



# BBC Content Diversity and Inclusion Commissioning Guidelines

**Script to screen:**

Changing the face of TV together

“The BBC’s future depends on remaining relevant to all our licence fee payers and reflecting modern Britain in an authentic way. Audiences will stay tuned in if they feel their lives and aspirations are being reflected, both now and in the future.

The UK is constantly evolving with new voices, opinions and talent emerging all the time. As programme makers it makes creative sense to give a platform to those different voices, subjects and talent to enrich the content we produce. This year we set ourselves stretching targets to achieve greater diversity both on screen and amongst our workforce. However, here at the BBC we acknowledge that we can’t do it alone, and that we need to work in collaboration with all our suppliers. We hope that these new diversity guidelines will offer support to our suppliers regardless of size or turnover, whilst also creating a cultural shift to ensure lasting change and sustainability”

*Charlotte Moore*  
*Director of BBC Content*



## Our charter demands it Our audience deserves it

We are tasked by the Royal Charter to ensure that our output reflects the diverse communities of the whole of the UK, accurately and authentically, with specific emphasis on reflecting under-represented communities, cultures and languages, and all socio-economic backgrounds.

As set out in the BBC Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, these guidelines put a particular emphasis on our commitment to black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people, disabled people, those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), and on ensuring gender balance. In addition, we are setting stronger objectives to improve our geographical portrayal across the UK to ensure we better capture and celebrate the distinct stories and lives across all four Nations.

