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## **Diversity in UK television: freelancers**

Ofcom's first full report on the diversity of freelancers  
in the TV industry

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# 1. Introduction

Freelancers make up over a third of broadcasters' workforce and play an important role in making programmes that reflect the diverse communities of the UK. In 2018/19, broadcasters<sup>1</sup> told Ofcom that there were 19,849 freelancers working across their UK television services.

[Ofcom research on diversity in public service broadcasting](#) shows that TV viewers want to see programmes that authentically portray their lives, reflecting the UK's diverse communities, nations and regions. To meet those expectations, broadcasters need to ensure their freelance workforces, both on and off-screen, reflect UK society. That means recruiting from a broad pool of diverse talent and opening the door to a career in TV to everyone. Freelance roles in the industry are vital across the whole creative process, from writing scripts, to producing and directing productions, and bringing characters to life on screen.

As part of Ofcom's [third annual report on diversity in television broadcasting](#), we have sought to understand better the make-up of the freelance workforce. The data we collect each year from broadcasters on their freelance workforce is limited, so to supplement this we have gathered information from other industry bodies. Of those freelancers working in the industry, the majority (12,529) work for the main five broadcasters; the BBC<sup>2</sup>, Channel 4, ITV, Sky and Viacom. In this report we look at how women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled people are represented across the main five broadcasters. In some cases, industry has recognised a lack of representation in these core areas and implemented initiatives to drive improvements for certain freelance roles.

This report aims to draw together the available diversity data on freelancers working in UK television to highlight where progress has been made to improve diversity, and where concerns remain. Information in this area is sparse; the most recent reports on the gender and racial group of freelancers cut by specific roles (such as for writers or directors) published by Directors UK<sup>3</sup> and the [Writers' Guild](#) included data for 2016. Our own annual findings on freelancers working for the UK's main five broadcasters are limited by data gaps and so only give an indication of the diversity of this group. To enhance our understanding, we asked the unions and guilds representing freelancers to identify members who have taken part in an initiative aimed at developing talent from under-represented groups to improve diversity and were willing to share their reflections with us on how these initiatives have made a difference to their careers.

Using these case studies, our data on the main five broadcasters, along with data published by Directors UK and the Writers' Guild, we have considered what action the industry is taking to

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<sup>1</sup> Covering 52 broadcasters with at least one UK-based employee, and at least one freelancer in their workforce. Data was provided for the period April 2018 to March 2019.

<sup>2</sup> In this report, the BBC refers to BBC Public Television Services.

<sup>3</sup> <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1537376389641-48nno7a8g5d-a2f386db65fdcecec7ac1fb44dac221b%2F2018-Adjusting-the-Colour-Balance.pdf>;  
<https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1534498780256-1us01ik1t7s-53673fec300aa64609cd02b8619dca90%2FDirectors+UK+Who%27s+Calling+the+Shots+August+2018+FINAL.pdf>.

promote diversity in its freelancer workforce. We also consider what impact this action has had so far and how the industry can best promote diversity going forward.

## What have we found?

**There are currently significant gaps in the monitoring of freelancers across the industry.** Those working on productions for the main five broadcasters are encouraged to provide diversity data to the [Creative Diversity Network's](#) production monitoring system, [Diamond](#). As part of Ofcom's monitoring programme, we collect information from these broadcasters on the diversity of their freelancers on a voluntary basis.<sup>4</sup> We have found they monitor the diversity of their freelancers to varying extents. This lack of information is limiting the industry's ability to complete an accurate picture of their freelance workforce. The Diamond monitoring system is now in its third year and continues to build on the information it publishes in each report; it is ultimately the only way that we can get a current understanding of the make-up of a fast-paced industry, and it is vital that industry supports its work.

**Women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds continue to be under-represented among freelance writers and directors.** The latest available data published by [Directors UK](#) and the [Writers' Guild](#), indicates that in 2016 less than a quarter of TV episodes were directed by women and only 35% of episodes were written by women. In the same year only 2% of television episodes were made by directors from a minority ethnic background. This data is now historic, and it is hard to understand if any progress has been made towards the diversity of writers and directors without a more up-to-date picture. There are currently no data available on the representation of disabled people in these roles.

**Where the industry has driven change, there have been improvements.** There has been a focus within the wider industry on development opportunities for emerging and established writers, producers, directors and actors from under-represented groups in the continuing drama series sub-genre. Information available on freelance roles in this sub-genre suggests this has led to some increase in diversity. For example, the percentage of continuing drama series episodes directed by women increased from 14% in 2013 to 21% in 2016.<sup>5</sup> The representation of directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in the continuing drama series sub-genre doubled from 2013 to 2016.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In 2017/18, Ofcom included data on freelancers that worked for the main five in our [second Diversity in television broadcasting report](#). This data captures all freelancers working for broadcasters and, unlike Diamond, not just those working in production roles.

<sup>5</sup> <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1534498780256-1us01ik1t7s-53673fec300aa64609cd02b8619dca90%2FDirectors+UK+Who%27s+Calling+the+Shots+August+2018+FINAL.pdf>

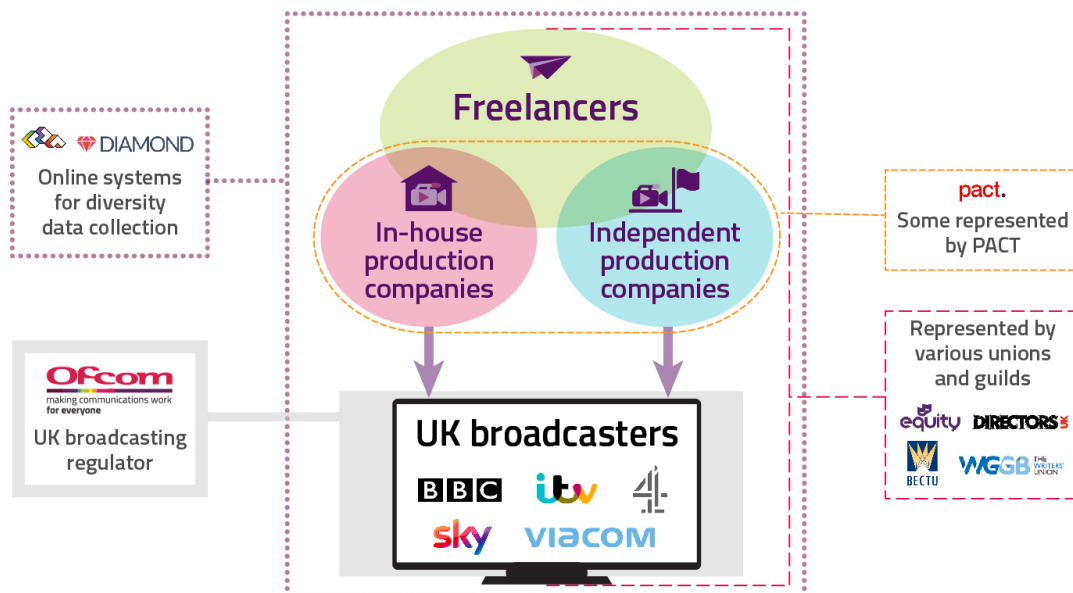
<sup>6</sup> <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1537376389641-48nno7a8g5d-a2f386db65fdcecec7ac1fb44dac221b%2F2018-Adjusting-the-Colour-Balance.pdf>

## 2. The crucial role of freelancers in television

### Who are freelancers?

- 2.1 Freelancers are self-employed production workers who take up short-term contracts with the UK's broadcasters or with production companies to work on the production of TV programmes. Freelancers work at every stage of the production process in technical and craft roles (e.g. operating cameras and designing costumes), production and editorial roles (e.g. writing, producing, directing and acting) and studio roles (e.g. floor managing and coordinating studios).
- 2.2 The majority of freelancers do not work for broadcasters under long-term or 'rolling' contracts. Production companies benefit from access to a flexible workforce to meet the fast flowing and often unpredictable demands of their commission.

#### The production industry landscape in brief\*



\*This diagram does not denote the ownership of the IP of content.

- 2.3 Some broadcasters have in-house production companies that can bid for broadcasters' commissions (e.g. BBC Studios, ITV Studios or Sky Studios). They compete with independent production companies (or "indies"). The [Pact 2018 Census](#) analysed over 200 indies of varying sizes in the television production industry.
- 2.4 Many freelancer roles are linked to industry bodies that seek to represent and protect the interests of their members, such as negotiating better pay or working conditions, launching campaigns, publishing data or providing training, and providing career development opportunities. Some examples of relevant industry bodies are below.

- **Directors UK** is the professional association for TV and film directors and has over 7,000 members.
- **The Writers' Guild of Great Britain** ("the Writers Guild" or "WGBB") is a trade union representing professional writers in TV, film, theatre, radio, books, poetry, animation and video games.
- **Equity** is a union of more than 45,000 entertainment professionals including actors, designers and stage managers on both stage and screen.
- **BECTU** is the UK's media and entertainment union and represents over 40,000 workers (both freelance and permanent) in non-performance roles in creative industries including broadcasting and independent production.
- **Pact** is the trade association representing the commercial interests of UK independent television, film, digital, children's animation and media companies.

