UNMUTED:
Experiences of deaf film and TV professionals in the UK media industry

Erika Jones and Ellie Tomsett

Sir Lenny Henry Centre
for Media Diversity

Executive Summary

Deaf people have been working behind the camera in UK film and television for over four decades, yet there is scarce information about their inclusion in the workforce. This report is one of the first studies to focus exclusively on deaf film and TV professionals, detailing their experiences, identifying issues with current industry practice and providing recommendations to improve opportunities.

Some of the key findings, based on a survey of over forty deaf film and TV professionals and subsequent interviews, are that;

> 💡 Deaf professionals responding to our survey earnt over the last year at least **£13,000** less than the wider industry on average[1].
>
> 💡 **98%** of the participants say they have experienced discrimination whilst working in the industry.
>
> 💡 Only **5%** of the respondents believed there to be enough resources and opportunities for deaf film and TV industry professionals.

After an introduction and methodology section, the findings of this research are explored in 6 distinct sections; 1) communication access, 2) skills and role gaps, 3) restriction and favouritism in deaf media, 4) ghettoising in major broadcasters, 5) inaccessible mainstream media, 6) facing discrimination in the sector. Each section contains relevant recommendations which are based on researchers' interpretations of the findings and suggestions made by interviewees.

[1] The Annual ScreenSkills Assessment in 2019 noted the average annual pay as £39,348.40, this is supported by Talent.com (recruiter) which states an average of £37,320 for film and £40,000 for TV.

Introduction

'There is really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard' (Roy, 2004:1)

Deaf people have often been ignored, dismissed, or muted by society – a minority lost in the sea of the tough world of media. In 2024 Creative Diversity Network (CDN)'s *Diamond: The Seventh Cut* report found that deaf people make up less than 1% of those working with the UK's broadcasting industry.It is also worth noting that of all disabilities recorded in the sector, deafness continues to make up one of the smallest percentages. CDN, in one of its earlier reports, *Disability Deep Dive* in 2020 also found that over the previous 5 years the number of deaf professionals working off-screen had more than halved.[3]

This number is a far cry from the national picture - it's estimated that currently around one in five adults of working age (18%) across the UK has a form of deafness, ranging from a mild hearing loss to being profoundly deaf.[4] So why is there such a large discrepancy? Why are so few deaf people working in film and TV and why are we seeing such a high dropout rate?

This report reviews the employment opportunities and experiences of current deaf professionals working behind the camera in the UK film and TV industry, building on initial research undertaken in 2020/21 by lead researcher Erika Jones (who was born profoundly deaf). It's now time for the voices of deaf people working in the industry to be **'UNMUTED'**.

Context

Deaf people face a unique set of challenges, stemming from communication. This group exhibits a wide variation in communication methods, linguistic ability, educational attainment, and cultural identity. Some deaf people view themselves simply as individuals with a 'hearing loss' and others reject this term and identify as Deaf members of a cultural and linguistic minority, with their own language, heritage, social norms, and prevailing sense of community (Ladd, 2003). This report therefore uses the term 'deaf' as an umbrella term to reflect the full spectrum of people who are Deaf (the capital D signifying a person who is culturally deaf), deaf, partially deaf/partially hearing, deafened, Deafblind and hard of hearing.

---

[2] No such figure for the Film industry can be found.

[3] Going from 1.8% in 2016-17 to 0.8%/0.6% in 2020-21 (CDN, 2022)

[4] Royal National Institute for Deaf People (2024) Facts and statements on employment. **https://rnid.org.uk/get-involved/research-and-policy/facts-and-figures/facts-and-statements-on-employment/** (Accessed June 2024)

Deaf people are often grouped within the wider category of disabled people - and the picture that emerges from reviewing existing studies into disabled people's experiences of the film and TV industry is one of significant and enduring underrepresentation. Industry regulator Ofcom's 2022/23 report *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in TV and Radio* highlights that disabled people's contributions in off-screen TV roles is only 10%. It is much less for the film sector, with 4% as reported by British Film Institute (BFI)'s *Diversity Standards - Initial Findings* in 2020. Both these figures are well below the Office for National Statistics (ONS)'s overall disabled workforce estimate of 24%.[5]

CDN states that if this trend of marginalisation continues, it will take 20 years until the UK's working disabled population is truly represented in television as 'There appears to be nowhere in the industry where disabled people thrive' (CDN, 2022a: 15). This is despite the creation of numerous diversity schemes and initiatives, which have totalled over 100 in the last 10 years (Salmon, 2021). So, why are we seeing this picture?

One possibility that occurred to us is that the industry continues to treat disabled people as a homogenous group, making it almost impossible to understand the inequalities at play. Conflating disabled people's differing identities and needs leaves a lot of room for ignorance to flourish. To give but one example of this muddled attempt at inclusion, the leading researcher and co-author of this report, as well as other deaf professionals in the sector have been offered braille[6] in their workplace, more than once. This lack of comprehension of the nuance and complexities of different disabilities is one that is anecdotally well-known, and it has tangible impacts on people's opportunities to participate in the industry. Due to the diversity of disabled people's experiences, it is unhelpful to lump everyone into a single box.

The following report is an attempt to start to unpack this box and to look specifically at deaf people's experience of the industry.

[5] Office for National Statistics (2024) Labour market status of disabled people; House of Commons (2024) Disabled people in employment.

[6] Braille is a system of touch reading and writing for blind people.

Methodology

We used a two-stage approach to data collection involving a survey and then follow-up semi-structured interviews with deaf film and TV professionals working in off-screen roles.

Stage 1:

The survey was designed using MS Forms and asked a series of questions related to respondents' experiences in the UK film and TV industry - this contained some open-ended questions where participants could write answers in their own words. To ensure the survey was accessible, we provided a video of British Sign Language (BSL) translation and subtitles for both the information sheet and each individual question. The video was linked at the very start of the survey and hosted on the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR) Vimeo channel. The survey was publicised through various industry networks and via social media in order to reach as wide a range of relevant people as possible.

