



Proudly run by  
**this is  
purpose**

LEVELLING UP  
**GOALS**



# Channel 4 Levelling Up Impact Report

A Purpose Coalition report







## Contents

- 1** • Forewords  
Rt Hon Justine Greening  
Alex Mahon
- 2** • Channel 4 and its role in the  
purpose agenda
- 3** • Mapping Channel 4's activities  
against the Purpose Goals
- 4** • Channel 4's regional impact
- 5** • Channel 4 and levelling up



## Foreword

Rt Hon Justine Greening, Founder  
of the Purpose Goals and Former  
Secretary of State for Education

Levelling up Britain means making sure that everyone is part of the story. It means embracing what makes a person different and recognising the contribution that each one of them can make, regardless of who they are or where they are from. It means nurturing talent from every community so no one is left behind.

All organisations should share that sense of national purpose so that everyone, whatever their background, can access the opportunities, skills and careers that we know can transform lives and prospects. Channel 4 has been successfully demonstrating that ambition since it first started broadcasting in 1982.

Daring to be different, its unique approach to broadcasting is defined by its equally unique status as a publicly owned but commercially funded organisation. We are all familiar with the iconic programmes and films it has commissioned and funded, becoming a huge success story for Britain and our creative sector.



Often it has been on Channel 4 that we have seen the programmes that have also sparked important debates around issues that were previously undiscussed, presenting alternative points of view. Critically, in what has traditionally been a London-centric creative industry, Channel 4 represents our wider United Kingdom, overwhelmingly producing programmes outside the capital, and with a growing presence across Leeds and the Yorkshire region.

The UK's creative industry has become an economic powerhouse in its own right. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was the fastest growing sector in the UK and in the last ten years, jobs have grown at three times the UK average. The industry supports millions of jobs, including many thousands of freelancers and self-employed workers.

Over the longer term, the creative economy is likely to be a key driver of economic growth if its long-term trend continues of growing faster than the wider economy. For a country focused on growth and levelling up, this is an industry that will be making a crucial contribution and, as a leader within that, Channel 4 too.

Yet the key to unlocking that levelling up dividend from economic growth is for Government, businesses, universities, charities, civil society and our public institutions to unite around that common purpose of levelling up Britain. Only by working together, can we ensure that real change is delivered on social mobility in this country.

I'm proud that Channel 4 is a leading part of that effort through being part of the Purpose Coalition – a group of purpose-led organisations. We have developed 14 new Purpose Goals which create a common architecture and language with which organisations can measure their progress, benchmarking it against others. They can target their social impact more effectively and get further, faster through partnerships and the sharing of best practice.

The sense of purpose on social mobility is demonstrated by Channel 4's approach to broadcasting and the local impact its regionally based supply chain of independent production companies has. It is also reflected in its approach to its employees and to the communities it serves. This independent impact report includes an audit of Channel 4's work on social mobility set against several of the Purpose Goals, assessing where and how

it is meeting those goals and highlighting the areas where it might make even more impact on its employees, its audiences and the country more broadly.

Its 4Skills initiative, showcasing the opportunities available in the creative industries and providing work experience, training and mentoring, meets Goal 2 "Successful School Years", Goal 3 "Positive destinations post-16" and Goal 4 "Right advice and experience".

Channel 4 employs recruitment processes that are purposefully designed to attract more diverse candidates to get in and get on in the organisations, meeting Goal 5 "Open recruitment". Alongside that, it has a range of schemes to ensure that successful candidates can then remain and flourish at the company, meeting Goal 6 "Fair career progression".

More broadly, the resources it makes available to staff for mental as well as physical health delivers on Goal 8 "Good health and wellbeing". Channel 4 operates a number of initiatives, including the Emerging Indie Fund, which ensure's that there is assistance for creative programming across the country, meeting Goal 9 "Extending enterprise".

It meets Goal 14 "Achieve equality through diversity and inclusion" through its Employee Resources Groups which provide a voice for all its staff and shape office culture. It measures its progress on removing barriers for employee progression, importantly including on socio-economic background, and has also opted to expand its pay gap reporting.

Channel 4 has an ambitious vision for its future. This report shows how what it is already achieving is significant and meaningful. Channel 4 is playing its role to create a fairer, levelled up Britain when it comes to opportunity. Its intention for the future is clear – to continue to champion creative and stimulating broadcasting while also bringing positive change to people's lives.

It's what we want to see all organisations do – Channel 4 is showing leadership and an approach that takes a wider country's priorities on driving social mobility and rightly makes them Channel 4's. This is a powerful platform for Channel 4 to now look at ambitions for where it can step up even further, especially in communities where its presence can lift aspirations alongside lifting a local economy. As far as it has already come, there is the chance for even greater, sustained impact in the years ahead if that opportunity can be grasped.







# Foreword

Alex Mahon, Chief Executive,  
Channel 4

Channel 4 is an organisation with purpose running through its veins.

In 1982, Margaret Thatcher created this challenger brand with a duty to be disruptive and a mission to unleash a wave of entrepreneurship across the UK's independent production sector. She gave Channel 4 a model to deliver change, and a remit to enshrine it for future generations.

Over 40 years on, we remain steadfast in that mission. Our aim is to create change in the wider world both on and off screen. To have a positive impact on society, on viewers, on Britain's culture and its brand abroad, on the creative industries and on the wider economy.

