

FAA Newsletter

October 2026



Produced by: Jon Alcock, Communications Officer

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Prospect Conference 2026

Last year, members of your committee ventured up to York to represent you at the Bectu conference. This June it was a rather shorter trip to Brighton for the Prospect conference. The former might seem more relevant, since everybody works in the same business, but many of the issues addressed under this broader banner are common to much of the country and the ultimate objective, after all, is to decide on what topics to lobby government for change. A union that advocates for something that will benefit one specific group of people is a lot easier to ignore than one that presents an already-debated and far more balanced argument.

Artificial Intelligence is perhaps the best current example of this and there were arguments put forward both for and against it. As we all know, it seriously threatens future jobs within our industry but in the medical world it has proven extremely beneficial in terms of developing medications for health conditions. For our colleagues in Education, though, there are pros and cons. In general, more transparency was requested, especially from employers.

A motion was passed instructing the NEC to take clear steps to demonstrate progress on existing AI policy on a regular basis e.g. through appropriate written communications and other mechanisms such as webinars. Another to campaign for a statutory Right to Opt Out of Generative AI in creative and technical roles, enabling workers to refuse the use of generative AI systems, to Seek amendments to forthcoming AI and employment legislation to require explicit worker consent, to Support members in negotiating clear contractual protections against compulsory AI substitution and fair compensation and to Establish a Prospect task force on Generative AI in Creative Work to monitor developments, understand impact of technical skills and coordinate campaigning and legal strategy. In other words, Prospect is going to have to be all over this. The membership said so! The actual legislation on all of that will obviously be some way away but the important part is that your union is campaigning on your behalf.



Albert, Stuart, Mia, Martin and Charlie representing the FAA.



...And just in case anybody thinks it was a "jolly"!.

Another motion addressed the inequality between subscriptions currently paid by Bectu members and those of the rest of Prospect. The result should be a reduction in the former, to bring it in line with the latter, with the goal being that both Bectu and Prospect bands equate to circa 0.55% of salary. Conference also instructed that Prospect create at least one new higher pay band, rather than passing all required increases on to the existing bands, and to minimise increases to the existing bands – keeping rates frozen if possible. As you know, FAA subs are less than what the rest of Bectu pays (half less than the lowest band and a sixth of the highest) so it's unlikely that any of this will unduly affect our members.

2026/2027 Pay Rises

When your FAA Committee and Officials negotiated the most recent pay rises with Pact, the Producers Alliance for Cinema & Television, it took some effort to secure the 2026 increase of 3.75%. As was pointed out in the last issue, this figure compares very well with others in our industry so should be considered a “win”.

More than that, though, is what comes next. Current year increases are naturally based on the current economic situation whereas future increases can only be based around a projection of likely events.

The 2027 increase was negotiated as 2.5%, largely on the basis that Pact anticipated that the rate of inflation would drop to just 2.0% over the course of the year. That had been the government’s intention and financial analysts were somewhat supporting it. The FAA, however, had rather less confidence in the national economy and agreed with Pact that if inflation (usually CPI or CPIH) in October is higher than 2.5%, then the increase will be reviewed. October rates are announced in November.

Since April, it has sat doggedly around 3%. Rest assured, words will be had.

Goodbye To Philippa Childs

After eight years as Head of Bectu (and 26 years at Prospect), Philippa has sadly decided to retire in January 2027. Bectu’s first female head, Philippa has championed the rights of nearly 40,000 staff, contract and freelance workers across the creative industries, including broadcasting, film and TV, theatre, fashion, live events and so much more.

Nobody would suggest that those eight years have been plain sailing for the creative industries. The Covid-19 pandemic, the challenges facing workers following the UK’s exit from the EU, and the slowdown in UK film and TV production following industrial action in the United States in 2023 have all landed in Philippa’s lap and she could very often be seen publicly championing our various causes. In fact, she’s been on the tellybox more often than some of us!

Her successor as Deputy General Secretary and Head of Bectu has been confirmed as Noel McClean. Noel is currently a Deputy General Secretary for the Heritage, IT&T and Aviation Sectors of Prospect but spent many years at Bectu as National Secretary.



Philippa with LPD National Secretary Spencer MacDonald, and FAA committee members Stuart and Jon, and Chair Albert at a rally in Leicester Square.

