

Bectu Hair, Make-up & Prosthetics Branch
25 September 2023

The Change to Early Call Payments

**Evidence from the Hair, Make-up & Prosthetics
Community**

Condensed Report

The Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics Community (HMUP) are no strangers to getting up early in order to begin their work. It is in their nature to do so but the changes brought in by the 2023 Bectu/Pact Television Agreement have radically impacted the financial recompense HMUP artists rely upon to be able to safely work such long hours. This report is based on a poll of members from the HMUP community and evidences their feelings and thoughts about these changes.

A Condensed Report

The dedication required to be a HMUP artist, at any level, involves years of training and practise plus long working hours. Through all of this, the HMUP community know the importance of getting the job done on time because production's are highly time sensitive and this is a respected fact.

The skillset of this department runs beyond hair, make-up and prosthetics and leads them to be one of the most respected HMUP communities globally. Their skills, creativity and work ethic are traits to be proud of.

Their job is not just about "making actors look pretty" and as a community the role of HMUP is often denigrated. For many years, work had to be accepted with "prep & wrap" being included in a daily rate but in HMUP departments across the Country, this was referred to as 'given time' - time you were working which wasn't paid for. It was a widely resented practise and did nothing to build a sense of value amongst the community.

The advent of the Additional Contracted Hour (ACH) in the 2023 Agreement has gone some way to redress this balance with all hours of work being paid for. However it is only now the 2023 Agreement is working in practise that crews are beginning to see the true impact of the changes and the financial implications to them personally, especially with regards the changes to broken turnaround (BT) and early call (EC). The reports shows that these changes are impacting the

workers' ability to work, the emotional impact on how they work and their decisions with regards if they can continue to work in this industry.

What is the purpose of this Report?

This report is based on a survey conducted in September 2023 by the Bectu HMUP Committee to gauge the feelings of the HMUP Community as a whole regarding the effect of changes to the early call payments. It highlights the impacts of the changes between the 2017 and 2023 Agreements. The HMUP community consists of workers from across the Country, of all grades and a mix of Bectu members and those who are not.

It has to be made clear that this is not a call for renegotiation. The survey has been conducted to gain evidence to assist in the review processes as stipulated in the 2023 Agreement and in the current talks regarding a resolution to EC and BT. It aims to draw attention to situations which could occur so these can be mitigated before productions recommence once the UK industry recovers from the effects of the American strikes.

What are the facts and figures?

The survey was sent out widely to the HMUP community across the UK calling to those who have worked on Television productions using the 2023 Agreement.

There was an even response from all grades. 54% of respondents were reliant on working as a daily for their income and the changes to the EC payments have had a disproportionate impact upon this group of workers.

Under the 2017 Agreement, the system of pre-calls and EC payments meant a Daily could gauge if it was viable to pay for their own accommodation (if not provided by production) based on what they would earn for an early call.

As an example, an individual is to be booked on a £300 SWD rate. Unit call is 0800 to 1900. The individual will be working 0500 to 1930 and their OT rate is £45.

Under the 2017 they would work 3 hours pre call in a crowd room prior to unit call plus EC at 1 hour of OT. This would give 4 hours OT for the day and a total fee of £480. (For this example 2.5 of pre call plus 30 min prep & wrap but OT is rounded up)

Under the 2023, an individual can now factor the ACH into their daily rate which on our example above is £30. The individual works 1 hour pre 6 AM giving them £15 as their .5T uplift (£3.75 per 15 minutes). After their contracted hours they work 2.5 hrs OT to wrap giving them a payment of £112.5 making their daily fee £457.50

It should be noted that if a daily is released after their contracted hours, their daily fee will be £345. This is a difference of £135 from the 2017 agreement.

Given the decisions a daily has to make this difference would not make this job viable for many.

What do the surveys results show?

The survey was completed by 851 respondents. Almost half of the respondents worked at the grade of an artist and over 50% spend half of their working lives as dailies.

When asked what all respondents felt the correct level of remuneration was for early call, 35% called for a single payment of £45 on top of their single time. Only 2% were satisfied with the current level of EC payment.

A staggering 74% say they feel pressurised into working and accepting the current level of EC payments. Of these respondents, the overwhelming reason is financial fear.

47% of all respondents feel the changes to their payments mean they would be better off working in a different industry and of these 58% are considering this as a real possibility.

What are the conclusions?

The HMUP community want and need to work but the changes to their payments mean that many are being forced to reassess their careers. One third of our respondents had worked in the industry for over 15 years. To lose their skills and knowledge from the community would be a travesty for the next generation.

