- Workers supporting vulnerable contributors
- Those working with distressing content
- Women
- Ethnic minority workers
- Disabled workers
- Lesbian, gay or bisexual workers
- People with caring responsibilities



Variation within the industry

Findings were remarkably consistent between sub-sectors and genres, with the most significant points of difference being between the industry and national benchmarks. However, we did see some variation within the survey data, and insights from the qualitative interviews have allowed us to explore where issues are more or less acute depending on an individual's role within the industry.

We have explored findings for the five sub-sectors in film, TV and cinema:

- Production and Development
- Post-production, VFX and Animation
- Broadcasting
- Distribution
- Exhibition

As well as for the following genres:

- Factual/Documentary
- News
- Sport
- Comedy
- Entertainment/Reality

Accessing support

Workers in this industry face barriers to getting the support they need to look after their mental wellbeing when they need it. These barriers are often characteristic of working life within this industry, including working patterns; industry attitudes towards mental health, and the capability of managers and senior staff to support their workers.

Government has committed to improve access to statutory mental health services, but there remains significant unmet need across the country. For example, 3 in 5 people experiencing a common mental health problem in England do not receive support (NHS, 2019).

We have identified four ways in which the industry's approach to workplace wellbeing could be improved:

- 1 Increasing and improving access to support, recognising the barriers faced by workers, and enhanced need amongst particular cohorts and those working in particular parts of the industry or working with vulnerable respondents or distressing content;
- 2 Building capability and capacity within the industry to improve workplace wellbeing, in particular amongst those with managerial responsibility, through enhanced access to training;
- 3 Changing behaviours: shifting expectations regarding acceptable workplace behaviour; challenging bullying and harassment and proactively tackling the stigma and risk associated with talking about a mental health problem at work;
- 4 Improving ways of working, recognising the distinct characteristics of work in the industry while striving to protect and improve worker wellbeing.

Shaping a movement for change

The scale of the challenge outlined within this paper calls for an industry-wide movement for change. While ambitious, the concerted effort outlined will bring tangible benefits for firms of all sizes within the industry.

There is a compelling case for getting this right. The cost to business of poor mental health is well evidenced; as is the return on investment associated with early intervention on workplace mental health. In an industry driven by talent, the finding that vast swathes of the existing workforce – particularly the diverse talent the industry is working so hard to attract – are considering leaving because of poor mental health is a serious and pressing concern.

Further, as Government and society increasingly look to business to act responsibly and better support the health and wellbeing of the workforce, there is an opportunity here for the film and TV industry to be seen as a leader on these issues in the UK economy – an example of good practice that others might seek to emulate.

Equipped with the insights captured through this research, it is vital the Film and TV Charity and wider screen industry collaborate to shape and build a movement for change.

To ensure the success of this programme, the industry should embrace the following key principles:

Shaping a movement for change

Equipped with insights captured through this research, the Film and TV Charity and wider screen industry should collaborate to shape and build a movement for change.



1. Industry-owned and industry-led

A movement developed by and for film, TV and cinema will be essential to deliver the changes the industry needs.



2. Shaped by lived experience

This movement should be continually informed by the lived experience of individuals who have experienced mental health problems while working in the industry.



3. Additive and complementary

This movement should aim to work alongside partners who are already delivering support, adding value by scaling up provision to widen reach and amplifying success stories.



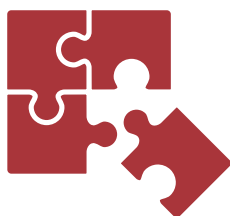
4. Sustainable and collaborative

A transformative and long-term programme of change underpinned by commitment and investment within the industry. The industry must act as a whole to drive real change in conditions, culture and capability.



5. Targeted and intersectional

This movement must reflect different working contexts within the industry as well as areas of need.



6. Holistic and multifaceted

The underlying causes of the mental health crisis in film and TV are interlinked in many ways, and so coordinated action will be needed across multiple areas.



7. Pioneering and evolutionary

This programme will require an openness to testing innovative approaches and willingness to consider whether models of good practice from other sectors and countries could be adapted to this context.

1. Introduction

Cost to Business = £42 to £45 Billion

c.£7bn Employee absence **c.£9bn** Staff turnover **£27bn to £29bn** presenteeism

The costs of mental ill health to UK businesses, calculated by Deloitte, 2020

The UK faces a significant and growing challenge around mental health (Stevenson & Farmer 2017). One in six adults in England experience mental health problems¹ such as anxiety, depression and stress in any given week (APMS 2016) and one in four experience mental health problems each year (APMS 2007). This has increased steadily since the early 2000s (McManus et al, 2016).

Mental ill health has a considerable impact on people's lives. Individuals experiencing poor mental health can find it hard to secure and sustain employment, with an estimated 300,000 people with a long-term mental health condition leaving work each year (Stevenson & Farmer 2017). They are also more likely to experience a physical health condition; those with severe and prolonged mental illness die on average 15 to 20 years younger (NICE 2019); and mental illness places people at higher risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour (Bradvik 2018).

Government spends £12.5 billion on mental health services each year (NHS 2019a) and in 2019 renewed its pledge to allocate an additional £2.3bn from the NHS budget to mental health by 2023/24, along with the expectation of increased emphasis on mental health conditions in local investment decisions (NHS 2019b, NHS 2015). Accounting for the costs of benefits and reduction in tax revenue, the cost of poor mental health to government is estimated at upwards of £25 billion per year (Stevenson & Farmer 2017).

“At a time when there is a national focus on productivity the inescapable conclusion is that it is massively in the interest of both employers and Government to prioritise and invest far more in improving mental health. The UK can ill-afford the productivity cost of this poor mental health.”

The Stevenson / Farmer review of mental health and employers (2017)

Alongside the human impact of poor mental health and its draw on the public purse, is a sizeable cost to business. Recent years have seen growing recognition of the impact mental health problems have on our working life, and of the role that good quality work can play in supporting people to manage their mental wellbeing. Employers are increasingly aware of the costs of mental health problems and work-related stress in terms of staff absence, presenteeism and staff turnover. Stress, anxiety and depression are a leading cause of lost work days (HSE 2018).

Research by Deloitte estimates that poor mental health costs UK employers between £42bn and £45bn each year. However, these costs vary considerably across different parts of the economy, predominantly because of how prevalent mental ill health is amongst the workforce in different sectors (Deloitte 2020).

Further, as we face unprecedented tightness in the labour market (Work Foundation/Screenskills, 2019b) and with the additional risks around the potential impact of Brexit on the ability of businesses to draw on the skills and expertise of EU migrants (ONS, 2019e); businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of supporting worker wellbeing in attracting and retaining talent (DWP/DHSC, 2019).

For an industry like film, TV and cinema – which has seen significant growth over recent years, is founded on our world-class talent base, and yet faces increasing skill shortages and gaps (Work Foundation/ScreenSkills 2019b) – this is of particular importance. Further, in the face of growing concerns about the treatment of TV programme contributors, revelations about bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace, and with campaigns such as #MeToo and Time's Up to challenge inappropriate behaviour and discriminative practices; there are clear signs that workplace practices and culture could mean these issues are more pronounced in this industry.

The Looking Glass: the first major UK study into mental health in film, TV and cinema

Despite the importance of these issues and growing media attention on working culture and practices in the Film and TV industry, there is a dearth of robust evidence on the mental health of those working 'behind the camera' in this vibrant part of the UK economy.

In February 2019, the Film and TV Charity commissioned the Work Foundation to undertake a landmark study – the first of its kind in the UK – to address this evidence gap. It sought to answer the following research questions:

- How does prevalence of mental health problems within film, TV and cinema compare with national levels?
- Which aspects of the film and TV industry present distinct challenges to workers effectively managing their mental wellbeing?
- How can people working in the industry best be supported to manage their mental health and periods of mental ill health?

¹ Please see Annex 1 for a glossary of terms used throughout this research

Importantly, our research sought to inform the development of a series of practical, scalable interventions, that emulate international best practice and galvanise industry-leadership on this issue; enabling the Film and TV Charity to work in partnership with other stakeholders to drive improvements in the mental health and wellbeing of those working in UK film, TV and cinema. Over the past nine months, researchers at the Work Foundation, working in close partnership with The Film and TV Charity, have embarked on an ambitious, mixed-method programme of research across four main phases, illustrated in Figure 1.1 (below).

Phase 1. Rapid Evidence Assessment, secondary data analysis

We conducted a rapid review of academic and grey literature regarding the experiences of people working in the film and TV industry in the UK. This was followed by analysis of national data including the Labour Force Survey, the Workplace Employee Relations Survey and Higher Education Statistics Agency data. This enabled us to synthesise what we know about mental health problems within the sector and focus on filling knowledge gaps.

Phase 2. The Looking Glass Workforce Survey

The Looking Glass survey sought to shed light on working life in UK film, TV and cinema. The survey was delivered online and was ran for a period of 3 weeks, between 17th June and 8th July 2019. The questionnaire was developed in partnership with The Film and TV Charity, and in consultation with a series of employers from within the industry.

It explored a range of topics including working hours and patterns; work intensity and job security; working culture; alcohol use; finances; experience of mental health problems and subjective wellbeing and experiences of accessing support. In total, we received 9,399 responses to the Looking Glass survey; of which 4,877 responses included enough demographic information to enable cross-sectional analysis.

Phase 3. Qualitative interviews with those working in film, TV and cinema

In addition to the Looking Glass survey, we undertook 30 qualitative telephone and face-to-face interviews with people working in the Film and TV industry.

This enhanced our ability to connect with industry workers who had experienced mental health problems, recognising that some may prefer 1-2-1 face to face engagement, while others might prefer to contribute anonymously. In addition, this approach enabled us to really understand some of the challenges workers face in operating within this unique environment while managing a mental health condition.

Phase 4. Provision research and case studies

We undertook a review of the services available to support mental health and wellbeing, including both mainstream provision and industry schemes. Further, the research sought to identify examples of good practice from other industries and countries; understand what works and what doesn't, and what might prove effective in the industry context.

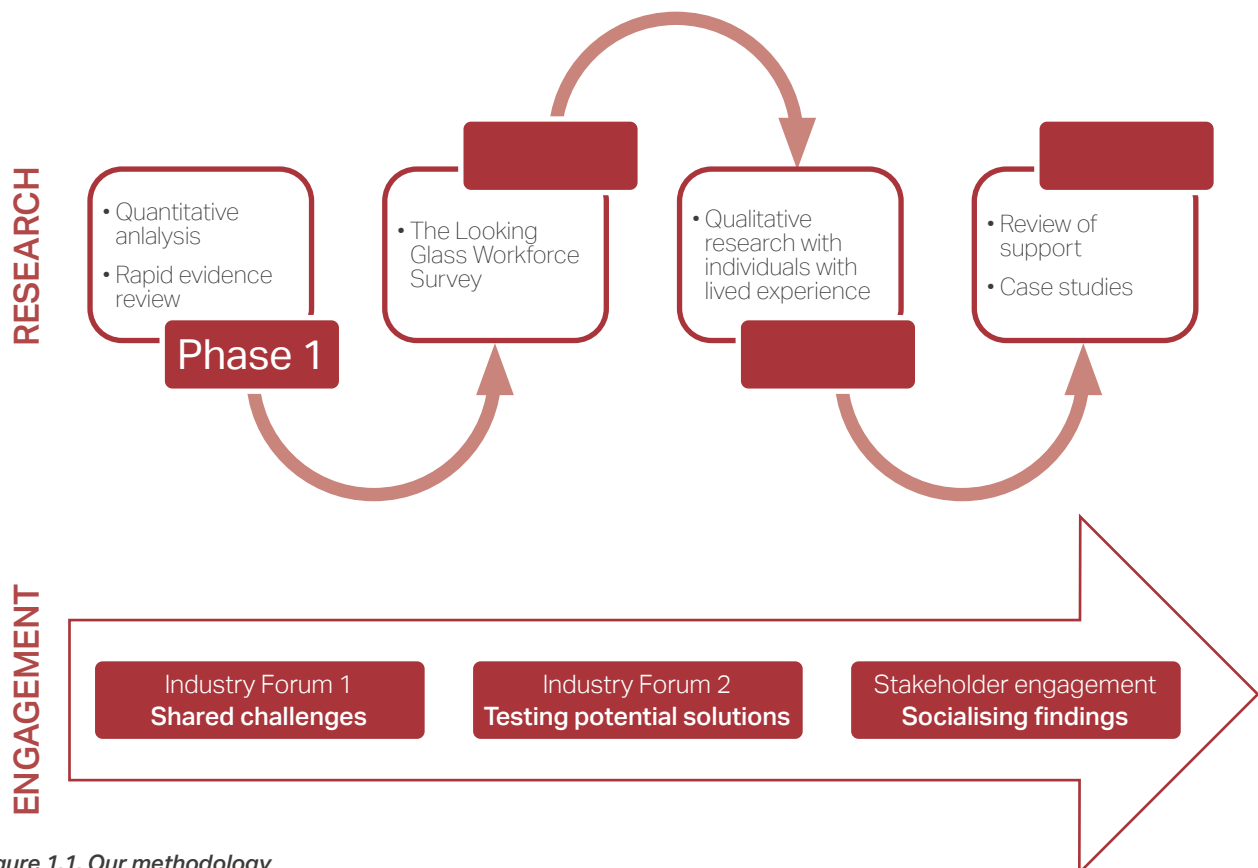


Figure 1.1. Our methodology

Importantly, *industry engagement* featured across each phase of the work. This included an Industry Forum, which brought together 25 individuals with people management responsibilities, including HR professionals in major businesses, freelancers who manage teams, and agents. Through two workshops held in July and September of 2019, we explored the real challenges affecting mental health in film, TV and cinema and shared examples of innovative working practices and support.

We also engaged with wider stakeholders, including mental health subject matter experts, charities, industry stakeholders and unions. These bilateral calls and meetings, held throughout November and December 2019, enabled us to test and hone recommendations and explore connections with wider activities underway in the industry.

Our research, and the Film and TV Charity's response to it has benefitted immeasurably from the support of the Industry Forum and wider industry stakeholders.

Further details of our methodology and the stakeholders we have engaged with through this research are contained within Annex B and C (respectively).

This report

This report summarises the findings from this research. It is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 considers the picture of mental health in UK film, TV and cinema;
- Chapter 3 explores the underlying causes of the problem;
- Chapter 4 identifies workers who experience greater vulnerability;
- Chapter 5 explores variation in experiences by sub-sector and genre;
- Chapter 6 looks at existing support available to those working in film, TV and cinema and explores the scope to enhance support, drawing on good practice from elsewhere; and
- Chapter 7 concludes by outlining the case for action and the founding principles for a movement for change.

It is important for readers to note that given the focus of this research, some sections of this report include challenging content, for example discussing self-harm and suicide (in particular in chapters 2, 4 and 5). The report also includes a range of anonymised quotes to illustrate some of the challenges faced by those trying to manage their mental health while working in this industry.

While much of the report makes for sombre reading, the overarching aim of the research has been to catalyse an industry-wide programme of change. This report should therefore be read alongside the Whole Picture Programme report, developed by the Film and TV Charity.

The Whole Picture Programme is the industry's urgent response to the mental health crisis identified by the Looking Glass research. Leading organisations from across the value chain have come together to form the Film and TV Taskforce on Mental Health and fund the work, ensuring the programme is industry-wide and industry-led.

The Film and TV Charity will launch the Whole Picture Programme in April 2020 with an urgent two-year response to the research findings, as part of a 10+ year evidence-based plan. The programme aims to tackle the causes by increasing support, building capacity, changing behaviours and improving ways of working, through a series of practical and scalable interventions.

The Whole Picture Programme will create partnerships with other industry bodies with interests in this space to ensure alignment with their work. A strategic and collaborative approach is vital to address the deep-seated issues uncovered by the Looking Glass and to deliver real change – especially for freelancers and other workers who lack appropriate support.

Key terms

Mental health – We all have mental health. Good mental health means being generally able to think, feel and react in the ways that we need and want to. Many of us experience mental health problems over the course of our lives. For some, these may be short term, while others may experience long term mental health conditions.

Mental wellbeing describes a person's mental state at any one time – how they are feeling and how well they can cope with everyday life. Mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from day to day. Someone with a mental health problem is more likely to have experience periods of low wellbeing – but they can have some days or periods of good wellbeing.

Stress refers to the normal reaction people have to being placed under pressure. The feelings they get when they find it difficult to cope with situations or events.

Work-related stress is the stress that people feel when they find it difficult to cope with pressure at work. The stress level is determined by the amount of pressure and their ability to cope with it.

Presenteesim refers to coming to work despite feeling unwell.

2. The picture of mental health in film, TV and cinema

2.1 Introduction

Our work has a pivotal role in our health and wellbeing. The nature of the job itself, as well as working conditions and hours, autonomy and control, flexibility, social interaction, opportunities to progress and workplace support and culture all play a significant role in influencing worker wellbeing (Waddell and Burton 2006; DWP and DoH 2008, Black and Frost 2011, DWP 2013). In the same way that physical roles that require heavy lifting or repetitive tasks can increase the prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions amongst the workforce (Nordlof 2014); long hours, intense periods of stress, and bullying and harassment in the workplace can negatively impact a person's mental health and wellbeing (HSE 2003; Verkuil et al 2015).

It stands to reason then, that workplace absence, presenteeism and the physical and mental health conditions that underlie these, vary substantially across the economy. Increasingly, employers and industry leaders are recognising this, and recent years have seen a growing focus on work based factors affecting mental wellbeing. This chapter seeks to establish a robust and up-to-date picture of mental health in UK film, TV and cinema; drawing on established evidence and new data from the Looking Glass workforce survey.

2.2 What does existing evidence tell us?

Our evidence review suggests *individuals working in the Film and TV industry may face greater risk factors or stressors at work than those working in other industries.*

UK film, TV and cinema comprises a value chain broadly defined in terms of Production and Development, Post-production, Broadcasting, Distribution and Cinema Exhibition. Work in many parts of this industry is characterised by being exciting and fast-paced, with very tight deadlines. This means that for many working in the industry, job demands will be high, and feeling stressed at times will be a natural response. For some people, small amounts of stress like this enable them to cope with high-intensity situations, and can be managed with appropriate levels of support and recovery. However, experiencing sustained periods of stress, especially in an unsupportive environment, can lead to problems in the longer term. Chronic stress has been found to have a negative impact on overall mental health and is associated with depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts (MQ, 2018; MHF, 2018).

Relationships at work as well as exposure to workplace bullying have a significant impact on mental wellbeing. The recent 'MeToo' and 'Time's Up' movements have drawn attention to bullying and harassment within the industry, and this research shows that uneven power dynamics and inappropriate behaviour are affecting workers behind the camera too.

Literature regarding mental wellbeing at work emphasises the role of managers in supporting workers through building meaningful relationships, providing support and guidance and managing the demands of a role.

However within parts of the film and TV industry where freelancing is common, many workers won't have access to a traditional 'line management' relationship.

The combination of these and other factors may therefore place workers in film, TV and cinema at greater risk of mental ill health.

The Work Foundation's analysis of the Labour Force Survey² found that *mental health problems are more prevalent among people who work in the Film and TV industry than across the workforce as a whole.* This has grown significantly over recent years, and has consistently been higher than overall workforce prevalence levels, indicating that mental ill health has been a structural, consistent issue for the industry. Our analysis also shows *that mental health problems present the greatest proportion of long-term health conditions among workers in film, TV and cinema.*

It is important to take account of the significant role of stigma in preventing individuals discussing mental health problems and how this has changed in recent years. As a result, it is unclear whether this increase in reported experience of mental health problems relates to a real increase in prevalence, or (more positively) a rise in the number of people within and beyond the industry who feel able to discuss their experiences of mental health problems.

However, this data only paints a partial picture, including only those who reported they had a mental health problem which had lasted or was expected to last for twelve months or more. These figures therefore exclude individuals who have recently started to experience a mental health problem, or who experience a condition which fluctuates, such as anxiety or depression – the most common mental health disorders in Britain, (NICE 2011)³.

To address these shortcomings researchers commonly turn to bespoke workforce wellbeing surveys.

Recent research with entertainment industry workers in Australia, for example, found higher prevalence of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts compared with national averages (Entertainment Assist, 2016). Research among people working in creative industries in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland has found that “specific characteristics of the creative sector work environment were reported as contributing to the likelihood of developing mental health problems” (Shorter et al, 2018). Limited evidence has suggested this may also be the case in the UK, with the Guild of Television Camera Professionals reporting that 76% of respondents to their survey had experienced some form of depression (GTC, 2018).

An in-depth focus on those working in UK factual television has highlighted concerning findings regarding the impact of prolonged and repeated exposure to distressing content and working with particularly vulnerable contributors (Dart Center, 2019).

So the existing evidence suggests that mental health problems may be more pronounced amongst workers in the film and TV industry, but there has been a dearth of evidence to qualify these concerns to date.

2.3 Findings from the Looking Glass: the picture of mental health in film and TV

Our survey confirmed that people working in film, TV or cinema were significantly more likely to have experienced a mental health problem than the wider population.

