

Workplace Health in the Creative Industries

Consensus Statement and Case for Change | Draft, August 2026

This draft has been developed by the Workplace Health in Creative Industries Task and Finish Group, a joint project between the Council for Health and Work and the Department for Health and Social Care, bringing together expertise from across the Creative Industries and the health sector.

We are sharing it with occupational health professionals, professionals supporting health and workplace wellbeing in the Creative Industries, and anyone with an interest in this work, ahead of finalising the Statement. Your input at this stage will directly shape the final version.

We would welcome your views on:

- Whether the language of the Consensus Statement resonates, and any amendments you would suggest
- Whether the Case for Change captures the right issues — and whether there is anything missing that should be reflected to target it in the right way
- Any additional evidence, examples or points that could add weight or influence to the Statement
- Whether your organisation, or you as an individual, would be prepared to sign the Consensus Statement as part of the launch
- Examples of good practice that could be highlighted as part of the launch or ongoing work

We aim to finalise the Statement in late September 2026, ahead of its launch at a conference/event dedicated to this work. We've created a Microsoft forms form to capture your feedback, and we'd welcome you having a look and sending us your comments and suggestions for enhancing this statement, where needed. The closing date for submitting feedback is 25th September 2026.

The link for the survey is [Consultation Survey: Draft Consensus Statement on Workplace Health in the Creative Industries – Fill in form](#)

DRAFT Consensus Statement

The relationship between employment and health is fundamental and enduring. Working can give an individual a sense of fulfilment and purpose, whether paid or voluntary. Work is also one of the key social determinants of health; being in work is associated with improved mental and physical health, provided this is 'good work', i.e. good working conditions and supportive management. In contrast, 'poor' workplace environments harm physical and mental health.

This consensus statement sets out how these principles apply within the Creative Industries; a sector whose distinctive ways of working bring opportunities, as well as risks, for the health of its workforce.

The health and wellbeing of people working in the Creative Industries is an important responsibility for creative employers as well as an ethical imperative and is fundamental to the economic growth and sustainability of the sector. The health of the workforce is the foundation of our Creative future.

The Creative Industries are a diverse landscape of organisations and sub-sectors spanning performing arts to publishing with both shared challenges and unique issues, but together we have a shared ambition for action to protect the health of creatives and to safeguard the future of creativity in the UK.

Across the Industry there is a strong reliance on freelancers and independent practitioners, fixed-term contracts and a high culture of competition for opportunity. Within specific sub-sectors there are common challenges such as poor mental health as well as sector-specific occupational exposures and risks. Responding to these challenges relies on having access to high-quality Health and Safety, HR and Occupational Health support who understand the common and unique challenges of creative workplaces.

Good health and wellbeing of the workforce lead to more productive, more economically sustainable and more successful businesses, and healthy workplaces improve recruitment and retention of talent and can inspire innovation. It is important to debunk the stereotype of illness being normalised for creativity, as is often accepted in dance or music as part of 'the job' and having a career in the Creative Industries should not come at the cost of ill health. It is key that we support people to have healthy creative careers throughout their creative life, irrespective of their art form or discipline of practice, at every stage of their career.

Through this consensus statement we are making a call to action on Creative Industries and the Occupational Health sector to work together to:

- Make public commitments to improving the health and wellbeing of those working in the Creative Industries
- Work within both sectors to embed understanding of workplace health and wellbeing into education, training and professional standards
- Increase the understanding of workplace health and regulation in creative industries through evaluation, sharing of good practice and research

We also call on Government and Arm's Length Bodies to strengthen the recognition of workplace health as a core driver of the success of the Creative Industries, and to align policies to support a healthy, thriving and successful Creative sector.

Case for Change

Why workplace health matters in the Creative Industries

Good work can provide income, purpose, fulfilment, social connection and a sense of identity, and is an important determinant of physical and mental health. Conversely, poor working conditions, insecure employment and unhealthy workplace environments can harm health and make it more difficult for people to remain in, return to or progress through work. This relationship is particularly significant for the Creative Industries: a sector identified by Government as one of the growth-driving sectors within the Industrial Strategy, contributing an estimated £145.8 billion to UK economic output and supporting approximately 2.4 million jobs, around 7% of all UK jobs in 2024.