As the deaf community is very small, the following report is careful to ensure individual responses are not inadvertently traceable, through say attributing specific comments to someone with a specific combination of identity category data (i.e. specifying the combination of age, ethnicity and gender would narrow a response down too much). We have chosen to not reveal the overall number of respondents (other than to state we received between 40 and 60 responses) so that percentages cannot be used to work out exactly how many people from each identity category responded. An overall spread of the ages, genders, ethnicities, additional disabilities, and communication methods of respondents can be seen in Figures 1 - 5. Out of all responses, nearly half (47%) of the respondents volunteered to participate in an 1-1 interview about their experiences.

Fig 1. Ages of survey respondents

16-24 years	7%
25-29 years	12%
30-34 years	17%
35-39 years	21%
40-44 years	5%
45-49 years	14%
50 - 55 years	12%
56-60 years	10%
60+ years	2%

Fig 2. Gender of survey respondents

Female	38%
Male	55%
Non-binary	5%
Prefer not to say	2%

Fig 3. Ethnicities of respondents

White - English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Irish	72%
Any other White background	2%
Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	2%
British Asian	12%
Black British	5%
Other	2%
Prefer not to say	5%

Fig 4. Additional disabilities

Yes	26%
No	71%
Prefer not to say	3%

Fig 5. Preferred method of communication

British Sign Language (BSL)	62%
Signed English (SSE or SEE)	17%
Spoken English	14%
Other	7%

Stage 2:

As so many survey respondents volunteered to be interviewed, we were unable to interview everyone. As such we had to sample interviewees and we did so to attempt to reflect the percentages of gender, racial background and communication format captured across the survey as a whole. In total we interviewed 10 people over video calls. The interviews were semi-structured and aligned with the life-world interview approach outlined by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015). Questions were chosen to enable participants to elaborate further on their answers to the survey, and to illuminate further detail about their lived experience using their own words. We used similar questions with all participants to enable us to compare responses across the overall cohort of interviewees.

Respondents were asked about their communication needs in advance and access was provided in all instances. In order to make the interview data accessible to both researchers (the leading researcher, who is not fluent in spoken English, and her academic mentor, who is not fluent in British Sign Language) all responses were translated into written English transcriptions.

The interviewees were provided with information and consent forms in advance, and this was reiterated at the start of each interview, participants had a right to withdraw after the interview took place and were given access to a draft of relevant sections of the report before publication. One participant subsequently withdrew consent and their data is not included within the final report. As such the remaining qualitative data originates from 9 interviews. Interviewees also contributed thoughts and suggestions that we have factored into the recommendations this report makes.

We selected the pseudonyms for each interviewee (to ensure they didn't accidentally choose the name of another participant) and everyone was able to confirm they were happy with the selected pseudonym as part of review before publication.[7]

Our findings pull together data from both the survey and interview stages of our work. As the data collected was vast and wide ranging, we selected specific themes to engage with and make this clear below.

---

[7] The 9 interviewees are referred to in this report as Anya, Cleo, Connie, Gabriel, Jay, Lal, Leon, Rhona, and Terrence.

Findings

The findings presented here are focused on the questions surrounding the small and declining representation of deaf workers in the off-screen industry, and the barriers to participation experienced by the respondents. The reason for this focus is that only 5% of the respondents believed there to be enough resources and opportunities for deaf film and TV industry professionals.

One survey respondent observed that the lack of opportunities could have significant long-term consequences:

"There are not enough opportunities for deaf professionals so the standard/professionalism amongst deaf professionals tends to be lower. This in turn creates a vicious circle as they are not as desirable as they could have been."

The absence of opportunities felt by the respondents has resulted in 64% of them to consider leaving the industry. And this number rose further if issues of intersectionality and related barriers came into play - for example, working mothers, people with additional disabilities, non-heterosexuals and people from working class backgrounds all expressed higher levels of dissatisfaction with the industry and were even more likely to have considered leaving.

So, what are the barriers preventing deaf professionals from accessing opportunities and resources, and pushing them out of the industry?

Through analysis of the survey responses, the main barriers identified were (in no particular order):

1. Communication Access

2. Skill and role gaps

3. Restrictions and Favouritism in Deaf Media

4. Ghettoising in Major Broadcasters

5. Inaccessible Mainstream Media

6. Facing Various Facets of Discrimination in the Sector

Communication Access

62% of the survey respondents selected BSL as their preferred communication method with 14% preferring spoken English. Out of all respondents, 62% could speak to hearing people in general, while the remaining 38% do not communicate this way. It is worth noting here that the National Deaf Children's Society highlights that even the most proficient lip-readers would only be able to follow about 30 - 40% of a conversation.[8] Regardless of whether the respondents speak or sign, 95% stated that they need communication support, which could be an interpreter, a notetaker or a technology system.

People who require support with communication access in the workplace can apply for an 'Access to Work' grant funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, to cover this cost. 86% of the respondents used this grant. Once an application is successful, Access to Work funding is invaluable to many deaf professionals, but it is not without its challenges or complexities (Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

Firstly, in recent years, Access to Work funding has been capped. At the time of writing the Department for Work and Pensions has set the cap at £69,260 per year.[9] The cap has been criticised for 'disproportionately impact(ing)' those who require 'more expensive' support staff including BSL interpreters (Centre for Social Justice, 2021: 91). Nearly a third (31%) of our respondents who have Access to Work said it did not cover all of their support costs. Bigger media companies may be able to cover the shortfall if the interpreter costs exceed the government's cap. However, this may be more challenging for smaller and independent productions with tighter budgets, and this could put them off hiring deaf people.

This problem is made worse by the short-term nature of industry which makes it hard to plan, as one of our interviewees, Rhona explained:

"I could be working full time on a project that requires daily interpreters for three months. My Access to Work budget runs for blocks of 12 months but how do I know how much budget I need to keep for my next project? [...] There is always the fear that my budget will be wiped out in the first few months and I'll be left without interpreters at the end of the year."

---

[8] English speech sounds are extremely difficult to lip-read, even under the best conditions.

[9] Department for Work & Pensions; **https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-work-factsheet/access-to-work-factsheet-for-customers** Accessed June 2024.