Being owned by the public drives us to think and act with public purpose front of mind. We serve the British people without being a burden to the taxpayer, thanks to our unique hybrid model. It's why Channel 4 is – and will continue to be – altogether different.

At the heart of this purpose is our commitment to serve all of the UK: championing diverse voices and untold stories, providing training opportunities to people who need them most, and generating regional economic growth across the Nations and Regions. Channel 4 is the original levelling up broadcaster – we just haven't always called it that.

And we've made great strides in recent years. We've established our National HQ in Leeds and opened two Creative Hubs in Bristol and Glasgow, now home to around 485 Channel 4 roles. Through our supply chain we support over 12,000 jobs, and we generated more than £1bn of GVA for the UK economy in 2021.

We're spending more of our commissioning budget outside of London too. We voluntarily set ourselves a target to increase our production spend in the Nations and Regions from 35% to 50%. We met that ahead of schedule, and we're now at 52%. We spend more with external producers in the Nations and Regions than any other commercial public service broadcaster.

But levelling up is as much about people as places – which is why we put rocket boosters under our training initiatives by launching 4Skills in 2020, with social mobility at its core. To enhance this support, we've committed to doubling our annual investment in 4Skills from £5 million to £10 million by 2025. I know how hard it is to break into the industry and therefore how important it is for Channel 4 to create routes in for people who might otherwise never get a chance, or might never have thought a creative career was open to them.

We do this because it's a vital part of our remit, and our model enables us to take the risk. But it's also critical to our creative output: bringing new faces to TV, film and our digital media has enabled Channel 4 to stand out in a crowded market, strengthening our appeal among young audiences, and helping us to remain distinctive.

Channel 4 is delighted to be a part of the Purpose Coalition, helping to share what we've learned over four decades of public service, while learning from others. The Purpose Goals are an important step forward and a hugely valuable framework that Channel 4 and other organisations can use to measure progress against, while setting future targets.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Purpose Coalition for their work in compiling this report.



# 2

## Channel 4 and its role in the purpose agenda

### Overview

Channel 4 exists to create change through entertainment. Publicly owned yet commercially funded, Channel 4 generates significant and sustainable cultural, economic and social impact across the UK – at no cost to the taxpayer.

The broadcaster's distinctive remit is set by Parliament, and it has a role to represent unheard voices, challenge with purpose and reinvent entertainment. For over 40 years, it has been a British success story, engaging generation after generation of young people.

Through a unique publisher-broadcaster model, Channel 4 commissions its content from the UK independent sector. Working with around 300 creative companies every year, Channel 4 makes a major contribution to the local, regional and national economy, creating and supporting thousands of jobs and businesses across the country. It is a major stimulus and outlet for Britain's highly successful independent production sector.

In 2020, Channel 4 launched its Future4 strategy to become a digital-first public service media company and to continue to deliver significant impact for UK audiences and investment into the UK creative economy.

Across its bases in London, Leeds, Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester, Channel 4 is turbocharging its efforts to find, nurture and develop talent across the UK. Through its training and development initiative 4Skills, Channel 4 is opening up opportunities in broadcasting, with a particular focus on disadvantaged young people, and addressing skills gaps across the Nations and Regions.

Channel 4 has the UK's biggest free streaming service plus 11 television channels including: Channel 4, E4, E4 Extra, More4, Film4, 4Seven and The Box Plus Network. Through Film4 Productions, Channel 4 also invests in British filmmakers to huge critical acclaim, producing 37 Oscar wins and 88 BAFTA wins in its history.



**Channel 4 has a strong commitment to representing the whole of the UK.**



## Governance

Channel 4 was established in 1982 under the Broadcasting Act 1980 and was provided for by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, the then broadcasting regulatory body. It was subsequently established under the Broadcasting Act 1990.

The corporation's board is appointed by the UK's communications regulator Ofcom, in agreement with the UK Government's Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Channel 4 Board is made up of executive and non-executive directors, who are responsible for ensuring that Channel 4 fulfils its remit and delivers its financial responsibilities. Its current chief executive is Alex Mahon and the chair is Sir Ian Cheshire.

## Purpose and vision

Channel 4 aims to generate positive impact in the wider world through all of its activities – television, streaming, social media and film. Channel 4 continues to deliver more value to viewers, to support more jobs across the UK, and to project British culture, values and creative excellence overseas.

Channel 4's vision is comprised of three main pillars:

**Represent unheard voices:** Channel 4 has a strong commitment to representing the whole of the UK. This means using its strong brand and wide reach to elevate unheard voices – from diverse communities, emerging writers and producers, to those who have different points of view or experiences.

**Challenge with purpose:** Channel 4 was created to challenge the status quo. For over 40 years it has done this through championing unheard voices, representing underserved communities, and telling stories which inspire reflection and critical thought.



**Reinvent entertainment:** Channel 4 has a long-established role as an innovator in the creative industries across 'entertainment' in the broadest sense. It challenges itself to continuously refresh what it does creatively – to develop new and emerging talent, to find new ways of reaching audiences, and to find new ways of working with partners.

Its Future4 strategy, launched in 2020, is focused on four areas: to prioritise digital growth over linear ratings; to put viewers at the heart of its decision making; to diversify new revenue streams to underpin its sustainability; and to focus on strategic partnerships to compete more effectively.



