



# Welfare Policy

A template mental health  
and wellbeing policy for companies  
working in the film and TV sector

**February 2022**

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## Contents

<b>The status of this document and how it can be revised.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction/Preamble .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Scope.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Principles .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Definitions .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Responsibility .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Recruitment and Pre-Production .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mental Health and Wellbeing Risk Assessment.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Declarations, reasonable adjustments, absence and support .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Promoting positive working conditions.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Review and Monitoring .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Confidentiality .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Resources (Appendix) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Appendix 1 .....	15
Appendix 2: Wellbeing Starter Form.....	16
<b>Getting help .....</b>	<b>19</b>

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## The status of this document and how it can be revised

This document details all aspects of the governance of this Policy. It is published by Bectu and can be updated regularly with an aim of improving practice or implementation of the policy. All readers of this document are welcome to propose changes to this document (including significant material alterations to the Policy). It should be updated in line with any changes to legislation.

All such proposed updates to this document should, in the first instance be emailed to the Emily Collin ([ecollin@bectu.org.uk](mailto:ecollin@bectu.org.uk)) and or Chris Warburton ([Chris.Warburton@prospect.org.uk](mailto:Chris.Warburton@prospect.org.uk)).

Any properly convened and quorate London Production Division (LPD) Committee Meeting can endorse or reject proposed amendments to this Policy document.

Proposed amendments or additions should state which text needs amending and the page/line.

Version	Date	Author	Comments
v01	15/07/2021	Emily Collin, Chris Warburton, Arun Devasia	Draft following Film & TV Charity consultation. Addition of how to update this document.
v02	27/08/2021	Emily Collin, Chris Warburton, Arun Devasia	Following feedback from first industry stakeholders meeting and Film & TV Charity comments.
v03	31/08/2021	Emily Collin, Chris Warburton, Arun Devasia, Paul Evans	Updated format and design.
v04	19/10/2021	Simon Crosby	Updated formatting and design.
v05	21/10/21	Martin Roberts	Following feedback from stakeholders.
v06	26/10/2021	Emily Collin	Addition of note on the Form (to be added), change to version numbering, addition of Solas Mind and surnames in acknowledgements.
v07	2/11/2021	Georgina Kinsella	Grammatical edits
v08	24/11/2021	Emily Collin	Draft Watermark, title change, incorporating feedback.
v09	20/01/2022	Simon Crosby	Updated formatting and added logo.
v10	22/02/2022	Simon Crosby	Amended flowchart and removed draft watermark.

# Introduction/Preamble

*This document has been written by and for members of Bectu through consultation with the Wellbeing Working Group that arose from The New Deal for Freelancers consultation in Spring 2020. Our hope is that its contents are used by production companies to inform their own policies on wellbeing and mental health.*

*A special thanks to Leo Anna Thomas and Matt Longley from 6ft From the Spotlight and Sarah McCaffrey from Solas Mind for their invaluable support.*

The mental health crisis in film and TV productions in the UK is no secret. A 2020 survey<sup>1</sup> commissioned by the Film and TV Charity, unearthed startlingly poor levels of mental health amongst workers in the sector. Nearly 90% of off-screen professionals have experienced mental health issues on the job, while one in 10 have attempted suicide.

These figures, and the personal stories that underpin them, ought to be a wakeup call to those in the sector. It is the responsibility of everyone working in the film and TV industry to work constructively to forge a working environment where these harrowing statistics are consigned to history. This document is a modest step towards achieving just that.

Robust and properly implemented policies on wellbeing and mental health in the workplace are naturally beneficial to the workers engaged on film and TV productions. Working in a creative and fascinating sector should not come at the expense of your mental health or wellbeing.

A lesser-known benefit is an increase in productivity and quality output. ACAS says the promotion of positive mental health leads to workers who 'perform well, have good attendance levels and are engaged in their work'.<sup>2</sup>

According to figures from Deloitte (2020), poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45bn each year with an estimated one in six people of working age experience a common mental health problem in any given week. The same report<sup>3</sup> indicates that for every £1 invested by employers into the mental wellbeing of the workforce, £5 is returned.