The level of administrative labour required to use the scheme is also a barrier. Access to Work does not offer much flexibility to freelancers or those undertaking short contracts – you need to apply for a new grant every time you have a new contract and it could take from a few weeks to several months to get one approved. One of our interviewees, Connie disclosed how for some jobs she didn't share her access needs with her employers:

"One of the reasons is that I know there's no point because it took considerable time for Access to Work to grant budgets for my access requirements, when the jobs are often starting at short notice, the length of the Access to Work application takes too long […] Contracts are often short, a few months' worth, so I felt like it's a pain in ass to reapply all over again".

The onus is often on deaf professionals to explain about Access to Work and their communication needs to their potential employers – a strenuous and repetitive task in an industry with a high turnover of projects and staff. They often need to do all the organisation and paperwork involved, as Rhona stressed it *"creates a lot of additional stress and administrative burden for deaf people using interpreters"*.

She also noted that the system is not designed for teams with more than one deaf worker as *"the Access to Work perspective is very much that 'the deaf person needs the interpreter' whereas it's the team that needs the interpreter"*. She then went on to provide an example of a large production involving numbers of deaf crew and actors saying that as *"lots of those people will have their own, differing, Access to Work budgets. The logistics of managing multiple budgets, schedules, invoicing and interpreters just doesn't make sense."*

This situation is not very efficient, as another interviewee, Anya, recalled an incident where she turned up for a try-out, only to discover that each deaf person had brought their own interpreter, when the employer *"could have booked one or two interpreters to cover us all!"*.

Once a grant agreement is in place, there's still an issue of securing appropriate support. There are only approximately 1,000 registered BSL interpreters,[10] for approx. 87,000 BSL users,[11] and fewer than 50 registered lip speakers in the UK.[12] Due to this shortage, it can be difficult to secure interpreters at short notice. This is made additionally difficult, as our interviewee Terrence explained, many are not appropriately *"trained, or experienced in the media industry...[and] there is a specialised language in the television and film industry"*.

[10] The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) **https://www.nrcpd.org.uk/**

[11] British Deaf Association (BDA) **https://bda.org.uk/**

[12] Association of Lipspeakers (ALS) **https://www.lipspeaking.co.uk/** (Accessed June 2024)

The interpreters also need to be the 'right fit' as interviewee Gabriel detailed:

"Filming is very fast-paced, with multiple people speaking very fast and interpreters have to be on the ball all of the time [...] everyone is expected to work long days – 12 to 14 hour days – and some interpreters don't like that. [...] If I have a last-minute cancellation, scheduling change or an ill interpreter and I can't book one from my usual team, I get very nervous. It doesn't normally work out well."

Cleo, another interviewee also outlined the impact working with unsuited interpreters has on her; *"I have to do my own work, and on top of that I have to educate my own interpreters. It's quite draining, and exhausting"*. This also means, for her, that she's being *"seen as less, in the eyes of others, just because my interpreters are not translating or voicing me correctly"*.

Working with an interpreter who doesn't understand you properly or is unable to use correct signs for industry jargon could lead to miscommunication and incorrect translation. Interpreters can have a direct impact on the way hearing colleagues view a deaf colleague's professionalism, and as such having the relevant training and experience is very important. A survey respondent recounted how it created a difficult picture of themselves:

"You tend to stay quiet so it's easier and minimises any risk of being misunderstood. So you end up as the 'quiet guy' of the team, when you're not really that guy."

Terrence also reflected on the personal impact of being misinterpreted stating that *"inaccurate translation can throw me out easily, negatively impacting my confidence, especially my confidence in my own ability to do my job"*.

Through analysis of the survey data and transcripts of interviews, it is clear that difficulties with accessing timely, reliable and appropriately trained communication support, from someone with a working knowledge of the media industry was a key issue. This coupled with the complexities of current government schemes, presents unique challenges for deaf people working in this industry. The following recommendations below have arisen as a result of analysing responses and include specific suggestions made by individual participants themselves.

Recommendations:

- The Department for Work and Pensions need to be made aware of the problems deaf people face with Access to Work and take real action to improve their systems, such as considering media industry specific Access to Work framework and Access to Work passport to allow for the scheme to pass between jobs, without having to make a new application.

- A simple resource pack dealing with the details of Access to Work, should be standardised through the industry, especially at top level management, to remove the pressure on deaf professionals to do all the explaining.

- The industry such as CDN and BFI as well as the UK Government should collectively consider the idea of a central funding pool or even an interpreter pool to be used to cover any access or cost gap. A similar idea has recently been put forward by Underlying Health Condition who are calling for the introduction of a new levy of 0.1% on all High-end TV budgets to create a new, dedicated 'Disabled Freelancers Fund' to provide a stop gap between Access to Work grants and to supplement any inadequate support. We support calls for this approach; however, this doesn't remove the need for the Department for Work and Pensions to improve their system.

- More media specific training and shadowing opportunities to be created for interpreters.

- Sign Language and lip speaker interpreting profession bodies - such as Association of Sign Language Interpreter, Scottish Collaborative of Sign Language Interpreters (SCOSLI), Visual Language Professionals (VLP), Association of Lip Speakers (ALS) and Association of Lipspeakers with Additional Sign (ALAS) - to consider setting up a public list or database of media interpreters, with their training being updated regularly as their Continuing Professional Development.

Skill and role gaps

Over 70% of the survey respondents were in editorial roles and under 10% identified themselves in technical, post production and production management roles.

During the interviews, an awareness of these existing skills gaps was highlighted by participants. Rhona noted that;

"For example, there is not a single deaf and BSL DOP [Director of Photography]– why? It's such a visual job - and deaf people pride themselves on being visual – so why not? It all stems from a lack of opportunities. The resources to work with deaf people on their career progression, and in particular niching down to a specialism, are missing."

The survey data corroborates this observation about problems with career progression, as 64% of the respondents said they performed multiple/additional roles outside their main role, with a further 24% needing or wanting other jobs outside their main role. Kate Ansell's (2021) *Career Routes and Barriers for Disabled People in the UK TV Industry* report also identified that disabled people often do not have a linear career, which then has the potential to impact securing future employment.

