Sheffield Hallam University

FILM + TV CHARITY

Campaign to End Loneliness

Report: Loneliness in the Film and TV Industry

Dr. Oliver Hawkins, Sheffield Hallam University
Dr. Anna Topakas, University of Sheffield
Prof. Andrea Wigfield, Sheffield Hallam University

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Film and TV Charity's recent Looking Glass 2024 survey confirmed that loneliness is a significant issue for those working behind the scenes in the film and TV industry.

Loneliness can be defined as the feeling of one's social needs not being met, often due to a mismatch between desired and actual social connections (Pinquart and Sorensen, 2001). As described by Firoz et al. (2020), workplace loneliness is the feeling of being isolated, alienated, or disconnected from other employees and colleagues in the workplace, and is a relevant and present issue in a variety of industries.

Many Looking Glass 2024 respondents reported experiencing feelings of loneliness well beyond that of the national average. Specifically, 30% reported experiencing high levels of loneliness generally, compared to 8% nationally, and over half (52%) reported feeling lonely at work, compared to 20% nationally (Film and TV Charity, 2025).

Other research from the Film and TV Charity suggests that loneliness is the leading factor influencing mental health amongst film and TV industry workers (Film and TV Charity, 2022). But the extent to which this relationship is causal or correlative was unknown. The key influences on industry workers' experiences of loneliness and whether these are largely work related or not has also been unclear.

Building on the initial descriptive findings of the 2024 Looking Glass survey, this report draws on a combination of inferential statistical analysis of survey data, in-depth interviews and a focus group, plus a rapid literature review, to explore the presence and impact of loneliness within the industry.

The findings demonstrate that the structural and cultural conditions under which many industry professionals work are strongly associated with feelings of loneliness, a connection which has not been made formally until now.

Furthermore, the findings from the statistical analysis confirm that loneliness plays a mediating role between workplace experiences and their effect on poor mental health. Meaning the workplace culture and conditions that contribute to poor mental health, do so, at least in part by making people feel lonely. Six broad factors were identified in the analysis and tested for their effect on mental wellbeing. These were:

- **Industry culture for wellbeing i.e. industry attitudes that prevent people from sharing their experiences of loneliness and mental health problems, plus the degree to which the industry is perceived to be a mentally healthy place to work**
- **Industry support for mental wellbeing**
- **Industry policies and practices for addressing Bullying, Harassment or Discrimination**
- **Mental health supportive activities outside of work**
- **Work-life interference**
- **Loneliness**

Further descriptions of these factors and the survey questions they include can be found below, with full detail in the Appendix.

Of the six factors analysed, only three were found to have a direct statistically significant effect on mental wellbeing. Respondents reported better mental wellbeing when they experienced a more positive industry culture for wellbeing, engaged in frequent activities that support mental health (such as healthy eating and exercise) and experienced less overall loneliness.

However, all five remaining factors were found to have a direct effect on mental wellbeing via loneliness. Loneliness is therefore the mechanism through which the full range of factors analysed here relate to mental wellbeing.

The factor with the strongest and most consistent effect on both loneliness and mental wellbeing was industry culture for mental wellbeing.

Interviews with workers across a range of roles and career stages supported these findings, revealing that long and irregular working hours, the high-pressure nature of productions, job insecurity, experiences of bullying, harassment and discrimination, and the prevalence of freelance and short-term contracts are key contributors to feelings of loneliness. The culture of the industry was frequently described as competitive and transactional, with few opportunities for authentic social interaction or emotional support. This was felt particularly acutely by freelancers and those

between jobs, who often lack access to support networks or ongoing engagement with colleagues and employers.

The stigma associated with loneliness and resulting mental health issues was a recurring theme throughout the research findings. Many participants described a reluctance to speak openly about their experiences to others at work, for fear of appearing weak or unprofessional. The absence of safe, supportive spaces where workers could talk about these issues without judgement, or fear of professional repercussions was identified as a major gap in current industry practices.

Importantly, the report also highlights the need for greater inclusion of workers with disabilities or long-term health conditions, neurodivergent workers, and those who are carers, parents, and with responsibilities outside of work. Many of these workers experience heightened loneliness due to the incompatibility of caregiving and long-term health conditions with current industry practices and norms.

In response to these challenges, this report offers a range of recommendations, developed from the experiences of those working in the industry and supported by existing research on loneliness and wellbeing. These include:

- **Creating more inclusive and accessible opportunities for social connection, such as regular informal gatherings, walking groups, and fitness sessions that do not rely on alcohol-centred environments, for both permanent and freelance workers.**
- **Establishing designated calm or safe spaces, both physical and virtual, where individuals can decompress, reflect, and speak openly about emotional concerns without fear of professional repercussions.**
- **Create a greater sense of inclusion by reducing the stigma associated with disclosing and discussing mental health problems and experiences of loneliness. This could be achieved by encouraging senior figures and high-profile individuals to share their own experiences.**
- **Introducing formal buddy systems to connect new or isolated workers with trained peers who can offer both emotional and practical support. These systems may work especially well when implemented across teams or organisations, allowing for support that feels more neutral and less hierarchical.**
- **Embedding welfare and mental health planning into production processes from the very beginning, including the allocation of dedicated budgets and the introduction of welfare leads or trained mental health first aiders on set.**
- **Relatedly, encouraging the measurement of levels of loneliness by adding such measures to existing mental health surveys or supporting surveys to monitor loneliness as a key contributor to mental wellbeing, and simultaneously raise awareness.**
- **Maintaining consistent contact with freelancers and those not currently in work, through structured re-engagement strategies such as regular updates or invitations to events and networks.**
- **Promoting sustainable working conditions by supporting practices such as job sharing, remote and flexible working arrangements, limiting working hours, and recognising the importance of personal life events and caring responsibilities.**
- **Addressing bullying, harassment, and discrimination by putting in place independent and confidential reporting mechanisms, alongside clear accountability measures and a broader cultural shift towards respect and empathy.**
- **Supporting continued research into loneliness in the film and TV industry, to gain a better understanding of how loneliness develops or changes over time, and how this directly impacts mental wellbeing.**

In summary, the findings make clear that reducing loneliness in the film and television industry requires more than individual resilience. Both structural reform and cultural transformation are necessary to address the profound impact these factors have on loneliness and thereby mental wellbeing for those who work in the industry.

Organisations working within the industry, such as the Film and TV Charity, have a vital role to play in modelling positive practices, fostering community, and leading efforts to create a working environment where emotional wellbeing is prioritised. By implementing the recommendations set out in this report, the industry can take meaningful steps towards becoming a more connected, compassionate, and sustainable place to work, and help manage feelings of loneliness and improve mental wellbeing for those that work within it.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Film and TV Charity's 2022 Mind-Craft report, through regression analysis of the 2021 Looking Glass Survey data, uncovered that loneliness is the most important factor influencing the mental health of people working in film and TV, outweighing money worries, poor management and work-life balance.

Their latest Looking Glass survey shows that loneliness within the industry is on the rise, with 30% of industry workers often feeling lonely – far above the national average of 8% (Film and TV Charity, 2025).

The Centre for Loneliness Studies, supported by the Campaign to End Loneliness, at Sheffield Hallam University were commissioned by the Film and TV Charity to carry out research on loneliness in the sector. The research aims to provide greater evidence and understanding of the following:

- **A more detailed (quantitative) analysis of industry workers' levels of loneliness and its role in their overall mental health and wellbeing.**
- **A more in-depth (qualitative) view of industry workers' experiences of loneliness (both in general and related to work contexts)**
- **An understanding of who experiences loneliness in the film and TV industries, including an overview of which groups are most affected**
- **Further insights into the causational factors of loneliness, including work-related factors; life (personal) experience factors, and individual characteristics**

To achieve the aims set out above, the research team at Sheffield Hallam University conducted a mixture of desk and field research, the details of which are outlined in this report.

2. METHODS

In brief, the different aspects of the research are as follows:

- **A rapid literature review, reviewing the current research and understanding of loneliness in the workplace.**
- **A detailed statistical analysis of the data from the 2024 Looking Glass survey, highlighting particular industry and individual factors that are associated with experiences of loneliness.**
- **Ten individual interviews with members of the film and TV industry, to gain a better understanding of feelings of loneliness within the industry**
- **A focus group with seven industry members, employers, and Film and TV Charity staff aimed at understanding the current causes of loneliness, and any practical interventions which can be put in place to help alleviate this, as well as any barriers to their implementation.**

Each of these stages of the research are outlined in respective individual sections of this report, followed by a summary and recommendations for tackling loneliness in the film and TV industry.

Further detail on the different aspects of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

3. RAPID LITERATURE REVIEW

This section summarises the results of the rapid review and provides a useful working basis for understanding how workplace loneliness might specifically affect those working in the Film and TV industry, and how the Film and TV Charity can help develop interventions to support beneficiaries of the Charity and beyond.

This review also draws upon the findings of the previously published report the Centre for Loneliness Studies authored for the Film and TV Charity, "Report: Summary of academic perspectives on loneliness for the Film and TV Charity" (Ratcliffe et al., 2023).

The report provides a useful summary of causal factors, individuals who might be more at risk of loneliness, and recommendations for tackling loneliness appropriate for the Film and TV industry.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE LONELINESS?

Loneliness can be defined as the resulting feeling of one's social needs not being met, often due to a mismatch between desired and actual social connections (Pinquart and Sorensen, 2001). As described by Firoz et al. (2020), workplace loneliness is the feeling of being isolated, alienated, or disconnected from other employees and colleagues in the workplace.

Workplace loneliness can lead to negative outcomes for all levels of personnel, and can adversely affect their mental health, as well as having wider implications. A caveat to reviewing the literature on workplace loneliness is that there are often inconsistent approaches to the measurement or definition of loneliness, which can make a consensus on how to manage or reduce loneliness difficult to assess (Lam et al., 2024).

To better understand this phenomenon, it is useful to outline who might be at risk of developing workplace loneliness, and what the consequences of this can be for the individual and for the organisation/employer.

WHO MIGHT BE MOST AT RISK – DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS?

Loneliness is an issue which effects individuals across a wide variety of demographics (Bryan et al., 2023). Nevertheless, as highlighted in a previous report for the Film and TV Charity (Ratcliffe et al., 2023), there are some groups which might be more vulnerable to feelings of loneliness. For instance, differences in familial structure might be a protective factor against loneliness in some ethnic groups (Ratcliffe, 2022), rejection anxiety might be a key factor for younger people (Watson and Nesdale, 2012), and physical disability can also be a contributor to feelings of loneliness (MacDonald et al., 2018).

Whilst these demographics are not unique to the film and TV industry, as highlighted in the findings of the 2024 Looking Glass survey, among those who are lonely (as measured by high UCLA scores (8-9) and who also agreed they often felt lonely at work, greater loneliness was experienced for individuals who identified:

- **As living with a disability or long-term health condition (21% compared to 12% without a disability or long-term health condition)**
- **Neurodivergent (21% compared to 12% neurotypical)**
- **Workless (those who have worked less than 3 months in the past year)**

Further evidence from the Looking Glass survey suggests the following demographic groups are also more vulnerable to feelings of loneliness in the film and TV industry:

- **Black and Global Majority groups (18% compared to 14% White, particularly Middle Eastern and Asian/Asian British)**
- **Muslim (37% compared to 12% no religion, and a range of 9% – 27% among other religious communities)**
- **With caring responsibilities (18% caring for dependent adults and 16% caring for dependent child with disabilities, compared to 14% with no caring responsibilities)**
- **LGBTQ+ (20% Trans and 18% Bisexual compared to 14% straight/heterosexual)**
- **Freelancers (16% compared to 12% permanent workers)**
- **Working class backgrounds (18% compared to 13% from professional backgrounds)**
- **Post-production and Sales/Distribution/ Marketing/PR (20%) and Film (17%) (compared to 14% TV, Animation and VFX, and 10% cinema/ exhibition/festival)**
- **Those that experienced B/H/D appear to be lonelier. 35% fall into the lonely definition of 8-9 on the UCLA scale and agree they're often lonely at work, compared to 16% who have not experienced B/H/D**
- **Those who experienced financial worries appear to be lonelier. 28% fall into the lonely definition compared to 11% who did not experience financial worries**

Many of these group differences in reported experiences of loneliness have been identified in previous literature, including the 2023 report, emphasising the likelihood that these demographic groups are at greater risk of loneliness and/or social isolation.

A more detailed analysis of the findings from the Looking Glass survey is provided in Section 4.

OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO WORKPLACE LONELINESS

Many of the demographic factors captured in the Looking Glass survey are also present in the papers analysed in a systematic review and meta-analysis of workplace loneliness by Bryan et al. (2023). However, some additional factors include gender, time of tenure (Anand and Mishra, 2021; Bentein et al., 2017), perceived workload (Lam and Lau, 2012), and the place of work – working from home or on-site (Orhan et al., 2016), all of which are associated with loneliness. Furthermore, loneliness in the workplace can also develop from other factors such as limited opportunities to interact with colleagues, even when in a non-solitary role (Aira et al., 2010; Whittaker-Howe et al., 2017), limited

informal interactions (Wang et al., 2021), and increased levels of responsibility (Aira et al. 2010). Incorporating measures such as these in future research could therefore be useful in determining additional causal factors of loneliness, but these could also represent useful discussion topics to incorporate for qualitative research.

Many of these factors might be highly relevant for the film and TV industry. For instance, brief examples of contributing factors might include freelancers not being part of a larger, constant workforce, or perceived competitiveness of the industry being a barrier to more meaningful, informal social interaction (Aust, 2020).

Examining how these different contributing factors and outcomes for loneliness differ between different subgroups might be useful to gain a better understanding of how workplace loneliness develops and who is most likely to be adversely affected. Whilst robust quantitative analysis is vital in understanding differences and similarities in levels of loneliness for different subgroups, qualitative analysis can also provide a greater depth of understanding for how exactly these factors influence loneliness. Bryan et al. (2023) also point out that much of the existing qualitative evidence around workplace loneliness has not identified which type of analysis they are using or provided quotes to support their interpretation of this.

CONSEQUENCES OF WORKPLACE LONELINESS

The main consequences of loneliness are covered well in the previous Film and TV Charity report (Ratcliffe et al., 2023), particularly with reference to the different demographics described previously. More detailed analysis of the findings related to outcomes for different subgroups of individuals would require a full systematic review, which is beyond the scope of this report. Some mental health outcomes for individuals experiencing workplace loneliness relate to increases in symptoms of depression (Andel et al., 2021), increased levels of stress (Galanti et al., 2021) and increased rejection sensitivity (Khan et al., 2019), with each of these being detrimental to the formation of pro-social relationships, and contributing further to loneliness (Wright and Silard, 2021).

With specific regard to workplace loneliness, as highlighted in Bryan et al. (2023), factors such as burnout, reduced job performance, poor job satisfaction and management relationships were all associated with increased levels of workplace loneliness. Examples of how these factors might specifically affect those in the film and TV industry are outlined below.

