



BIRMINGHAM CITY
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Setting the standards for success: interrogating the evidence to ensure lasting change through 'Channel 4 represents Black to Front'.

Report for Channel 4 by

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Executive Summary

Channel 4's 'Black to Front' initiative, a day of programming with 100% on-screen Black representation, and attempting to maximise Black representation behind the camera, provides a valuable opportunity for the broadcaster to identify and trial business practices that could significantly increase Black and people of colour (shortened to PoC henceforth) representation behind the camera in general and in key positions for years to come.

The broadcaster has announced that it sees this as “part of its ongoing commitment as an anti-racist organisation to improve Black representation on and off screen and drive long-term change”, as well as a way to “amplify Black talent, stories, and voices by bringing them to the forefront on screen and off screen.”

Yet, if the initiative is not implemented correctly it risks Channel 4 being seen by the general public as trying to capitalise on Black Lives Matter and the serious political movement of combating anti-Black racism for its own benefit, and with little or no lasting benefit to broader attempts to increase Black representation in UK broadcasting.

This report is organised in two key parts – examining existing data including a review of the literature, and utilising previous experience in terms of examples and interviews. It ends with recommendations for Channel 4 to maximise the potential for the 'Black to Front' day to make long-lasting change and minimise the risk of it being seen as tokenism. The recommendations are organised – for ease of reference – in terms of how they should be implemented, however, they broadly fall into the four key categories set out below.

1. Bigger Than One Day

Employment opportunities for Black people at independent production companies and at Channel 4 must be implemented before the day in question and carried on beyond the day. We also recommend that the day is repeated for several years to come with specific reference to Black people, in order for the broadcaster to show commitment to the process. To this end the day would enable benchmarking of the state of the television industry in 2021 and be able to measure progress for years to come. This of course does not exclude the idea of repeating the process or taking other actions to address underrepresentation of those with other protected characteristics at the same time.



2. Recognising the Need for Black Representation Behind the Camera Inside and Outside of Channel 4.

It is important to recognise the specific importance of Black representation behind the camera as opposed to representation of PoC in general. This issue is captured by an ongoing debate over the term “Black, Asian and minority ethnic”, which we believe is not merely a linguistic complaint but a genuine grievance with PoC being lumped together and the specific differences and challenges of racial groups not being recognised. We provide data to illustrate this issue.¹ We also provide evidence and experience on how important it is for the broadcaster to recognise the value of Black representation in editorial roles (behind the camera but especially commissioners) and the impact this will have on delivering more meaningful representation across the board.

¹ Terminology: We recognise the increasing dissatisfaction with the term “Black, Asian and minority ethnic” across large sections of society. We used it in this report as it is still the industry standard term and relates to data and references we cite below. We intend to use more appropriate and specific terminology in future research conducted by the Centre because we think it will more accurately reflect the detail of diversity in the media landscape.

3. A Tailored Approach for New and Ongoing Commissions

The report recognises the different challenges facing new and ongoing commissions to maximise Black representation behind the camera. The former should be used to identify skill shortages with the aspiration of achieving 100% Black representation behind the camera. The aspiration to achieve 100% representation² should lead to identifying where suitable Black talent exists and where there are gaps. This in turn should provide lessons for the broadcasters to identify the difficulties and speed at which existing commissions can increase their Black representation behind the camera. Both new and existing commissions should attempt to maximise the number of substantive opportunities for meaningful employment for Black staff at independent production companies, as well as looking at ways to maximise the number of Black commissioners at Channel 4. Where substantial opportunities do not exist to increase Black representation for ongoing commissions the broadcaster should explore ways to sponsor and create shadowing and training programmes for Black staff lasting several months and culminating in several production credits for individuals over the time period including on the day itself.

4. Creating Baseline Data to Track Success

Channel 4 needs to be able to communicate credibly the impact of the 'Black to Front' day. Currently there are no industry-wide trusted statistics for the ethnic diversity of those making any broadcasters' programmes. Channel 4 needs to take this opportunity to explore and test new ways to work with independent production companies to collect and publish data. We provide specific recommendations for data collection including: head count diversity, percentage of salary spend, and diversity of key roles including commissioners (inclusive of programme spend and budgets).

With these recommendations, we believe there is a real possibility for year-on-year transformative change – with Channel 4 being an industry leader, improving not just the diversity and representation of its own programmes but providing a public good across British media.

² There are some limitations under the Equality Act 2010, but the Act provides the opportunity for promoting positive change too where certain conditions are met.



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

On 25 August 2020 Channel 4 announced that it would dedicate a whole day of output to showcasing Black talent on and off screen. From breakfast right through to late night, Channel 4 will reimagine some of its biggest mainstream shows with a 'takeover' day of programming that will mark a year since the international protests and debates sparked by the killing of George Floyd and lead into Black History Month 2021. This day, entitled 'Black to Front', will be part of a wider series of initiatives within the 'Channel 4 Represents' umbrella.

There are three key goals for Channel 4's 'Black to Front' day of programming:

1. Achieving 100% Black on-screen talent across the day.
2. Achieving as high a proportion as possible of Black people in off-screen roles in general, and in key off-screen roles in particular. And where this is not possible trying to achieve as high a proportion as possible of PoC in off-screen roles.
3. Use the day to improve diversity over the long-term, both in terms of gaining lessons to inform future policies and creating lasting change from actions taken on the day.

The purpose of this report

Channel 4 asked the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity (LHC) at Birmingham City University to advise and design the best ambitious and achievable off-screen goals for 'Black to Front' in 2021. In order to do this, the LHC has completed research and interviews to ascertain not only how Channel 4 might achieve their ambitions to increase representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic talent in off-screen roles, but how the legacy of 'Black to Front' might be managed in order to make the day part of longer-term commitments to enhancing Black, Asian and minority ethnic workforce representation, rather than a one-off or standalone initiative.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of current debates and research pertaining to workforce diversity in UK broadcasting, evidence of existing precedents for so-called broadcasting 'takeovers', and to offer recommendations drawing from this evidence and experience to help inform how Channel 4 might set achievable and long-term goals for 'Black to Front' and beyond.

Current 'Black to Front' Schedule

As part of the plans for the day, Channel 4's Director of Programmes Ian Katz announced two major new commissions: a new Black-led comedy series and a new unscripted series set in the Black community. Both of these will feature in the 'Black to Front' in 2021.

It is our understanding that these new commissions will be scheduled within a typical weekday schedule of programmes on Channel 4.

At the time of writing, Channel 4 was in the process of commissioning new programming for the day.

Assumptions for this Report

On its announcement, Channel 4 stated that 'Black to Front' is part of the broadcaster's 'ongoing commitment as an anti-racist organisation to improve Black representation on and off screen and drive long-term change'.³

The LHC believes this commitment to broader change is critical. There is a real risk of a broadcasting event like this appearing as little more than a gimmick. It could raise questions of why a focus on Black talent on and off screen has been singled out for one day as opposed to being embedded within Channel 4's programming on a regular basis.

As the CAMEo report (2018) and Eikhof and Newsinger (2020) have noted, there are generally two kinds of intervention used to increase workforce diversity in the UK screen sector – 'empowering' and 'transformative'.⁴ Empowering interventions 'take the form of training initiatives designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills, capitals and experiences to progress' (CAMEo, 2018: 42), whereas transformative interventions 'tend to be more far reaching, often working at the level of policy and funding' (CAMEo, 2018: 43) [examples of this include the BFI Diversity Standards and Channel 4's 360° Diversity Charter – see further below].

³ News Release, 'Channel 4 kickstarts fresh push for greater on and off screen representation with Black Takeover Day', 25 August 2020.

⁴ CAMEo, Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review, 2018.

This report thus takes the starting point that operationally, Channel 4 will not just aim to ensure the 'Black to Front' day itself is a success but also use the opportunity of the day to create a "transformative intervention" and use "empowering interventions" where structural gaps are identified.

Furthermore, as the report identifies, there are some circumstances in which it will not be possible for the 'Black to Front' day to be a success unless empowering interventions are used.