As many as **87% of our Looking Glass survey respondents had experienced a mental health problem at some point in their lives compared with 65% among the UK population.**

“I didn’t realise that that was taking a toll on me, all of these no’s. I was just shrugging them off, because [I have] skin like a rhino.

And then, this is about ten years ago, Stephen Fry did a thing on the television on BBC Two about depression.

And I just happened to watch it and at the end of it I burst into tears and I thought, that’s what’s happening to me.”

Interview respondent

Depression and Anxiety

Among the survey sample, depression was the most commonly reported mental health problem, experienced by 64% of respondents compared with 42% of us nationally (MHF, 2017)⁴.

Across the country, on average 12% of us have experienced anxiety at some point during our lives (MHF 2017), compared with 28% of film, TV and cinema workers.

Wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing refers to how individuals feel they are doing, and can be measured using a standardised set of questions to calculate an overall score using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) (Warwick Medical School, 2019).

This enables the calculation of a wellbeing score on the basis of answers to seven questions relating to how respondents felt over the two weeks prior to completing the survey. This raw score can be used to generate an overall score on a scale which runs from 7 to 35⁵. Our survey found that *people working in film, TV and cinema have significantly lower levels of subjective wellbeing than national averages*. The mean score is 19.4, which compares with an average of 23.6 for England.

³ Other national datasets such as Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (APMS) and surveys by the Mental Health Foundation include more comprehensive questions to better capture mental health problems, but do not enable assessment of the sectors of the economy the respondent works in.

⁴ For more information on the data benchmarking throughout this report, please refer to the Annex 2.

⁵ Our methodology was guided by the provider’s manual and additionally by Fat et al. (2017).

Loneliness and isolation

Social isolation is associated with low wellbeing (Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, 2017).

To understand social engagement among respondents, the three item UCLA loneliness scale was incorporated within the Looking Glass survey. The loneliness score combines three questions, namely "How often do you feel that you lack companionship?"; "How often do you feel left out?"; and "How often do you feel isolated from others?"

Among respondents the mean loneliness score was 6, and as many as 13% scored 9, meaning that they often felt left out, lacked company and felt isolated.

Self-harm

Among our survey sample, 24% of respondents had deliberately harmed themselves. This is much higher than the national average, which is 7% (APMS, 2016). We found that in line with national data, self-harm was much more common among women (28%) than men (20%), and was highest among those aged 16-29 (34%).

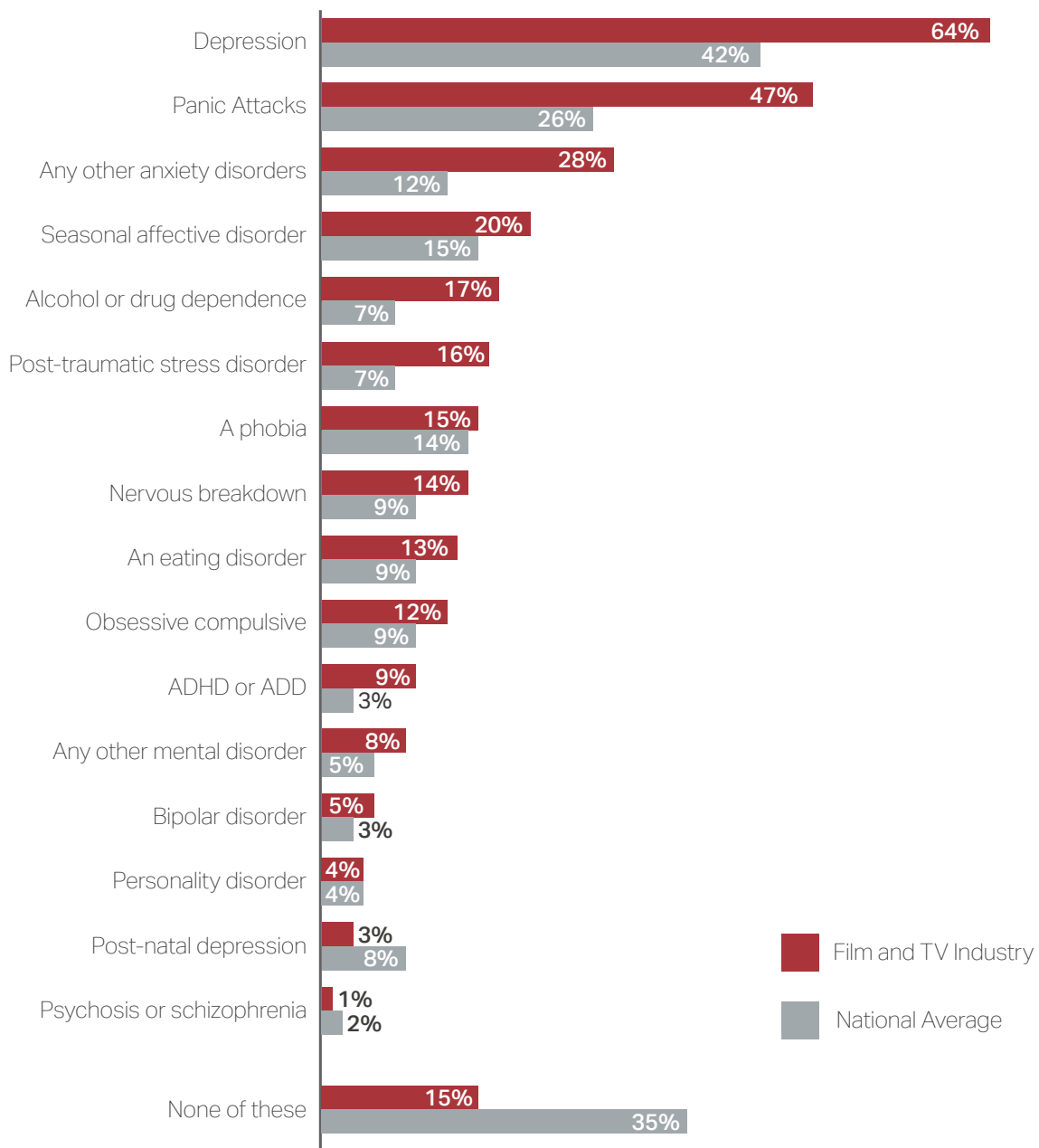


Figure 2.1. Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions in Film, TV and Cinema
 Data source for Film and TV Workers: The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019. Sample size: 4,877.
 Data source for National Average: Mental Health Foundation, 2017

Suicide

Evidence captured through the literature review and initial data analysis indicated that incidence of suicide may be higher within creative and entertainment industries.

For example, data on suicide in England between 2011 and 2015 shows that the proportional mortality ratio (100 represents the baseline, or average) for both men and women was over 100 in the culture, media and sports occupations, meaning that death by suicide in these occupations was more common in comparison with the wider population.

“From my graduating year at film school, three alumni who were working as film professionals have committed suicide in the last year. I’ve felt those tendencies in the past...”

It’s a product of our industry; I think it’s also a product of our times, but working in this industry, sometimes doesn’t help.”

Interview respondent

We recognise suicide is highly complex and that generalisations and simplification can be unhelpful. We chose to include two optional questions about suicide within our survey to understand whether, as reports have suggested, suicide may be more prevalent among people working in this industry.

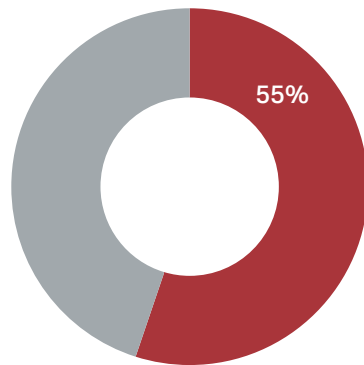
The survey found that *more than half of the sample, 55%, had contemplated taking their own life. Given that the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey found that across England 20% of people have experienced these suicidal thoughts, this is significant cause for concern.*

In addition, *10% of Looking Glass survey respondents reported that they had attempted to end their life. This compares with 7% nationally (APMS, 2016).*

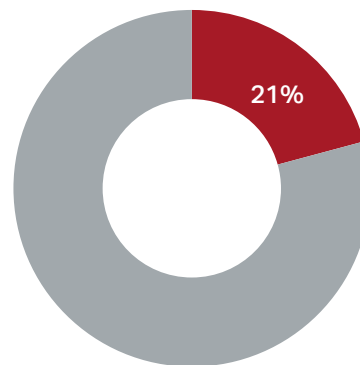
These findings also indicate that individuals working in this industry may be more likely to be experiencing bereavement following suicide. Several research respondents made reference to colleagues or friends within the industry who had died by suicide.

The survey findings therefore suggest that there is a mental health crisis within the UK film and TV industry. Moreover 63% of workers have thought about leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing.

This research has started to explore a range of factors which may be contributing to this crisis; intrinsic to working life in this industry, that exacerbate the risks of extreme workplace stress and make working life particularly difficult for workers experiencing long term mental health problems. It has also revealed a series of barriers to accessing mental health support that individuals working in this industry have encountered. These factors are explored further in subsequent chapters.



Film and TV Industry



National Average

More than **half** of film and TV workers have considered taking their own life, compared with **one in five** nationally

3. The underlying causes: conditions, culture and capability

3.1 Introduction

In order to formulate an effective response to the mental health crisis in the film and TV industry, it is crucial to understand the underlying causes of the problem.

The Looking Glass survey asked a wide variety of questions that sought to identify the characteristics of working life in film, TV and cinema that have an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce. These drew heavily on existing research on the work-related factors that we know influence mental wellbeing across all parts of the economy; alongside evidence and insight on jobs, working conditions and practices in the film and TV industry.

In total we explored around 25 different themes, ranging from work intensity and work-life balance, to autonomy and value, voice and control, bullying and harassment, the content people work on, and attitudes towards and support for mental health and wellbeing in the industry.

Having reviewed the evidence, *the research identified a series of possible underlying causes, explored through this chapter. This can be considered in terms of the 3 'C's: Conditions, Culture and Capability.*

3.2 Conditions

Summary

Working conditions within film, TV and cinema are impacting workers' wellbeing.

- Work is much more intense in this industry and people are more likely to work extremely long hours. More than 1 in 8 in film, TV and cinema work more than 60 hours per week, compared with 1 in 50 on average;
- This was strongly associated with lower levels of wellbeing and experience of work-related stress;
- Work-life balance was a significant problem, preventing workers from taking care of their wellbeing through relaxing, exercising or spending time with friends and family;
 - 67% said that work prevented them from making plans with family and friends;
 - 57% felt that a lack of control over working hours negatively affected their wellbeing;
 - 78% struggled with work-life balance (compared with a national average of 27% (WERS, 2011)).
- Having a family is largely considered incompatible with working in the industry and many women either put off starting families or leave permanently upon having children;
- Difficulties balancing work with caring responsibilities were also a key challenge.

Any work environment may be subject to certain pressures, deadlines, and moments where a high intensity or pace of work is required. This can put pressure on workers, which can translate to stress.

Stress is a natural response that, when short-lived, is usually harmless. However, according to the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards, if certain "areas of work design" are not properly managed, they can be associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence".

These areas of work design include:

- Demands, including workload, working patterns, and the work environment
- Support, including by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- Control, how much say the person has in the way they do their work
- Relationships, including dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- Change, how organisational change is managed and communicated within the organisation
- Role, whether people understand their role and to what extent roles may conflict

In looking at mental health and wellbeing within film, TV and cinema, the Looking Glass survey the included questions on how working conditions (such as hours worked, control over hours, work-life balance) impacted workers, the scope of which largely aligns with the HSE's model of the areas of work design.

What became clear is that working conditions in film and TV put workers at much higher risk of work-related stress than average. These include extreme working hours, greater work intensity, and a particularly acute sense of insecurity.

3.2.1 Work intensity

“It is such a fast-moving, fast pace, energetic working environment that it’s almost addictive.”

Interview respondent

Work intensity refers to the effort that is used in carrying out work (Eurofound 2018). The British Skills and Employer Survey recently found that 31% of workers in the UK experienced high work intensity (Green et al 2018). However, *job demands and work intensity* appear to be much higher in the film and TV industry. We know from our survey and previous studies that work in the sector is characterised by being fast-paced, with very tight deadlines. This can be exciting, but may have more insidious effects in the long term. Therefore, the Looking Glass survey went beyond asking about the degree of work intensity to consider how it impacted people’s mental wellbeing. **62% of workers in film, TV and cinema said work intensity impacted their mental wellbeing negatively or very negatively.**

High levels of work intensity causes stress. In small doses, stress enables us to cope with challenging situations, and when appropriately managed, it need not be an issue (Eurofound and ILO 2019). However, without adequate support or recovery time, experiencing sustained periods of stress can result in exhaustion and further lead to mental and physical problems in the long term (HSE 2018). Epidemiological studies have found chronic stress to have a negative impact on overall mental health and have connected stress with depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts (Milner et al 2018; Virtanen 2018).

Around one in eight of those in the film and TV industry work more than sixty hours per week. This compares to around 1 in 50 across the wider economy (LFS 2018).

Wellbeing was highest among respondents who worked between 20 and 50 hours, after which wellbeing levels drops steeply, indicating that working more than 50 hours per week is associated with lower mental wellbeing.

In addition to long hours, the majority of respondents (62%) indicated working at night had a negative impact on their wellbeing.

This resonates with wider research by media and entertainment union BECTU, which found that half of workers surveyed worked more than their contracted hours and two thirds said they had no choice over the extra hours they worked (BECTU 2017).

In fact, analysis found that *control over working hours had a greater relationship with respondents’ wellbeing than hours worked.* Autonomy over working hours has been found to be an important factor for our experience of working life (Wheatley, 2017). This is indicated by the inclusion of “Control” as a key aspect of the HSE’s Stress Management Standards.

In addition to long hours, the majority of respondents (62%) indicated working at night had a negative impact on their wellbeing.

Higher work intensity among workers does not necessarily translate to better performance for the business. Rather, hastily performed tasks can lead to poor communication, mistakes and reduced quality of work (Eurofound and ILO, 2019, p. 22).

“I got caught in a spiral of guilt about quality of work versus the energy I had to give it. I was struggling to keep all my plates spinning.”

Interview respondent

Respondents described the negative impacts particularly intensive work was having on their wellbeing overall. Some reported experiencing physical symptoms of stress, such as fatigue, headaches and irritable bowel syndrome. Others noticed that, in line with wider evidence outlined above, as they worked longer hours, they felt less able to deliver work to the standard they wanted, which led to feelings of guilt.

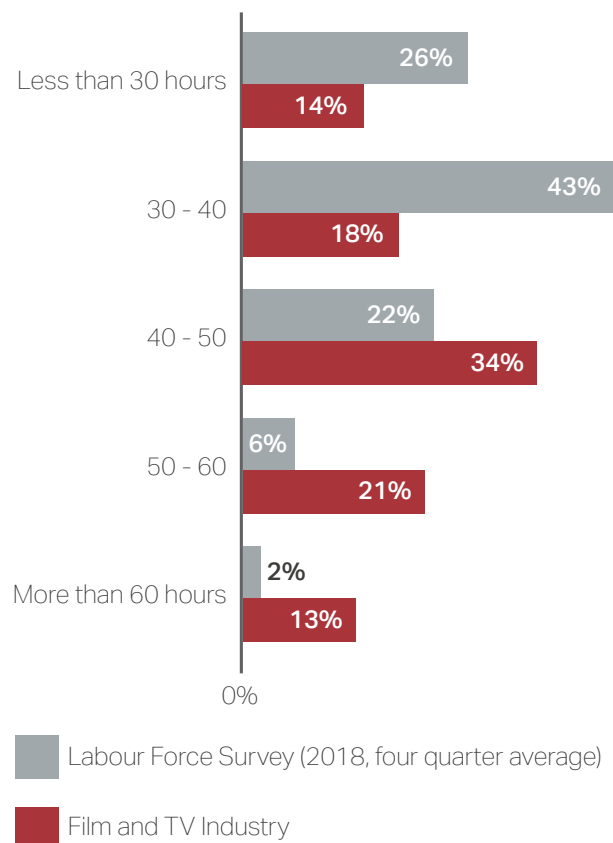


Figure 3.1. Hours worked per week in Film, TV and Cinema in comparison with national average
 The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
 Sample size: 4,280 (respondents who worked the week prior to completing the survey) & ONS (2018) Labour Force Survey

3.2.2. Work-life balance

Working long hours makes it more difficult for people to decompress, to find moments to relax and recharge. 60% of respondents reported they had rarely or never felt relaxed over the two weeks prior to completing the survey.

Many interview respondents described strategies they had developed to manage their wellbeing outside of work. These varied widely, with some individuals talking about hobbies and interests, from an individual who had taken up pottery and found it to be helpful in managing gaps between projects, to another person who used gardening to reduce their screen time following projects involving distressing visual content. Others talked about their support network, with their partner, family members or friends playing an important role in supporting them to stay well and to cope with difficult periods. Some attended talking therapy or support groups.

However, extreme working hours will limit workers' time with friends and family, as well as time to relax and rest, exercise and pursue hobbies and personal interests. Within both the survey and among the interviews, some felt that their working pattern was preventing them from doing what they needed to do to stay well. Many respondents indicated they struggled to eat healthily and could not find time to exercise, which negatively impacted their physical and mental health. Furthermore, one interviewee working in Production said their eating disorder was particularly difficult to manage due to unhealthy food being provided for staff and lacking time to exercise.

One respondent described themselves as having "no life while working." Perhaps unsurprisingly, *more than half of survey respondents (57%) reported work had negatively impacted their personal relationships*. Spontaneous additional comments to our survey referenced tensions with partners that resulted from working long hours, or taking work home and some even noted broken relationships and marriages due to the demands of work.

Others referred to missing important family events and losing touch with friends.

In particular, *respondents with children struggled to reconcile the demands of the job with those at home, with the effect, as mentioned by one respondent, that they "felt guilty while working and while at home"*.

The Looking Glass survey found that *across the Film and TV industry, 78% of workers found it difficult to fulfil commitments outside of work, due to the requirements of their job, compared with 27% nationally (WERS, 2013)*.

This is strongly linked to the number of hours worked, increasing from 78% to 95% among those who worked more than 50 hours during the week prior to completing the survey.

3.2.3 A deteriorating picture?

It was particularly concerning to learn that many working within film and TV feel these conditions have grown worse recently.

For the last two years, the film and TV industry has outperformed the rest of the services sector, making a significant contribution to overall GDP growth, largely driven by growth in production (ONS, 2019c). The UK Screen Alliance has reported that the sector is one of the few parts of the economy keeping the UK out of recession (UK Screen Alliance 2019). Similarly, Pact reports that TV exports reached a record high of £1.4billion in 2018/9, an increase of 7% on 2017/18 (Pact, 2019).

While the survey gives us a snapshot of the picture at this point in time, our analysis of the open-ended survey responses, along with discussions with forum members and others working in the industry suggested the industry's ambitions have outpaced growth in both budgets and workforce, especially within production.

Many respondents reported that they were "over-delivering", working harder, and often for longer than they had agreed to.

"Budgets are tighter, contracts shorter and rates static which makes every job tougher these days."

Looking Glass survey respondent

3.3.1 Attitudes towards mental health

Across the country, attitudes towards mental health at work are improving (Time to change, 2017). Despite this, workers in film, TV and cinema feel that mental health is not taken seriously enough by the industry, or that it is only paid lip service.

“The thing is if you haven’t had work for a long time and you are feeling a bit down, and then you have a meeting with someone, you can’t tell them that. You have to say, “Yes, everything’s great, it’s great, it’s brilliant. I’ve just had this meeting, it’s fantastic.” Because they want to hire people who are all on the up... We’re the greatest actors of all because we’re putting on a brave face every single day.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

There appears to be a perception gap, with just 24% agreeing with the statement “people working in this industry have a positive attitude towards people experiencing mental health problems”, while 47% agreed that “the people I work with day-to-day have a positive attitude towards people experiencing mental health problems”

Although many workers feel that the industry attitudes towards mental health are very unhelpful, the majority of people (86%) indicated they themselves would feel comfortable in supporting a peer who was struggling with mental health issues.

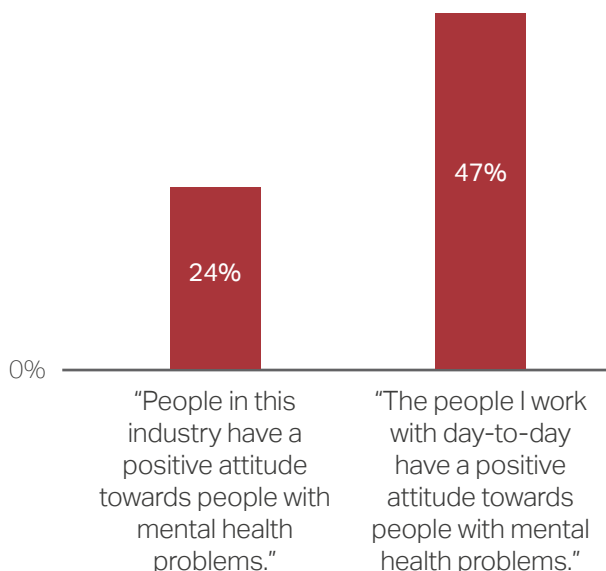


Figure 3.3. Attitudes towards mental health in film, TV and cinema

The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4,877

A number of Looking Glass survey respondents indicated that official company policy did not align with day-to-day practice.

