

# AAPTLE Meeting No. 14

*Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, 16:00 on Zoom,  
chaired by Stage Management Association*

## Welcome

SMA welcomed new members and then introduced Paul Fleming, General Secretary-Elect of Equity, to the meeting

## QUESTIONS

The pre-submitted questions were put to Paul Fleming. Except for question 6. Their responses are summarised below

**Many freelancers in AAPTLE are looking at the COVID-variation agreements which exist, or are being discussed, with some dismay. Performers and crew on shows starting up are being asked to take up to a third of touring weeks off unpaid at short notice. It seems that there is a management campaign to downgrade Sundays to standard working days.**

- I am perhaps not the best person to say because I have become considerably less hands on involved with them. So, there might be gaps in my knowledge.
- Still having an open conversation about the creative team agreements.
- We are in a position where we have a variation agreement in place very quickly for performers and stage management in commercial theatre and in the West End negotiations are currently underway.
- It is important to understand the different industrial contexts in which we are operating in the different scenarios. The pressures within them and Equity's strength are vastly different in each sector
- With the shows that are under the variation agreements have kept performers, stage management, and some creative team members sat there, EQ are consulting and balloting the workforce
- The complexities of commercial touring where multiple venues are involved is a much tougher negotiating position.
- In the subsidised sector, as the effects of the 1.57 billion bailout have yet to be felt negotiations have not begun
- A key demand has been that the government should be subsidising to produce COVID secure, safe theatre.
- Regarding Sunday's as a normal working day, this been an objective of the producers, for irrational reasons, for a very long time. Where Sunday working has become easier, we have not seen an increase in Sunday production. They don't like the idea that they get told that they can't work, or can only work Sundays in extreme circumstances. They have very much embarked on that with BECTU it does not look like that is the way the BECTU agreements

are going. To some extent we are somewhat hamstrung by the other unions and what they do.

- But we also must recognize the unique context in which we are all looking at BECTU are quite legitimately very worried about staving off redundancies, and making sure shows come back at as reasonable cost as possible.
- We are looking at longer term objectives, like the introduction of a five day working week in the rehearsal period and other family friendly work-life balance measures like proper equalities, monitoring.
  - o Not just numbers of bodies, but rates of pay, levels of exposure, and so on, not just for members on stage but for stage management members and for creative team members as well.
  - o It is about leaving this with everybody's dignity intact and able to say we have laid some groundwork for going forward.
- I think we can say to union members, this is a good thing, where you see demuntions in your terms for a temporary period, but improvements in those terms for permanent period.
- All the variations are, admittedly, perhaps for longer than we might like, temporary in their nature. The commercial theatre variations have been predicated on the production of a vaccine. The BECTU variations that they have been discussing are predicated on 2023 dates of returning to relative normality, which is further away.
- It is really important to be constructively critical of everything that we've done all the way through. But I think the union has by and large, and a very good job over the period, in protecting terms and conditions, in protecting jobs, where we can protecting shows, and returning money to members And was it perfect? Was it imperfect? We can debate that, but we have done a good job, I think, to date. And that is not to say that is not the challenge to be that confident about the deals that we do coming out of it.

**It seems that Equity and our members are facing a new and threateningly intransigent management attitude. How can Equity stand up to these demands and maintain hard-won rights, pay levels and conditions? Is Equity equipped to defend us from unreasonable demands made under the spurious cover of COVID-19 and defend the rights of backstage crews many of whom have seen little or no pay for six months and now face a major erosion of their pay and conditions?**

- Regarding weeks out, it is little known, because it was little used, but there was always a week out provision within the agreement.
  - It was weeks out payed at the Union minimum
  - Also, there is the unpaid period over Christmas, which is more widely known and widely disliked.
- Do I think it goes too far? Well, I don't and what I would say is this, you know, we have in order to maintain confidence of members, we cannot be seen and nor can we actively put terms or conditions in place, which either prevent production or drive productions off union agreements.
- When I started at equity, I looked after commercial touring theatre from 2011 to 2019. In that period there has been a real turnaround number of people who are members in that sector. We cannot afford as an industry to lose that level of engagement about people's

terms and conditions. There are also now deals with several big commercial producers, where we do did not have them when I started.