# 3.

## Channel 4's activity mapped against the Purpose Goals

The Purpose Goals build on the foundations laid by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by outlining 14 clear goals, and draw on expertise provided by academia and businesses which has been applied to the unique challenges facing the UK in levelling up.

They focus on key life stages and highlight the main issues that need to be resolved in order to create a level playing field for all in this country. The Purpose Goals are intended to guide how the urgent ambition to level up the UK can actually be achieved. The impact of the work carried out to do this can, and should, be measurable.

Channel 4's own vision is largely in line with the Purpose Goals, with particular focus on investment in training and talent development throughout the diverse communities of the UK.





## 2 Successful school years



### Goal 2: Successful school years

#### 4Schools

In 2022, Channel 4 launched 4Schools, a major engagement project working with schools to open up the world of television and the creative and digital industries to 11-14-year-olds. Its aim was to engage directly with 12,000 students to raise awareness of careers available in the wider TV production and digital sectors.

4Schools provides a wide range of resources and content online, including videos, lesson plans and quizzes, for schools to use in their own time aligned to their curriculum needs.

In addition to these broader resources, 4Schools delivers face-to-face careers workshops and assemblies. These were initially made available to schools in West Yorkshire, the North East and the West Midlands, with priority given to those with a higher percentage of free school meals. This ensures that Channel 4 has the greatest impact in the areas that can benefit the most from social mobility.

Take up from schools has been very strong. 4Schools exceeded its target, with more than 23,000 students from more than 60 schools taking part in 2022. 4Schools extended its provision to schools in the West and in the North West of England in autumn 2022 and, this year it will expand further to include 14-16 year olds and pupils in Scotland and Wales.



**In 2022 Channel 4 launched 4Schools, a major schools engagement project to open up the world of television and the creative industry to 11-14 year olds.**





## Goal 3: Positive destinations post 16+

### Channel 4 Apprenticeships

Channel 4 has a wide range of apprenticeship and internship programmes that support early careers opportunities within the organisation and across all of its offices in Leeds, London, Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester. As part of the increased 4Skills ambition, Channel 4 is now supporting more apprentices than ever before, with a commitment that at least half are outside of London.

These are primarily level 3 or 4 apprenticeships, along with a smaller number of level 6 degree apprenticeships. There are also a few bespoke programmes such as a rotational internship between its commercial arm 4Sales and its in-house creative agency 4Creative, in partnership with the Brixton Finishing School.

Channel 4 apprenticeships cover a broad range of disciplines including Business Analysts, Procurement, Software Testers, Broadcast Engineering, Data Analytics, Commissioning Operations, Film, Media Planning, Creative Diversity and Digital & Linear Continuity.

These programmes are targeted at underrepresented groups within society and contribute to Channel 4's broader diversity and inclusion targets.

There is active outreach and engagement to target candidates, not only via 4Skills channels and the Channel 4 LinkedIn page, but also working with the likes of UCAS, GetMyFirstJob, NotGoingToUni, The Association of Apprentices, Creative Access and Brixton Finishing School, and a network of other partners.

In 2023, 41 apprentices have been recruited to start in October, the highest number ever.

Of the 41 recruits, 63% identify as female, 37% are ethnically diverse, 32% identify as disabled, 27% identify as LGBTQ+ and 51% come from a lower socio-economic / non-professional background.

### Channel 4 Production Training Scheme (PTS)

The Production Training Scheme offers year-long, fully paid positions with independent production companies focusing on encouraging applications from groups that are not currently well represented within the UK production sector. Channel 4 provides intensive training bootcamps, regular development sessions and mentoring, supported by ThinkBIGGER! and trainees gain valuable experience through their day-to-day roles with the production companies. Half the salary costs are met by Channel 4 and half by each independent production company.

Across 2022, Channel 4 recruited two further Production Training Scheme cohorts – one focused on offering placements with scripted companies and the other with unscripted. In total, 33 trainees were hired with placements in Bristol, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, and Manchester. In the second cohort, five roles were ring-fenced for disabled candidates to secure opportunities for those who face higher barriers to enter the industry.

Across the trainees hired in 2022, approximately 65% identified as female, 40% were ethnically diverse, 40% were disabled, 30% identified as LGBTQ+ and 40% come from a lower socio-economic/non-professional background.



### Channel 4 Content Creatives

Channel 4 has developed a new scheme focused on offering opportunities to people who might not typically consider a career in the creative industry. Content Creatives is aimed at young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds with a passion for creating digital content.



In 2021, six people aged 18 to 24 took part in a 12-week fully paid pilot programme. It consisted of six weeks of training with SharpFutures – a specialist social enterprise company supporting diverse young people into employment – followed by a six-week placement with 4Studio, Channel 4's Leeds-based in-house digital content production studio.

Following this successful pilot, in 2022 the programme was expanded to provide a 14-week programme, offering 47 placements across two cohorts in Yorkshire and Manchester. 16 of these trainees were placed with 4Studio, and the remaining candidates were placed with digital agencies and creative organisations, including Born Ugly, Chief TV, CreativeComms, Creative Race, Dentsu Creative, Dubit, Hoot (Wise Owl Films), ITV (Social Media team), Jaywing, Leeds 2023, McCann and Social.

In 2023, we expanded the length of the programme to six months, including eight weeks of training. We have 30 trainees, eight of which are based with 4Studio.

