



Channel 4's Commitment to Anti-Racism 2024 Review

March 2024



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Channel 4's six-point commitment to anti-racism

1. Anti-racist

We commit to being an anti-racist organisation

4. Our Faces

We commit to fair black, Asian and minority ethnic representation on screen

2. Our Staff

We commit to strive for black, Asian and minority ethnic equity as an employer

5. Our Supply Chain

We commit to fair black, Asian and minority ethnic representation in our supply chain

3. Our Content

We commit to commissioning relevant and authentic content that reflects the lives of black, Asian, and minority ethnic audiences, on an ongoing basis

6. Our Business Model

We commit to use our influence as an advertiser-funded broadcaster to ensure black, Asian, and minority ethnic representation in advertising

Channel 4 holds an important role in a changing world, with its remit to represent unheard voices and reinvent entertainment, and we have a responsibility to use its influence to be a force for change both within the organisation and beyond. It is more important than ever, as we embed the [Fast Forward strategy](#) for becoming a genuinely digital-first public service streamer, that we ensure Channel 4 has a strong framework for driving further progress on equity, diversity and inclusion.

In 2020, we set out a [six-point plan](#) to ensure racial equity is embedded throughout the organisation and to continue driving better ethnically-diverse representation in the industry. The principles in that plan, "Channel 4's Commitment to Anti-Racism", inform our new and comprehensive strategy, "[Equity by Design](#)", which lays out how Channel 4 will further build equity, diversity and inclusion into every part of the business, across all protected characteristics whilst honouring its commitment to anti-racism.

This document provides a review of the work undertaken on anti-racism since 2020 and reaffirms our commitment to deliver against the six-point plan. While there is still more progress to be made, this document highlights the progress we have made.

1. We committed to being an anti-racist organisation.

We regularly use our position as a public service broadcaster to inform and raise awareness among our audience about racial discrimination, producing shows for all our platforms, including: *How Not to Be a Racist*; *Black, Female and Invisible*; *Black History Matters Too*; *Is Cricket Racist?*; *Black Maternity Scandal*; *Empire State of Mind*; *Race & Medical Experiments: What's the Truth?*; *60 Days with the Gypsies*; *Jews Don't Count* and, most recently, the [Alternative Christmas Message](#).

2. We pledged to strive for racial equity as an employer.

We exceeded our 2023 representation targets to ensure 20% of our employee population and 20% of our 100 top-paid staff are ethnically diverse. By the end of 2023, our employee population was 22% ethnically diverse, as were 20% of our 100 top-paid staff. We have set floor levels for representation for 2024 onwards and continue to act on insights from internal research (see appendix) on the experiences of ethnically diverse staff. We will continue to focus on the critical and complex issues that affect our staff and create a more inclusive



culture when it comes to faith. One of our starting points will be an exploration of an expansion of our network of ERGs to support communities interested in religious and faith identities. We have recruited internal “Safe Space Supporters”, employees who will be trained to give advice and support to anyone experiencing bullying or harassment in the workplace. We are also rolling out “Upstander” training, to empower employees to challenge inappropriate behaviour if they witness it.

3. We committed to commissioning relevant and authentic content.

In 2022, we launched new Commissioning Diversity Guidelines to enable better on and offscreen representation in all our shows. Each genre now commissions at least one new show with ethnically-diverse talent or stories at its heart each year, with forthcoming examples including [Queenie](#) and [Defiance](#).

4. We committed to fair ethnically-diverse representation on screen.

In 2021, our [Black to Front initiative](#) In 2021, our Black to Front initiative highlighted and celebrated ethnically-diverse talent on and off screen. Data from the Creative Diversity Network’s pan-broadcaster Diamond system showed that in 2023, ethnically-diverse people accounted for 19% of on-screen contributions on Channel 4, a figure that is 1 percentage point higher than the national population estimate of 18%. In 2024, we will launch codes of portrayal for race and ethnicity.

5. We committed to fair ethnically-diverse representation in our supply chain too.

We ringfenced funds for commissions from ethnically-diverse-led independent production companies. We exceeded our planned spend by £4 million, spending £40 million for 2022-23. By 2022, we had increased the proportion of ethnically-diverse suppliers we use to 13% and we are focused on increasing this further. In March 2024, we launched [Untapped](#) – a commercial initiative from 4Ventures to invest in entrepreneurs who have traditionally been overlooked by the VC ecosystem.

6. We made significant progress in our commitment to use our influence as an advertiser-funded broadcaster to ensure ethnically-diverse representation in advertising

As part of the [Black in Business initiative](#), five Black-owned businesses are currently benefiting from advertising worth more than half a million pounds. Separately our Diversity in Advertising Award, which is worth £1 million each year, was won in 2020 by a campaign for EA Sports, celebrating the Midnight Ramadan League and championing British South Asian role models.

While this work demonstrates the strength of our ability to inspire positive change, there is still more we can do to improve racial equity inside and outside our organisation. We remain strongly committed to continuing our efforts to tackle racism and will continue to drive progress and inspire change in the future, within the framework of our new [equity strategy](#).