As someone with a few decades of experience in the industry, Gabriel felt that issues with hiring and career progression had not really changed over the years. He observed that;

"Deafness is much more out in the open, but I don't think modern attitudes have caught up. Yes, there are more companies receiving deaf awareness training, more Access Coordinators in the production team [...] which is all positive, but what I'm seeing is a continuation of the same hiring practice."

Lack of access to training could be one of the reasons behind this skills gap as nearly a third (31%) of the respondents found training inaccessible. Cleo highlighted how the training she had attended was *"very hearing orientated [...] it was exhausting. I was fed up. It was a constant fight, to battle the barriers, simply just to get the access I needed".* Badly delivered training therefore can continue to exclude or alienate people simply hoping to upskill and progress within the industry.

Connie also commented that training providers' attitudes can play a role in this. She recalled applying for a course with a training provider for the screen industries:

"I emailed them about my access requirement [...] They basically said no [...] The whole experience is really upsetting, and this has put me off applying any more training in the future. If a major TV training provider can't provide accessible training...what's the point?"

One survey respondent echoed this experience and remembered an instance where a provider had told them that they *"don't think that I am able to do the course, that it'll be 'too hard' for me".*

Some of the interviewees described how it is considered a risk to invest time and money into training. Cleo recognised how *"many deaf people couldn't afford it or afford to take risks to take it on – nor if there are careers for them afterwards, it's not a guarantee"*. Rhona added that *"It's a big commitment... and deaf people won't do that because they don't have the confidence that they will get the return on their investment through post-qualification employment opportunities"*.

The gap is also seen at the top of the industry ladder, as 14% of our respondents were in senior management positions. 67% of those have their own production companies. One survey respondent commented that the industry *"was inaccessible for me so I ended up building my own companies"* and as such it might be the case that rather than fight to move up the ranks in bigger mainstream settings, establishing an independent company provides more control over a career. This is not so much a choice as a necessity - in order to progress an alternative route must be found. Like Cleo, when she became a managing director in her own company:

"It was the first time I had ever been in a senior position. It's somewhat sad that it's of my own making. I knew I would never get that kind of role in the mainstream world".

If we look only at the mainstream (which we defined in the survey as working on non-deaf specific content, in a team of hearing people) only 2% of our respondents are working at a management level - suggesting that there may be very few deaf people at a senior level in the mainstream off-screen industry illustrating a 'glass ceiling' for deaf professionals.

Ansell's (2021) report suggested that if disabled (including deaf) people are not given opportunities to gain experience early in their career, they will struggle to be promoted into senior roles when competing against non-disabled people who have not experienced the same barriers. This goes some way to explaining why there is a scarcity of deaf people at senior level.

Gabriel suggested that if we have more deaf people in a decision-making role, this may have a trickle-down effect into a more diverse workforce;

"When that happens, change follows easily. Diversity filters down through the ranks. We need to lead from the top. When more people are exposed to DDN (Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent) people, it becomes easy to see how much they can achieve."

Continuing lack of progression and glass ceiling could lead to deaf people leaving, taking their talent to other more accessible sectors.

Data collated by survey and interviews indicates how this could be exacerbated by a combination of factors, namely inaccessible training and lack of opportunities across the sector. This means that deaf people are often forced to embark on a nonlinear career, which in turn contributes to significant gaps in skill and seniority. The recommendations are targeted at addressing these key issues.

Recommendations:

- There's little data on the number for deaf workforce (along with other intersectionalities) in screen industries in different roles and grades – industry should collect such data to develop a better picture and to deliver a more focused strategy or policy to address any skill, role, or grade-related issues (and beyond)

- Training providers to be ensured that they're fully accessible. Involve deaf people at the helm and consider the deaf people as trainers. There are also calls for a proper training academy or funded programme specified for deaf people.

- Opportunities for deaf people to include apprenticeships, shadowing, work experience or even jobs to be attached to training, in order to avoid them being 'tokenistic' and meaningless. This should involve deaf people in design and implementation. Furthermore, ideally, those opportunities would be financed or funded so they do not leave participants with the extra expense. (Eikhof, 2024).

- Ring fencing of vacancies for deaf applicants.

- High quality leadership programmes should be considered, to address the gap in deaf professionals at senior level. Often by focusing on getting people into the industry, diversity schemes can overlook issues that happen when long serving staff find it difficult to progress.

Recommendations: (cont.)

- Commissioners, broadcasters, production companies and professional bodies to ensure that their information and resources are accessible via both British Sign Language and subtitles.

- People involved in recruitment should use deaf organisations as an advertising 'middleman' to spread the word. This is because the leading reason for the respondents in securing their breakthrough job and current/most recent jobs is via word of mouth. As a minority linguistic group, the Deaf community is small and with social connections that often resemble a family where there is less degree of separation (Lane, 1984).

- British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust (BSLBT) has just set up a new database for off screen talent[14], which should be utilised by broadcasters and production companies in their recruitment of deaf people.

[14] https://www.bslzone.co.uk/making-tv/off-screen-talent

Areas of employment:

Whatever their roles, the study found that deaf professionals would be usually employed in the three main areas in the film & TV industry:

1. Deaf commissioned content - Film, TV programmes or series involving deaf people /stories that are commissioned for deaf people. This could be produced by either deaf-led or hearing-led production companies. The majority of this content is commissioned by the British Sign Language Broadcasting Trust, (BSLBT). This is often referred to as 'Deaf Media.'

2. Deaf programming at major broadcasters - delivering deaf content, mainly for a deaf audience. Currently, there are only two teams that fall into this category; BBC's See Hear and ITV's Signpost.

3. Mainstream - where a deaf professional works within a team of hearing professionals, on content that is not specifically aimed at a deaf audience.

The data reveals barriers within respective areas and are outlined below.

'Deaf Media'

67% of the survey respondents' current, or most recent, role is in making deaf commissioned content so deaf media is an important source of employment for many deaf professionals. Whilst some of the respondents described it as positive and *"safe space where deaf people can learn and acquire skills free from communication barriers and cultural differences''*, others noted that this comes with some drawbacks, as one survey respondent explained, *"it's such a small pool and with funding [being] what it is, it is not enough to sustain entire careers and to specialise"*.