- We cannot be seen by members to be preventing work from happening. In reality, we are not seeing a huge reopening of the commercial touring sector.
- Sometimes we must talk about our terms and conditions, not completely divorced from the market reality. It is very unlikely that most theatre will go back in a scenario where that we are doing it with social distancing or the risk of local lockdowns.
- Bill Kenwright tried, but it failed because the figures did not stack up and there were additional lockdowns; the circumstances are too precarious.
- If the reported terms conditions are never used, they are never used. But, if it helps the sector start earlier, I think what members want. Particularly when the support from the government for self-employed people has been so slow and inadequate. Many members come back to us to criticise us for not getting them back to work quickly. It that is a difficult balancing act.
- Is it a new intransigence for management? From where I am sat it feels very familiar from last 10 years. The idea is that that you should never waste a crisis, whether you are a manager or a union.

**We also know that contracts are being issued by managements which include provision for any changes in a future variation agreement to become automatically part of the contract (even though when signing the individuals don't know what this will mean). Has Equity agreed this? Doesn't it remove one of the very few bargaining chips that the union has, to allow agreement to be assumed?**

- In some instances, it is reasonable, in some instances, it is not.
  - o Where you're talking about a show, which is some way into the future, where we would hope that the COVID variations have evolved to a point where people will be back on relatively standard terms, it seems to be entirely reasonable to be offering it, not least, because things can be withdrawn with notice.
  - o If it is something that is very direct and very immediate, and particularly in the subsidised sector, that is not an appropriate way to proceed. We do not have a groundwork to do that. Working in a COVID secure way should not come at the expense of collective bargaining
- The simple advice I would give, particularly in the context of constantly emerging guidance from the government is: Phone us. Do not presume that we have agreed that it can happen if it is offered. However, the further away it is, as an offer, the more reasonable it becomes.

**People are facing contracts, which say you are out with no pay if you get COVID symptoms. Also, people cannot work for 14 days if quarantined. What is Equity position on this?**

- The first thing I will say is that I am not aware of anything that is currently operating on the minimum terms of the Commercial theatre agreements. Now, that might be outdated knowledge, and I am happy to be corrected on it, so that excludes that sector.
- In relation to the West End and independent small-scale theatre and their reopenings, in all those scenarios, we are having an active conversation with the producer about what

happens. And in some of them, it will be in circumstances x; you receive full pay, in circumstances y; you receive a reduction, in circumstances z; you do, and you do not.

**What is Equity's position on international travel and quarantine - if forced to quarantine on return from an International job should producers pay, and will that be in contracts?**

- The answers vary depending on the producer's intentions for their show if they were reopening or closing.
  - o It is something that we are facilitating people doing with producers, as part of long-standing commitment, so everybody understands where it is.
- I do want to say one of the great on untrumpeted successes of the Union, was taking a position very early on in the pandemic in January, February time that where members were self-isolating, they should be on full pay, it should not be deducted from sick leave.
  - o The self-isolation was a social good, and members should not be penalized for that either by loss of pay or loss of sick pay.
  - o We managed to maintain that position pretty much consistently. Even though it is a difficult position to maintain six months into the pandemic.
  - o This is still the default position Equity is maintaining
- A particular interest in the smaller scale and subsidised theatre, is how you work in a bubble scenario.
  - o Equity have had conversations very early on with sister unions in New Zealand and in Belgium, where that has been the practice since April, producing small scale work, TIE companies, and so on.
  - o That presents an awful lot of challenges for our members, particularly if you have caring responsibilities.
    - Equity are trying to get the terms of conditions that recognise that, as part of our objective as well.
    - What TIE work and outdoor theatre work that has happened, has very much taken that into account.
  - o I do think that for the foreseeable future, that pod working small scale approach is the right one and probably a practical one as well.