“It’s only when that staff member is pushed to breaking point that anything gets done about it and it’s normally only a token gesture to get them working again.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Two-fifths of respondents (42%) reported that concern about being judged had presented a barrier to them getting mental health support.

Some respondents, particularly freelance workers, were concerned that they would be seen as less capable or reliable if prospective employers knew they had experienced mental health problems. Giving the appearance of feeling positive was emphasised by a number of Looking Glass survey respondents as essential in securing new work.

However, it seems that ensuring workers feel they can safely tell a manager or colleague about a mental health problem forms only part of the story, as some respondents pointed out that their organisation lacked the capability and resources to offer wellbeing support. One respondent said “everyone is overstretched so no one has the time and energy to support mental health/personal issues”.

3.3.2 Feeling valued and recognised at work

“If we fall apart, they don’t care. We are dispensable.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

The unique characteristics and working practices in some parts of the industry, which include limited access to HR expertise, a largely freelance workforce with limited statutory workplace protections, and highly pressurised working environments, often mean that workers feel like tools to be used and discarded.

The most common words that Looking Glass survey respondents used in reference to themselves were “disposable” and “expendable”, indicating that, *many people do not feel valued at work in the film and TV industry.*

This has real implications for businesses, as our analysis found that feeling undervalued was associated with wanting to leave the film and TV industry. In fact, this survey found that 79% of people who did not feel valued at work considered leaving the industry.

As a result of this, a strong theme identified through the qualitative research was a widely held perception that those in senior roles within the industry don’t care about the wellbeing of workers.

3.3.3 Competition and cliques

Securing work in this industry is complicated by the intense, and increasing competition for funds and jobs. Respondents noted that it has become more difficult to get work and to get paid well for it.

Mid-career and older workers indicated they struggle to compete with young workers, some of whom receive financial support from parents and so can afford to work for incredibly low, or no rates, thereby undercutting other workers.

“I find that this industry is very cliquey and project managers don’t necessarily look at portfolio or experience but go off on whose best friends are available to come work. Being an introvert makes it very difficult to join or be part of the social groups at lunch. I can and I am social but I also get very exhausted during the day if I don’t have a small break to myself.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Once in work, workers must consistently perform at the highest level, as respondents, particularly freelance workers, noted “you’re only as good as your last job”. This element of working culture in particular confers a lot of stress on workers, as every job, and every potential failure, puts their entire career on the line.

3.3.4 Bullying

Our research found that within many parts of the industry, working culture is characterised by undermining, intimidation and bullying. Exposure to bullying at work has direct impacts for mental wellbeing and has been found to cause symptoms of depression, anxiety and other stress-related issues (Verkuil et al 2015).

Although #MeToo and #TimesUp have inspired important conversations, *there is still a pervading sense that particularly high profile talent gets away with bad behaviour.* As Dame Janet Smith emphasised in her review of the BBC’s culture and practices during the Savile era, ‘the power of celebrity and the trust we accord it’ is a factor which allows established personalities within the industry unchecked access to individuals and situations, or to behave in ways that simply would not be tolerated in other working environments (Dame Janet Smith, 2016). Until now, the evidence base regarding how these power imbalances affect those in off-screen roles has been limited. Therefore, this study offers an important insight into one of the drivers of the current mental health crisis in film, TV and cinema.

The Looking Glass Survey found that *56% of workers in this industry had experienced bullying at work. Individuals who had experienced bullying were 1.5 times more likely to have thought about leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing.*

As outlined within the next chapter, this particularly affected women; gay men; workers of colour; mid-career workers, and self-employed workers.

The Looking Glass survey found that women were more likely than men to have experienced bullying at work, with 67% of women indicating they had experienced bullying, compared with 50% of men. Sexism was also a recurring theme in the spontaneous comments to the survey.

The gender difference we found is mirrored in other studies. For example, BECTU’s 2019 Dignity at Work study, found that 49% of women compared with 39% of men had experienced bullying or harassment at work. Further, a study by the TUC found that 34% of women indicated they had been bullied compared with 23% of men. Additionally, research conducted by the Edinburgh Television Festival among 315 respondents found that 71% had experienced workplace bullying, with women more affected than men⁶.

To build a greater understanding of how workplace bullying affects industry culture, we also invited survey respondents to indicate if they had witnessed intimidating behaviour at work.

In total, 82% of workers overall and 86% of women had experienced and/or witnessed bullying at work.

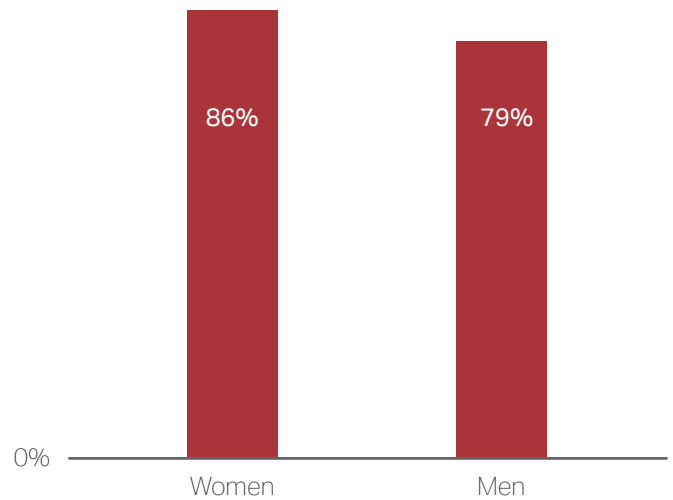


Figure 3.4. Proportion of Film and TV workers who have experienced and/or witnessed bullying at work
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4,877

Bullying appears to be most prevalent in Production and Development, and Broadcasting, where 87% and 86% of workers (respectively) indicated they had witnessed and/or experienced bullying, compared to the average of 82% across the full sample.

Cinema Exhibition saw the lowest levels of bullying, with (a still substantial) 64% of workers reporting having experienced or witnessed bullying.

⁶ The Looking Glass estimate of the prevalence of bullying is situated in the middle of these studies, which is likely related to the smaller sample sizes of these studies as well as to differences in how the question was posed to respondents.

3.3.5 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is associated with a host of negative outcomes including the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, eating disorders, suicidality, dissociation, and high risk sexual behaviours (Littleton et al 2018). The Looking Glass survey found that *on average, 39% of women in the Film and TV industry and 12% of men had experienced sexual harassment at work.*

This is broadly consistent with other studies such as ComRes (2017), which found that of about 6,000 adults in Great Britain, 40% of women and 18% of men had experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour in the workplace⁷.

Recent research on workplace sexual harassment from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that “the most common perpetrator of harassment was a senior colleague. However, just under a quarter reported being harassed by customers, clients or service users.” (EHRC, 2018)

The same research highlighted the importance of “a power imbalance between the perpetrator of the sexual harassment and the person being harassed”. The EHRC found that senior colleagues, due to their position of influence within organisations, were not challenged by HR departments or other colleagues, with some describing these individuals as ‘untouchable’. Findings from the open-ended responses in the Looking Glass Survey indicate that in many cases the perpetrators are in more senior roles.

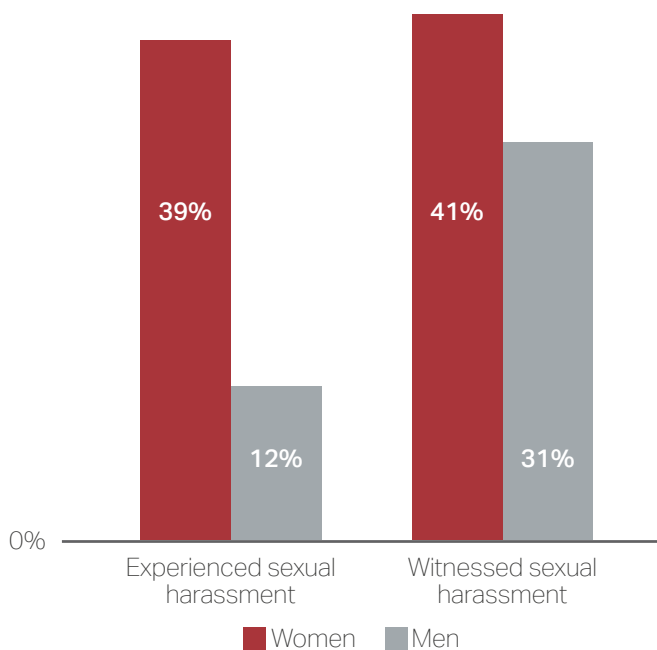


Figure 3.5. Proportion of Film and TV workers who have experienced and/or witnessed sexual harassment at work
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4,877

3.3.6 Calling out inappropriate behaviour

There was a sense among survey and interview respondents that the absence of HR structures and a propensity to protect individuals in senior roles allowed some workers to act with impunity.

In film, TV and cinema power imbalances create a culture in which it is difficult to speak out about inappropriate behaviour, or to seek formal redress after experiencing discrimination or abuse.

From spontaneous comments to the Looking Glass survey, it is evident that the need to maintain a strong network of personal connections to secure good references and facilitate future working opportunities led many to avoid criticism or complaints for fear of being considered a ‘troublemaker’.

“No one steps in and they get away with it over and over again. People are scared to step in or speak up because of not being hired again. It is always one rule for some and another rule for others. Always.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Many respondents pointed out that their employer or the businesses they contract with do not have a HR department or a formal whistleblowing process, which can be a barrier to speaking out about practices at work. However, even in organisations which do have an HR department, or which have policies in place that aim to protect workers, there are disincentives for workers to report inappropriate behaviour.

Several Looking Glass survey respondents noted their personal experience with raising a complaint and consequently being blacklisted and struggling to find work, or fired from the job they were on.

Others noted that the message and the reality are not the same.

“Anti-bullying, anti-harassment courses, meetings, email distributions are now commonplace, but they are known to be largely unenforceable.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Taken together, these findings paint a picture of an industry in which inappropriate and harmful behaviours that have long been unacceptable in other workplaces remain entrenched and normalised.

⁷ Estimates of other studies may be somewhat higher or lower, such as TUC (2016) and the Edinburgh TV Festival, which may be related to sampling size and sampling frameworks, as well as the phrasing of the question.

3.4 Capability

Summary

- Many film and TV workers aren't getting the support they need to do their job well, and this is causing stress and difficulty at work. Many respondents referred to a lack of recognition for the work they did. Several felt they received insufficient feedback on completed work, and many emphasised a tendency towards blame rather than constructive feedback or guidance. More than half (55%) felt there was insufficient support for working with challenging content – only 16% felt there was sufficient support.
- Individuals working with vulnerable contributors did so without training, guidance or support. While discussions are ongoing about the need for improved support for vulnerable contributors, the needs and experiences of those behind the camera warrants more attention.
- Workers involved in Production and Post-production of challenging or distressing content face particular risks to their wellbeing. Many feel that the support available in this area is not sufficient, and would like to see a more proactive approach to anticipating and managing risks.
- Workers who have experienced mental health problems don't feel able to seek support within the industry. Very few reported they would talk about their mental health at work, and many who had experienced negative reactions.
- Only 28% said that discussing their mental health problem at work had improved the situation; 54% said it made no difference and 5% said things became worse afterwards.

Our research found that despite the evident challenges in working conditions and culture in film, TV and cinema, many felt the industry lacks the capability to address these issues and provide workers with the support they need.

“We don't have any training as managers or HR people yet it comes as part of the job. It would be great to have support in developing us as better people managers, and to also find a way to deal with the weight of the responsibility on our shoulders.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

3.4.1 Management capability - Support at work

Literature regarding mental wellbeing at work places strong emphasis on the role of managers in supporting workers through building meaningful relationships, providing support and guidance and managing the demands of a role. For example, the Health and Safety Executive outlines the importance of workplace relationships as a factor which can both contribute towards and mitigate against workplace stress. The recent independent review on mental health and work identifies line management as one of the core standards of workplace mental health (Farmer/Stevenson, 2017).

However, within parts of the film and TV industry, many workers won't have access to a traditional 'line management' relationship, or where they do, this may not form part of a formal hierarchical management structure. Several of those we interviewed reported that while they knew who their line manager was on a project, they were unsure of who that individual reported to, while others working for small firms reported that their manager was the director. In both cases, it was unclear where to go for support or advice if a line manager used bullying or intimidating behaviour.

Career progression within this industry is centred on demonstrating excellence within a professional field or craft. This means that many of those who hold line management responsibility may be technical experts but have not had to demonstrate their interpersonal or leadership skills to reach this position, and may not have had any training, guidance or support in managing a team. Recent research has found that two of the most significant skills gaps within screen industries are line management and business management (The Work Foundation / ScreenSkills, 2019).

Despite this, without a targeted approach towards managing workers, our research found that individuals' experiences of management are, in large part, shaped by the culture and conditions outlined above. Workers often reported that their manager was "busy", "stretched" or "struggling" themselves, which limited their availability to support members of their team. Others emphasised that the high stakes nature of work in the industry drove those in more senior roles to put pressure on their team members to perform. This manifested in working environments with high tensions, with several respondents emphasising the lack of thanks or support they received from senior staff for their work.

3.4.2 Insufficient support to manage mental wellbeing

Several respondents used the words “blame culture” to describe in reference to engagement with colleagues and managers at work, which was largely attributed to increasing competitiveness and rivalry between workers, lack of support for peers and high pressure environments.

Respondents noted that a mistake or the failure to deliver on a project can incur heavy penalties. One respondent said that they had been shouted at in front of crew on set by a Director for things that were not within her control.

Others were concerned that mistakes at work would lead to them being blacklisted and being unable to find work again. One respondent felt that this creates an atmosphere of dampened creativity.

“Blame culture creates a vanilla output where there are no risks creatively and also has all freelancers on edge permanently.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Film and TV workers who had experienced a mental health problem were less likely to talk with people they work with about it than those working in other industries. *Thirty five percent of respondents who had experienced a mental health problem have told someone they work with about it, compared with half of people surveyed by Mind* (Mind 2018).

Research respondents with line management responsibility felt unsure of how best to support members of their team experiencing mental health problems.

Among those who have spoken about their experiences at work, this didn't always lead to improvements in the support they receive: for 28% the situation improved (this compares with 43% of those surveyed by Mind); 54% reported that their situation did not change (which is in line with the 50% surveyed by Mind) and for 5%, the situation became worse.

One interview respondent explained that when they told their manager that they were experiencing a long term mental health problem, their manager suggested that they were not “cut out” to work in the industry. Another became tearful at work during a particularly difficult period, and was later asked by their manager to “be more professional”. Two respondents were told that they couldn't take time out of work to attend talking therapy.

3.4.3 Barriers to getting support

We asked survey respondents who had experienced mental health problems about their experiences of accessing support services. In many cases, the issues that prevented individuals getting the right support at the right time were characteristic of working life in this industry, suggesting that if they were working elsewhere individuals may have been able to access support at an earlier stage.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, insufficient time to access services was the barrier most respondents encountered. Echoing the survey findings relating to the extreme hours, nearly half of survey respondents (48%) reported that they *did not have the time to access support to manage their mental wellbeing*. This was also a reoccurring theme among our interviews, with several respondents reporting they didn't have time to access support, and those who had accessed talking therapies reporting they often had to miss sessions when working late or away from where they lived.

High workloads and tight deadlines left many research respondents feeling acutely conscious of the potential impact that taking time away from work to access support could have on their colleagues. One respondent managed a small firm when they became unwell, and felt unable to take time off due to concerns for their team.

There was confusion about the types of support available and who was able to access it among several workers, suggesting a clear need for improvements in information and signposting.

Among those who had accessed mental health support through their employer, experiences varied considerably. Two of thirty interview respondents were aware that their employer had trained 'Mental Health First Aiders' however, one reported that they were office-based, and so not accessible to production staff while out on location.

A worker within Post-production expressed frustration that while this reactive support was available for individuals experiencing distress, they would have wanted to see support which involved proactively checking in with workers, particularly during intense periods. Both reported a lack of communication about the role of the First Aider or the circumstances in which they could provide support.

Another two interview respondents working in production referenced the Unit Nurse as a potential source of support, but both emphasised that this role is currently seen as being about physical health; “paracetamol and sprained ankles” rather than mental wellbeing.

The need for, and the availability of, support will also likely vary depending on how and where in the industry people work.

Many parts of the industry rely heavily on freelance workers, who would not have access to in-house support for employees (such as EAPs). Similarly, while small businesses are essential players in supply chains across the industry, many lack resources to develop their own offer of support for their staff.

Some highlighted gaps in support arising from variations in union engagement within the industry, with respondents reporting that this is lower among those working in independent or commercial film. Others reported they didn't believe there was a union available for individuals in their role.

Additionally, those working with vulnerable contributors or with distressing content will also require additional support which, as we explore in the next chapter, is not readily available in the industry.

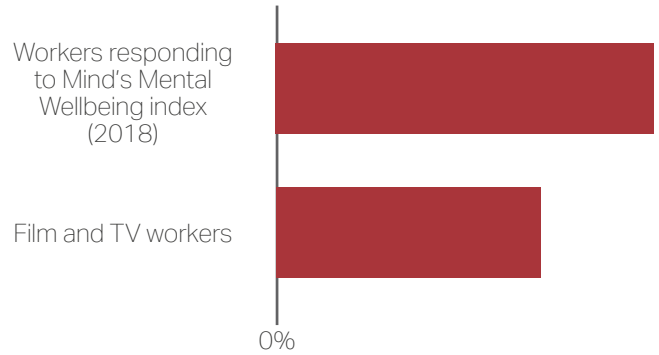


Figure 3.6. Film and TV workers who had discussed experiencing a mental health problem at work as a proportion of those who reported they had experienced a mental health problem

The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4,263

Mind's Mental Wellbeing Index 2018
Sample size: 43,892 (Film and TV Workers who have experienced a mental health problem)

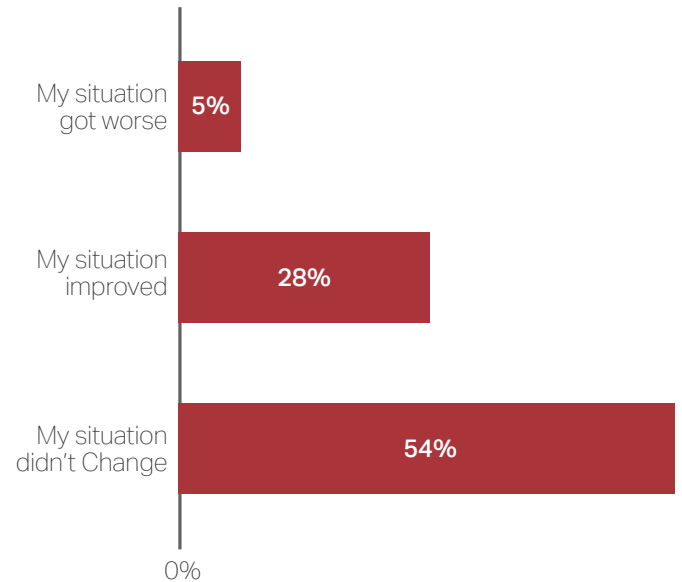


Figure 3.7. Outcomes experienced by Film and TV workers after talking about a mental health problem at work

The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019

Sample size: 1,536 (Film and TV Workers who told someone at work they had experienced a mental health problem)

4. Workers at greater risk

4.1 Introduction

The research found variations in results for different groups within film, TV and cinema. In some cases, prevalence of self-reported mental health problems was higher, while in others, groups were exposed to factors such as extreme work intensity or insecurity, or workplace bullying, which are associated with greater risk of workplace stress and low wellbeing.

The industry's freelance community is its lifeblood. Businesses of all sizes rely on freelancers. Many freelancers involved in this research enjoyed the autonomy and flexibility that comes with self-employment, and some harnessed this to support their wellbeing, for example through arranging breaks between projects. However, the structure of freelance work means that too often, *freelancers are at the sharp end of the issues explored through chapter three.*

Further, the film and TV industry is increasingly aware of the need to improve both on-screen and off-screen diversity. This is about recognising the power of representation, ensuring that the stories being told are truly reflective of modern British society, and about ensuring that the industry is attracting, developing and retaining the best possible talent pool. The industry has been working hard to address the barriers to 'getting in and getting on', that some minority groups continue to face, through the Broadcaster initiative 'Project Diamond', for example, which demonstrates the potential for coordinated industry-led action (Creative Diversity Network, 2019). *However, findings from this research suggest that minority groups face different and sometimes worse than average experiences at work, and relatedly may have different mental health and wellbeing outcomes.* This means efforts to support diverse talent to get in to the industry could be undermined by the experiences of minority groups once in work – essentially creating a 'revolving door' for diverse talent.