A large share of deaf programmes and films are commissioned by BSLBT. Set up in 2008, to offer an alternative way for broadcasters to meet their requirements to provide sign language on their channels as stipulated by Ofcom's Code on Television Access Services, BSLBT commissions television programmes and films made in BSL for deaf people. Because it's the only commissioning body with a sole focus on deaf content, it's very often the only place where deaf professionals can pitch their ideas. This could be a problem, as Terrence observed as *"It's all eggs in one basket, and you're stuck with them"*. In his experience he also found that;

"BSLBT plays it safe, they are quite restrictive. They will not take risks with ideas, and as a result, that is reflected in the wider deaf media, we really haven't seen any brave or innovative films. I know people have them, including myself. But when I brought it to the BSLBT, they wouldn't commission it. I have to dumb it down, simplify it down to get a chance of being commissioned at all. This influences the whole of your mentality. If we compare it to mainstream TV, where you see lots of risky, bold ideas coming on screen, we are lagging behind massively..."

This sentiment was shared by some survey respondents too. One remarked that *"Deaf productions are often forced to "play it safe", are repetitive and somewhat dated"*.

This isn't the only criticism about BSLBT that came out during the research. Several survey respondents and interviewees perceived the organisation as engaging in favouritism. Interviewee Leon argued that *"BSLST is full of cronyism"* before describing how in their experience existing hiring practices were deeply rooted in who you know, even more so than the wider media industry.

This is reflected in the survey data where 45% of the respondents reported they had seen favouritism, like this survey respondent who pleaded BSLBT to *"stop favouritism and inequality [sic] opportunities"*.

During their interview, one of our interviewees, Lal stated that in their experience:

"I know some people who have been partway through the application process when the job has been offered to the recruiter's favourite person [...] It's as though the recruiter is just cloning the same person over and over again."

Another interviewee, Jay, felt that deaf people's educational background plays a big role in this favouritism too;

"Deaf people who go to Mary Hare School form their own elite subculture who, once they've left the school, recruit their peers through an 'old boys club' style of nepotism which is continued through their siblings or children [...] I see this exact brand of deaf person running deaf media and all deaf organisations [...] For example, I know that the hearing community has a real problem with people from Eton controlling most of the British institutions such as the government, big businesses, and sport and I think Mary Hare is the deaf equivalent."

In relation to commissioning deaf content, Leon also noticed how commissions would often go to hearing production companies: *"I've worked in this industry for years, and hearing production companies will always have the upper hand."*

The use of hearing- led production companies in BSLBT's commissions is clear in their Annual Reports. In 2012 and 2013, nearly or all programmes commissioned by BSLBT were made by deaf-led production companies. This number has dwindled over the last decade to a point where in 2019, shockingly all BSLBT's commissioned programmes were made by hearing led production companies.

Since that, the commissions going to hearing-led companies remain in majority compared to deaf-led companies.

Despite hearing-led production companies still winning more than half of BSLBT's commissions, most survey respondents were not employed on this commissioned content. Hearing companies producing deaf content employ fewer deaf people in comparison to their deaf-led comparators (in our survey data, there was a 70% difference between employment in deaf-led organisations and hearing companies producing deaf content).

Hearing-led companies dominating the BSLBT market could be due to insufficient number of deaf-led production companies. Only 7% of the survey respondents felt that there are enough deaf-led production companies, so the question here is, whether this particular approach to commissioning, the current status quo of hearing-led companies producing most of the deaf content is stifling the growth of deaf-led production companies?

Leon commented on how the hearing-led production companies have safety nets to fall back on - safety nets their deaf comparators lack;

"The future of deaf production companies is very precarious. It's very hard to have a life and a family without knowing where your next commission will come from. Drummer TV, Maverik TV and Resource Base are fine because they have other commissions from places like the BBC running alongside their deaf programme making and that keeps them ticking over."

Jay observed how a combination of the abovementioned factors could be fatal to careers like his own:

"I feel like deaf media needs a total reset, to go back to scratch and start again...(BSLBT) have the money to create opportunities and make anything that they want, but they choose not to. They choose to play it safe and support the same people over and over again.

Leon suggested a more radical approach, as he believed that *"Ofcom's framework is the root of all issues in deaf media"*. Ofcom's Code on Television Access Services currently allows for channels to opt out of providing a minimum requirement of signing content by paying into 'money pot' for BSLBT. Leon claimed that as a result of this existing system;

"millions of pounds of our access budget are being thrown away. The money would be much better invested in the creation of a sign language channel, producing a range of programmes [this in turn] would mean more diverse work opportunities for deaf people".

Having a dedicated sign language channel was a popular topic of the interviews; it came up multiple times (without any prompting). Jay thought having *"our own deaf TV channel offering work to deaf people...would give [them] opportunity to develop their skills outside of inaccessible mainstream media"*. Cleo agreed that it would;

"provide a stream of employment for deaf people...We will see a more diverse group working in television and film. This will help to get serious funding for training, for it to be properly recognised."

Terrence believed this approach could be revolutionary:

"Imagine that...you'd see a rich and wide range of TV content. We can afford to take risks and come up with brave and bold ideas, allowing us to express our creativity, imagination, and individuality fully."

Since its establishment, BSLBT has emerged as an important cornerstone of Deaf Media and as a primary source of employment for many deaf media professionals. Feedback from survey and interview participants however highlight some negative perceptions of the organisation's commissioning process and decisions. Analysis of the organisation's past commissions also reveals that currently it provides fewer opportunities to deaf-led production companies than it could. For the Deaf Media environment to flourish, one where every voice is heard, and every talent given the chance to shine, the following recommendations, based on suggestions by respondents, should be considered.

Recommendations:

- BSLBT to create quotas for commissions to go to deaf-led production companies, as well as quotas for deaf staff to be recruited under the commissions.

- For deaf professionals to hold a deaf media annual event, to improve relationships and collaborations.

