

PRESS RELEASE

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## *Creating Positive Collaborations — New guidelines for writers and directors*

With 87% of people working in film and TV experiencing poor mental health<sup>1</sup>, it is important that everyone across the industry comes together to create positive cultural change to our working environments. In support of this, unions, guilds and professional associations must play their part in improving practice and setting standards that encourage healthier workplaces.

**The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB)** and **Directors UK** are actively working together to promote professional excellence and share a passionate commitment to combatting bullying and harassment in the creative industries.

They are therefore delighted to launch new joint guidelines, [\*Creating Positive Collaborations: Writers & Directors\*](#).

The traditional role of writer and director is changing. As film and high-end TV converge, writers and directors can find themselves moving between formats throughout their careers. While both still have expert roles to play, the creative lines can become blurred, leading to potential conflict when it comes time to collaborate.

The best-practice guidelines have arisen from reports from both organisations' members that writers and directors are being kept apart by colleagues who are keen to avoid artistic confrontation, yet this separation can lead to miscommunication, a loss of trust and a stifling of the artistic process. This is particularly acute in the transitional period where script development gives way to production.

Writers **Emma Reeves** and **Tom Williams** and director **Bill Anderson** were involved in crafting the guidelines.

Speaking today, WGGB TV Chair and working writer **Emma Reeves** said: *"Working relationships between writers and directors can sometimes be fraught, but they can also be joyously fulfilling. In TV and film, the structure of the industry too often keeps us apart. Lack of communication can exacerbate paranoia, distrust and conflict. Creating Positive Collaborations encourages directors and writers everywhere to make an extra effort to connect, to respect each other's work and to inspire each other."*

WGGB Film Chair and working writer **Tom Williams** said: *"Making film and television is the ultimate collaborative creative endeavour, but this process takes experience, patience and respect. It's fantastic to see WGGB and Directors UK coming together to deliver Creating Positive Collaborations, steering our members towards closer, more harmonious and more productive working relationships."*

Former Directors UK Vice-Chair and working director **Bill Anderson** said: *"Working together, Directors UK and WGGB have forged a best practice guide to encourage our members to harmonise their passion for screen storytelling. Creating Positive Collaborations offers practical advice for writers and directors on how to access the best in each other's complementary storytelling skills. This timely initiative will not only help directors and writers fruitfully reconnect as key creatives, it will fundamentally improve the experience we offer our audiences."*

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<sup>1</sup> The Looking Glass: Mental health in the UK film, TV and cinema industry. Commissioned by the Film and TV Charity. February 2020. Page 5.  
<https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Looking-Glass-Final-Report-Final.pdf>



WGGB General Secretary **Ellie Peers** added: *"A shared vision, respectful communication and commitment to resolving conflict are all essential ingredients that should underpin the alchemy that occurs when writer and director come together, but sadly the many pressures of working in film and TV often intervene. We hope these new joint guidelines will point the way to smoother, more fulfilling and ultimately more creative collaborations."*

Directors UK Head of Campaigns **Natasha Moore** highlighted the importance of the guidelines to the film and TV industry: *"In the film and TV industry where mental health is well documented as being poor, Directors UK is actively working to create a more positive working environment, using professionalism and excellence in directing craft as a key tool for cultural change. By showing what good practice looks like, we can set the tone as creative leaders, and create a model that should become daily practice for ensuring healthier working environments and respectful collaboration."*

**Creating Positive Collaborations: Writers & Directors** can be downloaded directly here:

<https://d3quihbyl1boep.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1631815806051-phht615abe-04d2a4e16ceb2b771cb97ebac6c03890%2FCreating+Positive+Collaborations+-+Directors+UK+and+WGGB+-+FINAL.pdf>

More information and a download of the guidelines is available on both the WGGB and Directors UK websites:

[writersguild.org.uk/writers-directors](http://writersguild.org.uk/writers-directors)

[directors.uk.com/campaigns/writers-directors](http://directors.uk.com/campaigns/writers-directors)

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For more information please contact:

Charlie Coombes, PR Manager, Directors UK  
+44 (0)20 7845 9707 | +44 (0)7723 183 606 | [ccoombes@directors.uk.com](mailto:ccoombes@directors.uk.com)

Sarah Woodley, Communications Manager, Writers' Guild of Great Britain  
[sarah@writersguild.org.uk](mailto:sarah@writersguild.org.uk)

#### Notes to Editors

#### **Creating Positive Collaborations: Writers & Directors – a summary**

- Writer and directors each bring a range of skills to the table – the writer plots the route on the map, while the director takes the audience on the journey. Collaboration – from script to production and beyond – is essential to ensure the same story is told in the most effective and creative way.
- Best practice in collaboration encompasses agreement at the outset on how both roles intend to work together; a commitment to good communication throughout the entire process, from script to screen; skills to manage conflict resolution; and respect for colleagues from different cultures and backgrounds.
- The guidelines also include tools to use if things go wrong – including when to bring in third parties like senior members of the production team, or the relevant union or professional organisation.
- Comments from our members illustrate the unique challenges faced by the writer and director working in film and TV, and include personal insights into how the creative relationship can be harnessed for the better.



#### **About Directors UK**

Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,800 members – the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK negotiates rights deals and collects and distributes royalties to its members. It also campaigns and lobbies on its members' behalf and provides a range of services including legal advice, events and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

[directors.uk.com/writers-directors](https://directors.uk.com/writers-directors)

#### **About The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB)**

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) is a trade union representing writers for TV, film, theatre, radio, books, comedy, poetry, animation and videogames. It negotiates national agreements on pay and conditions with key industry bodies, including BBC, ITV and Pact; the Royal Court, National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company. It campaigns and lobbies on behalf of writers and offers a wide range of benefits to its members.

[writersguild.org.uk/writers-directors](https://writersguild.org.uk/writers-directors)