The HMU community know their work has to be carried out early in order for filming to commence but the survey would suggest this community are doing this work under duress. They are feeling devalued and insecure about the work on

offer. One thing for certain is that these workers cannot afford to turn work down no matter how they may feel and they should not be exploited for that reason.

Releasing a worker after their SWD to prevent them from getting exhaustion is now possible but this has compounded the insecurity and inability for individuals to financially plan. Regardless of a worker staying post wrap or being released after their SWD, they have costs associated with working an early call eg overnight childcare or accommodation. A lack of these daily workers will affect the HMU departments capacity to hire adequate numbers of crew, fulfil crowd calls to a tight timescale and ultimately affect a shooting day. This is not an outcome the HMU community want. They want to contribute their skills to the creative whole in an effective, professional manner and take pride in their job.

This loss of personal finance also has further pernicious effect. A lack of finances means the HMU community will be far less able to pay for their own Continual Professional Development (CPD) potentially impacting on skills and quality in years ahead. Furthermore, investments in personal make-up kits may suffer especially amongst trainees and juniors, who rely heavily on OT payments to build up their kits. It has to be stated that as many in this grade are on PAYE, they do not benefit from off setting these costs against their tax bills either. The cost of living crisis has affected the costs of professional products artists need. As artists of the future, their kits will later become the backbones of HMU departments when hired in on productions. Therefore the change to these payments are akin to a lack of investment in skills and equipment amongst the HMUP community.

Renegotiation of the agreement was undertaken in good faith but with the potential pressures of a non agreement weighing heavily. Recent events with our American counterparts highlights the position we COULD have been in had an agreement not been struck. EC and BT changes were not key points on the

negotiating table and how these now work in practice are proving to be highly contentious. Without restoring faith amongst the HMU community, any other vote required by this section of the industry, will be hard won.

What are suggestions?

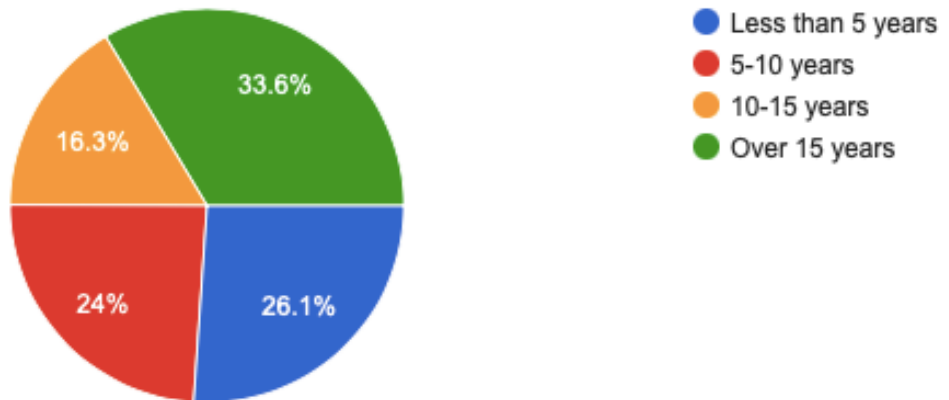
For an individual worker in the HMU community, the choice to negotiate a rate is often not seen as appropriate or not possible because of timescales. There needs to be a frank discussion to address the disparity in EC payment changes from the 2017 to the 2023 Agreement. This needs to happen to protect those who work as dailies or those who are required to regularly do their work earlier than the majority of crew thus leaving a worker prone to exhaustion. This need to be a stand alone payment, not tied to a workers wrap time or a considerably higher rate of uplift.

In an ideal world, schedules would be created to mitigate early calls but in reality, the call to break turnaround or do early calls, often falls disproportionately on to the HMUP department. Training needs to be provided to First AD's and Directors with regards the impact of scheduling or quick changes to said schedules which can have a profound effect on the departments whose roles are to prep for a days filming.

The Survey Results

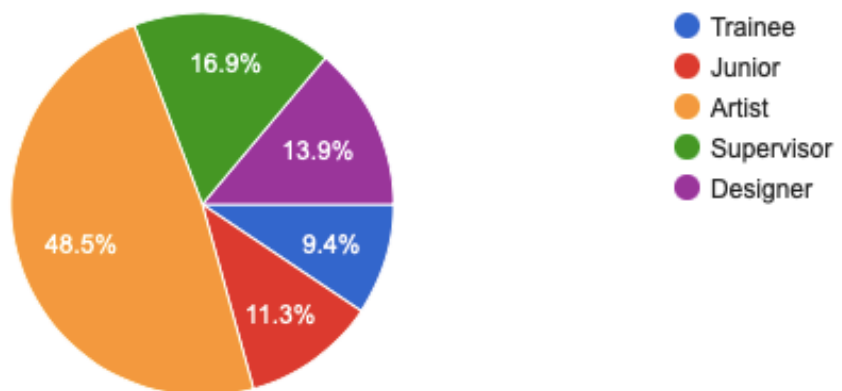
How long have you been working in the TV industry?

