HOW WE WORK NOW SUMMARY

Learning from the Impact of COVID-19 to Build an Industry that Works for Parents and Carers

















@RaisingFilms #HowWeWorkNow



RESEARCHERS' NOTE

Use Your Mind

How We Work Now surveyed nearly 500 parents and carers working across the screen industries in the UK. We launched on 17 May 2021, the day that cinemas re-opened in England, with thanks to all our partner organisations and community members who shared the survey on social media and via newsletters and emails before we closed the survey on 5 July.

The survey was designed and analysed by the Raising Films Research Collective, drawing on what we learned from our scoping study Back From The Brink (April 2021), based on in-depth interviews with our community members during October-November 2020. Even as our respondents were speaking from that more hopeful moment between lockdowns, Back From The Brink highlighted the financial, practical, and psychological impacts on primary carers, with the already uneven availability of employment and in-work support exacerbated by the pandemic. Thus, we designed

26% of respondents did not know about creative and cultural industries' COVID-specific financial aid and grants

the survey to learn more about the impact of COVID in relation to pre-COVID situations. We framed our questions with solutions in mind, not only to the problems of the pandemic itself, but to the problematic pre-existing employment practices it has exposed and worsened, including long hours and low pay: hence our report takes its section titles from Dolly Parton's workers' rights anthem '9 to 5'.

All of the questions in the survey were voluntary, which means we didn't insist that anyone shared information that made them feel uncomfortable. Instead we listened to what people felt most strongly about. We were

moved and enraged by the stories that respondents shared, describing the complex, cascading negative impacts of homeschooling, work cancellations, increased caregiving to support elderly and disabled relatives, and the return to production – as well as more hopeful stories of new forms of connection and ways of working.

Using both our quantitative and qualitative data, we were able to identify a number of specific situations, although these are often interlocking. The survey showed that the situations for freelancers, low-income workers, disabled workers, carers, single parents, and those working outside London, the South East, Edinburgh and Glasgow are especially challenging: these film and TV workers are in particular need of support and attention if the screen industries are to become in any way inclusive.

Reading the survey responses and writing the report, we were constantly and importantly reminded that caregiving is work, work that is undervalued. We were struck by the care that our respondents put into their answers, into sharing solutions and ambitions as well as struggles and barriers. We wanted to share as many of their experiences and insights as possible across this summary, our full report, and our cohort narratives, which put our community's voices front and centre. These voices are crucial in themselves but they also constitute a call to action for the industry. Please join us in



listening to and thanking all of our survey respondents: this is their story.

The Raising Films Research Collective

Dr. Jenny Chamarette, Louise Luxton, Dr. So Mayer and Dr. Ania Ostrowska

FOUNDERS LETTER:

There's A Better Life



You spoke and we listened. You've told us how hard it's been and how you're ready to give up. How caring for others makes the challenges of freelance life untenable. When we founded Raising Films in 2015 we identified that the industry wanted workers, but it didn't want our caring responsibilities. You're telling us – and we're seeing – that's one of many, often interlocking, parts of who we are and how we work that the industry doesn't want, and still struggles to accept: race, class, gender and disability are all made into barriers where they should be welcomed.

But we see you, too. We see you finding ways to create. To nurture and celebrate the work being made. To contribute to our screen industries and cultures in a way that makes them richer, deeper and more urgent. We see you fighting to tell your stories whilst fighting to care for others.

And we see that the industry is not listening. It is failing you whilst at the same time demanding your voices, your vision, your talent and dedication.

We are here to tell your stories and to forge a coalition of care alongside those organisations who are committed to changing our screen industries. As the cry for better working practices becomes louder, we understand that the fight must be taken beyond our industry, into legislation that will force employers to enact these better practices.

We are here with you. We are not done. This is how we work now. In solidarity,

Nicky Bentham, Hope Dickson Leach, Line Langebek, Jessica Levick, So Mayer

FROM OUR AMBASSADOR, MANJINDER VIRK:

It's Enough to Drive You Crazy / If You Let It

Day 63...

North London. I'm in a hotel room, waiting to shoot a street scene. I've been up since six o'clock. I got picked up at 7.20am today, which is a later start as it can be a 6am pick up. My kids, 7 and



On set for 'With Love from Calais' (2017). Annemarie Lean-Vercoe on camera, Manjinder Virk directing her daughter, Lyla.