This document contains practicable policies which have the dual purpose of benefiting the workers and production companies. The Film & TV Charity have a useful Wellbeing Toolkit to address the steps involved. These policies are not a wish-list, but rather a considered and cost-efficient list of solutions to help address the ongoing mental health crisis in film and TV - which can lead to a happier, healthier and more efficient workplace, which retains talent and increases diversity.

This policy can be used in its entirety or its principles or its clauses can be adapted to suit the production and its budget accordingly. Where wholesale adoption isn't practicable, productions should aspire to the same high standards. The expectation though is that where these clauses represent the law, they will be adhered to.

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<sup>1</sup><https://variety.com/2020/film/directors/uk-film-tv-mental-health-crisis-film-and-tv-charity-1203502271/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6065>

<sup>3</sup><https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/consulting/articles/mental-health-and-employers-refreshing-the-case-for-investment.html>

# Scope

This document is intended for use by production companies operating within film and TV across any genre and type of production. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Factual and entertainment
- Documentary
- Unscripted
- Non-scripted comedy
- News and current affairs
- Sport
- Children's TV
- Reality
- Live TV broadcast
- TV commercials
- Major Motion Film
- Scripted TV
- TV Drama
- Animation

This document has been drafted to benefit those working on the productions in this list regardless of their employment status. This includes, but is not limited to, employees (full or part time), freelancers (workers or self-employed), people providing services through a limited company and agency workers.

This document should also be read to cover all crew and cast regardless of their working environment. This includes, but is not limited to, those working on location, on set, in workshops, in a studio, in an office, at home or any other type of workplace.

# Principles

As a production we:

- recognise that we all have mental health, and acknowledge that efforts should be made to treat mental health and wellbeing on a par with physical health
- accept that we, the production, have a responsibility to the mental health and wellbeing of our cast and crew, regardless of their employment status
- will allocate a budget and or adequate resources for providing mental health and wellbeing support
- will create a plan to prevent mental health and wellbeing problem developing during the entire length of the production, including a risk assessment
- will make mental health and wellbeing support available for the duration of the production for cast and crew by having a suitably trained and qualified person(s) available to advise, support and/or signpost
- will consider the needs of those with pre-existing mental health conditions when making risk assessments and will consider making reasonable adjustments where individuals opt to disclose information
- will provide a confidential mechanism for people to voluntarily share conditions and access the support they require
- will measure the impact of our plans on the cast and crew via a formal review process, with the input of cast and crew, once the production has ended
- will make available and display mental health and wellbeing materials, resources and/or training
- will list the Film and TV Charity helpline telephone number (0800 054 0000), and the contact details for any engaged mental health professionals and any external mental health providers, are included on all call-sheets
- acknowledge all heads of departments, managers and supervisors have responsibilities to the mental health and wellbeing of those that they manage
- will share the responsibilities under this policy evenly and appropriately across the above roles and support the individuals to fulfil their responsibilities
- will strive to work with production related suppliers who can demonstrate they share positive values with regards to mental health and wellbeing
- recognise that health and safety and working conditions have a role to play in the mental health and wellbeing of cast and crew, and agree to review these to promote better standards
- support workers to discuss any concerns confidentially with their union, where they are members, to resolve or get advice on any issues
- shall lead by example and set the tone of the working culture, including the expected standards of behaviour, to ensure all cast and crew are treated with dignity, equality and respect at work (in line BFI principles)

# Definitions

## Mental health

‘A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his [their] community’ - **World Health Organisation**

## Work Related Stress

‘The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other type of demands placed upon them’ - **Health and Safety Executive**.

Stress is not a mental health problem, but it can cause or worsen mental health problems.

## First Responder

An individual engaged to work on a production who has at least a relatively basic level of formal training in mental health issues.

Through this training, the first responder(s) should, as a minimum, have the following:<sup>4</sup>

- A basic to median understanding of mental health and wellbeing issues
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgmental listening
- Knowledge to guide individuals to further support, whether that’s self-help resources, through their employer, through their trade union, the NHS etc.