2.5 With information available from Directors UK, WGBB and Equity, our analysis of the diversity of the freelance workforce will focus on:



#### Writers

Create and develop scripts for television programmes providing the plot, characters and dialogue for each episode.



#### Directors

Direct those involved in the production and editing of a programme. As the creative lead, they work with writers and producers to realise a shared vision.



#### Producers

Oversee and coordinate the production process including budgets, contracts, hiring and planning shooting schedules.



#### Actors

Perform on-screen as a character interpreting the writer's script and taking instruction from the director.

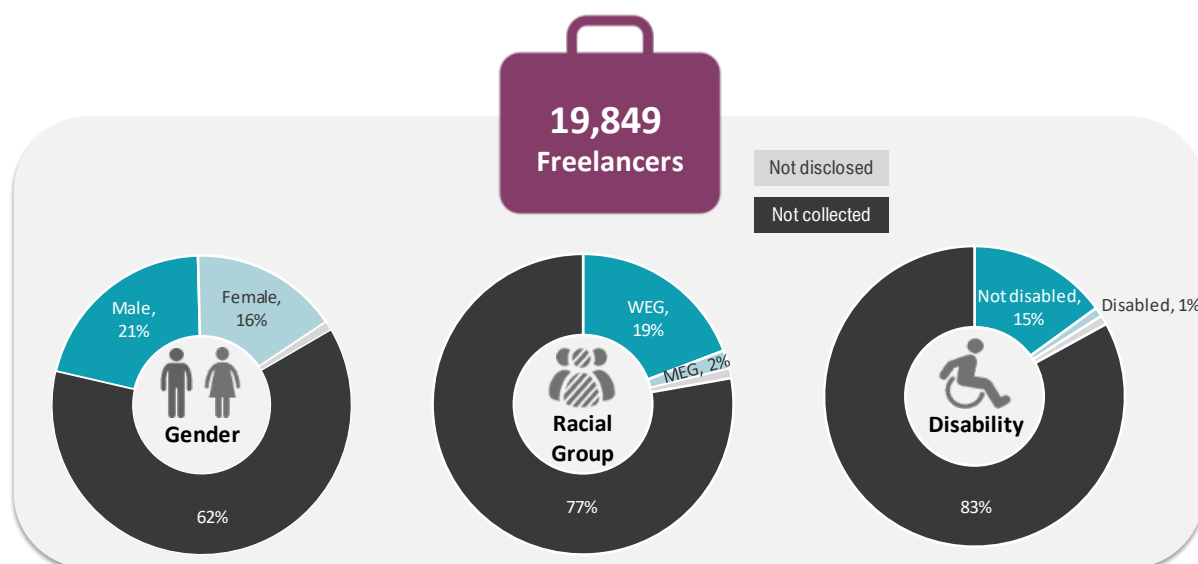
2.6 The **Creative Diversity Network (CDN)** aims to share, discuss and profile the work that the UK broadcasters are doing around diversity, both independently and as a collective. Its members include the main five UK broadcasters and it is chaired by a representative from one of the main five (currently from Viacom). CDN manage an **online monitoring system called Diamond** that is used by the main five to provide diversity data on their UK-originated productions.

## How can we understand the diversity of the freelance workforce?

### What information does Ofcom collect?

- 2.7 Unlike Ofcom's monitoring of the gender, racial group and disability of UK broadcasters' employees<sup>7</sup>, we cannot require broadcasters to provide information on the characteristics of their freelancers. We can only collect information on a voluntary basis, so building a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of freelancers is challenging.
- 2.8 Ofcom received data from 52 broadcasters with at least one UK-based employee, and at least one freelancer in their workforce for the period April 2018 to March 2019. Of these 52 broadcasters, only 37% provided data on the gender of their freelancers, 21% on racial group and 16% on disability. As most freelancers worked for one of the main five broadcasters, Section 3 of this report focuses on the diversity of this group.

### Freelancers working for the 52 broadcasters, by gender, racial group and disability



- 2.9 Where broadcasters did provide data to Ofcom, the majority of it was marked 'not collected' (62% of gender data, 77% of racial group data and 83% of disability data), leaving substantial gaps across all characteristics. Data reported as 'not collected' has increased by 9 percentage points (pp) for gender and 7pp for racial group since 2017/18. This is mainly due to more freelancers working in the industry (from 17,392 last year, to 19,849 this year), but it is a worrying trend.<sup>8</sup> Of the data that was collected, 16% of freelancers were female, 2% were from minority ethnic backgrounds and only 1% were disabled.

<sup>7</sup> This obligation only applies to broadcasters (or groups of companies) who employ more than 20 people in connection with the provision of licensed broadcasting services and are authorised to broadcast for more than 31 days a year. See Sections 27 and 337 of the Communications Act 2003.

<sup>8</sup> In 2017/18 we received data from 55 broadcasters with at least one UK-based employee, and at least one freelancer in their workforce.

- 2.10 Due to the paucity of information, this report can only provide a snapshot, and the small numbers do not allow us to compare representation with that of the UK labour market. Broadcasters' collection of this data must improve. To somewhat remedy these data gaps, Directors UK and the Writers' Guild have helped Ofcom collect personal accounts from freelancers about their experiences of diversity initiatives aimed at developing their career. These case studies consider the impact of initiatives brought in to improve representation among freelancers working in the industry today.

## What information does the Creative Diversity Network collect?

- 2.11 Freelancers can take part in CDN's monitoring of diversity data if they are working on a UK-originated production that is commissioned by one of the main five broadcasters: BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Viacom and Sky. Partners of CDN include the main five, ITN, and Pact. CDN collect data via [a production monitoring system called Diamond](#). Diamond has so far produced [two annual reports](#), with the third due in late 2019. It is committed to publishing diversity data by programme genre, broadcaster and role type:

"Over the last three years, Diamond has collected diversity data directly from tens of thousands of people. This is enabling us to monitor TV production in a way that has never been achieved before and provides concrete evidence to support the changes in commissioning decisions and production processes that are required to create a more inclusive workforce. CDN has been greatly encouraged by the very large numbers of individuals working in the industry who have participated...in Diamond. We hope that those working in the industry continue to recognise the achievements and benefits of Diamond and maintain their support for this world-leading initiative." **CDN**

- 2.12 The data from Diamond has illustrated that disabled people face the most significant barriers when it comes to making a career in the television industry. In order to tackle these barriers, CDN and the main five broadcasters are working together on [Doubling Disability](#), an initiative aiming to double the percentage of disabled people working in British television by 2020. This work will include a research programme to identify barriers to employment and find remedies that can be shared across the industry.
- 2.13 It is the responsibility of the production company to invite their freelancers to take part in Diamond's diversity monitoring. Those working on and off-screen can share information on their gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability by completing a short form to be reflected in Diamond's workforce statistics for the TV industry.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.14 While Diamond gives us an indication of diversity today, not all freelancers will be caught by the Diamond system and a significant monitoring gap remains. Diamond's [second report 'The Second Cut'](#), presented information from programmes broadcast from August 2017 to July 2018, and reported data submitted by 18,833 people which was 25.2% of individuals asked to complete the diversity form – a 1pp increase from the previous report. Diamond

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<sup>9</sup> A copy of the Diversity Self-declaration Form is available in the Diamond guidance notes [http://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Diamond\\_Guidelines\\_2018-FINAL.pdf](http://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Diamond_Guidelines_2018-FINAL.pdf).



does not currently publish data on all TV genres, for example data on News and Sport has not been included in previous reports.<sup>10</sup> While Diamond's reports have previously only included data on diversity by role type (such as within 'senior roles and commissioning' off-screen and within 'scripted and non-scripted roles' on-screen), CDN plan to include more data on specific role groups and types in their third round of reporting.

### Spotlight on diversity at ITN

ITN is a partner of the Creative Diversity Network and produces high-profile news programmes and content for three of the five main broadcasters – Channel 4, ITV and Channel 5. As ITN employs freelancers in a wide range of roles from production roles to on-screen talent, we invited the news organisation to provide insight on its approach to diversity on a voluntary basis.

In 2018, ITN committed to various on and off-screen diversity targets, including aiming to ensure 50% of its top 20 earners are women and 20% are from minority ethnic backgrounds (MEB) by 2022. It also plans to halve its gender and MEB pay gaps and improve the representation of disabled people.

To support these targets, it has put in a strategy to drive improvements including piloting a reverse mentoring programme for senior leaders and colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds to share their experiences. ITN recognises that it has more to do to achieve greater diversity and wants to involve colleagues in shaping its approach. For example, it is launching employee resource groups for colleagues to continue to feed into ITN's ongoing strategy.