The workforce is highly diverse, spanning employees, freelancers, self-employed people, independent practitioners, fixed-term and project-based workers, volunteers, and people working across multiple organisations and disciplines. Self-employment is substantially more common than across the wider UK workforce, 28% of Creative Industries jobs, compared with 14% nationally and considerably higher in some subsectors. This diversity is one of the sector's strengths, but it also means that access to conventional employer-based workplace-health infrastructure, such as occupational health, HR support and sickness-absence arrangements, varies considerably and can be difficult to sustain as people move between projects and employment types.

Workplace health in the Creative Industries must therefore be understood broadly: preventing illness and injury caused or exacerbated by work; creating healthy and safe working environments; supporting physical and mental health; enabling people with health conditions and disabilities to remain in work; supporting rehabilitation and return to work; and ensuring appropriate access to advice, reasonable adjustments and occupational health support.

A workforce facing distinct pressures

Financial insecurity can significantly affect people's ability to protect their health. The Film and TV Charity's Money Matters survey found that 42% of respondents had less than £1,000 in cash savings, including 27% with none at all, and that 40% could meet their financial commitments for no more than one month if they lost their income. Among self-employed musicians, only 28% reported having access to an employer-contributed pension. These findings illustrate the wider context in which people make decisions about work, health and financial security and why flexibility and independence, while valuable features of creative work, need to be matched by working cultures that do not create avoidable barriers to protecting health.

Mental health is a common challenge across subsectors: research from the film and television industry found that 35% of workers rated their mental health as poor or very poor, with some reporting they were considering leaving the industry as a result. But workplace health in the Creative Industries is not solely a mental-health issue. Risks vary by discipline and can include the physical demands of performance and production, repetitive or intensive work, fatigue, irregular working patterns and other occupational exposures, alongside the psychological pressures of competition and insecurity.

Workplace health must therefore encompass both health affected by work and health conditions that affect a person's ability to work, including non-work-related physical and mental health conditions, disability and other needs that may require adjustments or support to remain in or return to work. The aim should not simply be to respond once people become unwell: prevention, early intervention, supportive management and effective rehabilitation all help people remain economically active and sustain their creative careers.

Why this matters for the sector, not only the individual

The Creative Industries depend on highly skilled, experienced and often specialist people. Losing people from the workforce through preventable ill health, or because their health needs cannot be accommodated, contributes to skills shortages, recruitment and retention difficulties, and loss of organisational knowledge. Conversely, healthy workplaces support productivity, recruitment, retention and innovation, and strengthen the resilience of creative organisations. For a sector identified as central to the UK's future economic growth, investing in the health of its workforce is an investment in the sector itself.

Building on existing activity

There is already important work underway across the Creative Industries, including the Film and TV Charity's work on mentally healthy productions, research and policy work relating to musicians and music creators, and research into freelance dance artists and the wider dance sector, alongside a growing wider policy and professional framework for health and work, including the 2025 Healthcare Professionals' Consensus Statement for Action on Health and Work and Government initiatives such as the Get Britain Working White Paper, the Keep Britain Working Review, the Creative Health Review and the Creative Industries Sector Plan.

These initiatives provide a strong foundation, but they do not yet provide a shared, cross-sector framework for workplace health across the Creative Industries: provision, understanding and organisational capacity vary considerably by subsector, organisation size and employment model. A shared approach is needed to connect existing activity, promote learning between subsectors and establish a common ambition for healthy creative workplaces.

Embedding health throughout creative careers

Evidence from arts education and professional practice points to the importance of embedding health within education, training, leadership and professional standards, rather than treating wellbeing as an additional or optional activity. The forthcoming position paper on health promotion in tertiary music education, involving researchers, healthcare professionals, institutional and union leaders, musicians and student representatives internationally, illustrates this approach well. Its recommendations include embedding health and equity within governance, leadership, accountability, policy and curriculum; equipping educators and leaders with the skills to create supportive environments; developing partnerships with health professionals, researchers, unions and people with relevant lived experience; and empowering students and early-career professionals to challenge harmful conventions and shape healthier professional futures.