**What protections have been negotiated on sick leave because of COVID symptoms, or enforced quarantine due to track and trace meaning that a member cannot work for 14 days? Most of the creative team and stage management are freelance: what is the position if a team member needs to leave halfway through the tech? How are they protected?**

- Equity have seen some producers hiring larger casts to allow for people having to quarantine or working in bubbles across larger casts and larger stage management teams.
  - o Regarding creative team members, that presents its own very unique challenges, but also unique opportunities for people working from home, and so on.
  - o The only places where I am aware of very limited instances of this is in the West End. Where it has happened where Equity have come up with individual agreements.
- We'll see what we can do, because it's clearly not an unreasonable position for somebody to take the socially responsible approach of self-isolating, and then end up being knocked out of a job or work which they sorely need.

- So, I think the very simple answer is, at the minute we live in a world where there's so little production, it's horses for courses. But phone the union; there is always something that we can do, or a context in which the decisions being made that we can explain.
- *Paul confirmed that Equity would be going to the membership for approval of any other variations to the contracts.*

**Was there a reason that the variation to the Commercial Touring Agreement was not taken to the membership?**

- It was a difficult scenario with the touring contract, because of where we were with that agreement.
  - o It was the first one that managers wanted, and we were in a scenario where we had no member on the agreement.
  - o There was less pressure on the other main agreements to start working, but the desire was to do it at speed for touring agreement.
  - o Where we were in that COVID moment was, Kenwright and several other producers were attempting to put on work. Which in the end, none of has really happened.
  - o I think the only one that has ever happened to any meaningful degree is Six.
  - o There was a consultation, essentially through the deputies on those shows, which had recently closed, Stage management deputies as much as performer deputies. There was consultation with our committees and working parties. There is also a clear limit on where it is in use, especially on the West End.
- I have stood on the platform to say that part of our success has been about consultation and I do not see any reason why COVID should change that.

**There is the thought that many of the outcomes of these negotiations are being allowed to become more permanent and there is a there is a pressure on everyone to get them out, including Equity. It feels slightly that Equity is undermining its own negotiating position. Do you think that is a fair comment or not?**

- It comes down to what extent are people prepared to turn down work, decline work, not work, or indeed, and, not take any work on non-union contracts?
  - o The Nirvana is that position, but members are not there, for good reason. Part of that is to do with education, especially political education, but part of it has to do with a desire to pay their gas bill
- There was there was one moment where I lived in absolute fear that I was going to become general secretary of the union with no members, no money, and no collective agreements, because essentially every producer would tear them up.
  - o This was a reality, I was faced with as West End organizer with SOLT saying 'We will tear up at your collective agreements, if you do not agree these things'. In the end, we did not agree, but the reality that threat becomes greater and greater and greater.
- It cannot be just assumed that we have some ability to set rates or that there is a fixed point we negotiate to.

- There is a line to which we can be pushed to, and there's a line we believe that members can be pushed to, and unless we're seeing substantive changes that are valuable to us in the long term to those terms.
- Equity's objectives are very different BECTU's objectives, or the MU's objectives, like a five-day rehearsal week, and so on.
- Regarding the variations I think that we've obtained a better deal on force majeure in the in the short term, an awful lot less reductions in terms of conditions than were initially asked for, and we've ended up with absolute deadlines on when they're going to conclude.
- We are now looking at putting long term policy objectives in as conditions of our position I think we are in a good place in a context of negotiations.

**Q2: Many freelance creatives and technical crew working in UK theatre feel like they exist in a grey area between both Equity (historically for actors) and BECTU (majority TV and Film production roles). Moving forward, is there an arrangement for the backstage UK theatre workforce that is supported by both Equity and BECTU combined? (Eliminating the choice theatre freelancers have to make between the two unions and also offering a more bespoke service and support for those theatre freelancers that bridge multiple backstage disciplines).**

