

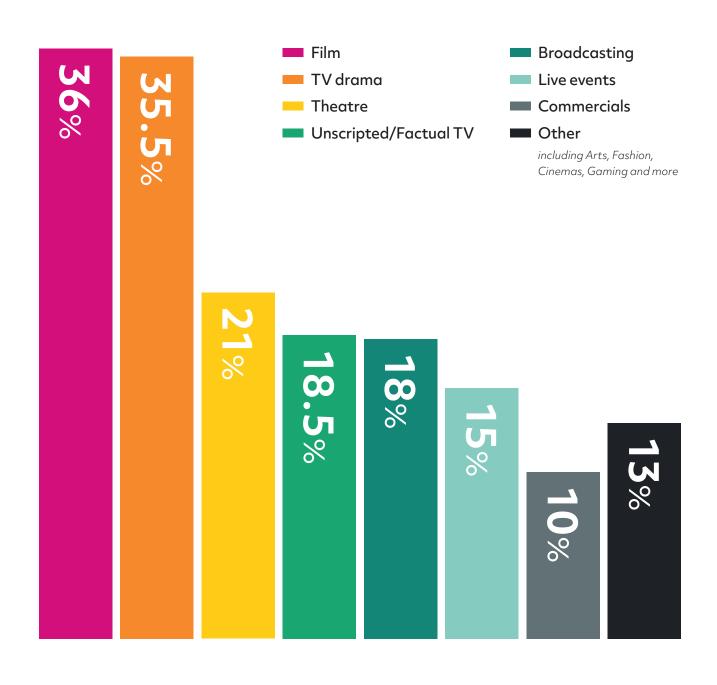


Between February and March 2025, Bectu surveyed 5,597 respondents across the creative industries in the UK's largest ever survey of behind-the-scenes creative workers.

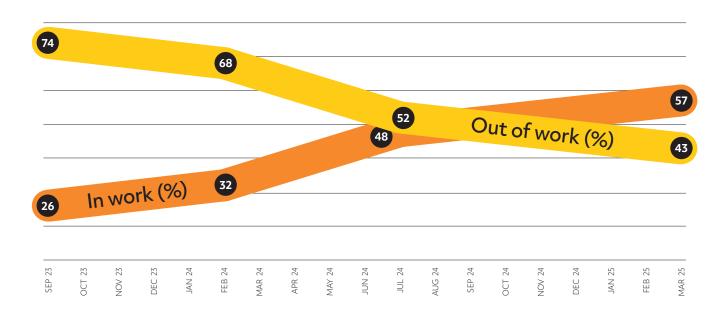
While creative industry workers are critical to our economy and to our social and cultural fabric, they (especially freelancers) often fall through data gaps on employment statistics, while without formal employment structures, their voices are often not heard. Bectu's Big Survey looks to fill these gaps, and use the findings to push for change.

Respondents by sector

Respondents came from across all areas of the creative industries, with many working in more than one area. 36% have worked in film, 35.5% in TV drama, 21% in theatre, 18.5% in unscripted, 18% in broadcasting and 15% in live events. 72% of all respondents were Bectu members. 58% were working as freelancers or were self-employed.



The screen industry slowdown



It is now more than a year on from the end of industrial action in the US, which bought many productions to a standstill. This coincided with a downturn in broadcasters' commissioning, due to financial constraints caused by a further squeeze on the BBC licence fee and a slump in advertising revenue. The screen industries slowdown is having a massive impact on the workforce, as our survey finds 43% of all 3,453 screen industry workers surveyed are out of work.

This is a decrease from 52% in July 2024, 68% in February 2024 and 74% in September 2023. Overall, only 16% of screen industry workers (film, TV drama, unscripted and commercial) have seen a full bounce back in their

employment since the end of US industrial action in November 2023.

A sluggish recovery is taking its toll on the workforce. Seven in ten (70%) screen industry workers told us that they were struggling financially and 65% reported poor mental wellbeing, with 61% saying they've struggled with anxiety or depression over the past 12 months.

The impact of the screen industries slowdown has added to existing poor working conditions. 85% of screen industry workers told us that they feel precarious in their work and just 19% say that they feel confident about their future in the industry.

This crisis poses an existential threat to the highly skilled workforce

who hold up the UK's £125 billion creative industries. A third (33%) of screen industry workers now see themselves leaving the industry all together in the next five years. This is a marked increase in the number of people who are planning to leave the industry within the next five years – from 24% in September 2023, as the long-term impact of the slowdown has taken hold.

Bectu has been holding regular discussions with UK broadcasters and other stakeholders to push for improved support mechanisms and are doing all we can to ensure workers' needs are top of the political agenda.

An end to toxic work cultures

More than seven in ten (71%) creative industry workers say that behaviours that would be considered toxic and inappropriate in public life are often tolerated in the creative industries – this increases to 8 in 10 workers in unscripted (79%) and 76% of global majority respondents.

More than six in ten creative industry workers (61%) have personally witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace.

But only around half (55%) of those who have experienced bullying or harassment had reported the incident to their employer or engager, with freelancers less likely to report incidents (48%) than full time employees (36%).