A comprehensive handover plan over the winter will ensure that there is a smooth transition before Noel steps into Philippa’s shoes in January. Hope he’s got small feet!

Contacts

Support and enquiries:

lpd@bectu.org.uk

Information for new members:

joinfaa@bectu.org.uk or
<https://bectu.org.uk/join/>

Existing membership queries:

membership@bectu.org.uk

Office phone number:

0300 600 1878

A common complaint made against all manner of organisations, from insurance companies to telecom providers, is that they seem to make contacting them as complicated as humanly possible. Bectu would like to think that it is not such an organisation! It is, however, rather large and so aims to reply to emails within 48 hours.

If the matter is urgent, please state this in the subject line in order that it can be given a higher priority and also reference the FAA so that it will go to the right people. The phone number should be used sparingly but it is there so that you can actually talk to real people. (If that’s not somewhat ironic for supporting artists!)

Your Committee

Albert Cheah (*Chair*), Stuart Matthews (*Vice-Chair and Recruitment*), Richie Cheung (*Vice-Chair, Deals, and Health & Safety*), Charlie Richards (*Branch Secretary*), Jon Alcock (*Communications*), Mia Chia (*Welfare*), Martin Bratanov (*assisting with H&S and Deals*), and Racheal Tse (*Disability and Equality & Diversity LPD committees*).

The Continuous Working Day

Some confusion seems to have crept in once again about the rules of the Continuous Working Day (CWD) so let's reiterate how it works. The CWD is seven hours long, instead of nine, so you'll go into overtime two hours earlier than usual. There is no obligation for a lunch break to be provided at a fixed time, however everybody should be fed and a "running buffet" is required to be available throughout the day. This basically means some kind of food and snacks to keep you going, although experienced hands will testify that such a thing very often does not appear. Please report such incidences to lpd@bectu.org.uk so that your officials can ask production what happened to it.

The absence of a running buffet will make the presence of water and hot drinks even more important so please remind your AD that CWD does not stand for some obscure Latin phrase that translates as "no need to feed and water the background". They have a duty of care and will certainly want to avoid the additional paperwork required if SAs start collapsing on set.

In most cases, lunch will be served but there will be no set time for it and no minimum duration. You will get it as-and-when it is practical to break and on busier shooting days you might end up eating "on the go". Neither Late nor Short Lunch penalties normally apply on a Continuous Working Day but it is worth raising the issue with the AD if no food and/or running buffet has been provided at all. Some will concede that there should have been one and pay it.

Finally, don't let anybody try to tell you that you're on a Semi-Continuous Day. Such a thing does not exist for Supporting artists, only for crew. If Production wants everybody to have only a half-hour break then they have three options: Book you on a Standard Day and put the crew back to work whilst you have your full hour, book a Standard Day but break everybody for a shorter time and pay all of the SAs a Short Lunch penalty, or book you on a Continuous Working Day and have you going into overtime sooner.

Another Win For The FAA

Your union recently got involved in a situation where members raised concerns over release forms they were being asked to sign after already starting work on a productions.

These release forms granted the agency the right to use a double or AI to represent an Artist's appearance and voice for any lawful purpose and with no time limits.

Naturally, some of our members were reluctant to sign away these. They queried this requirement with their agencies and told them that they were seeking advice from Bectu.

The Union thought that this part of the contract was, indeed, unreasonable and recommended that members ask for it to be removed before they agreed to sign it. Reported outcomes are mainly that artists did not have to sign the release and have still been paid for their work.

Moral of the story: if you think something isn't right, contact your union for advice. Moreover, let the agent know that you're doing so. And be patient. The work that we do is often only one day long but very few issues can be resolved in that timeframe. Time is actually on your side because, often, the production (and the agent) will want to get it out of the way and they may well give up on something if it's not sufficiently important.

It's In The BAG

There is nothing quite like meeting with your colleagues in person and union Branch Meetings are one of the best places to do that outside of a film or television set. Don't forget the next one at the Big Autumn Gathering on Saturday 10th October at the new venue of Ravensbourne University in North Greenwich. Come to the Branch meeting and air your views, listen to the union's take on the State Of The Industry and get a free head-shot (if there are any slots left, now!). And then have a drink and a chat with some of your illustrious colleagues at the end of the day.

Film Artistes Association

Respected. Supported. Represented.

Making the difference for all professional supporting artistes

