



2022

# Commissioning Diversity Guidelines

Effective: 1 August 2022

Channel 4 exists to represent unheard voices, challenge with purpose and reinvent entertainment. Our purpose is to create change through entertainment. It has been seven years since we published our Commissioning Diversity Guidelines, so as part of the Black to Front Project's legacy – and informed through input, research and analysis from the project – we have reviewed and renewed our expectations.

Working closely with the independent production sector, creative agencies and grassroots networks across the UK, we want to continue to drive positive change in our industry. The underlying core principles of these guidelines are about authentic portrayal, on- and off-screen representation and, crucially, widening the talent pool that we work with. It's imperative that we air content made by, and about, unheard voices and under-represented groups.

These guidelines now include regional representation for ethnically diverse off-screen talent; compulsory inclusion of disabled off-screen talent in teams; a requirement for ethnically diverse talent within senior leadership; and consideration of production spend for ethnically diverse and disabled talent, rather than simply headcount, due to the meaningful impact this can have on all roles in production teams.

We have also agreed to take responsibility and ownership for on-screen presenter representation in each genre, rather than delegating this to the production company. Each Genre Head will commit to representation across their slate as a percentage of their total commissioning. This will be tracked internally to ensure that targets are achieved.

As the census detail is published over the next 12 months, we will be reviewing all targets and updating where appropriate.

We also accept that, for some commissions, it may not be possible to meet these guidelines. The guidelines are not put in place to 'trip up' producers. We accept that, on small productions, the criteria may be unattainable, for example in some Nations commissions or where the editorial dictates certain contributors. Where we can, we will always try to help Indies find the talent that is required to meet the guidelines.

By working in partnership with producers, we hope to achieve systemic change in the industry, leading to equitable experiences both on- and off-screen for all under-represented talent. We believe passionately that, in turn, this will lead to greater creativity, inclusivity and success with audiences.



## Altogether Different campaign



# 01

## How to meet the guidelines on-screen



It's A Sin

A single programme or series will meet the new on-screen guidelines if it complies with either Criteria 1 OR Criteria 2.

### Criteria 1: Content/Subject Matter (Unscripted and Scripted)

Programmes which have a specific focus on:

- Ethnicity
- Disability
- LGBTQ+
- Lower socio-economic groups
- Other under-represented groups



and/or

### Criteria 2: Roles

#### Unscripted Presenters

Each genre will commit, across their slate, to a minimum of:

- 20% of presenters from an ethnically diverse group
- 10% that identify as disabled
- 5% that identify as LGBTQ+

#### Contributors

For a series, we expect 20% of contributors to be from an ethnically diverse group, disabled and/or LGBTQ+. We encourage the same for single commissions, however, it is acknowledged that there may be limitations due to editorial restrictions.

Every series will have at least one disabled contributor/guest, with the intention for more than one.

On-screen gender representation should be split 50/50 across a series or single programme.

*For documentaries/observational programming, it is acknowledged and accepted that the editorial may dictate contributors and these may not meet the guidelines.*

#### Scripted

Prominently features a significant proportion of actors/characters who are ethnically diverse or disabled or LGBTQ+.

It is expected that at least 50% of the lead actors/characters are female.

Every series will have at least one disabled actor or character, with the intention for more than one.

Disabled performers will be sought for every disabled role.

*It is acknowledged that there may be limitations due to actors/characters in a storyline in these instances approval needs to be given by the Commissioning Editor.*

Billy Monger: Changing Gear



How to meet  
the guidelines  
on-screen



Unapologetic



02

# How to meet the guidelines off-screen

A programme or series will meet the new off-screen guidelines if it complies with **Criteria 1 AND** a choice of **Criteria 2 OR Criteria 3**.

How to meet the guidelines off-screen

## Criteria 1

### Senior Leadership

As part of our Black to Front Project legacy, we require one or more ethnically diverse individuals in senior leadership roles.