This example is a useful illustration of the breadth of the Creative Industries and the range of health issues the Consensus needs to address: the principles it sets out have wider relevance across the sector, and health should be considered throughout the creative career journey, from education and entry into the sector, through career development and leadership, to sustaining work, managing health conditions and adapting careers over time.

Why act now

Creative Industries are a major and growing contributor to the UK economy at a time when Government policy increasingly recognises the value of good work, prevention, early intervention and economic participation, while creative organisations and professional bodies are already developing practical approaches of their own. The opportunity now is to move from a collection of valuable but disconnected initiatives towards a shared, cross-sector commitment, providing the common language and framework needed for people to build successful, sustainable and healthy creative careers, and for the Creative Industries to realise their full economic, cultural and social potential.

ANNEX 1

Evidence Review and Framework for Action

Supporting document to the Draft Consensus Statement on Workplace Health in Creative Industries

August 2026

Purpose of this annex

This annex provides the evidence framework supporting the Draft Consensus Statement on Workplace Health in Creative Industries. It is intended to explain why workplace health is important to the Creative Industries, identify the distinctive features of creative work that need to be considered, summarise the evidence and policy context already identified through the consensus development process, and provide a practical framework for implementation.

The annex is deliberately designed as a supporting document rather than a comprehensive systematic review. It retains the evidence and sources identified in the draft engagement document and identifies areas where further evidence, evaluation and research would strengthen implementation.

1. Executive summary

- Creative Industries are a major contributor to the UK economy and wider cultural and social life. The sector contributed an estimated £145.8 billion to UK economic output and supported approximately 2.4 million jobs, representing around 7% of UK jobs, in the period covered by the draft consensus¹
- The Creative Industries have distinctive employment and working arrangements. The draft identifies a self-employment rate of 28%, compared with 14% nationally, alongside extensive freelance, fixed-term and project-based working and strong competition for opportunities.
- These characteristics can create particular challenges for workplace health, including continuity of employment and support, financial security, access to occupational health and HR services, and the ability to take time away from work when unwell.
- Workplace health should be understood broadly. It includes prevention of work-related illness and injury, healthy and safe working environments, physical and mental health, support for people with non-occupational health conditions, reasonable adjustments, rehabilitation and retention.
- Existing initiatives demonstrate substantial activity across the Creative Industries, including work in film and television, music and dance, alongside wider Government and professional health-and-work policy. However, the evidence and activity are dispersed across subsectors and employment models.
- A cross-sector consensus provides an opportunity to establish a common ambition and language, connect existing activity, promote good practice, embed workplace health in education and professional standards, and strengthen collaboration between the Creative Industries and occupational health and health-and-work sectors.

¹ Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2025), DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates: Gross Value Added 2024 (provisional). The Creative Industries contributed an estimated £145.8 billion in 2024, equivalent to 5.5% of UK GVA.

2. Why workplace health matters in the Creative Industries

The relationship between employment and health is fundamental. Good work can provide income, purpose, fulfilment, social connection and identity, while poor working conditions and unhealthy workplace environments can harm physical and mental health. The consensus therefore treats work both as a determinant of health and as an important health outcome.

The Creative Industries comprise a diverse landscape of organisations, businesses and individuals working across areas including performing arts, music, film and television, publishing and other creative activity. The workforce includes employees, freelancers, self-employed people, independent practitioners, fixed-term and project-based workers and volunteers. This diversity creates strengths but also means that access to conventional employer-based workplace health infrastructure may vary substantially.

The health of the workforce is inseparable from the sustainability of the sector. Healthy workplaces can support productivity, recruitment, retention, innovation and organisational resilience. Conversely, preventable ill health, loss of experienced workers and difficulty retaining people with health conditions can affect employers, skills and the wider sector.