851 responses



What is your grade

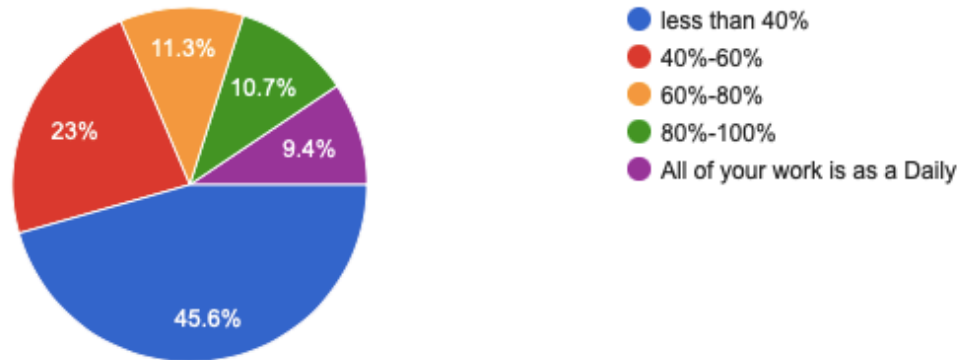
851 responses



In a typical year, what percentage of your work would you estimate you work as a daily.

(We are defining a Daily as working in a crowd room or as an additional artist on a main team for bookings of one day (or more days) where you are not contracted to the full run of a production)

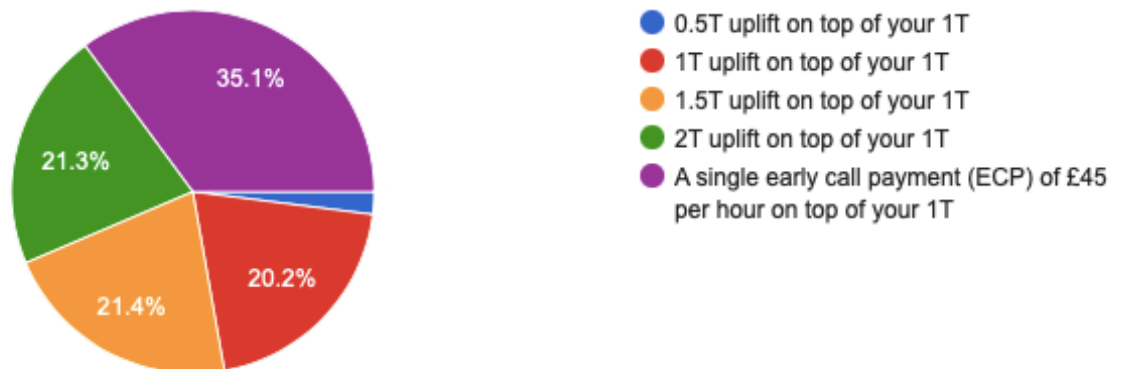
851 responses



What do you feel is the minimum acceptable compensation payment for working an early call (EC)?

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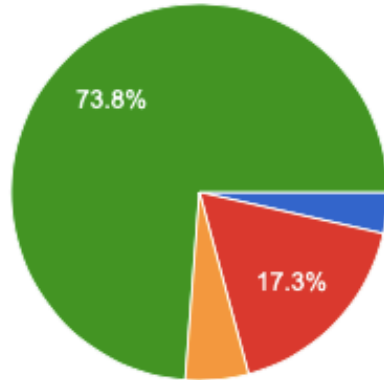
851 responses



If there are no changes to the levels of early call (EC) payment, how would you feel?