Finally, as we highlight in earlier chapters *the content and contributors that people work with can add a further layer of risk.* Without aiming to be exhaustive, the section highlights key working condition-related and culture-related drivers and outcomes for:

- Freelancers
- Workers supporting vulnerable contributors
- Those working with distressing content
- Women
- Ethnic minority workers
- Disabled workers
- Lesbian, gay or bisexual workers
- People with caring responsibilities

4.2 Freelancers

The industry depends on the skills, flexibility and passion of freelancers. Recent research on employers within screen industries (film, TV, cinema and games) found that 86% of employers work with freelancers, and 80% do so frequently. (Screenskills, 2019). The self-employment rate is almost twice as high in the screen industries as it is in the wider UK economy, at 28%. It varies considerably within the industry – film and TV production has the largest proportion of freelancers (50%), followed by Post-production (39%).

There are also suggestions that official figures may understate the proportion of the workforce that are freelance⁸. Further, the proportion of freelancers as a share of the workforce overall may continue to grow with the ongoing UK production boom. This was reflected within our survey sample, with three out of five respondents working freelance, or combining employment and freelance work.

Perhaps in contrast to initial expectations, at a headline level the survey did not reveal significant differences in experience of mental health problems or levels of mental wellbeing between freelancers and employees. Those who combine employment with freelance work were slightly more likely to have experienced a mental health problem than employees or freelancers (91% compared with 86% for both employees and freelancers). This is despite the fact that freelancers consistently reported greater exposure to work-related risk factors for their mental health and wellbeing.

“The people to go to for mental health support are... the people you would ask for future employment – you're not going to show weakness... for fear of not being hired on future projects.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

The reasons behind this warrant further exploration. One possibility is that the nature of freelance work may mean that freelancers could be more likely to normalise high-intensity working practices than employees. The freelance community is also more fragmented, which could mean that narratives about “that's just how things are done” and the notion of being “cut out to work within this industry” hold greater weight. It is important to consider too that relative to national averages, the overall survey sample saw poor levels of wellbeing and high prevalence of mental health problems.

⁸ Research suggests this could be due a failure of the Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) to fully capture parts of the industry where freelancing is highly prevalent (e.g. TV broadcasting) (Work Foundation / ScreenSkills 2019). Further, the definitions used in official surveys (such as the LFS) could also have a part to play when respondents are asked about their employment status during a particular 'reference week' (where freelancers may not have been working) and given a failure to offer the option of combining employment with freelancing (where our survey suggests 9% of the film and TV workforce work in this way).

Crucially however, *freelance workers are more likely to have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing than employees* (66% compared with 58% respectively).

For this reason, the experiences of the freelance community within film, TV and cinema have been explored further here.

4.2.1 Work-related risk factors

Our survey found that freelancers working in the film and TV industry face higher levels of work intensity and insecurity than their PAYE counterparts.

While we found that working hours in the industry are generally long, *freelancers are 1.5 times more likely than employees to work over 50 hours*, which puts downward pressure on their mental wellbeing. Freelancers were also more likely not to have worked at all during the week prior to completing the survey (18% compared with 3% of employees).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly two-thirds of freelancers expressed dissatisfaction with the level of control they had over working hours. This compares with less than half of employees.

Through our qualitative research, several respondents emphasised the feast and famine nature of their working lives, with work dominating their life for the limited period of a project, followed by, and weeks or months without work.

This sudden gear shift can be very difficult to deal with for a number of reasons. Some freelancers reported working most of the time when a project was underway, with limited opportunity to see anyone outside of work. Following the conclusion of the project, they struggled with feelings of isolation, being suddenly cut off from colleagues they had worked intensely with day-in, day-out during the project. During these gaps in employment, friends and family working outside the industry were not often available to meet during the week, contributing further to this sense of isolation.

“Being a freelancer means no job security, no employment benefits, continual pressure to find new work and to satisfy the (often-unrealistic) demands of a current employer in order to be re-employed.

Freelancers also have to manage their own tax affairs whilst having unreliable income streams. From personal experience (and being aware of numerous other people’s issues) this can have a severe impact on mental health.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Other respondents considered *the accompanying job- and financial insecurity to play the largest part in affecting their mental wellbeing*, as nearly twice as many freelancers as employees indicated they struggled to get by financially.

Freelancers were more likely to have experienced workplace bullying and sexual harassment:

- Nearly two in three freelancers have experienced bullying (64%), compared with less than half of employees (46%).
- 45% of female freelancers experienced sexual harassment, compared with 34% of female employees.

This aligns with wider research in this area, which has found that freelancers are at greater risk (Women and Equalities Committee 2018).

Freelancers were also more likely to report that their ability to speak out about working practices and the working environment was negatively affecting their wellbeing (51% compared with 41% of employees).

Unfortunately, the pervasive job and financial insecurity, unfavourable working conditions and increased risk of sexual harassment and bullying while self-employed, coupled with a sense that budgets are getting ever more squeezed and things will only get worse, means freelancers are feeling the pressure. The Looking Glass survey found that *two-thirds of freelancers have thought about leaving the industry due to concerns over their mental wellbeing (66%). This increases to 77% of mid-career freelance women aged 30-39.*

4.2.2 Barriers to accessing support

While many employers provide workplace support for wellbeing, ranging from training to access to psychological therapies or employee assistance programmes, this is limited to employed staff and not available to freelancers.

Freelancers do not have the same statutory protections and entitlements as salaried workers, and so do not receive any sick pay if they are unwell and need to take time off work.

Freelance Looking Glass survey respondents were less likely to talk about experiencing a mental health problem at work (31% compared with 39% of employees), and just **2% of freelancers said they would approach their manager if they were experiencing a mental health problem.**

Furthermore, *of those freelancers who had experienced a mental health problem, 50% avoided seeking support due to concerns they'd lose future work opportunities.*

4.3 Workers supporting vulnerable contributors

Several high profile cases have recently highlighted the risks that vulnerable contributors encounter through involvement in developing film or television content. Earlier this year, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee launched an inquiry into Reality TV, focussing on the experiences of respondents and considering the extent to which production companies are meeting their Duty of Care (DCMS Committee, 2019). While this has sparked discussions both within the industry and by Parliament about the importance of support for contributors, the needs and experiences of those working behind the camera in these situations warrants much greater attention.

“There’s a lack of awareness that dealing with contributors with traumatic stories can be difficult to process. And we’re given zero support and zero training in this crucial area.

PDs are also now being made responsible for duty of care calls to contributors after filming, despite having no tools, other than personal experience, to deal with any problems they may be facing.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

A large number of film and TV workers across the value chain are finding that their day-to-day work involves increasing contact with members of the public.

Workers within News, Factual and Documentary also encounter challenges in working with individuals who have witnessed or experienced traumatic events, or have lived through extreme hardship and disadvantage.

This issue was also frequently cited as a challenge among respondents working in Reality and Entertainment, with members of the public participating, for example, as contestants.

- Overall two thirds (66%) of film and TV workers felt that wellbeing support for those working with vulnerable contributors wasn't sufficient.
- Workers involved in content creation in particular felt support in this area was insufficient (72%).

One Looking Glass survey respondent highlighted the 'emotional labour' this can entail, reporting that there wasn't enough attention given to the role that workers play in supporting vulnerable contributors. Another explained that giving contributors their personal telephone number had meant they felt that they were always working. Many respondents felt a sense of responsibility towards contributors they were working with, and were conscious that without training or experience, they were not always best equipped to provide it.

Supporting vulnerable contributors is something few crew will have had any guidance or training to prepare for. This puts both crew and contributors at risk. In absence of this preparation, workers are following their instincts to support contributors where they can.

“Very often the lines are blurred as to what is your personal responsibilities and what is the company’s.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Recent years have seen a range of programmes and films exploring the experiences of people who have mental health problems. When done well, this content has powerful potential to challenge stereotypes and stigma, and encourages viewers experiencing similar problems to seek support. Several respondents emphasised that they felt particularly ill-equipped to provide support to contributors who were experiencing mental health problems. With this in mind, the risk that programmes of this nature expose workers involved to topic areas and experiences that may resonate is also high, as one respondent explained:

“My mental health was most affected when I was asked to cast on a show about eating disorders. I neither felt able to properly support the contributors I was speaking to nor was I given any support in how this might impact me emotionally as well.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Recent research conducted by the Dart Center with individuals working in factual content highlighted this as a particular area of concern, with many experiencing *“moral injury”, through which workers experience significant discomfort with ethical decisions relating to their work with contributors.*

This was echoed among respondents to our survey, with one describing the guilt he felt in discussing a difficult experience with a contributor to the point that she became tearful, and withholding his instincts to comfort her because it would make “good TV”. Another described intentionally misleading contributors about the nature of a programme in order to encourage them to take part. There was a palpable sense of guilt or moral compromise arising in these situations, which appeared to be negatively affecting respondents.

“You often are pressured by showrunners to coerce or ‘trick’ contributors into doing things they don’t want to do OR sometimes depict contributors negatively in a way which represents only a subjective truth - all this hangs heavy on the conscience. Messing up other people’s lives is not why I went into TV and that makes me feel grim.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

“Being steered...towards filming or portraying a contributor/s in a way that perhaps doesn’t truly reflect them but is ‘better for the programme’ and you feel morally compromised and in a difficult position with your employer.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

4.4 Working with distressing content

Individuals involved in the research highlighted the impact that exposure to distressing content through work can have a negative effect on their mental wellbeing.

This affects a range of workers through the value chain, particularly in Production and Post-production.

This included individuals working in research, who reported extensive exposure to highly traumatising content including graphic violence and footage of natural disasters. Another interview respondent had been involved in planning re-enactments of crimes through their work.

“My work involves watching sexually explicit material and portrayals of sexual violence, both of which have had a negative effect on my romantic life.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

“I worked on a show where only the people in production were offered therapy support. I am an editor and we were not offered anything... despite the fact that we watch the footage over and over.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

The overriding feeling among respondents was that little was being done to anticipate or manage the ways in which content was negatively impacting their mental wellbeing.

More than half (55%) of respondents disagreed with the statement *‘In my experience, people working on challenging or traumatic stories receive sufficient support to manage their own mental wellbeing’*. Recent research from the Dart Center has highlighted that “TV documentarians are at risk of both vicarious and direct traumatising”. (Dart Centre, 2018).

Two respondents reported that distressing content was discussed among colleagues in a light-hearted way, which didn’t leave room for processing the distressing images or situations they had been exposed to.

Respondents described not realising the effect that distressing content was having on them until much later. Some had experienced nightmares following a project, or had found that some images repeatedly returned to their mind.

Crucially, there was a shared feeling that managers/those supporting workers involved in producing/editing distressing content had to play a more proactive role in anticipating the need for breaks and structuring working time with their team, rather than waiting for the inevitable point when things become difficult to manage.

4.5 Women

4.5.1 Experience of mental health problems

We found gender differences in prevalence of some mental health problems. For instance, women were more likely to report experiencing eating disorders, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder while men were more likely to report experiencing depression.

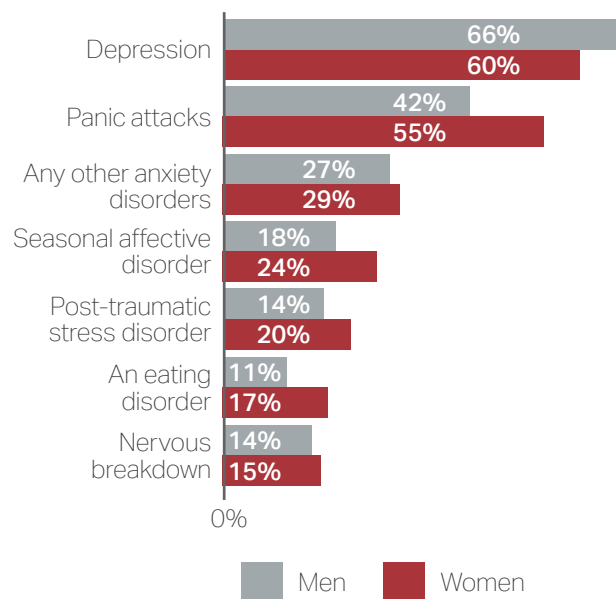


Figure 4.1. Experience of mental health problems, by gender
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4877

4.5.2 Working life

Women are more likely to feel their job is insecure (64%, compared with 59% of men) and more likely to disagree with the statement "I feel valued" (34% disagreed compared with 24% of men).

Women are also far less likely to feel the industry has a positive attitude towards mental health; more than half (52%) disagreed with this statement compared with 41% of men.

"My department has a complete lack of diversity in the workplace (being the only female ...) makes me feel very isolated. The lads culture mentality makes it hard to exist in this space."

Looking Glass survey respondent

"They often talk down your experience and belittle you (to keep your pay low and leave you feeling this is the only job you'll get. There's a bullying atmosphere and it's much worse for women."

Looking Glass survey respondent

4.5.3 Working culture – an old boys' club

Approximately 38% of the film, TV and cinema workforce are women (Labour Force Survey, 2018). The dominance of men in some parts of the industry makes some Looking Glass survey respondents feel like they have entered an "Old Boys Club" that is resistant to change and in which they struggle to keep their footing. This is particularly an issue for bullying at work. *Two in three women who responded to our survey have experienced bullying (67% compared with 50% of men). Women were also much less likely to feel that bullying is taken seriously where they work (39% compared with 47% of men).*

The open-ended responses to the survey included large numbers of references to sexism, with many women feeling patronised, passed over for opportunities, and excluded from key meetings and social events. One interview respondent recalled an internship, during which a male senior invited the other (male) intern to lunch and to networking events, but did not involve her.

Furthermore, due to revelations in 2017 and 2018 that led to the rise of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, the risks that women encounter in their professional and personal lives have become part of a global conversation. This has inspired action on many fronts and will hopefully drive wider cultural change. And, as highlighted previously, the results from the Looking Glass survey strongly underline the need for continued work here as *two in five women have been sexually harassed at work (39%). This compares with one in every ten men. Further, four in ten women feel that bullying and harassment is not taken seriously in the industry.*

4.5.4 Work-life balance

Within the survey, both women and men reported challenges in balancing work with family life and other responsibilities (67% of women and 68% of men felt work stopped them making plans with family and friends). However, through the open-ended questions to the survey, it became clear that many women in particular were struggling to balance being a parent with work.

"Often the job makes huge demands on my time and mental energy and that means tempers fray at home and life admin falls through the cracks. It's not a sustainable way to live with children at home who are depending on you."

Looking Glass survey respondent

The uncertainty surrounding scheduling in some parts of the industry combined with a lack of flexible childcare options was cited as an issue.

One respondent noted that after having children, she would experience stress at work near the end of the day, when the dual pressures to stay late and to go home were at their strongest and she worried constantly about the fight that was waiting at home if she was late again.

These issues are not merely the province of parents. They also worry workers – particularly younger women – who are planning in the short or long-term to start a family.

Some female respondents reported that they were very worried about the future and put off having children due to fearing they would never be able to get back into the industry afterwards.

This was borne out by the survey data – women at mid-career are most likely to have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing. Figure 4.2 below highlights this risk of attrition.

“I have often been faced with institutional racism and struggle more than my mainstream peers to have access to the same opportunities, jobs and career development.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

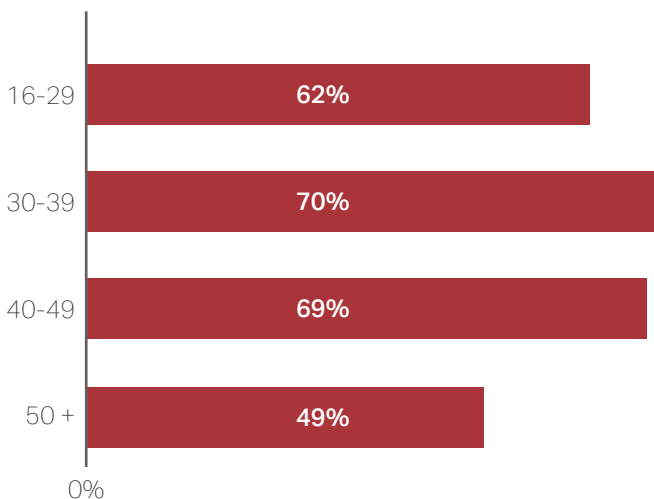


Figure 4.2. Proportion of women who have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing, by age
 The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
 Sample size: 2544

4.6 Ethnic minorities

Previous research has identified a number of underlying barriers that prevent ethnic minority groups from participating and progressing in the industry, particularly relating to recruitment and working practices, access to networks, workplace culture and discrimination (see, for example, Work Foundation / BFI 2016).

The Labour Force Survey suggests that a little over 11% of the film, TV and cinema workforce is from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. As the UK average stands at 12%, this compares quite favourably (ONS 2019a). However, when we take into account that the majority of the industry (particularly production) is located in London, where the proportion of BAME workers is around 35% (LFS April 2018-March 2019 and LFS July 2018-June 2019), it appears the workforce composition in film, TV and cinema is far from representative. In addition, wider research has found that workers of colour are under-represented in senior and creative roles (Brook et al, 2018).

“I often feel ostracised because of my colour. Conversations seem to be always directed at my white colleagues in meetings, I always feel on the outskirts when this happens.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Our research echoes these findings and suggests there are many aspects of day-to-day working life and culture that negatively impact those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

73% of Asian workers have considered leaving compared with 62% of workers that are white. This raises real questions about the extent to which industry programmes to promote the recruitment of those from ethnic minority backgrounds represent value for money, when such a large proportion of BAME workers already within the industry are looking to leave.

This paints a picture of a ‘revolving door’ where BAME workers may join the industry but subsequently decide to leave given the working conditions and culture they experience while working in the industry.

It also emphasises the importance of interventions to improve working practices, address inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, and that focus on the retention and advancement of workers from minority backgrounds. Overall, BAME workers were significantly more likely to feel bullying and harassment is not taken seriously (39% compared with 34% across the survey overall).

4.6.1 Ethnicity and gender

In attempting to understand these issues further, we find there to be significant variance across different ethnic groups; and additionally when we explore the intersectionality between gender and ethnicity, particularly looking at women of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic origin.

69% of Black, African, Caribbean or Black British men have been bullied, compared with 50% of men overall.

Further, *among women, those who characterised their background as other ethnic group (87%) and those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups (80%) were most likely to have experienced bullying at work.* They were also the most likely to indicate they had been sexually harassed (Figure 4.3).

BAME women are most likely to report that their ability to speak out about working practices or the working environment was negatively affecting their wellbeing.

Crucially, while 63% of survey respondents reported they had considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental health, this was higher still among BAME women (figure 4.3). Three quarters of mid-career BAME women have contemplated a career change to protect their wellbeing, suggesting that attempts to foster a diverse talent pipeline could be hampered by the experiences of BAME workers within the industry.

“It gets over looked, but being LGBT and black in the media industry, I’m sometimes incredibly worried. The barriers to employment in general while being black add to the situation. Black people with mental health issues are not looked upon with sympathy or empathy.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

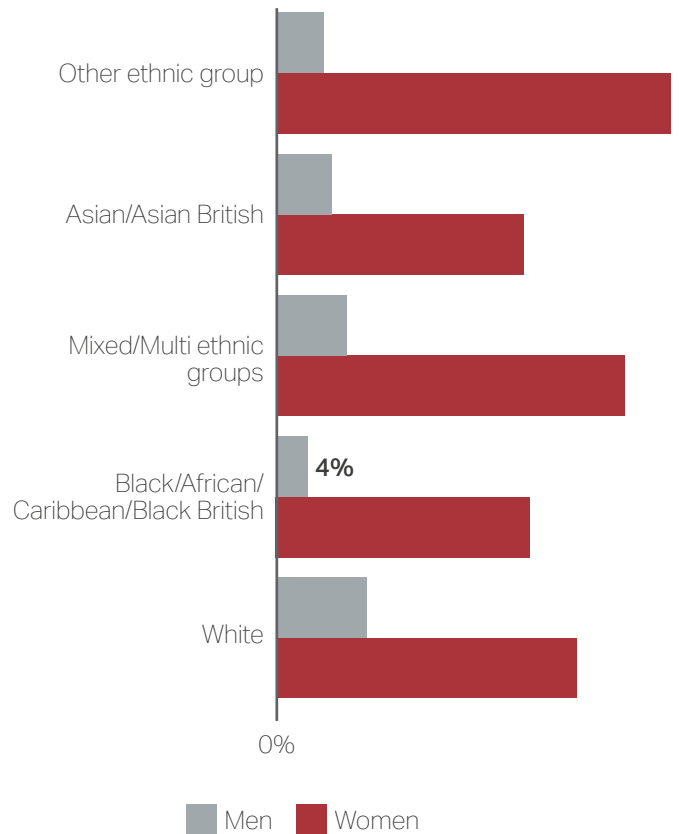


Figure 4.3. Experience of workplace sexual harassment, by ethnicity and gender
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4706

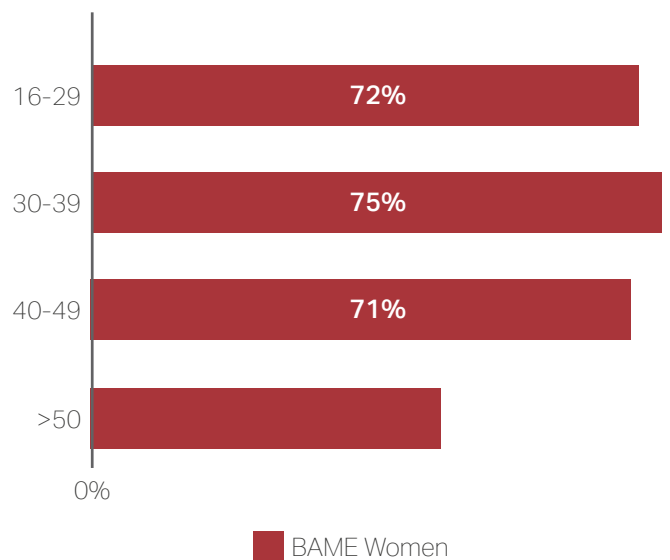


Figure 4.4. Proportion of BAME women who have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 271

4.7 Gay or bisexual workers

Within the Looking Glass survey, 8% of respondents identified as 'gay or lesbian'; 4% as bisexual; and 82% as heterosexual. A small number of respondents⁹ identified as having an 'other' sexual orientation.

