

Adjusting the Colour Balance

**Black, Asian and minority ethnic
representation among screen
directors working in UK television**

A report by Directors UK



September 2018

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Executive summary

In 2015, Directors UK issued its first ever report on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) directorial representation in UK television production¹. The report revealed just how few television programmes are directed by BAME directors. It found that:

- **BAME directors were critically under-represented and under-employed in UK television's directing workforce.**
- **A far smaller proportion of directing opportunities in many key programming genres were being given to BAME directors.**
- **Some of the most popular drama, comedy and entertainment shows had never been directed by a director who was of black, Asian or minority ethnic background.**

UK broadcasters have an obligation under their operating licences to represent and reflect the audiences they serve — the UK population is currently 14% BAME. Broadcasters have responded by publishing inclusion strategies and making efforts to monitor and report on the diversity of those working on their programmes, both on and off screen.

Directors UK now wants to understand if progress has been made to increase the proportion of BAME directors to a figure more reflective of today's society. Directors UK's latest report analyses the proportion of TV programmes made by BAME directors across the UK's four main television broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. It uses data manually collected by the Directors UK team from the credits of television programmes, which has then been cross-checked against data reports submitted by broadcasters.

Key statistics

The 2013–16 period saw the percentage of television **episodes directed by BAME directors increase slightly from 2.2% in 2013 to 2.31% in 2016.**

However, this negligible increase highlights the acute levels of under-representation and under-employment of BAME directors and the lack of progress being made by broadcasters and producers.

Television episodes directed

BAME directors

2.2%

2013

2.31%

2016

UK BAME population

14%

2011²



Change in percentage of episodes directed by BAME directors between 2013–16 (by genre)	
Factual	-0.3 percentage points
Multi-camera & Entertainment	+0.1 percentage points
Children's	+0.1 percentage points
Drama & Comedy	+1.5 percentage points

Change in percentage of episodes directed by BAME directors between 2013–16 (by broadcaster)	
BBC	+0.18 percentage points
ITV	+0.21 percentage points
Channel 4	-0.15 percentage points
Channel 5	+0.39 percentage points

In September 2017, Ofcom, the television regulator, issued a report called [Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Television](#)³. In the foreword, Ofcom's Chief Executive Sharon White stated: "Television has the power to shape and represent our identities and values. To achieve that, broadcasters must reflect the society we live in today ... research suggests they are falling short ... the industry needs to do much more."

This is borne out by our findings, which reveal that between 2013 and 2016 there has been no significant increase in the number of BAME directors working in UK television. Despite **14%** of the population being from BAME backgrounds, just **2.22%** of programmes are made by BAME directors, resulting in a cultural separation between the people who make our television programmes and the audiences who watch them.

Just **3.6%** of the UK television directors featured in our dataset come from BAME backgrounds. In raw numbers: only **158** of the **4,388** directors who appear in this data are of BAME origin.

No broadcaster made a significant improvement on diversity from 2013 to 2016. The BBC saw a **0.18** percentage-point increase, while ITV and Channel 5 experienced a **0.21** and **0.39** percentage-point rise respectively. In the same period, Channel 4 saw a **0.15** percentage-point decline.

When examining specific genres, the figures were more varied. Our report found little or no improvement in the percentage of episodes made by BAME directors in Factual (**a 0.3 percentage-point decrease**) or Multi-camera & Entertainment and Children's (**both increased by 0.1 percentage points**). However, there was a noteworthy rise in Drama & Comedy which increased by **1.5 percentage points**, from **2.6%** in 2013 to **4.1%** in 2016.

We believe the rise in the number of Drama & Comedy episodes made by BAME directors during 2013–16 is due in part to a series of workplace interventions providing opportunities for under-represented groups in Continuing Drama (soaps) and single drama. These contributed to a 3 percentage-point increase in the number of Continuing Drama episodes directed by BAME directors, from **2.7%** to **5.7%**, and a rise of **3.6** percentage points in single drama, from **2.3%** to **5.9%**.

Career development interventions do appear to boost the numbers within targeted genres but these interventions need to be made available across the board if we are to deliver systematic change in overall programme making.

In conclusion, our report recommends a sustainable route to generate positive change:

- We call on Ofcom to make it mandatory for all UK broadcasters to monitor and publicly report on the diversity characteristics of all those making programmes for them, both permanent staff and freelancers.
- We propose that broadcasters be set targets to ensure their workforce mirrors the gender, ethnic and disability makeup of the UK population by 2020.
- We call on broadcasters to use fairer recruitment practices in line with other industries and provide those in hiring positions with unconscious bias training.
- We ask all broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programme-making as a levy to fund industry access and career development schemes for under-represented groups.



About Directors UK

Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,000 members — the majority of working television and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK champions change to create equal opportunities for all.

The dataset

The dataset covers 47,444 episodes directed by 4,388 directors which were broadcast by the four main UK terrestrial broadcasters — BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 — between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. An episode represents a single programme, for instance a documentary, or a single episode within a television series or serial. The dataset is divided into five genres:

Genre	% of total dataset	No. of episodes
Factual	46.9%	22,280
Multi-camera & Entertainment	26.1%	12,423
Drama & Comedy	18.2%	8,667
Children's	8.2%	3,906
Animation	0.3%	168

Key findings

The 2013–16 period saw the percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors increase from 2.2% to 2.31%, representing a rise of just 0.11 percentage points over four years.