Burnout

Bryan et al. (2023) found, in their meta-analysis, that burnout, defined as emotional exhaustion including lack of energy, fatigue, and the depletion of emotional resources (Anand and Mishra, 2021), was moderately positively correlated with feelings of loneliness. Stylianou and Menegaki (2023) identify that gender (with women at greater risk than men) and ethnicity could be linked to increased burnout, echoing two other demographic factors highlighted in workplace loneliness research previously (Lasgaard et al., 2016; Tian et al., 2021).

A study of healthcare professionals found that greater burnout was associated with poorer outcomes for patients (Salyers et al., 2016), and a separate study found that mental health outcomes for staff were worse for those experiencing burnout compared to those who were not (Peterson et al. 2008).

This raises two issues, firstly that those experiencing burnout might have reduced performance at work, both professionally and socially (see section below), and secondly that greater burnout can lead to poorer health outcomes for those experiencing it.

If workers in the Film and TV industry are experiencing burnout due to highly stressful or precarious working conditions, this could well lead to greater levels of loneliness, as well as negative outcomes across a variety of factors. Interventions which address levels of burnout therefore require appraisal.

Job performance

Previous research has found that workplace loneliness can affect job performance. For example, Ozcelik and Barsade (2018) found that greater workplace loneliness led to reduced work performance. It resulted in reduced approachability of the lonely individual, and often a lesser commitment to their organisations. A similar relationship was found in Uslu (2021), who found emotional deprivation (the lack of emotional attachment to others) (Wright et al., 2006) and workplace ostracism reduced job performance. Amarat et al. (2018) also found increased workplace loneliness and alienation reduced performance. This suggests that meaningful connections at the workplace, which help to foster inclusivity, might be important in reducing feelings of loneliness, thereby increasing job performance too.

Importantly, improved job performance can affect the general wellbeing of employees too, as Gabriel et al. (2021) point out, those with higher self-confidence in the ability to carry out their roles can facilitate positive problem-solving behaviours. As Dewi et al. (2020) highlight, a sense of belonging is an important factor in improving job performance.

In the Film and TV industry, barriers to a sense of belonging have been identified at work (see Ratcliffe et al., (2023), sections 2.4-2.6, 3.1, 4.1). These barriers might be due to specific demographic characteristics or vary depending on the job circumstances of different individuals (e.g. tenured versus freelance). Support networks and fostering inclusivity appear to be vital considerations to reduce feelings of loneliness in the workplace and simultaneously improve other outcomes such as mental health for individuals.

Job satisfaction

Another outcome of workplace loneliness, which may seem fairly intuitive, is reduced job satisfaction. Research conducted previously with teachers found that there was a negative correlation between workplace loneliness and job satisfaction (Tabancali, 2016), a pattern echoed in a wider representative study of Dutch workers (Lowman et al., 2022). Moens et al. (2021) also found a link between greater loneliness and lower job satisfaction, and that contract length is a mediating factor for this. In brief, the findings suggest that those on temporary contracts experience more loneliness and less job satisfaction than those on permanent contracts.

These findings apply to the Film and TV industry in two ways. Firstly, those with reduced job satisfaction are more likely to express a willingness to leave their roles (Aytac, 2015). This means that there are possible ties to the above section on job performance, and also those that do leave might represent something of a ‘brain drain’ due to talented workers leaving their roles. There are also potential links back to approachability and ostracism persisting feelings of loneliness, as highlighted previously. Secondly, the precarity of job positions might contribute to experiences of loneliness, meaning that there need to be efforts to provide some level of assurance for workers.

Manager relationship

A poor relationship with management staff has also been shown to be associated with increased workplace loneliness. In nursing staff, lower levels of leader-member exchange (LMX), characterised as fewer exchanges and frequency of communication, accompanied reports of increased loneliness levels. This was also associated with less trust in leaders, and lower reports of meaningful work, linked to reduced motivation and potentially increased stress at work (Gelsema et al., 2006). Similar associations have been found in some of the papers cited previously (Anand and Mishra, 2021; Lam and Lau, 2012).

Beyond LMX, negative work relationships with colleagues are also associated with increased levels of loneliness, however a greater perceived level of social support can alleviate some of these negative feelings (Kuriakose et al., 2019). An example of improved social support alleviating feelings of loneliness and social isolation of teleworkers is given by Bentley et al (2016), who found that regular check-ins from managers and provision of resources improved perceived social support.

In a detailed review by Lam et al. (2024), a wide range of papers in which the concept of leadership loneliness is discussed. Similar caveats apply as those from previous themes, such as a lack of consistency in definition and approach in measurement. Leadership loneliness is discussed

as the result of challenges in relationships with colleagues lower in the hierarchy. A British Red Cross (2023) report also highlights how 32% of senior managers experience loneliness, twice the average of the UK.

Desired versus actual relationships at work

Whilst the Bryan et al. (2023) review provides a useful overview of the broad themes of workplace loneliness, it is of course not exhaustive. Additional themes are raised in the article by Wright and Silard (2021), as well as similar themes to those already discussed here. Wright and Silard specifically provide a process model for workplace loneliness influenced by factors such as how workplace loneliness can be stigmatised and trivialised (Cacioppo and Patrick, 2008), how all individuals wish to feel related to others (Ryan and Deci, 2000), and how desired versus actual work relationships can be influenced by individual and organisational factors.

The desire for social relationships might vary between individuals, with sociotropy and social anhedonia cited as factors (i.e., high versus low desire to form connections), but Wright and Silard add that desire might be influenced by what is seen to be possible in a work setting, and what the benefits would be. This leads on to what actual relationships in the workplace might look like, and the authors identify four domains which might influence this, namely: 1) external factors; 2) societal factors; 3) social and interpersonal skills; and 4) individual differences.

Echoing Lam et al. (2024), individual factors such as high competitiveness to succeed and rise to the top of an organisation could result in feelings of loneliness. This can occur as the change in role from colleague to leader can hinder the formation of meaningful connections with peers. Wright and Silard (2021) suggest that strong social skills in an environment which allows for the fostering of meaningful relationships could lead to greater fulfilment, and it is an important consideration for the work environment to allow this development.

The authors also suggest that those with more introverted personalities might be predisposed to shyness-oriented behaviours, which might be detrimental to relationship development. Blevins et al. (2021) describe how some stigma around introversion exists but also point out how individuals with this personality type can be beneficial to organisations. Condon and Ruth-Sahd (2013) discuss how introverts can be provided with opportunities to speak up themselves or be provided with less socially intense methods to provide input. An awareness of these personality traits is therefore important, as one approach might not fit for all.

With regard to the relational climate, Condon and Ruth-Sahd (2013) again explain that the intrinsically individualising environment in some organisations might be the antithesis to that which is required to form meaningful relationships, and environments which are more cooperative are more useful to reduce feelings of loneliness.

In a similar vein, marginalisation, perceived or actual, can result in 'minority stress' (Kuyper and Fokkema, 2010), which can lead to introversion and therefore lead to similar issues of a lack of meaningful connections, as discussed previously. This marginalisation can result from more outward factors such as gender or ethnicity (Cooper-Thomas and Wright, 2013) but can also be related to 'concealable' stigma such as sexual orientation. These factors bring an added stress of rejection or discrimination if revealed voluntarily (Quinn and Earnshaw, 2013) or increase minority stress by not wishing to open up to others (Newheiser and Barreto, 2014).

Wright and Silard (2021) suggest that relational fulfilment is attained when desire is equal to actual relationships, and that loneliness is represented by a deficiency in the desired level of relationship(s) at work, and what they can achieve, either personally or organisationally. The authors conclude that it is not sufficient to expect individuals experiencing loneliness to fit into the organisational social fabric, and that the identification of this social deficiency could improve feelings of loneliness by facilitating the formation of social connections.

WORKPLACE LONELINESS – SUMMARY

Each of the themes discussed previously have relevance to the Film and TV industry, in that as the previous Film and TV Charity report highlighted (Ratcliffe et al., 2023), there can be feelings of competition, ostracism, and potential uncertain working contracts. Each of these factors can increase levels of stress, and reduce job performance and dissatisfaction, which in turn increase levels of loneliness. Loneliness can then further contribute to reductions in performance and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, a perceived or actual stigma or discrimination around personal factors, or even of feelings of loneliness, can become detrimental to the formation of meaningful connections.

It appears evident that this rapid review of literature has identified the need to facilitate the formation of meaningful social connections, addressing individual factors such as personality type or forms of marginalisation, and also organisational factors such as combatting individuating climates, and allowing for the fostering of pro-social behaviours.

It is therefore necessary to consider existing interventions which have sought to reduce the negative effects of each of these factors.

INTERVENTIONS FOR WORKPLACE LONELINESS

As pointed out in Ratcliffe et al. (2023), information on interventions aimed at workplace loneliness in the industry are scant, other than those explored by the Film and TV Charity. Ratcliffe et al. (2023) effectively collate some of the types of interventions which could be useful for the Film and TV Charity in developing interventions of their own. This section does not seek to replicate that, but instead builds on the suggestions made previously, with specific relevance to how these, and others, could help address workplace loneliness in the themes raised in the previous sections.

It should be noted that previous grey literature reports have also touched on interventions which might be useful for those experiencing loneliness, and what these should look like or factors to target. These include but are not limited to:

- **Not a one-size-fits-all approach**[1,2,3]
- **Developing meaningful workplace relationships**[1,2]
- **Support around conflict management**[1]
- **Supporting leaders (training to help employees' emotional or mental health issues)**[1]
- **Signposting to relevant support groups**[2]
- **Group activities – peer- or co-developed, shared interest groups**[2]
- **Recognising diversity**[4]
- **Fostering a sense of belonging**[4]

We explore some particular approaches below in more detail and discuss the applicability of the interventions examined in the context of the Film and TV industry.

[1] British Red Cross. (2023).
[2] Co-op. (2016).
[3] British Red Cross/APPG (2021).
[4] Loneliness Lab (2020).

Social prescribing and group approaches

This section combines two approaches raised in the Film and TV Charity report (Ratcliffe et al., 2023). Whilst the two approaches have distinctions, some of the applicability and desired outcomes of these can overlap.

As highlighted previously, job satisfaction (Lowman et al., 2022) and job performance (Amaret et al., 2018) are two factors which can be adversely affected by increased workplace loneliness, often due to insecurity of contracts, or perceived alienation or ostracism.

Potential methods to address these issues include improving the social connections of those experiencing feelings of loneliness. A review of the impact of social prescription in the UK by Reinhardt et al. (2021) found that belonging to a group can reduce feelings of loneliness and level of healthcare use. This effect is echoed by Aggar et al. (2020), who found that a 12-week social prescription programme for injured workers in Australia improved all measures of biopsychosocial outcomes for participants, including frequency and confidence in engaging in social activities, loneliness, and capacity to return to work.

Ratcliffe et al. (2023) also highlights some challenges of social prescribing, raised in a review by Liebmann et al (2022):

> **" i) when prescribed groups do not share similar interests to the individual; ii) when people's social needs are not being met (i.e., a different kind of assistance is needed); iii) when people do not manage to connect with people at the places they attended; iv) when people are not interested in longer-term connections; and v) in situations where people do not like or get on well with the social prescribing link worker. "**
>
> Ratcliffe et al., (2023) paraphrasing Liebmann et al. (2022)

Given the above factors, as well as reports such as those from the British Red Cross (2023), that contact with colleagues "is not enough to prevent loneliness", there should be a focus on ensuring that any social connections facilitated through social prescribing or by running events, for example, are done so with shared interests, the identification of individuals' needs, and perhaps even personality types (sociotropic versus social anhedonia) considered.

Although social prescription has been shown to be effective in reducing feelings of loneliness, as commented by Reinhardt et al (2022), the existing literature is inconsistent in its approach to measurement, as well as quality of data collection. This point is supported by Bickerdike et al (2017), who also go on to suggest that as a result, social prescription might become costly, with no guarantee of efficacy.

A potential avenue to improve on social connections in the workplace could be through regular group-based activities organised by organisations such as the Film and TV Charity. As Wigfield et al. (2022) suggest, these sorts of groups are instrumental in forming meaningful connections, rather than just a route to meet new people.

As the previous report (Ratcliffe et al., 2023) highlights these can take the form of shared interests, shared identity, and peer-support groups, and have been found to improve on measures of loneliness (Gardiner et al., 2016), ostracism (Jaubert et al., 2023), and burnout, respectively (Peterson et al., 2008).

Such groups, in which managers and leaders can also involve themselves, might also help to improve on leader-manager exchange for both sides of the relationship and improve outcomes for leaders facing loneliness too (Sullivan and Bendell, 2023). Due to the often "us versus them" atmosphere a hierarchical organisation might provide, actively working to reduce perceived distance between employee and manager might also help to improve on these outcomes for both parties in the relationship (Chen et al., 2016).

As with social prescription, a careful evaluation of group activities meeting individuals' needs must be carried out. As Stuart et al. (2022) report, taking part in groups designed to improve well-being, but not addressing an individual's particular needs can be seen as a "social curse" rather than a cure. Bearing in mind that one-size-fits-all might not apply is paramount in the development of, and recruitment to, these groups. Groups which provide shared goals and inclusion such as "Men's Sheds" have been found to reduce social isolation (Foettinger et al., 2022), for example.

The benefits of these groups have relevance to each of the consequences of workplace loneliness outlined previously, especially in settings where insecure contract length, non-centralised workspaces, and limited opportunities for meaningful connections are possible, which also has particular relevance to the film and TV Industry (Duarte, 2020; Zarate et al. 2022).

Interestingly, D'Oliveira and Persico (2023) find that loneliness at work might be more effectively addressed by investing in a supportive environment, and that belonging to smaller groups within an organisation might not be enough to reverse the effects of loneliness and isolation. This might depend on if the organisation values more individualistic successes and contributions to the wider organisation but stresses the importance of a supportive culture. The forward-looking Vodafone "Loneliness 2030" report (Vodafone, 2020) paints alternative pictures for what loneliness in the UK might look like if we continue with individualised approaches to existence and also stresses the need for community spirit and support to combat this.

Psychological approaches

Forms of psychological intervention to help with feelings of loneliness have also been recorded in the loneliness literature. As Cacioppo et al. (2015) highlight in their report on loneliness, social cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been effective at reducing loneliness, specifically when attempting to reframe negative thoughts on social interactions as maladaptive, from thoughts to facts. The authors cite that Masi et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis on loneliness interventions suggests addressing these maladaptive social cognitions as the most effective interventions.

As the previous sections have shown, workplace loneliness in the Film and TV industry can be the result of many factors at once, rather than primarily maladaptive thoughts around social interaction, though these of course can develop alongside feelings of loneliness. There are, however, more recent studies which have used similar psychological approaches to address the other causal factors of loneliness in the workplace.

Whilst not always explicitly addressing workplace loneliness, a review by Ahmada et al. (2024) details how CBT, mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) and solution-focussed therapy (SFT) can improve reported measures for employees such as perceived stress, quality of life, risk of burnout and job satisfaction (Aikens et al., 2014; Holman et al., 2018; Persson Asplund et al., 2023). As detailed previously, each of these factors have been associated with workplace loneliness, and it is possible that encouraging and training individuals in the use of these techniques could help mitigate the negative effects.