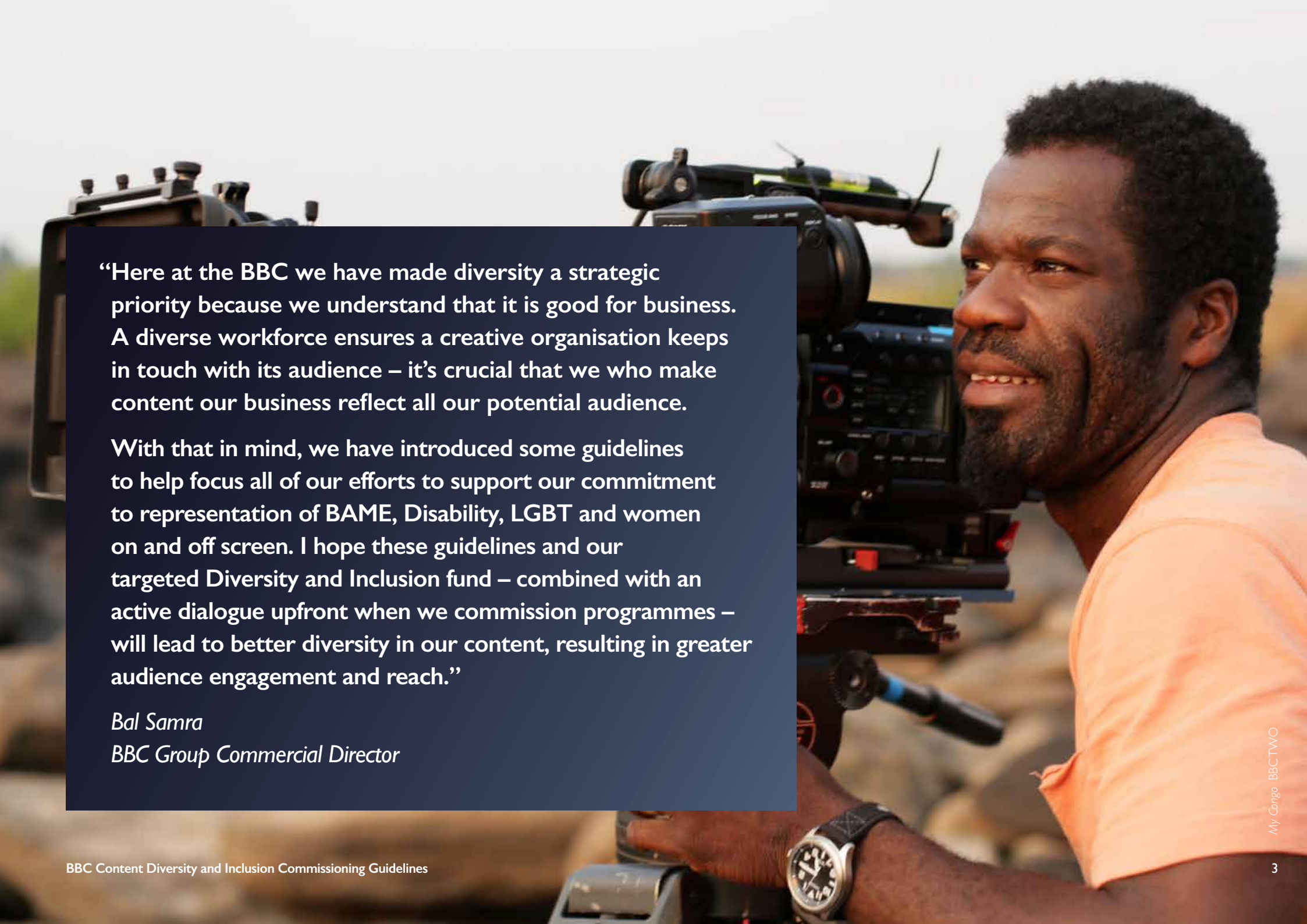


## Shared values Shared commitment

By 2020, the BBC aims to have met stretching new on screen portrayal and workforce targets covering a wider range of diversity than ever before. We want diversity and inclusion to be something that everyone at the BBC understands, and all those who make programmes for us support.

We are using our position in the industry to ensure that anyone who makes programmes for us shares our values and commitments.

# Our responsibility is clear. So too is our vision.

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing an orange t-shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking towards the left. He is operating a professional video camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The camera has various attachments, including a microphone and a light fixture.

“Here at the BBC we have made diversity a strategic priority because we understand that it is good for business. A diverse workforce ensures a creative organisation keeps in touch with its audience – it’s crucial that we who make content our business reflect all our potential audience.

With that in mind, we have introduced some guidelines to help focus all of our efforts to support our commitment to representation of BAME, Disability, LGBT and women on and off screen. I hope these guidelines and our targeted Diversity and Inclusion fund – combined with an active dialogue upfront when we commission programmes – will lead to better diversity in our content, resulting in greater audience engagement and reach.”

*Bal Samra*

*BBC Group Commercial Director*

# How we can work together

Set at national level, but with full awareness of the demographic differences across the UK, the BBC's targets for 2016-2020 demonstrate our ambitions:

WORKFORCE <i>All staff and leadership levels</i>	2017 Target	2020 Target
Women	n/a	50%
Disability	5.3%*, 5%**	8%
Black, Asian and ethnic minorities	14.2%*, 10%**	15%
LGBT	n/a	8%

\* All Staff \*\* Leadership

ON SCREEN PORTRAYAL	2017 Target	2020 Target
Women on screen, on air and in lead roles	n/a	50%
Disability on screen, and in some lead roles	5%	8%
Black, Asian and ethnic minorities on screen, on air and in lead roles	15% †	15%
LGBT on screen, and in some lead roles	n/a	8%

† Portrayal only

In addition, we're deeply committed to improving representation of all socio-economic backgrounds as we strive for a wider range of voices to be heard on and off screen.

To help us deliver some of our responsibilities, targets and ambitions we have created a set of guidelines for all suppliers of our on screen content. We have consulted with key suppliers, PACT, BBC Studios, Equity and relevant minority groups. These guidelines give a particular focus to the UK's ethnic minority and disabled communities, and apply to all our on screen genres – Comedy, Drama, Entertainment, Factual, Children's and Sport.

**We will further evolve these guidelines as we learn what works.**

In order to ensure we achieve our aims and targets, we will all need to be ambitious – particularly with returning commissions. We understand that these guidelines constitute a big ask for some. Smaller independent suppliers may find some suggestions particularly challenging. But we ask that, with our support, you join us in moving the content landscape forward. Sharing resources and know how we can strengthen the industry together, becoming sustainably diverse and increasingly creative – and our audiences will be better and more widely served than ever before.

We have joined with the Creative Diversity Network and broadcast partners such as Channel 4, ITV and Sky to launch DIAMOND, the industry's diversity monitoring tool. DIAMOND will track and highlight how we are doing as productions, broadcasters and as an industry in meeting our diversity ambitions on screen and behind the camera. We are committed to reporting and analysing the resulting data, and using it as a benchmark for the future.

“BBC Entertainment Commissioning is passionate about diversity both on and off camera. Our audience need to identify with our content and embedding diversity in all our titles is key to this.”

*Kate Philips*

*Controller, Entertainment Commissioning*



# What are the aims of the Diversity and Inclusion Commissioning Guidelines?

They are intended to provide clear direction for our production partners to help us in our aims to:

- Meet our portrayal targets for BAME, Disability, LGBT and women by 2020.
- Increase opportunities for talent (on and off screen) from under-represented groups.
- Release greater creativity as more voices and experiences feed into production processes.
- Reflect the audience better by widening the range of backgrounds portrayed on screen, maximising engagement across all audience groups.