Thus, while the focus of this report is ostensibly on ensuring the success of one day, it will need to be viewed both internally and externally – and to both external partners and the general public – as bigger than one day, in order to have the greatest impact for Channel 4 and the UK media sector more broadly. The report indicates potential cost implications of this where possible, but also notes this detail is beyond the scope of the report.

PART 1: WORKFORCE DIVERSITY IN CONTEXT



Part 1: Workforce

Diversity in Context

While ‘Black to Front’ was precipitated by a very particular moment in time – namely the global Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 prompted by the killing of George Floyd in May 2020 and the international call for active anti-racism from all realms of society – it is entwined, and will inevitably become part of, broader contemporaneous debates surrounding equity and equality in the UK screen sector.

In 2020 a special issue of the *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, dedicated to ‘Diversity in British Film and Television: Policy, Industry and Representation’ was published.⁵ In the introduction of this journal the editors, Shelly Cobb, Jack Newsinger and Clive James Nwonka, noted that: ‘Under-representation of marginalised persons both on and off screen remains a significant problem in the UK film and television industries, and governmental and institutional responses to this have had little to no effect’.⁶ It is important to remember, then, that this report examining Channel 4’s approach to ‘Black to Front’ (planned for 2021) sits alongside and responds to some of the key issues and debates pertaining to workforce diversity within the screen sector today.

As the 2018 ‘Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector Evidence Review’ report by CAMEo illustrated, while we have many sources of data detailing the demographic composition of the UK film and television workforce, there remain barriers to attaining, training and retaining those



⁵ *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, ‘Diversity in British Film and Television’, volume 17, issue 1, 2020.

⁶ Shelley Cobb, Jack Newsinger and Clive James Nwonka, ‘Introduction: Diversity in British Film and Television: Policy, Industry and Representation’, *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, volume 17, issue 1, pp. 1-5 (p. 5), 2020.

from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, in both on and off-screen roles. Such reports (see Appendix A for a select bibliography of key reports), have provided ample evidence of existing imbalances in off screen workforce diversity across television in the UK. Peter L. Block has argued that the UK screen industries are ‘data rich but information poor’ because there has been a ‘great emphasis on monitoring and gathering quantitative data measures but limited focus on practical interventions and qualitative research’.⁷ However, it is worthwhile remembering that while it may seem as though there is an abundance of data, there is little in the way of programme-level data and if broadcasters wish to acquire a real sense of the workforce diversity across their programming they need to start gathering more detailed data on a regular basis.

This section highlights key information and conclusions detailed in a number of published reports. It will collate the current workforce demographics we have for Channel 4, as well as detailing other key data relating to off screen workforce diversity according to programme genres and roles relevant to the ‘Black to Front’ schedule (see Figure 1).

Channel 4’s existing data

In order to accurately ascertain Channel 4’s current position in terms of off-screen workforce diversity, particularly in terms of the regular programming already scheduled for ‘Black to Front’, we would need an up-to-date breakdown of the current demographics of staff on productions. Such data would be necessary to provide as accurate and achievable goals as possible for ‘Black to Front’. However, as this data is currently unavailable, we have relied upon existing and publicly available data, which suffers a number of limitations outlined below where relevant.

As part of their duty to promote equality in broadcasting, broadcasters are required to provide information about their equal opportunities policies and the make-up of their directly employed workforce. Ofcom began collecting this data as an annual Diversity in Broadcasting monitoring programme in 2017.

In 2020, Ofcom published ‘*Diversity and equal opportunities in television and radio 2019/20: Report on the UK-based broadcasting industry*’, which provides data on the five main broadcasters (BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Sky and Viacom (Channel 5)).⁸ This report shows that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds make up an average of 15% across the five main broadcasters.

⁷ Peter L. Block, ‘Diversity regulation in the UK broadcast industry’, *Representology*, 2020.

⁸ Ofcom, *Diversity and equal opportunities in television and radio 2019/20: Report on the UK-based broadcasting industry*, 2020.

It is important to stress that the 15% figure is for all employees and not an indication of those directly involved in production or the large number of freelancers. In its latest report Ofcom makes reference to the Creative Diversity Network's (CDN) Diamond data as a way to collect production data and data on freelancers. In its latest report CDN's Diamond data placed Black, Asian and minority ethnic off-screen representation at 11.8%.⁹ It should be noted Diamond data is highly contested as it relies on self-reporting and there are therefore concerns it suffers from selection bias. One example of such selection bias is illustrated by how Diamond's data for the proportion for Black, Asian and minority ethnic directors differs from the more comprehensive Directors UK data roughly by a factor of 3.7 (Diamond says 8.4% of UK television directors are Black, Asian and minority ethnic (CDN, 2020: 5) versus 2.3% according to Directors UK¹⁰). Assuming this over-estimation is consistent across the workforce this would mean the more accurate industry figure for Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation would be closer to 3%, although at this stage with only one data point it is impossible to estimate how accurate Diamond data is.

Furthermore, restrictions around data protection have been a major stumbling block for gathering such data. There are questions around the minimum level of staff required in order to publish data on protected characteristics so as to ensure anonymity is protected, and it is unclear how willing individuals are to voluntarily forego their data protection rights in order for data to be published that could possibly identify their ethnicity. As a result, objective data is rarely collected, creating a problem for broadcasters and perceptions of their data transparency

In addition, with the data that does exist, we caution against direct comparisons between broadcasters because their respective business models differ dramatically and are based in different parts of the UK. These differences mean the figures are not directly comparable for different types of job roles or how reflective they are of the potential workforce they draw from.

⁹ CDN, Diamond: The Fourth Cut, 2020 (p.5).

¹⁰ Directors UK, Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation among screen directors working in UK television, 2018 (p.3).

Nevertheless, through OFCOM, Channel 4 reported that 18% of their workforce were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. This put Channel 4 ahead of the other broadcasters, followed by Viacom (16%), BBC and Sky (both 13%) and ITV (8%) (Ofcom, 2017: 7). However, Channel 4 was lagging behind in the representation of employees from an ethnic minority background in senior roles, recording only 10%, with Sky being the lead in this with 15%. Similarly, alongside ITV, Channel 4 had a lower proportion of ethnic minority employees in commissioning roles (Ofcom, 2017: 12). This figure has increased since 2017 with Channel 4 publishing data showing 19.6% of commissioners were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds¹¹. Although data from Broadcast's Commissioners Index indicates across the major broadcasters "*the vast majority of those [non-White commissioners] are at rank-and-file commissioning editor level.*"¹²

The 2018 diversity data published by Ofcom revealed that employees from minority ethnic backgrounds made up 'almost a fifth of employees' at Channel 4 – which maintained their 18% Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation of overall workforce recorded in the previous year.¹³ This figure was higher amongst non-management level (21%) as opposed to senior positions: 12% across senior/middle/junior management (Ofcom, 2018: 17). Related to this, progression of promoted workforce from minority ethnic backgrounds remained below the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees across the organisation – 15% compared to overall 18% (Ofcom, 2018: 17).

On top of this, retention was an issue. While 19% of those joining Channel 4 were from ethnic minority backgrounds – in line with the proportion across the organisation – 24% of those leaving the company were from ethnic minority backgrounds (Ofcom, 2018: 17).

¹¹ Max Goldbart, Ushering in a diversity revolution, Broadcast, 2020

¹² Max Goldbart, Ushering in a diversity revolution, Broadcast, 2020.

¹³ Ofcom, Diversity and equal opportunities in television: Monitoring report on the UK broadcasting industry, 2018.

Channel 4 also published its Gender and Ethnicity pay gap in 2019.¹⁴ There was a 17.7% mean ethnicity pay gap, dropping to 10.8% median, a reduction of 1.4% and 3.5% respectively from the previous year. It also reported a 39.4% ethnicity bonus pay gap (mean) an increase of 29.9% year-on-year.