Whilst more a recommendation than a tested intervention, Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2023) found that increased levels of hope were a mediator for remote work and job engagement, suggesting that improving outlook in individuals for success, and possibility for social interaction could improve on feelings of loneliness. Hernandez and Overholser (2021) provide a systematic review of interventions used to improve hope in older adults, with life review an effective form of improving hope. Alongside the previously referenced methods of psychological intervention, promoting a change in narrative around the levels of perceived stress and hopelessness in stability or inclusion in an organisation could also help to improve feelings of loneliness.

Turning to leadership, Mohr et al. (2024) describe an intervention designed to improve mental health support behaviours in military platoon leaders. Service members with a leader in the intervention programme had significantly reduced loneliness levels compared to those in the control condition. The framework in Mohr et al. is adapted from Hammer et al. (2024) and thus could have applications to other industries. Other previous interventions in improving mental health support training for leaders has been reviewed, but low-quality data necessitates further investigation into this field (Dannheim et al., 2021).

Destigmatisation of workplace loneliness

The provision of interventions such as those discussed previously are an important step for organisations to consider when attempting to reduce feelings of loneliness or isolation in the workplace. However, in order for these initiatives to work effectively, there of course needs to be employee engagement and uptake. To secure this, organisations need to foster a culture of support, which encourages and supports individuals to seek out help when they need it and reduce any stigma around seeking this support. As Ratcliffe et al. (2021) point out, shame and loneliness might continue if stigma around such feelings persists.

As shown by Kerr and Stanley (2021) perception of loneliness can differ between demographic groups, as U.S. students were found to view lonely individuals negatively, however this perception was not apparent in a wider representative sample of U.S. adults. A more recent study also found that men were more stigmatising of loneliness, but showed less self-stigma then women. Meanwhile young people had more stigmatising views than older people (except for internal versus external attributions), and collectivist countries (those which value group rather than individualistic goal setting and wellbeing) viewed loneliness as more controllable, and thereby had more external stigma (Barreto et al., 2022). This stigma is also present in workplace loneliness, and is connected to previously discussed factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ostracism (Ulsu, 2021; Wright and Silard, 2020).

Stigma around other mental health conditions has also been found to impact feelings of loneliness and social isolation in younger people (Prizeman et al., 2023), so reducing stigma around mental health generally might also reduce perceived stigma of loneliness.

The previous Film and TV Charity report provides some recommendations for the Film and TV Charity in reducing stigma:

> **"The recent government White Paper (Jones et al. 2023) includes three recommendations for combatting stigma and loneliness: emphasising the positive features of being alone by using the phrase 'solitude'; encouraging individuals to recognise and accept environmental barriers to forming relationships; and ensuring physical spaces feel safe and welcoming."**
>
> Ratcliffe et al. (2023)

Changing the narrative around loneliness is a useful recommendation here. Due to existing stigma around mental health and loneliness, it may be useful to initially discuss loneliness without express use of the term. However, it is important to bring in the term explicitly at an appropriate point to avoid further stigmatisation of loneliness. Sometimes individuals don't *realise* they're lonely, as they might conflate "aloneness" with "loneliness" (Russell et al., 2012), so raising awareness and understanding of loneliness are key. There are ongoing discussions on the best methods to define and identify loneliness in individuals, however questions from the UCLA such as "Do you feel you lack companionship?" might be effective ways in helping individuals understand their own feelings. As with each of the previously discussed approaches, a supportive organisation appears to be instrumental in facilitating the access to intervention initiatives, and the reduction of stigma around the use of these (Grazier, 2019).

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This rapid literature review sought to provide an overview of the current understanding of what workplace loneliness is, who it might affect, what the consequences of workplace loneliness can be, and current interventions around workplace loneliness and loneliness more generally. As such, the literature review highlighted five main themes and issues:

- **Causal factors of loneliness**
  - **Including type of work, place of work, marginalisation, and job security.**
- **Consequences of loneliness**
  - **Additional mental health outcomes such as stress, depression and anxiety, perceived ostracism, and other factors such as reduced job satisfaction.**
- **Interpersonal and organisational dynamics**
  - **Desired vs. actual workplace relationships, and stigma surrounding the topic of loneliness or mental health.**
- **Potential interventions**
  - **Providing opportunities to form connections, increasing awareness, and improving hierarchical imbalances.**
- **Effectiveness of interventions**
  - **Including current coping strategies utilised, barriers to change, and what works in other sectors.**

4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

As part of this project, the research team used advanced statistical analysis techniques, with four aim aims in mind:

1. To develop a statistical model using Looking Glass 2024 data to explore the factors most strongly associated with mental wellbeing, similar to the statistical analysis carried out on Looking Glass 2021 data for the Mind-Craft report (Film and TV Charity, 2022).
2. To 'predict' whether working in the industry is associated with poor mental health, by looking at factors such as industry culture and practices, work-life interference (see below for more details), industry tenure and amount of work over the preceding period.
3. To develop a theoretically and psychometrically sound measurement model and use it to estimate the effects of a number of work and non-work factors on mental wellbeing and loneliness, as well as investigate the degree to which the influence of these factors on mental wellbeing is, in part at least, due to their effect on loneliness.
4. To determine causality – i.e. can we say that the relationship between loneliness and poor mental health among the Looking Glass respondents is causal rather than just correlative?

As such, the quantitative analysis undertaken aimed to build on the findings from the previous Mind-Craft report (Film and TV Charity, 2022), focusing on mental health and wellbeing in the film and TV industry. Due to differences in survey questions between the 2022 report, and the 2024 Looking Glass Survey (Film and TV Charity, 2025), exact replication was not possible.

A range of more robust statistical methods were used to improve and build on the previous analysis. Key areas explored include: identifying conceptually and statistically distinct factors covered in the survey that may have implications for loneliness and mental wellbeing (exploratory factor analysis); developing and testing a measurement model of the identified factors and establishing that it adequately fits the data (confirmatory factor analysis); testing the relationships between the factors, specifically their effect on wellbeing directly and via loneliness, accounting for a range of control variables.

KEY FINDINGS

The main findings from the analysis are outlined below and can be read in more detail in the Appendix.

Survey questions were grouped based on exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses into the following seven factors:

- **Overall mental health and wellbeing: This factor captures the broader state of mind and self-reported level of mental health of the participants. It was measured by relevant items from the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWS; Stewart-Brown et al., 2009), and a direct mental health question.**
- **Loneliness: Loneliness was captured with three questions from UCLA loneliness scale (Hughes et al., 2004) and reflects the frequency of experiences of isolation, feeling left out and lacking companionship.**
- **Industry culture for wellbeing: This factor reflects the prevalent attitudes within the industry about the acceptance of and openness towards workers with mental health concerns, and overall perceptions on the degree to which the industry is generally a mentally healthy place to work.**
- **Industry support for mental wellbeing: This factor represents the industry practices and sources of support available to workers for addressing mental health problems and maintaining their mental wellbeing.**
- **Industry policies and practices for addressing B/H/D: The questions included in this factor capture the availability of policies, reporting channels, support and adequate response for addressing instances of B/H/D.**
- **Mental health supportive activities outside of work: This factor has a non-work focus and captures the frequency which respondents engaged in wellbeing-promoting activities, such as eating healthily, engaging in hobbies, and exercising, among others.**
- **Work-life interference: The final factor reflects the degree to which work commitments prevented respondents from adequately meeting their non-work commitments, and vice versa.**

To test the relationships between the above factors we used structural equation modelling, an approach which estimates causal (i.e. directional) relationships, allows for the simultaneous assessment of all the hypothesised relationships between factors in a model and accounts for measurement error in its estimations, yielding more accurate results compared with traditional regression analysis.

We found that respondents reported better mental wellbeing when they experienced a more positive industry culture for wellbeing, and engaged in frequent activities that support mental health, such as healthy eating and exercise, and experienced less overall loneliness. Surprisingly, industry support for mental wellbeing, industry policies and practices for addressing B/H/D and work-life interference did not have a significant effect on wellbeing, when the effects of the other factors were accounted for. What is more, after accounting for the effects of all six factors, higher overall mental health and wellbeing was associated with freelance working, higher work intensity in both the past week and the past year, higher age and female gender.

The finding that greater work intensity is associated with better mental wellbeing is striking. By way of contextualisation, it is important to note that this relationship is not as clear as the correlation alone suggests and that there may be a number of complicating factors involved. For example: it may be that those who are mentally well have more capacity to work intensely; they may not be challenged by other non-work commitments; or they may have precisely the kind of work they desire.

Any of these factors might lead to their mental health benefiting from doing this work.

These findings demonstrate the nuance in the factors affecting mental wellbeing. On average freelance workers report poorer mental wellbeing compared to permanent staff (Film and TV Charity, 2025), but this finding is reversed when we account for the other industry and personal factors included in this analysis. That is, being freelance does not negatively impact mental health and wellbeing *per se;* rather it is likely their experiences of the workplace, and potentially their wellbeing-related behaviours outside of work, that drive wellbeing deficits relative to permanent workers.

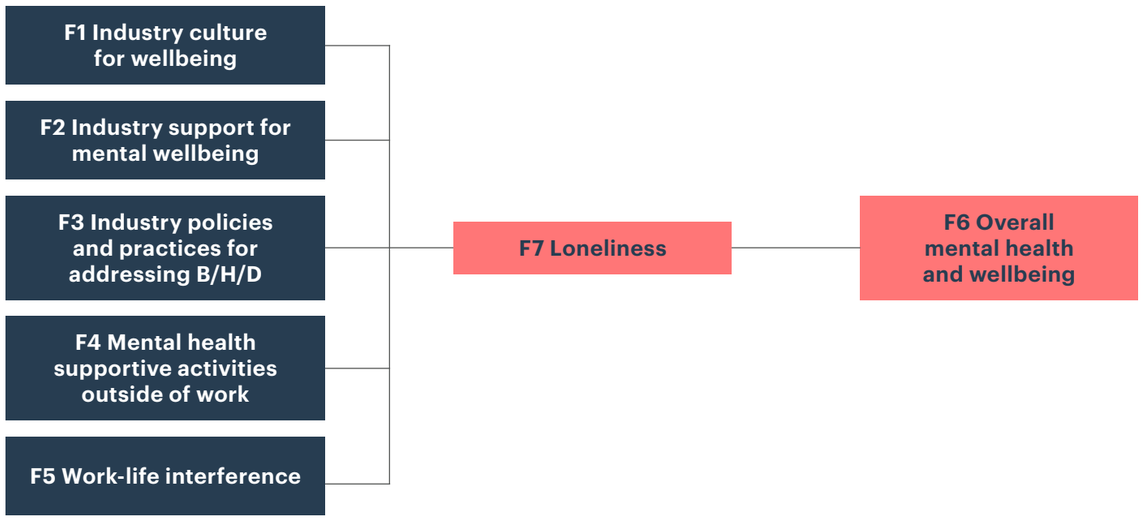
As the 2024 Looking Glass Survey found that loneliness was far higher in industry members when compared to the national average, a secondary aim of the statistical analysis was to explore in more detail the role of loneliness in driving wellbeing. We conducted mediation analysis to identify whether loneliness was the mechanism through which the remaining five factors affect mental health and wellbeing.

The results indicated that all five factors have a significant association with loneliness. Specifically, lower loneliness is reported by respondents who perceive a more positive culture for wellbeing, higher levels of industry support for mental health, better and more accessible industry policies for B/H/D, engage in more frequent mental health supportive activities outside of work, and experience lower levels of work-life interference. Importantly, loneliness was found to mediate the effect of all five factors on overall mental health and wellbeing. This means that poorer experiences on all five factors have a detrimental effect on mental wellbeing, in part at least, because of their negative association with loneliness. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1, below. With respect to the control variables, respondents who reported higher loneliness tended to have shorter tenure in the industry, lower work intensity in the past week and year. Respondents reporting higher loneliness were less likely to report their ethnicity as being Jewish, while no significant association between ethnicity and other ethnic categories were found.

To summarise the key statistical findings:

- **Factors directly associated with mental wellbeing: Industry culture for wellbeing, non-work behaviours that support mental and physical health and loneliness are the three broad factors that are directly associated with respondent mental wellbeing.**
- **Factors directly associated with loneliness: Levels of loneliness are influenced by all five of the other factors included in the analysis, that is, industry culture for wellbeing, industry support mental health support, industry policies and practices for addressing B/H/D, frequency of mental health supportive activities outside of work, and work-life interference.**

Figure 1
Hypothesised model of the effects of the five factors on Overall Mental Health and Wellbeing, via Loneliness



- **The mediating role of loneliness: Finally, all five factors have an indirect effect on mental wellbeing, via loneliness.**
- **Overall conclusion: The key conclusion from these findings is that improving conditions to alleviate loneliness will have a positive knock-on effect on overall mental wellbeing of industry members**
- **Additional observations: After accounting for the effects of the broad industry and personal factors, work intensity (both annual and weekly) is positively associated with wellbeing, and negatively with loneliness. Additionally, industry tenure has no significant direct effect on wellbeing, while longer tenure is significantly associated with lower loneliness. Finally, higher work intensity correlates with lower loneliness, which may be signifying that those workers who are able and motivated to engage in more intensive work, such as working longer hours, are also well connected and embedded in their communities at work, and potentially outside of work, and enjoying a high level of good quality relationships and social connections. The most straight forward explanation for this effect is that, all else being equal, people who spend more time engaged in their work are enabled, likely via their work relationships and more non-work resources (e.g. higher earnings) to build and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships.**

Loneliness and Model Limitations:

- **It was not possible to include all items included in the Looking Glass 2024 survey in the analysis due to their cross-loading across different factors – when some variables are significantly represented in more than one factor, thereby making the variables contribution to one specific factor unclear. Excluding these items allowed us to have a clear conceptual and statistical distinction between the factors under analysis, and importantly, between factors conceptualised as predictors vs outcomes.**
- **One such item that was excluded from the analysis due to cross-loading was the measure of *work-related loneliness*, which precluded the assessment of this context-sensitive experience on worker mental wellbeing.**

Causality Challenges:

- **Structural equation modelling assumes but cannot *prove* causality.**
- **Longitudinal analysis is challenging due to changes in survey design across years, and anonymous participation prevents individual tracking of changes in loneliness and mental wellbeing over time within the Looking Glass survey series.**
- **The lack of temporal separation (all data collected at one time point) further complicates efforts to draw clear lines between cause and effect.**
- **Continued research beyond this report should aim to gather longitudinal data (i.e., repeated measures over time) with consistent survey items, providing clearer understanding of how loneliness develops and affects mental health.**
- **Including qualitative insights or more targeted loneliness metrics could further elucidate the mechanisms of loneliness in the industry and highlight variations in experiences of loneliness in the context of individuals' lived experiences and personal circumstances.**

To summarise, the quantitative analysis suggests that by addressing the factors which lead to loneliness whilst working in the film and TV industry, better general wellbeing and mental health could be achieved.