# What you can do

## 1. Create your own Diversity and Inclusion policy

When you submit an Editorial Specification, you will be asked whether you have a Diversity and Inclusion policy in place for your company. If you do not currently have a policy, a template is available from the Creative Diversity Network (CDN): [www.creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/template-equality-and-diversity-policy/](http://www.creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/template-equality-and-diversity-policy/)

## 2. Consider the Diversity Commissioning Guidelines and talk to us about your ambitions

The following guidelines focus on five key areas:

1. On screen: portrayal
2. On screen: casting
3. Off screen: production team
4. Off screen: entry level
5. Off screen: senior editorial roles

As set out on the Editorial and Specification and Development Agreement, you will be expected to have a conversation with your BBC Commissioning Editor to discuss your diversity ambitions and how they align with genre diversity priorities. BBC Commissioning teams will be advised and supported by the BBC's relevant Diversity and Disability experts.

Please note that we are intentionally not setting targets by genre. We want all our suppliers to set their own ambitions that progress us towards a truer reflection of modern Britain, whilst acting within the law.

We now expect each commission to be doing everything it can to meet these guidelines. The positive steps you plan to take to address under-representation will be factored into commissioning discussions ahead of productions being green lit.

We do recognise that our suppliers are all different. Some face distinct diversity challenges due to their size or geographical base. Therefore, we ask that you liaise with your commissioner about any particular hurdles as they come up – and a proportionate approach can be considered.

**These are guidelines we're expecting all suppliers to adhere to. Any suppliers unable to work with these guidelines must let their BBC commissioner know as soon as possible.**