Examples of First Responders include, but are not limited to:

- mental health first aider,
- wellbeing facilitator

The main role of the First Responder should be:

- to act as an optional first point of contact for cast and crew to have confidential conversations,
- to be consulted on any organisational mental health and wellbeing risk assessments,
- to sign post to appropriate resources, and
- to refer to this or any other policies.

This role is not part of any human resources (HR) function and should not offer clinical diagnosis or advice to the individuals or the production.

## Qualified Health Professional (QHP)

An individual with a suitable professional qualification directly related to mental health and wellbeing, who possess a high level of expertise in the area.

A qualified professional should have recent experience in treating those with mental health problems and should usually consider the treatment of those with mental issues as their primary occupation.

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<sup>4</sup> This list is adapted from Mental Health First Aid England.

Examples of a QHP include, but are not limited to:

- Psychiatric nurse
- Clinical Psychologist
- Psychotherapist
- Mental health counsellor
- Psychiatrist
- Psychoanalysts
- Occupational physician or nurse

## **Occupational health services**

Occupational health services are staffed by occupational health professionals who support people in the workplace, help to ensure that workplaces are safe and healthy and address health problems when they arise

## **Responsibility**

This policy is to be made available to all individuals working in any capacity on the production.

This policy should be utilised at all stages of the production, including the recruitment process, pre-production, shooting and post-production.

It is the responsibility of the producer, director and their representatives to ensure the implementation and continued adherence to this policy. For the avoidance of doubt this includes heads of departments, supervisors and any other crew members who have managerial responsibilities.

The production agrees to make clear to each member of cast and crew who to speak with in the event they have an issue relating to their mental health and wellbeing, for example in the form in appendix 1.

In the event that a head of department, supervisor or any other person with managerial responsibility is unable to adequately resolve an issue related to a cast or crew member's mental health concerns within their team or department, the matter should be escalated to an appropriate person with more seniority, with the individual's consent.

Cast and crew should be made aware that they can also seek support from their trade union reps or officials, and the production and their representatives should engage constructively with such persons to improve or resolve any issues raised.

Flexible working arrangements and flexibility requests should be considered and discussed as early as possible with the individuals making them. Where they are practicable to implement, they should be adequately planned for in consultation with the individual. Note: it is up to the individual to disclose any disability or health issues. Unless it will impede their ability to work, health questionnaires or screening should not take place prior to an offer of work.

Managers must be provided with suitable and sufficient resources and the authority to implement the actions contained within this policy.



## Recruitment and Pre-Production

The production will engage sufficient crew and resources to implement this policy during the pre-production stage and to develop and deliver this policy and its measures during the production and post-production phases.

Wherever possible a First Responder(s) (see **'Definitions'** - above) will be engaged to support the mental health and wellbeing of those working on the production. This can be a dual role (e.g. that of First Responder and Assistant Director) however this should preferably be a standalone position and sufficient time should be allocated to carry out the role's functions.

Wherever possible, a Qualified Health Professional (QHP, **'Definitions'** - above), or a service providing such expertise, will be engaged to support the mental health and wellbeing of those working on the production.

Wherever possible production should engage HR professionals to assist with implementation of policies and procedures, including this one.

Inimacy co-ordinators should be engaged where scenes of an intimate nature are being filmed.

The First Responder and/or QHP will be consulted in the drafting and/or revision of the production's mental health and wellbeing risk assessment (see below).

Employers should consider providing an employee assistance programme (EAP) and universal access to a SEQOHS accredited occupational health service.

All workers will be made aware of all mental health and wellbeing policies and resources prior to starting at the production, either via email, a welcome pack or in person at a start-up meeting.

The name, telephone number and email address of the First Responder and/or QHP will be included on the production's call sheet.

A Mental Health and Wellbeing Risk Assessment, (see below), will be produced during the preparatory stage of production and, if necessary, will be altered and updated on a regular basis.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Risk Assessment

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, every employer has an obligation to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and non-employees. Additionally, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to identify, evaluate and mitigate any risks to workers' safety and health from workplace hazards. Both of these laws cover stress and mental health risks.