The final point in the list above is something that this research sought to explore further, and the next section details the interviews carried out with industry members to gain a better understanding of their experiences of loneliness whilst working in the industry.

5. INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP

As outlined in the Methods section, interviews were held with a Film and TV Charity staff member, ten with industry workers, and through a focus group of seven industry community mangers and employers. The analysis of the discussions in the interviews and the focus group yielded four main theme headings, that were identified are as follows:

- **Workplace culture and communication**
- **Bullying and hierarchy**
- **Sectoral workplace practices and conditions contributing to loneliness**
- **Possible solutions and interventions**

This section outlines the findings from each of these themes and describes how the themes were represented in the discussions. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, minimal identifying information of the participants is provided. Specific quotes are utilised to support the relevant themes but are not exhaustive.

WORKPLACE CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

Across the in-depth interviews with industry professionals, staff, and the follow-up focus group, there was strong alignment in identifying the structural and cultural issues contributing to loneliness in the film and TV sector.

This issue of culture was often reflected by participants expressing that the nature of the work in the industry is so intense, there are rarely opportunities to form meaningful connections. The discontinuity between projects and the transient nature of working relationships may produce conditions that fail to provide or facilitate sustained social support. While temporary or superficial connections may form at work, their abrupt dissolution can undermine the stability and continuity necessary for long-term peer relationships.

The constant reset described by participants implies an ongoing cycle of disconnection, which may increase susceptibility to loneliness over time, especially in the absence of mechanisms for maintaining relationships between projects.

> **" It's hard because it's a very intense working environment. So, you bond, I think, quite quickly to people and then when it's over, it's kind of like 'OK that's it'. It just ends one day and then you have to like reset completely and move on to the next thing. So I think that that aspect is quite hard. "**
>
> TV producer

Another of the main subthemes that emerged was that of competition and feeling replaceable as a barrier to the formation of meaningful connections, and some participants were doubtful as to whether this aspect of the culture can be changed. In addition to the sense of competition, all participants suggested that there was a strong sense of fear of being replaced by someone else in their job role.

In such environments acknowledging feelings of loneliness may be interpreted as a weakness or a liability, discouraging open conversations and support-seeking behaviours. This dynamic not only inhibits the formation of authentic workplace relationships but may also contribute to longer-term psychological strain and alienation. The implication is that addressing loneliness in the sector cannot be separated from challenging these deeply entrenched norms of toughness and feeling disposable.

> **" One thing that's important to say in terms of characterising the industry culture... is that it is an industry where you are considered that you have to be very tough. If you're not tough enough to deal with it, then get out of it is the message. Everyone is made to feel like there's just someone else who could come and take your job, who wants it more so there's that competitiveness. "**
>
> Community Development Manager

Other important cultural issues were raised, such as hostile environments, racism and discrimination, and being devalued or overlooked for reasons

not based on personal skill. The discussions also highlighted, again, the fear of what speaking up against these injustices might mean for professional prospects.

For individuals from underrepresented or marginalised backgrounds, feelings of loneliness may be compounded by a lack of social identity affirmation within professional spaces. Furthermore, the labelling of those who challenge inequities as 'difficult' can have a silencing effect, reinforcing both systemic exclusion and internalised restraint. In these cases, loneliness is not simply the absence of social contact but a more profound experience of invisibility and emotional risk in professional settings.

> **Being a mixed heritage woman in the industry, often the only brown face sitting at a table, feeling lonely. Even when you've got into those spaces, when you spoke out, you're considered tricky. You're difficult. There are all these names for people who are just actually fighting things. When you do speak up, you get a label.**
>
> Welfare Executive

It also became apparent that individuals might not always be aware that what they are feeling could be defined as loneliness, and if they do, there is a persistent stigma around speaking up about these feelings which perpetuates a sense of social isolation.

In high-pressure, performance-driven environments, there may be limited space for reflection on wellbeing, leading to loneliness being experienced but not named or addressed. This underscores the importance of increasing awareness and destigmatising loneliness within sectoral discourse.

> **I think I was feeling the loneliness, but I wasn't 100% aware of it, I didn't want to be aware of it... I don't think that people actually realise it. I don't think that they realise that they feel lonely.**
>
> Focus puller, Film

Another common impact of the industry culture and practice is that those who moved on to new projects or are without work for a time feel unable to maintain their connections once the work has finished. Often, participants expressed that the nature of working in the industry means there is no time to form connections outside of work either.

The pace and structure of project-based employment appear to generate intense but fleeting connections with others. When these connections break at the end of a project, individuals may experience a kind of relational deficit, in which previously supportive environments are no longer accessible. Moreover, the lack of time or energy to cultivate external relationships further narrows the social field, reinforcing feelings of isolation during gaps in employment. For those not currently embedded in a work team, this lack of continuity may exacerbate both feelings of professional precarity and personal loneliness.

> **The problem is that you're building relationships, and you become friends with your colleagues very quickly. But they're very transitory relationships. So, you may be working incredibly closely and getting on fantastically with your colleagues... but the truth is that during that time, you're totally focused on your job.**
>
> Industry Peer Supporter

> **Maybe you get on really, really well with some people. And then after say three months, it all disbands... I don't know about it being difficult to form connections, I think the thing is that you don't always keep hold of them.**
>
> TV production manager

As this section has demonstrated, there are common and persistent causes of loneliness which participants have associated with the state of the culture in the film and TV industry. The analysis shows that a sense of being unable to share these feelings with peers for fear of being replaced, competition, and the nature of the work in the industry not providing enough opportunities to form meaningful connections, either during or after work.

Together, these findings suggest that loneliness in the sector might not simply be a chance undesirable outcome, but a structurally produced result of patterns of precarious work, competitive dynamics, and cultural norms that discourage vulnerability. Addressing loneliness will therefore require not only individual-level interventions, but systemic and cultural change at large.

BULLYING AND HIERARCHY

Another main cultural issue which came up was the theme of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, as well as how rigid hierarchal structures make addressing these issues difficult. As this theme was so strongly represented, we have presented it as a separate cultural issue, as this might have different root causes to feelings of loneliness and isolation.

A common subtheme that emerged was that of feeling overlooked or devalued, which participants reported as being dehumanising and isolating. When workers' contributions or aspirations are met with a sense of rejection, the result is not only frustration but also a sense of personal invalidation. Such dynamics often result in the withdrawal of emotional expression or engagement, which may reinforce feelings of isolation.

> **Because then you don't feel you're your emotions are taken into consideration at all. And when you're bringing something very profoundly personal right to them. Like, if that that doesn't move the needle and like getting a response, then you very quickly feel that that like, nothing will. You just stop talking.**
>
> Film director

Some of the experiences of being devalued were more specifically to do with experiences of racism, sexism, sexual harassment, or discrimination based on physical or mental health conditions.

A common theme was that "everyone's experiencing it" but no one is speaking up and suggests a culture in which the feeling that one must remain silent perpetuates the cycle of harassment and isolation. Climates such as these intensify loneliness by undermining trust and reinforcing a sense of alienation even amidst others who might have similar experiences.

> **I have definitely experienced treatment from men who are in positions of power... Maybe they see something in me or you almost feel lucky that they want to help you and you know it all feels very innocent and all of a sudden it becomes something that's not innocent. And it's like impacted me massively and kind of changed me as a person, changed my outlook my personal life with men as well... It's just that the matter of the harassment is so... The way it's done is so isolating that no one is saying anything, but actually everyone's experiencing it. It's crazy.**
>
> TV producer

Where these experiences were associated with factors which might result in being labelled as a "minority", such as ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation, some participants who could identify with these categories lamented how current diversity schemes appear unfit for purpose.

These perspectives indicate that symbolic inclusion without meaningful progression can serve to reinforce the marginalisation which it aims to counter. The promise of diversity initiatives become hollow when participants see little follow-through or structural change. Moreover, the need to conceal one's identity in order to gain access suggests that inclusion is conditional, thereby reinforcing feelings of disconnection and inauthenticity. In this context, loneliness may stem, not from a lack of people to connect with, but from a lack of recognition, affirmation, or safety to be one's true self.

> **You know, six new black writers will be taken under X production company and they're going to develop a script and then you don't hear anything about it afterwards. And it feels sometimes it's a gimmick to show that we're doing something and then you speak to those writers and it's like, well, what came about that? Nothing. It sort of ended. And that was that.**
>
> TV producer

> **Having worked as a script consultant and been on set on certain shows, just seeing the level of ignorance. Or let me just call it out, racism and Islamophobia... I feel that sometimes what's happening is that it's creating the wrong kind of culture on set completely, and then I'm speaking to execs and they're just not knowing how**

to deal with it. They don't know how to deal with people who are stepping out of line and making people feel uncomfortable. "

Third Sector Executive

In some cases, similar experiences were more directly identified as bullying, and left participants feeling isolated, especially as they felt that they couldn't speak up about it.

By reframing serious harms as anecdotal or trivial, and regarding bullying as "normal", individuals may inadvertently suppress their own emotional responses. This coping mechanism, while adaptive in some respects, also isolates individuals from others who might offer validation or support. As such, the relational and structural dimensions of workplace bullying might become mutually reinforcing drivers of loneliness.

" **That was definitely bullying and harassment... I've talked about it so many times to people outside of the industry mostly, and I saw it like a bit like a joke. I was just like telling it as like an anecdote, but people were like, 'Oh my God'... But because it's so normalised. I was just like, oh, yeah, like, you know, that's that happens all the time... "**

Certification analyst

Another common occurrence which appears to link back to industry culture generally is that of hierarchical structures, and those in positions of power, or with more authority, asking far too much of those working under them, appearing to perpetuate a cycle of poor working practices, as they too experienced this in the earlier stages of their career and it is seen as "normal".

" **There have been times where it almost reminds you of school. Where you might have, one group of people that think they're great or whatever and you know you're not part of this group. [It's] similar because there are cliques within the industry, there are groups of people who are in powerful positions who like to surround themselves with people similar to themselves. "**

Broadcaster, TV

" **I think the most surprising one for me was actually working on sets because you are surrounded by people but at the same time, I felt so alienated and I think that also comes down to the fact that people who are a bit higher up, they tend to like talk down to the people who are you know, runners or like production assistants. "**

Certification analyst

This section has shown how the culture in the industry might allow for individuals to bully, harass, discriminate, or generally devalue those working in the industry. This can lead to individuals feeling isolated and afraid to speak up, either because they feel they might put their job prospects at risk, or because this makes it clear that they are made to feel "othered" and therefore aren't able or willing to attempt to form meaningful connections with others they work with. There is some acknowledgement that there are changes being made to help deal with situations such as those cited previously within the industry, but this doesn't always feel like it's enough.

" **There's so much that has to change for that to happen, and I just don't know if that's ever going to. But I am hopeful, and I do think that there's things that like an individual can do, like checking in with people... "**

TV producer

SECTORAL WORKPLACE PRACTICES AND CONDITIONS CONTRIBUTING TO LONELINESS

With the main cultural contributors to loneliness identified, the discussions also highlighted other structural, logistical, and task-related factors that exacerbate feelings of loneliness or contribute to social isolation. This section explores how the organisation and demands of work itself can create or intensify disconnection, beyond general industry culture.

One of the most consistently identified pressures was the intensity of workload, the expectation to work long hours, and the frequent need to travel. These conditions make it difficult to sustain meaningful social or familial relationships outside of the workplace.

" **All you do is drive to work, you go home, have a shower, like there were times I was sleeping in the shower, being so tired after work, I would go back home in the shower and literally fall asleep in the shower from tiredness. "**

Focus puller, Film

" **It's always been a problem... You're obviously having to travel, work unhealthy hours and then you don't really have the energy to have relationships or even nurture friendships in in those situations...**

Even if you're working healthy hours, you're actually probably going to be doing two to three hours more a day of travel, which makes it unhealthy. And then again, when do you have relationships? When do you connect with people? "

Business Founder and Employer

Where individuals mentioned that they had consciously decided to focus on family or other connections outside of work, they reported how difficult it was to come back to working within an environment which appears unforgiving when taking time away from work, even in cases such as childbirth or bereavement.

Some accounts reveal a lack of support around periods that might already increase emotional vulnerability. In contrast to supportive re-entry practices found in other sectors, participants described environments where the expectation to resume performance quickly undermines the potential for empathy, reinforcing a sense of alienation at the very moment connection is most needed.

" **I've heard instances of this before from other people who've come back from bereavement. To be totally expected to jump back into it because of the nature of production, and that is extremely, extremely isolating and lonely. Because you're already going through... To come into that space where you expect support and sort of gently going back into work and speaking to people. And in my case, my boss didn't even have time to speak to me when I came back. "**

TV producer

Financial precarity, uncertainty about job continuity, and perceived risks to professional standing also shape participants' experiences of loneliness. Insecure or irregular work can mean individuals often feel pressured to accept undesirable conditions or remain silent about personal needs. In such a system, the fear of professional exclusion can compel workers to prioritise perceived loyalty or availability over wellbeing, further discouraging the kinds of honest interactions and peer support that might alleviate loneliness. This fear of openness extends to sharing caring responsibilities, in case this leads to being seen as unreliable.

" **That decision alone [to choose one job over another] has immediately cost me hundreds of pounds. And in the bigger picture, it's like, where has that cost me in the pecking order? The fact that I've essentially said no, do I get asked next time, how has it affected my standing with them? And none of these things are based on how well I did the job. "**

Broadcaster, TV

" **As a carer, we are in an even more isolated position than any other workers. You don't talk about being a carer when you're working in the industry because you're perceived as being unreliable. Yet you need that support, and it doesn't matter what role you have. You just can't say that you're a carer. "**

Industry Peer Supporter

Another concern for some was that the nature of the work they do at times made it very difficult to maintain healthy practices they usually adhere to in their personal lives, or that the options for socialising with colleagues might be restrictive, for instance due to lifestyle choices or cultural differences.

> **What I've noticed is that my healthy habits and my healthy lifestyle hold up for about 3 weeks of 50-to-60-hour weeks of production time before there's absolutely no use. That's how long my buttresses can hold off the onslaught of film production...**
>
> **I think like my perception is that most people are drinking their loneliness away in hotel bars, or the pub closest to location.**
>
> Prop-dresser, TV

This exclusion from informal bonding practices suggests that even opportunities designed to facilitate connection can result in marginalisation when not thoughtfully considered. When participation is implicitly coded around dominant social norms, individuals may feel pressure to assimilate or self-exclude, either of which can result in reinforcing loneliness by limiting authentic social engagement.

> **Even when we're talking about socials, it's like, 'let's all go to the pub' and, you know, I'm not comfortable with that. And I can't. I can't do that for religious reasons. And that's stated and it's sort of, 'oh yeah, we'll figure something out next time'. And there never is a next time.**
>
> TV producer

This section has highlighted how structural and task-related issues within the industry contribute to feelings of loneliness and experience of isolation among workers. The participants describe intense working practices marked by long hours, high pressure, and a constant need to deliver, which leaves little room for personal relationships or a healthy work-life balance. Often the need to feel visible and reliable in the industry leads to added pressures which can extend to concealing external responsibilities such as caring roles, further complicating forming connections. The freelance nature of much of the work adds a layer of insecurity, leaving individuals feeling left out or left behind when not actively working. Socialising outside of work is often centred around drinking, which can exclude those with different cultural or religious values, while maintaining healthy habits becomes difficult during long stretches of intense production schedules.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

This section provides details about what the participants themselves feel are worthwhile suggestions for approaches to take to combat loneliness within the sector, as well as any perceived barriers to this.

