

# How to support post-production teams

Post-production and VFX teams face similar pressures to those working on production, but they also have the additional challenges of working very long hours, often in isolation.

On production, people work in close proximity, which might make it easier to spot the signs if someone is struggling. However, for post teams, it can be trickier to know how colleagues are doing and offer peer support. It's even more difficult if people are working remotely.

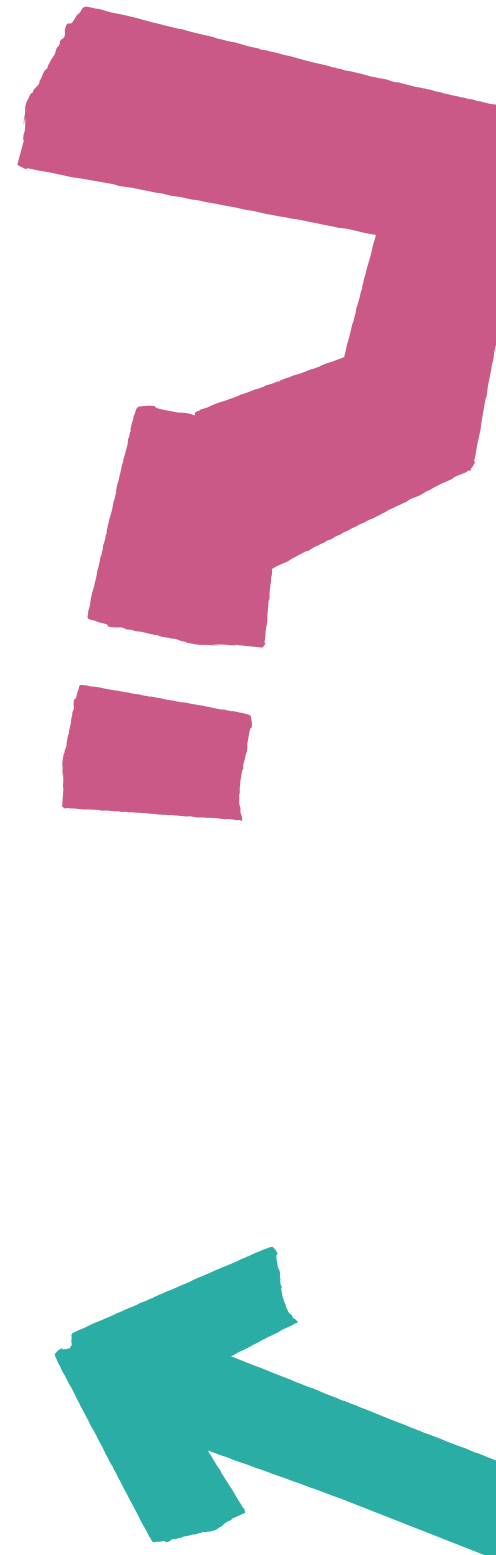
Here are some general hints and tips for ensuring everyone working in post-production gets the support they need to do their best work — and feel good doing it.

## Manage realistic schedules

The main challenges faced by post-productions teams often come directly from unrealistic schedules. When delays from production spill over, it's often the post-production teams who feel the squeeze as the pressure increases to deliver to impossible deadlines.

Of course, budgetary constraints and pressures from commissioners and distributors can make scheduling a real challenge, but being realistic from the beginning of the post-production period can alleviate a lot of the issues that occur further down the line, as well as mitigating the risk of teams being placed under a level of stress that begins to affect their mental health. It's also important to remember that alongside editors, many other members of the team including Production Managers and Edit Producers can also be under a great deal of pressure and need to know how to access support.

See our [Mini Guide 11 – How to have wash-up meetings and provide ongoing support](#) and [Mini Guide 13 – How to handover the wellbeing plan to post-production](#).



Wherever possible, encourage producers, directors, financiers and distributors to plan a realistic post-production schedule and communicate this as early as possible. This will not only have a positive impact on wellbeing, but it will also benefit the project itself.