### Outreach and engagement

4Skills is committed to a range of outreach and engagement activities, with the overall aim of widening access to the creative sector, showcasing the range of roles available and helping people to start, develop and progress their careers.

During the pandemic, Channel 4 provided online outreach events and these brought some considerable benefits in terms of accessibility and reach which the company looks to capitalise on in future.

Post-pandemic, the Channel has moved to have a mixture of face-to-face, hybrid and virtual engagement activities, working collaboratively with a range of partners such as ScreenSkills, the National Film and Television School and other local, regional and national partners. These hybrid activities ensure that Channel 4 is able to level the playing field by removing any barriers to taking part – young people do not need to travel in order to engage with their programmes.

With the National Film and Television School, Channel 4 delivers multiple training opportunities throughout the year, including bespoke edit producing and self-

shooting training as part of the Black to Front Project legacy, and several weeks of free online short-courses and masterclasses attracting thousands of sign-ups.



Channel 4 invested £5 million in 4Skills in 2022 reaching over 28,000 people across the UK. This investment is set to double to £10 million per year in 2025 as they continue to grow their reach and impact across the UK.

For instance, there is now a partnership with Bradford City Council to support their Screen Strategy which led to the launch of 'The Unit'; a free working space in Keighley for content creators from across the district where people can share and learn about all aspects of screen production.

There have been a series of regular workshops with a stream of industry professionals sharing their knowledge as well as production services and facilities, hot desking capabilities and an on-site host to provide education and skills training advice and funding information. 4Skills has also run a short form content fund, available to content makers in the district.

In Bristol, an events programme has been delivered in the Channel 4 Creative Hub in conjunction with partners across the city to engage with young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds. These events focus on different aspects of the creative industry – from taking those first steps, to creating digital content and offering networking opportunities.





### Goal 4: Right advice and experiences

#### Work experience, outreach and mentoring

This year, as part of 4Skills, Channel 4 has expanded its work to encourage young people to consider a career in the broadcast industry by launching a new work experience programme.

Delivered virtually to increase accessibility and scale, the new online work experience programme set challenges that help young people match their skills to a potential career in the creative industries.

Aimed at people aged 16 and above, it covers some of the most important steps a TV show takes on its way to our screen – from initial idea to securing a sponsor, to deciding when a programme should be broadcast and analysing its success.

Almost 1,300 people have already completed Channel 4's new virtual work experience programme with 77% based outside of London.

In addition, Channel 4 runs bespoke work experience projects. For instance, its legal and compliance department partnered with Aspiring Solicitors to offer mentoring and work experience for diverse candidates hoping to pursue a career as a lawyer or compliance advisor in the media sector.

In 2022, 4Skills worked with Duck Soup Films to provide an opportunity for 10 Leeds-based people to work alongside the production of *Dance School*, a new coming-of-age drama series commissioned by Channel 4. The industry training placements, managed by the National Film and Television School, were available to individuals with no previous broadcast experience and provided training, mentoring, career planning and the chance to work on a major production.

#### The Momentum Project

Channel 4 works with award-winning organisation We Are Parable to deliver the Momentum project. This is a mentoring and training programme for 60 Black TV, filmmakers and content creators across the UK.

The Momentum scheme offers opportunities in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow and London, creating new opportunities for Black people to progress in the film and TV sector across all corners of the country.

As part of the scheme, the filmmakers are paired with a mentor and have access to masterclasses and discussions with experts from across the industry as part of a comprehensive guide to what they should do next to advance their careers.



### Goal 5: Open recruitment

#### A rich mix

Channel 4's recruitment processes are designed to attract a rich mix of different voices. All roles are advertised on its careers site for complete transparency.

As set out in Goal 4, the company carries out extensive outreach, including free UK-wide physical and virtual events, which opens up access to candidates from different backgrounds.

It reaches wider talent pools through specialist sites like Evenbreak and The TV Collective.

Communicating the 'Disability Confident Leader' status welcomes disabled talent, guaranteeing an interview if candidates meet essential criteria. Internally, hiring managers complete 'Inclusive recruitment' workshops.

#### Outside London

Channel 4 is building creative communities out of London with offices in Leeds, Glasgow and Bristol as well as their Manchester sales hub. By the end of 2022, Channel 4 had 485 roles located outside of London – and this figure continues to rise with a new target to reach 600 roles by the end of 2025.

Partnerships such as Screen Yorkshire's Beyond Brontës and the Leeds Enterprise Partnership have helped to broaden reach and support the company in reaching wider talent pools in those locations.





### Interview

Channel 4's video interviewing platform removes specific socio-economic background related barriers to interview, like travel costs and time needed off work. It has also removed educational requirements from all roles unless essential.

### Diversity data

The company monitors diversity data to track applications and conversions and identify potential barriers at any stage of recruitment. Having this data also allows Channel 4 to ensure that it is reaching the right candidates who reflect the diversity of the UK.

In 2022, 24% of new hires were ethnically diverse, 12% declared a disability, 14% identified as LGBTQ+ and 28% came from a lower socio economic / non-professional background.

### Graduate schemes

Channel 4 partners on a range of graduate schemes, including:

An engineering scheme with the Royal Television Society, offering support and funded placements for talented engineering and computer science graduates from low-income backgrounds considering a career in television.