- It is critical we are working together with other trade unions.
  - As a quick aside, I mean, trade unions, wherever they are, I mean, this is the first time in my time Equity, where our members are actively referencing the excellent work done by the Baker's union, against the odious Tim Martin, owner of Wetherspoons.
  - Using that as an inspiration is the way that they approach our work, you know, that you're working with other trade unions is a really, really important thing we should be doing, we are beaming into people's homes every night, we're showing them on stages every night, some of the most compelling trades union members in the country.
  - That is a real social good, with 75% union membership on stage that compares to the national average of 10% in the private sector. That is a really powerful message that how we organize the gig economy, for the good of creative work, for the good of all working people.
- Within the creative unions more specifically, we do already work together, we have already worked together for a long time.
  - We have our day of action on the 30th of September, which is a big part of that unified approach, using the profile of some of our members to identify and raise up the issues and lots of BECTU members and our backstage members as well.
- In terms of the strategies, we meet and talk to BECTU very openly about going forward, but there is not independence in that we have to recognize the different historical origins of people's terms and conditions.
  - We are working much more closely together to understand that, but also recognize that our objectives are fundamentally different.
- As to what the different offers are, if you are somebody who is working in a very craft type scenario, then BECTU is the union for you. If you are coming into design from a creative

background exclusively, or you have moved away from doing the building and making yourself then, you know, Equity is decidedly the union represents you.

- And it is important that we have conversations about how jobs evolve.
- The Stage Management committee has been identifying which jobs should fall within BECTU grade and which job should fall within equity grade, with the aim of then being able to write standard industry job descriptions.
  - I think that would be a great piece of work to do for designers, and directors as well.
  - Let us be honest about when management have crossed the line and be honest, which union they should be in or what grade of pay they should be in or what the rate for the job is.

### **Do people have to make a choice between the unions**

- I think sometimes people think that trade unions, sit there and write agreements, then think they are good enough to work on forever. Well, I do not, if I thought they were good enough to work on, I would not renegotiate them when we put a claim in in three years' time.
- So, are our terms or conditions good enough? No. Is the union equipped enough to deal with them? I think that is a very open question.
  - There's a big listening exercise to be done on Equity's part, particularly with creative team members, directors and designers in particular, about how the union talks to them, how we connect with them, how we articulate their concerns, how we understand their concerns, and how we negotiate their agreements.
  - Those agreements, let us, let us be brutally frank, on the fees issue, the union agreements for directors and designers are not good enough, they are not good enough.
  - It is the union's job to find out how we do that, how we win the confidence of designers and directors.
- I think we would be a stronger union; It is in a performer member's interests to have a much more solid representation there, and to see people's fees and rates of pay going up.
- So, is the structure right? I do not know, to be honest, and I am quite keen to hear people's views on it.

### **Where do those who work in Sound fit in regarding the unions? There are very few pure designers, most people in the field work across the discipline**

- So very explicitly on the sound question, in 2003, had a conversation with BECTU where the belief at the time was BECTU was better placed to organize sound designers.
  - Until about 18 months ago, when Robbie Butler from ALD was actively engaging with sound designers to saying, you should be part of the equity group.
  - We have not actively made those approaches; I do not want to undermine any of the good work the BECTU does with designers.
- I am very happy to be in a position where Equity is sharing recognition rights for designers of all shades and hues, because that represents the different routes through which people come into the industry.

- I do think that for sound designers, specifically, we are moving into a world where we need to organise them more actively, maybe but it is a hard sell given the current position with rates for other roles
  - o One of the first things I did just after I was elected, was to make it so we are now accepting sound design evidence.
  - o We need a little bit more expertise as to what that looks like. But we will accept members into membership on the basis of sound design work, we will be moving to a position as to how we organize them.
- To some extent, sound designers represent a new challenge, because there's conversations never really been had with them as a grouping.
- And so that was a very long-winded answer of saying, we are going to move to a position of actively organizing sound designers

**Q4: For some practitioners, there is a feeling that they have learned more about what Equity has been doing to represent them in AAPTLE meetings than from Equity itself. Particularly given the current crisis, can you please make your website more open and accessible in order that we can all see more clearly the benefits of encouraging more people to join, particularly from the 'Creative Team'? Making the work that you are doing to represent non-actors more visible on your website and included in key statements would also help.**