The most frequent recommendation from participants was that workplaces or organisations need to provide opportunities for workers to form connections. This was perceived to be particularly important given that social connection is so infrequently a consideration made by employers or organizations within the industry.

> **It sounds really simple and a bit daft to suggest it, but actually just having the opportunity to meet with people more regularly in person, even just kind of week-to-week, day-to-day, to actually feel that it was OK to do that a bit more, actually making a more determined, concerted effort to go and meet people.**
>
> Talent executive

Where this suggestion was made, it was stipulated that these types of meeting places and events should not be restrictive, with regards to factors such as cost or culture, and could even promote healthy lifestyles.

Activities like lunchtime sports or wellness classes were seen as simple yet effective ways to build connections with colleagues and improve mental health. There was also a clear desire for spaces that could welcome those who are out of work, acknowledging that loneliness is often most acute during periods of unemployment.

> **I think like non pub or alcohol based social events. Especially on those jobs where you're away from home...**
>
> **[An example from another production is someone] will book a Pilates teacher to come in once a week and teach a lunchtime class. And then you end up with people from various different departments all together at lunchtime. Doing something that you know is not in any way work related. And I think bringing in elements like that is particularly healthy.**
>
> Prop-dresser, TV

> **I've recently worked with an amazing company... They had lots of opportunities to meet up, they had a lunch group once a month they had a coffee morning; they had a run club; they had a support group for parents. And so, they'd created these little opportunities for connection, and they have quite a transient freelance workforce, but they've put real structures in place across the company.**
>
> Industry Mental Health Trainer

It is also important to ensure that these environments are kept separate from work, not treated as networking events, and also provide opportunities for individuals such as freelancers who are not currently in work.

For some, fear of reputational damage or professional exclusion remained a barrier to participating even in informal initiatives. This underscores the persistent culture of fear and risk aversion that surrounds vulnerability in the industry, something that must be directly addressed if wellbeing initiatives are to be truly inclusive.

> **Something that is social, purely social and not linked to work or anything, I don't know what kind of form that would take. Just like somewhere you could go because I feel like everything I ever go to is like a networking event.**
>
> Sound engineer, Film

> **What would be really nice to see is if you've worked in this company, you're in, you know, you're one of us and you will always be one of us... This is what's coming up. We want to stay in touch.**
>
> Industry Mental Health Trainer

Beyond social spaces, another major suggestion which was made was help in ensuring that better standards are in place across the industry. This mostly took the form of asking for more stable working hours, sharing shifts with other workers, and having someone independent at workplaces who workers could report to with feelings of loneliness, poor mental health, or to report bullying or discrimination. It was also felt important that these resources are available to all workers, regardless of the size of the production, for instance.

There was also advocacy for more structural improvements in the industry, including better working hours, job sharing, and the presence of independent support figures on set. Specifically, someone approachable who workers could turn to without fear of judgment or career repercussions. Freelancers especially expressed the need for support systems that included them, not just those in permanent roles.

> **If the director is happy to work for 16 hours or the producer wants to have 16-hour day, they can still have a 16-hour day with two shifts. We go in on dailies all the time they can have a morning operator and an evening operator.**
>
> Focus puller, Film

> **We need this environment to be as functional and efficient as possible, where people can feel safe.**
>
> Film director

> **The work that's been put in place for contributors is really good... I think the same thing is needed for crew and production. I know that's starting to be voiced and being looked at. But I think that will really transform a lot, actually, that same duty of care that we're now putting for contributors.**
>
> Welfare Executive

In a similar vein, having some form of service or representative to check in with informally was also a popular idea, including existing practices such as 'buddy systems'.

> **We know of an organisation where they would have a buddy system on set for trans artists, on camera people, or behind the camera people, so that a trans person on set wouldn't be the only trans person on set. There would always be someone else who understood their experiences.**
>
> Community Development Manager

There were also calls for fewer organisational changes, and more cultural changes, particularly moving away from the culture of competition, and towards collaboration, understanding, and empathy.

> **If you're not listening to young people or different groups, then how do you expect to get anywhere? So yeah, more openness, more empathy, more understanding, more respect. At the end of the day, for different people with different opinions, from different cultures and different backgrounds.**
>
> TV producer

> **I think so many of the issues in our industry just comes down to... You know it'll be so much better if people were just nice to each other I'll always come back to this. People who are just nice to each other in the first place and just communicated with each other.**
>
> TV production manager

Finally, some other initiatives were suggested, such as improving opportunities for team building, more casual interactions with management or senior staff. Some suggested that senior industry figures openly sharing their own experiences of loneliness could help normalise these conversations, reduce stigma, and set a new tone for healthier working environments.

> **I guess the precedent set by people who are really successful and at the top of their game and people that own companies, I think those are the people that like you would aspire to be...**
>
> **If people would come out and say, 'hey, you know I've experienced this and it's been really hard' to kind of make it feel a bit more normal and less stigmatised... to have someone that is in power and that people look up to say 'I felt like that' I think would be big to raise awareness and destigmatise things. Because it's almost like if they say it, then it's OK for everyone else to say it.**
>
> TV producer

> **The other thing that they did that I thought sounded really good was that they had testimonials where people from the top were sharing personal stories about themselves, like struggles or challenges that they've gone through that were being shared throughout the company.**
>
> Industry Mental Health Trainer

This section has reported on solutions suggested by workers in the film and TV industry to combat workplace loneliness, highlighting both practical interventions and broader cultural shifts. Participants consistently emphasised the importance of creating more opportunities for connection, such as accessible in-person events, regular meetups, and physical spaces on set where people can socialise. These spaces, they argued, should be inclusive, non-alcohol-based, and importantly not tied to networking or career advancement.

The next section of this report details the recommendations which the research team have formulated as a result of the analysis of the themes which have arisen in the research as a whole, the literature review, interviews and focus group.

6. RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS FOR LONELINESS IN THE FILM AND TV INDUSTRY

Across both the in-depth interviews with industry professionals and the follow-up focus group, there was strong alignment in identifying the structural and cultural issues contributing to loneliness in the film and TV sector, as well as in proposing practical and cultural interventions to address these challenges.

A shared priority across data sets was the need to create more consistent and inclusive opportunities for social connection. Participants frequently spoke about the lack of space, both physical and emotional, for meaningful interactions beyond the transactional nature of their work. To counter this, interviewees and focus group participants recommended more accessible in-person events, including informal gatherings such as lunch groups, walking clubs, or fitness classes like Pilates. These activities were not only seen as ways to build community but also as a break from the isolating norm of post-work pub culture, which can be exclusive for those with religious, cultural, or personal reasons for avoiding alcohol-based settings. In a review by Pels & Kleinert (2016), it was found that interventions which encourage physical activity generally reduce levels of loneliness but also suggest that loneliness itself can be a barrier to engaging in such activity. If encouraging such interventions, it is important that these spaces remain inclusive so that those joining can build on new or existing relationships.

The findings also emphasised the importance of establishing designated "safe or calm spaces" on set and beyond. These places could be where workers can decompress, chat freely, or share emotional struggles without fear of professional repercussion. These spaces were framed as essential for tackling the stigma that continues to surround conversations about loneliness and mental health in the industry. As to the concern of how an individual would be perceived by colleagues for utilising such spaces was present, these spaces could be online or away from the work setting and additionally should aim to be separate from work or a more networking-style setting. Online friendship interventions have been found to alleviate measures of loneliness (Bouwman et al., 2017; Larsson et al., 2016), as have peer-outreach programmes (Kotwal et al., 2021). Whilst these findings might not be directly applicable to the film and TV industry, they suggest an argument for the inclusion or support of such programmes.

Related to this, participants advocated for the destigmatisation of loneliness through leadership by example. Hearing high-profile or senior professionals speak candidly about their own struggles with loneliness and burnout was seen as a powerful way to normalise these experiences and foster empathy within the wider workforce. Practices such as role-modelling or stigma reduction are suggested to be effective ways to improve employee mental health (Hammer et al., 2024), however a recent review found the existing evidence base to be limited and thus it is difficult to draw conclusions (Richardson et al., 2023). Nevertheless, both groups identified this as a promising area to investigate further.

Freelancers and those currently out of work were consistently highlighted as particularly vulnerable to feelings of exclusion. Both the interviewees and focus group attendees noted that current support systems often fail to engage this population group. They called for ongoing inclusion in events and communications, regardless of employment status, to ensure that freelancers still feel part of the industry community. Baxter et al. (2022) suggest that those with mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety, commonly associated with loneliness (Moeller and Seehuus (2019) benefitted from community and cultural engagement, but that mental health was a barrier to involvement. Therefore, ensuring that access to such events for those who are most vulnerable continues even after a contract has finished could be a worthwhile inclusion. Instead of placing the onus solely on freelancers to seek out new opportunities or stay connected, participants proposed that companies send periodic updates or check-ins to past collaborators, maintaining community and reducing the professional and emotional uncertainty often associated with freelance work.

There was also broad agreement on the need for more sustainable working conditions. Excessive hours, unrealistic demands, and constant performance pressure were seen as key drivers of isolation and burnout. Participants advocated for job sharing, capped working hours, and better planning practices that prioritised wellbeing alongside production goals. Whilst there may be a general sense of intense working hours being 'just how things are', an evidence-based model for changes in working hours, including considerations of feasibility, planning, and costing can be found in the recent Timewise (2024) report.

Structural reforms were complemented by calls for mental health support roles within companies or on set. Someone independent, approachable, and trained, who could provide a confidential point of contact for workers struggling with loneliness or mental distress could meet this requirement. These roles were seen as especially critical in environments without a formal HR function. As referred to previously, whilst there appears to be a limited evidence-base for the efficacy of Mental Health First Aid, for instance in Richardson et al.

2023, other evidence has highlighted the need for a supportive culture to help alleviate workplace isolation (D'Oliviera and Persico, 2023).

Importantly, to address the impact of bullying, harassment, and discrimination on loneliness in the film and TV industry, interviewees and focus group participants called for concrete interventions that go beyond awareness-raising. An independent and trained staff member could fulfil this need, but this 'third party' should provide formalised reporting mechanisms, anonymous channels for raising concerns, and clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour. The participants called for these efforts to be backed by genuine cultural change, where senior leaders model respectful behaviour, share their own challenges openly, and help to dismantle stigma and fear around speaking up. Similarly, the role modelling of mental health cited earlier can also play an important role in addressing bullying, harassment, or discrimination (Fricke et al. 2023; Munro and Phillips, 2020). Organisations such as the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA[5]) could be instrumental in meeting these challenges, and organisations such as the Film and TV Charity could provide valuable support in spreading awareness and ensuring such practices are seen as necessary and normalised.

In addition to these shared themes, the focus group provided several distinct and actionable recommendations that extended the ideas raised in the interviews. Notably, there was strong support for implementing formal buddy systems, the pairing of new or at-risk workers with a designated peer to offer emotional and practical support. These systems, however, were noted to require careful design to avoid placing undue burden on buddies or creating awkward dynamics, especially where both individuals work within the same team. There was also recognition that buddy pairings might sometimes work better across organisations or departments, allowing for support with a degree of separation. Support for such programmes is in Bravata et al. (2023), who found that a digital peer support programme was effective at reducing symptoms of loneliness, depression, and anxiety, among other health related quality of life measures. The focus group also highlighted the effective use of digital platforms as a tool to foster connection, including the integration of private chat groups and informal "talk clubs" within workplace messaging systems.

The focus group advocated for embedding welfare considerations into production planning from the outset. Rather than treating mental health and emotional wellbeing in a reactive manner, they urged for welfare budgets and supportive roles to be part of the core production schedule, just as safety or technical planning would be. A greater push for engagement with tools such as The Whole Picture Toolkit from the Film and TV Charity could help on this issue.

Finally, the focus group raised an important gap in current industry practice regarding carers and parents, and those with other responsibilities outside of work. These individuals often experience heightened isolation and loneliness due to the incompatibility of caregiving and industry demands. Relatedly, whilst our interview sample included individuals who identified as neurodivergent, or as living with disabilities, these factors did not directly appear to contribute to conversations around loneliness above the general cultural and structural factors. It is worth noting however, that factors such as disabilities have been found to contribute to increased comparative levels of loneliness and thereby poor wellbeing (Emerson et al., 2021), and the Looking Glass Survey 2024 did also identify neurodivergent and individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions as highly lonely.

[5] CIISA https://ciisa.org.uk/

It is therefore worth considering that once the effects of cultural and structural factors are addressed or at least accounted for, factors such as caring responsibilities, disabilities, or neurodivergence might begin to feature more in future discussions. It is also important to note that our sample of interviewees might not reflect a representative sample of individuals who might fit into these categories, and future research could seek to investigate these factors in relation to loneliness within the industry more directly.

There was a call for better hybrid working options, intentional efforts to check in on those going through emotionally intensive points in life, such as parents returning from leave, and recognition of caregiving as a legitimate and protected status within the industry.

Where useful facilitation of hybrid work can help to manage caring responsibilities, it is important to note that new staff typically feel more lonely than experienced staff if working remotely (Mäkelä et al. 2025). It is therefore important to ensure that all staff, but especially new workers, who work remotely are made to feel a part of the organisation and have opportunities to connect with other colleagues.

Conclusion

Across both the interviews and the focus group, the message was clear: addressing loneliness in the industry requires both structural reform and cultural change. Among participants in these discussions, there was a unanimous call for a shift toward empathy, openness, and collaboration, and a critical need for organisations such as the Film and TV Charity to lead the way by promoting inclusive practices, modelling care, and creating spaces where connections can be formed and cultivated.

The Film and TV Charity could address the recommendations made within this report by emphasising the ways in which it offers support in what appears to be for many a competitive, fear-driven, isolating and lonely industry to work in. Effective ways to deliver this role might include providing opportunities for meaningful connection, addressing stigma around loneliness and mental health, providing spaces for people to speak up about the challenges they're facing, and having support from those already established within the industry.

7. SUMMARY – RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE LONELINESS IN THE FILM AND TV INDUSTRY

The recommendations below are summarised from the contents of this report. In some cases, these represent initiatives the Film and TV Charity itself can consider introducing or might be more focused on increasing awareness and support around wider cultural change. As such, some of these recommendations might represent interventions which could be implemented more immediately, and some more long-term.