851 responses

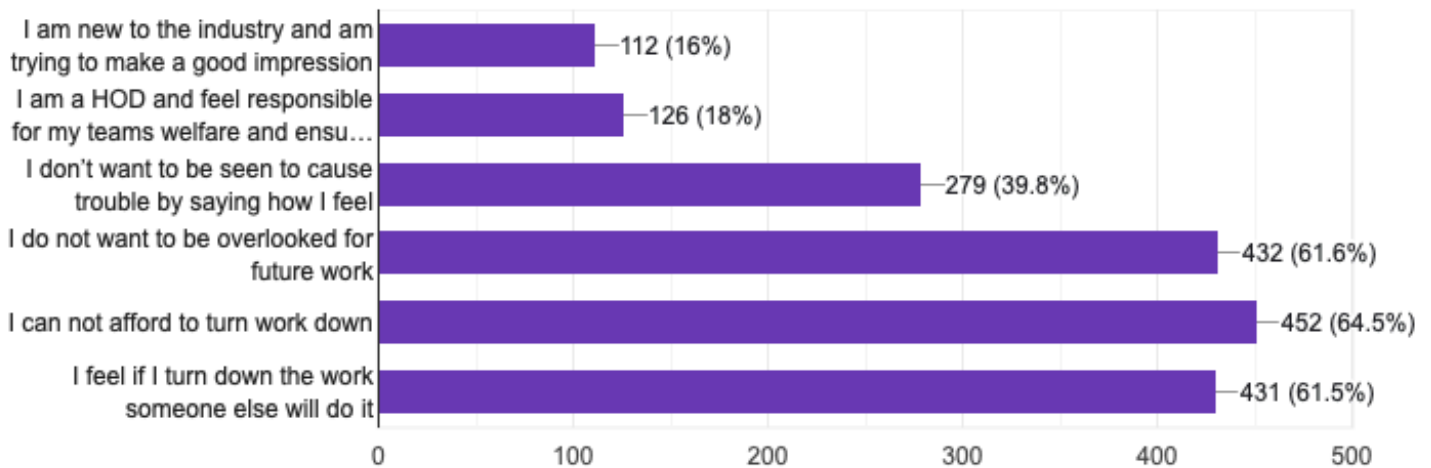


- A) I am happy and will work early call
- B) I am NOT happy but will still work early call
- C) I am NOT happy and I will not work early call
- D) I am NOT happy but I feel pressured to work early call

If you answered D) I am NOT happy but feel pressured to work early call, please expand on your answer - tick all statements that apply

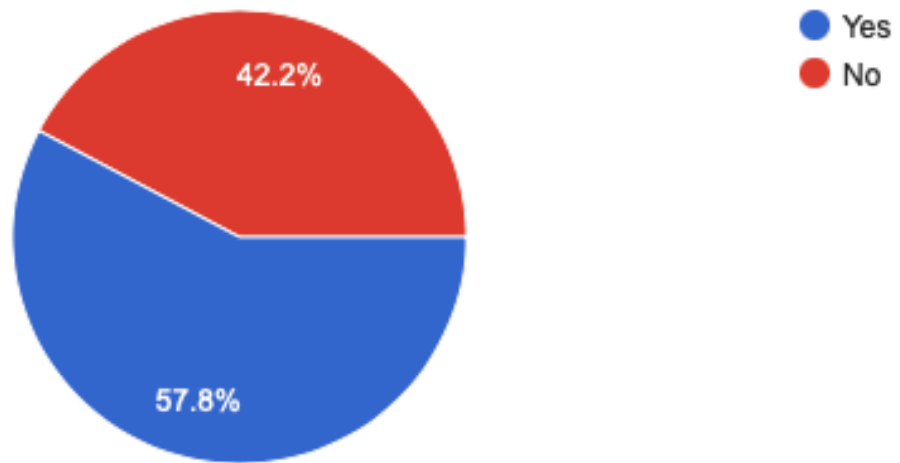


701 responses



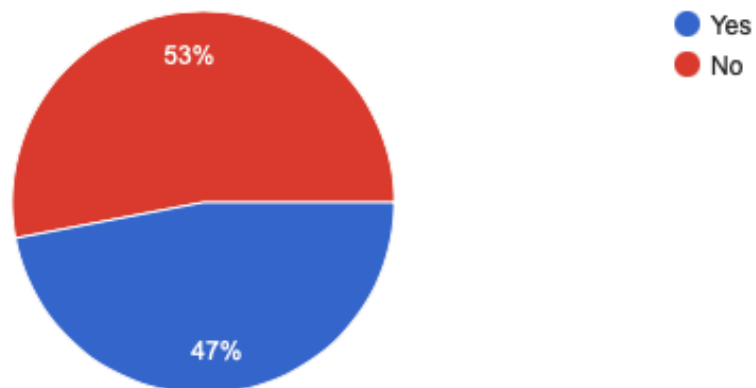
If yes, are you considering this?

618 responses



If nothing changes with early call, is it financially better for you to work in a different industry?

851 responses



Respondent Comments

An overriding factor during the design of the survey was that every respondent felt able to have their voice heard. 266 people chose to leave a comment with everyone being read and a wide selection put into the themes to allow for salient points to be seen. These were :-

1- Production issues and stress

2- The system of penalty payments

3- Personal & financial impact on individuals

4- Relating to safety concerns

This resulted in 36 pages of comments. The full report can be seen at www.hairmakeupbranch.org.uk