4.7.1 Experience of mental health problems

National data has found that prevalence of common mental health problems, suicidal thoughts and self-harm is higher among lesbian, gay and bisexual people (CSIP 2007; PHE/RCN 2015).

In line with this, our survey found that LGB workers within film, TV and cinema were more likely to report experiencing a mental health problem than heterosexual colleagues (93% compared with 86% of heterosexual workers). Experience of suicidal thoughts was also markedly higher among LGB workers (Figure 4.5) and 22% of LGB workers had attempted to end their lives.

18% of gay men and 21% of bisexual men have attempted suicide. 9% of Lesbian/Gay women and 27% of bisexual women have attempted suicide.

Overall, those who are lesbian, gay or bisexual are more likely to feel isolated (30% compared with 24% of heterosexual workers).

LGB workers are more likely to have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing, (68% of Gay or Lesbian workers and 69% of bisexual workers have thought about leaving, compared with 62% of heterosexual respondents.)

Research has found LGB people face particular barriers to accessing health services, and evidence suggests significant improvements in attitudes among health professionals will be needed to tackle this (Stonewall, 2015).

“It can be a worry whether to tell colleagues I’m gay, it’s like coming out to people every time you start a new contract”

Looking Glass survey respondent

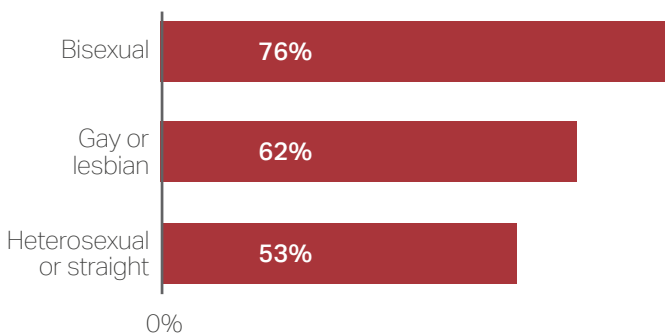


Figure 4.5. Experience of suicidal thoughts by sexual orientation
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 3651

4.7.2 Homophobia and hostility at work

Many respondents had experienced homophobic comments while working in the film and TV industry.

It appears that gay male workers in particular struggle with a hostile working culture. *Nearly two-thirds of gay men (62%) have been bullied, compared with half (49%) of heterosexual men.* Additionally, one in five (18%) gay men have experienced sexual harassment at work, compared with one in ten (11%) straight men. *Nearly half of bisexual women have been sexually harassed (48%), compared with 39% of women overall.*

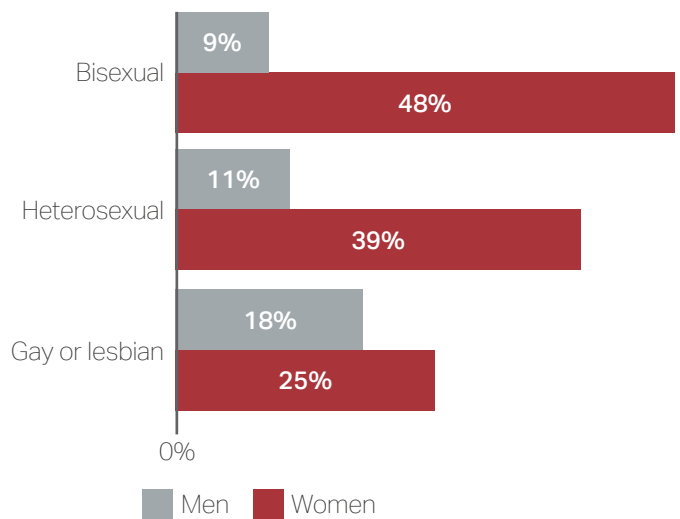


Figure 4.6. Experience of sexual harassment at work, by sexual orientation and gender
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4706

⁹ n=35

4.8 Disabled Workers

The Looking Glass survey highlighted concerning findings regarding the experiences of disabled workers within the industry.

Levels of subjective wellbeing were low, and experience of mental health problems was much more prevalent.

4.8.1 Mental health and wellbeing

Ninety-five per cent of disabled Looking Glass survey respondents reported having experienced a mental health condition in their lifetime, they are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed (46% compared with 20%), and more than three times more likely to have attempted suicide (24% compared with 7%) compared with non-disabled workers.

“I have a mild physical disability. I know many disabled people who can’t work in the industry... because their carers are unwilling to commit to what for them is effective a 60 hour working week... and it’s frustrating that accommodations aren’t made. Mental health wise, this obviously has a knock on... that you’ll be less employable/valued. I don’t admit my disability now.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Further, one in three disabled workers rate their own mental health as poor (32%), compared with one in five non-disabled workers (19%). This aligns with national data, as the ONS (2018) has reported that disabled people are almost twice as likely to have poor personal well-being than non-disabled people.

Notably, workers with a disability were more likely to feel isolated often (38% of disabled workers compared with 24% of non-disabled workers).

While this resonates with wider literature on the links between physical and mental health conditions, it paints a bleak picture of the mental wellbeing of disabled workers in the industry – 7 in 10 (71%) have considered leaving because of concerns about their mental wellbeing.

4.8.2 Experiences at work

More than one-third of disabled workers do not feel valued at work (36%), compared with one in five non-disabled workers (26%).

Disabled women were at greater *risk of sexual harassment – more than half indicated they had been sexually harassed at work (54%), compared with 37% of non-disabled women.*

Across the industry, organisations have been striving to improve representation of disabled people on screen, and to tackle barriers to entering the industry that many disabled people continue to face. Channel 4’s Year of Disability and Pact’s toolkit for inclusive recruitment of disabled on-screen and off-screen talent (Channel 4 2016, Pact) are at the forefront of this.

The findings from this research make clear a need for a renewed focus on the wellbeing, experiences and support of disabled people who have already entered the industry.

4.9 Carers

903 Looking Glass survey respondents are carers¹⁰. Carers are people looking after, helping or supporting family members, friends, neighbours or others because they had a long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems related to age.

The majority of carers who participated in the research were over 40 years old (53%). One in four female Looking Glass survey respondents were carers (26%), compared with one in five men (19%).

Isolation and feelings of loneliness can be an issue for carers, as one in three (31%) reported feeling isolated, compared with one in four workers without caring responsibilities (23%). They are also more likely to lack companionship (31% of carers compared with 22% of workers without caring responsibilities) and often feel left out (27% and 22% respectively).

One self-employed respondent noted that their partner struggled with mental illness, and that the pressure of managing this at home, combined with pressure to perform and deliver at work, without feeling like they had anyone at work to share those concerns with, left them feeling very isolated and pressurised.

Likely related to having to juggle work and caring responsibilities, carers are more likely to work fewer hours. We found that one in five carers work less than 30 hours a week (20%), compared with one in ten workers without caring responsibilities (10%).

Relatedly, carers are more likely to indicate they are struggling financially. One in five (21%) carers were finding it quite or very difficult to get by compared with 14% of those without caring responsibilities.

They also struggled with late payments, felt tired at work because of losing sleep over money worries, and were more likely to feel under pressure at work or to take work outside of the industry to make ends meet.

4.10 Conclusion

Altogether our analysis of those more likely to be vulnerable to mental health conditions or who face additional challenges in managing their mental wellbeing paints a concerning picture of working practices and culture.

Together these highlight a lack of support for those more vulnerable to mental ill health; risk the ability of the industry to continue to draw on the freelance workforce on which it relies; and will also act as a sizeable obstacle to ongoing efforts to improve diversity and inclusivity within UK film, TV and cinema.

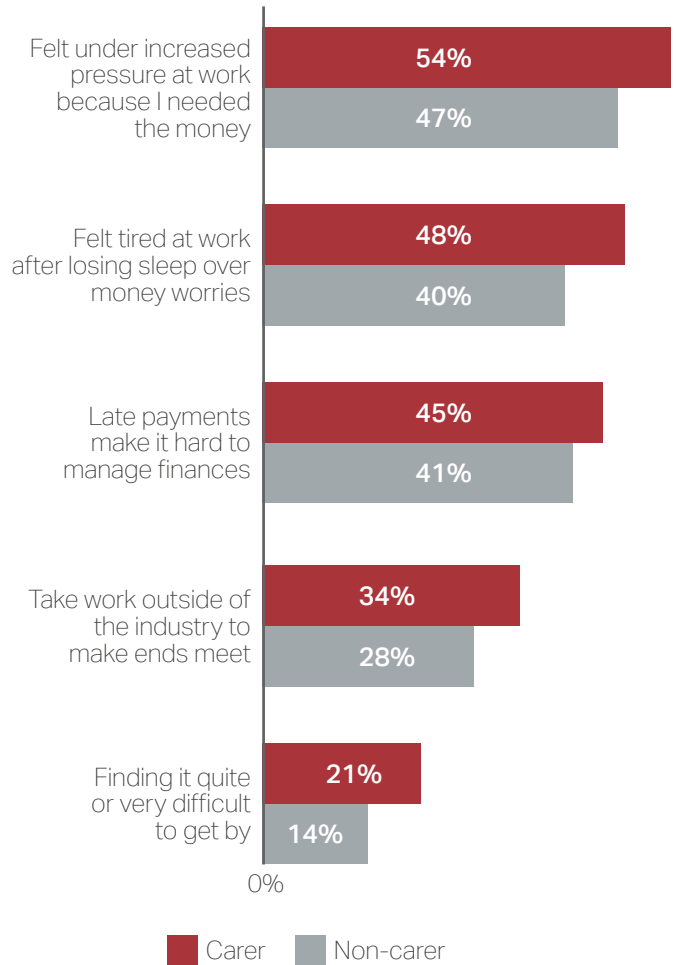


Figure 4.7. Proportion of Film and TV workers experiencing financial difficulties, by carer status
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4858

¹⁰ 505 women and 370 men

5. Variation in experiences by subsector and genres

5.1 Introduction

The Looking Glass survey and wider research identified key trends and challenges which run through the value chain within the film and TV industry.

Overall, findings were remarkably consistent between sub-sectors and genres, with the most significant points of difference being between this industry and national benchmarks. However, we did see some variation within the survey data, and insights from the qualitative interviews have allowed us to explore where issues are more or less acute depending on an individual's role within the industry. This section highlights key findings for the five sub-sectors of the Film and TV industry:

- Production and Development
- Post-production, VFX and animation
- Broadcasting
- Distribution
- Cinema exhibition

It also explores findings for a select group of genres, where variation from overall findings was most pronounced:

- Factual/Documentary
- News
- Sport
- Comedy
- Entertainment/Reality

5.2 Production and Development

With 39% of all workers in the film and TV industry working in Production and Development (Labour Force Survey, 2019), this is the largest sub-sector. In fact, we received the highest number of responses from this sub-sector, although this was corrected through weighting (please refer to Annex B), and findings do highlight a range of challenges in working practices and conditions which could underpin this need to feel heard.

In several ways, those working in Production and Development appeared to face acute risk factors for their mental wellbeing at work, including extreme working hours, high levels of bullying, and high incidence of sexual harassment compared with averages across the survey.

“I know many senior HoD’s, myself included, and other people who at some point during a film reach to a point that they would like a small accident so they can be off for a week. Just to make the pressure stop.”

Looking Glass survey respondent.

5.2.1 Extreme working hours

“The production schedules we are working to seem far more unrealistic than they used to be... I have to work a significant number of evenings... This all goes unpaid, my managers are aware but tell me it is what it is.”

Looking Glass survey respondent.

Production and Development workers worked the longest hours – nearly two in five worked more than 50 hours per week (39%) and one in five (17%) worked more than 60 hours during the week prior to completing the survey. They were also most likely have not worked at all during this period at all (15% compared with 12% on average), which relates to the large proportion of freelance workers within this sub-sector, and the feast or famine nature of their work.

Notably, workers in this sub-sector were among those most likely to say that control over their working hours negatively impacted their mental wellbeing. Workers described feeling under intense pressure to stay late or work weekends due to competition from other workers.

One respondent said: “this industry has the ability to take everything out of you”. Another said they were “constantly going above and beyond and the employer taking and taking”.

62% of Production and Development workers felt that the amount of control they had over their working hours was negatively affecting their mental wellbeing, compared with 57% on average. Lack of control over hours can affect mental wellbeing through infringing on sleep, family and social commitments and downtime.

Three-quarters (76%) of Production and Development workers indicated work prevented them from making plans with friends and family (compared with 67% on average).

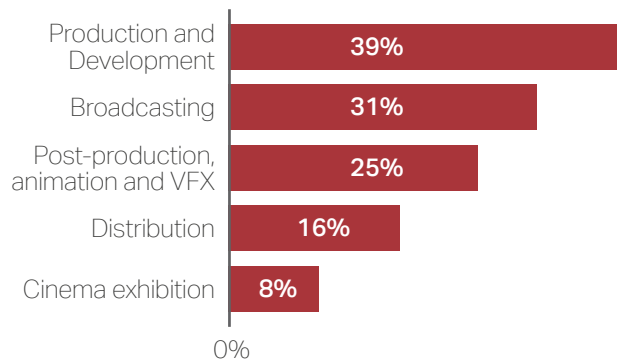


Figure 5.1. Proportion of Film and TV workers who work more than 50 hours per week, by sub-sector
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4877

5.2.2 Financial insecurity

Mirroring the ‘feast and famine’ working hours outlined above, workers within Production and Development were more likely to report experiencing financial insecurity. 75% of Production and Development workers disagreed with the statement “I feel my job is secure”¹¹ and 63% felt that their level of security at work was negatively affecting their mental wellbeing. 69% of Production workers felt they should always be available to take on extra work, and 51% had felt “under increased pressure at work because I needed the money”.

5.2.3 Access to support

Reflecting the working patterns outlined above, Production and Development workers were most likely (54%) to report that “not having enough time” had been a barrier to accessing mental wellbeing support.

Another barrier that is substantively higher in Production and Development than in other sectors is the concern that workers will no longer be offered work if people knew they were experiencing mental health problems, which was mentioned by 50% of workers in this sub-sector, compared with 43% on average across the sample.

5.2.4 Bullying and harassment

Workers in Production and Development were also most likely to have experienced bullying or sexual harassment at work. Findings were particularly stark for women – roughly three quarters of women in production had experienced bullying (73% compared with 67% across the survey overall).

5.3 Post-production, animation and VFX

Three quarters (75%) of Looking Glass survey respondents within this sub-sector were men.

5.3.1 Mental health and wellbeing

Workers within this sub-sector were most likely to report experiencing alcohol or drug dependence, with over one in five (22%) workers indicating this (compared with 17% across the sample). Within this sub-sector, experiences of mental health problems were worse among those working in animation and VFX, with 31% considering their mental health to be ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ (compared with an average of 26% across the survey).

5.3.2 Working characteristics

This sub-sector has some very specific workplace characteristics, which can impact mental health and wellbeing. For example, editors in Post-production noted that due to the nature of work, workspaces often have very few windows. As such, people work long hours in rooms without any natural light, which can be particularly difficult during winter.

Working in rooms away from the rest of the organisation made some workers feel very isolated and cut-off. This is borne out by the survey data, which showed that *nearly one in three (31%) workers in this sub-sector often felt isolated* (compared with an average of 26%). *This was higher still among workers within animation and VFX (35%).*

“When you ask for a room with a window, because it affects your health... you are made to feel that you are difficult and that all editors like to sit in the dark.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Further, Post-production workers may come across distressing material through their work, which could be negatively impacting their wellbeing, and the nature of their work may require repeated and extensive exposure. One respondent said that “the content we edit can sometimes be deeply triggering or traumatising and that can be hard to express to the people you work with.” Individuals within Post-production were most likely to report that the content they work on or with had negatively affected their mental wellbeing (27% compared with 16% across the survey sample).

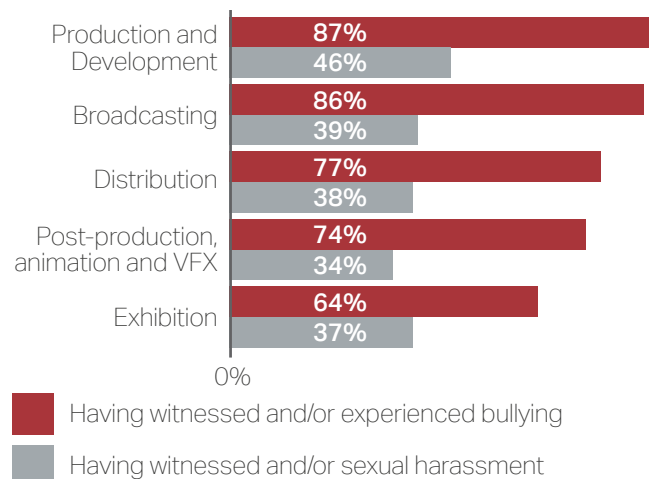


Figure 5.2. Proportion of Film and TV workers who have experienced or witnessed workplace bullying or sexual harassment, by sub-sector

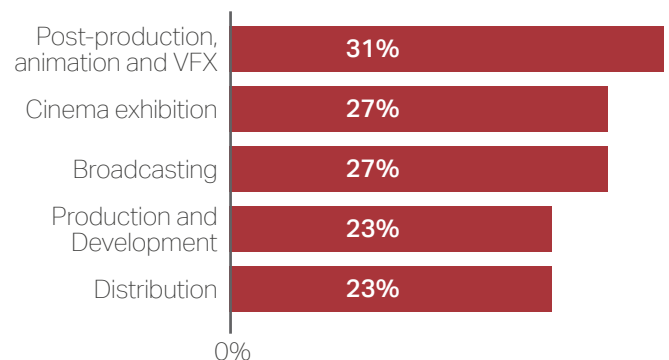


Figure 5.3. Proportion of Film and TV workers who report feeling isolated 'often'
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4877

¹¹ Compared with 58% in post-production and in Broadcasting; 50% in Distribution; and 34% in Exhibition.

5.4 Distribution

5.4.1 Working life

Individuals working in Distribution were least likely feel valued at work (41% compared with 27% across the sample). This was reflected in the views of one respondent:

“I have been in distribution for 6 years and it’s been in a nosedive - zero compassion from older people in senior positions. The industry will be a reserve only for the very privileged at some point in the near future.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Another described Distribution as being “an old boys club”. Workers in Distribution were the most likely to agree that ‘It’s hard to progress in this industry if you don’t drink alcohol in some situations’ (53% compared with 37% across the survey sample). They were also most likely to agree with the statement ‘Drinking alcohol is a significant part of working life in this industry.’ (73%)

5.4.2 Experience of mental health problems

Distribution workers were the most likely to have experienced anxiety (35% compared with 28%), and were three times more likely to have experienced it than the national average.

This sub-sector also saw the highest reported incidence of an eating disorder, at 19% compared with 13% across the Looking Glass survey and more than twice the UK average of 8.6% (APMS, 2016)

5.4.3 Barriers to support

Distribution workers faced different barriers to accessing support to manage their mental wellbeing. They were most likely to refer to prohibitive costs, with 43% reporting this, roughly 10 percentage points higher than the average across the survey.

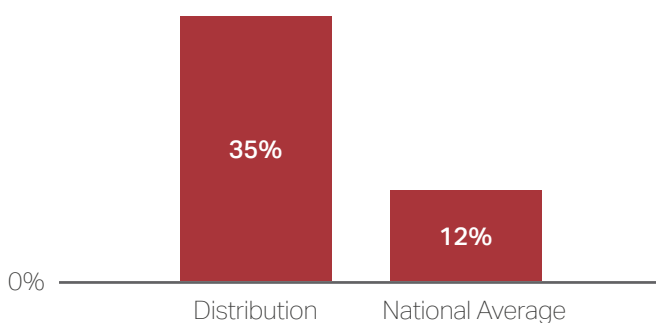


Figure 5.4. Proportion of workers within Distribution who have experienced anxiety, compared with the national average
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019 and Mental Health Foundation, 2017

5.5 Broadcasting

Broadcasting is the second largest sub-sector in the film and TV industry (ONS, 2019a).