- I would say that the union's Achilles heel, recently, if not for a very long time, has been communications in general.
  - o So, one the first one of the first things I did on being elected is I have looked at a new structure for the way in which we communicate.
  - o We are doing a communications review at the minute, looking at the nature of the content, the frequency of the magazine, it is looking at social media content, it is looking the way we approach the outside media
  - o I've we have engaged an independent freelance journalist who is advising us on that and helping sort more public communications
- I think that if people see us in a public forum, saying the Union for Creative Practitioners, the Union for Performance, Stage Management, Directors, Designers, Choreographers, Creative team members, Circus Artist, Jugglers; as long as you don't just seem like you're saying actors all the time, it creates that cultural change.
- There is a degree of visibility that I can do as well, one of the commitments I made was about going to workplaces as general secretary. I have met creative team members at various events also
- We have a high-quality magazine, but frankly, I think very often it is used as, as hamster bedding.
  - o I would rather that we put that effort into producing sectorial publications that would put that together to put in publications related to people's professions, really targeted down.
  - o The second largest group of equity members after actors are variety performers, 20% of our membership, now what the hell does that involve, burlesque, dancers, clowns, fire eaters, and children's entertainers, club singers. Our current publications do not reflect that

- One of the things that we've changed very recently, as well as looking at the software we use to produce and send our emails, is experimenting with different times of day sending out emails, different days of the week, we've put moving images in the emails, and full colour of pictures and so on.
  - o This is having an impact; one week we had a 51% opening rate of the all-member email.
    - Compared to average circular emails, I am told by the people who do the analytics, which we never did before, is about between 13 and 21%.
- I want to do print stuff; I want to do good print stuff; I want to do print stuff that represents and involves everybody. But I think I think we have got to be fleet of foot and accurate in the way we analyse the importance of these things.

**A lot of people feel they are not part of the equity set and cast meetings; they do not feel invited to them. They feel that they are for actors and stage management, sometimes even not stage management. Inviting people to these and making them feel welcome could be a good starting point**

- So, in terms of stage management, there is often an issue in the way which we speak.
  - o I have almost trained myself, whenever I say, to my members, I say Performers and Stage Management, because they are working on the same agreement.
  - o One of the great successes of lockdown; I have been trying for the past eight months before lockdown, to create a Stage Management West End deputies committee. Prior to lockdown there was very little engagement, so it is unprecedented that we now have a Stage Management deputy on every single West End
  - o We are trying to make Stage Management feel more included and that it is more relevant to them
- For Creative team members, we have tried various things over the years, letters to team members in the packs, or sent directly to them, if we have their contact details, as well as invitations to meet.
  - o We have also engaged with and gone to Directors Network events
  - o The current situation and Zoom present us with an opportunity to engage in those forums in a different way.
  - o It is something we have never tried before. I am really hopeful that we'll be able to connect people in that way There's no substitute in communication for face to face contact and being able to take frustrations out on somebody.

**What 'carrots' can we show to members as a reason to join (besides Public Liability Insurance cover which is now offered by most of the established professional associations)?  
Is there an intention to support freelancers with an appropriate Pensions Scheme?**

- With the pension, it is something that Stage Management members benefit from, but not something that creative team members benefit from necessarily.
  - o I think that ambitions in collective bargaining should be for those sorts of add-ons for them also

- While the fees going up is important, let us talk about the other issues of work: work life balance and looking after people in their old age, that are really important we never engaged with
- In terms of the insurances, I am planning an insurance package review in the spring of next year, which is looking at tendering the insurances that we already offer, but also at what other insurances could, could be available.
  - o I think professional indemnity insurance is something that our designer members have asked for a long time,
  - o We have never really engaged with meaningful income replacement insurance instead of the top up insurance on for accidents and injuries either.
- So simple answer, there is an insurance review in the spring, and I want to look at some additional insurances. Also, the way in which we present them and package them makes a big difference as well.
- People are much more willing to join a trade union and put up with them warts and all, if they are joining for collective reasons, and using those individual benefits when they need them.
- Regarding information and resources behind the paywall
  - o Looking at organizing contemporary dance as an example, which is an area where we really struggled.
  - o We took the approach that we would not make stuff restricted for a very long period of time. We held meetings not prescribed on the basis of membership of the Union. We were sharing a lot more information on facts and figures.
  - o In February this year dancer membership was 76%, higher month on month than it was five years ago.
  - o Now everything is back behind the paywall. There is a moment to say 'Hang on a minute. We have shown you what your fellow colleagues are paying for their union membership. It is time you join, right Don't be a freeloader'.
- With directors with designers in particular, we need that approach.
  - o We need to be open and welcoming to them.
- This is one of the things we are looking at as part of this communications review.
  - o Two websites: one which is an internal function that provides members with that real benefit, the other is a sexy campaigning website, that that makes people feel included and welcome. I think that that is, you know that that is a key part of what we are going to do

