



| **HUB**

# Loneliness at Work: Why it Matters in Film and TV

Wednesday 23rd, 2024

# Introducing....



Professor Andrea Wigfield  
Campaign to End Loneliness  
Centre for Loneliness  
Studies  
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Dr. Anna Topakas  
Senior Lecturer in  
Work Psychology  
University of  
Sheffield



Rupert Jones-Lee, Head of  
Research and Impact at The  
Film and TV Charity



Lucy Maxwell  
Community Development  
Manager at  
The Film and TV Charity

# Agenda

- **Introduction:** Why does loneliness at work matter? (Antonia Ypsilanti)
- **Background:** The Film and TV Charity, and their Looking Glass survey (Rupert Jones-Lee)
- **Expert view:** Academic perspectives on loneliness: Implications for the Film and TV industry (Anna Topakas)
- **Next steps:** Overview of what The film and TV Charity are trying to find out with forthcoming work (Lucy Maxwell)

# Why Does Loneliness at Work Matter

## **Loneliness affects health and well-being of individuals**

- affects mental and physical health
- can lead to anxiety depression, lower self-esteem, lack of confidence
- adversely affects cognitive processes which are important for creativity

## **Loneliness affects performance at work**

- less engagement
- lower job satisfaction
- less commitment
- less creativity
- impact on teamwork
- increased absenteeism (annual costs to employers £220 million)
- increased staff turnover
- reduced productivity (£665 million pa)

## **Negative impact on individuals, businesses, and the economy overall**



FILM + TV  
CHARITY

## Charitable Objects

3.1 The Charity's objects ("Objects") are (a) **to provide relief to those in need** by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage; (b) **to prevent or relieve poverty**; (c) **to promote physical, mental and social well being**; in each case among people involved in whatever capacity in the film, television or moving image industry in the British Isles (excluding the Republic of Ireland) and such other branches of the entertainments industry as the Trustees may determine from time to time, together with their families and dependents (hereinafter called the "beneficiaries"); and (d) **to promote equality, diversity and inclusion** for the public benefit by reducing, preventing and discouraging discrimination and the resulting barriers in the film, television or moving image industry in the British Isles (excluding the Republic of Ireland) and in wider society.





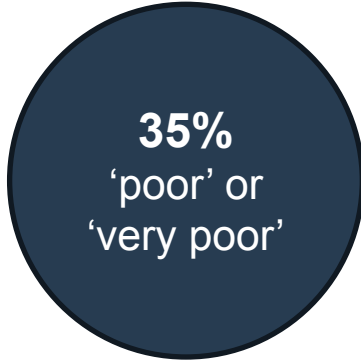
# LOOKING GLASS 2024

THE INDUSTRY'S BIGGEST MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY  
YOUR TAKE COULD CHANGE LIVES

**#LGS24**

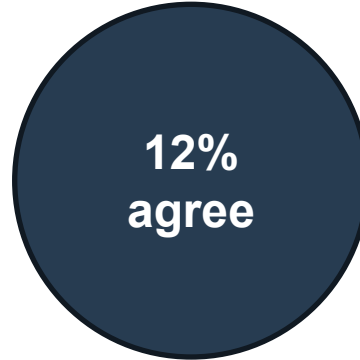
## Key findings (LG 2024)

### Self-rating of mental health:



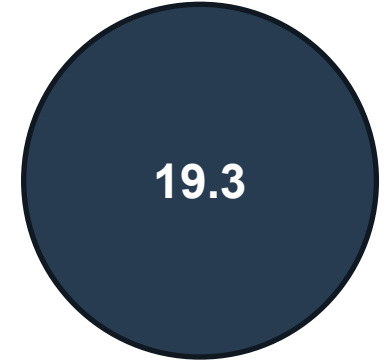
Worse than in LG 2022  
(24%)

### The industry is a mentally healthy place to work:



Slightly better than in LG 2022  
(11%)