Television episodes directed

BAME directors

2.2%

2013

2.31%

2016

White directors

2013

97.77%

2016

97.64%

BAME directors are not representative of the UK population's ethnic make-up

2.22%

Episodes made by BAME directors

3.6%

BAME directors in the dataset

14%

UK population with BAME background²

Of episodes broadcast across the four channels between 2013 and 2016, an average of just 2.22% were worked on by BAME directors.

In terms of numbers of working individuals in the dataset, just 3.6% (158) were from BAME backgrounds while 96.4% (4,230) were white.

Table 1: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors across all broadcasters (2013–16)

Year	White	BAME	Unknown
2013	97.77%	2.20%	0.03%
2014	97.96%	2.03%	0.01%
2015	97.64%	2.31%	0.05%
2016	97.64%	2.31%	0.05%
Percentage shift from 2013–16	-0.13%	+0.11%	





Table 2: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors by broadcaster (2013–16)

- The BBC, ITV and Channel 5 only saw negligible increases in the number of episodes made by BAME directors, the BBC and ITV slightly trending upwards after a sharp dip in 2014. Channel 4 actually saw a small decrease of -0.15 percentage points, trending downwards after 2014. While Channel 5 peaked in 2015 before dropping again.

Broadcaster	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
BBC	2013	5,754	2.49%	Mean average 2.27%	Overall percentage point increase +0.18
	2014	5,313	1.71%		
	2015	6,163	2.23%		
	2016	5,683	2.67%		
ITV	2013	2,853	1.41%	Mean average 1.45%	Overall percentage point increase +0.21
	2014	2,764	1.33%		
	2015	2,613	1.45%		
	2016	2,756	1.62%		
Channel 4	2013	2,643	2.51%	Mean average 2.67%	Overall percentage point decline -0.15
	2014	2,633	3.08%		
	2015	2,183	2.74%		
	2016	2,580	2.36%		
Channel 5	2013	628	1.70%	Mean average 2.80%	Overall percentage point increase +0.39
	2014	780	3.13%		
	2015	930	4.31%		
	2016	1,168	2.09%		

Which genres* saw the biggest change in the percentage of episodes made by BAME directors?

When focusing on Multi-camera & Entertainment and Children's programmes, the report found little or no improvement in the percentage of episodes made by BAME directors. Drama & Comedy saw the biggest rise of 1.5 percentage points. Factual actually declined by 0.3 percentage points over the four-year period.

Table 3: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors, by genre across all broadcasters (2013–16)

- Drama & Comedy saw the biggest increase in the share of episodes by BAME directors, from 2.6% to 4.1%.

Genre	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
Drama & Comedy	2013	2,361	2.6%	Mean average 3.57%	Overall percentage point increase +1.5
	2014	2,083	3.0%		
	2015	2,150	4.6%		
	2016	2,073	4.1%		
Multi-camera & Entertainment	2013	3,093	0.6%	Mean average 0.57%	Overall percentage point increase +0.10
	2014	3,136	0.8%		
	2015	2,862	0.2%		
	2016	3,332	0.7%		
Children's	2013	1,067	1.5%	Mean average 1.2%	Overall percentage point increase +0.10
	2014	894	0.7%		
	2015	1,075	1.0%		
	2016	870	1.6%		
Factual	2013	5,356	3.0%	Mean average 2.8%	Overall percentage point decline -0.3
	2014	5,343	2.6%		
	2015	5,684	2.9%		
	2016	5,897	2.7%		
Animation	2013	1	–		Insufficient data†
	2014	34	0.0%		
	2015	118	0.0%		
	2016	15	0.0%		

* Full genre and sub-genre definitions can be found on page 23.

† The number of Animation episodes included in our sample is too small to be statistically illustrative.

Looking at the sub-genres in more detail, where have the percentages changed?

Factual programmes



Table 4: Percentage of Factual television episodes made by BAME directors, by sub-genre across all broadcasters (2013–16)

The area of greatest decline within the Factual genre was in documentary series episodes, which fell by 0.8 percentage points. Constructed factual saw a rise in the percentage of BAME directors in 2015 coinciding with an increase in the number of episodes being produced, but in 2016 this dropped back down to 0%.