A Dispatches Investigative Journalism Training Scheme with Leicester De Montfort University which has now trained more than 50 journalists from a wide range of backgrounds.

Channel 4's Strategy and Consumer Insight team fully funded PhD and Masters Schemes. Starting as a partnership with University College London and later involving Bournemouth University and Durham, Channel 4 has created a number of data science schemes which have also included elements of creative leadership and neuroscience.





## Goal 6: Fair career progression

### Development programmes

Channel 4 provides development for female leaders and managers through a programme called Rise, provided by Shine. This year Channel 4 developed over 40 leaders and managers. Since launching this programme in 2018 Channel 4 has significantly improved its gender mix, particularly in its Top 100. This has increased from 34 women in 2017 to 55 women in 2023.

Channel 4 is also working with the BBBA, a talent accelerator programme targeted at ethnically diverse employees and also the Purple development programme aimed at disabled employees.

All these programmes are supported by Channel 4's internal mentoring and Coaching programme.

### Progression routes

In response to staff feedback the company is in the process of carrying out work around career progression looking at how it can provide more development opportunities and clearer progression routes for employees. This year Channel 4 has made available to all Grades P1 – 3 employees Creating your Career, to support employees be more successful in their role, take responsibility for their career and create an ideal future in their profession.

32% of Channel 4's vacancies have been filled with internal candidates, showing their commitment to career progress.

### Commissioning Mentoring Network

Channel 4's Commissioning Mentoring Network is focused on identifying rising stars from under-represented groups and helping to elevate them to more senior posts in commissioning and production, both at Channel 4 and within the production community.

Commissioners and other senior leaders are matched with mid-level programme makers for three to six months.

Now in its seventh year, the network has worked with over 300 people in 29 cohorts and mentees are overwhelmingly

from ethnically diverse backgrounds, with 60% women and around 20% from the Nations and Regions.

The Network has created a pool of confident diverse talent, the majority are working on primetime shows and over 25 mentees are now commissioning across a wide range of channels.

### The Factual Fast Track Programme

Factual Fast Track is a reputation-building career development programme that fast tracks established, ambitious Producers and Series Producers to help them move up the career ladder and work on larger scale and higher budget productions in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the West. The Fast Track package includes paid production and broadcast placements, bespoke training and commissioner and peer mentoring.

The schemes – which are funded by Channel 4, the BBC, S4C, Screen Scotland, Creative Wales and Northern Ireland Screen – provide networking opportunities to help raise the Producers' profiles, training sessions to extend their skills, and mentoring support to build their confidence to help them become business winning Series Producers.

### 4Screenwriting

Over the last 12 years, 4Screenwriting has taken on over 140 new writers, pairing them with an industry script editor to develop a pilot episode script and then introducing them to key contacts within the TV drama industry.

The course has a focus on working with new and unheard voices, helping to identify new talent for Channel 4 and the industry as a whole. Recent success stories include scheme alumni writing on Channel 4 Drama shows from *Hollyoaks* and *Ackley Bridge* to *Screw* and *Queenie*.

### New Writing North Partnership

Channel 4 and New Writing North, a writing development agency based in Newcastle, have worked in partnership since 2014, offering aspiring television writers nine-month funded placements at independent production companies through the Channel 4 Writing for Television Awards.

The Talent Development Partnership, produced by Channel 4 and New Writing North with independent production companies, is a three-year programme of support for new and emerging television writers in the North of England. Running from 2022–2024, the programme offers awards, script development, writers' roadshows and workshops, and the formation of the Northern Talent Network.





## 8 Good health and wellbeing



### Goal 8: Good health and wellbeing

#### Company support

Channel 4 is committed to normalising open conversations around mental health and actively supporting staff wellbeing and inclusion.

It has done this in a number of ways, including wellbeing webinars, and the growth of its 4Mind network of which about one-quarter of Channel 4 staff are now members.

It provides a range of easy to access support for staff including an Employee Assistance Programme, GP service and quick, free access to psychiatrists and counselling professionals through its BUPA private healthcare.

The company has a dedicated 'Wellbeing Hub' on the intranet and its 4Mind network has its own resource page and monthly wellbeing newsletter.

Channel 4's 'Give Back and Grow' scheme provides all employees the opportunity to spend up to 10 days each year exclusively on learning, developing and volunteering activities. The scheme is focused on ensuring that employees are able to grow personally and professionally, give back to the community, and contribute to the organisation and its culture and values.

#### Staff surveys

Channel 4 includes wellbeing questions in its staff surveys so it can track how staff are feeling and ensure training and support is responsive.

This includes training for managers on mental health and managing remote teams and training for staff around resilience, emotional intelligence and mindfulness.

#### Mental Health First Aiders

The company has been training up additional Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) and has provided additional refresher training for existing MHFAs. It is on course to have more than 10% of staff trained.

#### Leadership

Channel 4's leadership have regularly talked openly about mental health and its importance and many staff have been sharing their own stories and lived experience. This creates an open culture where staff know it is safe to share and ask for support.

The company is now working on a new wellbeing strategy and policy to embed and build upon its progress.





### Goal 9: Extending Enterprise

From its creation in 1982, Channel 4 has always acted as a catalyst and pioneer for innovation and enterprise, stimulating the growth of the independent production sector and entrepreneurial businesses across the whole of the UK.