11, got up at 7am. I know I've got to get showered and out the house but they want toast, so I make toast. My daughter has just started secondary school, she has a complicated timetable which she is still getting her head round – as are we. We go through her check list. My son has P.E. today and can't find his shorts, the only shorts he says are comfortable.

I try to help find them, inevitably I get involved in their morning routine. And before I know it, I'm not ready and I'm ten

minutes late for my pick-up. And I just have to pass the reins over to my husband and get out of the house. I always feel guilty but have to let it go: this is the job. I'm in makeup at 8.30am. My make-up artist is also a mother, we often share our stories of family life. I get a call from my husband to say my son still can't find his P.E. shorts. So he's having a major meltdown about it

and that spills into him telling him that he's not enjoying school and finds year three hard. After the call, I'm thinking I'll arrange to see the teacher about this, because I don't want it to become a problem. After such a turbulent year of home schooling, I want him to feel happy at school. And happy to learn again in a classroom.

At the same time, I'm looking at the lines I've learned from yesterday's sides (scenes you get given for what is to be shot) and notice they're different from the ones given out today. So I'm thinking, "Okay, I've got to learn this new scene, which isn't a new scene, but it's different to the one that I've already learned." And at the same time, at the back of my mind I keep thinking, I have to arrange to see my son's teacher.

By the time I get to set, I find out I'm actually not on for a couple of hours, it's a little frustrating because I could have solved the situation with my kids, with his teacher, got his P.E. kit, got them into school and still arrived on time, possibly... because it is now nearly 11am. But part of me thinks, this is the nature of filming, yes? And with my waiting time, I get to learn my lines... but how do we become less afraid of talking about the pull we, as parents and carers, have?

Day 64...

Pread a quote someone put on Instagram that 'You have to work like you're not a parent and parent like you don't work'. That really stayed with me. And sometimes we just need to have these conversations to make it easier, or to feel heard. I love working and I want to carry on working, I've never stopped, even when breastfeeding my babies I was writing treatments. Days like yesterday are tough, but this morning I asked for a later call, production listened and I felt I could ask. Even if I miss breakfast on set, I get to have breakfast with my kids. So, that was put into the schedule, and it helps: these little things really help, if you can tuck your kids in at night and get them ready for school, and just catch up with them and find out how their day was. As long as it doesn't interfere with the working day and you can do your job: I think it makes for a better working environment for parents and carers on set. And I totally get that sometimes it's just not possible. I was filming in Rome earlier this year and I was back and forth over three months, the first time away was difficult but we got through it. It helps that my husband is as understanding and as supportive as he is but it's not easy. You put what you can in place and make it work. But the problem is there isn't enough support and allowances for parents and carers.

And we have also had to deal with COVID.

My worry about COVID is that, before the pandemic, I think we were starting to have more open discussions about childcare, and how to make the workplace better for parents, and things were

being implemented. I worry that this important work could be sidelined, because COVID has become the more urgent (immediate) problem. And it is, it has been difficult for productions to take it on board, and put in huge changes. But we have adapted. The industry has adapted very quickly and positively in a way that allows production to carry on. So it does make me think: if we are able to do that, in three or four months, where we can get productions up and running with COVID teams in place, with testing and extra staff employed for that purpose – why can't we make those changes with childcare in the workplace?

INTRODUCTION

Barely Getting By

If you're reading this then, by hook or by crook, you've survived. And – especially if you're a primary carer – it has been against the odds. COVID has had an enormous, substantially negative impact on all caregivers, especially on their ability to work safely, healthily and securely.



We know this because How We Work Now is part of a community of reporting and campaigning for change that has been ongoing for decades. Our way of working is indebted to all the grassroots organisations and researchers, past and present, working for equity, transparency and inclusion. Over the last eighteen months, the extreme and asymmetrical negative impacts of COVID have also proven to be a catalyst for more, and higher-profile, reporting – leading, we hope, to an

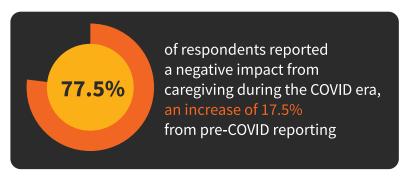
increase in concrete action to redress the inequalities being compounded.