## What additional information is collected?

- 2.15 Industry bodies representing freelancers are campaigning for greater diversity in the production industry. Their work has helped reduce the significant monitoring gap of freelancer characteristics by publishing data on the diversity of particular roles, which gives us a better overall picture of the industry. The work of these bodies in this area includes:
- Directors UK's reports on the diversity of directors such as their ['Who's Calling the Shots?' report](#) on gender inequality in TV and their ['Adjusting the Colour Balance' report](#) on the representation of directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in UK film and TV; and,
  - The Writers' Guild and Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society's (ALCS)<sup>11</sup> reports on the diversity of writers such as their ['Gender Inequality and Screenwriters' report](#) on the gender imbalance in writing roles in UK TV and film.
- 2.16 While not comprehensive, the data they have published so far gives us some ability to understand the diversity of freelancers in 2016. Directors UK's reports demonstrated that

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<sup>10</sup> Diamond publishes data on Arts, Children, Comedy, Current Affairs, Drama, Education, Entertainment, Factual, Factual Entertainment, Leisure, Music and Religion.

<sup>11</sup> ALCS is a not-for-profit organisation that collects money for secondary uses of writers' work.

in this year only 24% of television episodes were directed by women, and only 2% of episodes were made by directors from a minority ethnic background. The Writers' Guild report indicated that in 2016 only 35% of television episodes were predominately female written. Directors UK and the Writers' Guild have not currently published any data on disability for freelancer roles but are considering how disability and social mobility can be incorporated into their future monitoring work. As the data published by Directors UK and the Writers' Guild is now historic, it is important for the industry to encourage freelancers to disclose their data via the Diamond monitoring system, to gain access to up-to-date information.

- 2.17 Directors UK and the Writers' Guild also provide some further breakdowns in their analysis of representation at a sub-genre level. This information gives an indication of areas where some progress has been made and areas where underrepresentation remains a serious concern. Section 4 of this report includes some of this data as part of our case studies on the continuing drama series and lifestyle entertainment and reality sub-genres.

## What insights do Ofcom's Diversity Advisory Panel provide?

- 2.18 In order for us to have a meaningful discussion and debate around diversity, as well as take into account a wide range of perspectives, we believe it is important to listen to the views of active professionals working in the industry. This is so we can hear first-hand experiences of some of the real challenges they're facing on a day to day basis. One way in which we are doing this is by reflecting different opinions from members of our **Diversity Advisory Panel**, across our reports. Here, Adrian Lester shares his view with us on diversity and data collection across the industry:

"Before Ofcom can truly use its powers to try and make sure we have a balanced industry, it must have access to the broadcasters' diversity figures. I think it's time that the lack of information from any broadcaster not be looked upon as happenstance or a mistake; I think it's time the failure to collect data should be regarded as a flippant and disrespectful response to everything Ofcom and many others have been trying to achieve for decades. I believe now some sort of penalty should exist to make sure our broadcasters collect the information necessary to take our industry to the next step."

**Adrian Lester, actor**

- 2.19 More insights from Diversity Advisory Panel members Ellen E. Jones and David Proud feature later in this report.

## Ofcom's concerns about the diversity of freelancers

- 2.20 While there are clear statutory limitations to Ofcom's role in monitoring the diversity of freelancers, we are concerned that data in this area is incomplete due to industry's limited engagement with Diamond or is not current. From the information that is available we are also concerned that certain groups remain under-represented and that where there has been change, progress has been slow. In our view, insufficient steps have been taken by

broadcasters to address existing barriers that freelancers from certain under-represented groups may face when trying to enter the industry or progress their careers. The data, or lack of it, available for this report supports this.

- 2.21 [Directors UK's report on ethnicity and directorial representation in UK television](#) revealed that between 2013 and 2016 there was no significant increase in the number of directors from minority ethnic backgrounds working in UK television.<sup>12</sup> [The Writers' Guild and ALCS' analysis of gender in UK television writing](#) showed only a 7% increase in TV episodes with predominately female writers from 2005 to 2016.
- 2.22 Ofcom meets regularly with the main five UK broadcasters, CDN, and other industry bodies, such as unions and guilds, to promote diversity and inclusion. This year we have also involved our newly-formed Diversity Advisory Panel in our work, which is a group of six highly experienced industry experts who provide us with insight and perspectives that broaden our understanding of diversity issues across the UK broadcasting industry. Through this extensive engagement, we have identified the following three challenges which could impact freelancers, especially women, disabled people and people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## 1. Ensuring fair recruitment processes

- 2.23 Trust in the experience and skills of a freelancer is an important consideration when commissioning programmes to ensure the quality of a production. The relationship-based nature of the production industry may lead broadcasters to look to their existing contacts when opportunities arise. This may disproportionately impact talent currently under-represented in the industry. Our understanding is that the industry still relies quite heavily on “who you know”.
- 2.24 Production jobs are not only hard to obtain but can be short-term opportunities. Contracts will last the length of time required to produce a programme or series – which could be as short as a few weeks. Freelance production staff are constantly looking for new positions and can face being out of work between jobs, the uncertainty of which can be a significant financial barrier to talent from less privileged backgrounds. Ellen E. Jones, a member of Ofcom's Diversity Advisory Panel told us how this can impact individuals:

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<sup>12</sup> The 2013-16 period saw the percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors increase from 2.2% to 2.31%. Directors UK's analysis considered 47,444 episodes directed by 4,388 directors that were broadcast by BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016.

"Some people don't have to spend 50% of their day panicking about how they're going to pay their rent, and that's 50% they can spend on writing their script...TV contracts are short and if you come from a family where it's important to know where your next pay cheque is coming from, and you don't have savings or a trust fund, it can feel really nerve-wracking to go into that kind of job."

**Ellen E. Jones, film and TV critic, columnist<sup>13</sup>**

- 2.25 Disability can impact the frequency of opportunities available to talent. David Proud, a member of Ofcom's Diversity Advisory Panel, told us how disability can be perceived as a financial risk where adjustments are needed on set, and can impact the willingness of production companies to hire disabled talent:

"With disability there's a financial barrier...some reasonable adjustments cost money such as to get temporary ramps put in somewhere or to hire somebody to be a PA. I think that's why disability [on-screen] has lagged so far behind. But it's a bit of a myth that having a disabled person on set is going to cost you thousands...everyone's needs are completely individual. It's a case of finding the person you want to work with and having a conversation about what you need...I was making friends with able-bodied actors who would have an audition a week and I'd get one every six months, so the pressure to absolutely nail it was incredible."

**David Proud, actor, writer and producer<sup>14</sup>**

- 2.26 Freelancers must maintain good working relationships with production managers to maintain regular employment. Again, success is, to some extent, determined by your contacts. When a production manager moves on to their next project, they may invite freelancers who have impressed to join them, securing their next contract.
- 2.27 This type of hiring can pose significant barriers for freelancers from under-represented groups seeking an opportunity to "breakthrough" in the industry. It also hampers those looking to progress their career – for example, by moving onto a bigger budget production or into a new genre.
- 2.28 Some industry initiatives have sought to address this challenge by improving production companies' access to a diverse range of talent. Pact, for example, maintains databases of diverse [on-screen](#) and [off-screen talent](#) providing lists of recognised organisations representing talent and signposting where companies can advertise opportunities. Pact have also produced resources to empower producers to embed diversity in their casting processes through their [Inclusive Casting Workshop](#).

## 2. Ensuring freelancers have opportunities to progress

- 2.29 As access to work can depend on your contacts and your reputation, getting on in the production industry can be tough. Freelancers might think about their progression

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<sup>13</sup> For more insights, see [Ofcom's full interview with Ellen E. Jones](#).

<sup>14</sup> For more insights, see [Ofcom's full interview with David Proud](#).

opportunities in terms of the timeslot or genre they want to work on and could find themselves getting stuck working on the same sorts of project for a long time.

- 2.30 Given being offered a more senior role on a production or a first role in a new sub-genre could be a risk to the success of the production – it takes time to build a proven track record of delivering quality work. Freelancers must wait for their potential to be recognised to be given this opportunity to develop. Although career progression can be challenging for all freelancers, this is heightened for freelancers competing with well-known and well-connected peers.
- 2.31 The [Writers Guild](#) have identified a particular concern about the opportunities for women to progress in writing roles. Their analysis of the gender diversity of TV writers showed that the percentage of programmes predominantly written by women decreases across the day with the greatest gender disparity in the writing teams of prime-time programming. This could be the result of productions not taking the “risk” to work with female talent outside their current network of writers.