In 2019, Ofcom reported that 'Channel 4 has gone through a significant period of transition in which the broadcaster has seen significant changes in its Executive Team roles and the move towards a multi-site operation', including movement of Channel 4's HQ to Leeds, and the naming of Bristol and Glasgow as two creative hubs.¹⁵ As a result of this, Channel 4 implemented a new diversity and inclusion strategy (Channel 4, 2019: 13) and evolved their staff targets to focus on 2023, working towards a target of 20% Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation across the business, including in the top 100 paid, by 2023. Leadership currently standing at 12%.¹⁶

Channel 4 reported a 1% increase, from 18% in 2018 to 19% in 2019 (Ofcom, 2019: 6). This brings them close to their 20% target for Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees across the organisation. The proportion remained higher at non-management level, increasing to 23% (from 21%).¹⁷ Likewise, roles in broadcast management and technical, engineering and data analytics, 21% and 22% respectively, remained higher than the overall make-up of the organisation (Ofcom, 2019: 22).

Progression was improved upon, rising from 15% to 18%. There had also been a "surge" in those from ethnic minority backgrounds joining the channel – 30% compared to 19% in the previous year. However, there was also a 3% increase in those leaving the company (from 24% in 2017 to 27% in 2018/9) (Ofcom, 2019: 22).

¹⁴ Channel 4, Gender and BAME Pay Report, 2018.

¹⁵ Ofcom, Diversity and equal opportunities in television: Monitoring report on the UK-based broadcasting industry, 2019, p. 39.

¹⁶ Channel 4, Gender and BAME Pay Report 2018, 2018 (p. 2).

¹⁷ Ofcom, Diversity and equal opportunities in television: In-focus report on ten major broadcasters, 2019, p. 22.

Part 1: Workforce Diversity in Context

Implications for 'Black to Front' day



Based on the data available, 'Black to Front' day presents a useful opportunity for Channel 4 to address workforce diversity problems, both internally and across the industry.



Given the limitations of existing productions' diversity data, Channel 4 should use the 'Black to Front' day opportunity to explore how to improve this. For the day itself, Channel 4 could ask relevant commissioned productions to:

- a) Share percentage of salary spend to Black/ PoC talent. This would be in line with the current requirement of sharing out of London non-on-screen talent spend to qualify as an "Out of London production".
- b) Share key role data. The LHC believes the roles already identified by Channel 4's Commissioning Diversity Guidelines for Factual Programmes, Scripted Programmes would work very well in these genres, as would the roles for women identified in Entertainment Programmes.



In addition, Channel 4 could seek independent legal advice on the minimum level of staff required in order to publish data on protected characteristics so as to ensure anonymity. This legal advice should ideally be made publicly available.



Channel 4 should also explore how willing individuals are to voluntarily forego their data protection rights in order for data to be published that could possibly identify their ethnicity. This is common practice in some legal companies when collecting and publishing data.

Part 1: Workforce Diversity in Context

The Gaps in Workforce Diversity by Genre

Since 'Black to Front' spans several genres, it is important to consider the specific impact this might have on staffing productions. One of the key industry figures we spoke to for this report suggested that the aspiration of 100% Black talent off-screen would be possible (in theory), but it would depend on 'a lot of talent [being] the same'. In other words, what little Black off-screen talent there is currently working in the industry would likely need to be on multiple productions for productions to meet any target of 100% Black off-screen talent. Another key industry figure echoed this, suggesting that 'some departments [...] have more UK Black talent, than others [...] partly because there haven't been opportunities'. Such comments indicate that there is not currently enough Black off-screen talent to fulfil all roles across all genres.

This is borne out in the (limited) data we have for workforce diversity by genre and sub-genre. In 2018 Directors UK published their report on Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation among screen directors in UK television. The report found that between 2013 and 2016, there was a marginal increase in the percentage of television episodes directed by Black, Asian and minority ethnic directors from 2.2% to 2.31%.¹⁸ Both figures were significantly below the UK Black, Asian and minority ethnic population, which stood at 12.8% according to the 2011 census. During this same period, Channel 4 was the only broadcaster to see a decline in the percentage number of episodes made by Black, Asian and minority ethnic directors, having an overall percentage point decline of -0.15% (Directors UK, 2018: 6).

In October 2020, Creative Diversity Network published a report providing a deep-dive into Racial and Ethnic Diversity data collected through Diamond.¹⁹ The report provides data on ethnic and racial representation across seniority, genres (on and off screen) and job roles. Although we believe there are serious concerns over the data published by Diamond, assuming that the selection bias has remained relatively constant we do believe it can highlight useful and important trends.

¹⁸ Directors UK, Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation among screen directors working in UK television, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁹ CDN, Race and Ethnicity: a deep dive into Diamond data, October 2020.

CDN report that between 2017 and 2020 the ‘overall proportion of off-screen contributions made by all Black, Asian and minority ethnic (“BAME”) groups to UK programmes has increased from 9.7% to 12.3%’ (CDN, 2020: 6) (see Figure 1). This remains below the UK Black, Asian and minority ethnic population (12.8%). It is also significantly lower than the non-White population of London, 40.2%, where “a high proportion of TV programmes are made”. But while the figures may be out by a factor of 3.7, for reasons stated earlier, the trend seems to be positive. However, the increase may also merely be in line with more general UK workforce demographic changes and therefore not represent any real progress at all.

Figure 1: Trends in Proportion of off-screen contributions of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups to UK programmes

	16/17	17/18	18/19	difference yr 1 -yr 3
Mixed	4.2	4.3	4.4	0.2
Black	2.6	3.1	3.2	0.6
South Asian	2.2	2.7	3	0.8
East Asian	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.5
Other	0.5	0.7	1.1	0.6
Total BAME	9.7	11.4	12.3	2.6
No. contributions	75,976	321,725	486,458	

Source: ‘Race and Ethnic Diversity: a deep dive into Diamond data, October 2020’

The report also shows that there is significant divergence of representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic off-screen talent across genres. Ranging from 23.4% in Current Affairs, to 8.6% in Drama (CDN, 2020: 25).

Figure 2: Varying representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic off-screen talent across genres (2019 data)

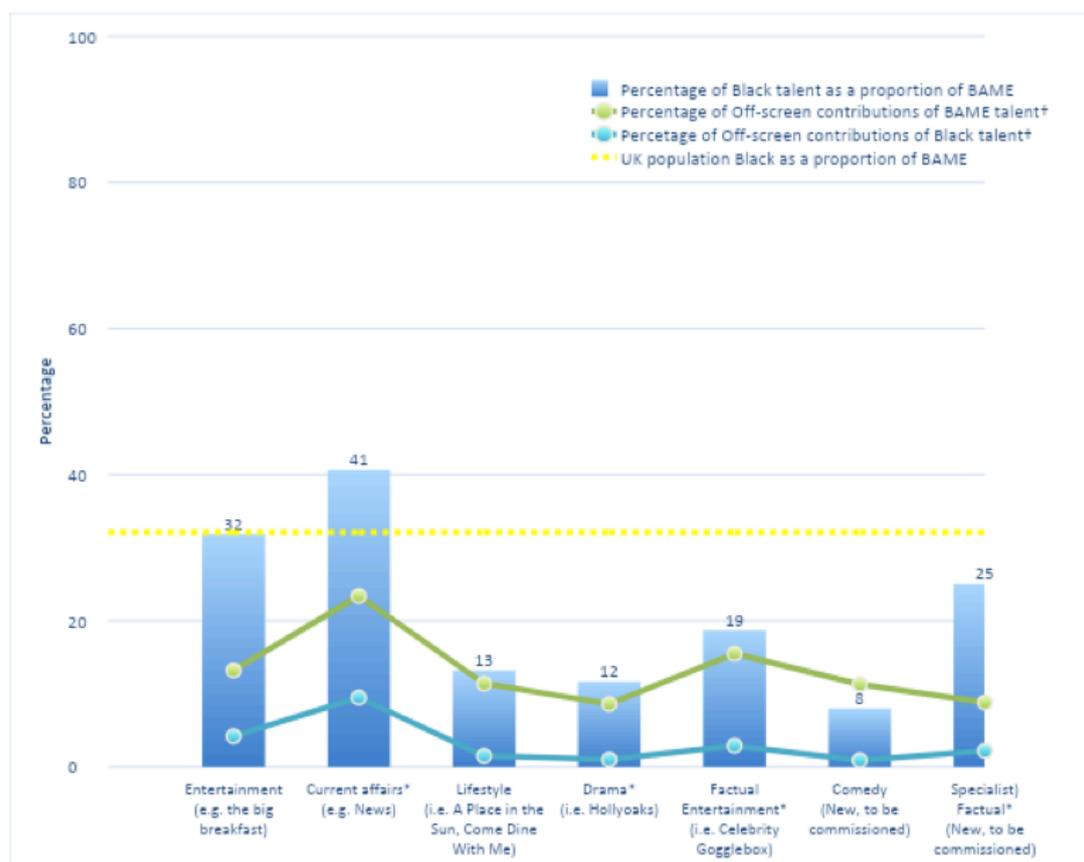
	Childrens	Comedy	Current Affairs	Drama	Entertainment	Factual	Fact Ent	Lifestyle
Mixed	2.6	4.7	7.5	4.4	5	3	7.9	4.4
Black	2.6	0.9	9.5	1	4.2	2.2	2.9	1.5
South Asian	4.2	4.3	3.2	1.3	2.3	2.5	3.1	1.6
East Asian	0.8	0.4	1.5	0.1	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.1
Other	0.5	0.9	1.6	1.9	0.9	0.6	0.7	3.6
Total BAME	10.6	11.3	23.4	8.6	13.2	8.8	15.5	11.4
No. contributions	137,231	15,934	37,839	34,395	90,943	72,597	48,871	40,406