5.5.1 Mental health and wellbeing

Workers in this sub-sector were most likely to indicate they had ever experienced a mental health problem (89% compared with an average of 87%). They were also most likely to rate their current mental health as poor, or very poor (28%, compared with 26% across the sample).

In line with national data (APMS, 2016), we found that female Looking Glass survey respondents across the sub-sectors were more likely to report having ever experienced a mental health problem than men. Broadcasting was the sole exception to this - 90% of men in Broadcasting reported they had experienced a mental health problem, compared with 84% of women.

5.5.2 Workplace bullying

“There is a real culture of bullying within some broadcast industries. I live between branded content and TV work and I find the pressure from above to fit in and conform is high. Anyone who doesn’t toe the line is not treated well.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Broadcasting saw the second highest levels of bullying within the industry. 86% of Broadcasting workers had witnessed or experienced bullying at work (compared with 82% across the sample) at work, and more than half (53% compared with 48% on average) felt that their ability to speak out about the work environment or working practices had negatively affected their mental wellbeing.

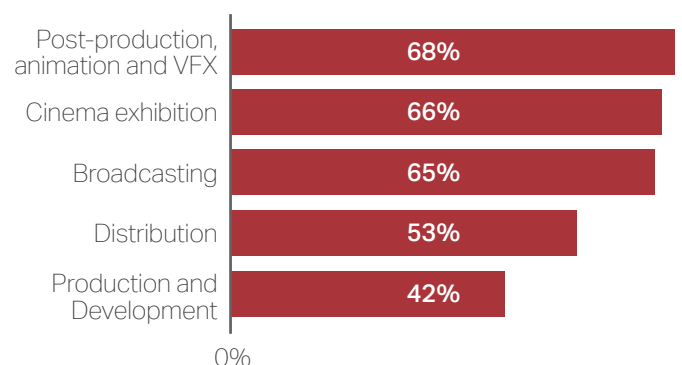


Figure 5.5. Proportion of Film and TV workers who have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing, by sub-sector
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019

“This now seems to be accepted as the norm. This also applied to HR, who instead of supporting staff condone the bullying behaviour.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Using statistical modelling, we found that experience of bullying was strongly associated with feeling undervalued at work. Together, these two factors were found to be the greatest drivers for considering leaving the industry due to concerns about mental wellbeing.

5.5.3 Working life

Workers in Broadcasting were more likely to work extremely long hours (31% worked more than 50 hours over the week prior to completing the survey). 64% of workers felt that the level of control they had over their working hours had negatively impacted their mental wellbeing.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this sub-sector sees the highest proportion of workers who have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing (68%).

5.6 Cinema Exhibition

The Cinema Exhibition workforce includes a large proportion of front-of-house staff, and so has a different profile to the rest of the industry. Approximately 40% of Exhibition workers are under the age of 30. Freelancing within Exhibition is much less common, and earnings are lower than for the rest of the industry (Screenskills / The Work Foundation 2019).

5.6.1 Experience of mental health problems

85% of those working in Exhibition have experienced a mental health problem. Prevalence of mental health problems is much higher among younger workers within this sub-sector, as shown in figure 5.6.

National data suggests that anxiety and self-harm are much higher among young people (APMS, 2016), and this is reflected within our survey findings.

For example, Exhibition saw the highest levels of self-harm, at 39%, compared with 24% across the survey. It also saw much higher prevalence of suicidal thoughts, at 63% compared with 55% across the survey.

5.6.2 Work characteristics

Despite this, in many ways the characteristics of work in Cinema Exhibition compare favourably to other parts of the Film and TV industry.

Workers in Cinema Exhibition are less likely to work more than 50 hours per week (8% compared with 30% across the sample), are nearly double as likely to feel their job is secure (49% compared with 25%), and also more likely to feel valued (62% compared with the average of 55%).

However, working within cinema venues may require irregular working patterns and shift work, which can impact mental health. Additionally, those working in the sub-sector report limited access to natural light can impact their wellbeing, and prevalence of Seasonal Affective Disorder was also slightly higher (22% compared with the average of 20%).

“In the Cinema industry (especially here in Scotland) a lot of us don’t see sunlight for days on end in Winter. Cinemas very rarely have windows! I strongly believe this exacerbates our mental and physical wellbeing. Shift work is not good for sleep patterns and this affects mental health issues. Due to this being classed as the Entertainment industry there is no financial reward for working unsociable hours.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

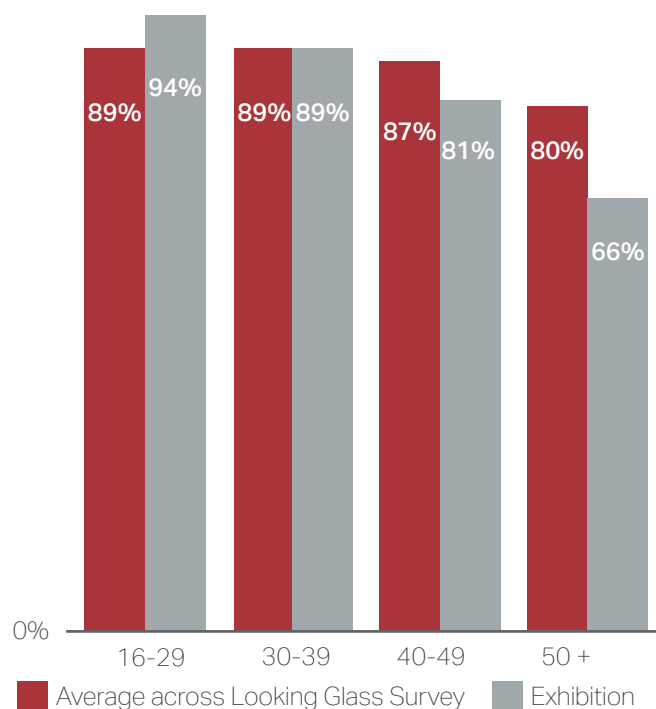


Figure 5.6. Experience of mental health problems by age within Exhibition and across the survey sample
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019

5.7 Factual/Documentary

Challenges within Factual/Documentary can involve investigating and reporting on quite distressing content. *More than half of Factual/Documentary workers (61%) reported they felt that support in these situations was not sufficient, compared with 55% on average.* Interview respondents described the impact distressing visual material was having on their mental wellbeing, with one reporting experiencing vivid nightmares after watching footage of a natural disaster, and another describing a 'numbness' after involvement in a programme involving extreme violence.

Research has also found that "TV documentarians are at risk of both vicarious and direct traumatisation". (Dart Center, 2019)

Mirroring this, our survey found *that Factual/Documentary had the highest incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (25%, compared with an average of 16% across the survey sample).*

Individuals working within Factual/Documentary were also at greater risk of experiencing workplace bullying (64% compared with 56% on average across the survey).

While working patterns within Factual/Documentary align with the overall pattern for the survey sample, workers were more likely to report that work had a negative impact on their relationships (67% compared with 57%) as well as challenges in balancing work with personal commitments (81% compared with the average of 78%).

Furthermore, four in five workers indicated they felt stressed at work (80%). This compares with just a little over two-thirds on average (71%).

Working in Factual/Documentary can involve specific challenges and high stakes. One interview respondent described the challenges of balancing her responsibilities as a mother with being a producer on an international factual programme, exemplified by a phone call made from a nursery with crew working in a conflict zone.

Wider research has found that Factual/Documentary workers are facing acute challenges in engaging with vulnerable contributors. This can involve a strong sense of responsibility when telling someone's story, difficulties in managing boundaries, moral confusion, and concern that participation may heighten a contributor's distress (Dart Center, 2019).

"Impact of cuts in my area have had the worst impact on making the job more stressful. Fewer staff / bad organisation of work have led to 2 periods of disruptive anxiety and stress after 28 years of enjoying working in [the] 'stressful' news environment. Not being able to do [the] job properly is main issue."

Looking Glass survey respondent

"In news there are a lot of issues around exposure to traumatic imagery and working with traumatic witness accounts, as well as a lack of training / knowledge / care about the potential impact we have on the mental wellbeing of potential contributors / witnesses / bereaved families / etc that we want to talk to. As a result I am leaving the industry this year as I no longer feel like the impact I'm having on the world is a net positive"

Looking Glass survey respondent

This combination of stress at work, feeling one's mental wellbeing impacted by traumatic content without adequate support and workplace bullying makes workers in this genre more likely to consider leaving the industry due to concerns for their mental wellbeing (71% compared with 63%).

5.8 News

64 respondents to the Looking Glass survey worked in News. Due to this low sample size, we have used unweighted survey data to explore the experiences of this group, and caution that these results are indicative but not representative of the experiences of News workers.

59 respondents working in News (92%) reported they had experienced a mental health problem.

Those working in News must often deal with challenging and distressing content. Of those we surveyed, 42% felt the content they worked on had a negative impact on their mental health (compared with 17% overall), and 62% felt that support at work to manage this was insufficient. Alongside this, respondents described the cumulative effect of working with members of the public who had faced real tragedy:

“Contributors are regularly living in extreme human suffering. Our job is to convey that pain and sometimes when we walk away some of that sadness and guilt comes with us. I regularly weep at what I have seen, but keeping the balance in your work can keep you sane”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Respondents also described the intensity of working in a 24 hour news environment, with high pressure to perform consistently.

“The pressures of senior leaders on local managers and team leaders - demands in a News world full of deadlines and too tight budgets. Not enough staff to cover the roles and, indeed, to cover peak leave. Shockingly tight financially - yet the demand to perform remains high. Many reporters don’t get a break because they’ve expected to self-shoot, self-edit and report live from location - sometimes to early deadlines. Too much pressure is damaging.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

5.9 Sport

60 Looking Glass survey respondents work in Sport. Due to this low sample size, we have used unweighted survey data to explore the experiences of this group, and caution that these results are indicative but not representative of the experiences of Sport workers.

41 workers in Sport have experienced depression (66%). In fact, this is the genre most likely to have experienced a mental health problem, but the least likely to have told anyone.

Further, 47 (76%) felt drinking alcohol was a significant part of work culture in the industry, even to the extent where nearly half (47%) of Sport workers surveyed believe it is harder to secure new work or progress into more senior roles if you don't drink alcohol.

Perhaps as a natural consequence, increased alcohol intake is a common way of coping with stress in this genre, indicated by 39 people working in Sport (63%).

“I stopped drinking - I feel like this has had a hugely positive impact on my life, but it’s also created a huge anxiety over socialising at work. I have a colleague who also quit drinking and he has even more of the anxiety than I do. Our industry / culture in the U.K. is so wrapped up in alcohol, and this has clear effects on everyone.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

While data regarding the composition of the workforce by genre is not available, engagement with the industry forum indicated that Sport continues to be a male-dominated part of the industry.

5.10 Comedy

Nine out of ten of those working in comedy have experienced a mental health problem (91% compared with an average of 87%), and 33% of people rate their own current mental health as poor or very poor, which is above the average (26%).

Eating disorders are also more prevalent among those working in Comedy (19% compared with 13% on average across the survey).

Nearly half of women in Comedy indicate they have experienced sexual harassment at work. (46% compared with 39% overall).

Notably, workers within Comedy report higher than average experience with drug and alcohol dependence (22%). Workers within comedy were most likely to agree that 'drinking alcohol is a significant part of work culture in this industry' (68% of compared with 60% across the sample).

5.11 Daytime

There are indications from the 300+ respondents who work in Daytime that the working culture in this genre is harming workers.

Strikingly, 42% indicate that the culture and values of the industry impact their mental health negatively, compared with 29% overall.

Nearly half (47%) report that attitudes towards mental health in the industry have negatively affected their mental wellbeing, compared with 35% on average.

Also, they are the most worried they will be judged if people found out they had a mental health issue, with over half indicating this (52% compared with 42% on average).

In a comparison across the genres, *people in Daytime are among the people who feel least valued at work (38% compared with 27% on average).*

As a result, *nearly three-quarters of workers in Daytime consider leaving the industry due to concerns for their mental wellbeing.*

5.12 Reality/Entertainment

Due to the low sample size for Reality, and the overlap in working conditions between Reality and Entertainment, these genres were merged, containing in total a group of 786 respondents. This is composed of approximately 62% men and 38% women.

In a comparison of genres, *this combined genre had the highest reported levels of anxiety (31% compared with 28%).*

In line with the overall survey sample, *two-thirds of workers in this category felt that support for those working with vulnerable contributors was not sufficient.*

Work with vulnerable contributors was a strong theme among this group, with several respondents alluding to experiencing the 'moral injury' or discomfort with unethical working practices outlined in more detail in Chapter 4.

64% of workers within this category felt that their ability to speak out about working practices or their working environment was negatively affecting their mental wellbeing, compared with 47% overall.

“Working in an industry where mental health is a big part of the work we do (from contributors, to portrayal, to stress in the job) the lack of sympathy and understanding in 2019 is shocking. The lack of awareness from commissioners about mental health and the desire to exploit misfortune and mental health issues for entertainment purposes puts me as a person working on the other side in an uncomfortable position.

I do not like exploiting people’s misfortunes to ‘make good TV’. I like telling real stories that people want to share not feel forced to by producers under immense pressure to deliver certain narratives from commissioners.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

“Working in reality TV has a huge toll on me, dealing with talent who have no regard for the team who work so hard putting a show together to make them look good... I want to get out of this genre of tv to see if I prefer something else, and if not then I will leave.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

Workers within this genre are more likely to report that the content they work on or with as negatively affecting their mental wellbeing (20% compared with 16% overall).

5.13 Conclusion

It is clear therefore that, while the picture of mental health, work conditions, culture and capability is largely consistent across the industry, there are some nuances within this – in particular depending on the characteristics of workers and the content, part of the value chain or genre that people work in.

Together with the findings from chapters 3 and 4, this signals the needs for both wide-ranging and tailored support, to address the underlying challenges while reflecting specific areas of vulnerability and need.

6. Existing mental health support

Summary

- Workers in this industry face barriers to getting the support they need to look after their mental wellbeing when they need it. These are often characteristic of working life within this industry, including working patterns; industry attitudes towards mental health; and the capability of managers and senior staff to support their workers.
- Government has committed to improving access to statutory mental health services, but there remains significant unmet need across the country. For example 3 in 5 people experiencing a common mental health problem in England do not receive support (NHS, 2019).
- Within the film and TV industry, several employers are leading the way in providing enhanced support to their employees to help them to stay well or recover following a period of mental ill health.
- This work is supplemented by the efforts of industry groups, such as unions, trade bodies and occupational bodies working to improve working practices across UK film, TV and cinema.
- We have identified a series of examples of support being delivered in other industries, which provide insights to inform how the film and TV industry could work to tackle shared challenges.
- We have identified four ways in which the industry's approach to workplace wellbeing could be improved:
 1. Increasing and improving access to support
 2. Building capability and capacity within the industry to improve workplace wellbeing
 3. Changing behaviours
 4. Improving ways of working

6.1 Introduction

Given the picture of mental health amongst workers in UK film, TV and cinema outlined through this report, the need for ready access to high quality support is crucial.

Support needs will vary considerably among individuals working in the industry, and workers may find that their needs change over time.

This suggests there is no 'one-size fits all' approach that will work for those who experience a mental health problem; but rather points to a need for a comprehensive package of measures – including workplace interventions, healthcare services, and support offered by charities and private providers.

This section explores what support those working in film, TV and cinema want, what's currently available and where the gaps are. It articulates a series of strategic themes for future programmes designed to tackle the underlying causes of the mental health crisis and promote better mental wellbeing across the industry.

6.2 What support is available now?

6.2.1 Statutory services

Provision of statutory services varies widely across the UK and although investment in this area is expected to grow, significant unmet need will remain.

Individuals experiencing mental health problems can access support through community and secondary care within the National Health Service. *Health services are devolved to the nations within the UK, and as a result mental health service provision varies considerably* as providers develop strategies and services to meet specific local needs.

For example, there are specific challenges in Scotland, which sees higher than average rates of suicide (ONS 2019b). Successive strategies have brought this down considerably, and the holistic approach to mental health support has been widely commended (RCN 2016). In England, patients have access to psychological therapy within the NHS wherever they live. The flagship Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programme has seen real success, and is being emulated as an example of best practice. However, significant improvements need to be made to the way people experience support during a mental health crisis in England.

Three in five people experiencing mental health problems in England receive no support at all (NHS 2019).

In Wales, extended periods of reduced funding in the NHS have led to *significant regional variations* in access to mental health services within the nation. But there is clearly a real ambition to address this, with both changes to legislation and practice bearing fruit through early improvements in patient experience.

A recent briefing from the Mental Health Policy Group includes a range of ways in which Government should improve mental health support in England, *including expanding and supporting the mental health workforce, closing the gaps in the access, experience and outcomes between different ethnic groups and investing in the mental health estate*. The continued need to focus on the fundamental infrastructure of mental health support provided through the NHS gives an indication of the scale of the challenge in improving outcomes and meeting unmet need.

6.2.2 Workplace support

Through our review of existing provision and engagement with the industry forum, we identified *a number of ways in which employers are already working to protect and improve the wellbeing of their workforce*. These included:

- Activities to raise awareness, through schemes such as Mental Health Awareness Weeks;
- Talking campaigns to reduce stigma, where leaders within a business discuss the importance of talking about mental health;
- Changing language used to ask workers about their experience of physical or mental health problems, with greater emphasis on workplace support available;
- Wellness Coffee Morning events for a business's freelance community;
- Building discussions about wellbeing and workplace behaviour in to start-up meetings on productions;
- Supporting staff to take 'Mental Health Days' – time off work requested at short notice to support wellbeing and recovery;
- Anticipating where workers may be exposed to challenging content and discussing this with them ahead of a project;
- Sharing resources signposting support to all workers, for example during induction meetings or on cards included in worker lanyards;
- Embedding expectations for workplace behaviour in to contracts training, including mental health awareness and mental health first aid training as well as training on respect and behaviour at work;
- Wellbeing support, including extending psychological support available to contributors to workers and targeted Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs).

70% of organisations in screen industries have fewer than five employees (compared with 54% across the whole economy) (Screenskills/The Work Foundation, 2019). Throughout this research, we heard concerns from respondents and wider stakeholders that only large employers have the resources, in terms of both capacity and in-house expertise, to deliver effective workplace support.

However, one respondent described how the small production company she works with have supported her through periods of mental ill health. She has led the development of a mental health policy for her organisation, grounded in simple practical steps for supporting workers experiencing mental health problems (see adjacent case study).

The role of culture in supporting mental health at work

Amy* is an Office Coordinator in a small Production Company. She is a mum of four children and has borderline personality disorder, eating disorder, depression and has self-harmed.

When advertised, it was clear the role was a good match in terms expertise.

“My first thought was ‘I can do this work. I’ve done similar and I was good at it’

“My second was that I might be accepted. The whole point of what they do is look at people that are different and people who haven’t necessarily had the easiest time in society. So I thought ‘If I can’t be honest here, I can’t be anywhere’”

But what made her apply was the fact that the Production Company advertising the role makes films about marginalised, vulnerable groups.

Because of her mental health conditions, at times Amy* needs to take a week off while unwell. The business she works for is hugely supportive; accepting she will do what she can and will work to catch up once she's back. For her, a truly supportive working culture is one where 'it's okay not to be okay sometimes' and where there are strategies in place that are realistic to the individual and the organisation for dealing with those times.

“It’s about sort of giving me that space. That it’s okay not to be well.

Some organisations say they accept everyone, and they are open-minded and it’s just words; because the first time you’re off sick no one knows what to do, no one knows how to cope.

On a practical day to day level it’s good to have a clear mental health policy, which is something that I helped write. If I’m not there, it’s not like suddenly the whole office has to shut down.

It’s finding those individual strategies that make your role still yours when you get back, but that ensure other people can operate when you’re not there.”

6.2.3 Industry initiatives

Alongside the support being offered by individual businesses, our research found some examples of industry-wide mental health support available to individuals working in film, TV and cinema, as well as initiatives to tackle the underlying causes of the crisis outlined within Chapter 3.

Support currently available within film, TV and cinema falls within the following categories:

- Guidance
- Training
- Helplines
- Information and advice
- Clinical support and therapy

Our review found that while support with mental health and wellbeing is available to workers within the industry, this can be geographically-limited, and often targets specific occupations.

Our review also found strong examples of industry initiatives to drive improvements in working practices within film, TV and cinema. In the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal and Me Too movement, the BFI and Bafta have taken steps to address sexual harassment, bullying and abusive behaviour in the workplace, introducing new Principles and Guidelines for the screen industries.

The Film and TV Support Line

The Film and TV Support Line provides one-to-one, independent, professional support and advice, by phone, web chat and e-mail. The number is 0800 054 00 00 and the line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The support covers a range of issues; practical and emotional, work-related and personal. Through the line, callers have access to counselling, regulated legal advice, guidance and information around debt, budgeting and benefits, as well as referral to the charity's grants and awards programmes. Those who are referred for counselling can have their sessions on the phone or in person; online CBT is also being rolled out.

