



**12<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

The Corona virus presents the greatest ever challenge to our industry. After many weeks of universal shut-down, and as we contemplate a return to work, the British Society of Cinematographers (BSC), Association of Camera Operators (ACO), Guild of British Camera Technicians (GBCT) in association with BECTU Camera Branch, strongly believes those working behind the camera should be active participants in any conversation going forward.

Cinematographers, camera operators and all HoDs are uniquely placed within the industry. Our responsibilities toward our art and craft, as well as to our crews, give us a distinct and frontline perspective on what it is going to take to get us all back to set and the implications of any suggested procedures.

With various documents emerging outlining possible future protocols, we the undersigned wish to impress upon those shaping our future that there is a need to protect the interests of those so-called 'below-the-line'. In finding a balance between economic necessity (getting people back to work) and the security (actual and perceived) of those film workers committed to their profession, their vocation, there are issues that should not be regarded tangential but rather be at the very core of what returning to work in a Covid world will be about.

Our crews want to feel safe, secure in their jobs and know that the already tenuous hold they have on employment is not threatened by any 'new' measures. Many crew members did not benefit from the Chancellor's various financial schemes and they are therefore very keen to get back to work. It would do those workers - and the industry itself - no service whatsoever to feel they are being coerced back under a false premise.

We cannot allow a rush back to work be the cause of a further shut-down of our industry. Four key points:

Ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of the crew lies with the employer. That needs to be made explicit.

All crew members need to know that should they fall ill with Covid-19 and/or have to be sent home to isolate, they will be furloughed by the Production with full pay until fully recovered or returned to work.

No one on set knows the workings of a particular department better than its Head (HoD). Their position and judgement should be respected when structural and logistical changes are made to accommodate new working practices.

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On-set medics need to be independent and testing should follow the latest science.

We recognise that much of the conversation so far is itself designed to provoke further discussion and help find solutions to intractable problems, but we are creating a template that will shape how we work in this industry for the next who-knows-how-many months. Years even. So we urge an approach that embraces not just modification of an existing work ethos but one that comprehensively protects film workers in the long-term until such time as a vaccine becomes available.

We, like everyone involved, look forward to our industry getting back to work and creativity once again being the collective aim.

Respectively Yours

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