Source: 'Race and Ethnic Diversity: a deep dive into Diamond data, October 2020'

As Figure 2 shows, off-screen contributions by Black talent varies massively by genre, being as low as 0.9% in Comedy and as high as 9.5% in Current Affairs. The latter making nearly half of the total Black, Asian and minority ethnic contribution in the genre (23.4%) and the highest proportion of contributions made by a single non-White group.

When applied to the genres which we know are to be included in the 'Black to Front' schedule, the above data gives some indication of the proportion of Black people making up the "Black, Asian and minority ethnic" category - assuming that the selection bias which is present in Data is constant across "BAME" groups compared to White groups. This provides useful information of where specific Black underrepresentation may lie, and which are hidden by the more generic use of a "BAME" or PoC category. It also provides an insight into where specific policies need to be targeted in terms of genre to increase Black representation as opposed to just more general representation of PoC. This is shown in Figure 3 below. While current affairs and entertainment appear to have the proportion of Black people within "BAME" close to or higher than the national average, for all other genres the numbers are significantly below the national average.

Figure 3 – Black talent as proportion of “BAME” talent across media genres and in comparison to National Average for UK population



*Where Channel 4’s specific genre categorisations are unknown, what is assumed to be the more likely/relevant equivalent has been applied (i.e. Current Affairs=News)

†Figures taken from ‘Race and Ethnic Diversity: a deep dive into Diamond data, October 2020’

As a result, after it has been ascertained why employers were unable to identify and/or fill certain roles with Black talent, it may be necessary to seek to recruit PoC. However, in this respect we think it is important that the justification between seeking out specific Black talent and more general PoC talent is understood and recognised. It will also be necessary to ensure that any steps comply with the Equality Act and to this end the opportunities in the Act to take positive action should be exploited where possible.



To be most transformational, Channel 4 should ensure 'Black to Front' day has a focus on Black – not non-White – talent off-screen.



Channel 4 should ensure all productions immediately record current staff ethnicity by three metrics: Overall headcount, percentage of salary spend, key roles.



Channel 4 should prioritise its resources to enable independent production companies to identify, attract and recruit Black talent off-screen on certain genres, such as comedy, drama and lifestyle, where the gaps are largest (followed by PoC more broadly).

In seeking Black talent for the 'Black to Front day', Channel 4 has stated that it is specifically trying to address issues of anti-Black racism highlighted by the Black Lives Matter protests. In addition, it is seeking to value and share those cultural perspectives, narratives and experiences which are unique to Black people. A more general focus on PoC talent does not directly address any of these points but more generally seeks to address the dominance of White power and control of the industry.

To use a regional analogy, if Channel 4 were looking to increase Scottish representation and perspectives behind the camera we do not believe many Scots would look favourably if Channel 4 simply told them that they had increased the amount of non-London staff. Tackling the dominance of London is important but increasing Scottish representation is a separate, although related issue.

The Gaps in Workforce Diversity by Role

Furthermore, there is evidence of particular gaps in specific industry roles that cut across genres.

For instance, recent research conducted by Emma Butt for the LHC reveals that there is a specific absence of diversity in post-production sound teams particularly in drama, entertainment and factual.²⁰ Following an analysis of the 36 highest rated TV shows across the Autumn period of 2019 on BBC1, BBC2, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky One, Butt concludes that in the sample of 60 available sound roles (undertaken by 55 people), only one man 'identified as mixed-race' with the 'other 46 [men] identifying as white' (Butt, 2020). Butt also found there were 'no women of colour working in the 60 available sound roles.' One of the results of this lack of opportunity, Butt argues, is that 'people from BAME backgrounds have felt the need to create their own companies in order to progress within the industry' (Butt, 2020).

Related to this is the issue of retention. In their submission to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on the impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors, the Film and TV Charity illustrated that '73% of respondents identifying as Black, Asian and minority ethnic had already considered leaving the industry'.²¹ They have examined this further in their 'The Looking Glass: Mental Health in the UK film, TV and cinema industry' report from February 2020, in which they look further into retention in the industry. The report notes that nearly three quarters of "BAME" workers have considered leaving the industry (even before the pandemic) which 'paints a picture of a 'revolving door' where non-White workers may join the industry but subsequently decide to leave the working conditions and culture they experience while working in the industry'.²² (Butt, 2020).

²⁰ Emma Butt, Diversity in Post-Production Sound Roles in UK Television Production, *Representology*, 2020.

²¹ Film and TV Charity, Submission to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS Sectors: Issues for the film and TV workforce, 19 June 2020, p. 1.

²² Melanie Wilkes, Heather Carey and Rebecca Florisson, *The Looking Glass: Mental Health in the UK film, TV and cinema industry*, 2020, p.31.

Implications for 'Black to Front' day



There is significant value of people from under-represented backgrounds that are trained in specific roles receiving programme credits to further their careers. To this end the 'Black to Front' day should attempt to maximise the number of credits Black people receive on the programmes on the day.