#### Unscripted

- Head of Production
- Production Executive
- Director
- Producer
- Producer/Director
- Series Producer
- Series Director
- Series Editor
- Executive Producer
- Lead Editor
- Production Manager

#### Scripted

- Director
- Writer
- Producer
- Executive Producer
- Lead Director of Photography (DOP)
- Lead Editor
- Set/Costume Designer
- Production Design
- Hair and Makeup Designer

We also strongly encourage and support the inclusion of disabled talent in these senior roles.

and

## Criteria 2

### Production Teams

#### London productions

- 20% of the production team will be from an ethnically diverse group
- 10% of the production team will identify as disabled

#### Regional productions

- 15% of the production team will be from an ethnically diverse group
- 10% of the production team will identify as disabled

#### National productions

- 10% of the production team will be from an ethnically diverse group
- 10% of the production team will identify as disabled

*N.B.: Production team is defined as the editorial and production roles – but not including the crew.*

These definitions are based on Ofcom regional production definitions.

We expect production teams to be split 50/50 in terms of gender.

OR

## Criteria 3

### Total Salary Spend

A production has at least 20% of total salary spend for all off-screen roles allocated to ethnically diverse and disabled talent.

There must be representation across both of these groups.

*For production teams smaller than eight people, it is acknowledged and accepted that it may not be viable to meet these guidelines.*

# Additional mandatory training

We expect all production companies to study and distribute to their teams two very important guides.

- 01 [Guides to hiring, including and progressing disabled talent](#)
- 02 [Guides to tackling harassment and bullying at work](#)

Live/online training for these guides will be available throughout the year.

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# Frequently asked questions

Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games



# 04

## Who do I contact if I have a query?

Please contact your Commissioning Editor, who will be able to help or redirect you, or email the Creative Diversity team.

## What happens if we are a small team and cannot meet the criteria?

We recognise that, with singles and smaller teams, it may be difficult to meet the guidelines. For production teams smaller than eight people, it is acknowledged and accepted that it may not be viable to meet these guidelines. We are committed to Channel 4 productions meeting the guidelines and can offer help and support in order to understand your challenges and achieve this. However, there may be occasions where exceptions need to be granted, and we are open to talking about those. Please speak to your Commissioning Editor prior to starting production to discuss, if this applies.

## Can anyone help me find staff from under-represented groups?

Channel 4 can offer help and support. Please speak to your Commissioning Editor in order to access this.

## Is a drama documentary classed as scripted or unscripted for the purposes of the criteria?

If you are unsure of the genre, please follow the genre pathway relating to the commissioning department at Channel 4 that you are working with.





# Frequently asked questions continued

## At what point in my commission do I work with the new Commissioning Guidelines?

All Ed Specs issued from 1 August 2022 will contain the new guidelines.

## Do these criteria apply to co-productions?

Our aim is for these guidelines to apply to all productions that Channel 4 have funding involvement in, although we realise that this may be challenging in some cases. Please speak to your Commissioning Editor to discuss, if this applies.

## How do I report which criteria my production will comply with?

As part of the commissioning process, you will be asked to complete an Ed Spec. It is at this stage that you capture your intention for the production. At the end of the production, as part of the final delivery paperwork, you are asked to confirm your actual final criteria qualification on the DRS (Diversity Regionality Sustainability) Confirmation and the steps that you took to meet the criteria.

## What happens if the criteria that the production is complying with changes after Ed Spec submission?

Any changes to the qualifying criteria should be discussed with your Commissioning Editor as soon as the change happens.

### On-Screen Roles – Scripted

## What happens if 50% of the lead actors/characters aren't female?

Please discuss and agree this with your Commissioning Editor. If it was agreed with the Commissioning Editor, non-compliance will not affect your qualification with this criteria.

## What is a 'significant proportion' of actors?

In order to give adequate space for a script/storyline to breathe, a significant proportion refers to a minimum of 20% of actors/characters deriving from talent who are ethnically diverse, disabled or LGBTQ+.