Sub-genre	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
Factual entertainment	2013	916	0.4%	Mean average	Overall percentage point increase +0.2
	2014	733	0.8%	0.62%	
	2015	625	0.7%		
	2016	686	0.6%		
Constructed factual	2013	59	0.0%		Mean average
	2014	82	1.2%	1.55%	
	2015	110	5.0%		
	2016	37	0.0%		
Single documentary	2013	385	3.0%		Mean average
	2014	336	3.1%	2.5%	
	2015	376	1.1%		
	2016	331	2.8%		
Lifestyle entertainment and reality	2013	2,645	3.9%		Mean average
	2014	2,692	2.9%	3.37%	
	2015	2,832	3.4%		
	2016	2,994	3.3%		
Documentary series episodes	2013	1,314	3.4%		Mean average
	2014	1,450	2.8%	2.95%	
	2015	1,681	3.0%		
	2016	1,797	2.6%		

Multi-camera & Entertainment



Table 5: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors by sub-genre within Multi-camera & Entertainment across all broadcasters (2013–16)

- Within the report dataset, there were no BAME directors working on debate programmes between 2013 and 2016. There were approximately 1,500 episodes made per year within the game show sub-genre — over 6,000 episodes in total — across the whole four-year period and yet only one of those episodes was made by a BAME director. This is very discouraging and raises the question as to whether there are specific barriers within these sub-genres that block the entry of new talent.

Sub-genre	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
Entertainment	2013	883	0.0%	Mean average	Overall percentage point increase +0.3
	2014	926	0.2%	0.17%	
	2015	802	0.2%		
	2016	876	0.3%		
Debate	2013	88	0.0%		Mean average
	2014	28	0.0%		
	2015	24	0.0%		
	2016	105	0.0%		
Game show	2013	1,455	0.0%	Mean average	0.01% No change
	2014	1,659	0.0%		
	2015	1,426	0.0%		
	2016	1,562	0.03%		
Report/ magazine	2013	540	3.4%	Mean average	Overall percentage point decrease -0.6
	2014	415	4.0%	2.72%	
	2015	535	0.7%		
	2016	698	2.8%		
Recording of a cultural event (concert, ballet)	2013	108	1.4%		Mean average
	2014	75	6.7%	2.02%	
	2015	45	0.0%		
	2016	60	0.0%		

Children's programmes



The author's voice is vital in shaping children's perception of the world during their formative years. This is why it is important that programmes are made by people who ethnically and culturally reflect the society in which we live.

Table 6: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors by sub-genre within Children's across all broadcasters (2013–16)

- Only one sub-genre showed a rise in percentage points: children's episode in a drama series saw a 2.5 percentage-point increase in the number of programmes made by BAME directors. Similarly, as with the game show sub-genre, the pre-school sub-genre had only one BAME-directed episode across the four-year period. There were over 1,790 pre-school episodes made between 2013 and 2016.

Sub-genre	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
Children's episode in drama series	2013	287	1.6%	Mean average	Overall percentage point increase +2.5
	2014	239	2.5%	2.7%	
	2015	350	2.6%		
	2016	302	4.1%		
Pre-school	2013	492	0.2%		Mean average
	2014	511	0.0%	0.05%	
	2015	498	0.0%		
	2016	358	0.0%		
Children's factual/entertainment	2013	283	3.9%		Mean average
	2014	143	0.0%	1.2%	
	2015	226	0.2%		
	2016	209	0.7%		

Drama & Comedy



Table 7: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors by sub-genre within Drama & Comedy across all broadcasters (2013–16)

- Of all the genres, Drama & Comedy showed the most positive signs of improvement.
- Within the sub-genres, Continuing Drama (soaps) has seen a notable increase in the number of episodes directed by BAME directors from 2.7% to 5.8% over the four-year period. This is in part due to a number of broadcaster / production company workplace interventions generating opportunities for under-represented groups. As the sub-genre creating the bulk of drama episodes it is important that BAME directors have a greater presence here.
- Single drama episodes made by a BAME director also increased by 3.6 percentage points. This represents the biggest rise across all the genres and sub-genres in the report. However, due to the comparatively small number of episodes within this sub-genre, a slight fluctuation in work for just one BAME director can have a dramatic effect on the percentages, making it difficult to draw statistical conclusions.

Sub-genre	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
Continuing Drama (soaps)	2013	1,479	2.7%	Mean average 4.45%	Overall percentage point increase +3
	2014	1,302	3.6%		
	2015	1,354	5.8%		
	2016	1,238	5.7%		
Drama series and scripted comedy	2013	797	2.5%	Mean average 2.12%	Overall percentage point decrease -0.8
	2014	734	2.0%		
	2015	738	2.3%		
	2016	780	1.7%		
Single drama	2013	44	2.3%	Mean average 3.45%	Overall percentage point increase +3.6
	2014	39	1.3%		
	2015	58	4.3%		
	2016	34	5.9%		



Continuing Drama



With a high volume of episodes, Continuing Drama (soaps) makes up a substantial share of all television content. Career interventions within this sub-genre therefore offer a significant opportunity to bolster the number of working BAME directors.

In 2015, [BBC Writersroom](#)⁴ set up a scheme for early career directors — the BBC Continuing Drama Directors' Scheme. It provides career development opportunities on Continuing Drama series, including *Casualty*, *Doctors*, *EastEnders*, *Holby City* and *River City*, and is supported and part-funded by Directors UK. In the first two years (2015 and 2016), 21 directors took part in the scheme, a third of those were of BAME origin.

Interventions like these have gone on to generate long-term opportunities, with participants being offered further work after the placement has ended and being given multiple episodes ('blocks') to direct.