**Digital broadcast and distribution rights have become heavily fore fronted during the pandemic and there are now numerous theatre and live event productions being made which will go straight to video streaming. AAPTLE members feel very uncomfortable and vulnerable regarding their protection in terms of copyright, royalties and appropriate pay and working conditions in a new era where streamed 'product' can be made available around the world. There is a need for theatre contracts to include provisions for territorial, residual and/or streaming rights payments to be made to everyone involved in the production.**

- There has been a long-term strategy with recorded broadcast streamed theatre, which has been broadly to adapt and renew our recorded media agreements to make them fit for that purpose.
  - o that has been a bit of a learning curve for everybody producers, union and members included
  - o The National Theatre live as an example of which I am particularly proud; We managed to negotiate an ongoing royalty for stage management, which is a protected 1% for them, which didn't come out of the performers share, but actually came out the producer share.
  - o The equity pool includes now not only Stage Management and Performers, but Directors and Designers. As part of that deal that we did at the National, for outsourced productions, 51% of royalties are going to members, including Directors and Designers and Stage Management, and 61% when they are inhouse productions.
- We have managed to secure secondary payments, or buyouts more conventionally, on recording productions on the West End and commercial and theatre productions, using the PACT agreement.
- At the start of the Lockdown we took a strategic decision. People may agree or disagree with it, that what our industry and sector needed was propaganda. Otherwise, we would fall off the edge of a cliff.
  - o So, we did a series of deals that were significant below anything we would have possibly considered before and before lockdown, but they were for a limited period, and subject to individual consent
- We have probably moved out in its entirety; we are now stopping work happening.
  - o For a few West End productions we have prevented them putting on some form of streaming performance, and on one of them, the big dispute was the lack of payment for assistant directors or lack of payment for stage management that was being offered.
- If streaming theatre is here to stay, which I believe it is, then it must form part of our members earnings.
  - o I think it is important and is a key part of having a sustainable finance in the industry, is seeing backstage workers get its significant secondary payments.
  - o We have never really had a proper engagement with directors and designers about this work at all.
  - o A huge piece of work that needs to be done is to find out what directors and designers are getting and how their agents are engaging with this sort of work.

- It is a learning curve, we're not going to get it right every time but we're in a significantly stronger position the American unions are in it has to be said, because we are one union representing across all sectors, and, and helping them with their work on it is important to us.
- It is a long battle, we are all seeing this technology emerge, but yet a key issue to talk to people about

**What can Equity do to improve working conditions and pay in the less well funded venues, where many people start out? This is currently a barrier to entry for those who cannot get family support, and often a reason why people are forced to give up a career in the industry, significantly reducing representation and inclusivity.**

- We must acknowledge that pay on non-Equity agreements is so low is because people will not pay equity rates.
  - o There is that there is a little bit of a of an intrinsic problem, because the only place the union can move in order to accommodate those sorts of producers is by reducing our rates of pay.
  - o That is not something I'm particularly keen on doing and I think that, particularly the directors and designers that we talked to would say, they can't go any bloody lower than where they are on the union minimum agreements anyway.
- We have seen a growth in the use of the Commercial theatre agreements, in particular, because we've introduced a much clearer a tiered system as we do on the West End.
- The ICTC agreement is slightly different as it forms an industry standard for applications to the Arts Council, but the enforcement and regulation of that in England is very poor.
  - o It is better elsewhere in the UK
  - o We need to move to a position where regulating what producers are getting on that agreement is more part of our culture.
  - o I've had meetings in the past couple of weeks about how we introduce a much better audit system, which does not require what my former assistant to put in 250 freedom of information requests to find out exactly what the rates of pay were
  - o There is a lot of agreements that look like ITC agreements, but are not and actually, to all intents and purposes are until there's a problem.
- Regarding the Fringe, I took the union's first national wage case in 2012-13, for a group of performers. Since then we have seen a confident growth in the use of our Fringe agreement.
  - o There is a lot of work to be done at that end, for creative team members, they don't have recourse to the national minimum wage act, they don't have recourse to holiday pay, they don't have recourse to regulations around pension or to enrolment, currently we don't have the statutory sticks to help them.
- A lot of our members work in more profitable areas for higher rates of pay, to work elsewhere for lower rates of pay.
  - o Very often the lower paid work people want to do is the interesting work, the innovative work.
- I want to look at sort of artists centred approach to how we raise wages, because there is no point in putting union resources into chasing money that simply is not there.