Push for a cultural shift

- **Consider further research on the best ways to foster a better culture within the industry.**
- **Ensure that the Film and TV Charity fills the much-needed role of a model organisation, caring for industry workers and targeting tangible change.**

Create inclusive, low-cost social spaces:

- **Host or signpost regular non-alcohol-based events (e.g. lunch clubs, walking groups, fitness sessions).**
- **Ensure events are culturally sensitive and accessible to all workers, including freelancers and carers.**

Establish physical and virtual "safe/calm spaces":

- **Offer onsite rooms or offsite/online alternatives where staff can decompress and connect confidentially. Signpost existing initiatives where possible.**
- **Where relevant, ensure these are clearly separate from professional networking environments.**

Support digital peer connection initiatives:

- **Facilitate anonymous check-in channels or moderated "talk clubs" via communication platforms.**
- **Encourage light-touch, opt-in emotional check-ins to promote connection and early support.**

7. SUMMARY - RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE LONELINESS IN THE FILM AND TV INDUSTRY

Advocate for formal buddy systems:

- **Pair new or at-risk workers with trained peers (potentially across teams or organisations).**
- **Provide guidance and support to buddies to avoid undue pressure or discomfort.**

Embed welfare into production planning:

- **Include wellbeing budgets and roles (e.g. welfare leads or mental health first aiders) from development stage.**
- **Use tools to support integration of mental health into schedule planning, such as The Whole Picture Toolkit from the Film and TV Charity.**

Maintain connection with freelancers and those out of work:

- **Create a structured re-engagement strategy (e.g. periodic check-ins or updates on opportunities).**
- **Invite freelancers to events and support services post-contract to reduce exclusion.**

Destigmatise loneliness and mental health:

- **Encourage respected industry leaders to share their personal challenges to model openness and empathy.**
- **Develop awareness campaigns or speaker series to reduce stigma and normalize vulnerability.**

Establish independent, trained support roles:

- **Provide clear, confidential reporting mechanisms for bullying, harassment, and emotional distress.**
- **Ensure accessibility to such support networks for those without HR support, including freelancers and juniors.**

Advocate for sustainable working conditions:

- **Promote job-sharing models, capped working hours, and shared shift structures.**
- **Encourage employers to accommodate key personal events (e.g. family milestones, bereavement).**

Improve inclusion for carers and parents:

- **Champion hybrid and flexible working arrangements, ensuring new employees feel part of the wider organisation if such arrangements are in place.**
- **Create formal peer support or buddy systems for returners and caregivers.**

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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The research comprised the following aspects:

- **A rapid literature review, reviewing the current research and understanding of loneliness in the workplace.**
- **A detailed statistical analysis of the data from the 2024 Looking Glass survey, highlighting particular industry and individual factors that are associated with experiences of loneliness.**
- **Ten individual interviews with members of the film and TV industry, to gain a better understanding of feelings of loneliness within the industry**
- **A focus group with seven industry members, employers, and Film and TV Charity staff aimed at understanding the current causes of loneliness, and any practical interventions which can be put in place to help alleviate this, as well as any barriers to their implementation.**

RAPID LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to achieve the wider aims set out in the introduction to this report, a documentary analysis, encompassing desk research aimed at reviewing existing academic and grey literature addressing workplace loneliness has been carried out.

This involved a rapid literature review, assessing current understanding of workplace loneliness, who is vulnerable to workplace loneliness, and what types of interventions have been used in the past to mitigate the negative effects of loneliness. The review mostly encompasses academic literature for defining and measuring workplace loneliness, as well as possible interventions to help manage these feelings, whereas the grey literature is more focused on interventions and why loneliness needs addressing.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Data from the Film and TV Charity's Looking Glass Survey 2024 was analysed to identify the relationship between industry and work conditions with the wellbeing of people working in film, TV and related domains. The data was collected by the Film and TV Charity, using an online survey method between 26 June and 31 July 2024. Participation in the research was voluntary, with the survey being disseminated and promoted via the Film and TV Charity's contacts list and social media channels, with support from industry trade press, industry bodies, guilds, and community networks. The survey contained questions covering a wide range of industry and work-related factors, participant characteristics and wellbeing, and completion took on average 15 minutes. The final sample consisted of 4,376 respondents, representing a diverse cohort of industry members.

Sample characteristics are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Sample characteristics

	Sample size	As percentage of total sample
Total	**4,376**	**100%**
Usual employment type		
Freelance	3,256	74%
Permanent	1,088	25%
Sector		
Film	607	14%
TV	2,877	66%
Post-production	296	7%
Animation and VFX	125	3%
Cinema, exhibition and film festivals	156	4%
Sales, distribution, marketing, publicity	70	2%
Gender		
Female	2,629	60%
Male	1,614	37%
Non-binary / prefer to self-describe	57	1%
Age		
16-29	749	17%
30-39	1,337	31%
40-49	1,151	26%
50-59	792	18%
60+	267	6%
Ethnicity		
Black, Asian and Global Majority	739	17%
White	3,509	80%
Sexuality / sexual orientation		
LGBTQ+	872	20%
Heterosexual	3,504	80%
Region		
England - East Midlands	59	1%
England - East of England	120	3%
England - London	1,896	43%
England - North East	67	2%
England - North West	307	7%
England - South East	602	14%
England - South West	415	9%
England - West Midlands	119	3%
England - Yorkshire and the Humber	136	3%
Northern Ireland	48	1%
Scotland	309	7%
Wales	172	4%

Table 1.(continued.)
Sample characteristics

Disability or long-term health condition (LTC)		
With disability or LTC	**1,127**	**26%**
No disability or LTC	**3,249**	**74%**
Neurodiversity		
Neurodivergent	**1,167**	**27%**
Neurotypical	**2,995**	**68%**
Caring responsibilities		
Adult caring responsibilities	**312**	**7%**
Child caring responsibilities	**1,080**	**25%**
No caring responsibilities	**2,857**	**65%**

With the use of advanced statistical analysis methods such as exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling, it was possible to determine the most impactful factors for mental health when working in the industry. Furthermore, through these methods it was possible to identify to what degree these factors influence mental wellbeing by exacerbating individuals' level of loneliness.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP

To gain a more informed understanding of the topics covered in the literature review, interviews were carried out with individuals from representative demographic groups within the industry, including Film and TV Charity staff and an industry leader. The initial interview was carried out with the Community Development Manager at the Film and TV Charity with informed experience of the subject to help identify key themes and issues to explore in the interviews with industry workers. This provided the research team with a basis to gain a better understanding of industry workers' experiences of workplace loneliness, how this might vary between demographic groups, and the sorts of interventions which might help combat loneliness in the sector.

Following the industry worker interviews, a focus group was held with industry employers and representatives of organisations providing support to the sector to gain further in-depth insight into loneliness in the industry. The focus group was designed to explore and identify interventions which have the potential to effectively address loneliness, based on participants' experiences of working within and navigating the current industry climate.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, minimal identifying information is provided where appropriate.

Interview with the Film and TV Charity's Community Development Manager

An interview with the Community Development Manager at the Film and TV Charity was carried out. This interview was intended to inform more specific questions to use in the industry member interviews, as well as identify any commonly known causes of loneliness, and gain an understanding of what measures organisations such as the Film and TV Charity have tried to address this issue already. The interview was held online on 7/1/25 and lasted approximately 90 minutes.

Interviews with film & TV industry members

Industry members with experiences of loneliness were recruited with the help of the Film and TV Charity. The Film and TV Charity provided an opportunity to register interest in taking part in the research project. On registration, the principal investigator contacted potential interviewees, and provided more information about the project, as well as supplying a consent form for them to return if they wished to take part.

All interested participants were then asked to take part in a screening survey before arranging a full interview. The screening survey was intended to ensure that participants were representative of one or more of the groups identified in the Looking Glass survey and our quantitative analysis as being at greater risk of reporting feelings of loneliness.

The final sample of interviewees included 10 industry workers with the following demographic backgrounds:

- **All but one participant reported being self-employed or having a part-time job position**
- **Five participants worked in TV, three in film, and two in roles within TV/film organisations**
- **Five participants were struggling financially, with the other five "doing alright" or "just getting by"**
- **Eight participants reporting having experienced bullying/harassment/discrimination in the last 12 months**
- **Three identified as male, and seven as female**
- **Ages ranged between 25 and 59**
- **Eight participants were white, one Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, and one Mixed or multiple ethnic groups**
- **Three were Christian, four non-religious, one Muslim, one Buddhist, and one preferred not to say**
- **Five had neurocognitive conditions, and five did not**
- **Three had caring responsibilities**
- **Seven identified as having mental health conditions, four as disabled, and three had a long-term physical health condition**
- **Nine identified as straight/heterosexual, and one as bisexual**

The interviews were conducted online and recorded with a voice recorder to enable effective analysis of the discussions. The interviews lasted approximately one hour, and were held between 25/2/25 – 6/3/25. All participants provided informed consent before the interview and were reminded of their right to withdraw their data for up to two weeks after the date of the interview.

Once the interviews were completed, the transcripts for each interview were processed using NVivo 12, a piece of software which enables the quick examination and comparison of transcripts and themes within these.

Each of the transcripts were analysed until saturation was reached – the point where no new themes were identified within the discussions.

Focus group with industry managers, employers, and charity leaders

Informed by the findings of our desk research, the qualitative data analysis and the in-depth interviews, the final stage of this project was to carry out a focus group with workers, employers and organisations supporting industry staff to discuss in detail, options for practical interventions that could be implemented to combat loneliness in the film and TV industry. The focus group was intended to discuss the themes which had arisen in the interviews, gain an understanding of what needs to be done, and what is possible to address loneliness in the industry, as well as any barriers or challenges associated with this.

The Film and TV Charity facilitated the recruitment of this focus group. The job roles below provide a broad overview of the participants, whilst preserving anonymity.

- ***Community Development Manager***
- ***Industry Peer Supporter***
- ***Third Sector Executive***
- ***Industry Peer Supporter***
- ***Welfare Executive***
- ***Industry Mental Health Trainer***
- ***Business Founder and Employer***

The focus group was conducted online and recorded with a voice recorder to enable effective analysis of the discussions. The online session lasted approximately 90 minutes. All participants provided informed consent before the interview and were reminded of their right to withdraw their data for up to two weeks after the date of the interview.

The transcript was again analysed within NVivo12 until saturation was reached.

APPENDIX B: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LOOKING GLASS 2024 SURVEY DATA

Introduction

Data from the Looking Glass Survey 2024 was analysed to identify the relationship between industry and work conditions with the wellbeing of people working in film, TV and related domains. A detailed overview of the analysis and findings is provided below.

Data analysis

The primary objective of the data analysis was to identify the factors that relate to the wellbeing of the members of the FTV industry. Analyses of prior years' survey data indicated that loneliness is a key factor with a strong association to wellbeing (Film and TV Charity, 2022). We therefore explored loneliness in some depth, especially as the survey included several indicators of loneliness.

Step 1: Identifying variables of interest as predictors, controls or indicators of wellbeing

Three members of the research team reviewed all the items from the Looking Glass 2024 survey to produce initial variable groupings, driven by thematic areas and referent (e.g. self, industry, job). This exercise yielded 8 initial item groupings, 4 individual items that were not conceptually linked to any of the factors and 17 potential control variables (longlist).

Step 2: Exploratory factor analysis

The grouped items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis using IBM SPSS 28.0. The exploratory factor analysis yielded 11 factors with meaningful conceptual bases. Each factor's items were then analysed to determine the scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha and Spearman's rho (for 2-item factors). Of the 11 factors, 7 were found to be reliable scale measures and retained for further analysis. These are:

Factor 1: Industry culture for wellbeing (7 items).

Factor 2: Industry support for mental health (3 items).

Factor 3: Industry policies and practices for addressing bullying, harassment or discrimination (B/H/D) (4 items).

Factor 4: Mental health supportive activities outside of work (6 items).

Factor 5: Work-life interference (4 items).

Factor 6: Overall mental health and wellbeing (7 items).

Factor 7: Loneliness (3 items).

Analysis overview:

- **Where items had different response options with the resulting data not being on comparable scales, new variables were created by transforming the data into z-scores, i.e. with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. This transformation ensures that between-item correlations are unaffected.**
- **Before factor analysis of each set of grouped items, we conducted preliminary analysis to check whether conducting a factor analysis on each set of items is appropriate (i.e. we checked whether the correlation matrix is factorable).**
- **Where we determined that the correlation matrix is factorable, we conducted analyses to identify the number of factors that account for the between-item correlations. The SPSS uses a cut-off of Eigenvalue >1, although there are limitations to this approach. We therefore also conducted 'parallel analysis' to account for potential sampling error and reviewed the scree-plots to confirm the appropriate number of factors to extract. We excluded any items with cross-loadings across several factors.**
- **We then 'forced' this factor solution and, where more than one factors were extracted, we rotated the factors in order to determine the meaning of the resulting factors. To do this, we selected the Method: Principal axis factoring ('common' factor analytic approach), with a fixed number of factors. Because we initially grouped the items on conceptual grounds, we adopted the 'oblique rotation' (Promax) approach, to allow the extracted factors to correlate (i.e. they are not independent/orthogonal).**

Item grouping A - Industry factors for wellbeing

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: a substantial number of correlations are above .3, indicating good justification for factor analysis. In addition, there is no indication of high collinearity with the highest correlation coefficient at .644.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .026 > .00001, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .847 (high value, markedly above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with all values above .6, this is further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 2 factors**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first two eigenvalues from the simulated data are lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 2-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Good factorability of the matrix, 2-factors.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation.**
- **Review of Communalities values indicate that our 2 factors explain a relatively large portion of variance in the items.**

Pattern Matrix used to interpret items/factors. Loading criteria to decide whether a loading to a factor is non-trivial for the purposes of this analysis: |.30|.
The following solution was obtained:

Table 2.
Factor loadings for item grouping A

	Factor A1	Factor A2
A1.1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Film and TV industry is a mentally healthy place to work	**.683**	-.071
A1.2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? People working in this industry have positive attitudes towards people experiencing mental health issues	**.750**	-.074
A1.3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Colleagues I work with day-to-day in the industry have positive attitudes about people experiencing mental health issues	**.666**	.021
A2. In the last 12 months, have you sensed a change in culture and behaviours in the industry towards mental health and wellbeing?	**.465**	.059
B5.1 To what extent does your work in the industry positively or negatively affect the following? Your mental health	**.715**	-.060
B5.2 To what extent does your work in the industry positively or negatively affect the following? Your physical health	**.519**	-.061
C2. What was the outcome when you told someone about your mental health problem?	**.488**	.056
F2.1 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, were you...? Invited to share information about any mental health conditions or issues related to wellbeing that you might have	-.103	**.848**
[F2.2 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, were you...? Asked about any reasonable adjustments relating to mental health or wellbeing that you might need	-.102	**.803**
Organisational support: Sum of all selected forms of support in F3.1-F3.8 (e.g. scheduled downtime and rest, clear start and finish times, advice or training on managing your mental health and wellbeing)	.238	**.455**

Table 2.(continued.)
Factor loadings for item grouping A

	Factor A1	Factor A2
G6 How would you rate the support made available to you by your employer/workplace to support the wellbeing of others you are responsible for?	.518	.370

Factor 1: Industry culture for wellbeing (7 items, Cronbach's alpha = .795)

Factor 2: Industry support for mental wellbeing (3 items, Cronbach's alpha = .739).