‘...Women are being discriminated against in terms of the writing projects to which they are gaining access – women in TV for example are being pigeon-holed by genre and are unable to move from continuing drama or children’s programming to prime-time drama, comedy or light-entertainment’

**The Writers’ Guild and ALCS’ 2018 ‘[Gender Inequality and Screenwriters’ report](#).**

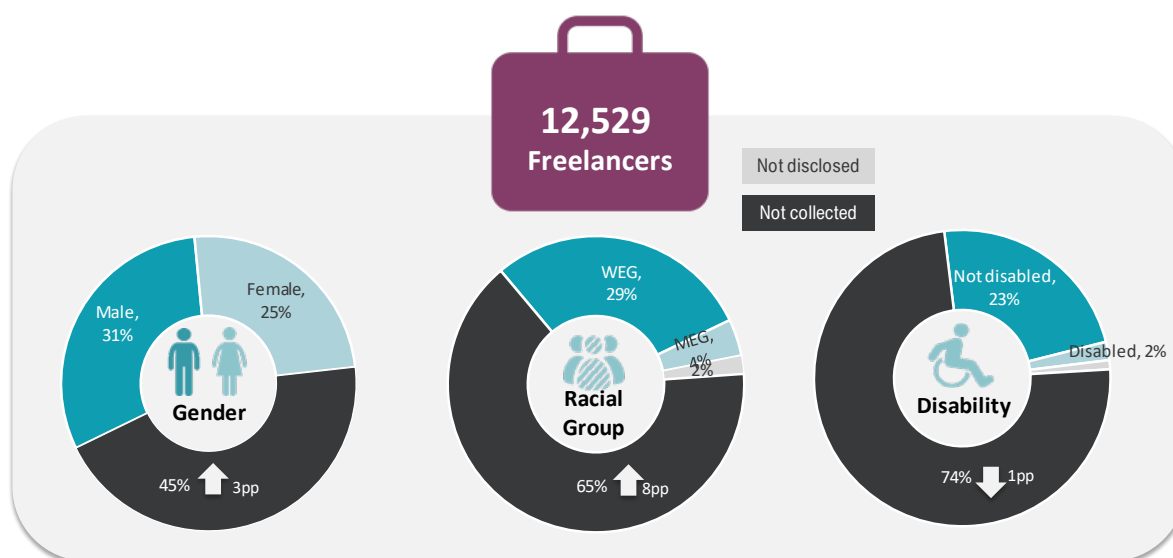
### 3. Ensuring accurate diversity data is available to the industry

- 2.32 It is difficult to hold broadcasters to account for the diversity of their freelance workforce without accurate and complete data. As a consequence, concerns around representation are hard to evidence. Broadcasters should recognise the importance of gathering information on freelancers to promote diversity.
- 2.33 We recognise collecting information on freelancers poses significant challenges, such as monitoring a short-term workforce. Discussions with the broadcasters have identified many freelancers are recruited by individual teams on an ad-hoc and short-notice basis and therefore capturing their diversity information can prove difficult.
- 2.34 However, broadcasters and production companies should endeavor to encourage people to provide diversity information. Their engagement with the Diamond monitoring system is important to ensure industry has access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on the make-up of freelancers. Without accurate monitoring, broadcasters and indies are unable to identify gaps in representation, take steps to address them and evaluate those steps.

### 3. Freelancers working for the UK's main five broadcasters

3.1 The information gathered for this report by Ofcom shows that in 2018/19 just over 12,500 freelancers worked for one of the main five broadcasters – BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Sky and Viacom – including freelancers that worked in roles outside of production. The size of each freelance workforce varied considerably by broadcaster. Of these freelance workers, ITV accounted for 41% whereas Sky made up just 1%.

#### Freelancers working for the UK's main five broadcasters, by gender, racial group and disability



### What is the diversity of freelancers working for the main five?

#### The gender, racial group and disability of freelancers working for the main five broadcasters

		BBC	Channel 4	ITV	Sky	Viacom
	Number of freelancers	4608	454	5132	112 <sup>15</sup>	1816
Gender	Female	41%	-	-	17%	54%
	Male	59%	-	-	83%	46%
	Not collected	-	100%	100%	-	-
Racial group	Minority ethnic group	11%	-	-	*	-
	White ethnic group	80%	-	-	*	-
	Not disclosed	6%	-	-	*	-
	Not collected	4%	100%	100%	92%	100%
Disability	Disabled	4%	-	-	-	-
	Not disabled	61%	-	-	-	-

<sup>15</sup> This figure only includes freelancers that have a direct contract with Sky.

Not disclosed	4%	-	-	-	-
Not collected	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\*Racial group cannot be reported due to data potentially being personally identifiable

- 3.2 Across the main five broadcasters, their collective freelance workforce increased by 472 freelancers from 2017/18, and the proportion of their total workforce from which they collected data on gender and racial group has decreased since last year with substantial data gaps remaining for all characteristics. Overall, 45% of gender data and 65% of racial group data was not collected.
- 3.3 More data on freelancers' characteristics is provided by the main five broadcasters than for the industry as a whole, but this is driven by the BBC, Sky and Viacom collecting 100% of data on gender, and the BBC collecting data on racial group and disability from the majority of its freelancers. This year Channel 4 and ITV were unable to provide any information to Ofcom on the characteristics on their freelance workforces, although Channel 4 will begin to collect this data from September 2019.
- 3.4 Collecting data from freelancers on disability remains a challenge for all of the main five. This is a particular concern, with data 'not collected' for 74% of the reported freelancers, and this gap has unfortunately only decreased by 1pp since last year.

## How are the broadcasters trying to drive change?

- 3.5 The main five broadcasters have told Ofcom they recognise the need to improve representation within their workforces. They have adopted a holistic approach, setting targets to improve representation in their on- and off-screen talent for both employees and freelancers. The BBC and ITV have targets for their on-screen talent as a whole;

### BBC and ITV on-screen targets for gender, racial group and disability

	UK labour market <sup>16</sup>		BBC (by 2020) <sup>17</sup>	ITV (by 2022) <sup>18</sup>
<b>Women</b>	47%	Onscreen	50%	50%
		Lead roles	50%	-
<b>People from minority ethnic backgrounds</b>	12%	Onscreen	15%	15%
		Lead roles	15%	-
<b>Disabled people</b>	18%	Onscreen	8%	10%

<sup>16</sup> Sources used for UK labour market / population figures:

**Disability** = ONS Labour market statistics [A08: Labour market status of disabled people](#) (Average of Apr-Jun18, Jul-Sep18, Oct-Dec18, Jan-Mar19). Proportion of all 16-64 who are 'Harmonised Standard Definition Disabled'.

**Racial group** = ONS Labour market statistics [A09: Labour market status by ethnic group](#) (Average of Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, Oct-Dec 2018). All in employment.

**Gender** = ONS Labour market statistics [A09: Labour market status by ethnic group](#) (Average of Apr-Jun18, Jul-Sep18, Oct-Dec18, Jan-Mar19). All employed males and females.

<sup>17</sup> <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2016.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.itvplc.com/~media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/download/itv-social-purpose-report-2018.pdf>.

- 1.1 Instead of setting on-screen targets for its programming as a whole, Channel 4's [Commissioning Diversity Guidelines](#) set genre-specific on-screen targets for the production companies it works with. For example, scripted programmes must contain at least one main character from a minority ethnic background/ with a disability/ who is LGBT, or alternatively at least 50% of the lead characters must be female. Sky have on-screen targets for the representation of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds, including for Sky Sports (25% women and 20% people from minority ethnic backgrounds) and Sky News (50% women and 20% people from minority ethnic backgrounds). Viacom have an overall aim to reflect the societies in which they operate and the communities to whom they broadcast.
- 1.2 BBC, Channel 4 and ITV have also set holistic targets for their overall off-screen work-force which are aimed at improving representation among both staff and freelance workers and their senior management teams:

#### Broadcasters' off-screen targets for gender, racial group and disability

	UK labour market		BBC (by 2020) <sup>19</sup>	Channel 4 (by 2020) <sup>20</sup>	ITV (by 2022) <sup>21</sup>
<b>Women</b>	47%	Workforce	50%	50%	50%
		Leadership	50%	50%*	50%
		Board	-	-	30%**
<b>People from minority ethnic backgrounds</b>	12%	Workforce	15%	20%	15%
		Leadership	15%	15%*	15%
		Board			11%**
<b>Disabled people</b>	18%	Workforce	8%	6%	8%
		Leadership	8%	6%*	8%

\*Targets for top 120 leaders

\*\*Targets for ITV PLC Board

- 3.6 Sky have a number of off-screen targets for the representation of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds that vary by team. For example, targets for women include 30% in Technology, 40% in Digital and 50% in leadership. Targets for people from minority ethnic backgrounds include 15% in Entertainment and Studios, and 25% in Customer Service non-volume.
- 3.7 Viacom track the diversity of their UK employees and compare these statistics with the figures used by the [Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion](#), which reflect UK society today.

<sup>19</sup> <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2016.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/c4-cp-assets/corporate-assets/2017-07/Channel%204%20360%20Diversity%20Charter%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.itvplc.com/~media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/download/itv-social-purpose-report-2018.pdf>.