3. Distinctive characteristics of creative work

Characteristic	Potential workplace-health implication	Evidence/resource already identified
High self-employment and freelance working	Potentially fragmented responsibility for health, safety, HR, occupational health and rehabilitation; variable access to benefits and support.	DCMS/Creative Industries workforce evidence; Musicians' Census; freelance dance research.
Fixed-term, project-based and portfolio careers	Continuity of support may be limited; people may move rapidly between employers, projects and employment statuses.	Creative workforce and subsector reports.
Financial insecurity and income volatility	May make it difficult to take time away from work or invest in health; can compound wider stress and insecurity.	Film and TV Charity Money Matters; Musicians' Census Financial Insights.
Competition for opportunities	May contribute to reluctance to disclose health needs, seek adjustments or decline work when unwell.	Sector evidence identified through the consensus process.
Small organisations and variable organisational capacity	Access to formal HR, health and safety and occupational health expertise may be limited.	Creative Industries workforce evidence; sector-specific practice evidence.
Discipline-specific occupational exposures	Different creative occupations may require different prevention, risk assessment and specialist support.	Music, dance, film/TV and other sector evidence.

4. Health and wellbeing evidence

4.2 Physical and occupational health

Workplace health in the Creative Industries is not solely a mental-health issue. Risks vary by discipline and can include physical demands, repetitive or intensive work, fatigue, irregular working patterns and other occupational exposures. The consensus appropriately includes both work-related conditions and health conditions that affect a person's ability to work.

Further evidence should be assembled across subsectors on occupational injury and illness, musculoskeletal health, hearing and voice health, fatigue and sleep, ergonomic risks and other discipline-specific exposures. This is an identified evidence-development priority rather than a claim that the current evidence base is comprehensive.

4.3 Health conditions, disability and retention

Workplace health also encompasses support for people with non-occupational health conditions, disability and other health needs. The objective is to enable people to remain in work where possible, access appropriate adjustments, return safely following illness or injury, and sustain creative careers.

Evidence on disability, long-term conditions, neurodivergence, reasonable adjustments and retention should therefore form part of future evidence development and implementation evaluation.

5. Financial security and employment conditions

The financial context of creative work is an important part of the workplace-health picture. The draft reports that, in a 2024 Film and TV Charity Money Matters workforce survey, 42% of respondents had less than £1,000 in cash savings, including 27% with no cash savings, and 40% felt they could make ends meet for no more than one month if they lost their income. The draft also reports that only 28% of self-employed musicians had access to an employer-contributed pension.^(3,4)

These findings illustrate why workplace health cannot be considered separately from employment conditions. Financial insecurity may influence decisions about taking leave, seeking treatment, accepting work while unwell and disclosing health needs. The purpose of the consensus is not to address all aspects of employment policy, but to recognise these contextual factors when designing effective workplace-health approaches.

6. Economic and organisational case for action

The Creative Industries are identified in the Government's Industrial Strategy as one of the growth-driving sectors. The draft states that the sector contributed an estimated £145.8 billion to UK economic output and generated approximately 2.4 million jobs, around 7% of all UK jobs.⁽⁵⁾

A healthy workforce is therefore an economic asset. Supporting health can contribute to retention of skills and experience, productivity, organisational resilience and the ability of the

³ Film and TV Charity (2024), Money Matters: Financial Resilience Report. Survey of 2,026 film, TV and cinema workers; findings include 42% with less than £1,000 in cash savings, including 27% with no cash savings, and 40% reporting they could make ends meet for no more than one month if they lost their income.

⁴ Musicians' Census (2023), Musicians' Census: Financial Insights Report. The draft consensus cites the finding that 28% of self-employed musicians reported access to an employer-contributed pension.

⁵ Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2025), DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates: Gross Value Added 2024 (provisional).

sector to grow. The case for workplace health is consequently both an ethical responsibility towards workers and a practical component of sustainable economic growth.

