

Bectu's Big Survey: TV workforce

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. This briefing draws on data from the 3,621 TV workers (who work in broadcasting, TV drama, unscripted or factual television and commercials).

The impact of the commissioning slowdown crisis continues to take its toll on the TV workforce

- 45% of those in TV drama, 46% of those in unscripted and 45% of those working in commercials told us they were not currently working in March 2025
- Just 11% of those working in unscripted, 10% of those in commercials and 17% of those working in TV drama say that they've seen a full recovery in their employment since the end of US industrial action in November 2023.
- The impact this is having on workers is profound, with seven in ten (68%) TV workers saying that they are struggling financially.

Across the TV workforce, the slowdown has doubled down on existing inequities, driving diversity out of the workforce

- 42% of working-class respondents are currently out of work compared to 37% who do not consider themselves from a working class background.
- 44% of disabled workers are currently out of work in the screen industries, compared to 39% of able-bodied workers.
- Global majority respondents are also less likely to be in work than their white counterparts; 67% of those from a Bangladeshi background, 54% of black Caribbean and 55% of those from a Pakistani background said they were not working, compared with 44% of white British respondents.

The TV industry remains a space where all too often, toxic workplace cultures emerge and are allowed to flourish

- More than seven in ten (74%) TV 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%)
- More than six in ten of those working in TV (61%) told us that in the past year that had personally witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in the workplace. Half of those incidents were not reported (48%).
- And 60% of Global majority TV workers had personally witnessed or experienced racial discrimination and/or abuse while at work.
- Almost 8 in 10 (78%) got their current or last job through a friend or contact, meaning TV remains exclusionary to many, and adds barriers to reporting bad behaviour

And poor mental health is a significant issue for the TV workforce, where there is a notable lack of structured support

- One in five (18%) TV workers report really struggling with their mental wellbeing
- Workers in the Unscripted TV sector were particularly likely to report poor mental wellbeing, mirroring findings in the Film and TV charity's *Looking Glass* research. Around a quarter (24%) of those working in Unscripted TV said they are really struggling with their mental wellbeing and a staggering 68% said that they have felt anxious or depressed in the past year.
- On top of poor working conditions, a quarter (25%) of all unscripted workers also told us that they had worked on content that they had found harmful or distressing over the past 12 months.

And the poor working conditions of many TV jobs is making staying in the industry impossible for some

- 87% of the TV workforce (those in broadcasting, unscripted, TV drama and commercials) feel their work is precarious
- 72% say their work has negatively impacted their personal relationships
- Only 18% feel confident about their future in the industry
- 29% of TV workers have another job outside of the creative industries to sustain themselves financially
- A third (33%) of TV workers say they will leave the industry in the next five years