



'Equity by Design'

Channel 4 Equity Strategy

March '24



Context

Channel 4 holds an important role in a changing world.

We exist to create change, and we do this by representing unheard voices, challenging with purpose, and constantly reinventing entertainment. In a world facing deep political divisions, ongoing debates about identity, and changing viewer habits, it's critical we stay true to and deliver our remit.

We've led our industry in diversity and inclusion, both as a broadcaster and an employer, but there's more for us to do.

From on-screen initiatives like Black to Front, through to industry-leading commercial initiatives like the Diversity in Advertising Award, our pioneering workplace policies around women's health and our commitment to being an anti-racist organisation, we're proud to be progressive – and we're committed to making an impact. But we know there's more work to be done to ensure Channel 4's reality matches its aspirations, on and off screen, and internally.

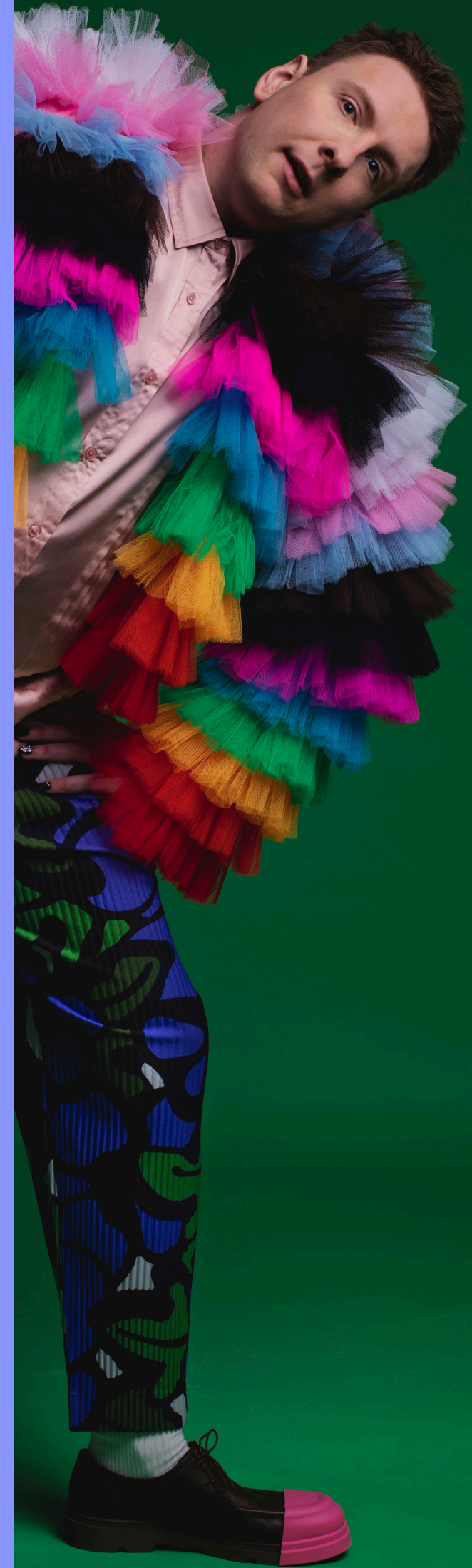
As we transform as a business, we must evolve our approach to this work. We are focused on becoming an agile and genuinely digital-first public service streamer by 2030. As we adapt to meet a changing environment and shifting viewer needs, we must rethink how we do – and go beyond – diversity and inclusion, building on our existing commitments and successes to create equity for everyone we serve.

"Channel 4 was designed to be ahead of the curve and has never stood still"

Alex Mahon, CEO
on the *Fast Forward* strategy

"My lived experience of being here hasn't lived up to the way we talk about Channel 4. We do good things but could and should be better"

Channel 4 employee, London





Equity by design

Our pioneering work to date has focused on the related concepts of diversity (who's represented) and inclusion (how people experience Channel 4). However, as an agile digital-first streamer, our success will depend on how well we can anticipate and respond to changing needs in this space. As we transform as a business, we must evolve our approach to this work.