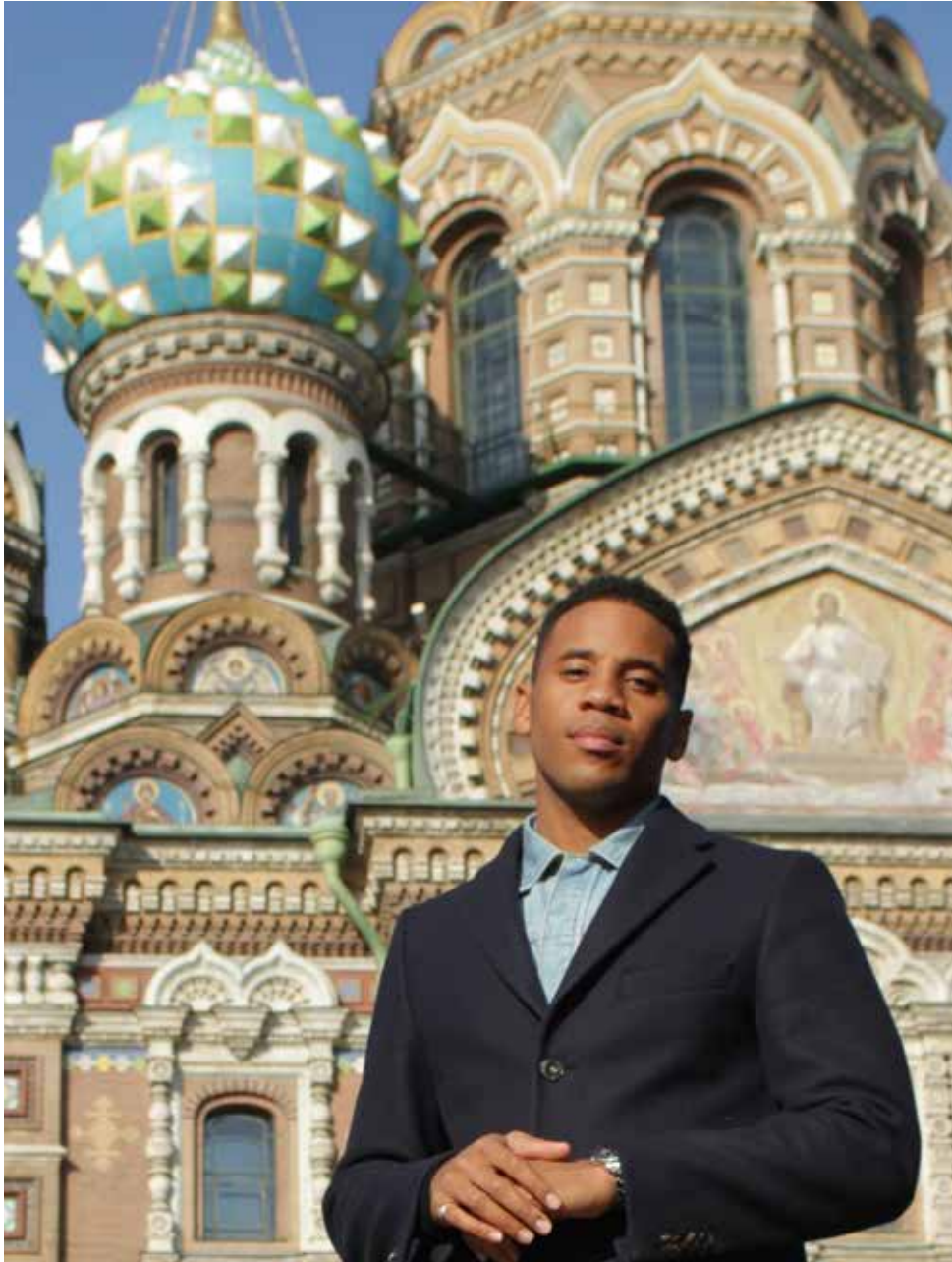







“In factual commissioning we are passionate about telling authentic stories with diversity and innovation at their core. We believe in championing great talent, both established and new, that connect with and inform our audience, bringing passion and expertise to our screens. This commitment holds for both on and off screen talent. We are committed to working in partnership with our suppliers to make shows that reflect the nation in its entirety.”

*Alison Kirkham  
Controller, Factual Commissioning*



## To further support you, **we offer:**

- Points of contact at the BBC.
- BBC Diversity events throughout the year giving you a chance to upskill, exchange ideas and be introduced to diverse new talent.
- Continued contact with commissioners to discuss genre plans and priorities in terms of on screen under-representation.
- Access to the Diversity and Inclusion Development Fund, the primary purpose of which is to accelerate projects not yet ready to commission and which need exceptional extra support to bring them to screen; more details are available on the BBC Commissioning website [www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/tv/production/articles/diversity](http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/tv/production/articles/diversity)
- A pan-industry Talent Database via the Creative Diversity Network (CDN).
- An active discussion between commissioner and producer on every commission at the point of editorial specification.

A close-up photograph of a Black woman and a Black man. The woman is on the left, shown in profile, looking towards the right. She has dark, curly hair and is wearing a blue top. The man is on the right, looking slightly upwards and to the right. He is wearing a blue shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

“Original, distinctive writing is the beating heart of BBC drama, and championing a true diversity of voices is essential to ensure that our drama truly reflects the nation, telling stories that shine out with fresh perspective and continued relevance; stories that are surprising, challenging and utterly involving for our audiences everywhere.”

*Lucy Richer*  
*Commissioning Editor*  
*Drama Commissioning*

# BBC Diversity Commissioning Guidelines:

We expect all suppliers to have a Diversity and Inclusion Policy for their company. If you do not currently have a policy, a template is available from the Creative Diversity Network (CDN): [www.creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/template-equality-and-diversity-policy/](http://www.creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/template-equality-and-diversity-policy/)

To support the BBC's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, commissioning editors will develop an approach with producers to improve representation, taking into account the genre, existing talent base, geographical location and specific nature of the programme.

These guidelines are here to support you in helping us to meet our ambitions and published targets. It may not be possible or practical to improve diversity in all areas for all productions both on and off screen but we expect companies to demonstrate they have taken active steps towards making improvements in this area. We also expect programme makers to operate within the law.

To assist companies, set out in this document are a range of approaches and guidelines.





## On screen: **Portrayal**

**We are committed to meeting ambitious new portrayal targets that cover a wider range of diversity than ever before – with positive impact for audiences and greater opportunity for diverse talent. We need your help to ensure that the UK’s diverse communities and groups are authentically represented on screen and that we deliver a rich and thought-provoking mix of portrayal.**

**We’re asking you to:**

- Consider widening the pool from which you select writers to include more LGBT, BAME and disabled talent working across the whole range of output, not just stories that reflect their background.
- Encourage your researchers to look to accurately reflect all communities in the UK, including the Nations and Regions and all socio-economic backgrounds, plus regional and minority languages.
- Consider authenticity in the incidental portrayal of ethnicity, sexuality and disability across all content – in particular actors and extras.
- Demonstrate you have considered diversity across a series, not just in one programme.

**To better reflect our audience on screen, we're also asking you to:**

- Deploy disabled talent across all sorts of shows, not just disability content.
- Widen your network when sourcing contributors and programme participants, making use of digital channels and social networks to reach under-represented groups.
- Widen your pool of talent by identifying new faces and voices and training and developing key disabled, LGBT, BAME and other presenters, reporters and actors from under-represented groups; spot potential by identifying diverse contributors who could benefit from development opportunities in presenting.
- Improve the diversity of panels.
- Aim to make studio audiences as diverse as possible according to your locality.
- Broaden your database of diverse expert contributors, for example through partnerships and talent events.
- Ensure a wider pool of diverse on screen talent is drawn upon when an opportunity arises to refresh talent on a returning series.