Doctors (BBC) showed a significantly higher number of episodes by BAME directors in 2016, which is a compelling indication that positive intervention does increase the level of BAME representation. The *Doctors* placement scheme has so far led to further employment opportunities for three BAME directors. However, we are yet to see a trend of BAME directors moving on from *Doctors* to higher profile and higher budget continuing dramas.

Table 8: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors within Continuing Drama

- *Doctors* (BBC) showed a significant increase in the percentage of episodes made by BAME directors — jumping from 6.7% to 21.8% in four years. This is, in part, due to the establishment of an ‘early career’ directors development scheme.

Continuing Drama	Year	Episodes	% episodes made by BAME directors		
<i>Doctors</i> (BBC)	2013	268	6.7%	Mean average	Overall percentage point increase +15.1
	2014	175	8.6%	13.28%	
	2015	225	16%		
	2016	179	21.8%		
<i>Coronation Street</i> (ITV)	2013	271	1.5%		Mean average
	2014	238	6.3%	6.33%	
	2015	251	9.6%		
	2016	241	7.9%		
<i>Casualty</i> (BBC)	2013	48	16.7%		Mean average
	2014	40	10%	11.9%	
	2015	49	8.2%		
	2016	39	12.8%		
<i>Hollyoaks</i> (Channel 4)	2013	311	5.8%		Mean average
	2014	312	1.9%	2.76%	
	2015	306	2.3%		
	2016	294	1%		
<i>Emmerdale</i> (ITV)	2013	300	0%		Mean average
	2014	287	1.4%	0.35%	
	2015	282	0%		
	2016	286	0%		
<i>EastEnders</i> (BBC)	2013	266	0%		Mean average
	2014	250	2%	1.3%	
	2015	225	2.2%		
	2016	209	1%		
<i>Holby City</i> (BBC)	2013	56	3.6%		Mean average
	2014	48	6.3%	4.33%	
	2015	54	7.4%		
	2016	54	0%		



Spotlight on the broadcasters

Broadcasters report that they are now taking steps to comprehensively monitor their diversity through the Project Diamond initiative run by the Creative Diversity Network (CDN). This not-for-profit organisation was founded and funded by the major UK broadcasters, including the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5/Viacom and Sky.

The four broadcasters we are exploring in this report have also created diversity commissioning guidelines which are publicly available to view and, as such, they can be held to account for delivering them. These guidelines will be referred to later in our report.

Table 9: Percentage of television episodes made by BAME directors across the four genres for all broadcasters (2013–16)

- No broadcaster increased the percentage of BAME-directed episodes across all four genres included within the dataset. The most notable area of improvement is for the BBC and ITV in Drama & Comedy.
- There is no discernible pattern to the percentage share of episodes made by BAME directors, although there are areas of positivity. Improvements can be seen in Drama & Comedy so it is worth considering how this upward trend can be replicated across all genres.

Genre	Broadcaster	2013	2014	2015	2016	Variant from 2013 to 2016
Factual	BBC	3.16%	1.68%	2.31%	2.77%	-0.39
	ITV	3.18%	1.37%	0.77%	1.73%	-1.45
	Channel 4	2.79%	4.58%	4.50%	3.39%	+0.6
	Channel 5	2.62%	4.15%	6.14%	2.68%	+0.06
Multi-camera & Entertainment	BBC	1.21%	1.00%	0.28%	1.13%	-0.08
	ITV	0%	0.20%	0.13%	0.29%	+0.29
	Channel 4	0.58%	0.84%	0%	0%	-0.58
	Channel 5	0%	3.33%	0%	0%	0
Children's	BBC	1.85%	0.83%	1.13%	1.80%	-0.05
	ITV	0%	0%	0%	No Shows	0
	Channel 4	No episodes	No episodes	No episodes	No episodes	N/A
	Channel 5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0
Drama & Comedy	BBC	3.10%	3.32%	5.68%	6.15%	+3.05
	ITV	0.80%	3.02%	4.15%	3.02%	+2.22
	Channel 4	4.48%	2.19%	2.09%	1.66%	-2.82
	Channel 5	0%	3.33%	0%	0%	0

Project Diamond

The first diversity and inclusion report issued in 2017 and updated in May 2018⁵ by Project Diamond, the diversity monitoring system used by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky, was called [*Diamond: The First Cut*](#).

“Currently, we are also unable to ascertain the extent to which our data sample is representative of the workforce it is trying to capture. Although we are reporting on 80,804 contributions from 5,904 contributors, the response rate is relatively low (24.3 percent of those invited to submit data).”⁶

Accepting this data relates to a quarter of those asked to take part in Diamond, it reported that 10.1% of the off-screen contributions were from BAME workers⁷. Until the CDN, who deliver Diamond, and the broadcasters can provide further data and analysis and the response rate improves, it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions.