Item grouping B – Bullying, harassment and discrimination (B/H/D)

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: a substantial number of correlations are above .3, indicating good justification for factor analysis. In addition, there is no indication of high collinearity with the highest correlation coefficient at .619.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .130 > .00001, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .789 (high value, markedly above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, i.e. correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with all values above .6, this is further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 2 factors**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first two eigenvalues from the simulated data are lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 2-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Good factorability of the matrix.

Note. Replaced missing values for or_bhd with mean (i.e., 0) due to high missing values preventing parallel analysis. Transformation done only for parallel analysis.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor

- **Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation.**
- **Review of Communalities values indicate that our 2 factors explain a relatively large portion of variance in the items.**

Pattern Matrix used to interpret items/factors. Loading criteria to decide whether a loading to a factor is non-trivial for the purposes of this analysis: |.30|.

The second item, barriers to reporting BHD, did not load sufficiently on either factor and is therefore excluded from further analyses. The second factor has only two items and should therefore be treated as a weaker measure of the underlying factor.
The following solution was obtained:

Table 3.
Factor loadings for item grouping B

	Factor B1	Factor B2
H6 What was the outcome of reporting the bullying behaviour, harassment or discrimination you experienced?	.372	.016
Barriers to reporting BHD: 9- H7 Why did you not report your experience of bullying, harassment or discrimination? sum of all selected High value, low prevalence	.236	.152

Table 3.(continued.)
Factor loadings for item grouping B

	Factor B1	Factor B2
Prevalence of BHD: 4 - H8 While working in the industry in the past 12 months, have you witnessed any of the following towards others? 0=didn't witness any or prefer not to say, 3 witnessed all three High value, low prevalence	.039	.722
Recency of BHD occurrence: H11. In the last 12 months, or anytime before that, has anyone at work reported to you that they have experienced bullying behaviour, harassment or discrimination in the workplace? High value, less/less recent.	-.041	.504
H14.1 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? I know where to get support if I experience bullying, harassment or discrimination at work	.814	-.103
H14.2 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? I would seek out support if I experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination at work	.610	-.004
H14.3 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? There is a clear policy and reporting process for bullying, harassment and discrimination at work	.804	-.044
H14.4 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree with the following statements? Reports of bullying, harassment and discrimination would be acted on wherel work, regardless of the perpetrator	.732	.136

Factor 3: Industry policies and practices for addressing B/H/D (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = 756; item H6 was excluded at Confirmatory Factor Analysis stage due to high missing values, 4 items, Cronbach's alpha = .828).

Factor 4: (rejected): Witnessing B/H/D (2 items, Cronbach's alpha = .531, Spearman's rho = .361*<.7, indicating poor scale reliability, not included in further analyses).

Item grouping C – Response to experiencing mental health problems

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: Extremely high correlation between first two items (collinearity) and very low with third item. No justification for factor analysis or grouping the three variables together.**

Conclusion: none of the items will be included in subsequent analyses.

Table 4.
Factor loadings for item grouping C

A3. At any point in the last 12 months, have you thought about leaving this industry due to concerns about your mental wellbeing? (higher score, not thought about leaving)	n/a
Taking action to leave industry due to MH concerns: 7- A4.1. Did you act on those thoughts about leaving the industry in any of the following ways? High value, fewer actions to leave	n/a
Disclosing MH: C1 If you have experienced a mental health problem in the last 12 months, did you tell anyone at work about it? High value, disclosure to more referents	n/a

Item grouping D – Resource awareness

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: correlations in the range of .228-.279 indicating no collinearity problems, but moderate factorability.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .841 > .00001, i.e. justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .607 (moderate value, above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, i.e. correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with values ranging between .596-.626, this is moderate justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 1 factor.**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first eigenvalue from the simulated data is lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 1-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Moderate factorability of the matrix.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal components without rotation because there is only 1 factor.**

Review of the Component Matrix indicates high item loading onto the factor for all three items. **The following solution was obtained:**

Table 5.
Factor loadings for item grouping D

	Factor D1
Sum of F1.1-F1.6 Awareness of MH and wellbeing resources	.713
Sum of F1.1-F1.6 Awareness of MH and wellbeing resources	.680
F6 Awareness of FTV toolkit	.729

Factor D1 (rejected): Awareness of mental health and wellbeing resources (3 items, Cronbach's alpha = .501 < .7, poor reliability, not included in further analyses).

Item grouping E – Behaviours that promote good health and wellbeing

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: correlations in the range of .330-.600 indicating no collinearity problems, and good factorability.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .146 > .00001, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .834 (high value, above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, i.e. correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with all values above .6, this is strong justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 1 factor.**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first eigenvalue from the simulated data is lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 1-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Moderate factorability of the matrix.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal components without rotation because there is only 1 factor.**

Review of the Component Matrix indicates high item loading onto the factor for all items.

The following solution was obtained:

Table 6.
Factor loadings for item grouping E

	Factor E1
D1.1 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Eat healthily	.659
D1.2 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Physical activity/exercise	.747
D1.3 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Spend time with friends and family	.715
D1.4 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Enjoy hobbies	.780
D1.5 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Take time out to relax	.738
D1.6 Thinking about an average week for you over the past month, how often have you been able to do the following? Spend time outdoors/with nature	.742

Factor 4: Mental health supportive activities outside of work (6 items, Cronbach's alpha = .825).

Item grouping F - Work-Life Balance & Work-Life Spillover

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: correlations in the range of .000-.504 indicating with majority below .3, indicating poor factorability.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .387 > .00001 some justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .721 (high value, above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, i.e. correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with some values below .6, this is poor justification for factor analysis.**

Conclusion: Poor factorability of the matrix.

Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 2 factors, with cross-loadings and a single-item factor.

Revised grouping F.

The initial grouping contained six items, four of which had a Likert-style response scale and two that made reference to specific hours worked. Given the poor factorability of the initial grouping of items, we focused on the four Likert-style items only.

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: correlations in the range of .207-.594 with several above .3, indicating good factorability.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .389 > .00001 some justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .723 (high value, above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the**

diagonal), with all values above .6, this is good justification for factor analysis.

- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 1 factor.**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first eigenvalue from the simulated data is lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 1-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Moderate factorability of the matrix.

Table 7.
Factor loadings for item grouping F

	Factor F1
A5.3 I often find it difficult to fulfil my commitments outside of work because of the amount of time I spend on my job	.792
A5.5 I find it difficult to do my job properly because of my commitments outside of work	.449
A5.6 Work has a negative impact on my personal relationships	.856
A5.7 I find it difficult to relax in my personal time because of my job	.810

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal components without rotation because there is only 1 factor.**

Review of the Component Matrix indicates high item loading onto the factor for all items.

The following solution was obtained:

Factor 5: Work-life interference (4 items, Cronbach's alpha = .715).

Item grouping G - Satisfaction with experiences of working

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: a moderate number of correlations are above .3, indicating some justification for factor analysis. In addition, there is no indication of high collinearity with the highest correlation coefficient at .373.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .608 > .00001, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .777 (high value, markedly above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with all values above .6, this is further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 1 factor**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first two eigenvalues from the simulated data are lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 1-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Good factorability of the matrix.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal components without rotation because there is only 1 factor.**

Review of the Component Matrix indicates high item loading onto the factor for all six items.

The following solution was obtained:

Table 8.
Factor loadings for item grouping G

	Factor E1
A5.1 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I feel valued at work	.713
A5.2 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I rarely feel stressed at work	.457
A5.4 Thinking about your current or most recent work in the industry, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I feel my job is secure	.675
4-sum of all 'yes' answers on the money-related questions B6. Higher score indicates fewer work challenges related to financial difficulties	.687
3-sum of H1.1 H1.2 H1.3 higher value less bullying, harassment and discrimination. Higher value indicates better treatment at work.	.577

Factor G1 (rejected): Overall satisfaction with experiences of working (5 items, Cronbach's alpha = .610 < .7, poor reliability, not included in further analyses).

Item grouping H – Overall mental health and wellbeing

Step 1: Factorability

- **Correlation matrix: a substantial number of correlations are above .3, indicating good justification for factor analysis. In addition, there is some indication of collinearity with the highest correlation coefficient at .664.**
- **Determinant of correlation matrix: .002 > .00001, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **KMO value: .904 (high value, markedly above .5), i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Bartlett's test: significant, i.e. correlation matrix different from identity matrix, i.e. further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Anti-image correlations: consideration of measures of sampling adequacy (values in the diagonal), with all values above .6, this is further justification for factor analysis.**
- **Initial number of factors based on eigenvalues >1: 3 factors**
- **Parallel analysis: Based on 1000 simulated datasets, the first two eigenvalues from the simulated data are lower than those from the raw data, thereafter they are higher. This is confirmation in favour of a 3-factor solution.**

Conclusion: Good factorability of the matrix.

Step 2: Identifying which items to retain as indicators of each factor.

- **Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation.**
- **Review of Communalities values indicate that our 3 factors explain a relatively large portion of variance in the items.**

Pattern Matrix used to interpret items/factors. Loading criteria to decide whether a loading to a factor is non-trivial for the purposes of this analysis: |.30|. **The following solution was obtained:**

Table 9.
Factor loadings for item grouping H

	Factor H1	Factor H2	Factor H3
B1. How would you rate your mental health at the moment? higher score better MH	.721	.052	.100
B2.1 SWEMWS I've been feeling optimistic about the future	.669	.050	-.049
B2.2 SWEMWS I've been feeling useful	.618	.144	-.052
B2.3 SWEMWS I've been feeling relaxed	.696	-.043	-.015
B2.4 SWEMWS I've been dealing with problems well	.792	-.090	.024
B2.5 SWEMWS I've been thinking clearly	.815	-.097	.028
B2.6 SWEMWS I've been feeling close to other people	.396	.391	-.031
B2.7 SWEMWS I've been able to make up my own mind about things	.619	.029	-.014
B3.1 UCLA How often do you... Feel like you lack companionship?	-.033	.753	.023
B3.2 UCLA How often do you... Feel left out?	.015	.828	.000
B3.3 UCLA How often do you... Feel isolated from others?	-.036	.926	.012
3-sum of E2.1-E2.3 with higher score indicating less self-harm and suicide intention in the past 12 months	.083	.011	.721
3-sum of E3.1-E3.3 with higher score indicating less self-harm and suicide intention prior to the last 12 months	-.099	.008	.770
Have you had any therapy, counselling, medication or other clinical treatment specifically to support your mental health? higher score: no or not recently	.043	.013	.336

Step 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis allows for all hypothesised factors to be modelled together with their respective items loading as grouped in the Exploratory Factor Analysis and based on theorising. This analysis checks whether our hypothesised 'measurement model' fits the data (variance structure) well, and significantly better than random or theoretical plausible alternative structures/ models. To confirm our measurement model, or adopt an alternative model, we rely on 'model fit' indicators, typically the Root Mean Square Error Of Approximation (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). According to Hu and Bentler (1999), a good model fit is determined by RMSEA < .6, CFI and TLI > .95 and SRMR < .8. We give more weight to RMSEA and SRMR fit indices as they are less biased by the sample size and model size (e.g. Ximénez et al., 2022).

We conducted Confirmatory Factor Analysis using MPlus8. The initial model did not reach convergence, likely due to the high number of missing values for one of the items, which had responses only by those individuals who reported experiencing bullying, harassment or discrimination (Factor 3, Question H6). We omitted this item from further analyses and re-run the Confirmatory Factor Analysis which resulted in the 7-factor model running normally. All our items in the hypothesised measurement model loaded significantly onto their latent factors. We concluded that our hypothesised measurement model fits the data well based on the following model fit results: $\chi^2(506, N = 4376) = 6732.01$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 13.30$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .90; TLI = .89; SRMR = .05). To confirm this conclusion, we specified three alternative models and compared these to our hypothesised model (see table below). While the model fit indices for the first alternative model are slightly worse when compared to the hypothesised mode, the χ^2diff is not statistically significant, indicating that the fit of the two models is comparable, i.e. they fit the data equally well. The same is concluded on reviewing the second and third alternative models. We conclude that our hypothesised model fits the data adequately.

We provide the detailed factor loadings for the hypothesised measurement model in Table 3. The results indicate that all items load significantly onto their respective latent factors and that all factors are significantly associated to each other (see second half of the table).

Table 10.
Goodness-of-Fit indicators for the hypothesised measurement model compared to alternative models (N = 4376)

Model	χ^2	*df*	χ^2/df	χ^2_{diff}	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Hypothesized	6732.01***	506	13.30		.05	.90	.89	.05
Alternative 1	8016.22***	512	15.66	2.36	.06	.88	.86	.05
Alternative 2	12298.77***	517	23.79	10.45	.07	.81	.79	.06
Alternative 3	15173.72***	521	29.12	15.82	.08	.76	.74	.07

*** p < .01. *** p < .001*
Alternative 1: Combining Factors 2 and 3, resulting in a 6-factor model
Alternative 2: Combining Factors 2 and 3, and Factors 6 and 7, resulting in a 5-factor model
Alternative 3: Combining Factors 2 and 3, Factors 6 and 7, and Factors 4 and 5, resulting in a 3-factor model

Table 11.
Standardised factor loadings for measurement model (two-tailed p-value) (N = 4376)

	Label	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value
Industry culture for wellbeing	F1	BY			
	ATT1	0.671	0.010	67.661	0.000
	ATT2	0.691	0.010	68.328	0.000
	ATT3	0.653	0.011	60.896	0.000
	ATT4CH	0.472	0.013	35.189	0.000
	WK_MH	0.718	0.009	77.075	0.000
	WK_PH	0.528	0.013	41.983	0.000
	TLD_OUT	0.528	0.021	24.995	0.000
Industry practices for proactive mental health support	F2	BY			
	DIS_MH	0.795	0.011	70.870	0.000
	DIS_RA	0.785	0.012	68.162	0.000
	ORGSUP	0.562	0.014	39.426	0.000

Table 11. (continued.)
Standardised factor loadings for measurement model (two-tailed p-value) (N = 4376)