As well as delivering a vital public service for viewers, Channel 4 invests hundreds of millions of pounds every year into the creative economy, supporting over 12,000 jobs across the country through its supply chain.

#### Emerging Indie Fund

Channel 4's Emerging Indie Fund is specifically designed to help independent production companies outside of London to break through key stages of growth.

The fund is run annually and involves commissioners from each genre identifying small indies from the Nations and Regions who Channel 4 will work more closely with in order to help them grow their businesses.

The chosen indies receive development funding and monthly routines with a dedicated Commissioning Editor, as well as business development and slate development support, and Insights into Channel 4 departments such as commercial affairs, advertiser-funded programming and scheduling to help them develop further.

The fund worked with 11 companies in its first year and 12 in its second, providing discretionary funding to a further 13 companies over the two years. Another 10 companies and seven discretionary awards have recently been announced for 2022/23. The companies supported are spread right across the UK.



#### Indie Accelerator

The Emerging Indie Fund sits alongside Channel 4's Indie Accelerator which supported 10 ethnically diverse-led companies across the UK in its first year and a further six companies in 2022/23.

In partnership with The TV Collective, the programme provides networking and coaching opportunities, routines with a dedicated Channel 4 Commissioning Editor, and a bespoke package of support from across relevant Channel 4 teams.

#### Indie Growth Fund

The company's successful Indie Growth Fund has also been re-focused to prioritise investment in Nations and Regions, ethnically diverse-led and digital companies, supporting greater diversity in its supply chain. There are currently 18 companies in the Indie Growth Fund from across the UK.





## 13 Harness the energy transition



### Goal 13: Harness the energy transition

#### Sustainability roadmap

Channel 4 has launched a sustainability roadmap with robust near-term (2030) and net zero (2050) company-wide emission reduction targets. This includes a wide variety of work across the business and with its suppliers.

The roadmap has set ambitious science-based targets for Channel 4 and is embedding environmental sustainability in the heart of Channel 4's content and aims to empower its employees to make changes in how they work.

#### 'Albert' Sustainable Production Certification

Albert is a BAFTA led consortium that brings the film and TV sector together to tackle the sector's environmental impact.

Channel 4 is working with new productions to ensure that they have the Albert Sustainable Production Certification.

Productions gain this by implementing sustainable production techniques to reduce carbon emissions where possible, and offsets where not.

Channel 4 is providing training and resources within the company and with its partners to deliver this.

As part of COP26, Channel 4 also became a signatory to the Climate Content Pledge. Alongside 12 broadcasters and streamers, it has pledged to use its content to educate audiences about the climate crisis, helping to inspire and inform the public about sustainable choices.

## 14 Achieve equality, through diversity & inclusion



### Goal 14: Achieve equality through diversity and inclusion

#### Pay gap reporting

Channel 4 has voluntarily expanded its pay gap reporting to include pay gaps and action plans for disability, LGBTQ+ and ethnically diverse staff as well as gender.

It collects and publishes staff data across the protected characteristics as well as on the socioeconomic background of staff.

The company has set ambitious 2023 targets for all staff and for its leadership – including a 50–50 gender balance in the top 100 earners by 2023, which it has now exceeded.

To improve transparency, it reports progress quarterly to staff through the Diversity Dashboard.

#### Equitable representation

Channel 4 made strong progress on equitable representation in 2023. With 20% of Channel 4 staff being ethnically diverse, it has met its 2023 target. Crucially it has also seen strong progress in its top 100 leaders more than doubling the proportion of ethnically diverse leaders from 9% in 2017 to 19% in 2023.

#### Employee Resources Groups

Channel 4's Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) are central to its equity and inclusion work and it has invested in them through training, resources and support from executive sponsors.

They are an important means of harnessing the energy and passion of employees, by giving a voice to staff and their lived experience. They help shape workplace culture and engage as many people as possible in the EDI work.

The networks are a vital resource both for staff and the business and have been at the heart of some of Channel 4's biggest inclusion interventions over the last year.

They include:

**4Womxn** built on their ground-breaking work on Channel 4's Menopause Policy with a new Pregnancy Loss Policy and Period Policy and created space for discussion, action and allyship on women's safety.

**The Collective** were pivotal in Channel 4's response to Black Lives Matter and the development of its ambitious Black to Front Project plans.

**4Mind** worked closely with the leadership and people team to drive a step change in the company's work around staff wellbeing. They launched a wellbeing newsletter, used regular events and communications to open up conversations about taboo areas, and kickstarted a discussion on body diversity within commissioning that is leading to meaningful change on-screen.

**4Purple** continued to drive forward accessibility and awareness and succeeded in embedding Purple Light Up as something celebrated across the organisation.

**4Pride** launched a monthly newsletter and held a host of events including an It's a Sin screening, Q&A with Steph McGovern and an event on lesbian representation in the media.

**4Earth** launched Channel 4's first sustainability roadmap, setting Channel 4's intention to become carbon neutral by 2030.

**4Parents & Carers** was launched in response to the pandemic, providing a vital source of support at a uniquely challenging time for those with caring responsibilities. They have worked with the People team to launch a new policy to best support those who have identified as either parents or carers.

**The Shed** launched as a space for men to share and discuss sensitive topics. They are working to remove stigma around talking about mental health and raise awareness of men's health issues and male suicide.

Through all of this work the networks are helping to shape Channel 4's inclusive culture, and ensure all voices and perspectives are heard.