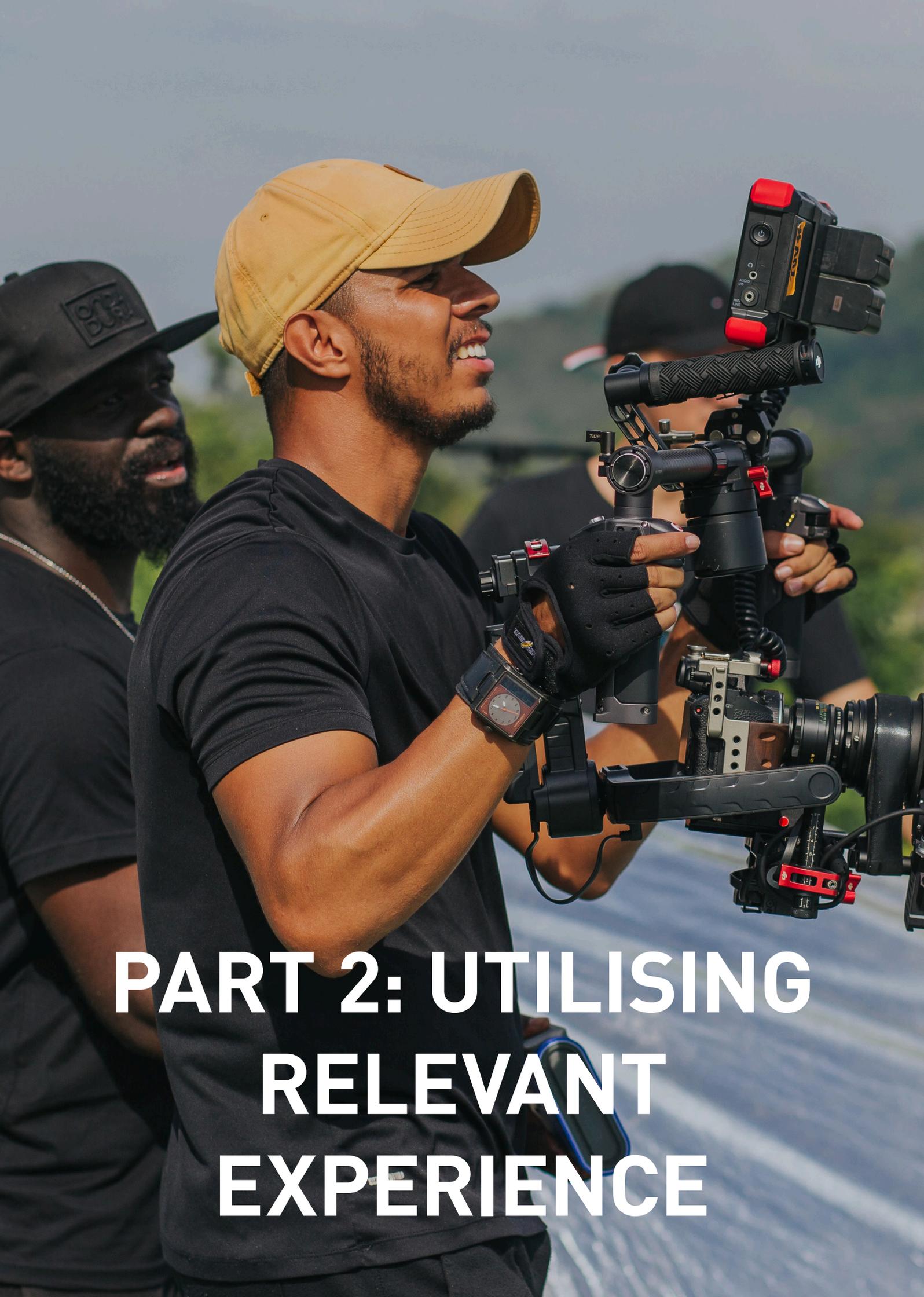


Channel 4 should therefore prioritise resources in helping independent productions to identify and recruit²³ for the day Black talent off-screen in certain roles that cut across genres, given evidence of significant gaps in such positions.



Channel 4 should record the ethnicity of all staff and freelancers that leave during that time period leading up to the day and the measure the ethnicity of all new hires and contracts issued during that time. Also, where a Black member of staff leaves during the same time period there should be a full exit interview for Channel 4 to understand the reason for the loss.

²³ Within the legal framework set by the 2010 Equality Act.



PART 2: UTILISING RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Part 2: Utilising Relevant Experience

Over the last thirty years has been a growing tension between the importance of on-screen representation versus diversity behind the camera. This tension made headlines in 2017 when Sir Lenny Henry gave a speech at the Houses of Parliament calling on the practice of broadcasters and regulators to prioritise on screen diversity ahead of off-screen diversity “Fake Diversity”.

It is a sensitive subject for nearly all Black people we spoke to working in the industry and needs to be handled very carefully.

It is widely acknowledged that there is enough Black talent to achieve 100% representation in front of the camera. The question is what is the rationale for not aspiring to achieve the same level of representation behind the camera. Indeed, we believe trying to formulate an argument as to why the goals would be different runs the very risk of falling into the issue identified by Dr David Olusoga in his MacTaggart lecture – i.e.

“There is willingness to accept Black people as performers, in front of the camera, but unwillingness on the part of the industry to make space for them behind the scenes, in the rooms where the decisions are made and the real creativity happens.”

How can experience inform the goals Channel 4 should have in this respect for ‘Black to Front’ day?

Staffing up Productions

In recent months we have seen a number of high-profile Black British filmmakers express their concerns surrounding the industry's inability to hire, train and retain people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in key roles.

In June 2020, the Black British Director Steve McQueen said that, on his return to making films in the UK for the BBC in 2019, that the UK was 'behind' in terms of off-screen workforce diversity, suggesting that the UK was 'behind in terms of representation.'²⁴ For these six films (entitled *Small Axe* and aired by BBC in November 2020), McQueen notes that they 'tried very hard' to increase the off-screen workforce diversity, creating training schemes with one trainee in each department. However, in terms of more senior roles, such as Heads of Departments (HoD), there were only a handful of Black British members of the staff. Similarly, in August 2020 David Olusoga admitted that he had come close to leaving the industry, noting that: 'In the time I have been in television the vast majority of the senior Black industry figures I have come across working within the UK broadcasters have moved to the Indie sector or left the industry.'²⁵

Indeed, access into, and retention once within, television is often reported as one of the most significant barriers to achieving workforce diversity in terms of race and ethnicity, as well as gender, age, disability, LGBTQIA+ identity and socio-economic background (see, for example: Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012; Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013; Wing-Fai, Gill & Randle, 2015). Along with this are the barriers to access via sector recruitment practices, which commonly rely on existing networks and 'word of mouth' (see Bhavnani, 2007; Directors UK, 2018; CAMEo 2018). The industry figures we spoke to for this research intimated that these remain key barriers to access and staffing productions. One television producer said:

[T]his industry works a lot on word of mouth, and on your mates that have done things before. Some directors like to stretch out for each of their shows, and to find somebody that's specifically chosen for that project. Others just don't, they fall back on their trusted team, time and time again. And it's very hard to break that bubble.

The producer also noted that 'the higher the budget, the less people are willing to take chances', suggesting that high-end, high-profile productions are even less likely to include a diverse crew.

²⁴ Steve McQueen, 'The UK film industry has to change. It's wrong, it's blatant racism', *The Guardian*, 20 June 2020.

²⁵ David Olusoga, James MacTaggart Lecture, 24 August 2020.

Another producer/commissioner said that Black off-screen talent are often only called in to productions 'to do certain things [...] it's usually around whatever they [the producers] think the 'Black subject' is at that time. And then that's what people get hired for, and then they sit around for months on end not being able to get any of the work'. This producer/commissioner also reiterated the importance of making workforce diversity, and the regular hiring of Black off-screen talent, as the norm as opposed to the exception: 'the thing is, that everybody wants [...] to have regular work, on a wide variety of projects, and that it shouldn't be a shock if it's a Black DOP, or it's a Black sound person, or a Black director, or whatever it is.'

These comments indicate that the well-documented barriers to workforce diversity in television remain and are some of the key barriers Channel 4 will need to take into consideration and respond to when planning and commissioning for 'Black to Front'.

Implications for 'Black to Front' day



There are clearly some structural barriers to recruitment that mean production companies for Channel 4 may not be able to identify appropriate Black talent who would in theory be able to fill 100% off-screen roles on the day, let alone employ them.



A tailored approach may be necessary that distinguishes between existing and new commissions.



Where Black staff are successfully hired during this time Channel 4 should understand how they were identified and recruited to see if there is best practice that can be used throughout the industry. Where Black staff are not identified or hired then Channel 4 needs to understand why and either work with the production company to improve their recruitment processes and / or recognise where there may be shortages in Black talent and skills and then work to develop training and pipeline programmes.

Existing Commissioning Models aimed at increasing diversity

When considering the best means by which to ensure a high proportion of PoC or Black off-screen talent in productions for 'Black to Front', it is helpful to consider existing models used within the sector (including Channel 4) to attempt to ensure workforce diversity across productions. Some of these may provide helpful examples of good practice for Channel 4 to follow.



In 2015 Channel 4 published its Commissioning Diversity Guidelines developed to 'ensure that every new Channel 4 commissioned programme in every genre works towards increasing diverse talent participation on and off screen'. The guidelines propose that new Channel 4 commissions need to demonstrate diversity within on/off screen content and/or on/off screen roles, as well as offering training to achieve off-screen results. Independent production companies are tracked by commissioning editors, with results being measured by Channel 4's Creative Diversity team and DIAMOND.