CDN states that the report is the result of the first year of data gathering and it is working with broadcasters and production companies to increase response rates across the industry. It also said that it hopes to provide further analysis in the future to help us better understand whether directors from under-represented groups are in decision-making positions where they can shape content. In May 2018, the CDN released an updated version of *Diamond: The First Cut* which stated:

“This update is a continuation of the commitment made by CDN and all the Diamond broadcasters to publish data from the system. The intention is to ensure that any interventions are informed by evidence.”⁸

If credible evidence is required to catalyse change, additional independent findings from professional bodies such as Directors UK should act as a stimulant for broadcasters, programme makers and Ofcom to take immediate and decisive diversity action, particularly considering Ofcom Chief Executive Sharon White’s speech at the Westminster Media Forum⁹:

“How wide is the circle of commissioning editors who determine what gets made? How deep is the pool of senior writers and directors who develop those stories? Commissioners may be turning repeatedly to tried and trusted writers and editors. That’s an understandable instinct, but it risks forming a closed circle of talent.”

Broadcasters' efforts to promote diversity for off-screen talent

Each broadcaster has issued updated diversity and inclusion commissioning guidelines in response to an industry-wide call to improve diversity and gender equality.

BBC

The BBC's Content Diversity and Inclusion Commissioning Guidelines¹⁰ state that a production company must have a diversity and inclusion strategy in place when they submit an 'editorial specification'. The BBC also highlights the development of a new talent database and a Diversity and Inclusion Development Fund to support early stage projects. Most notably, they set out their equality and diversity targets so that partners know what success looks like.

"Set your own proportionate goals that address any under-representation you have identified and that will help us meet our aspirations; we aim to have 50% women and at least 15% BAME, 8% LGBT and 8% disabled people working behind the camera by 2020. Your own ethnicity staffing targets should be appropriate to your geography." (p.16)

In March 2018, the BBC also published the BBC Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice¹¹.

"We expect content makers to set out for each production what measures will be taken to increase off air diversity (as set out in the commissioning specification), including those in senior production roles to include: Executive Producer, Series Producer/Editor, Producer/Director, Production Executive, Head of Production, Writer, Director, Producer [as relevant by production]." (p.13)

ITV

In ITV's Commissioning Commitments Overview¹², the broadcaster lays out its commitment to diversity and inclusion and sets out expectations for production partners.

"We want our production partners to think about how diversity and inclusion can be achieved when crewing up a programme for us to commission. We understand and share the need to have the best people for the roles, and we expect our production partners to be proactive in their search for the best and make sure working environments, practices and policies are inclusive... Make sure early and ongoing suggestions around lead editorial roles including

writers, exec producers, producers, directors and other HoDs will form a senior team that endeavours to represent modern working Britain. This could be linked to a person's experience, networks and contacts — not specifically their own ethnicity, gender, disability, age or sexuality." (p.8–9)

Channel 4

In 2017, Channel 4 issued an update on their 360° Diversity Charter¹³, highlighting plans to deliver an initiative to support 40 directors from under-represented groups (p.8). They have also updated their commissioning guidelines for 'off screen' roles (p.38).

"Factual programmes: A programme or series where AT LEAST one of the Head of Production / Production Executive / Director / Producer / Producer Director / Series Producer / Series Director / Series Editor / Executive Producer is from an ethnic minority or has a disability.

"Scripted programmes: Of a scripted programme AT LEAST one of the ... Director / Writer / Producer / Executive Producer / Lead DOP / Designer/ Lead Editor ... is from an ethnic minority or has a disability. OR at least two are women."

Channel 5 (Viacom)

Viacom has an Office of Global Inclusion and produced a set of key targets and guidelines within its Viacom in the UK Diversity and Inclusion Strategy¹⁴.

"The measurable goal of Viacom's diversity and inclusion strategy is to broadly reflect the make-up of modern British society in our programmes and in the people we employ both directly and indirectly through the independent production companies we work with."

On their website¹⁵ they also stress:

"We expect all production companies with which we work to have in place policies aimed at furthering the diversity of their workforce. We expect such policies to cover recruitment and promotion policies for permanent staff, freelance staff and Interns; and to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups. In addition, we will seek a series of specific commitments from the people who make programmes for us. In respect of each programme or series we commission, we will require production companies to ... Provide details of senior production staff who will work on the commission; how they were chosen for those roles; and what steps were taken to ensure people from underrepresented groups were included."



Broadcasters' response to this report

Prior to the publication of this report, we shared our findings with the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5. The broadcasters requested that the Creative Diversity Network (CDN)¹⁶ respond on their behalf. CDN provided us with the following statements:

CDN: Thank you to Directors UK for publishing the data that they hold on their members who worked on and collected fees for UK productions 2013–16. At CDN we believe that long term, comprehensive and consistent monitoring, data collection and evidence gathering, is an essential tool for driving equality of opportunity.

When Diamond launched in 2016, it signalled a fresh intent by the main UK broadcasters to provide consistent and transparent data about the diversity of the production community in its entirety, including directors. The single system approach also facilitates sharing of good practice and will enable us to provide far reaching insights into UK television production. Diamond also catalysed a commitment by UK broadcasters to take a change-focused approach to diversity and equality. Since the launch of Diamond in 2016, the UK broadcasters have reviewed their targets and ways of working, implementing programmes and protocols to find and develop the best talent.