That includes the unequal and complex negative impacts on parents and carers. This issue is not a secret: large national organisations such as the Office for National Statistics and the Institute of Fiscal Studies have undertaken large-scale studies that show homeschooling and the closure of paid childcare had a negative impact on parents' ability to work, and had specific gendered impacts as women continue to do more of the caring work at home. These reports have been given depth and detail by specific studies from the Global Institute for Women's Leadership and Pregnant then Screwed, looking at UK workers across all industries and finding that the gender disparity seen in the impact of lockdown on employment is closely related to caregiving responsibilities.

Closer to home, Creative Access, Film and Television Charity, Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA), Share My Telly Job and We Shall Not Be Removed have all reported on the

unequal impacts of COVID and lockdown in the creative and cultural industries, raising concerns that moves towards equality, diversity and inclusion made in the last half-decade are

being rolled back. Recent reports for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity, the Creative Industries Federation PEC, Film and Television Charity, and Producers' Roundtable show that inequality in the creative and cultural industries industries is intersectional.



deep-rooted and persistent, and that robust, far-reaching and nuanced solutions are needed. You can find their research reports, along with all the other research we cite and draw on for our full report, in our Dropbox folder, which is also linked on our website: https://bit.ly/3zqMqdS.

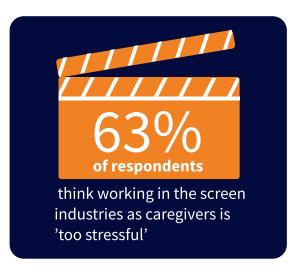
So much crucial work about how we work now has been done over the last eighteen months, in particular, often under the most strenuous conditions: we need to ensure that both the findings and the recommendations for action are not lost. Unions, campaigners and politicians have been sharing headline-grabbing initiatives such as flexible working from day one, the right to disconnect, more support for the paid childcare sector, improvements to Universal Credit and childcare vouchers, and an end to zero-hours contracts. All of these are necessary, but none of them are blanket solutions that work for all workers – and none of them go far enough to address the full inequalities resulting from long hours, irregular contracts, and low pay, as well as the more insidious operations of exclusion.

To make effective change, we need to attend to the specific and detailed analysis being reported, as well as the bold headlines. Our report, How We Work Now, specifically highlights the significantly worse experiences of parents and carers who have experienced multiple exclusions, whether through their lower household income, single parent households, status as a carer, experience of disability, or regional or rural location.

Homeschooling, the closure of nurseries and daycares, and the loss of in-home professional care during lockdowns had a negative impact on most people with caregiving responsibilities, showing up the precarious patchwork of everyday care that our community put together from family, friends, schools, state childcare, and paid carers. We describe this negative impact as a 'cascading crisis' as homeschooling requirements could have a knock-on effect on availability for working from home, which could then lead to delays or the loss of further projects, leading to financial loss, further compounding childcare issues once the lockdown ended; all of this adds up to a

negative impact on mental and physical health for many – with the heaviest burden continuing to fall on women.

What we learned is that exponential exclusions mean that the crisis continues to cascade, spiralling out of control. Connected factors such as earning a higher income and/or having savings or assets, being salaried rather than freelance or self-employed, and living in London and the South-East or



Edinburgh and Glasgow all offered significant buffers against the cascading effects, as did being partnered, being non-disabled, and not having additional caring responsibilities. In other words, being able to work in the screen industries as a parent or carer, without risking severe effects such as homelessness and mental ill health, requires a significant amount of structural advantage.

Neither working in the screen sector nor being a parent or carer should be treated as a privilege. If they are, then these choices only become available (individually, but

especially in combination) to those with existing privilege. These structurally embedded advantages and disadvantages are made palpable by the low percentage of Black, Asian and minority ethnic respondents to our survey, which mirrors the percentage reported in PiPA's 2020 survey. This speaks to the socio-economic double bind that excludes Black, Asian and minority ethnic parents from the film industry, and may also exclude some Black, Asian and minority ethnic film industry workers from considering parenthood while in the industry, not least because they do not see themselves represented and included within the community of parents and carers, as screen media continue to focus on white, affluent, able-bodied mothers when addressing parenting at all.