7. Existing policy, evidence and initiatives

Supporting document/resource	Relevance to the consensus
Healthcare Professionals' Consensus Statement for Action on Health and Work (AOMRC, 2025)	Provides five principles including asking the work question, understanding work as a health outcome, improving access to guidance and adjustments, making effective use of the fit note, and recognising organisational responsibility for healthy working environments.
Get Britain Working White Paper (2024)	Provides the wider Government health-and-work context for improving economic participation and addressing health-related barriers to work.
Keep Britain Working Review (2025)	Provides further policy context on health, work, retention and economic participation.
Industrial Strategy and Creative Industries Sector Plan	Establishes the strategic importance of the Creative Industries to growth and productivity.
Creative Health Review (2023)	Provides the wider context for the relationship between creativity, health and wellbeing.
PEC Good Work Review	Provides evidence and a framework for considering good work and its implications for health and employment.
Film and TV Charity resources ⁶	Provides sector-specific evidence and practical principles for mentally healthy productions and financial resilience.
Musicians' Census and EU musicians' health evidence ⁷	Provides evidence on financial security, employment arrangements and health and wellbeing of musicians and music creators.
Freelance Dance Artists' Working Ecology and UK Dance Sector freelancer research ⁸	Provides insight into freelance working arrangements and the working ecology of dance.

8. Policy alignment

Policy/strategy	Relevant ambition	Contribution of workplace-health consensus
Industrial Strategy	Economic growth and productivity	Supports a healthy, productive and sustainable Creative Industries workforce.

⁶ Film and TV Charity, Principles for Mentally Healthy Productions and associated research and resources.

⁷ Musicians' Census (2023), Financial Insights Report; European Commission (2023), The Health and Wellbeing of Professional Musicians and Music Creators in the EU – insights from research for policy and practice

⁸ Freelance Dance Artists' Working Ecology; Dance Sector research, The Role and Impact of Freelancers in the UK Dance Sector

Creative Industries Sector Plan	Growth and development of the sector	Places workforce health alongside skills, productivity and organisational sustainability.
10-Year Health Plan for England	Prevention and improving health	Applies prevention and healthy-work principles to a major workforce.
Get Britain Working	Economic participation and reducing barriers to work	Supports retention, rehabilitation and healthier working lives.
Keep Britain Working	Health and work	Provides a sector-specific context for retaining people in work and preventing avoidable economic inactivity.
Creative Health Review	Creativity and health	Complements population-health benefits of creativity with attention to the health of the people delivering creative activity.
AOMRC Health and Work Consensus	Health professionals supporting work	Provides a professional framework that can be applied to the distinctive Creative Industries context.

9. Supporting references and resources identified in the draft consensus

- Healthcare Professionals' Consensus Statement for Action on Health and Work (AOMRC, 2025).
- Industrial Strategy and Creative Industries Sector Plan.
- Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, The Good Work Review.⁹
- Get Britain Working White Paper (2024).
- Keep Britain Working: Final Report (2025).
- Creative Health Review (2023), National Centre for Creative Health and All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing.
- Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, Geographies of Creativity: State of the Nations report (2023).¹⁰
- Film and TV Charity, Principles for Mentally Healthy Productions.
- Film and TV Charity, Money Matters: Financial Resilience Report.
- Musicians' Census, Financial Insights Report (2023).
- European Commission, The Health and Wellbeing of Professional Musicians and Music Creators in the EU – insights from research for policy and practice.
- Freelance Dance Artists' Working Ecology.
- The Role and Impact of Freelancers in the UK Dance Sector.
- Forthcoming Position Paper on health promotion in tertiary music education, referenced in the draft consensus.

⁹ Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, The Good Work Review.

¹⁰ National Centre for Creative Health and All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (2023), Creative Health Review

10. Evidence gap and research priorities

The current evidence base demonstrates the importance of workplace health but is uneven across subsectors and topics. The consensus therefore provides an opportunity to strengthen the evidence base through evaluation, research and sharing of practice.

- Health outcomes across different Creative Industries subsectors and occupations.
- Physical as well as mental health outcomes.
- Health and workplace experiences of freelancers and self-employed workers.
- Disability, long-term conditions, neurodivergence and reasonable adjustments.
- Access to occupational health, HR and health-and-work support.
- Work-related occupational exposures and discipline-specific prevention.
- The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of workplace-health interventions.
- Career-stage differences, including early-career and later-career workers.
- Differences between large organisations, SMEs, microbusinesses and independent practitioners.
- Health inequalities within the Creative Industries workforce.
- The relationship between workplace health, retention, productivity and sector growth.