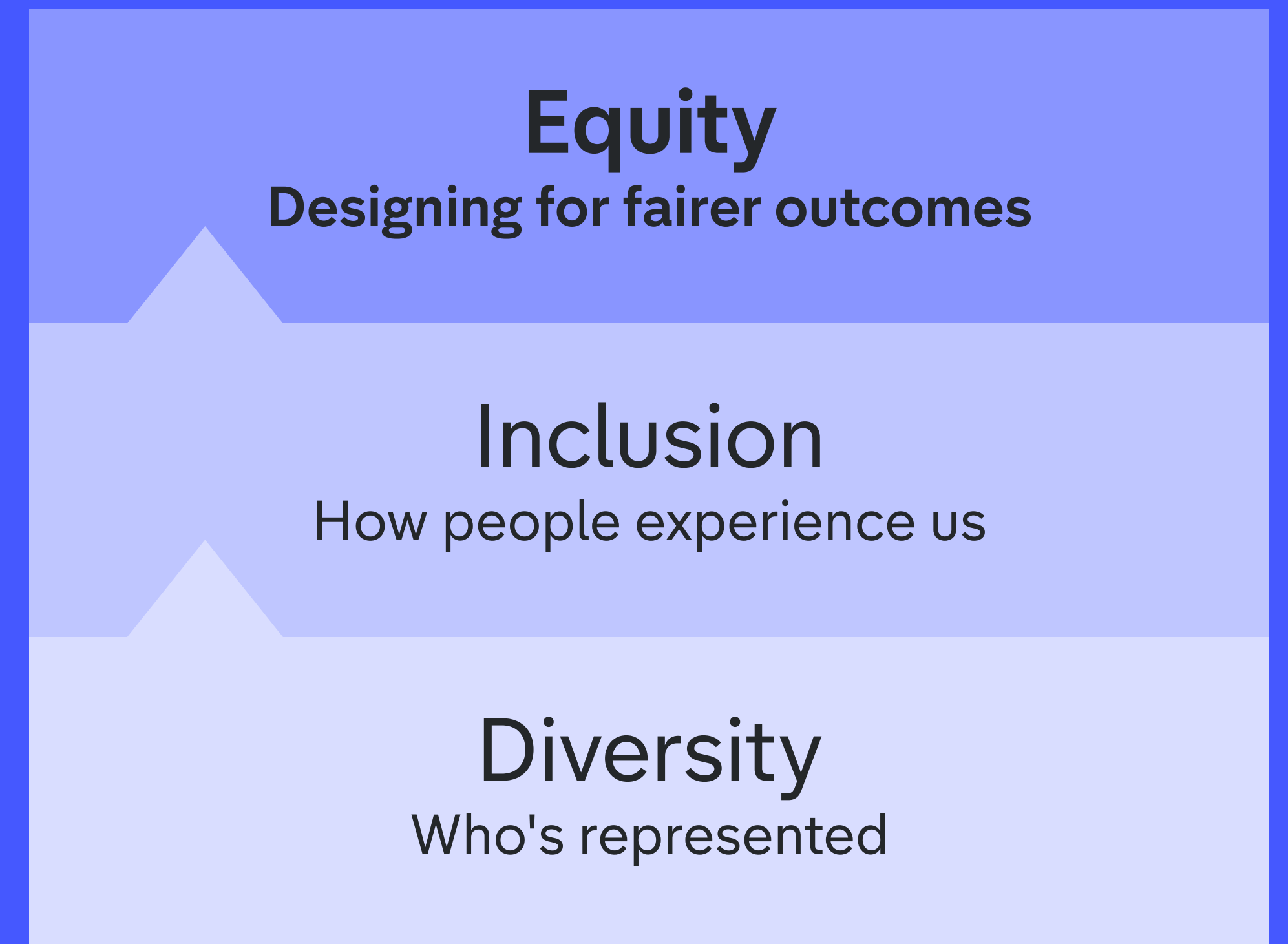
We will only close existing diversity and inclusion gaps by applying a rigorous equity lens to everything we do. We will achieve this by improving how we design diversity and inclusion into our decision-making from the outset, to ensure fair outcomes for all.

This 360-degree approach supports our public sector equality duty to promote equality, avoid discrimination and foster understanding. It's a sustainable and systemic way of operating which will ensure we protect and deliver our remit into the future and set ourselves apart from other streamers.