In 2016 the British Film Institute introduced its Diversity Standards to 'require film projects to satisfy a number of diversity-related criteria to be eligible for finance from the BFI Film Fund'.

The Standards require anyone applying for BFI funding to complete the Standards application as part of the main application. These Standards include:



Standard A

On-Screen Representation, Themes and Narratives (applicants need to meet three criteria to meet this Standard (see BFI, 2019: 3)



Standard B

Creative Leadership and Project Team (applicants need to meet two criteria to meet this standard (see BFI, 2019: 4)



Standard C

Industry Access and Opportunities (applicants need to meet two criteria to meet this standard (see BFI, 2019: 5)



Standard D

Audience Development (applicants need to meet three criteria to meet this Standard (see BFI, 2019: 6)

In January 2020, the BFI published its initial findings on how the Diversity Standards had influenced film productions between the launch of the Standards in June 2016 and the end of March 2019.²⁶ The report found that '[m]ost applicants (90%) fulfil the Standards' minimum criteria, with the average applicant meeting 2.5 of the four Standards' and that '[o]verall applications tended to focus on Standards A (86%) and C (74%)' (BFI, 2020: 10). While the report notes that 'the data shows a commitment to increasing diversity and representation in front of and behind the camera via the Standards', it also acknowledges that the data has 'pulled into focus a number of areas of underrepresentation that still need support and improvement' (BFI, 2020: 10).

²⁶ BFI, BFI Diversity Standards: Initial Findings, Jan 2020.

In his analysis of these initial findings, Nwonka explores the issues revealed by the data further, explaining:

[T]he data reveal[ed] that film productions were over twice as likely to represent gender difference than Race/Ethnicity and other underrepresented groups across a vast number of key on-screen roles and off-screen positions.

Films with larger productions budgets do not produce more racially diverse representations, with the representation of Race/Ethnicity being generally consistent across all five budget bands between £10 million+ and under £0.5 million, both on and off-screen.

There remains an extremely poor representation of racial difference in films made outside of London, with some UK regions such as the East and West Midlands registering no representation of racial and ethnic difference in their off-screen workforce.

What these initial reports of the BFI Diversity Standards show is, according to Nwonka, how 'racial underrepresentation remains a structural condition within the film industry' (Nwonka, 2020: 18) and it would be fair to assume such underrepresentation is replicated in television, too.²⁷

²⁷ Clive James Nwonka, Race and ethnicity in the UK film industry: an analysis of the BFI diversity standards, 2020.

Part 2: Utilising Relevant Experience

Implications for 'Black to Front' day



Channel 4's and other existing commissioning models and diversity achievements to date already imply minimum targets of Black or PoC representation behind the camera – the 'Black to Front' day should aim to be significantly better.



Existing models and achievements provide a basis to be able to ask all NEW commissions for the day to aim for 100% Black representation behind the camera (using the opportunities provided by the Equality Act to take positive action where appropriate²⁸).



Furthermore, for all EXISTING productions, following the BBC's announcement of 20% minimum diversity targets for new productions and the structure of models outlined above, Channel 4 should set a minimum target of 20% Black representation for staff headcount and staff spend (again using the opportunities under the Equality Act to take positive action where appropriate) . Anything less than this may have the effect of looking too unambitious for a day dedicated to Black representation (although it is noted BBC's target allows for the "combining" of disability, ethnicity and socio-economic diversity to reach its 20% goal). We also recommend minimum targets for key roles.



For the existing productions, where empty positions become available that would cover the day and are not filled by Black people, Channel 4 should systematically document the reasons.



This will enable Channel 4 to set specific focused genre or role targets in the future as opposed to more general targets that might not be effective.



This may also inform the need for specific training programmes to be developed to create talent that is appropriate in the future and better able to compete in the market.



Channel 4 should publish this data in order to:

- a) serve as a public good for the entire industry as to where there are skill shortages and focus training programmes for all broadcasters and major employers and bodies to develop; and
- b) help Black people in the industry to understand where there might be possible opportunities for them to focus on.

²⁸ Sections 158 and 159 of the Equality Act set out the circumstances in which positive action can lawfully be taken; for example by training and other steps. This may apply too in relation to shortlisting and recruitment, subject to conditions, including that candidates are of equal merit (the conditions should be checked beforehand to ensure that they are met).

Relevant Precedents for 'Black to Front' day

Over the years other broadcasters have held similar 'takeovers' to increase on-screen and off-screen representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and stories.

These precedents are important to explore for helping Channel 4 to understand their goals and ambitions, especially off-screen, and the methods through which they managed recruitment. In particular, in several of LHC's discussions with Channel 4 the issue of whether "simply swapping" out a White member of staff on an existing production for a Black member of staff for a day would be seen as "insulting" was raised. Added to this were the concerns such "swaps" would simply be perceived as "window dressing" and would not help people's long term careers.

While the LHC sees validity in these arguments we believe that there are several ways this can be addressed and ensure existing commissions achieve as much diversity as possible for the day and in terms of legacy. The precedents serve to help explore these issues and provide best practice.

The examples include:

My Ramadan, BBC – 2015²⁹



During Ramadan in 2015, the BBC broadcast a series of programmes to 'reflect and better serve Muslim audiences' in the UK. Programming was broadcast across the BBC's digital and analogue services, including BBC One, Asian Network and BBC iPlayer. The season also saw an increase in regional programming across local radio and broadcast.

Lenny Henry Radio 4 Today Programme Editorial Takeover, BBC – 2014³⁰



On Tuesday 30th December 2014 Sir Lenny Henry was the guest editor for Radio 4's Today Programme (the Today Programme has invited guest editors to take over the programme during the festive season - between Christmas and New Year - since 2003). Henry's show featured a presenting team made up exclusively of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, with BBC World Service's Nkem Ifejika and Radio 4's Mishal Husain.

²⁹ BBC, My Ramadan, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02v0397>.

³⁰ Jason Deans, Lenny Henry's guest editing of Radio 4's Today: how Twitter reacted, The Guardian, 30 December 2014.

Black & British Season, BBC – 2016³¹



On November 2016, the BBC's Black and British season ran across BBC Two and Four, and included a digital campaign, 'Black British Hero', featuring across BBC's social media accounts. Headlining this season was David Olusoga's four-part documentary series Black And British: A Forgotten History.

Loose Women, ITV – 2020



On Thursday 22nd October 2020, the daytime talk show Loose Women was hosted by four black women presenters: Judi Love, Brenda Edwards and Kéllé Bryan, and led by Charlene White. The episode was praised by viewers, being called 'poignant' and 'refreshing'.³²

It is worth noting that these 'takeovers' have often been incorporated as seasons into regular scheduling or are part of an annual initiative (such as Radio 4 Today programme's guest editors).

There are a number of lessons that can be garnered from these experiences that are relevant to organising Channel 4's 'Black to Front' day.

First, starting early is crucial. We interviewed a television producer who was actively involved in recruiting a diverse crew for certain productions and asked how they went about it. They replied: 'Literally, phoning all the agents, asking for [Black talent]. Trawling shows that were likely to have Black crew members'. The producer made it clear that 'you literally have to put in the footwork at the moment' but that 'when you really look, it's quite hard'. These comments were echoed by another producer/commissioner, who suggested that efforts to ensure diverse productions 'have to start that from the time you start looking for the crew. It's got to start way, way, way before [the start of production].'

Accordingly, Channel 4 and the production companies commissioned to produce new programmes for 'Black to Front' need to consider staffing and recruitment at an early a stage to ensure their aims for achieving a high proportion of PoC off-screen talent are embedded in productions from the start.

³¹ BBC, Black and British – Season Launch, 10 October 2016 (see <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/blackandbritish>)

³² Isobel Lewis, Loose Women viewers praise daytime show for featuring all-black presenting panel, Independent, 22 October 2020.

Second, both Lenny Henry's guest editing of the Today Programme and Charlene White's "Black Take Over" of Loose Women ensured that the maximum number of PoC worked on the respective days looking at the larger overall staff number. This would mean looking at both the staff who work on the specific programme as well as looking at staff who might work in the broader organisation (ITV Productions and ITN for example) that might work on other programmes but would be happy to work on the specific production for a limited time.