They are creating opportunities for collaboration across networks, departments and the wider organisation which has helped them to better reflect their overlapping communities and the multifaceted identities and experiences of staff.

### **Future**

Channel 4 is keen to ensure that its Employee Resource Groups continue to go from strength to strength and engage with the widest possible group of staff.

The company also held focus groups to evaluate the impact of the networks to date and look at what has worked well and what could be improved upon.

It also looked at how their structures and strategies can support long term sustainability and enable as many staff to get involved as possible. This has resulted in a new, co-created way of working document which provides a framework for ERGs to thrive.

### **Disability confident**

Channel 4 has carried out extensive work to improve disability representation in the workforce, supply chain and on-screen, becoming the first media company to achieve Disability Confident Leader status.

It is committed to sharing its learnings externally including through its previous 360 Charter reports, its L&D learnings whitepaper and the annual Inclusion Festival.

Channel 4 has also signed a commitment to The Valuable 500, a global movement that puts disability on the business leadership agenda.

Channel 4's 'Engage & Enable' disability strategy is working to improve disability representation in their supply chain. It includes new best practice guides to hiring, including and progressing disabled talent; a series of networking events; a mentoring programme; and the industry's first talent and contributor welfare policy.

Channel 4 is part of the TV Access Project (TAP) – an alliance created to drive greater accessibility in the TV industry. As part of this, Channel 4 has incorporated their best practice guidelines to help producers and indies improve how they work with disabled talent.



### **Other work**

Channel 4 has pledged to be an anti-racist organisation, which includes a six-point plan to drive the industry in improving black and minority ethnic representation.

Channel 4 also refreshed its Commissioning Diversity Guidelines in 2022, to ensure that every new Channel 4-commissioned programme, in every genre, contributes to increasing diverse talent participation on and off screen. Its objective is to bring transparency and accountability to the numbers of people from diverse backgrounds employed in the TV industry.

### **Black to Front Project**

As part of the legacy of the Black to Front Project, Channel 4 ran a project to provide mentoring and training for 60 Black TV, filmmakers and content creators across the UK – in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow. The 60 filmmakers received insights on script development, financing and funding to collaborating, sales and even distribution as part of a comprehensive guide to what they should do next to advance their careers, working with industry experts from Channel 4 and Film4 as well as Apple, Altitude, Park Circus, STX and many more.

### **4Stories**

Delivered in partnership with Blacklight Television, 4Stories offers a unique opportunity for emerging writers and directors to make an authored TV drama with a guaranteed network broadcast on Channel 4.

4Stories is aimed at finding genuinely diverse voices, exploring contemporary stories of and by communities that are rarely seen on mainstream television. The scheme has proven to be a successful launchpad for emerging British talent. The first series of *On The Edge*, which was developed through the 4Stories initiative, received two BAFTA nominations for Best Single Drama and Best Breakthrough Talent and three BAFTA Cymru nominations for Best Drama, Photography and Sound.

# 4.

## Channel 4's regional impact

Channel 4 stands out among public service broadcasters for the priority it places on expanding its presence and investment outside of London.

Channel 4 chooses to invest heavily in the creative sector outside of London in the Nations and Regions, with the opening of the national HQ in Leeds, and bases in Glasgow, Bristol and Manchester.

By the end of 2022, Channel 4 had 485 roles located outside of London and this will continue to increase over the next few years.

Independent analysis from EY also shows that through its supply chain, Channel 4 supports over 12,000 jobs across the UK. This helped Channel 4 to generate more than £1bn of GVA for the UK economy in 2021, an increase of 18% since 2019.

In 2022, 66% of hours of first-run originated programmes on the main channel came from suppliers based in the Nations and Regions – that's two-thirds of Channel 4's programmes for the second year running.

The impact of Channel 4's '4 All the UK' activities is resulting in more representation of different parts of the UK on screen. 2022 saw the broadcaster start co-anchoring its news from Leeds, joining the now well-established *Steph's Packed Lunch* as a regular fixture.

*First Dates* is now filmed in Manchester; Channel 4 has a returning prison drama *Screw* coming from Scotland; BAFTA-winning *The Great House Giveaway* is produced from the Llyn Peninsula by Welsh indie Chwarel, and *24 Hours in A&E* is made by The Garden in Nottingham.

Regional representation is also high on the agenda – from the anarchic *Late Night Lycett*, aired weekly from Birmingham, to *Steph's Packed Lunch*, which is live from Leeds Dock.

The opening of *Channel 4 News'* permanent Leeds studio is ensuring that their news output includes voices from across the UK.

Channel 4 has also directed its major partnerships with ScreenSkills and the National Film and Television School to focus more on Nations and Regions priorities, supporting diverse talent so that they can develop creative careers without having to relocate to the South East. Channel 4 was a key driver and a founding partner of the Unscripted Skills Fund investing upfront in this training pot and ensuring that the majority of this is spent on out of London beneficiaries.

Channel 4 has developed its partnerships with the NFTS to deliver more training opportunities with more impact across the Nations and Regions. In 2022, the partnership delivered a series of free taster days – in Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds and Newcastle among other locations – to give those under-represented in the industry an opportunity to find out more about careers in film and television, including less glamorous roles that get overlooked but which are critical to productions.