As these programmes take flight, it is more important than ever that we gather robust and comprehensive data over the long term to monitor the impact they are having on the wider industry, as well as their own businesses and practice.

Deborah Williams, Executive Director of CDN says “Directors UK’s report is a good start and will, we hope, over time demonstrate how long-term data can provide rich insights. We look forward to the next three years of data being published by Directors UK which we hope will provide additional insights into our own data, which is growing steadily.”

Channel 4’s Head of Creative Diversity and Special Projects Angela Chan, sent a comment via CDN: “In 2017 Channel 4 gave opportunities to 46 emerging diverse directors, exceeding our target of 40. Directors worked across a wide range of genres and titles, including *Hollyoaks*, *Unreported World* and *The Undateables*. Half of the directors were introduced to indies by Channel 4, who then hired them on merit. We also provided direct funding to directors, enabling them to spend more time in edit and to receive bespoke training. We also launched 4Stories, our new drama strand for emerging diverse directors. Our ambition is to keep progressing the careers of these directors, working with them to broaden their contacts among indies and commissioning editors. Channel 4 is committed to nurturing new and diverse talent.”

ITV sent a comment via CDN: “The commissioning team’s Social Partnership Commissioning Commitments are our main tool for driving change in our production supply chain. We strengthened and simplified these Commissioning Commitments in 2018. ITV are pleased to have talented BAME directors working across their output, in Factual shows like: *Ibiza Weekender*, *Heathrow: Britain’s Busiest Airport* and *What Would Your Kid Do?*; and in Drama we recently announced that Gurinder Chadha will direct episodes of her new series *Beecham House*.

“ITV Studios Continuing Drama, in conjunction with Directors UK, have run a series of Multi-Camera Drama Directing Workshops which give non-ITV directors from under-represented groups training and opportunities in soap directing. Initiatives like this will furnish us with a much more representative pool of Continuing Drama directors to draw on in the coming years, as well as helping to shift the BAME representation of our regular director pool and increasing the range of directors we work with.”

The **BBC**'s Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Tunde Ogungbesan, said: "The small number of BAME directors working across the TV industry is a concern for everyone who cares about representation. At the BBC we're committed to improving that representation through schemes such as the Documentary Directors' Initiative and the Continuing Drama Directors' Scheme. These are some of the largest schemes run by any UK broadcaster. Both programmes are designed to support the careers of directors, providing opportunities, training and mentoring to help them at different stages of their careers."

Channel 5 / Viacom responded via CDN: "Last year, Viacom announced a diversity and inclusion strategy which seeks to broadly reflect the make-up of modern British society across our programmes and in the people it employs both directly and indirectly through our independent production companies at all levels.

Promoting and supporting diversity is part of Viacom's DNA, whether through our long-established Office of Global Inclusion or the investment in employee resource groups focused on increasing inclusion and cultural awareness in the workplace. Whilst we strive to make strides with on and off-screen diversity, we know there's much more work to do.

"In early 2017, Channel 5 published Diversity Commissioning Guidelines for our independent production partners, setting out the contribution we expect from individual programmes and production teams to help us achieve our goal. We are actively seeking directors from under-represented groups to work across all of our genres. We have most recently worked with talented BAME directors from Stellify Media, ITN Productions and Maroon Productions and remain committed to reflecting society, both on and off screen."



Why does the amount of television made by BAME directors remain so low?

Research from other bodies, such as CAMEo (2018)¹⁷ and anecdotal feedback from our director members suggest several possible causes:

Unconscious bias: Deep-seated behaviours, perceptions and values influence decision-making even if we are not consciously aware of them. For example, the idea that BAME directors are best suited to make BAME content is inherently biased. It's based on outmoded views and stereotypes that need to change.

There is a belief that BAME directors are few in number: There are BAME directors who have the right talent and experience for a wealth of opportunities. The issue is not a lack of talent, but a failure by the programme commissioners and producers to search for talent outside their known network. We have a great deal of work to do to bring BAME directors into the profession and retain them. Even so, with BAME directors making just 2.31% of UK television, our existing workforce is still underemployed compared to non-BAME directors.

Hiring practices: Where freelance recruitment processes are largely informal, most work is secured by personal referral so opportunities often stay within a closed network. Even if jobs are advertised, hiring decisions may be based on a familiarity with a director's credits and not on their



actual skills. Working on a well-known programme becomes an influential stepping stone rather than contributing to a lesser known but more technically challenging show. To compound the problem references are usually made verbally. They are not recorded or archived, so cannot be checked or queried, and the discussions often cover perceived personality rather than skills. As Directors UK CEO Andrew Chowns highlighted in an [article in Broadcast](#)¹⁸ in April 2018, this informal system uses an employer's own network which makes it closed to external opinions and is likely to result in a lack of hiring diversity.

Small-scale diversity initiatives cannot create systemic change: While broadcasters clearly recognise the need to take positive action to address a lack of diversity behind the camera, our findings show these actions have yet to make an impact on the overall percentages. Establishing placements for BAME directors builds trust with commissioners and production companies and showcases their capabilities to help change perceptions and overcome unconscious bias. But a small-scale deployment of this activity is not enough. It needs to be part of a wider, more strategic plan by broadcasters that includes multiple titles across all genres.