- Ofcom to explore the idea of reviewing the current code, and to consider the idea of setting up a dedicated sign channel.

Deaf programming by major broadcasters

The most common barrier identified in the workplace of major broadcasters making deaf content was ghettoising, which is confining a particular group to a particular area and treating them differently. Within the off- screen industry this practice is keeping deaf and disabled employees in disability-specific content making rather than providing opportunities across the spectrum of productions. One survey respondent elaborated:

"The BBC and ITV, despite hiring deaf staff for decades, they still find it difficult to imagine employing their deaf staff in any of their non-deaf programming."

Interviewee Rhona concurred with this point:

"The issue comes when deaf media professionals become pigeonholed because the industry doesn't get to see the other parts of their intersectionality, for example, their gender, ethnicity or life experiences. Deaf people are seen as deaf first and foremost."

Within the major broadcasters' productions across the board, you typically see their staff moving around on productions, gaining new experiences and skills - progressing their careers, whilst deaf staff on deaf programming tend to be kept on, even if they express a wish to move around just as their hearing peers do. Another survey respondent commented that they *"asked to move, they [the employer] said no even if my hearing colleagues get moved around different programmes all the time, while I am stuck here"*.

Gabriel detailed in his interview how he had been stopped from progressing into other programming that would, potentially, be an upwards career move, as well as hindering any potential skill development when he moved into BBC's See Hear;

"It was a great job...I ended up stuck there for (some) years, [...] I was applying for lots of other [...] jobs within the BBC but they wouldn't accept me. They couldn't get their head round it; they said, "but you're deaf and you're doing a great job on See Hear [...] I said, "I don't want to stay there, I want to work for you!" but they'd just respond with "you're deaf, they need you", so I was stuck."

The teams on deaf programming are often small with only a few roles available – at the time of writing, not counting freelancers, roles number less than 10 at both BBC's See Hear and ITV's Signpost. Naturally for small teams, there's often a small ladder to move up but it's difficult to be promoted if the employee above is being retained. The small number of roles as well as the retention of existing staff can also create a barrier for newer deaf prospective employees to gain entry to the production.

Several studies have highlighted the practice of ghettoising in the TV industry (e.g. Randle et. al, 2007, Saha, 2018, Ansell 2021). Randle and Hardy (2016) provides one specific example; they suggested that, whilst ghettoising can be seen as a potential chance to get a foot in the door in the industry, it could also be seen as a possible career limitation, as they found that disability-specific programming was seen as 'devalued', of 'secondary' importance and of 'poor quality' in comparison to mainstream programming (Randle and Hardy, 2016: 10).

Ofcom's (2023) *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in TV and radio* report noted that despite now recruiting higher proportions of people from underrepresented groups, broadcasters are struggling to retain these staff. Our survey data implies potential reasons for this retention issue. 78% of respondents working with broadcasters reported that they had experienced ableism across their careers, with 67% saying they have at some stage been bullied in their workplace. This statistic is at least 20% higher than survey respondents working in other types of workplaces.

It's also the industry setting where the lowest representation (22%) of the survey respondents reported experiences of good inclusive practice or support in comparison to other workplaces.

It's important to clarify that the practice of ghettoising is not restricted only to broadcasters, as Gabriel outlined how it can apply to deaf media:

"I've worked with a lot of deaf people who are trapped there for years. They couldn't get work at the BBC or any other mainstream programmes; the only jobs that deaf people could get was See Hear, Signpost or BSLBT... Audism is both subtle and obvious."

This comment suggests that ghettoising could be aggravated by mainstream being inaccessible as alleged by some of the respondents, such as Jay: *"I don't even bother trying with mainstream media because I know I wouldn't stand a chance"*. Rhona summed the issue up, stating that:

"Deaf people can work in any genre, they don't need to be pigeonholed into deaf programmes. There's a real lack of imagination and an inability to see the whole person... We don't yet have a plethora of deaf people working in mainstream TV to help break these stereotypes."

The data collected as part of this research clearly indicates that broadcasters' ghettoisation of deaf media is holding deaf professionals back, and actively harming their career. Implementing the suggestions below, formulated from the analysis of the findings and comments, could help to address the issues of this systemic barrier to further inclusion across the industry.

Recommendations:

💡 Broadcasters, commissioners, and production companies (both hearing-led and deaf-led) to introduce targets across roles and grades, not just a one-number-blanket for the whole group. 'Blanket-cover' could give a potentially wrong impression that deaf staff may be spread across various productions when it's most likely that all, or almost all, deaf staff are grouped into a specific team.

💡 Broadcasters to encourage deaf staff mobility – in 2022 seven of the UK's main broadcasters have come together to create 'access and inclusion passports', based on a BBC initiative – to enable the holders to move more smoothly across departments and between broadcasters, reducing the need for disabled professionals to repeatedly disclose their needs to each new employer or manager. A consistent, robust, and transparent evaluation and review should be part of this progress and published regularly (no review of this scheme is currently accessible) – to make sure that they are working as effectively as possible.

Mainstream

29% of the survey respondents had a current or most recent job in mainstream productions, and 14% have worked in it for all of their careers. However, a much higher number, 83%, of the respondents expressed a desire to work on mainstream productions, with some commenting that there are benefits to move into mainstream work, such as developing skills; *"Mainstream productions are environments where you can specialise and challenge oneself in terms of one's craft"* and obtaining experiences; *"They tend to be bigger production companies which mean better chance(s) of networking and opportunities"*.

40% of the respondents have rarely or never worked in the mainstream. This disparity in the numbers suggests the lack of opportunities - and this is underlined by the fact that only 2% of all participants believed there are enough opportunities in the mainstream.

Meanwhile, half of the respondents who worked on mainstream productions all of their careers have said that they are not sure if they want to work there. They don't share their reasons in the survey, but the comments by other respondents implied some of the potential explanations. In her interview, Cleo described working in the mainstream as *"a massive burden on us"* while another survey respondent commented that:

"I have to work triple as hard and feel a burden/huge responsibility as a deaf staff (member). I know if I perform not as well as others, they will judge all deaf (people the) same."