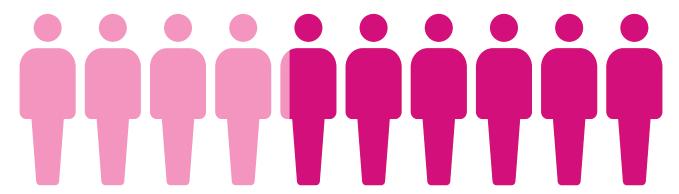
Bectu has been working to put in place the building blocks to ensure that bullying and harassment across the industry is tackled head on. We have supported the development of the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority and have also established our sexual harassment support service.

3Better support for freelancers

More than eight in ten freelancers (82%) told us that they feel precarious in their work, and less than a quarter feel confident about their future in the creative industries (24%).

Bectu has long been campaigning to modernise protections and entitlements for the self-employed and to give freelancers access to rights afforded to employees such as workplace parental rights.

We have been loud and clear in our calls for a Freelance Commissioner, to drive cross-government action to improve freelancers' working conditions and recognise the crucial role for freelancers in the UK's creative economy.



Nearly 60% of survey respondents worked as freelancers or were self-employed

4Work to live

The feast or famine nature of work in the creative industries is unsustainable. A relentless long hours culture followed by periods of no work at all is often the norm, with survey respondents telling us that the average working day in the creative industries is over 10 hours. Over a third (34%) said it was usual to work for 12 or more hours a day.

Seven in ten creative industry workers said that their work has had a negative impact on their personal relationships and for more than a third of creative industry workers (34%), their work has impacted their reproductive choices (e.g. choosing to have children).

Bectu has addressed the issue of long working days in many of our collective agreements, but we know that these conditions are not always upheld, and that many of our sectors are not currently protected.

We have been campaigning to change this, notably in the live events sector where we are working to improve conditions for workers at festivals, and in our campaign to end 'broken turnaround' for film and TV workers.

5 Artificial intelligence

We know members are concerned about how artificial intelligence will impact the creative industries. Just 10% predict that AI will have a positive impact on their own work -62% say they have not used AI and do not plan to. Just 2% of screen industry workers have used AI to generate, produce or edit video content. But we need to make sure workers do not get left behind from the opportunities it could bring; 2024 research from the Producers' Alliance for Cinema and Television showed that 57% of producers have already used Al in their production process or had plans to.

Bectu has been lobbying the Government for stronger protection for the workforce and greater transparency on Al training data, in our response to the Government's recent consultation on Al and copyright and contributing to the TUC's manifesto on Al for creative workers. We have also become members of the creative rights in Al coalition and will be focusing on ensuring members' needs and interests are accounted for.



Towards inclusive creative industries

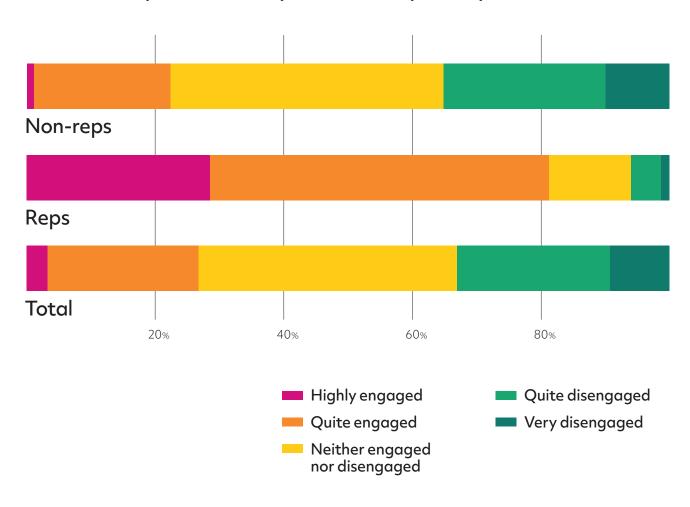
Equality and diversity remain a significant issue in the creative industries, with minority groups often the hardest hit by industry ebbs and flows, and talent drains contributing to worsening diversity metrics.

A minority of creative industry workers in our survey said they felt that the creative industries are an inclusive place to work (38%) and just 38% overall feel confident that as a sector or industry we are taking effective action to be inclusive for all – just 29% of global majority respondents say the same.

Bectu's policy of equal opportunity is an integral part of our bargaining agenda, and our equality committees work hard to build positive change across workplaces and in the wider sector. We are campaigning for change across the creative industries, for example in developing more inclusive requirements for hair, makeup and prosthetics and campaigning for better parental rights in the screen industries.

Bectu and you

How would you describe your current participation with Bectu?



Overall, members gave a satisfaction score of 7.11, when asked on a scale of 0 to 10 whether they would recommend Bectu membership to a friend or colleague, while Bectu reps gave a score of 8.4.

And members generally consider themselves quite engaged with union activities.

One in five members accessed Bectu trainings in the past 12 months: 7% of members had attended trainings for union activities and 13% for work-related trainings organised by Bectu in the last year.





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