Appendix

2022 Lived Experience Clinics on the Experiences of Ethnically Diverse Staff

Background

- In 2017, Channel 4 and The Collective (our race and ethnicity employee network) commissioned research on the experience of our ethnically-diverse staff.
- We chose independent consultants Caerus Executive to lead this study because they put lived experience at the heart of their research, treat people with care, and respect privacy.
- In 2022, on the advice of The Collective, we invited Caerus back to run a series of Lived Experience Clinics to uncover what helps and hinders progression, retention, and inclusion of Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicity employees at Channel 4, through confidential interviews and insight groups with our staff.
- We shared Caerus' findings with Channel 4 employees in December 2022, then spent 2023 designing and implementing a programme of work in support of Caerus' recommendations.
- What follows is a summary of what we learned and how we are acting on it, in the context of our anti-racism commitments and our new strategy, ['Equity by Design'](#), which sets out the core principles and activities that will inform our approach in the future as we transform our organisation to become a genuinely digital-first public service streamer.
- We are grateful to those employees who trusted us with their testimony and thank them for how they helped shape this project.

What we learned

The listening sessions considered themes such as: leadership and success; career development and progression; identities and self-expression; inclusion vs assimilation; and building an inclusive culture. Based on those sessions, Caerus shared five general insights:

1. **Diversity vs inclusion:** Many Channel 4 initiatives and interventions to date were diversity-focused and an expansion to inclusion was needed.
2. **Intent vs impact:** While there was significant appreciation for on and off-screen initiatives, leaders felt frustrated that significant efforts to drive diversity and inclusion in the workforce had not yielded the desired impact
3. **Management culture:** Channel 4 was described as a nice and polite place to work, sometimes at the expense of having challenging conversations. Employees' experiences depended on their line managers and there was more work to do on developing inclusion as a management capability.
4. **The Collective:** There was a tension between management and The Collective regarding ways of working. It was recommended by Caerus that the network should amplify Asian voices and seek more strategic alignment with Channel 4 goals.
5. **2017 recommendations:** In the researchers' view, four of their eight 2017 recommendations, which related to progression, recruitment, retention and management capability, were still a work-in-progress.

What we've done

- Caerus made recommendations under the following themes:
 1. **'2017 revisited':** Some previous recommendations that the researchers felt were still 'work in progress', particularly those relating to progression.

2. **'Inclusion fluency'**: Ways of growing awareness, understanding and inclusive behaviours among Execs, line managers and employees.
 3. **'DEI as business critical'**: Ways of making diversity, equity and inclusion central to our business.
- We have turned these recommendations into a significant programme of work, prioritising activities that will make the biggest systemic impact at Channel 4. And we have enhanced some recommendations to make them bigger and bolder.
 - A dedicated team from our Equity & Inclusion and People divisions are delivering this work, consulting The Collective at key junctures. We hold quarterly forums with the network to review and discuss progress.

1. Equity Strategy

- We held an **Exec immersion event**, as suggested by Caerus, in which we set our intent and ambition for this work moving forwards with our most senior leaders.
- We held a series of **open-invite workshops** for people across the business.
- From the above, we have developed Channel 4's first **equity strategy**: a set of principles to drive equity for everyone we serve. It aims to shift our focus from quantitative results to qualitative outcomes and drive long-term, sustainable progress for all.

2. Inclusive Culture

- We've introduced **inclusive recruitment training** for all hiring managers and have launched an **internal recruitment process** that preferences qualified internal candidates for all vacancies, to support career growth and progression. In 2023, 33% of our hires were internal candidates vs 11% in 2022.
- We've launched a **competency framework** for all roles to grow employees' understanding of progression requirements and needs.
- Our **career development programmes** target junior to mid-level staff who wish to progress, including our 'talent accelerator' course for ethnically diverse employees.
- To increase managers' capability to manage diverse teams, we've launched **inclusive leadership training** for our 250 'leader' level employees, and are rolling this out to our senior leaders in 2024.
- We've set **retention targets** relevant to performance for our CEO Committee to increase our chances of keeping valuable ethnically diverse, disabled and female talent in the business.
- We're launching **inclusion masterclasses** that address intersectional issues highlighted by Caerus and our internal inclusion survey, and are developing an **anti-racism programme** for all staff.
- We've introduced **inclusion objectives** for all employees, on the suggestion of The Collective, to ensure everyone at Channel 4 works towards creating an inclusive culture.
- Our Creative Equity team launched an **inclusion training programme** for commissioners, covering topics including inclusive leadership and language.

3. Safe Space

- We've recruited our first cohort of **'Safe Space Supporters'**: employees who will be expertly trained to give informal, confidential advice and support to anyone experiencing bullying or harassment in the workplace.
- We are rolling out **'upstander' training** for all employees to empower them to challenge inappropriate behaviour when they witness it.
- We've reviewed relevant **policies and processes**, including those related to bullying, harassment and grievances, to ensure they align with best practice.



Moving forward

We will continue to deliver our plan and assess its impact through our annual inclusion survey, quarterly pulse surveys and feedback from The Collective. It is a key part of our anti-racism commitments and [equity strategy](#).

We were recently rated an 'Advanced Employer' by [Investing in Ethnicity](#) after completing their maturity matrix (a tool for employers to assess their achievements and progress on ethnic inclusion) which gives us confidence we're on the right path.