	Label	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value
Industry policies and practices for addressing bullying, harassment or discrimination (B/H/D)	F3	BY			
	DHB_KWGS	0.765	0.009	89.376	0.000
	DHB_WSSE	0.596	0.012	51.207	0.000
	DHB_CPRP	0.805	0.008	102.342	0.000
	DHB_ARS	0.756	0.009	84.644	0.000
Frequency of mental health supportive activities outside of work	F4	BY			
	EAT	0.555	0.012	45.642	0.000
	EXER	0.640	0.011	59.343	0.000
	FR_FAM	0.656	0.010	63.729	0.000
	HOB	0.746	0.009	85.844	0.000
	RLX	0.713	0.009	75.855	0.000
	NTR	0.658	0.010	63.980	0.000
Work-life interference	F5	BY			
	WK_OCOM	0.661	0.01	63.579	0.000
	WK_JPROP	0.31	0.015	20.44	0.000
	WK_NEGPR	0.811	0.008	100.221	0.000
	WK_RELAX	0.745	0.009	82.428	0.000
Overall mental health and wellbeing	F6	BY			
	MH	0.811	0.006	126.085	0.000
	OPTIM	0.690	0.009	76.770	0.000
	USEFUL	0.683	0.009	75.123	0.000
	RELAX	0.680	0.009	74.448	0.000
	PROBLM	0.733	0.008	90.332	0.000
	TCLEAR	0.744	0.008	93.996	0.000
	MIND	0.621	0.010	60.284	0.000
Loneliness	F7	BY			
	UCLA_COM	0.724	0.008	88.278	0.000
	UCLA_LFO	0.854	0.006	146.134	0.000
	UCLA_ISO	0.913	0.005	180.589	0.000
	F2	WITH			
	F1	0.417	0.018	23.256	0.000
	F3	WITH			
	F1	0.629	0.013	48.164	0.000
	F2	0.506	0.017	30.383	0.000
	F4	WITH			
	F1	0.407	0.016	25.189	0.000
	F2	0.196	0.019	10.206	0.000
	F3	0.280	0.017	16.232	0.000
	F5	WITH			
	F1	-0.690	0.012	-56.439	0.000
	F2	-0.324	0.019	-17.033	0.000
	F3	-0.432	0.016	-26.868	0.000
	F4	-0.559	0.014	-39.396	0.000
	F6	WITH			
	F1	0.624	0.012	50.478	0.000
	F2	0.286	0.018	15.665	0.000
	F3	0.422	0.015	27.677	0.000
	F4	0.497	0.014	35.401	0.000
	F5	-0.535	0.014	-38.403	0.000
	F7	WITH			
	F1	-0.475	0.014	-32.858	0.000
	F2	-0.277	0.018	-15.355	0.000
	F3	-0.369	0.016	-23.447	0.000
	F4	-0.348	0.016	-22.022	0.000
	F5	0.422	0.015	27.716	0.000
	F6	-0.593	0.012	-50.256	0.000

Note. The full item wording is provided Step 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Step 4: Control variable selection

We reviewed the 17 variables in our longlist of potential control variables to determine which may be associated with both our hypothesised predictors (industry factors, work factors and loneliness) and our outcome variable (wellbeing). We selected 7 variables as potentially having a confounding effect and reviewed their relationship with our predictors and outcome of interest using correlations and Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs). On reviewing the results, we selected the following as controls to use in further analysis:

[SEMPTYP] Summary employment type (0 = Freelance, 1 = Permanent)

[HLWIFTV] Industry tenure: I5. How long have you been working in the film, TV and cinema industry?

[WWIPY] Work intensity – year: I6. Approximately how many weeks in the past 12 months have you worked in the film, TV and cinema industry?

[HRSWLW] Work intensity – week: I7. How many hours did you work last week in the film, TV and cinema industry?

[AGE1] Age

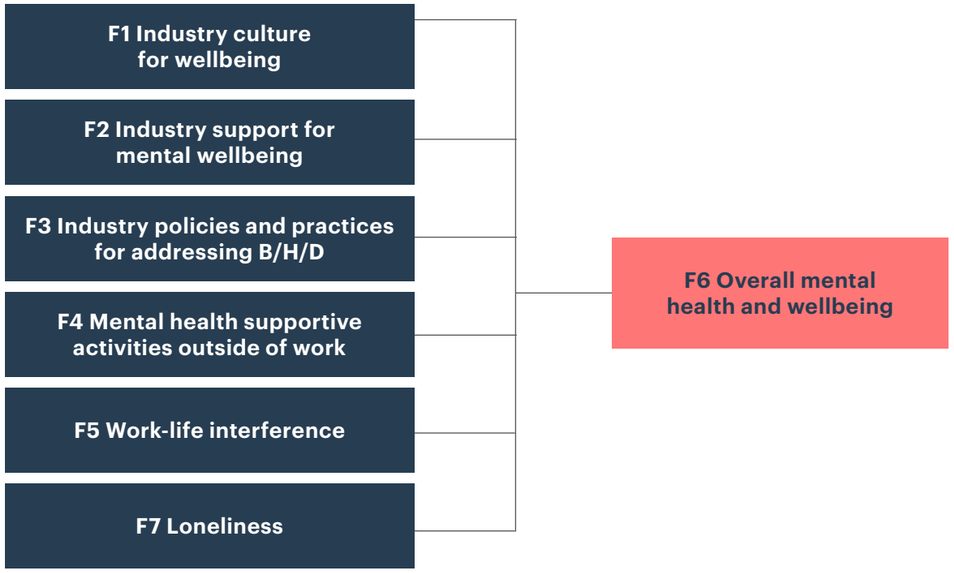
[GENDER1] Gender (1 = female, 2 = male)

[ETHBAME] [ETHJWSH] [ETHWHT] Broad ethnicity categories for Black and Minority Ethnic background (BAME), Jewish and White (0 = No, 1 = Yes)

Step 5: Structural Equation Modelling: Mental wellbeing as outcome

We conducted Structural Equation Modelling, which is a technique for testing causal models that allows the combination of observed variables and latent factors in the same model. Structural Equation Modelling does not establish causality; this is derived based on prior evidence and the conceptual association between the variables of interest. We therefore constructed a structural model with all the factors that we expect will have an effect on wellbeing; Please see Figure 1 for a visualisation of the hypothesised causal effects. We controlled for the variables listed in Step 4 above.

Figure 2
Hypothesised model of the effects of the six factors on Overall Mental Health and Wellbeing



The overall hypothesised model fits the data reasonably well, with the following fitness indices: $\chi^2(803, N = 3313) = 7625.55$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 9.50$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .85; TLI = .84; SRMR = .07). The abbreviated results are presented in Table 4 below; the measurement model coefficients are excluded for brevity, since the detailed measurement model results are included in Table 3. The overall model explains 55.2% of the variance in F6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing).

Results indicate that Factors 1 (Industry culture for wellbeing), 4 (Frequency of mental health supportive activities outside of work) and 7 (Loneliness) have a significant effect on Factor 6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing). That is, respondents reported better mental health and higher wellbeing when they experienced a more positive industry culture for wellbeing, engaged in frequent activities that support mental health, such as healthy eating and exercise, and experienced less overall loneliness.

Of the control variables, higher overall mental health and wellbeing was associated with freelance working, higher work intensity in both the past week and the past year, higher age and female gender.

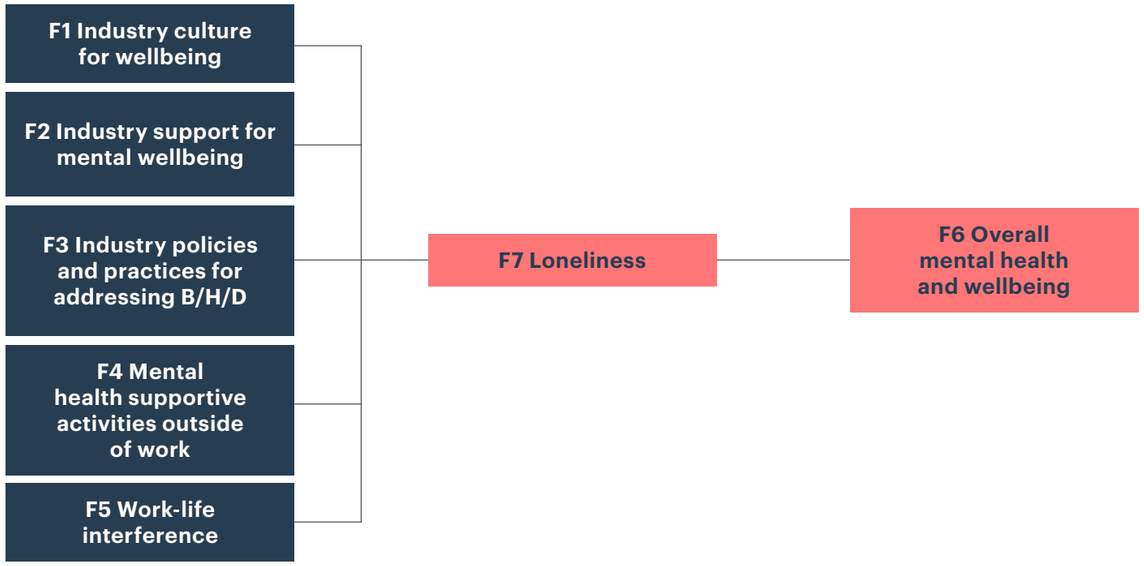
Table 12.
Factor loadings of the six factors (latent) and control variables (observed) on Factor 6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing).

Factor	Label	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value
Overall mental health and wellbeing	F6	ON			
Industry culture for wellbeing	F1	0.356	0.031	11.448	0.000
Industry practices for proactive mental health support	F2	-0.021	0.021	-0.985	0.325
Industry policies and practices for addressing bullying, harassment or discrimination (B/H/D)	F3	-0.026	0.024	-1.094	0.274
Frequency of mental health supportive activities outside of work	F4	0.268	0.020	13.356	0.000
Work-life interference	F5	-0.014	0.029	-0.485	0.628
Loneliness	F7	-0.313	0.018	-17.763	0.000
	F6	ON			
Employment type (permanent)	SEMPTYP	-0.047	0.016	-2.970	0.003
Industry tenure	HLWIFTV	-0.013	0.020	-0.645	0.519
Work intensity: year	WWIPY	0.056	0.019	2.987	0.003
Work intensity: week	HRSWLW	0.146	0.017	8.735	0.000
Age	AGE1	0.101	0.020	5.077	0.000
Gender	GEND1	-0.055	0.014	-3.880	0.000
Ethnic background: BAME	ETHBAME	0.031	0.027	1.144	0.253
Ethnic background: Jewish	ETHJWSH	-0.008	0.017	-0.493	0.622
Ethnic background: White	ETHWHT	0.023	0.029	0.802	0.422

Step 6: Partial mediation with bootstrapping

As our secondary aim was to explore in more detail the role of loneliness in driving wellbeing. We hypothesised a causal path model to test whether loneliness carries some of the effect of the other five factors onto wellbeing, i.e. we conducted (partial) mediation analysis. We used the bootstrapping method to calculate confidence intervals in order to determine whether the indirect effects of the five factors, via loneliness, are statistically significant. Please see Figure 2 for a simplified depiction of the mediated effects.

Figure 3
Hypothesised model of the effects of the five factors on Overall Mental Health and Wellbeing, via Loneliness (Figure reproduced in main body; Figure 1)



The overall hypothesised model fits the data reasonably well, with the following fitness indices: $\chi^2(794, N = 3313) = 7505.91$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 9.45$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .86; TLI = .84; SRMR = .07). The abbreviated results are presented in Table 5 below. The overall model explains 55.6% of the variance in F6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing).

The results indicated that all five factors have a significant association with F7 Loneliness, with all being associated with lower loneliness apart from work-life interference, which is associated with higher loneliness, meaning that where work commitments influence private life and life commitments affect work, respondents tend to report higher levels of loneliness. With respect to the control variables, respondents who reported higher loneliness tended to have tenure in the industry, lower work intensity in the past week and year, and were less likely to report being ethnically Jewish.

The mediation analysis (see section 'Mediated effects' in Table 5) indicates that loneliness mediates the effect of all five factors on overall mental health and wellbeing, with full mediation present for Factors 2, 3 and 5, meaning that their effect on overall mental health and wellbeing is fully carried by how they influence loneliness.

Table 13.
Factor loadings of the six factors (latent) and control variables (observed) on Factor 6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing).

						95% Confidence Interval	
Factor	Label	Estimate	S.E.	Est./S.E.	P-Value	Lower 5%	Upper 5%
Overall mental health and wellbeing	F6	ON					
	F1	0.354	0.035	10.131	0.000	0.296	0.410
	F2	-0.021	0.021	-0.970	0.332	-0.056	0.015
	F3	-0.026	0.026	-1.011	0.312	-0.070	0.016
	F4	0.267	0.023	11.426	0.000	0.228	0.305
	F5	-0.014	0.033	-0.417	0.677	-0.068	0.041
	F7	-0.310	0.019	-16.685	0.000	-0.340	-0.278
Loneliness	F7	ON					
	F1	-0.231	0.037	-6.180	0.000	-0.297	-0.170
	F2	-0.050	0.025	-1.982	0.047	-0.093	-0.008
	F3	-0.049	0.029	-1.689	0.091	-0.097	-0.004
	F4	-0.147	0.025	-5.883	0.000	-0.186	-0.104
	F5	0.135	0.034	3.918	0.000	0.075	0.188

Table 13. (continued.)
Factor loadings of the six factors (latent) and control variables (observed) on Factor 6 (Overall mental health and wellbeing).

Overall mental health and wellbeing	F6	ON					
	SEMPTYP	-0.047	0.015	-3.048	0.002	-0.072	-0.020
	HLWIFTV	-0.014	0.019	-0.731	0.465	-0.046	0.015
	WWIPY	0.054	0.020	2.734	0.006	0.021	0.087
	HRSWLW	0.144	0.018	8.042	0.000	0.115	0.174
	AGE1	0.101	0.020	5.015	0.000	0.070	0.135
	GEND1	-0.054	0.014	-3.867	0.000	-0.076	-0.030
	ETHBAME	0.031	0.029	1.085	0.278	-0.016	0.080
	ETHJWSH	-0.009	0.017	-0.543	0.587	-0.037	0.018
	ETHWHT	0.022	0.030	0.754	0.451	-0.027	0.073
Loneliness	F7	ON					
	SEMPTYP	0.015	0.019	0.800	0.424	-0.016	0.045
	HLWIFTV	-0.066	0.023	-2.934	0.003	-0.104	-0.030
	WWIPY	-0.100	0.023	-4.391	0.000	-0.138	-0.065
	HRSWLW	-0.088	0.020	-4.449	0.000	-0.119	-0.053
	AGE1	-0.004	0.024	-0.164	0.870	-0.043	0.034
	GEND1	0.011	0.016	0.726	0.468	-0.015	0.037
	ETHBAME	0.009	0.032	0.288	0.774	-0.046	0.063
	ETHJWSH	-0.049	0.021	-2.307	0.021	-0.084	-0.015
	ETHWHT	-0.024	0.034	-0.714	0.475	-0.078	0.031
	Mediated Effects						
	F1-->F6	0.354	0.035	10.131	0.000	0.296	0.410
	F1--> F7-->F6	0.072	0.012	6.044	0.000	0.053	0.091
	F2-->F6	-0.021	0.021	-0.970	0.332	-0.056	0.015
	F2--> F7-->F6	0.016	0.008	1.959	0.050	0.002	0.029
	F3-->F6	-0.026	0.026	-1.011	0.312	-0.070	0.016
	F3--> F7-->F6	0.015	0.009	1.660	0.097	0.001	0.031
	F4-->F6	0.267	0.023	11.426	0.000	0.228	0.305
	F4--> F7-->F6	0.045	0.008	5.633	0.000	0.032	0.058
	F5-->F6	-0.014	0.033	-0.417	0.677	-0.068	0.041
	F5--> F7-->F6	-0.042	0.011	-3.707	0.000	-0.060	-0.023