The most obvious example of this for Channel 4 is Channel 4 News which is produced by ITN. ITN already moves staff from one channel to another on occasion and anecdotally would like the opportunity to do this more. Informal conversations with Channel 4 News staff indicate that any sizable Black representation behind the camera on the Black to Front day would be extremely difficult but could be achieved using other ITN staff working at ITV and Channel 5.

Third, when interviewed for this report Charlene White stressed one of the objectives for increasing Black and ethnic diversity in front and behind the camera on Loose Women was to "normalise" the idea of Black representation. It is for this reason that ITV did not announce the fact they would have an all-Black line-up in front of the camera for Loose Women. Charlene White said that "you would not announce an all-White line up, so I did not want to announce an all-Black line-up, it would have defeated the purpose of normalising Black representation".



To this end Channel 4 could similarly maximise Black representation behind the camera on shows in the run up to the day without any announcement and only making it public after the 'Black to Front' day.

Fourth and finally, looking to the example of Loose Women of trying to "normalise" Black representation the programme ensured the programme tackled "mainstream" issues but with a "Black perspective" which occurred naturally as Black people had de facto editorial control. Indeed, the LHC takes the view that the ethnicity of Channel 4's commissioners is important. We believe Channel 4 shares this position as it publishes data on certain protected characteristics already as they relate to commissioners. The industry in general recognises that in the efforts to increase regional diversity it must increase the number of commissioners outside of London, as opposed to London based commissioners commissioning what they think is representative of the rest of the UK.

For this reason, ideally, Black staff working on existing commissions for the 'Black to Front' Day - even temporarily would need as high a degree of editorial independence as possible to ensure they were producing programmes that had a "Black perspective" and acknowledging the importance of "Black editorial control".

Part 2: Utilising Relevant Experience

Implications for 'Black to Front' day



Maximising diversity both on and off screen will help Channel 4 avoid criticism of tokenism and ghettoising black talent of only being able to work on “Black issues” or on the “Black day”.



There is a strong role-modelling message in moving people around to maximise diversity on productions even if it is temporary. It can serve to demonstrate the depth of Black talent and also address the commonly voiced fear in the industry that having Black staff is somehow perceived as more of a risk.



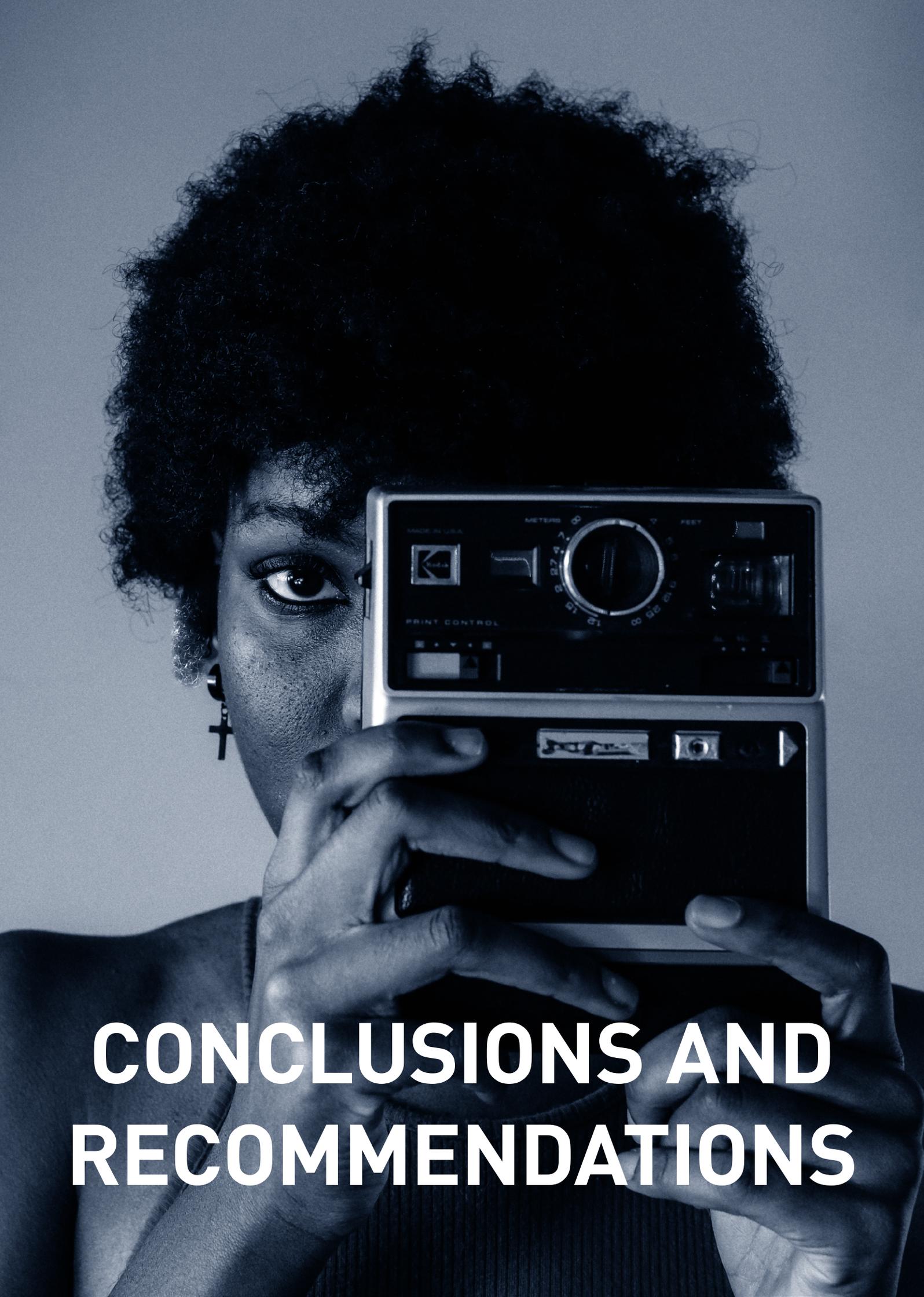
As many as possible of the commissioners and staff with editorial input working for Channel 4 on Black to Front day should be Black. This should be measured by head count and percentage of staff spend.



In order to avoid challenges of “tokenism”, where people cannot be moved from other productions, new Black people should be recruited to be hired for several months in placements (e.g. 6 months) to train and shadow key positions before the day, and then take the positions on and after the 'Black to Front' day to enrich their career prospects. This will act a natural progression of Channel 4's current Commissioning Diversity Guidelines as it relates to requirements regarding “Training, internship and career progression”, and would not replace hiring more Black talent but would be a powerful demonstration of the talent that is available and provide an example of what could be achieved.



In order to ensure legacy, all newly recruited Black people in independent production companies should also be tracked and supported by Channel 4 after their training and shadowing is over to try and get them more permanent positions. The success with which they are able to get more permanent positions at 6 month, 9 months and a year should also be documented.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions and Recommendations

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, our overarching recommendation is to ensure that 'Black to Front' day is used to ensure long-term change, beyond just a day. Based on the evidence and data available, 'Black to Front' presents a unique opportunity for Channel 4 to address workforce diversity problems, both internally and across the industry.

However, based on the evidence and experience set out in this report, it is clear that to deliver even just success on the day, the work needs to occur before the day as well as continue after the day to ensure a legacy.

To achieve this Channel 4 needs to be very specific on what it is hoping to achieve, before the day, during the day and afterwards. In previous sections we have presented implications for the 'Black to Front' day that arise from the evidence and analysis presented.

Here we present those recommendations provided in this report in these three categories, for ease of implementation by Channel 4. In some cases there is potential for further analysis, and this is marked where relevant. Ensuring delivery of all these complementary activities will become increasingly important if the 'Black to Front' day is repeated annually.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations to implement immediately and before 'Black to Front' day

These recommendations in particular relate to collection of data for tracking success and change, as well as communicating expectations of off-screen diversity targets (where relevant) to productions and recruiters.