### Off-Screen – Senior Leadership

## Can I use a role that is not listed or a senior role with a different title?

If they are a senior leadership role and, in the case of a series, are working across the majority of the episodes, you can agree additional roles with your Commissioning Editor.

### Off-Screen – Production Teams

## What job roles are included in the production team?

For this purpose, a production team is defined as the editorial and production roles – but not including the crew. In cases where roles are working across numerous productions at any one time, they should only be counted if the majority of their time is spent on this production.



Gogglebox

## Is the London or Nations and Regions location determined by where the company is based, where the location office is, or where we are filming?

This will be dependent on how your production has been defined as per the Ofcom regional production guidance.

## What happens if we can't meet the 50/50 split in terms of gender?

Please discuss and agree this with your Commissioning Editor. If it was agreed with the Commissioning Editor, non-compliance will not affect your qualification with this criteria.

## Do these guidelines apply to digital productions?

These guidelines apply to linear commissions. We are undertaking a programme of work to incorporate digital productions in the future and we will launch this in early 2023.

# Definitions

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## Under-represented ethnic groups are defined as:

**Those from African/Caribbean/Asian Heritage or minority ethnic backgrounds are defined as:**

**Black/African/Caribbean/Black British.**

Selection: African, Black British, Caribbean, Other Black background.

**Asian/Asian British.** Selection: Asian British, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Other Asian background, Pakistani.

**Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups.** Selection: Mixed Ethnicity.

**Other Ethnic Group.** Selection: Middle/Near Eastern/Arab, any other Ethnic Group.

## Lower socio-economic groups are defined as:

**At the age of 14, your parent(s) or main carer worked in the following roles:**

Routine Manual, Service and Unemployed (e.g. bar staff, cleaner, labourer, packer, van driver).

Semi-routine Manual and Service (e.g. caretaker, farm worker, machine operative, receptionist, sales assistant, security guard).

## Other under-represented groups

## Disabled is defined as:

To paraphrase the UK's Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental condition that is long-lasting and has a substantial adverse effect on day-to-day activities.

This covers a wide and diverse range of conditions, impairments, injuries and illnesses, including those which are not immediately apparent such as mental ill health, chronic illness, neurodivergence or learning disabilities or difficulties.

It is for each person to decide if they identify as disabled under this definition. Many people have conditions or impairments which are not immediately apparent to an outside observer, but entitle them to identify as disabled. Some have conditions or impairments which, to an outside observer, might meet the criteria and will choose not to identify as disabled. Others may choose not to disclose or share openly that they are disabled.

Everybody is different; the rule of thumb is to avoid any assumptions and to be led by the individual.

## LGBTQ+ is defined as:

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation, intersex, and asexual.

Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games





# Widening talent pools



BAFTA Crew



Beyond Brontës



Black Sound Society



Black Women in Post Production



Bristol Production Talent Facebook Group



Broadcast Hotshots



Brown Girls Doc Mafia



Creative Access



D and I



Deaf & Disabled People In TV Facebook Group



Disabled Artists Networking Community



Edinburgh Ones to Watch



FWD-Doc



Grierson DocLab



Gritty Talent



Hire Black Creatives



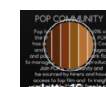
Look Beyond The List



MAMA Youth Project



PACT



Palette 16 Crew Instagram Group



Rising Arts Agency



The Big TV Link Up



The TV Collective and their Facebook page



TRC Scotland – Supersizers Alumni and RAD entry level scheme



TV and Film Freelancers in Wales



TV Talent North Facebook Group



TV Talent Scotland Facebook Group



We Are Parable



We Are POCC



With Not For



Women in Film and TV Mentees

# Key contacts

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## Channel 4's Creative Diversity team:

Naomi Sesay, Head of Creative Diversity:  
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### Alternative formats

To request an alternative format please contact  
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