The Support Line was set up by the Film and TV Charity in April 2018 in response to a number of events, including the death by suicide of location manager Michael Harm, who left messages saying how lonely he was and urging the industry to do more to look after its own. The need for support was further demonstrated by widespread revelations of sexual harassment in the industry, which led to the #metoo and TimesUp movements. When the BFI and Bafta developed a set of principles for dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace, a support line was identified as a vital, missing resource. The deaths by suicide of TV show contributors were also signs that all was not well in the industry.

Bafta and BFI Principles and guidance on bullying and harassment

In 2018, Bafta and the British Film Institute brought industry partners together to develop a new set of working principles to tackle workplace bullying and harassment within film, TV and games. The aim of this work is to prevent bullying and harassment within the industry, through sending a message that they will not be tolerated.

The guide includes tailored messaging for employers, heads of department and workers, freelancers or employees, setting clear roles and responsibilities and highlighting routes to support. Crucially, the guidance was developed through consultation with industry, and BFI and Bafta have committed to review it regularly to ensure it keeps apace with changes in working practices and legislation.

The principles and guidance are already delivering tangible impacts. There is a contractual condition for all BFI funded projects, and agents have reported embedding them in to contracts on behalf of their clients.

Bafta and BFI are working with Screenskills to develop a short e-learning module informed by the guidance, which will be available at no cost from 2020.

The Film and TV Charity has a 90-year history of providing support to individuals wherever they are based and the Support Line was the first new service from the charity as part of its revitalised mission to support the wellbeing of all those who bring stories to our screens. The Film and TV Charity is working with many industry partners to ensure the Support Line number is included on every call sheet and widely promoted across the sector. Since its launch, the Support Line has taken over 3,500 calls, emails and webchats.'

6.3 Increasing and improving access to support

The previous section highlighted significant gaps in support for individuals working in film TV and cinema. This suggests a need for the industry to provide further, and enhance access to, support amongst its workers.

6.3.1 Talking therapy

When asked 'where would you go for support to manage your mental health or wellbeing?' just over a third (36%) selected private therapy. However, when asked 'What would help you to manage your mental wellbeing at work?' 51% of respondents wanted 'one to one therapy'. There are a number of factors which could account for the discrepancy between these two findings. In particular, when identifying barriers to support, 33% said 'services are too expensive'; and 16% said 'services aren't available where I work'.

These findings suggest that individuals working in the industry would value access to one-to-one therapy at reduced cost or free of charge. There could be particular value in scoping the possibility of therapy co-located at studios, post houses and other large employers, alongside digital options such as videocalls or computer based CBT.

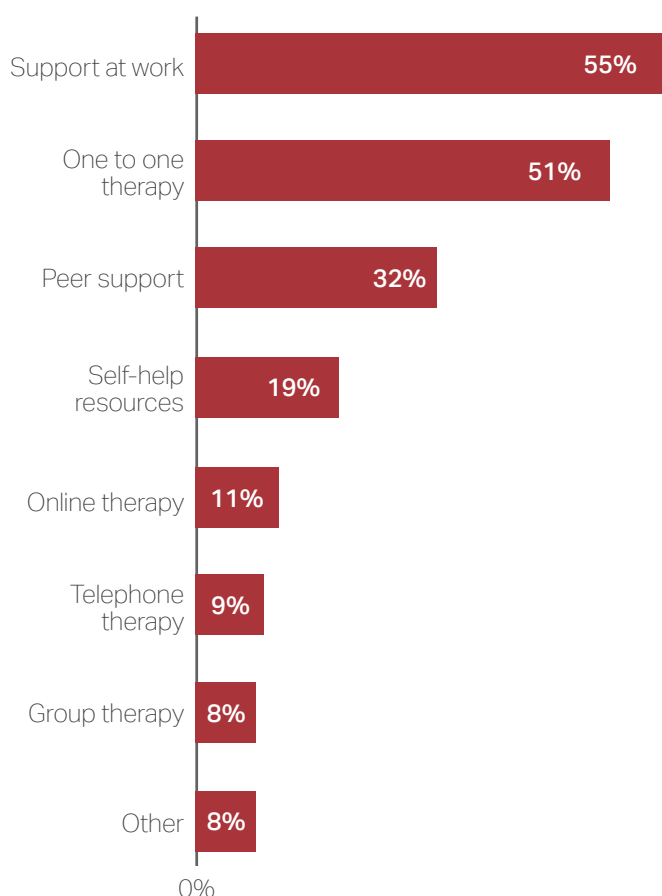


Figure 6.1. What would help to manage mental wellbeing at work
The Looking Glass survey, June/July 2019
Sample size: 4,773

6.3.2 Peer support

Just over a quarter (26%) of respondents reported that they often feel isolated. Peer support involves individuals with shared experiences coming together to support each other – either in-person or virtually through online platforms – and can be particularly effective in supporting individuals who have experienced mental health problems and social isolation. When asked 'What would help you to manage your mental wellbeing at work?' roughly a third of Looking Glass survey respondents (32%) selected 'peer support'.

Peer support was particularly popular among certain groups that can often feel excluded or isolated, including people who are Black and Asian (both at 41%), and people with caring responsibilities (37% compared with 31% without).

Finland Wellbeing Guild of Entrepreneurs

The main objective of the Guild project was to support the mental wellbeing of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs and ensure that they have the skills and resources to take early action in case of onset of mental health problems. This model entails experienced entrepreneurs and wellbeing experts advising more junior entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized companies on sustainable well-being.

The core activities included:

- A two-day course on welfare (applied mental health first aid); and

- Peer group activities, in which expert and peer support were used to develop respondents' self-awareness, stress management skills, and resilience with regards to periods of isolated working.

- Peer group discussions focused on coping and on problems related to everyday life and work.

Over six hundred entrepreneurs took part in the Guild, of whom more than ninety percent recommend Guild activities to their colleagues. This has helped entrepreneurs understand their own coping strategies and identify risks related to their mental well-being.

This model was identified by an expert panel at the EU Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being as an example of good practice following assessment against a range of measures including effectiveness and scalability (EU Compass Consortium, 2016).

“I collected together people who I respected that were in a similar position, but we didn’t know each other, and we were from a variety of backgrounds. We met once a month for several years, and we still do. It’s a huge help in terms of inspiration, support and advice and ideas. It’s one of the best things that I’ve had career-wise and it works very well. So, I think peer support is brilliant.”

Interview respondent

One research respondent had set up a group for workers within the industry, and outlines the ways it had been useful for them:

A growing body of evidence suggests peer support can prove successful in empowering those with mental health problems. Benefits include shared identity, acceptance, increased self-confidence, self-worth associated with helping others, developing and sharing skills, improved mental health, emotional resilience and wellbeing, information and signposting; and challenging stigma and discrimination (Mind 2013). Consultation with the McPin Foundation emphasised the importance of multiple layers of ‘shared experience’ within peer support, for example, bringing together people who have commonality in their job role, their career stage, the mental health conditions they face, particular life events, other personal or demographic factors, or the region they live in.

One example of this is the work of MindOut, a mental health charity for LGBT people living in Brighton and Hove. Through their research, the McPin Foundation also found that peer support works best where funders, providers and communities work together to co-design peer support that works for different groups. With this in mind, there could be value in a range of stakeholders within film and TV coming together to explore the potential for peer support for different groups within different settings. For example, there could be particular value in scoping the possibility of peer support co-located at studios, post houses and other large employers.

MindOut

MindOut is a support service for LGBT people based in Brighton, East Sussex.

It offers dedicated peer groups, for example a group for anyone identifying as bisexual. It also acts as a wellbeing network, and offers one-off sessions centred around particular life events (e.g. coming out) or other mental health challenges (e.g. anger, self-harm). The reach of these groups is considerable. Over 2018-2019, 214 people attended 20 different groups

These have led to improved wellbeing using the Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale for 64% of attendees, with clients reporting that after using the service, they are

- feeling close to other people
- thinking clearly
- feeling confident

6.3.3 Support at work

a) Support to manage mental wellbeing

Research respondents wanted to see more mental health support available through their job (cited by 55% of respondents), but highlighted their concerns about discussing a mental health problem they were experiencing at work. Just 7% of respondents said they would approach their manager for support if they were experiencing a mental health problem, and for many, concern that talking about mental health could jeopardise future work opportunities had prevented them from seeking support. Alongside this, managers reported they wanted more support and guidance on having supporting conversations with team members who were experiencing a mental health problem.

Recognising the demand for enhanced support at work, there would be value in developing and sharing a resource that industry workers and managers could use to structure conversations about mental health and workplace support. One strong example of a resource already available is the Wellness Action Plans, developed by the mental health charity, Mind.

The Looking Glass survey revealed significant disparities in the experiences of freelancers and employees. This is particularly significant given that while many employees will have access to a form of Employee Assistance Programme, benefit in kind tax rules exempt freelancers from accessing this service.

Freelancers were more likely than employees to work more than 40 hours per week, and also more likely to report not having the time to access the support they need. Freelancers also reported greater worries regarding long term financial planning; 92% reported "uncertainty about future income often makes me worried", compared with 65% of employees. In combination, these factors indicate significant unmet need among freelancers working in the industry.

Mind's Wellness Action Plans

Mind, the mental health charity, has developed Wellness Action Plans as a resource for employers and workers to facilitate conversations about mental health.

It aims to help workers identify what keeps them well at work, what causes them to become unwell and the support they would like to receive from their manager to boost their wellbeing or support them through a recovery.

The Wellness Recovery Action Planning approach, which Mind adapted to develop their WAP, is a well evidenced approach to self-management for people experiencing mental health problems.

A randomised control trial within the USA demonstrated that WRAPs have led to a reduction in symptoms and an increase in hope among users (Cook et al 2012). Research exploring their applicability within mental health services in Scotland and Ireland has also endorsed rollout (Scottish Centre for Social Research 2010, Higgins et al 2010).

b) Support to anticipate and mitigate workplace risks to wellbeing

Several interview respondents expressed frustration around situations where they felt that risks of high levels of workplace stress or distress could have been identified in advance.

In particular, this applied to individuals working with distressing or challenging content. Evidence suggests that risks of vicarious trauma and distress are high among individuals working within these settings. People spent hours at a time reviewing footage of graphic violence or human tragedy without prior discussion about the impact this may have on their wellbeing or steps they could take to limit the impact of disturbing visual content.

The effects of this appeared to be heightened by the repetitive and isolating nature of research and editing work. Individuals described working on projects alone, and needing to view hours of similar footage at a time to identify the content required.

Simple strategies, including taking regular breaks during the working day, and, where possible, balancing the amount of time spent on projects of this nature could make a clear difference.

One Production Company is already working to do this, holding briefing meetings with staff involved in 'blue light' programmes to support them to prepare for the content they may be exposed to. For a more comprehensive offer of support, lessons could be learned from the success of the partnership between emergency services teams and the mental health charity Mind in developing a Trauma Awareness Training Programme.

Workers emphasised that given the competitive nature of the industry, it is difficult to turn down or opt out of projects due to concern about the potential impact of content, so there is a clear need for employers to be more proactive in supporting staff and freelancers in this area.

The BBC is working to address this through its comprehensive approach to Trauma Risk Management.

BBC Trauma Management and Support

To reflect the nature of the work that many people do at the BBC, they have a particular focus on psychological trauma (including secondary trauma) as part of their overall approach to mental health.

A before/during/after model is followed to ensure people who are exposed to trauma are supported at every stage. Staff can access information, training and confidential support in relation to assessing and managing potential traumatic or other psychological risks.

The BBC also has a network of trained BBC staff who are able to advise and support colleagues before and after their deployment or exposure to traumatic scenes and events and, if necessary, advise on need for further professional help. They are trained in an approach called Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) which was pioneered in the UK military.

Those affected by trauma also have access to a specialist Occupational Health pathway which provides assessment and potentially treatment for those impacted. There is also psychological support available through the BBC's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Mind's Blue Light Trauma Awareness Training

Through the Blue Light programme, the mental health charity Mind developed new evidence about the mental health and working experiences of emergency services staff.

One element of this was the development of targeted training in trauma awareness and peer support.

Following the training, 94 per cent of respondents reported they felt more confident looking after themselves and others witnessing or involved in traumatic events, and 99 per cent agreed their awareness of trauma and its effects had improved. (Mind, 2019)

6.3.4 Digital routes to support

The main reason that workers were not able to access support was that they didn't have time (48%). Alongside that, a third reported that services are too expensive (33%). Some also reported that services weren't available where they work (16%) or where they live (6%). Recognising the barriers individuals face in accessing GP services and talking therapies, there could be value in exploring digital routes to support. For example, many mobile apps now allow users to access cognitive behavioural therapy, wherever they are and at any time of day. One example of this is Space from Depression developed by Silvercloud, which offers internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy.

Many providers now offer access to talking therapies through video link, allowing individuals to build rapport with a therapist while avoiding the need to travel to a specific location to attend meetings.

Other digital routes to support include Babylon, which allows remote access to GP services, and Headspace, an app for practising mindfulness.

Space from depression

This is a mobile app which allows users to access internet based cognitive behavioural therapy remotely. It could be delivered at much lower cost than in-person therapy, and would allow individuals to participate in the online module at their own pace, wherever they are and at any time of day.

It has been available in the UK since 2012, and has established a robust evidence base including reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression and reduced delivery costs. (YHEC, 2019)

6.4 Building capability and capacity within the industry

6.4.1 Mental health literacy

As outlined in Section 3.4, there are clear gaps in understanding and awareness about mental health among industry workers.

Without a fundamental understanding of the factors that can contribute to stress and poor mental wellbeing among those planning and scheduling work, workers may continue to face unmanageable demands with limited breaks and extremely long hours. Essential training about the prevalence of common mental health problems could help to tackle pervasive and outdated stereotypes about mental health, which will be essential in ensuring that workers feel able to seek advice and support, regardless of their seniority.

“I think the only way it will change is if it’s made more acceptable for people to say that they have mental health problems and they need to do certain things to stop them from having bouts of mental health issues...”

Saying “I’ve got to go to a meeting to talk about my feelings”, which is what everyone thinks AA meetings are about, they all think “Really? Does that really take precedence?”

Interview respondent

The case study outlines steps Sky Sports are taking to improve mental health literacy and access to support among their team.

Wellbeing at Sky Sports

Over recent years, Sky Sports has been focussing on improving the experiences of staff through focussing on work-life balance and on attracting, retaining and developing people from a wider range of backgrounds. Alongside this, attitudes towards mental health have been improving across Sky, and especially within Sport. This change has been driven from the ground up, by junior colleagues and Heads of Department who had experienced mental health problems.

This group spearheaded a Time to Change Action Plan and secured support from Sky Sports Senior Leadership Teams, who committed to the Time to Change employer pledge, and agreed to fund specialist Mental Health First Aid Training for staff.

Twenty three colleagues, working at all levels of the business, have now taken part in the training and have come together as a peer-led Wellbeing Team for Sky Sports staff. The team now holds weekly mental wellbeing drop-in sessions, offering staff a source of confidential support on site. These sessions are well attended, and the ‘grassroots’ feel of the service is considered to have been essential to its success.

The Wellbeing Team also works closely with the Sky Sports Body&Mind network to tackle stigma surrounding mental ill health and proactively promote support available to staff, including a helpline and counselling services.

At a recent town hall event which brought together 200 employees, four Sky Sports colleagues got up on stage and spoke openly about their personal experiences of having a mental health problem while working in the industry. Discussion around the difficulties that can come with feeling low or anxious while spending time working alone away from home resonated both within and beyond Sport, with colleagues within Sky’s Home Services Teams facing similar challenges.

Through this work, Sky Sports has managed to shed long-standing perceptions about culture within Broadcast Sport. It has driven similar initiatives across the business, with other parts of Sky now committing to the Time to Change scheme.

6.4.2 Management and leadership skills

Several respondents highlighted that the recent boom in parts of the industry had led to an increase in 'up-working' with individuals with limited training and experience progressing in to more senior roles with management responsibility. Managers who contributed to the research reported they had not received training or guidance on supporting teams, and there were calls among workers and managers alike for training to build manager capability.

While a number of larger employers are already working proactively in this space through internal training on mental health awareness or line management, there is a case for building on this to ensure that a wider group of workers benefit:

- Training seems to be accessed only by small groups of workers within firms – interviews suggested this was more common in office-based roles for example
- Because training is largely funded by employers for employees, it is often not accessible to freelancers

To address this, the industry could develop tailored training courses which raise mental health literacy and recognise the unique challenges and opportunities of supporting and developing a team within the industry.

This would enhance manager capability, and re-position line management as an essential competency for industry leaders.

6.4.3 Equipping crew to support vulnerable contributors

As outlined within chapter 3 of this report, the challenges and responsibilities associated with working with members of the public are putting production teams under real pressure.

“Junior production members need much more support when dealing with vulnerable contributors. I've dealt with people in poor mental health, done reces to the houses of vulnerable people on my own - all without any training.”

Looking Glass survey respondent

There is a clear need to ensure that these projects embed high quality dedicated support for contributors alongside training, risk assessment and support for crew.

Some production companies are now providing mental health training to crew working with contributors. As well as improving mental health literacy among crew, organisations should ensure crew are supported in establishing professional boundaries with contributors, and identifying content that may be particularly difficult for them personally.

Anglian Water: Bespoke line manager training

Given that 70% of the workforce at Anglian Water is male and regularly engaged in industrial / field work, the occupational health team recognised that mental health conditions may be underreported across the company. It therefore designed an intervention to address this and encourage conversations around mental health. It was felt that line managers, although squeezed for time, were best placed to spot the signs of mental health issues amongst the workforce.

The company purposely did not go down the route of creating Mental Health First Aiders as they wanted something more bespoke to them. They worked with a company, Mental Health at Work, to design and deliver training sessions via a one-day course held off-site. All staff with line management responsibilities participated in this course.

Since the training was started, the proportion of mental health issues reported by staff has increased, while the proportion of MSK issues has declined, suggesting that attempts to break down the stigma attached to discussing and disclosing mental health problems have been successful.

Anecdotal feedback suggests that this is due to the fact that staff feel more empowered to disclose that they are struggling with a mental health condition and take the time off they need to recover, rather than feeling obliged to come back early before being ready and thus being at risk of presenteeism.

This must include all staff that have an interaction with contributors, even where this isn't explicitly recognised as a formal part of their role (including, for example, researchers, make-up artists, runners and so on).

Training should be underpinned by an organisational approach to contributor support, informed by the experiences of both contributors and crew.

6.5 Changing Behaviours

6.5.1 Talking campaigns

As for other industries, stigma associated with mental health can act as a significant barrier to accessing support. This is heightened by a culture in film and TV built around 'toughness'; where surviving extremely intense periods of work over a sustained period of time is worn as a 'badge of honour' and where the largely freelance workforce in parts of the sector feel they can't speak up in fear of missing out on future work opportunities.

This makes it difficult to provide preventative support, such as making workplace adjustments that allow individuals to reach their potential at work and understanding and limiting personal risk factors.

It also heightens the perception that experiencing mental health problems is rare and could also contribute to ongoing stigma and shame associated with mental ill health.

Other industries have taken steps to address stigma and to establish a culture where workers feel they are able to talk openly about mental health. In particular, the Lord Mayor's Appeal 'This is Me' campaign has sought to address this issue – where senior leaders of businesses in the City of London share their personal experiences of mental health problems.

This is me

This is Me is a business-led campaign to support organisations, and their employees, to talk about mental health. It encourages people with experience of a mental health problem, whether their own or of a loved one, to share their stories.

This is Me has seen real success, and has been adopted by a range of employers. In 2019, funding from the Cabinet Office through the Inclusive Economy Partnership has allowed the campaign to expand further. It has also extended regionally, with a new iteration of the campaign 'This is Me in the North West' co-developed by Barclays, PWC and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

There are now around 800 firms connected to This is Me or the Green Ribbon, of which 200 are actively running This is Me.

Another way to tackle inappropriate behaviour at work is through Active Bystander Training. This training supports individuals to play an active role in working situations where inappropriate behaviour occurs. It recognises that power disparities mean that some individuals will not feel able to directly intervene in response to harmful behaviour, and equips them with a toolkit of alternative strategies to use. The goal of this approach is not only to address bullying, harassment and violence as it happens, but also to shift cultural norms within a given community.

6.5.2 Tackling inappropriate behaviour

The 'Culture' chapter of this report outlined that workers within the film and TV industry continue to face inappropriate behaviour at work. There is a need to shift perceptions within the industry regarding the types of behaviour that can be considered to be acceptable.

Kings College London have deployed active bystander training as part of its 'It Stops Here' campaign. Other employers who have publicised that they are using active bystander training include BNP Paribas; Leigh Day; Brighton and Hove Albion, Imperial College London and Cambridge University.

“There should be some sort of... protocol... like they have in other companies where, if someone complains, it has to be noted down and it has to go through a certain process. That means that people can't get away with it, but also, there's no bias involved and... people know that they're not going to be just pushed to the side, because everyone is so chummy and friendly with each other.