We believe that it is in the industry's collective power – and also collective interest – to create structural and systemic change. Changing how we work now as an industry means changing the stories we tell and how we work to tell them. In order to make meaningful, impactful change that helps everyone, it is vitally important that we address the needs of those who are most vulnerable. As Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett identify in *The Spirit Level*, more equal societies bring with them the associated benefits of better physical and psychological health, including social cohesion and trust, for



all. By addressing those most excluded, we bring everybody with us, creating the greatest positive impacts for all.

Our findings and analysis are rooted in the conviction that solutions need to proceed from

recognition of the needs of the most vulnerable workers, who are also often those underreported within the industry – lower income workers, freelancers, single parents, disabled parents/carers, carers, those based outside London and the South-East. This is an act of radical inclusion: by working from the most vulnerable upwards, we leave no person behind, and we can begin to repair the whole precarious ecology of the screen sector.



We heard from our community that many valued the opportunities for networking, training and even ways of working that were made accessible remotely during lockdown, and that this addressed some pre-existing inequalities around access, relating to location, economics and disability. We know that there are solutions that work to create equal opportunities, to expand the conversation, and to provide redress. We also know that these cannot be cosmetic or top-down – and that we can't continue to place the responsibility on individuals to ask for what they need. Employers and organisations have a responsibility to do the work of inclusion, for all. As Dawn Foster points out succinctly in *Lean Out*, 'Asking women to "lean in" is far easier than demanding that we fundamentally change the way businesses operate, who they operate for, and how we reward and approach work'.

We have to change how we reward and approach work – and that means listening to workers when they speak, and especially to the most vulnerable to inequality and exclusion. We have been speaking up for many years, and that has intensified over the last eighteen months as the impacts, too, have intensified. It's time for the industry to acknowledge, firstly, that it has a problem when it comes to hiring, employment, pay and retention, and that that problem creates exponential exclusions for workers with protected characteristics; and secondly, that it's those very workers who, being most affected by exclusion, are – as they long have been – providing the strongest and most fundamental leadership on the solutions. We've spoken – will you listen?

OUR FINDINGS:

You're In the Same Boat As a Lot of Your Friends

How We Work Now surveyed nearly 500 parents and carers across the screen industries about their experience of working during the pandemic. 60% of our respondents reported that caregiving responsibilities have the most significant effect on their ability to work in the sector – this remains a gendered issue, with 63% of female respondents reporting an overall negative impact compared to 42% of men. It rose overall to 77.5% during the COVID era, when 60% gained additional caring responsibilities, and 55% said this had a significantly negative effect.

The reasons are complex and interlocking, but the overall picture is clear when it comes to the negative impact, not least on mental health: 63% of respondents said that the biggest caregiving-

Carer

Not only have I been caring for an elderly relative of mine for four months full time, and six months (ongoing) part-time, I have been living with two vulnerable people who would be seriously affected if they caught COVID,



meaning I haven't been able to get back to work until recently since they have been vaccinated. This obviously means I now have a huge gap in my CV and it has been really slow to get jobs.

Female respondent, 16-24yo, East of England

related barrier to work in the industry is that 'it feels too stressful'. The need for flexible work as defined by the worker's needs, rather than the industry's, is one of two overall, toplevel solutions, along with the need for affordable, sustainable and widelyaccessible childcare that. again, meets workers' needs, especially taking into account the industry's nonstandard working practices such as long hours.

Looking more deeply into the data, our report shows that the biggest indicator for negative financial and mental health impacts of caregiving is low income – and that caregiving also has a negative impact on income, creating a vicious cycle and, all too often, a cascading crisis. This means that the

most vulnerable workers are most likely to be excluded from the industry. Approximately 40% of respondents to the survey earn under £20,000 per annum, across all roles including headline

creative and talent. This stood at 34% for 2019-20 and rose to 43% in 2020-21, showing the clear impact of COVID, while making it clear that low incomes pre-existed the pandemic.

Lower-income workers often face a multiple bind: they are more likely to be freelance and less likely to be able to access support from employers such as flexible or remote working, parental leave, technical equipment, continuing personal development and/ or PPE. They are more likely to live outside London and the South-East, where the majority of the provision of employer support occurred.