Itc agreement

- Very specifically on the on the ITC agreement, when I looked at the ICC rules, in 2011 we were in an absolute state
  - o The biggest thing was logic that was advanced, I'm going to assume in good faith by the ITC in 2006, was if you stop compelling our members to use this agreement and you take out a large number of term and conditions, put them in a handbook, and then it will become much more used.
  - o Consequently, what we had was a significantly emasculated union agreement for performance and stage management.
  - o We lost the requirement for creative team members to use the agreement by an ethical manager at all.
  - o At which point we were having less than 100 companies a year registering to use the Ethical Managers agreement
    - The application process run into 16/17 pages every year.
- We have now managed to get about 60% of the handbook back into the agreements.
- I don't believe that any standard contract that hasn't been negotiated with the trade union is worth the paper that was written on, I don't think that the Management Association should engage in that sort of work, I think we have to recognize that it's engaged in in a way to it disrespects fundamentally the process of collective bargaining and shouldn't happen.
- I think, in all honesty, if we had if we had a more robust Arts Council England monitoring regime, as you see in the other nations of the UK, we'd also be in a much better place as well.
- It is an absolute priority because it is the agreement we cannot afford to lose.

**Many associations and professionals within AAPTLE support Stage Sight, Inc Arts, PIPA, The Seven Inclusive Principles for Arts and Culture and other initiatives aiming to make theatre work fairer, more inclusive and family friendly Does pillar four of Equity's Four Pillars initiative represent a strong enough longer term vision for a fair and inclusive theatre and live events industry in the coming years?**

**What plans do Equity have to include inclusivity aims and initiatives like paid training days for freelancers, inclusive employment aims, and family/carer friendly scheduling into contracts being negotiated?**

- We have submitted in our pay claims, a request for collectively bargained equalities monitoring for the past two years.
  - o When I say monitoring, I am talking about sort of monitoring that we have managed to have for performers at the National Theatre for some time
    - which is: how many people, how many weeks, what level of exposure, what level of pay
    - Not just asking age, sex, and race, but an intersection of all of those.
  - o there is a lot more work to be done on disability because of poor reporting and poor self-reporting and an awful lot of allied campaigns to improve people's awareness there.
- Arts Council England has said that if Equity produce a monitoring form and the members are happy with, they will support it and require managers to use it. So, we are in a relatively good place.

- When we are talking about a return to work from Coronavirus, who are we talking about return to work for?
  - o I do not think this industry is back until it looks better than the industry that stopped on the 16th of March,
  - o That must be our position, and whether it is in terms of race or carers or women or trans members or whatever it is really important.
  - o I think they are very different arguments to be had on that front about backstage workers than there are performers.
- I think that Equity has suffered from an existential crisis of who we are and what are we there to do.
  - o My understanding of our union is that we are a trade union; we are here to improve terms and conditions of work and improve access to those terms and conditions.
  - o Allied to that are that we show solidarity with an increase in representation in creative teams, increasing representation of writers of the work that we see and so on. It is about the terms of conditions that make those things.
- Sometimes with the professional associations, we felt that we have been in conflict, because we've kind of half acted as professional association, half as a trade union.
  - o I think the same can be said, of professional associations as well.
  - o If we are a strong and confident modern trade union, we are occupying that space showing solidarity with those professional associations as they do professional association stuff. We are in a much happier place, and I want to put to bed that debate. I feel it, you know, it is not a contentious thing to say.
- So, I look forward very much to working with the associations with members who have historically felt underrepresented.