## Diversity by Broadcaster



- 3.8 This year the BBC's freelancers made up 25% of the total workforce of its Public Services, decreasing from 27% in 2017/18. It collects data on all characteristics from the majority of its freelancers and has improved its collection on racial group and disability data. Despite a slight drop in the size of its freelance workforce, the BBC's statistics on gender representation are stable from last year, freelancers from minority ethnic backgrounds increased by 2pp (to 11%), and disabled freelancers by 1pp (to 4%).<sup>22</sup> Overall, this suggests a positive movement in the BBC's diversity statistics.
- 3.9 The BBC has progress to make to reduce its disability data gap and ensure its freelancers reflect the UK labour market. While some disabled freelancers could be included in the 'not collected' group, the statistics currently suggest they are under-represented by 14pp in the workforce<sup>23</sup>. There is also scope for the BBC to improve the number of women and freelancers from minority ethnic backgrounds it works with to ensure its workforce is truly representative of the UK.
- 3.10 In addition to the information the BBC provided for this year's diversity in television reports, the [BBC's Operating Licence](#) sets out its obligation to report to Ofcom annually on how the UK Public Services have authentically reflected, represented and served the diverse communities of the whole United Kingdom.<sup>24</sup> Promoting diversity and equal opportunities is critical to ensuring this accurate representation and authentic portrayal of the whole of the UK.
- 3.11 In accordance with its Operating Licence conditions, in March 2018 the BBC published its [Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice](#) as part of its commitment to increase diversity on and off-screen. The code aims to embed discussions about diversity into the commissioning process so that the contribution of productions to increasing diversity are established before a programme is commissioned. The guidelines are intended to ensure that the production companies the BBC works with share its values and commitments.
- 3.12 The BBC has a duty to report on progress on the code annually (condition 2.48) and Ofcom will assess this as part of our annual assessment of the BBC's compliance with its licence conditions, which will be published in the Annual Report this autumn.

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<sup>22</sup> The BBC's freelance workforce has decreased by 507 freelancers since 2017/18.

<sup>23</sup> Sources used for UK labour market / population figures:

**Disability** = ONS Labour market statistics [A08: Labour market status of disabled people](#) (Average of Apr-Jun18, Jul-Sep18, Oct-Dec18, Jan-Mar19). Proportion of all 16-64 who are 'Harmonised Standard Definition Disabled'.

<sup>24</sup> The BBC's reporting obligations are set out in licence conditions 2.42 – 2.45.

## What initiatives does the BBC have to improve the diversity of its freelancers?

- 3.13 The BBC offers a variety of development schemes and funds to address the underrepresentation of women, people from minority ethnic groups and disabled people in the industry. Some examples of the initiatives that freelancers can apply for are given below.



### **Diversity Creative Talent Fund**

Launched in 2014, the £2.1 million fund focused on ethnicity for two years, which has led to the development of 13 scripts and the BBC working with 10 new writers from minority ethnic backgrounds. The BBC has pledged to continue to invest in and develop new talent through the fund.



### **Felix Dexter Bursary for BAME writers**

This six-month bursary gives up-and-coming talent the chance to develop their skills while gaining experience on a range of BBC comedies across radio, TV and online, on panel shows, short sitcoms or comedy entertainment shows. It is designed find writers with fresh, unique points of view and the potential to shape the future of comedy – whether in the BBC or somewhere else in the industry.



### **BBC Continuing Drama Directors' Scheme**

This scheme was set up in 2015 to help early career directors gain their first TV credit on a BBC continuing drama, and aims to address the under-representation of women and directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in the industry. *Casualty*, *Holby City*, *Doctors* and *River City* developed partnership initiatives with Directors UK and Creative Skillset to offer creative directorial opportunities through the scheme. Each director observes and participates in the entire production process of a programme and is given the opportunity to direct an episode, which can result in employment after the training. Of the 24 directors in the 2016 cohort, 53% were women and a third of directors in the scheme's first two cohorts were from minority ethnic backgrounds.



### **BBC Class Act**

Launched in 2017, this is a nationwide search and skills programme for disabled acting talent. It has so far offered 330 auditions and selected 32 actors to be part of a programme. The actors attend a showcase bringing together content makers, casting executives and agents from across the industry.



- 3.14 In 2018/19 freelancers accounted for 32% of Channel 4's workforce, down 5% from the previous year. Channel 4 was unable to provide any data on this group for this report. In

the past Channel 4 has directly employed freelancers working on its productions. Going forward it plans to hire freelancers to work on its productions via a third party, and to ask them to complete a non-mandatory diversity questionnaire. It will collect this data from September 2019 to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of this group.

- 3.15 To aim to drive diversity in the programmes it commissions, Channel 4 continues to use the [Commissioning Diversity Guidelines](#) it launched in 2015. The guidelines set genre-specific on and off-screen diversity targets for production companies working with Channel 4. In 2018, nearly 89% of its productions met the guidelines. Channel 4 expects all its production partners to take active steps to achieve targets, and all production companies are required to state their diversity commitments at the beginning of the production process.

## What initiatives does Channel 4 have to improve the diversity of its freelancers?

- 3.16 Channel 4 offers an extensive list of development opportunities for freelancers with protected characteristics to support the careers of those from under-represented groups in production, example of which are given below.



### 4Stories

This programme aims to showcase talent from currently under-represented groups in drama – women, disabled people, BAME and those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to kick-start careers. The scheme aims to launch the careers of three breakthrough writers, giving them an opportunity to develop an original series, serial or single with BlackLight Television and Channel 4, and three emerging directors, following a nationwide search and thousands of applications with support from Directors UK.



### Production training scheme

Launched in 2019, this 12-month salaried training programme funds 16 young people through placements at independent production companies. Trainees work with 11 companies based across the country, and 94% of the 2018 cohort are now working full-time in the industry, including at Nine Lives, Firecrest Films and Lime Pictures. Channel 4 has ringfenced all 16 places on the 2019/20 programme for applicants with disabilities who will work across their 2020 Paralympic programming.



### Spotlight on Directors

Since its launch in 2017, this initiative has supported 40 directors across all genres with their placements and onward journeys to expand the diversity of thought in TV. The directors have worked on established and new brands such as *One Born Every Minute* and *Indian Summer School*. Spotlight On Women is supporting the achievement of Channel 4's 50:50 gender split target in the talent directing factual output by the end of 2020. Channel 4 is working in collaboration with the BBC to support ten promising assistant producers and directors with mentoring, training and personal



#### Channel 4 Comedy

development to enable them to forge a close relationship with the factual commissioning team and Channel 4.

Channel 4 are developing an initiative to grow the next generation of disabled writers and performers in comedy. Across their shows in scripted, Channel 4 want to provide opportunities for writers and actors with disabilities to work with key shows and casting directors. The initiative is planned to include working on two or three pilot scripts.



- 3.17 ITV works with a substantial number of freelancers, making up over half of its total workforce (51%). ITV does not report data to Ofcom on the diversity of its freelancer workforce. Instead, it encourages freelancers to voluntarily provide their diversity data to CDN's Diamond monitoring system. ITV emphasised its continued commitment to support and work with CDN, Ofcom and other broadcasters to create a clear picture of the diversity of freelancers in the industry.
- 3.18 ITV's Social Partnership Commissioning Commitments require producers working with ITV to commit to a minimum of two diversity and inclusion production promises on-screen, such as reflecting diversity in lead characters, and off-screen, such as providing career-development opportunities for someone from an under-represented group.

### What initiatives does ITV have to improve the diversity of its freelancers?

- 3.19 ITV has launched initiatives to improve the representation of women and disabled people within the on and off-screen talent that it works with:



#### Comedy 50:50

Last year ITV announced a new initiative which seeks to put measures in place to address the gender imbalance in comedy on television. ITV plan to increase the number of female writers in comedy teams on ITV productions, create an independent database of female comedy writers which can be accessed for free, and set up mentorships and regular targeted networking for writers and producers.



#### Break Through On Screen

ITV opens up opportunities for actors with a disability through this one-day development workshop. The initiative offers applicants the opportunity to learn about the TV production and audition process, and successful candidates can be involved in a recorded read through for their showreel and receive tips from directors on set. The workshop has previously taken place with the cast of *Emmerdale*.



- 3.20 Of the main five broadcasters, Sky has the smallest freelance group which accounts for just 1% of its total workforce. Sky collects data on the gender of the freelancers it employs but has significant data gaps on racial group and ethnicity, with almost all of this data not collected from freelancers.
- 3.21 The data on gender strongly reflects concerns in the industry about the representation of women in the workforce. Sky's current freelancer workforce is 30pp below the percentage of women in the UK labour market.
- 3.22 Sky's [Diversity Guidance Note for Production Companies](#) sets out its commitment to ensure that its productions and workforce reflect the diversity of the UK, and acknowledges that certain groups are currently under-represented. Sky pledges to increase diversity across all its productions, giving particular focus to how people from minority ethnic backgrounds are: portrayed on screen; involved in productions; and, contribute as writers. Sky did not outline any specific diversity initiatives aimed at freelancers in its response to Ofcom's request for information.