The mental health and wellbeing risk assessment's primary purpose is, where possible, to avoid situations which might cause stress or trigger a mental health or wellbeing issue for the cast and crew. As with a risk assessment for the purpose of mitigating against physical injury, a mental health and wellbeing risk assessment is a process of evaluating the risk to a workers' safety and health.

It is an organisation-level exercise. When drafting the assessment, the employer should identify and mitigate key risk factors in people's jobs and the working environment which may compromise the mental health of crew members. The production must consult all staff on this process.

Production will consider the following questions when drafting their risk assessment:

- How might the intended working conditions and hours affect the wellbeing and mental health of the crew? For example, how can claw-back be used to offset night-working?
- Could the rates of pay we intend to offer my crew have a detrimental effect on their wellbeing and mental health?
- Could the subject matter of the production have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing and mental health of my crew?
- Have we ensured the availability of a suitably trained and qualified professional available to advise, support and or signpost those working on the production who are having issues with their wellbeing or mental health?

We will also consider, in advance of work starting and throughout the production, the following factors, which are drawn from the Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for work-related stress. If not properly managed, these risk factors are associated with poor mental health, lower productivity and increased sickness absence rates:

- **Demands** - workers are able to cope with the demands of their jobs, including factors such as workload, work patterns and the work environment
- **Control** - workers have a say about the way they do their work
- **Support** - workers receive adequate information, encouragement, resources and support from the organisation, colleagues and superiors
- **Relationships** - workers are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying. Positive working is promoted to avoid conflict and unacceptable behaviour is dealt with
- **Role** - workers understand their role within the production and the production ensures they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change** - the production engages workers frequently when undergoing an organisational change, large or small

More information on how to carry out a mental health and wellbeing risk assessment, including template risk assessments, is available from the Health and Safety Executive<sup>5</sup> or in the Film & TV Charity's Whole Picture Toolkit.

It is important that it is a 'live document' which is altered or updated where necessary during the entire length of the production. Its contents should be circulated amongst heads of departments and should be freely available to all cast and crew upon request.

## Avoidance of Triggers

Prior to the start of production, we will endeavour to collate a list of potentially distressing subject matter which will be explored as part of the production, to form part of the risk assessment.

For the avoidance of doubt distressing subjects can include, but are not be limited to:

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| • Sexual content of any nature including sexual assault or harassment | • Death            |
| • Discrimination  | • Illness          |
| • Warfare / torture   | • Coercive control |
| • Violence  | • Abuse or neglect |

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/>

## Performance of mental health crisis or state

We will use best endeavour to make cast and crew aware of any scenes that may involve any distressing subject matter as far in advance of filming as is practicable. Production should be mindful of the use of triggering language in public forums and documents.

We will provide a confidential platform for cast and crew to disclose personal discomfort or concern with scenes or topic matters involving distressing subjects

We will endeavour to agree reasonable adjustments when an individual raises discomfort or concerns. This will include, but is not limited to:

- a. permitting the individual to work elsewhere while the distressing subject matter is being produced
- b. providing the individual with mental health and wellbeing support, either via a member of crew or an external professional service.

# Declarations, reasonable adjustments, absence and support

We will strive to provide all cast and crew with the support needed to do their job to the best of their ability.

Prior to the commencement of the engagement, but after confirmation of an offer of work, we agree to:

- circulate a form to each cast and crew member, requesting they voluntarily share consensually any mental health conditions or issues relating to their wellbeing, using the template in Appendix 2 entitled 'Wellbeing Starter Form' (the form);
- to only circulate the form after a contract has been agreed with the cast and crew member in question, to prevent any potential claim of discrimination based on any disclosures made; and
- to implement any personal reasonable adjustments recommended by the cast and crew members on the form.
- We will discuss and agree reasonable adjustments and adopt reasonable adjustment passports with cast and crew members who inform us of a mental health problem during their contract.
- All submissions of the Wellbeing Starter Form will be kept confidential, and only made available to the most relevant person in line with the confidentiality section of this policy and with consent of the individual concerned.
- Individual submissions of the Wellbeing Starter Form must be kept securely and will be securely destroyed within relevant time frames.
- We agree not to subject anyone who discloses an issue to any form of detriment.