It means each of our critical business decisions will be equity-proofed. And it means every team member in every business area will understand what their contribution is to achieving fair outcomes for all, through their day-to-day work.

“Being accessible and inclusive should be part of our ways of working, infrastructure, and culture”

Channel 4 employee, London



Guiding principles

We've created six strategic principles to guide how we'll build equity into the way we do things at Channel 4.

These principles were born out of what our people, audiences and stakeholders say we're doing well, and where we can do better. And they were shaped by valuable insights from workshops open to all our employees.

Each principle is backed by bold, organisation-wide activities designed to drive transformation and build our inclusive culture.

And teams will be expected to develop local equity plans to show how these principles inform the work they're delivering. These plans will be backed by support and resources to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

"Equity and inclusion should be baked into every decision"

Workshop attendee, Leeds

"We should tell every supplier, from who we buy pencils from to who does production, 'this is how we will behave, and this is what we expect of you'"

Workshop attendee, London

"Accessibility should never be never an afterthought"

Workshop attendee, London



Channel 4's equity principles

1 Make informed choices

1

Our decisions consider everyone, and are powered by diverse views and quality data from our employees and audiences

2 Design for inclusion

2

Our product, content, workplaces and ways of working are inclusive by design, and showcase the best in accessibility for all

3 Choose inclusive partners

3

We invest in diverse, inclusive partners who share our values, and we pass our learnings and expertise onto others in our value chain

4 Treat people right

4

We expect the very best from our people, in particular our leaders, and help our industry set the standard in tackling unacceptable behaviour and systemic discrimination

5 Create opportunity

5

We lead our field in workforce representation, and progressive and inclusive workplace practices, aligning employee experience with our brand values

6 Lead on social impact

6

We act on emerging societal issues affecting our employees and audiences

1. Make informed choices:

Our choices consider everyone, and are powered by diverse views and quality data from our employees and audiences

We consider everyone from the outset when making choices, embracing tools such as equity outcome assessments for key decisions.

We seek underrepresented perspectives, consulting those with lived experience and groups representing communities' voices. This includes our employee resource groups (ERGs) who act as strategic partners in identifying issues and potential solutions alongside our functional teams.

We engage thought-leaders and subject matter experts, centering those with lived experience. And we leverage evidence-based insights when making choices, on and off-screen and within our workforce.

2024 activities

- Equity outcome assessments that can be applied in a lively, light-touch way within fast-moving processes
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team
- 'Meet the audience' sessions to bring us closer to our underrepresented viewers, their perspectives and their habits in a changing world
Owned by Consumer Insights & Commissioning teams
- Creative Equity review of on and off-screen representation and portrayal metrics, and audience data, to identify further opportunities to deliver equity
Owned by Creative Equity team



2. Design for inclusion:

Our product, content, ways of working and workplaces are designed with everyone in mind, and showcase the best in accessibility for all

We consider everyone's needs, preferences and abilities to improve access and experience for all.

We stand the best chance of standing out and winning in a digital environment by doing so. Accessibility and usability are key in this context to reaching new and underserved audiences, along with existing audiences who value inclusive service features (whether viewing online or participating as an audience member or contributor in one of our shows).

Inclusive design also extends to distinctively inclusive representation, and authentic portrayal, in our content.

2024 activities

- Company-wide training, led by subject matter experts, on inclusive design and digital accessibility
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team
- Accessibility audit of key and new suppliers
Owned by Technology team
- Accelerate accessibility of commercials on our platforms and beyond
Owned by Commercial & Product teams
- Develop further codes addressing Trans, Arab and Muslim, Jewish, and Race and Ethnicity portrayal
Owned by Creative Equity team



3. Choose inclusive partners:

We invest in diverse, inclusive partners who share our values, and we pass our learnings and expertise onto others in the value chain

We work with like-minded businesses in an increasingly digital world.

We support our partners in fulfilling their diversity and inclusion commitments and we hold them to account.

And we share our learnings and expertise in minoritised audiences and talent with those we work with to create greater equity for all.