- 3.23 Two thirds (66%) of Viacom's workforce are freelancers. It is currently working with its global technology teams to look at implementing a system which will allow it to start collecting diversity data on its freelance workforce. Viacom currently only collects data on the gender of its freelancers, and the data provided illustrates a diverse workforce in terms of gender. It highlighted some challenges it faces in collecting diversity data on its freelancers including concerns around security and GDPR, as well as the changing nature of a freelance workforce.
- 3.24 Viacom is an international organisation which has an overarching aim to reflect the societies in which they operate and the communities to whom they broadcast. Viacom also did not identify any specific initiatives which are aimed at improving the representation of currently under-represented groups in its freelance workforce.

## 4. Freelancers today – case studies from the industry

- 4.1 To understand better how diverse the freelance workforce is today, Ofcom has worked with Directors UK, the Writers' Guild and Equity who represent freelancers, to gather stories from freelancers who have taken part in a diversity initiative aimed at developing talent from under-represented groups. These accounts have been provided voluntarily by freelancers with permission to be published in this report. This section draws together stories about the difference these development initiatives have made to freelancers' careers and the available diversity data.
- 4.2 In this section, we also consider two sub-genre case studies to highlight examples of the differing extents to which positive interventions have been made across the industry:
- We consider how initiatives aimed at developing under-represented talent have improved the diversity of freelancers working in the continuing drama series (CDS) sub-genre both on and off-screen. This case study suggests that targeted interventions in CDS have supported steady progress in the representation of women and freelancers from minority ethnic backgrounds, but some challenges remain to ensure that freelancers with protected characteristics benefit from fair recruitment processes and have opportunities to develop and progress during their career.
  - We also highlight the comparatively few initiatives in the lifestyle, entertainment and reality sub-genre (LE&R) to help freelancers from under-represented groups. In this case study we find no progress towards a more diverse freelance workforce, and in some cases a decline in the representation of women and freelancers from minority ethnic backgrounds. We are concerned with the disparities in the efforts in different genres to increase diversity which continue to ultimately prevent programmes from authentically representing the UK audiences which they serve.

### Continuing Drama Series (CDS)

- 4.3 Continuing drama series, or soaps, are a sub-genre of the wider 'drama and comedy' television genre. Episodes of CDS can be continually re-commissioned making it a high-volume sub-genre that accounts for a significant share of the hours of content produced by broadcasters. CDS are often daily or weekly scripted drama shows, broadcast in a regular 30-minute slot in the TV schedule and sometimes based in a single location, such as *Emmerdale* or *Hollyoaks*.



Source: Directors UK

- 4.4 Continuing drama series portray the lives of various communities around the UK. It is important that those involved in making programmes for CDS authentically represent the UK's diverse communities. Offering freelance talent with protected characteristics opportunities to work on productions could be key to ensuring this authenticity.

## What is the diversity of writers in Continuing Drama Series (CDS)?

- 4.5 As a sub-genre, CDS has the greatest number of women writers as a percentage of recorded episodes.<sup>25</sup> In 2017, women wrote 43% of primetime soaps.

### Women writers in primetime CDS\* from 2015 to 2017<sup>26</sup>

Year	Number of recorded episodes	Number of women writers	% of recorded episodes written by women
2015	1090	438	40%
2016	974	410	42%
2017	1059	454	43%

\*This data excludes the following titles: *Doctors*, *Pobol y Cwn*, *River City*

- 4.6 The Writers Guild's and Authors Licensing and Collecting Society's (ALCS) [report on Gender Inequality and Screenwriters](https://writersguild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gender-Inequality-and-Screenwriters.pdf) found that long-running and high-volume programmes were more likely to have an equal representation of men and women on writing teams. The best female representation was found on series with over 100 episodes.
- 4.7 Equivalent data on the racial group and disability of writers is not currently available, but there are initiatives aimed at furthering the careers of writers from minority ethnic backgrounds. More transparent data on the ethnic background of writers is needed to evaluate the impact of these positive interventions.
- 4.8 The improving representation of women writers and the promotion of greater diversity in CDS has been supported by several initiatives, for example:



#### BBC Studios Writers' Academy

Although it is not targeted at unrepresented groups, the academy offers paid training opportunities to a minimum of eight up-and-coming writers in drama, and opportunities to write broadcast episodes for BBC drama. It involves a 13-week classroom period followed by three months writing episodes for *Casualty*, *Holby*

<sup>25</sup> <https://writersguild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Gender-Inequality-and-Screenwriters.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> The Writers' Guild



#### 4Screenwriting

*City and Eastenders* among other CDS shows. Each participant writes four scripts during the scheme.

This course offers 12 writers who are new to television drama an opportunity to write an original pilot episode with support from industry professionals such as script editors. The scheme highlights new talent to the department, and graduates from the course have gone on to write for programmes such as *Shameless* for Channel 4 and *Hollyoaks*.



#### ITV Original Voices

ITV's writing initiative has offered opportunities in its continuing drama programmes to writers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Writers spend six weeks with the *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street* story departments to develop their skills at creating gripping stories, weaving multiple story strands and writing credible long-running story arcs. At the end of the scheme, they can write a trial script for the programme to be read by the show's producer, a standard path for securing a role on a soap. Four new writers worked with the programme, one of whom has now gone on to a full-time job in the story team.



#### Equality Writes

This campaign spearheaded by the Writers Guild calls for programme-level TV equality monitoring data to be released and for public funders to pledge a 50/50 split between male and female-written films by 2020.

## What is the diversity of directors in Continuing Drama Series?

- 4.9 In Directors UK's 2016 [Who's Calling the Shots? report](#) on gender inequality, drama and comedy was the only genre that showed an increase in the percentage of television episodes directed by women across all sub-genres. Although this data is now out-of-date and may not reflect the current representation of women in this role, it reveals a significant increase in their representation over time. In continuing drama, the percentage of episodes directed by women in this genre increased by 7% from 2013 to 2016, with a small decrease from 2015 to 2016. There is still significant progress to be made to drive the representation of women up towards the UK labour market figure.

### Women Directors in CDS 2013-16

Year	% of episodes directed by women	% change from previous year
2013	14%	N/A
2014	21%	+7%
2015	22%	+1%
2016	21%	-1%



- 4.10 There was also a notable 7pp increase in the number of episodes made by directors from minority ethnic backgrounds from 2013 to 2016. Again, the data suggests there is still progress to be made to ensure directors working on CDS reflects UK society. The representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds varies across CDS productions; Directors UK's [Adjusting the Colour Balance report](#) revealed that in 2016, 21.8% of episodes of the BBC's *Doctors* were made by directors from minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### Directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in CDS 2013-16

Year	% of episodes directed by MEG directors	% change from previous year
2013	3%	N/A
2014	4%	+1%
2015	6%	+2%
2016	6%	+0%

- 4.11 There are currently no disability data available on directors working on continuing drama series, but some initiatives do seek applications from disabled directors. Again, it is not yet possible to evaluate the impact of these initiatives on the representation of disabled directors.
- 4.12 In addition to the BBC Continuing Drama Directors' Scheme mentioned in Section 3, there are a number of initiatives that have supported the development of directors from under-represented groups in CDS over the four-year period analysed by Directors UK, sometimes leading to further work after the initiatives have ended such as:



#### Multi-Camera Drama Directing Workshop

This joint initiative by ITV studios and Directors UK provides potential new multi-camera drama directors with a shadowing opportunity on the set of *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*. This scheme uses positive action provisions to promote diversity and to increase participation of those who are currently under-represented in TV drama.



#### Training and Mentoring scheme

Lime Pictures, in partnership with Channel 4 and Directors UK created a scheme intending to progress the careers of diverse directors, involving 9 continuous weeks of observation on the set of *Hollyoaks* and directing an episode. This scheme was only open to currently under-represented groups (women, BAME and disabled directors) in TV drama.



#### Inspire Mentoring Scheme

Inspire is Directors UK's year-round mentoring programme that encourages directors across all genres to seek structured support to enhance their career opportunities. The mentoring partnership pairs directors with a mentor one or two steps above them in their career path. This is part of Directors UK's on-going action to widen opportunities for the broadest range of talent – including those traditionally unable to access networks.

- 4.13 Vicki Kisner is a writer and director who was selected to take part in Directors UK's Inspire Mentor Scheme. After shadowing Ian Curtis on the set of CBBC's comedy drama series *So Awkward*, Ian invited her to shadow him on the set of *Hollyoaks* earlier this year:

"As someone who's ambition lies with directing drama, *Hollyoaks* sets a very high bar for new, emerging directors with a story to tell. I am drawn to dealing with difficult subject matters and to raising awareness of the often-taboo subjects [that] the show tackles. As someone who has cut my teeth on short films, *Hollyoaks* feels like a terrific home for directors who can demonstrate originality whilst serving the energy and look the show is famous for. It's been great to see Ian in action on a continuing drama dealing with adult themes, a large cast and time pressures, and [I] feel it is really helping me prepare to direct my first block of broadcast television drama".

