

Frequently Asked Questions – Sub Rep Agreement Proposal 2017-19

The proposed new deal for a new Sub Rep Agreement is currently out for ballot of all performers and stage management who have worked on the Agreement since October 2010 –around 5,000 members in all. A number of questions have kept coming up, so we've put together a handy guide to the deal, and why the working party of working performers and stage management are recommending acceptance.

What are the main achievements of the deal?

The main achievements are money and pension.

Our members asked us to improve their basic weekly wage and we have achieved significant raises for all. The minima for performers and ASMs rises by 12.5%; some salaries for stage management go up by over 13.5%. The smallest percentage increase is 9.5%.

In real terms this means approximately an extra £50 or so per week for all members.

Additionally, there would be an extra 2% contribution from management into the pension scheme, bringing this to 5%.

What do the changes in breaks mean?

In short, there will be a 15 minute break within every three hours (as current) and an hour break after every five. This would allow directors to schedule shorter working days, as the agreement would not require them to break as early or to have minimum sessions

Additionally, it will cost managers more to breach a break, so there is a bigger disincentive to miss them. For stage management, where breached breaks are common, this will likely represent a further financial increase too.

What do the changes in hours mean?

Most weeks will stay at 43 hours. The only exception to this will be 46 hours in two weeks of rehearsal (one of those weeks already had more flexible working hours) and touring productions when on tour to give extra time for travelling. For those weeks overtime will be improved

You will still get time and a half overtime for all other weeks as at present.

Why the changes in Sunday payments?

Sundays have been able to be worked on this agreement for many years. By and large managers do not work on Sundays as there is little demand outside of Christmas and children's shows. This is pattern we see across theatre – the National Theatre's ending of Sunday performances this year is a good example of managements being unable to attract audiences on that day.

Sunday payments are only achieved when you work a Sunday. We want more money in salaries for all performers and stage management whether they work Sundays or not.

The size of these percentage rises in the guaranteed weekly salary for all mean that the vast majority of artists will be significantly better off – whether they work Sundays or not.

What is the 'stage management extra services payment'? Why is it being got rid of?

This one-off payment applies when a stage manager provides a **new** prompt script for a third party (i.e. a commercial producer who takes on a production). It's being removed because it doesn't bind the manager who the stage management member is employed with.

This means the stage management member can refuse to undertake the work, or negotiate directly with the third party producer for a payment that actually reflects the work done.

This must not be confused with any **other** duties.

What does the stage management staffing clause change actually mean?

The current clause is failing both management and the union. Management don't like having to ask Equity for variations to the standard size of team. They don't do it, and when we have found it being breached, we are often asked not to challenge it by the team already employed.

The new clause means the union will know in advance the reasons why a smaller team is to be engaged and can query it where necessary.

The clause is subject to a formal review with the management association in 2019, and information of any instances of a reduction in staffing levels will be reported to the Equity Stage Management committee every quarter.

What are the alternatives to the deal?

The Working Party does not believe that anything further can be achieved by negotiation. This process has already overrun by almost three months because of our efforts to achieve the best settlement and remove unacceptable elements to the proposal.

The management side are only prepared to offer a **1%** rise if we reject the changes proposed. They are not prepared to look at a pick and mix, where we accept some changes but decline others. The only package of terms is the one the working party is recommending with the substantial financial increases.

When does the ballot close?

9.30am on the 21st December 2017