2024 activities

- Assess suppliers' compliance to standards, and commitment to equity, during the procurement process and beyond
Owned by Procurement team
- Review ways of working with indie partners, prioritising commitment to and accountability for Commissioning Guidelines
Owned by Creative Equity team
- 4Ventures 'Untapped' scheme to bring more investments from under-represented founders to our attention
Owned by 4Ventures team



4. Treat people right:

We expect the very best from our people, in particular our leaders, and help our industry set the standard in tackling unacceptable behaviour and systemic discrimination

Our leaders play a pivotal role in defining our culture and behavioural norms. We expect the best from them and invest in best-in-class training to equip them with the knowledge and tools they need to foster inclusion.

More broadly, we treat one another with respect and dignity and take a zero-tolerance approach to behaviours that undermine this. We build a trust culture, supported by excellent systems and processes to surface and stamp unacceptable behaviour out, and seek to hold those who are responsible to account.

2024 activities

- Launch Inclusive Leadership programme for Senior Leaders
Owned by Equity & Inclusion and People teams
- Launch Safe Space programme (an informal, peer-led support route for anyone affected by unacceptable behaviour) and upstander training for all employees
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team
- Reassert core Channel 4 values within workforce through Code of Conduct training
Owned by People team
- Update our internal inclusive language guide, co-developed with employees and external subject matter experts
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team



5. Create opportunity:

We lead our field in workforce representation and progressive and inclusive workplace practices

Whilst we're proud to represent the general population (Census 2021) for most characteristics, numbers alone don't equal inclusion – which is why we're moving from targets to 'floor levels' (see appendix) alongside our broader equity strategy.

We are relentlessly committed to understanding our employees' experience, identifying equity challenges through data analysis and engagement, and addressing them in a strategic and timely way to reduce and remove differentials relating to characteristics, and to ensure employee experience aligns with our brand values.

And we're committed to finding, growing and nurturing the next generation of UK creative talent through [4Skills](#).

2024 activities

- New class-focused employee network to accelerate our journey to becoming more class-inclusive in everything we do
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team
- Dedicated learning and development initiatives to drive equity where underrepresentation remains
Owned by People team
- Paralympics Production Training Scheme
Owned by 4Skills
- Industry-leading internship opportunities in Access Services, in partnership with Red Bee Media
Owned by Early Careers team



2024+ floor levels:

Disabled 18%
Ethnically diverse 20%
Women 51%
LGBTQ+ 6%

New goal:

Non-professional 40%

+ monitor care responsibilities and care experience

6. Lead on societal impact:

We act on emerging societal issues affecting our employees and audiences

As we accelerate into the digital age, our founding public service principles remain, including our commitment to representing the unrepresented. Through delivering this principle in our content and workplaces, and focusing on emerging issues that impact these groups, we make our viewers and employees feel seen and improve life chances for underserved groups. This work involves input from thought-leaders from our industry and beyond and can be long-term and planned, or reactive to organisational, cultural or significant societal events.

2024 activities

- Continue to implement our specific [Anti-Racism Commitments](#)
Business-wide
- Launch progressive class inclusion programme
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team
- Launch formal programme for care-experienced young people
Owned by Early Careers team
- Religion and belief awareness activity and community building for employees, including particular focus on Judaism and Islam
Owned by Equity & Inclusion team





Three year view

2024

Establish

Motivate: Comms to promote awareness and understanding of equity and principles

Act: Activities which create the structures, tools and knowledge needed for greater inclusion across the business. This includes local equity and inclusion plans, developed by departments, that put the equity strategy into action

Impact: Measure via inclusion & pulse surveys; employee data; ERG and Safe Space Supporter feedback; remit score

2025

Embed

Further integrate inclusion into the fabric of our culture, operations and practices, once the foundations laid in 2024 are established and delivering impact

2026

Expand

Culture of continuous improvement and innovation to enhance and expand our equitable practices



Appendix



Workforce representation:

After hitting our ambitious 2023 diversity targets, we're taking a fresh approach to workforce representation to support our focus on equity.

From 2024 onwards, we will stay in line with or ahead of general population (Census 2021) and previous Channel 4 targets by setting 'floor levels' we won't fall beneath.

We're also setting a new goal for 'non-professional' socio-economic status and will start monitoring representation of those with care responsibilities and care experience.

Data will be tracked on an ongoing basis and published annually.

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