They were also more likely to face additional challenges such as being sandwich carers (who are parents to children under 18 and also have additional caring responsibilities, often for partners or parents), being single parents and/or being disabled. The number of single parents eligible for free school meals

LOW INCOME

When those I cared for fell ill, and then I fell ill, I was unable to work and I'm the only person making money as a single carer to an adult disabled child. It's been very challenging to say the least and if a production company and theatre company I was working with had not bailed me out I'd have lost my home.

Female writer/ screenwriter, 35-44yo, North West, freelance

doubled between 2019-20 and 2020-21, while approximately 50% of the carers, and 50% of the disabled workers, who responded to our survey were in the under £20K income bracket. Almost a quarter of disabled parents and carers – double the rate of non-disabled respondents – needed provisions from employers and contractors but were unable to access them.

In-work poverty – including workers accessing Universal Credit and free school meals – is an under-reported fact of the film industry; uptake of free school meals by single parents responding to our survey doubled this year. But low incomes and poor working conditions were exacerbated and brought to light by the pandemic, not caused by them. While many creative and cultural

industries organisations offered emergency grants or financial aid, 26% of survey respondents did not know about any of them, despite reporting need.

Better communication located in a more inclusive sense of community is required for screen industries inclusion interventions to work across the board. Without a cultural change towards meaningful inclusion, our survey portends potentially high rates of attrition among parents and carers, which means a loss of skilled and passionate workers, creating a major gap in the talent pipeline at a moment of skills shortage.

ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES:

Pour Yourself A Cup Of Ambition

How we work now is not working. Our findings show, above all, that equality and inclusion need to begin by transforming hiring and employment to meet the urgent needs of the most precarious workers.

While there are good practices across the screen industries, they are piecemeal, poorly communicated, dependent on location, and related to employment status. Lower-income workers are exponentially more likely to face poor working conditions, creating a cascading crisis made more stressful by lack of access to support and information, and no recourse to accountability. A cultural change is needed, one that requires practical actions from employers and hirers to create positive outcomes for workers and contractors – and it requires oversight at the highest level to ensure fairness, transparency and equal rights for all. To make this happen, 73% of respondents to our survey want training to pivot from its focus on workers to focus on those doing the hiring, contracting and HR, to ensure they are meeting the minimum requirements of implementing the Equality Act, paying a living wage, and recognising freelancers' rights.

Raising Films commits to developing, consulting on, and working with an accountable body that advises on and monitors equality, inclusion and diversity in hiring, contracting, training and employment practices across the sector to ensure an end to exclusion and inequality. We advocate for the practices ("also available as a separate document titled "How to Hire, Employ and Retain Parent and Carer Employees and Workers") as an initial guideline expanding on and supporting our calls to action.

To make screen work work, we call on the UK screen industries to undertake the following six practical actions to make structural and systemic change:

- recognise and value unpaid parents and carers and paid care workers as workers already present across the screen industries.
- recognise that caregiving is an inequality that exacerbates in-work poverty and systemic exclusion, especially and exponentially where it intersects with additional socio-economic inequalities
- take structural and practical steps to address this through providing fair, equal and transparent hiring, employment, contracting and retention practices.
- design, provide and accredit comprehensive training in employment and equality law and best practices for all screen industries workers who hire and contract, with public funding contingent on undergoing and implementing such training.
- address the specific inequalities between employees and freelancers, given that
 screen workers are twice as likely to be freelance as workers across UK industry as a
 whole; and parents and carers in the screen industry are twice as likely to be
 freelancers as non-parents.
- via inclusive hiring, expand the industry's vision and representation towards
 employing and supporting more voices and narratives that represent the full breadth
 and complexity of lived experience, including parenting and caring beyond white ablebodied heterosexual middle-class mothers.

In order to implement and sustain these changes across the industry evenly, transparently, effectively, and in a timely fashion, we see it as essential that the screen industries:

- provide core and sustainable funding for grassroots worker organising across the sector, as best practices and solutions are emerging from community reporting and engagement.
- mandate and fund an accountability body with sanction power to adjudicate fair and inclusive hiring, contracting, employment and retention across the screen industries, recognising all protected characteristics and axes of exclusion.