**Vicki Kisner, writer and director**

## What is the diversity of actors in Continuing Drama Series?

- 4.14 Sub-genre data on the representation of women, actors from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled actors in CDS is not currently collected by industry bodies. However, in addition to ITV's Break Through On Screen workshop discussed in Section 3, there are a number of initiatives aiming to drive change, such as:



### Manifesto for Casting

Equity's manifesto is used to seek industry wide changes in making the auditioning process fairer to all. It aims to allow all performers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic background, disability, UK location and caring responsibilities, an equal chance to audition.



### Play Fair

Play Fair is Equity's campaign to challenge the industry on the persistent under-representation of diversity, and discriminatory practice in the casting process. It aims to promote inclusive casting with employers and challenge poor practice in the casting process.

- 4.15 David Proud, an actor, writer and producer and member of Ofcom's Diversity Advisory Panel, told us about his experience as a wheelchair user on the set of CDS productions:

“Because [filming] is in one place...it's very rare they do location shoots, so they can put adaptations in place that are actually going to make the productions accessible. They [CDS] are a great way in which we can showcase what can actually be done. I think the bigger fear on larger-budget productions is if you're going to be filming in a field somewhere one week and the next week you're going to be in a city, how does that effect the mobility of the disabled artists? Soaps, just because they're largely filmed in one place, are a really great starting point...”

**David Proud, actor, writer and producer<sup>27</sup>**

## What challenges to diversity remain in Continuing Drama Series and what action is being taken?

- 4.16 Moving from continuing drama into other sub-genres of drama and comedy is a known challenge in the industry. This challenge is heightened for freelancers who are outside of established professional networks whose talent may go unnoticed by productions for longer – and they are more likely to be from already under-represented groups.
- 4.17 While representation is improving in CDS, there remains a barrier in transitioning to other sub-genres that is causing women and freelancers from minority ethnic groups to continue to be under-represented. According to the [Writers' Guild and ALCS in their 2018 report](#), women are still struggling to gain writing opportunities in non-CDS scripted drama and comedy, with only 18-22% of episodes written by women in 2016. [Directors UK](#) also revealed that the percentage of episodes of drama series and scripted comedy made by directors from minority ethnic backgrounds was only 1.7% in 2016. There is no data available to determine if these figures have improved since 2016 but they suggest that much more progress is needed to ensure production teams are representative of modern UK society.
- 4.18 Some initiatives are seeking to tackle these barriers to freelancers' career progression by offering structured opportunities to work in other sub-genres and genres. Four directors told us how these initiatives impacted their development:



### BAFTA Elevate

This scheme aims to help a select group of actors from under-represented groups progress to high-end television drama, comedy and features.



### High-end TV drama directors Programme

This Directors UK scheme funded by Screen Skills aims to help directors' transition from CDS into making high-end drama. Below are case studies from three beneficiaries of the scheme. Christiana Ebohon-Green shadowed on *The Tunnel*, Katherine Churcher directed two episodes of *Killing Eve*, and an anonymous contributor.

<sup>27</sup> For more insights, see [Ofcom's full interview with David Proud](#).



### Inspire programme

This structured mentoring scheme from Directors UK aims to aid directors' transition to other genres. Abdullai Adejumo moved from 'factual' to 'drama' having been mentored by Steve Kelly on the set of *Doctors*.

- 4.19 Christiana Ebohon-Green's experience working on *The Tunnel* as part of the high-end TV drama directors programme helped to progress her career from continuing drama series on to new projects in drama:

"I applied for the programme as I had been stuck in continuing drama for a long time. There seemed to be no prospect of me advancing my career on to bigger dramas that I knew that I was capable of. Shadowing on *The Tunnel* gave me confidence in my abilities and experience. I never felt out of my depth and saw the same practices that I used in my directing. The main difference was that at this level, there was more time, money and care invested. It gave me more confidence pitching for directing gigs of high-end drama. Since completing the programme in 2015 I have directed episodes of *Soon Gone: Windrush Chronicles*, *Call the Midwife*, *Father Brown* and *Holby City*...The programme helped to kick-start a career that had been hitting glass ceilings for a number of years. I am now solely focussed on high-end drama and feature films. My career prospects are so much brighter".

**Christiana Ebohon-Green, director**

- 4.20 An anonymous member of Directors UK shared her experience of struggling to get meetings for TV jobs, despite her portfolio of award-winning short films. After two BBC shadowing schemes helped her into a career in TV, the high-end TV drama directors programme gave her a mid-career push into high-end drama:

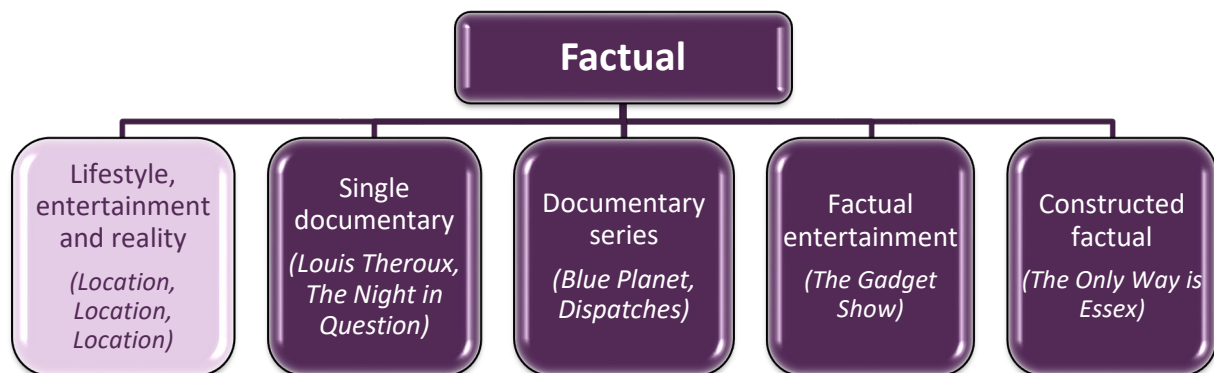
"I feel that gender and class are big career barriers. Female directors have been seen as 'risky' or 'inexperienced', while producers see young male directors at the same level as 'worth taking a chance on'...Unconscious bias from producers and executives is a huge problem...Joining the High-end TV Drama Directors Programme was a great opportunity for me to progress. It was great to build relationships with the producer and the executives on the project... and they introduced me to other producers and executives. I feel the exposure of the Programme has helped get me a raft of meetings with various high-end TV production companies, and I've pitched for various high-end shows, but am still awaiting my first job in high-end direction." **Anonymous, director**

- 4.21 Abdullai Adejumo had been directing factual programmes for 20 years, from current affairs documentaries to flagship factual entertainment series with the Hairy Bikers. He was mentored through the Directors UK's Inspire programme, which led to an opportunity to gain experience in continuing drama:

"I've always wanted to direct drama. When an opportunity came along to be mentored by Steve Kelly, a successful British filmmaker with three movies to his name (the latest being *The Bromley Boys*), I jumped at the opportunity. When we got reacquainted I was desperate to find out what the secret was to his successful move from factual to feature films, so I asked him about mentoring me through the Directors UK Inspire scheme, and he said yes — and within a week had organised for me to shadow him on the set of the BBC's flagship daytime soap *Doctors*. I would be joining him on set in Birmingham for a couple of days." **Abdulai Adejumo, director**

## Lifestyle, entertainment and reality

- 4.22 Lifestyle, entertainment and reality (LE&R) is a sub-genre of the 'factual' genre. These programmes are unscripted and typically focused on domestic topics. They often feature members of the public and have an emphasis on entertainment, such as programmes like Channel 4's *Location, Location, Location*.



Source: Directors UK

- 4.23 Single documentaries can be long or short films covering a topic in a factual context, whereas a documentary series explores a single factual topic as part of wider portfolio of topics such as *Dispatches*. Factual entertainment programmes include a mixture of information and entertainment (*The Gadget Show*) and constructed factual has the look and feel of a reality show but the broad narrative for the programme is prepared in advance (*The Only Way Is Essex*).
- 4.24 Like continuing drama series, programmes made for lifestyle, entertainment and reality can be long-running making it a high-volume sub-genre. It therefore offers an important opportunity to ensure LE&R programmes authentically represent the UK's diverse communities and offer freelancers with protected characteristics opportunities to progress.

## What is the diversity of writers in lifestyle, entertainment and reality?

- 4.25 Data is not currently available on the racial group or disability of writers in LE&R. This sub-genre is an area of concern for the representation of women. In their 2018 ['Gender Inequality and Screenwriters' report](#), the Writers' Guild and ALCS found that the genre with

the lowest number of female writers was light entertainment in stark contrast to the progress made in CDS.