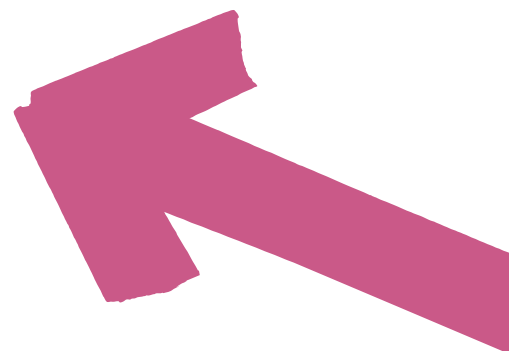
## **Control working hours**

Another factor that we know can have a negative impact on the mental health and wellbeing of post and VFX teams is the expectation to work excessively long hours, often without breaks. Working to a realistic schedule can help to mitigate this, but when certain ways of working have become ingrained, it takes hard work and time to shift these negative patterns.

Have open conversations about the expected hours and responsibilities, especially when getting quotes for post. Question or push back when post-production houses provide 12-hour days or extensive work schedules. Try, where possible, to make sure working days are no longer than 10 hours and monitor this throughout, encouraging people to stick to it and reminding them that evidence suggests that working excessively long hours can really impact their health and also be detrimental to the project.

We all have a shared responsibility to model healthier ways of working and we can do this by sticking to our set hours, as opposed to being 'first in, last out'. **Those in leadership positions can really help by role modelling best practice.**

If people are finding themselves working long hours and doing overtime, make sure this is acknowledged and that people are paid properly for it. This includes freelancers, but also members of staff, who can also be given time off in lieu (TOIL). You could also consider bringing in additional team members if needed to help spread the workload.



## Want to campaign for change?

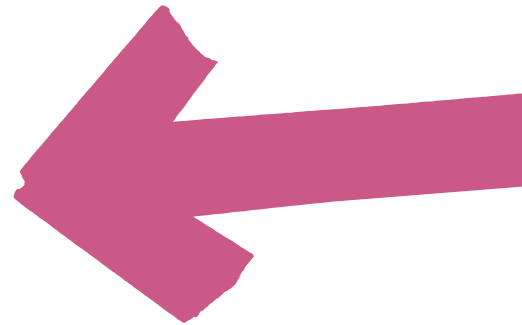
If this resonates with you, encourage your team to sign up to the [Time Project](#) to campaign for change. Anyone who works in film or TV production can use the free Time app to track their working hours, and compare rates of pay, which is especially useful for freelancers. The data is used by researchers at York University to build a picture of how hours worked correlates to pay and other factors, such as where in the UK you work. This wealth of data can be used in the future as evidence to convince commissioners and financiers to make changes to budget provisions to prevent unhealthy and even dangerous working hours.

## Champion the need for breaks

Encourage your team to take frequent breaks. Due to the nature of work and the working environments, many post and VFX teams find themselves in dark workspaces and can often have few windows or little access to natural light. This can easily have a negative effect on mental health and wellbeing and can be particularly difficult during the winter months.

We all need a reminder to step away from the screen sometimes! But, especially post-production teams who might be used to eating their lunch at their desk and staring at a screen for hours on end.

Give your team simple reminders of good habits like going for a quick walk in the fresh air, taking time to eat lunch away from desks and prioritising sleep and exercise. All these can have huge benefits both physically and mentally, so that people can perform at their best. Set up regular social events so that your teams get a chance to decompress and feel connection with colleagues.



## Promote healthy ways of working

**Time off** – Check your teams know what holidays and time off for personal appointments, including medical, they are entitled to and help them to take it whenever possible. People do a better job if they're feeling supported to take care of their mental and physical health, are well rested and able to spend time with family and friends. Senior leaders can also set a good example by prioritising their own health and taking time off when required.

**Clear boundaries** – Start by clarifying what the expectations are for the job role right from the start. Many post workers are expected to go above and beyond their role, and often boundaries and responsibilities become confused. Set the tone when new team members join by discussing expectations from both sides and discuss things like flexibility of hours and locations. For example is remote working possible? And is there any potential for team members to job-share or work flexibly?

**Regular check-ins** – Have regular check-ins with your post-production and VFX teams. This is an opportunity to create an open channel of communication, as well as a way to ensure they know where to access support if they need it. For example, a team member could be experiencing or witnessing bullying and harassment, or racism and be unsure of who to talk to. This is something they might be able to bring up in a one-to-one check-in. Always ensure these check-ins are scheduled well in advance and try to avoid moving or cancelling them.