Cultural difference could be an additional burden, as one participant explained: *"you find it difficult to express your own true self - you code-switch to fit into their 'culture' which is hard"*.

Further negative experiences of mainstream organisations came out during interviews, such as when Connie spoke of;

"...incidents where a person spoke to me, to ask me to do something [...] I asked them to repeat what they're saying as they're often in a rush, or not standing and facing me clearly. They just took off and did what I was supposed to do! It was supposed to be my job! But they weren't bothered to try to communicate with me properly, they gave up too quickly and did my jobs instead [...] It knocked my confidence massively."

Another survey respondent shared how tough it could be when starting out in mainstream;

"Doing this whilst educating people on how to include a deaf person, always being a second or two behind via interpretation, managing cultural differences and so on is onerous and a big ask of someone who is just starting out in their career."

This correlates with the data showing that 83% of the survey respondents who worked all their career in the mainstream have experienced ableism. It's almost 25% more than for those who have never worked there, with one survey respondent commenting: *"Mainstream productions are a minefield of ableism and misplaced well intention, if not outright ignorance or audism"*.

Gabriel sketched out how the perception about his deafness has prevented him in his mainstream career progression;

"I feel very lucky to have had such a long career but there have been lots of jobs that I could have got – and should have got – but they were worried about my deafness...I've seen the careers of my hearing peers accelerate past me, leaving me lagging behind.[...]The problem is that the people at the top of these companies just don't understand, they are unwilling to learn and won't try anything new. They are very risk averse. They see the deafness, they don't see the person."

Anya felt the industry has failed to step up: *"We do lots of bothering, chasing, educating non deaf [people] about our culture... The burden should not fall all on us. It's exhausting"*.

The negative perception or misconceptions of disabled people has been highlighted in several studies including those by Scope (2018), The BFI (2020) and CDN (2021a, 2021c). Further to this, van Raalte, Wallis and Pekalski's 2021 report, *Disability by Design*, found that *"it is clear that the industry is plagued by a fundamental lack of understanding at the top when it comes to disability"* (van Raalte et. al, 2021:14). This reflects the current stigma and misconception around deaf people. In 2023, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) found that 59% of people would not feel confident communicating with deaf people, and this number rose to 84% for a BSL user.

And what may count as a vicious circle, deaf people being a rare sight in the mainstream has resulted, for Connie, a further *"lack of understanding from the hearing people in the media"*.

The collected data reveals that the journey into the mainstream sector for a deaf professional can be fraught with difficulties. It can be both a hard place to break into, and once you're in the mainstream sector, it can be a tough and lonely place to work due to prevalent negative attitudes and perceptions. The lack of deaf representation in the mainstream film and TV sector not only impacts the careers of deaf professionals, but also through the content produced, perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces a narrow view of the deaf experience for audiences. The recommendations below suggest changes that need to be made in order to increase the visibility and understanding of deaf people in the mainstream production environment.

Recommendations:

- Introduce industry-wide mandatory standard deaf awareness training (created by deaf people)- including unconscious bias, legal responsibilities, microaggression etc. - to be introduced to all – starting with the top-level staff (regardless of whether they are currently working with deaf people or not) This could go some way in removing some of the attitudes reported, including false assumptions and fears about working with deaf people. This could have a 'trickle down' or 'ripple' effect.

- Education system providing media related studies, such as film schools and university's degree programmes to consider including deaf (and disabled or diversity) modules on courses, including practical elements, such as learning about Access to Work.

- Mainstream production companies to consider introducing ring fenced jobs, work experience and shadowing opportunities for deaf professionals.

Respective barriers in each different areas, as reported above, have left some of the respondents experiencing isolation - survey comments included:

"In deaf media we are beset by limitations/rules and in the mainstream, it is our job to deliver to a hearing audience with little cultural context or knowledge... feels like being stuck between a rock and a hard place."

"You get better learning opportunities, and a wider pool of choices at the mainstream but you face daily discrimination. You get better access and more relaxed at deaf productions - but it's all who's the best mates with the boss. In both areas, you often see yourself being passed over by someone with less skill, just cos you're deaf at the mainstream productions, and for deaf productions, cos you're not in the 'right circles'...sometimes it can feel like you're on an island when working in the TV industry. It's exhausting and it is very easy to forget why you're in the industry in the first place at all."

Discrimination

98% of the survey respondents said they have experienced discrimination working in the film and TV industry. This number is worse than what has been reported in Jones' initial report 2020/21. 43% of the respondents also said they have been bullied - verbally, emotionally, and physically.

Tokenism is the most common form of discrimination reported by the participants - 62%. One survey respondent felt that they are hired;

"because I'm deaf but on the job, I am given minor tasks. Any time I speak out, there's always backlash. When they give a tour, they come to me, 'look, a deaf employee!'"

Rhona commented that;

"The worst kind of tokenism is when deaf people are recruited just to tick a box on a disability checklist, with no regard for who they are or their experience. It's setting them up to fail."

For those industry professionals who are also Global Majority, tokenism could be much worse. Terrence disclosed how employers would only hire him to work on content based on the colour of his skin but *"for any other film, job, etc, - I haven't heard anything from them. [...] I do feel that it's double tokenism"*.

Ableism and Audism are the second most common forms of discrimination (60%) reported by the respondents. Connie discussed an experience that she felt clearly marked audism:

"When I put down my disability on my CV, I rarely heard back from the production companies. I think I made about 500 applications and only 3 of those 500 got back to me! They didn't offer me any interviews though...I thought it would not be an impediment as the job adverts kept saying that they're looking for marginalised applicants, diverse - all those 'right' words being thrown around...(when) I decided to take it off my CV, I've heard back a lot more".

A form of audism is also identified through the data collected for this research - 'speech privilege' where the society rewards people for how well they can pass as hearing judging on the clarity of their speech. In this respect, someone who speaks "well" (often called oral) is speech privileged, and they are rewarded for this by the 'audist' institutions and structures in the society.[15]

---

[15] Authors would like to thank Dr Dai O'Brien, Associate Professor in British Sign Language and Deaf Studies, York St John University for confirming the correct way to term this.