### SWEMWBS score (/35):



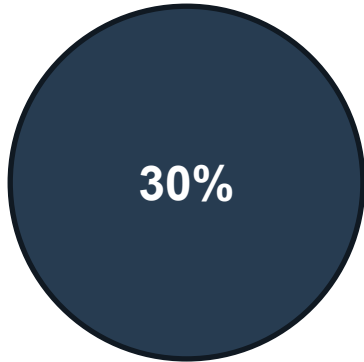
Slightly worse than LG 2022  
(19.7)

National benchmark: **23.5/35**



## Key findings (LG 2024), cont.

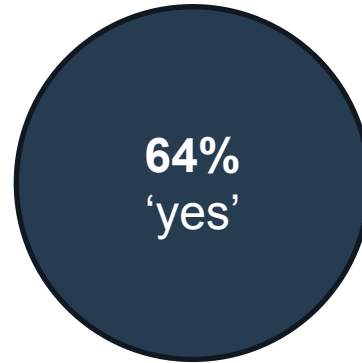
**Suicidal thoughts in  
past 12 months:**



Slightly worse than LG 2022  
(29%)

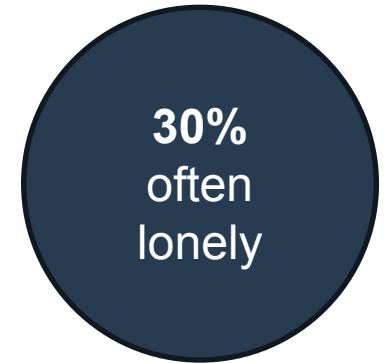
National benchmark: 5%

**Considered leaving the  
industry in the last 12  
months due to concerns  
about mental wellbeing:**



Worse than in LG 2022  
(60%)

**Loneliness  
(UCLA score of 8-9):**



Worse than in LG 2022  
(24%)

National benchmark: 8%



# Underlying causes

## CONDITIONS

- **Worklessness and precarity**
- **Financial worries**
- **Long hours and work-life balance**

## CULTURE

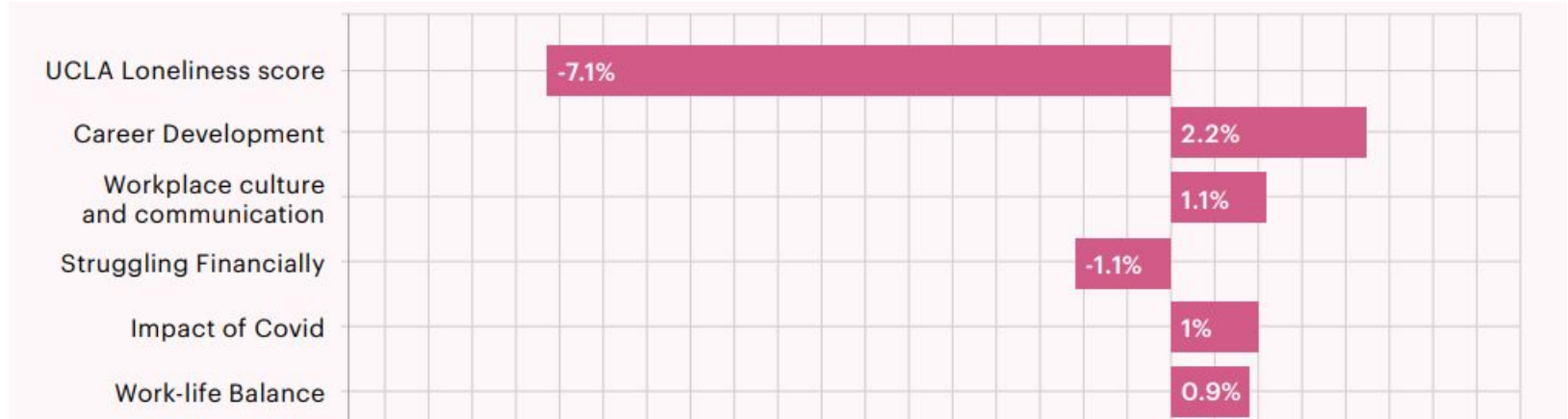
- **Attitudes toward mental health**
- **Feeling valued and recognised**
- **Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