Until interventions become common practice instead of genre-based exceptions, positive change towards a more ethnically representative workforce will be impeded.

Loss of focus: The ever broadening 'diversity and inclusion' conversation in the industry has lost focus as the categories rightly expand to include social mobility and neuro-diversity as well as gender, race, disability and LGBT. While this is a good thing, it does mean that no group is getting the full support it deserves to ensure meaningful, far-reaching and sustainable change.



Directors UK recommendations

The purpose of this report is not only to raise awareness of lack of diversity behind the camera but also to suggest a sustainable route for positive change. Our recommendations cross all diversity and inclusion categories in order to support all directors working in the creative industries.

Recommendation 1

Existing diversity information collected by Ofcom does not contain comprehensive data surrounding freelance programme makers. We are calling for Ofcom to make it a mandatory annual requirement for all UK broadcasters to monitor and publicly report on the diversity characteristics of all those making programmes for them. This reporting must include both permanent staff and freelancers.

In particular, we would like to see broadcasters monitor and publish diversity data on directors and other senior production roles.

This transparency within individual roles will make broadcasters accountable to their equality, diversity and inclusion actions and commissioning goals and identify areas of concern that can be positively addressed. It will also prevent the lack of diversity among directors being lost or hidden in overall monitoring statistics.

Recommendation 2

We call for Ofcom to set broadcasters targets to use production crews whose gender, ethnic and disability makeup mirrors that of the UK population, both in front of and behind the camera, by 2020.

Broadcasters should be required to show evidence of initiatives undertaken year on year to improve diversity and inclusion among directors as well as presenting statistical results.

Recommendation 3

We call on broadcasters to take practical measures to improve the diversity of their programme makers, in particular directors, and to build the following provisions into their commissioning contracts:

- Unconscious bias training for everyone in hiring or hiring approval positions in broadcasters and production companies.
- A commitment to regularly bring commissioners, production companies and freelancers together to network to improve job mobility within the industry.
- A commitment to fairer recruitment practices in line with other industries to improve equal access to opportunities for all, including gender and BAME workers; in particular, externally advertising roles and the introduction of written references for freelance production staff.

Recommendation 4

For all broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programme making as a levy to fund industry access and career development schemes for under-represented groups. Currently only high-end drama and children's programmes are part of industry training levies.

Methodology

The data used to produce this report comes from programme credits for UK-commissioned television programmes broadcast across the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 terrestrial channels between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. Also included are UK-commissioned programmes shown more than once on those broadcasters' digital channels during the same period. Each individual episode appears in the data only once; upon its first transmission if that was on a terrestrial channel, or its first repeat if on a digital channel.

Our data is gathered on a post-broadcast basis as part of the Directors UK scheme for distributing royalty payments and has been cross referenced with transmission reports submitted by the broadcasters themselves. The data excludes news and sports programmes which are not typically repeated and are therefore not a part of our royalty scheme.

The broadcast data has been matched with our comprehensive database of directors working in UK television. Due to the nature of the production environment we had to be mindful that not every programme title appears in every year in the dataset, nor does every director. So, we used the common factors in the data between years to draw our conclusions; for instance, the same genres and sub-genres in programme production and the same broadcasters. These provided consistent points for comparison. The figures produced in this report are an accurate depiction of our database as of 8 February 2018, which is when the data was extracted for analysis.

Fractional weighting

Fractional weighting was used in the analysis. Each production was weighted by the number of employed directors. A sole director on an episode counts for a 100% share of an episode while five directors working on the same programme would count for 20% each. If a white director and a BAME director co-directed a programme, that episode would be considered 50% white and 50% BAME.

Identification via Origins software

Directors UK worked with insight consultancy [Webber Phillips](#) to identify and cross reference the BAME directors found within our data sample. The analysis is derived from unique software (Origins) created by Professor Richard Webber, best known as the lead developer of two of the most commonly used consumer classification systems in the UK: Mosaic and Acorn. The technology is used extensively by public authorities, including police and health services, as well as leading retailers to gain detailed insight into performance and customer experience.

This software employs a database of 1.2 billion individual records globally. It uses 2.5 million family names and 0.8 million personal names to generate algorithms that can associate individual names with their gender, ethnic or cultural identity. Results derived from Origins have been tested against several samples where the gender composition is known through other methods and achieved accuracy in excess of 95 per cent.

Independent analysis

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) was selected as the analytical partner to quality assure the analysis of our datasets (natcen.ac.uk). NatCen is the UK's largest independent social research agency with data handling protocols that are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation. The data was anonymised and securely delivered to NatCen who analysed it during the spring of 2018. The analysis and validation process included significance testing of data, validation of charted findings and scrutiny of episodes and directors' working patterns.

Glossary of terms

Director: The creative lead who is responsible for:

- interpreting and planning the realisation of the creative content, style and structure of a work
- capturing and gathering the creative content through directing the production crew, performers, presenters and contributors in a work
- directing the editing of the creative content to form it into a cohesive whole

Episode: A one-off programme such as a single documentary or a single episode within a series or serial.