Support for issues as they arise

- Where there has been an incident, we encourage workers to seek support as early as possible, either from a member of production or a first responder or QHP. Concerns will be listened to attentively and sensitively. The circumstances will be investigated where necessary by an appropriate person from the production. A resolution will be sought with the consent of and in consultation with the individual. Informal resolutions should always be sought first, but this may be carried out formally under the appropriate policy such as a grievance procedure if necessary and appropriate.
- We will treat individuals suffering from mental health problems fairly and consistently and individuals will not be made to feel guilty about their problems or subjected to detriment.
- We will encourage crew to consult suitably trained peers, the First Responder, QHP, their own GP, or a counsellor of their choice for example. We will provide a suitably trained person to be available but will advise that specialist advice, like the QHP or occupational health, is also sought if necessary.
- First responder should themselves be able to access support for any mental health problems they experience and be provided suitable support by the production in fulfilling their functions.

Return to work

- In cases of long-term sickness or absence from the industry, we will put in place, where possible, a graduated return to work.
- Flexible working should be utilised in order to help facilitate the return to work or return to the industry for those with issues regarding wellbeing.

- We will make every effort to identify a suitable alternative role, in full discussion with the crew member, where a return to the same job is not possible due to identified risks or other factors.

## Promoting positive working conditions

The Health and Safety Executive's 'HSG65: *Managing for health and safety*' has more information on overseeing health and safety arrangements, which are relevant to managing risks related to stress and mental health.<sup>6</sup>

### Communication

- There will be effective communication up, down and across the production. Leaders will communicate information to cast and crew on the risk to their health and safety, including risks to their mental health, identified in the risk assessments, and the preventive and protective measures necessary to control risk. This could be done using the Film & TV Charity Wellbeing memo Template<sup>7</sup>.
- Leaders should ensure that time is allocated so that communications can take place and formulate plans for cascading information relating to mental health. Workers or their trade union representatives should be involved in planning communications activities.

### Training

- Everyone on the production will receive adequate information and training to gain appropriate knowledge of the safe working arrangements and the relevant policies, including this policy. Training should include, but is not limited to, training recommendations made by the Screen Skills<sup>8</sup>. Leaders will provide resources and time to enable relevant training to take place.

### Facilities

- We will provide crew with appropriate facilities and welfare arrangements to ensure people can work with dignity. As a minimum, they should comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. Facilities should be kept clean and be maintained in working order.
- Facilities and arrangements should include:
  - Appropriate toilet, sanitary and washing facilities
  - Reasonable working temperatures
  - Easy access to drinking water
  - Facilities to rest and eat meals
  - Facilities for pregnant women and nursing mothers
  - A physical space or facility for private conversations
  - An accessible workplace

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Source link to follow.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.screenskills.com/information-and-resources/information/mental-health-training-guidance-for-employers/>

## Working Hours

Rest breaks should be provided in line with the Working Time Regulations as a minimum or greater where productions are following Union Agreements. This means crew members are entitled as a minimum to:

- a rest period of no less than 11 consecutive hours in each 24-hour period
- an uninterrupted rest period of no less than 24 hours in each seven-day period
- an uninterrupted rest break of at least 20 minutes for every six hours at work

## Health and safety related to COVID-19

We will implement appropriate controls to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission in line with relevant guidance.

## BFI Principles & Dignity at Work Policy

Productions should develop their own policy using the BFI principles on bullying and harassment. Where a policy does not exist, productions may apply the BFI and BAFTA Dignity at Work Policy.<sup>9</sup>

Such policies shall be made available to staff i.e. in contacts and/or in call sheets etc.

Additionally, we agree to include a 'dignity at work' clause in all contracts of the individuals who are engaged on the production.

## Review and Monitoring

We will review the workplace mental wellbeing policy and risk assessment at regular intervals and should consider input from any competent professionals and crew members working on the production. The review process should monitor how effectively the policy and assessment meet their aims and objectives.