## CAPABILITY

- **Management capability to support with mental wellbeing**
- **Barriers to getting support – time, expense, fear of judgement**
- **Limited exposure to good practices**



## Percentage point contribution to mental wellbeing (SWEMWBS)



# Expert View



Sheffield University  
Management School

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**  
Knowledge Applied

# Academic perspectives on loneliness: Implications for the Film and TV industry

[Centre for Loneliness Studies](#) / [Film + TV Charity](#)

[Prof Andrea Wigfield](#), Sheffield Hallam University

[Dr Anna Topakas](#), University of Sheffield

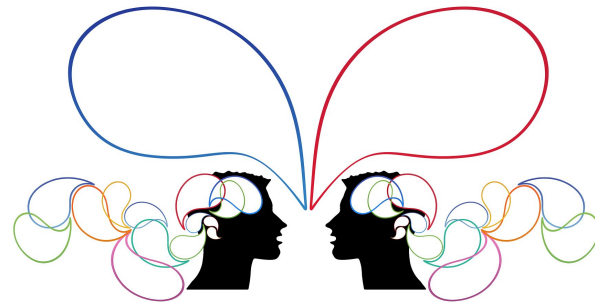
[Dr John Ratcliffe](#), King's College London

# What does loneliness mean to you?



Go to [wooclap.com](https://wooclap.com)

Enter code **XSFTBG**



# What is loneliness?

1. **Psychological perspective:** The distress experiences when the one's **actual** social connections and relationships fall short of their **desired** levels (e.g. Perlman and Peplau 1987).
2. **Evolutionary perspective:** A signal to indicate the need to seek and strengthen social connections (e.g. Cacioppo et al. 2003).
3. **Philosophical perspective:** Loneliness and solitude as quintessential to being human (e.g. Long & Averil, 2003).
4. **Sociological perspective:** Loneliness emerges from an interaction between the person and their social context, where the latter does not facilitate meaningful interaction and a sense of belonging (e.g. Wigfield et al., 2022).

## In summary...

1. Loneliness is a personal experience borne from the social world.
2. Meaningful interactions, and social connections, are important to its prevention.
3. Cultural and political context can frame whether and why people may feel lonely.
4. Loneliness is strongly linked to other forms of poor mental health.
5. There are no clear demographic predictors of loneliness, though minoritised groups are in some contexts more at risk of loneliness.

# Workplace Loneliness

"the distress of having a higher desire for social connection than what is subjectively experienced while working" (Wright & Hadley, in press).

- Workplace conditions may have a negative impact on loneliness.
- Loneliness is associated with lower creativity and productivity.
- Tension between productivity and social interaction in hybrid work settings.
- Can be alleviated through problem-focused thinking and skills/confidence building.

# Loneliness in the film and TV industry

Work conditions, including precarity, financial instability, long working hours, and mistreatment contribute to alienation and low wellbeing overall.

- Difficult to build and maintain relationships due to project based work.
- Reliance on networks and networking for securing work may impede authentic interactions.
- Identity and meaning: Disconnect between creator and product, in addition to commercialisation of the products of artistic expression.



# Tackling loneliness

- Social prescribing: Connecting people to activities, services, groups etc
- Psychological approaches: Counseling, addressing negative social cognitions
- Connecting with groups on the basis of shared interests or identities and peer support
- One-to-one exchanges, e.g. mentoring, informal interactions
- Technology-facilitated approaches, e.g. whatsapp groups
- Education and training, especially building professional self-efficacy through expertise
- Addressing stigma
- Organising work around smaller, stable teams
- Opportunities to help, volunteer, support others.



# Next Steps

# What we're hoping to learn from our research....



Do people feel lonely at work?



What works



Who is lonely?



Barriers to overcoming / preventing loneliness



People's lived experiences



What lonely people need



The causes



## How will research help?



Evolve and adapt our support offer for individuals



Support industry employers

# How can you help?

- Share your insights
- Support us to recruit industry workers with lived experience
- Be part of the solution

**Contact:**

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[filmtvcharity.org.uk](http://filmtvcharity.org.uk)

[@FilmTVCharity](https://www.instagram.com/FilmTVCharity)





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Thank you!