CARER

My father is near 80. He is also an amputee with a persistent cough, if he had caught COVID he would be dead. This meant that I was unable to work and as I was a freelancer I was ineligible for any sort of furlough. luckily I was saving to buy a house in 2020. However now I am burning though the deposit with no job prospects and a worsening mental and physical condition while also

caring for a father who is getting worse but will likely need years of care

Male respondent, 25-34yo, urban centre in County Down



SINGLE PARENT

I am a single parent of a school age child and during lockdown I was homeschooling alone, with no options for paid support, which effectively meant I was unable to work as I had lost all of my previous support network. My child eventually was taken in [to school] on the key worker provision in January 2021 but, for personal reasons relating to her other parent, this was a very stressful process over 2020-21 and this has had a very negative impact on my mental health.

Female writer/screenwriter, 35-44yo, London, freelance





My dream work situation would be support for disability without constant comments about paperwork and a bullying environment in projects as under pressure to stay and do more hours to get through huge workloads. This pressure ultimately lies with productions insisting on shorter prep time to save money.

Female set decorator, 55-64yo, London

REMOTE WORKING/WORKER OUTSIDE LONDON

COVID and other health problems meant I couldn't work much. But, I like the way COVID has normalised working from home and that, for a while at least, London wasn't the centre of the universe.

Female respondent, 45-54yo, urban centre East of England



FREELANCER



As a freelance Senior Producer I had a 6 month contract, I was a month into it and was let go in March 2020 along with 10 other freelancers – my contract was not worth the paper it was written on. No extra pay, let go that day. It was awful. Also my parent suffered a stroke and nearly died, the following month, the same thing happened to my other parent. In October, my first job offer since I was let go, I had to turn it down to care for my elderly parent. I have not earned any money at all In the past year. I am on furlough as a company director and get barely enough to pay the mortgage. We are relying on parents supporting us. It's been horrendous, I have always worked hard but in this industry there is just no job security at all and the experience of losing my job, despite my contract, has just highlighted how awful it is. I want to leave TV, I've just had enough.

WORKER OUTSIDE LONDON

Female respondent, 45-54yo, South Wales East

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Living outside of London was suddenly no longer the issue it was before. Able to make more of job, networking and training opportunities that would usually be quite literally physically out of reach (or require expensive travel to achieve)

Female director, 35-44yo, South West England, employed/fixed term

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SUPPORTING STATEMENTS:

Give You Credit



The How We Work Now survey highlights just how challenging working in the screen industries is for those with caring responsibilities. The twin pressures of increased caring responsibilities coupled with ever longer days is causing burnout and mental health pressures. The industry must address work-life balance and support fulfilling careers, or the skills shortage will become worse.

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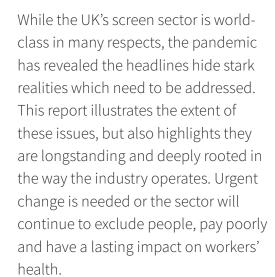
BECTU

Philippa Childs, Head of Bectu



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It is imperative we listen to the experiences of our workforce, so we are pleased to support this timely research by Raising Films which recognises the incredibly important role of carers in our society, and the difficulties they face in balancing those duties with work. With our industry relying on a largely freelance workforce, the pandemic had a significant and negative impact, and these findings give us unique insight into how those with caring responsibilities have struggled to rejoin the workforce as the industry has reopened.



It's great for the Screen Industries Growth Network to be working with organisations like Raising Film who have such great insights about the industry.

BFI

Melanie Hoyes Industry Inclusion Executive Inclusion / Film Fund



Jon Swords



We agree with this new report that how we work now is not working and that the financial and mental health impact on those with caregiving responsibilities in the screen industries needs to be urgently addressed. A cultural change is indeed needed to address the disproportionate effects felt by under-represented groups highlighted in the research, including women, disabled employees, low-income and freelance workers. Flexible working, accessible childcare and training for hirers and employers are important first steps on the way out of this crisis.

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WGGB

Ellie Peers General Secretary















THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The survey and report were compiled by the How We Work Now Research Collective, which includes Dr. Jenny Chamarette, Louise Luxton, Dr. So Mayer and Dr. Ania Ostrowska, with input from the Raising Films team: founders Nicky Bentham, Hope Dickson Leach, Line Langebek and Jessica Levick, project manager Katy Swarbrick and comms team Oli Gots and Sally Hodgson. The How We Work Now report and resources were designed by Rachel Lipsitz.

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