To set a baseline for tracking the success of 'Black to Front' day, Channel 4 should collect and publish new detailed ethnicity data as soon as possible, and while collating the data explicitly ask how willing individuals are to voluntarily forego their data protection rights in order for data to be published that could possibly identify their ethnicity. This is common practice in some legal companies when collecting and publishing data.



Specifically, Channel 4 should ask all relevant commissioned 'Black to Front' day productions to immediately share their data on:

- a) overall headcount by ethnicity;
- b) the percentage of salary spend to Black/ Black, Asian and minority ethnic talent. This would be in line with the current requirement of sharing out of London non-on-screen talent spend to qualify as an "Out of London production"
- c) key roles data. The LHC believes the roles already identified by Channel 4's Commissioning Diversity Guidelines for Factual Programmes, Scripted Programmes would work very well in these genres, as would the roles for women identified in Entertainment Programmes.



To be most transformational, Channel 4 should ensure 'Black to Front' day has a focus on Black – not PoC – talent off-screen. Channel 4 should prioritise resources now in ensuring recruitment by production companies, and by Channel 4 itself, for the day of Black talent off-screen on certain genres, such as comedy, drama and lifestyle, where the gaps are largest (followed by PoC more broadly), as well as in certain roles that cut across genres, given evidence of significant gaps in such positions.

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There are clearly some structural barriers to recruitment that mean Channel 4, and the production companies it is working with, may not be able to identify appropriate Black talent for every available role, let alone achieve 100% off-screen Black representation on the day. However, there is significant value in people from under-represented backgrounds receiving programme credits to further their careers. Maximising diversity off screen will also help Channel 4 avoid criticism of tokenism and ghettoising black talent of only being able to work on “black issues” or on the “Black day”. Thus, Channel 4 should realistically maximise the number of credits Black people receive on the programmes on the day and have a tailored approach:

- all NEW commissions for the day should aspire to 100% Black representation behind the camera through actively helping independent production companies to attract, identify and employ Black talent (using the opportunities provided by the Equality Act to take positive action where appropriate).
- all EXISTING productions should have a minimum target of 20% Black representation for staff headcount and staff spend through actively helping independent production companies to attract, identify and employ Black talent (again using the opportunities provided by the Equality Act to take positive action where appropriate)³³.
- More specific (and ambitious) targets may be possible for different genres as well as for key roles, and we are willing to provide more advice on this going forward.



To minimise additional costs, Channel 4 and production companies should move people around to maximise diversity on productions even if temporary, and at all levels including editorial. There is successful precedent for this in other settings and it will arguably serve to demonstrate the depth of Black talent and also address the commonly voiced fear in the industry that having Black staff is somehow perceived as more of a risk.



Where people cannot be moved from other productions, new Black people should be recruited on placements for several months (e.g. 6 months) to train and shadow key positions before the day, and continue the positions for a short while after the Black to Front day.



Channel 4 should record the ethnicity of all staff and freelancers that leave during that time period leading up to the day and the measure the ethnicity of all new hires and contracts issued during that time. Also, where a Black member of staff leaves during the same time period there should be a full exit interview for Channel 4 to understand the reason for the loss.

³³ As we do not have clear data on Channel 4's existing baseline for existing productions, we have not been able to set a higher target. Our recommendation would be to request further advice once the baseline data is available and we may also be able to provide further suggestions for specific targets for roles and genres.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations to implement on 'Black to Front' day

These recommendations in particular relate to how Channel 4 communicates about the 'Black to Front' day internally and externally as well as specific needs for the day in terms of editorial direction as well as data collection.



Channel 4 should use the findings from this report, data gathered to date, to shape key messages around 'Black to Front' day being focused on Black representation on and off-screen, on editorial independence, and also on long-term change.



As many as possible of the commissioners and staff with editorial input working for Channel 4 on Black to Front day should be Black (and moved around from the rest of the organisation as necessary to ensure this). This should be measured by head count and percentage of staff spend.



Where appropriate Black talent cannot be identified to fill vacancies arising, or appropriate Black talent is not employed to fill these positions on the 'Black to Front' day, Channel 4 should systematically document the reasons.



Channel 4 should announce that 'Black to Front' day will be an annual event – distinguishing it from precedents explored in this report to make it a long-standing industry game-changer. Channel 4 should also continue to implement other complementary policies to increase Black representation. Channel 4 may even consider applying the idea of a dedicated day for other protected characteristics in addition to the annual 'Black to Front' day. Our recommendation is that Channel 4 can and should use all the tools available to ensure long term progress in increasing Black representation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations to implement after the 'Black to Front' day

These recommendations relate to how Channel 4 utilises the 'Black to Front' day to drive long-lasting change internally as well as act as an industry leader on this issue.



Channel 4 should seek independent legal advice on the minimum levels of staff required in order to publish data on their protected characteristics while protecting anonymity. This legal advice should ideally be made publicly available.



In order to have complete diversity data, Channel 4 should use the precedent set by the 'Black to Front' productions to ask all other productions to:

- a) disclose percentage of salary spend to Black/ PoC talent. This would be in line with the current requirement of sharing out of London non-on-screen talent spend to qualify as an "Out of London production".
- b) Share key role data. The LHC believes the roles already identified by Channel 4's Commissioning Diversity Guidelines for Factual Programmes, Scripted Programmes would work very well in these genres, as would the roles for women identified in Entertainment Programmes.



Channel 4 should track how Black staff were successfully identified and recruited for 'Black to Front' day to see if there is best practice that can be used throughout the industry. Where Black staff are not hired then Channel 4 needs to understand why and either work with the company to improve their recruitment processes and / or recognise where there may be shortages in Black talent and skills and then work to develop training and pipeline programmes.

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Channel 4 should track and support all newly recruited Black people after their training and shadowing is over to try and get them more permanent positions where possible. The success with which they are able to get more permanent positions at 6 month, 9 months and a year should also be documented.



Channel 4 should use data and evidence gathered from 'Black to Front' day to set specific focused genre or role targets in the future as opposed to more general targets that might not be effective.



Channel 4 should use data and evidence gathered from 'Black to Front' day to develop specific training programmes to create talent that is appropriate in the future.



Channel 4 should publish data and evidence gathered from 'Black to Front' day in order to:

- a) serve as a public good for the entire industry as to where there are skill shortages and focus training programmes for all broadcasters and major employers and bodies to develop; and
- b) help Black people in the industry to understand where there might be possible opportunities for them to focus on.

Channel 4 and its production companies should use all the tools available under the Equality Act to increase representation of Black off-screen talent, including by taking positive action and through use of the "tie-break" provision³⁴.

³⁴ This allows for Black people to be preferred at shortlisting and recruitment stage if certain conditions are met (section 159, Equality Act). These conditions should be checked before shortlisting and recruitment to ensure that they are met.

Finally, a note on costs.

The LHC does not believe that increased representation can be achieved without sizable investment from the broadcasters. This has been the experience of increasing out of London diversity. This investment must go over and above simply commissioning new programmes with increased representation as we do not believe that this is extra investment in diversity any more than commissioning new programmes from Leeds or Bristol would be seen as extra investment without the corollary of extra investment in infrastructure in those regions.

We recognise that several of our recommendations will put an extra cost on productions, including: Improving HR systems of tracking staff and how to recruit, as well as creating shadowing and training programmes lasting several months to increase credits – to name just two examples. We do not believe that the independent productions should bear the cost of these extra burdens.

As no one would expect diversity and structural and systemic industry racism to be “solved in one day” we would recommend that the ‘Black to Front’ day is repeated annually. Not only is this necessary to build on any successes achieved in creating the day it would also guard against criticism of Channel 4 simply doing it as “Black Lives Matter is fashionable right now” and “jumping to the next cause” in following years even if significant progress is not achieved in increasing meaningful Black representation immediately.

With our recommendations, we believe there is a real possibility for year-on-year transformative change – with Channel 4 being an industry leader improving not just the diversity and representation of its own programmes but providing a public good across British media.

We look forward to Channel 4 taking this opportunity and implementing these policies to create real substantial and meaningful progress on diversity.

Appendix A

Selection of key broadcaster and industry reports for further information.

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