Yes, it is awkward if you're friends with someone and then a colleague complains about them and you have to sit in the office and discipline your friend. But maybe then, that person just shouldn't be part of it, they should get someone else?”

Interview respondent

Active Bystander Training

This training aims to equip workers with strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. While this can include direct intervention, the training also considers other ways to de-escalate the situation for example through distraction, to support the individual after the event, and to report the incident to those with authority to act.

Public Health England recently published a comprehensive evidence review in to the applicability of this approach in UK university settings, which found that “if implemented at scale, over time, bystander programming in university contexts can lead not only to positive attitudinal and behavioural change at the individual level, but also, to a reduction in perpetration and victimisation at the level of the whole community”

Kings College London have deployed active bystander training as part of its 'It Stops Here' campaign. Other employers who have publicised that they are using active bystander training include BNP Paribas; Leigh Day; Brighton and Hove Albion, Imperial College London and Cambridge University.

Spot digital incident reporting

Spot is a reporting tool for workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination which uses artificial intelligence to generate incident reports using cognitive interviewing techniques.

Research respondents shared 29% more accurate detail when describing a sensitive incident to Spot, compared with speaking with a human. This type of solution fares particularly well in comparison with traditional telephone hotline; witnesses who had an online reporting tool available were significantly more likely (1.5x) to report the incident.

The Bar Council, which represents Barristers in England and Wales, has adopted Spot as a mechanism for supporting bullying and harassment within the legal profession. This allows Barristers to record inappropriate behaviour, and, if they choose, to make a complaint about the incident to their chambers, employer and/or regulator.

One of thirty interview respondents called for a more formal process for reporting inappropriate workplace behaviour within the industry.

6.6 Improving ways of working

6.6.1 New workplace standards and processes

This research has highlighted how working conditions in the industry – particularly work intensity – are creating an environment where risk factors for workplace stress and poor mental wellbeing are heightened, and protective factors for good mental wellbeing are limited. There is evidence that squeezed budgets and rising expectations mean the situation is worsening rather than improving.

Further, other factors such as the physical conditions within which people work (e.g. with a lack of natural light) or the content people work with can increase risk and undermine individual wellbeing.

All this points to a need for the industry to take a wider perspective when evaluating risk; and to establish new expectations for workplace practices. This could include new processes for evaluating and mitigating risks, particularly in film and TV production where stress factors are more pronounced. The industry also needs to set new expectations for ways of working, could include split shifts, protected time and space for breaks, challenging unacceptable behaviour, and providing and signposting mental health support.

These standards and processes could emulate wider schemes that seek to enhance workplace practices, such as the ALBERT scheme for environmental sustainability within production; Project Diamond which aims to increase on and off screen diversity and the Living Wage and Living Hours accreditations.

However, it is important that they are co-designed with industry to ensure they are workable in practice; complement existing standards and resources (e.g. BFI and Bafta principles on Bullying and Harassment and Pact Diversity Toolkit); and build on and tailor wider resources such as the Thriving at Work Standards for the specific challenges associated with the film and TV industry.

6.6.2 Collective Accountability

A particularly concerning survey finding was that 47% of survey respondents reported their mental wellbeing was negatively affected by their ability to speak out about their working environment or working practices..

This was reinforced by a large number of qualitative question responses which referred to barriers to reporting bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour. Given the large freelance workforce and the steady flow of workers between companies and projects, internal whistleblowing procedures within employers will not offer a sufficient level of scrutiny or coherence.

Another option to address this could be through a single digital incident reporting platform for this industry that allows workers to anonymously and confidentially report inappropriate behaviour. Through an app and a web-based platform, workers could report inappropriate behaviour to a trusted third party service, which could take responsibility for investigating complaints.

However, this raises the question of who workers are reporting concerns or complaints to? To drive the meaningful and lasting changes needed within film and TV, there is a need for the industry to take ownership of the mental health crisis and to commit to an industry-led response commensurate with the scale of the challenge. While this may seem difficult and ambitious, there are a range of positive examples from other sectors of industry-led action.

For example, the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), set up by the print media industry as an industry-led regulator that sets minimum standards for press reporting and behaviour.

Similarly, recognising the unique range of health and wellbeing challenges faced within their sector, construction firms recently came together to establish the Health in Construction Leadership Group. It aims to work as a “stimulus and a catalyst in helping unify the industry in its approach to worker health protection and the promotion, adoption and implementation of best practice processes and initiatives”. Current areas of focus include mental health, respiratory health and design for health.

These, and the case studies of interventions being offered in other industries to tackle shared challenges, could lay the foundations for and inspire a positive movement for change to support better mental health and wellbeing in UK film, TV and cinema.

7. Conclusion – the case for action

Our research has found that people working in film, TV and cinema are more likely to experience a mental health problem. Workers within the industry were more likely to have experienced suicidal thoughts and were more likely to have harmed themselves. Subjective wellbeing levels among workers were also lower than average.

Workers within the industry are also exposed to a range of factors at work which negatively affect their mental wellbeing, from extreme working hours and high work intensity to emotionally charged working environments and bullying. Industry workers living with a mental health problem face barriers to getting the right support when they need it, with many concerned that talking about their mental health at work could jeopardise their career prospects.

Industry bodies including the BFI and Bafta, Pact and BECTU are already working hard to drive improvements in working practices within the industry, and some employers are developing comprehensive offers of support for their employees. But too many workers are falling through gaps in the support available. The industry needs to build its capability to support the wellbeing of its workers.

People, and the creativity, skills and expertise they bring, are the driving force of film, TV and cinema in the UK. Investing in their wellbeing through developing positive and sustainable working practices and embedding inclusive cultures will be key for the industry to flourish.

The scale of the challenge outlined within this paper calls for an aligned industry-wide movement for change. While ambitious, the concerted effort outlined within this paper will bring tangible benefits for firms of all sizes within the industry. There is a compelling case for getting this right.

7.1 The case for action

7.1.2 The business case

Mental ill health is one of the main drivers of sickness absence and ill health in the UK. While overall sickness absence levels have declined over recent years, progress is starting to slow down and that appears to be driven by a greater proportion of workers experiencing mental health problems.

Mental health related absence is costing employers £6.8 billion per year, and the productivity lost through individuals working through periods of mental ill health, 'presenteeism' is costing between £26.6 to £29.3 billion per year (Deloitte, 2020). The Centre for Mental Health estimates that employers spend £3.1 billion a year in replacing staff who leave their jobs because of their mental health. The Government's Joint Work and Health Unit recently reported that people who have a long term sickness absence through a mental health problem are less likely to return to work afterwards. The Farmer/Stevenson review found that 300,000 people experiencing a mental health problem leave the UK labour market each year. Crucially for this industry, mental ill health among self-employed workers is estimated to cost £860 million (Deloitte, 2017).

We heard through this research that many firms rely on a core pool of freelance talent. While freelancers appear to be less likely to take sickness absence from work given that there is no entitlement to sick pay, presenteeism is difficult to account for and may increase costs overall.

While the costs to businesses are evident, the Mental Health Foundation has highlighted that people working with a mental health problem actually deliver more benefits than costs to the economy as a whole; they are responsible for 12.1% of the UK's GDP, or £226 billion.

In addition, return on investment for early intervention in workplace mental health is substantial. Reactive interventions, such as access to therapy through work, offer a return on investment for businesses of 5:1. (Deloitte, 2017). Interventions to equip managers to support their teams are also well evidenced, with a recent manager training course delivered strong outcomes and achieved a return on investment of £9.98 per £1 invested in the programme. The greatest returns came from investment at the organisational level which combined tailored individual support with wider programmes, such as a tailored health appraisal and personalised emails offered alongside group health seminar sessions (Deloitte, 2017).

7.1.3. The talent and diversity case

This is an industry driven by people; by their ideas, their creativity, and their capacity to tell compelling stories. Retaining this talent through proactively protecting and improving workforce wellbeing is more important now than ever before. With the production boom, the industry is growing rapidly. But a third of industry employers surveyed by Screenskills are currently experiencing skills shortages which are presenting problems for their business (Work Foundation / ScreenSkills 2019). The industry is facing a significant period of uncertainty. Within this context, it should be striving to develop a reputation as an inclusive place to work.

The industry is often characterised as being a 'closed shop' with few working outside it aware of the informal recruitment practices and extreme working conditions that have been normalised. But with the reach that social media platforms now offer, that could be set to change.

In this context, our survey finding that 63% of workers have considered leaving the industry due to concerns about their mental wellbeing should come as a stark warning.

While the sense of competition to work within the industry is still strong, it is facing a leaking talent pipeline, with individuals falling out of the industry as they progress. This is particularly concerning considering who is leaving; mid-career women in production, women of mixed ethnic backgrounds and Asian men.

7.1.4. The leadership case

Respondents consistently told us they want to see industry take a more proactive role in anticipating the risk factors for mental wellbeing that workers encounter and working to manage them

The UK film and TV industry is part of an increasingly connected global community. Exports are growing, as is international inward investment.

Throughout this research, we repeatedly heard the message that the difficulties workers encounter, from long hours to inappropriate behaviour at work are “just the way things are in this industry”. But while some working practices may well have taken root, this is an industry known for its agility in adapting to an evolving landscape. With coordination and leadership, there is no reason for these harmful working conditions to remain entrenched. Challenging the status quo by moving away from the conventions of working conditions and culture within the industry would offer the UK industry a clear point of difference among international counterparts. By showing true ambition and leadership in this regard, the UK could become the best place to make compelling content in the world.

As Government and society increasingly look to business to demonstrate responsible leadership and support better health and wellbeing of the workforce; the film and TV industry has the opportunity to be seen as a leader on these issues in the UK economy – an example of good practice that other industries might seek to emulate.

7.2 Shaping a movement for change

Equipped with the insights captured through this research, the Film and TV Charity and wider screen industry should collaborate to shape and build a movement for change.

7.2.1. Industry-owned and industry-led

Changes in culture, capability and working conditions cannot be imposed on an industry. A movement developed by and for film, TV and cinema will be essential to delivering the changes the industry needs.

The pace and impact of changes will unequivocally hinge on the involvement and ambition of industry leaders.

The business case for industry leadership in response to this challenge is compelling; not only in terms of attracting and retaining the talent and skills that will be essential for the screen industries to thrive in the future, but also in terms of tangible returns on investment. Managers and Directors representing employers of all sizes as well as occupational trade bodies and unions, have the resources and profile to drive this forward and so must be at the helm.

7.2.2 Shaped by film and TV workers who have experienced mental health problems

This research has provided new evidence and insight regarding the needs and experiences of people working in film, TV and cinema. Workers consistently associated a series of aspects of working life within this industry to their mental health and wellbeing. Long working hours, high pressure to perform, limited support at work and inappropriate workplace behaviour are chief among these perennial problems, and appear to be more acutely felt here than by workers in other industries.

Workers are cautious about schemes which feel disconnected from their experiences or irrelevant to their working life, and so a guiding principle for this movement should be that it is continually informed by the lived experience of individuals who have experienced mental health problems while working in the industry.

7.2.3 Additive and complementary

This research, and the movement it aims to catalyse, has not arisen within a vacuum but rather has evolved alongside and been informed by the work of a range of industry stakeholders already striving to improve the wellbeing of those working in the industry.

The BFI and Bafta are working to re-establish behavioural norms within film and TV production through their guidance on bullying and harassment; Pact is striving to tackle barriers to entry encountered by many groups through its diversity charter; and Bectu, 6 foot from the Spotlight and several broadcasters are improving mental health literacy through targeted training.

This movement should aim to work alongside partners who are already delivering support, adding value by scaling up provision to widen reach and amplifying success stories.

7.2.4 Sustainable and collaborative

Meaningful and lasting change will take time and need sustained commitment over the long-term. While there will always be an appetite for 'quick wins' in response to a challenge of this scale, what is required here is a transformative and long term programme of change underpinned by commitment and investment within the industry.

While some employers and industry stakeholders are developing activity in this area, acting alone will not be enough. The industry must act as a whole to drive real change in conditions, culture & capability.

Joint industry-wide activity has been proven to be successful in other industries, from the Health in Construction Leadership Group to the City Mental Health Alliance. In this industry, the case for joint working is arguably strengthened by the need to invest in the wellbeing of its sizeable freelancer workforce, who are under-served by industry initiatives currently on offer.

7.2.5 Targeted and intersectional

The research found that experiences within the industry varied significantly among workers. As a result, this movement must reflect different working contexts within the industry as well as areas of need.

Ethnic and social background was a significant factor here, with people of colour reporting higher levels of bullying and harassment, and working-class people experiencing isolation from the industry's networks and cliques. Disabled workers reported much lower levels of wellbeing, with interview respondents highlighting that simple adjustments at work were often overlooked. Women were more likely to report experiencing bullying and harassment, and freelance mid-career women were most likely to consider leaving the industry through concerns about their mental wellbeing.

Experiences varied by sub-sector, with the risk factors in Post-production and animation, for example, different to those highlighted in film and TV production.

7.2.6 Holistic and multifaceted

No silver bullet will address the range of factors affecting workplace wellbeing within film and TV. Instead, there is a need for a holistic approach which aims to concurrently address the broad range of underlying causes through a multifaceted programme.

Many aspects of working conditions are considered to be embedded within working culture, and true culture change will be driven by a commitment from senior leaders and engagement and behavioural change by managers at all levels who recognise the importance of their own capability in improving workforce wellbeing.

The underlying causes of the mental health crisis in film and TV are interlinked in many ways, and so coordinated action will be needed across multiple areas.

7.2.7 Pioneering and evolutionary

As outlined throughout this report, the current challenge within film, TV and cinema calls for an ambitious response. Working life within this industry is unique in many ways, but workplace wellbeing, and mental health in particular, is a priority for employers everywhere.

The evidence base regarding workplace wellbeing support is established and growing and this programme will require a willingness to consider whether models of good practice from other sectors and countries could be adapted to this context.

Alongside this, there is a need to be pioneering, with an openness to testing innovative approaches. Taken together, these approaches will mean that the programme of change is evolutionary, with ongoing monitoring and evaluation to gauge the effectiveness of interventions, and successive iterations maximising impact through insights from service users.

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Annex A: Glossary of terms

Stress

- There is no medical definition of stress. In this report, 'stress' refers to the normal reaction people have to being placed under pressure. The feelings they get when they find it difficult to cope with situations or events.
- It does not refer to the situations or events themselves that put pressure on people.
- The level of stress that people experience depends on both their emotional resilience — how good they are at coping with tough situations — and how much pressure they are under.
- Intense or frequent pressure is more likely to impact someone's stress level, therefore may be described as stressful. However, everyone is different. A tough situation that one person finds difficult to cope with may not cause such feelings of stress for another.

Work-related stress

- Work-related stress is the stress that people feel when they find it difficult to cope with pressure at work. The stress level is determined by the amount of pressure and their ability to cope with it.
- Work-related stress is one of the many factors that, in combination with others, can cause a mental health problem.

Mental health problem

- Good mental health means being generally able to think, feel and react in the ways that you need and want to live your life.
- Doctors make their diagnoses of mental health problems based on someone's experiences (groupings of certain feelings, behaviours and physical symptoms), how long they've been experiencing these things and the impact it's having on their life.
- Mental health problems can have a wide range of causes. It's likely that for many people there is a complicated combination of factors — although different people may be more deeply affected by certain things than others.

Mental wellbeing

- Mental wellbeing describes a person's mental state at any one time — how they are feeling and how well they can cope with everyday life. Mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from day to day.
- If someone experiences low mental wellbeing over a long period of time, they are more likely to develop a mental health problem.
- Someone with a mental health problem is more likely to have experience periods of low wellbeing — but they can have some days or periods of good wellbeing.
- We used the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale within our survey to understand respondents' subjective wellbeing.

Presenteeism

- Presenteeism is the practice of coming to work despite illness or injury.
- It is also used to refer to the practice of being present at work unnecessarily — for example, staying late in order to impress a manager or be able to charge for overtime.
- Both types of presenteeism lead to a decrease in productivity.

Freelancer

- Freelancers are defined as those who are self-employed. In the Looking Glass survey we asked respondents 'Are you... an employee; self-employed/freelance; combining employment with freelance work'. As such, our definition differs slightly to other surveys that ask about employment status over the past seven days, and/or do not offer an option for those combining employment and freelance work.

Annex B: Research methodology

Methodology annex

This section of the report contains additional information on our approach and methodology in relation to the survey size and statistics of robustness. Survey estimates are always subject to various sources of error for the reason that estimates are based on a sample rather than on the true population. Therefore, there may be smaller or larger differences between the estimates we derived from the survey sample, and those that actually exist in the population. This annex provides some information on how survey estimates may be interpreted.

Survey size

At the close of the online survey at 9am on Monday the 8th of July 2019, the dataset counted 9,399 original responses.

Of these, 20 responses were found to be spurious, as these related to respondents refused to agree to our use of their data and who were consequently denied access to the survey.

Further, of the 9,379 responses left, we have removed incomplete responses falling in a range of completion from 0% up to 69%. This is done for a number of reasons, the primary one is related to the composition of the survey. In the survey, questions pertaining to the respondents' personal characteristics, such as gender and age, were found at the end of the survey. Without at least some of this information, it is not possible to analyse these responses cross-sectionally, meaning that without this data we will be able to say that the proportion of respondents who have anxiety is of a given level, but not whether this relates to men or women, and what their circumstances look like that could explain or 'control' for spurious conclusions drawn from such numbers. On top of that, there is much literature warning against using partially completed survey responses as this introduces a higher risk of bias. This is based on the theory that there may be structural differences between those who complete a survey and those who do not in terms of engagement, the level of seriousness in answering questions honestly, etc.

Discarding incompletes up to 69% leaves us with a dataset of 5,446 responses with a completion rate that ranged between 70 to 100%. Of these, we retained the 4,887 responses which contained partial and completely filled out demographic questions. As such, it is important to note that some cross sectional analyses may be based on a given number of respondents, and another analysis on a lower, or higher number of respondents, depending on the number of respondents who answered the question that we are basing our analysis on.

The final dataset has been weighted, to correct for difference between the make-up of the survey sample and the profile of the film and TV workforce, including on the basis of: gender, age, sub-sector and region of employment. Data for the population was sourced from the Labour Force Survey 2017. Please refer to the table below for a detailed overview of the weighted survey sample.

Confidence intervals and standard errors

Confidence intervals describe the estimated margin of error we expect to find between our survey estimates and the values in the true population. In general, the larger the survey sample, the narrower the confidence intervals. For a 95 percent level of confidence, the sample size should be around 1,000. Therefore, estimates that are performed on our full sample of over 4,800 respondents fall within a narrow confidence interval, which means that we can quite specifically and with confidence say about those estimates that their value closely approaches the value we'd expect to find in the true population.

Of course, many of our estimates are performed on smaller subgroups of the sample, for example, only on self-employed women, or disaggregated by sub-sector. For these estimates, confidence intervals are a function of the sub-sample size and the increase in standard errors introduced by weighting.

The table below reports the lower and upper bounds of the confidence intervals and the standard errors for each of the point estimates. The percentages can be interpreted to mean that when we say the proportion of male workers in Film and TV in the UK is 63%, we are 95% certain the true proportion in the population ranges between 62% and 64%.

Table: Survey sample proportions, confidence intervals and their corresponding standard errors

	Looking Glass (weighted percentage)	(minus one standard deviation) CI-lower bound	(plus one standard deviation) CI-upper bound	S.E.
Gender				
Male	63%	62%	64%	0.006913
Female	36%	35%	37%	0.006873
Age	%	CI-lower bound	CI-upper bound	S.E.
16-29	30%	29%	31%	0.006562
30-39	29%	28%	30%	0.006498
40-49	21%	20%	22%	0.005832
50 and over	20%	19%	21%	0.005728
Subsector				
Production and Development	38%	37%	39%	0.00695
Post-production	8%	7%	9%	0.003885
Distribution	4%	3%	5%	0.002806
Programming and Broadcasting	32%	31%	33%	0.00668
Exhibition and motion projection	12%	11%	13%	0.004653
Region	%	CI-lower bound	CI-upper bound	S.E.
North East	2%	2%	2%	0.002005
North West	7%	6%	8%	0.003654
Yorkshire & Humberside	3%	3%	3%	0.002443
East Midlands	2%	2%	2%	0.002005
West Midlands	3%	3%	3%	0.002443
East of England	2%	2%	2%	0.002005
London	53%	52%	54%	0.007147
South East	11%	10%	12%	0.00448
South West	6%	5%	7%	0.003401
Wales	3%	3%	3%	0.002443
Scotland	6%	5%	7%	0.003401
Northern Ireland	1%	1%	1%	0.001425
Outside UK	2%	2%	2%	0.002005

Annex C: Industry engagement

Aardman	ITV	Vue
BBC	Knickerbockerglory	Warner Bros
The British Film Institute	RDF	Freelance Film Key 2nd Assistant
Channel 4	6ft from the spotlight	Freelance Standby Art Director
Disney	Sara Putt Associates	Freelance Production Manager
Endemol Shine	Sky	Freelance Director
Framestore	STV	
The Health and Safety Executive	Trades Union Congress	