- 4.26 In light entertainment 85% of episodes were written by predominantly male teams, and only 9% were written by predominantly female teams in 2016 – a worrying disparity with no data available to assess if this remains the case. If a large proportion of writing teams had a 50:50 gender split in 2016 this would help to explain the disparity, however teams that were 50:50 only made up 6% of writing teams.

## What is the diversity of directors in lifestyle, entertainment and reality?

- 4.27 The representation of women directors in this sub-genre has decreased substantially moving figures further away from the percentage of women in the UK labour market. According to Directors UK, in 2013 44% of episodes in LE&R were directed by women but this dropped to 31% by 2016, a decrease of 13% in four years. There was a particularly significant drop between 2013 and 2014, with a decrease of 9%.

### Women directors in LE&R 2013-16<sup>28</sup>

Year	% of episodes directed by women	% change from previous year
2013	44%	N/A
2014	35%	-9%
2015	33%	-2%
2016	31%	-2%

- 4.28 The representation of directors from minority ethnic groups was also concerningly low in 2013 and has remained so for the years monitored. The percentage of episodes made by directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in this sub-genre decreased from 4% in 2013 to 3% in 2016. This percentage has been static since 2014, leaving the representation of directors from minority ethnic backgrounds at only a third of the UK labour market figure for people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### Directors from minority ethnic backgrounds in LE&R 2013-16<sup>29</sup>

Year	% of episodes made by MEG directors	% change from previous year
2013	4%	N/A
2014	3%	-1
2015	3%	+0%
2016	3%	+0%

- 4.29 There are currently no disability data available on directors working on lifestyle, entertainment and reality programmes.

<sup>28</sup> <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1534498780256-1us01ik1t7s-53673fec300aa64609cd02b8619dca90%2FDirectors+UK+Who%27s+Calling+the+Shots+August+2018+FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://d29dqxe14uxvcr.cloudfront.net/uploads%2F1537376389641-48nno7a8g5d-a2f386db65fdcecec7ac1fb44dac221b%2F2018-Adjusting-the-Colour-Balance.pdf>.

## What are the challenges to diversity in lifestyle, entertainment and reality and what action is being taken?

- 4.30 From the information available, it appears representation in LE&R is not just failing to improve, it is actually getting worse. The number of episodes directed by women and MEG directors is falling, and women were less likely to gain opportunities to write for lifestyle, entertainment and reality shows in 2016 than they were in 2013. Given the most up to date data on this sub-genre was published in 2016, it is unclear whether this situation has improved over the past three years.
- 4.31 We identified one initiative aimed at freelancers looking for opportunities in the factual genre, the Series Producer Programme from Screen Skills, but this initiative alone will not drive the change needed in the representation of freelancers with protected characteristics:



### Series producer programme

Screen Skills noted the shortage of series producers in factual, specialist factual, factual entertainment and entertainment, and this programme aims to help solve this serious skills gap by finding the next generation of diverse series producers.

- 4.32 Diversity in the LE&R sub-genre is a concern and is set to remain so with few development opportunities for emerging talent from under-represented groups. The declining representation of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds is a trend that appears to have not yet been countered by interventions, driving under-represented groups out of this area of television production. We would like to see targeted initiatives aimed at promoting diversity within this sub-genre as seen in the continuing drama series sub-genre.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

### Data gaps remain a significant barrier to promoting diversity

- 5.1 Freelancers make up a significant part of the television industry, and yet monitoring of this workforce is inadequate. There is insufficient information on the diversity of specific freelance roles, with information only available due to the work of Directors UK and the Writers' Guild. This incomplete picture limits the industry's ability to identify continuing areas of under-representation and to fully understand where meaningful steps can be taken to address them.
- 5.2 Without complete and accurate data, it is difficult to hold broadcasters to account for the diversity of their freelance workforce. In turn, ongoing concerns around representation are hard to evidence. We urge broadcasters to recognise the importance of gathering data on freelancers to identify gaps and put measures in place to address those shortcomings.
- 5.3 We recognise the challenges broadcasters face in collecting meaningful data on freelance workers. However, we would like to see a concerted collaborative effort from industry to encourage freelancers to provide their data, either via CDN's Diamond production monitoring system or to the broadcasters directly.

### Industry-wide efforts have been effective at increasing diversity in some areas

- 5.4 Writers, directors and actors working in drama and comedy have benefited from opportunities to develop their careers in continuing drama series and progress to other television sub-genres and genres. Initiatives have led to long-term opportunities for the successful participants, but the effect of these positive interventions on the wider diversity of freelancers can be difficult to monitor with little evaluation available on their impact.
- 5.5 The industry has reacted to some remaining challenges for freelancers from under-represented groups. In continuing drama series there have been initiatives to improve development and career progression opportunities. The stories that freelancers have shared with Ofcom reflect the importance of these interventions to under-represented talent, but more measures are necessary to effectively address barriers such as progressing to other sub-genres.
- 5.6 To achieve the changes seen in drama and comedy, we urge the industry to introduce positive interventions into other genres, such as factual, which remain largely underserved by initiatives to increase diversity to date. These interventions should be targeted and measurable, focused on improving opportunities for freelancers from diverse backgrounds.



## Recommendations to industry

- 5.7 It is important for the industry to encourage freelancers to disclose their diversity data to CDN via the Diamond monitoring system. It is difficult for data published on the makeup of freelancers to accurately reflect the diversity of a fast-paced industry. Diamond's monitoring and annual reporting is ultimately the only way that we can get a up-to-date look at the diversity of freelancers and it is vital that industry supports its work.
- 5.8 Further coordinated and targeted action could effect change in areas where women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and disabled freelancers are vastly under-represented. The progress in the continuing drama series sub-genre demonstrates the potential for greater change in future by implementing initiatives that address the barriers faced by freelancers with protected characteristics.
- 5.9 We encourage all broadcasters and industry bodies representing the interests of freelancers to better evaluate the impact of the positive interventions they make. This will enable industry to identify effective measures to increase diversity in television production and increase the pace of change.

## Further action by Ofcom

- 5.10 In our future engagement with the main five broadcasters, we will continue to encourage a collaborative approach to improving the diversity of their freelance workforces. We will discuss the challenges of providing diversity data on their freelance workforces and emphasise the importance of better collection and disclosure of information to Ofcom to support our monitoring.
- 5.11 Ofcom will also continue to engage with industry bodies representing freelancers to discuss the progress of initiatives aiming to help those from under-represented groups to launch their careers and continually develop. We will monitor any further diversity data released by industry bodies and consider the impact of remaining challenges to diversity.
- 5.12 Diversity remains an important consideration for the UK's Public Service Broadcasters. Ofcom will consider how best to use our broader programme of work to address our concerns. We will keep our Diversity Advisory Panel informed of progress in this area and continue to seek their insights on the issues raised in this report. Through our work, we will continue to shine a spotlight on the importance of diversity in the television production industry, as a means to improve the authentic portrayal of the diverse communities of the UK.

## A1. Glossary of key terms

<b>Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society's (ALCS)</b>	A not-for-profit membership organisation started by writers for the benefit of writers.
<b>Creative Diversity Network (CDN)</b>	This network aims to share, discuss and profile the work that the UK broadcasters do around diversity, both independently and collectively. Its members include the main five UK broadcasters and it is currently chaired by a representative from Viacom.
<b>Continuing Drama Series (CDS)</b>	A sub-genre of the wider 'drama and comedy' television genre. CDS are often daily or weekly scripted drama shows, broadcast in a regular 30-minute slot in the TV schedule and sometimes based in a single location, such as <i>Emmerdale</i> or <i>Hollyoaks</i> .
<b>Diamond</b>	The online monitoring system managed by CDN that is used by the main five to provide diversity data on their UK-originated productions.
<b>Directors UK</b>	The professional association for TV and film directors and has over 7,000 members.
<b>Diversity Advisory Panel (DAP)</b>	A group of six, highly experienced industry experts provides us with insight and perspectives that broaden our understanding of diversity issues across the UK broadcasting industry.
<b>Equity</b>	A union of more than 45,000 entertainment professional including actors, designers and stage managers both on stage and on screen.
<b>Lifestyle, Entertainment and Reality (LE&amp;R)</b>	A sub-genre of the 'factual' genre. These programmes are unscripted and typically focused on domestic topics. They often feature members of the public and have an emphasis on entertainment, such as programmes such as Channel 4's <i>Location, Location, Location</i> .
<b>Pact</b>	The trade association representing the commercial interests of UK independent television, film, digital, children's animation and media companies.
<b>Writers' Guild of Great Britain (the Writers' Guild or WGBB)</b>	A trade union representing professional writers in TV, film, theatre, radio, books, poetry, animation and video games.