**The impact of Channel 4's '4 All the UK' activities is resulting in more representation of different parts of the UK on screen.**





## 4Studio

4Studio, Channel 4's social media and digital content production department, launched December 2019. Through 4Studio delivering trusted content to younger audiences on social platforms, 4Studio also regularly reaches more young people than other commercial broadcasters on Facebook and YouTube, with 7.3 billion global views across all their social channels in 2022. 4Studio has, to date, commissioned 13 regional indies to make digital content, helping to foster regional economic growth and grow regional creative ecosystems.

The team, heavily weighted towards young people, has gone from 2 to more than 150, with roles in all of Channel 4's regional offices. Three people on the Apprenticeship and Trainee scheme have already moved into full time roles in 4Studio, with many others going to work in other companies in the sector. Through their dedicated talent development resource, 4Studio helps create new opportunities for young people, by building recruitment partnerships and a talent pipeline for employees.

#### **4Studio team case studies**

##### **Michael Sheridan – Assistant Producer**

Growing up on a council estate in a working-class town in the North, the idea of getting to work in TV seemed like a pipe dream. I always thought that, due to a highly London-centric media industry, the only way I could get my big break would be if I somehow won a load of money to enable me to move to the capital. But, thanks to the shift of broadcasters to the regions (even if an albeit slow one), with the MediaCity development and Channel 4's move to Leeds, I have been able to achieve many of my ambitions that seemed unfeasible and to work for all the major broadcasters.

To continue the move away from an overwhelmingly centralised industry sends out a vital message... the message that, no matter where you are from or how much money your family has, your voice is heard, and it matters. And this is essential to Channel 4's vision and purpose; how can we champion unheard voices, if all the voices are coming from the same place? And how can we make change and be truly and authentically inclusive if anyone outside the M25 is left out of the conversation?

##### **Esha Bal – Junior Video Editor**

Channel 4 moving to the North has been the biggest blessing, I grew up thinking I would eventually have to leave home and move down South if I wanted to enter the media industry.

I completed an apprenticeship at 4Studio which then led into a full-time role, had it not been for the move to the Nations and Regions, I know it would've been much harder financially and mentally to move down South and complete an apprenticeship.

I honestly never thought I would be able to do an amazing apprenticeship while living at home and the great people I have met while working at 4Studio have only made my journey so much more positive. I didn't know anyone in the North who had interests in the media like I did and now there is a whole office full of them. It's given me a sense of belonging and encouragement to keep working towards my goals.

Since Channel 4 has made the move to Leeds, there has been an outburst of opportunities for young people everywhere... Channel 4 has sent out a strong message of equal opportunity and for that message to come from such a large broadcaster is powerful.



### **Laura Ward – Senior Producer**

Growing up in Yorkshire, I always wanted to work in TV. Despite bagging a work experience placement with the BBC straight after university, I couldn't afford to follow my dreams. All the jobs going were based in London. I couldn't afford to move there on the low wages being offered and after four years at university, I didn't want to ask my parents to support me any longer, so I had to go down a different route.

Many years later, Channel 4 moving to Leeds has finally given me the opportunity to get that dream job in television. It's also opened up those careers to a whole new generation of talented people who might otherwise have missed out. Not because they're not good enough, but simply because of where they come from.

The most creative and representative solutions come from having people round the table who think and look differently and who have different lived experience so being able to broaden out who works in broadcasting can only be a good thing for the industry as a whole.

### **Jack Fuller – Video Editor**

I was born just on the outskirts of Leeds, so I know the city well. Growing up, I knew that working in media or TV meant I would have to move away from the city to get good opportunities, which I did.

Channel 4 coming to Leeds has transformed my life. I can spend more time with close family and friends, I can travel quickly to be in the countryside (a blessing during Covid) and I can offer an alternative, local view to the content we produce.

I am from a working-class family and feel that Channel 4 has given me social mobility that did not exist when I was working in London – I bought my first home whilst working here. I have made new friends and grown as a person.

As a manager, I have helped others with the transition of moving to Leeds and helped to push them to develop and grow too. The impact on the city has been evident too, Channel 4 has pushed Leeds to become more diverse, more inclusive and we have made a real impact on the creative industries here – no longer does someone need to leave the city to get an opportunity.



# 5.

## Channel 4's levelling up guarantee

Channel 4's structure and remit, and in particular its commitment to the Nations and Regions, mean it is ideally placed to be an engine of social mobility for the sector and for the UK.

The organisation is determined to build on its achievements to date in creating more opportunities for young people in this highly specialised and competitive sector, in line with the Purpose Goals.

**Channel 4 will work with the Purpose Coalition and other partners over the coming months to take this work forward, with a focus on:**

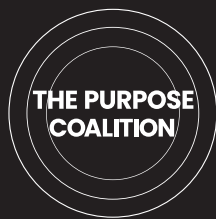
- **building on Channel 4's commitment to opening up more opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Nations and Regions to work in the industry;**
- **developing a strong and clear pipeline for individuals from any background. Getting into work is just the first first step, creating supported pathways will ensure that talented people are able to progress through their careers;**
- **embedding processes across the organisation, and with the partners Channel 4 works with, to strengthen delivery on social mobility; and**
- **gathering and evaluating data on opportunities and career development for people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the industry.**











Proudly run by  
**this is  
purpose**

**LEVELLING UP  
GOALS**

Proudly produced by This is Purpose