Risk assessments and the policy should also be reviewed if there is a significant change to the working arrangements, or after a mental health incident.

## Confidentiality

Disclosures about mental health conditions, disabilities, and medical information must be treated in the strictest confidence. They may be discussed only with those necessary to support the development and implementation of any reasonable adjustments or risk assessments. The individual has to consent to the information being given.

The only exception to confidentiality is where there is a safeguarding issue.

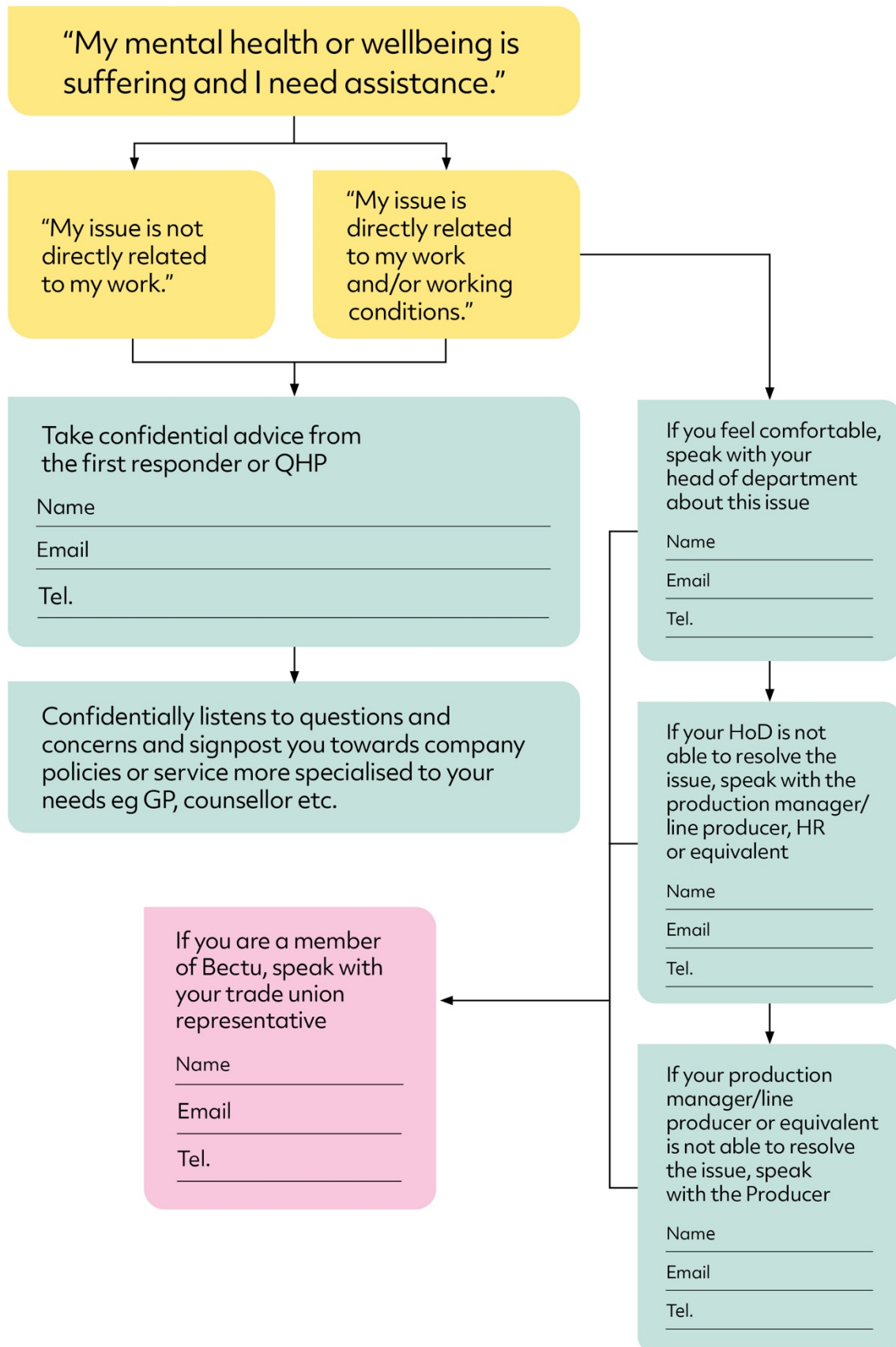
Any data held will be compliant with UK GDPR. This includes but is not limited to any forms with disclosures or requests for flexible working. Information held on individuals must be destroyed and or deleted after the production has concluded or stated date. This will also be referenced to in the production's privacy policy.