Title: The name of a one-off programme or series, e.g. *Casualty*.

Factual (genre): An episode generally focused on one topic, typically one presenter or narrator and has an emphasis on information.

- **Lifestyle, entertainment and reality TV (sub-genre):** A show typically centred around domestic topics, where members of the public are sometime featured. The emphasis is on entertainment. Includes *Reality TV*, e.g. *Location, Location, Location*.
- **Episode in documentary series (sub-genre):** A show exploring a single factual topic as part of a wider portfolio of topics, e.g. *Dispatches*.
- **Factual entertainment (sub-genre):** Provides a mix of factual information and entertainment, typically covering a handful of topics presented by more than one presenter, e.g. *The Gadget Show*.
- **Single documentary (sub-genre):** A long or short film, covering one topic in a factual context, e.g. *The Spy Who Brought Down Mary Queen of Scots*.
- **Constructed factual (sub-genre):** Has the look and feel of a reality show, but the broad narrative is prepared in advance, e.g. *The Only Way is Essex*.

Multi-camera & Entertainment (genre): A studio-based show, created using multiple cameras to capture different perspectives and action.

- **Game show (sub-genre):** Usually features members of the public as contestants and contains an element of gaming and the winning of prizes, e.g. *Deal or No Deal*.



- **Debate (sub-genre):** A studio-based show where two or more parties, often accompanied by an audience exchange views and pose questions, e.g. *Question Time*.
- **Report/magazine (sub-genre):** Shows that report on a variety of topical subjects. Often with hosts that introduce different segments, e.g. *Watchdog*.
- **Entertainment (sub-genre):** Typically light entertainment programme filmed in front of a studio audience, e.g. *Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*.
- **Recording of a cultural event (concert, ballet, or award ceremony):** a broadcast based around an event of wide popular interest, e.g. a royal wedding.

Drama & Comedy (genre): Scripted shows based around comedic sketches, or story narratives.

- **Drama series and scripted comedy (sub-genre):** A scripted show. Typically with recurring characters, story threads or aspects that appear in multiple episodes, e.g. *Doc Martin*.
- **Continuing Drama (soaps) (sub-genre):** Daily or weekly scripted drama shows, typically broadcast in a 30-minute broadcast slot. Often set in a single locale, e.g. *EastEnders*.
- **Single drama:** Includes miniseries that have one director, one-off dramas and feature films, e.g. *Murder on the Home Front*.

Children's (genre): Programming aimed at audiences under 16 years of age.

- **Children's factual/entertainment (sub-genre):** Shows for 6+ focused on providing information and entertainment, e.g. *Officially Amazing*.
- **Children's episode in series (sub-genre):** Shows for ages 6+ broadly entertainment focused, e.g. *The Dumping Ground*.
- **Pre-school (sub-genre):** Children's shows for ages 0–6, e.g. *Igam Ogam*

Summary tables: BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5

Table 10: Number of episodes and programme titles and directors by year for all four broadcasters combined (2013–16)

Year	No. of episodes	No. of programme titles	No. of directors
Total	47,444	4,262	4,388
2013	11,878	1,395	2,241
2014	11,490	1,320	2,177
2015	11,889	1,355	2,342
2016	12,187	1,337	2,313

Table 11: Number of episodes, programme titles and directors by broadcaster and year (2013–16)

Year	Broadcaster	No. of episodes	No. of programme titles	No. of directors
2013	BBC	5,754	781	1,324
	ITV	2,853	214	368
	Channel 4	2,643	285	715
	Channel 5	628	115	223
2014	BBC	5,313	718	1,297
	ITV	2,764	206	377
	Channel 4	2,633	255	653
	Channel 5	780	141	265
2015	BBC	6,163	761	1,389
	ITV	2,613	212	227
	Channel 4	2,183	253	658
	Channel 5	930	129	322
2016	BBC	5,683	705	1,266
	ITV	2,756	227	448
	Channel 4	2,580	283	717
	Channel 5	1,168	122	318

Table 12: Number of episodes, programme titles and directors by genre for each broadcaster (2013–16)

Broadcaster	Genre	No. of episodes	No. of programme titles	No. of directors
BBC	Factual	9,720	1,567	2,016
	Multi-camera & Entertainment	5,721	303	489
	Drama & Comedy	4,107	278	435
	Children's	3,322	210	335
	Animation	43	9	12
ITV	Factual	4,476	401	628
	Multi-camera & Entertainment	3,452	132	205
	Drama & Comedy	2,813	89	209
	Children's	121	7	7
	Animation	124	4	9
Channel 4	Factual	5,640	670	1,387
	Multi-camera & Entertainment	2,689	99	101
	Drama & Comedy	1,709	69	213
	Children's	No shows	No shows	No shows
	Animation	1	1	2
Channel 5	Factual	2,444	390	702
	Multi-camera & Entertainment	561	24	54
	Drama & Comedy	38	5	11
	Children's	463	11	20
	Animation	No shows	No shows	No shows



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Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,000 members — the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

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