**Set out your own proportionate ambitions for on screen diversity, tailored to your programme or series, the scale of your productions and the under-representation you have identified. Clearly every programme is different. You could set yourself targets where relevant, for example:**

- Consider how your scripted programme appropriately reflects a diverse UK. Are there characters from a variety of backgrounds who have a storyline unrelated to their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability?
- On factual programmes are presenters or guests/contestants accurately representing all parts of the community?
- On a specialist programme, are you drawing from a wide enough range of contributors?
- Are you ensuring disabled talent are prominently featured on programmes covering a variety of content not just on issues around disability?

# On screen: Casting

## We need to eliminate all barriers during casting that exclude diverse talent.

### We're asking you to:

- Make your casting directors, bookers and business affairs units aware of your commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Advertise roles as widely as possible – consider using a broader range of talent agencies to encourage a greater diversity of talent to be put forward.
- Ensure that all auditions are accessible to disabled actors and presenters by routinely asking for any access requirements in advance.
- For scripted programmes/series:
  - Ensure a range of diverse actors are considered and seen as standard for on screen parts – including disabled actors being considered for roles not written as disabled.
  - Promote incidental casting across the diversity spectrum; consider artists from all backgrounds regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and geography for all roles.
  - Ensure authentic portrayal when casting for a character with a specific disability, making every effort to audition suitable disabled actors to play that role.

- For factual programmes:
  - Make your teams aware that we expect pools to be wide enough to ensure there are suggestions for diverse talent included in the mix for presenter-led programme proposals and treatments; we need to work especially hard to increase disabled talent.



Doctor Who BBC ONE

“More flexible working patterns, shared child-care duties and lengthening retirement periods are all contributing towards the volume and diversity of people at home during the day. The BBC aims to provide the highest quality and broadest range of Daytime programming available to viewers and we are working with our suppliers to ensure that we reflect the UK back to itself both on screen and off. Every production that we embark upon needs to consider how it can contribute towards these goals.”

*Dan McGolpin*  
*Controller, Daytime Commissioning*





## Off screen: **Production Team**

**We want to see diversity at all levels from Runner to Executive Producer as diversity behind the camera is just as important as it is on screen.**

- Set your own proportionate goals that address any under-representation you have identified and that will help us meet our aspirations; we aim to have 50% women and at least 15 % BAME, 8% LGBT and 8% disabled people working behind the camera by 2020. Your own ethnicity staffing targets should be appropriate to your geography.
- Outline for each production what measures will be taken to increase off screen diversity (as set out in the Editorial Specification).
- Widen your pool of writers to include those from identified under-represented groups – for example, women, BAME, disabled or LGBT.
- Ensure all hirers consider the skills and experience of disabled talent before questions about reasonable adjustments or access issues.
- Make sure all hiring staff are fully aware of Access to Work.
- Track your progress via DIAMOND and create an action plan around areas of challenge.


## Off screen: **Entry Level**

**We are committed to increasing and accelerating opportunities for entry level talent regardless of their background.**

**We're asking you to:**

- Eliminate unpaid internships; make all paid internships and time-limited unpaid work experience open to a diverse pool of talent.
- Where possible, provide at least one paid training and development placement on each production to either a participant or alumni from approved industry schemes.
- Ensure that the abilities advertised are true requirements of the role and are not an unnecessary barrier to participation from any particular group.
- Identify/create networking opportunities that will benefit the progression of diverse talent.





“The question we get asked most as commissioners (second only to ‘can I buy you another drink?’) is ‘what are you looking for at the moment?’ Invariably the ambition is to find those ideas, worlds and voices that haven’t been uncovered yet and make our output increasingly diverse in all ways. Have we got enough representation of the world of the white able-bodied middle-class middle-aged male in comedy? Yes we do. Please can we collectively strive to uncover new settings, concepts and talent both on and off camera who will better help us reflect the modern Britain we live in right across the spectrum? I will buy you all a drink in return.”

*Shane Allen  
Controller Comedy Commissioning*

## Off screen: **Senior Editorial Roles**

**We are committed to working with suppliers to support progression of diverse talent and retention of those already working at a senior level.**

**We're asking you to:**

- Identify talent from under-represented groups with potential and equip them to compete for senior roles.
- Use returning brands to create new opportunities for progression.
- Ensure that you advertise all senior editorial roles, rather than relying on word-of-mouth recommendations.
- Offer training, development and/or coaching to senior editorial staff new to the role from under-represented groups.