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<sup>9</sup> Both documents can be downloaded from this page: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bullying-harassment-racism-prevention-screen-industries>

# Resources (Appendix)

## Appendix 1



## Appendix 2: Wellbeing Starter Form

The purpose of this form is to assist in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing at work and disclosing conditions that require reasonable adjustments. All crew/cast are encouraged to complete this form; however, they remain optional. You should only provide information that you are comfortable sharing. Where a worker discloses a concern or risk, the employer may have to address it. All forms will be kept in line with UK GDPR legislation and the company's privacy policy. This information will only be shared with the people necessary to implement and reasonable adjustments you require and will not be shared without your consent. The company will be deleted or destroyed as appropriate within a reasonable period after the engagement has concluded.

Please observe the privacy notice (insert a link to the production's privacy policy), at the end of this document, before you complete, thank you.

Full Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

Role /job title on this production?	
-------------------------------------	--

**Do you have any health, neurodiversity, mental health or wellbeing issues, diagnosed or undiagnosed, that you would like to share here?**

One of the key benefits of making the organisation aware of such issues is so that we may be able to put in place some reasonable adjustments to support you in the workplace.

*If there are no mental health or wellbeing issues, you'd like to share here, go to the next question.*

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**Please list any triggers for any mental ill health or wellbeing issues you have.**

*You can circle any that apply or describe in your own words.*

	Sexual content		Sexual assault
	Sexual harassment		Death
	Discrimination: race/sex/gender/sexual orientation/age/gender reassignment/pregnancy		Illness
	Warfare/torture		Coercive control
	Violence		Abuse or neglect

**What aspects of work cause you the most ill effects to your wellbeing and mental health?**

*Please indicate with an 'X' to the left of any that apply.*

	working long hours		unreasonable last requests/ last minute change to script & schedules being bullied/ harassed by a crew/cast member
	feeling pressure to stay at work after working hours		
	feeling isolated/unheard/seen		negotiating rates/hours
	not having enough time away from work		one sided/immoral/contracts and no time to read and sign them
	short turnaround times		Covid-19
	Other (please state below)		

**Can you describe any early warning signs that might be noticed if your health or mental health is suddenly impacted or impaired?**

*Please note, if you should require support, please don't wait for symptoms to be noticed, but initiate a request for support as soon as you feel it is needed.*

**What support or reasonable adjustments could the Production put in place to minimise these triggers, and/or support you to manage any symptoms or distress you may have at work?**

**Is there anything we should try to avoid doing? Please be clear about what you need and how your condition affects you.**

***(A reasonable adjustment is a change that must be made to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to an workers disability when doing their job)***

**If your mental health or wellbeing were to deteriorate, or we feel we have noticed early warning signs of distress, anxiety, panic, sleep deprivation etc how would you like to be supported?**

**Who can we contact?**

## Getting help

If you needed to discuss your mental health or wellbeing please contact the first responder, qualified medical professional, or your line manager (delete as appropriate) in the first instance.

You may also contact the Producer/Line Producer/Unit Production Manager/Line Manager (delete as appropriate) if you feel you need to escalate a request for support.

If the production or your line manager feel they need to contact you about your responses in this form, or a related issue during the production, what is your preferred means of communication?

Put an 'X' to the left of your preferred contact option below. Please note it may not always be possible to approach in person in the first instance, please tick a second option as well if you are comfortable being approached in person about an issue.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Text	<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	In person
--------------------------	------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-----------

Thank you for completing this form.

(Insert link to the Production's privacy policy).

Please return this form to (insert name and contact of nominated person).