Examples of speech privilege found in the data include:

- All of the respondents who work in the mainstream all of their career can speak, 75% of them being oral.

- Only 13% of the participants who don't speak English orally to any degree have experienced good practice or support, while this number increased to 69% of oral respondents.

- 17% of oral respondents reported being bullied while it's 50% for non-oral respondents.

- 83% of the oral respondents also found training more accessible compared to 31% of non-oral respondents.

Comments shared by interviewees and survey respondents reflect these findings too, such as Leon who concluded, *"because of audism, it's easier for people [...] who speak well to get away with being deaf. For those of us who use sign language, we don't stand a chance"*.

Lal recalled how there was:

"one person I worked with who was a deaf person in a higher position than I was. At first, I thought it was fantastic to have a deaf role model, especially one who's worked her way up the career ladder. Then, as time went on, I realised that her experience, as an oral person, was very different to mine. Our hearing colleagues loved her because she spoke so well. There was a real divide in the office between those who could sign and those that didn't."

Connie also reflected on her own experience and pointed out:

"I pass for a hearing person; I speak well and clearly – you won't realise I'm deaf unless you see my cochlear implant or when I say, 'pardon'. So, imagine if I already get that kind of discrimination, what will it be like for people who are fully deaf, sign language users, those that do not pass for a hearing person or who are not able to speak clear spoken English."

Her comment is also a reminder that having 'speech privilege' does not make one immune from experiencing discrimination - as the data indicates that the level of audism and ableism reported by both oral and non-oral respondents are similar. Connie recalled an interview where:

"It seemed to be going well. There was a positive discussion and I thought I did get on well with my interviewer. It was just the two of us in the room, so it was easy to understand them. The conversation flew really well [...] after the interview, the employers rang up my reference and asked them "how does the whole deaf thing work?" [...] I was so furious – I just don't understand it. We literally just had a good hour in the interview, where we had a whole conversation without any problems!"

Discrimination is not experienced only because of the respondents' deafness or disability; many of them also experienced intersectional discrimination. And the numbers reported are often worse than the wider industry's statistics.

40% of Global Majority participants said they have experienced racism, in comparison to industry wide of 24% as reported by Film and TV Charity's recent *Looking Glass* survey (2022). Jay raised in their interview that *"racism within [media industry] is horrendous [...] I could hardly believe my eyes"*.

Half of female and non-binary respondents reported experiencing sexism (in comparison to 12% from the (2022) *Looking Glass* survey) and 36% of respondents had experienced homophobia.

One survey respondent claimed how the discrimination leads to barriers to the career itself: *"...discrimination leads to lack of work, which leads to lack of finances and that of course affects both career and life development"*.

Often income is a useful metric by which to consider inequalities. For example, there is a pay gap of 14.3% between male and female employees,[16] and it's 13.8% between disabled and non-disabled workers in all industries.[17] We found that the average income of respondents to our survey was between £20,000 - £24,000. This is considerably lower than the average annual income in the nationwide screen industry of £37,320 - £40,000.[18]
This indicates that there's at least a £13,000 gap in income between deaf off-screen film and TV workers and the average across the sector.

The pay gap is important not just to signify inequalities, but research shows that it could also contribute to poor mental health (Platt et. al, 2016). This is especially concerning as deaf people are twice as likely to experience mental health challenges compared to the general population, and face numerous barriers when attempting to access mental health services (Kuenburg et. al, 2016).

---

[16] House of Commons Library Research (2024) The Gender Pay Gap.

[17] Office for National Statistics (2023) Disability pay gaps in the UK, 2021 (latest release)

[18] The Annual ScreenSkills Assessment in 2019 noted the average annual pay as £39,348.40, this is supported by Talent.com (recruiter) which states an average of £37,320 for film and £40,000 for TV.

The pay gap can result in some deaf professionals being forced to seek an alternative role outside their main job (as detailed earlier in this report) and outside the industry, limiting their own career progression or forcing them to leave the industry ultimately.

Findings indicate that deaf people often face discrimination within the film and TV industry, and this is exacerbated by intersectional factors. The discrimination is starkly evident in the significant pay disparity between the deaf respondents reported pay for 2023 and the sector averages for their hearing contemporaries. This disparity has tangible impacts on deaf professionals, such as when they also may have to contribute to funding their own communication support when Access to Work grants is exceeded. The following recommendations are a starting point to addressing this significant barrier.

Recommendations:

- There should be an independent body holding broadcasters and production companies accountable in terms of discrimination and bullying. They should be evaluated regularly, and the findings of such evaluations to be published.

- Increasing outreach into schools, colleges, deaf clubs, deaf organisations across the different parts of the UK is needed, with accessible career information (including signed and subtitled videos, for example) to introduce a more diverse workforce in the media sector.

- Training, shadowing and work opportunities, as recommended earlier in the report, can also go some way to disassembling and addressing the discriminatory attitudes or misconceptions in the industry.

- Consider the introduction (if not already in place, as is the case at C4, BBC and ITV) of pay monitoring and reporting as well as more robust equal pay reviews across the board.

- Creative Diversity Network to include data on existing pay disparities in their Diamond reports.

Recommendations: (cont.)

💡 Media organisations are currently making positive steps towards improving mental health in the industry in various ways, for example, toolkits and support lines, but we need to ensure that they are accessible. Written English is not sufficient, as a proportion of deaf people, including some of the respondents, struggle with English language and this also constitutes a barrier to those with dyslexia.

💡 To introduce a new incentive scheme or use existing ones, such as 'Deaf Aware Quality Assurance Scheme', for the broadcasters and production companies to achieve a deaf friendly environment - e.g., certification/accreditation awarded after a successful completion of targets with a logo to display at the end-of-the-show credits.

Conclusion

Through analysis of both survey responses and 9 extensive interviews with deaf film and TV industry professionals, it is clear there are several barriers in operation preventing deaf people both getting into the industry and progressing within it in the longer term. The ways in which disability discrimination, specifically audism, intersects with race, class and gender in order to make the industry particularly resistant to wider inclusion is an important consideration when suggesting changes to industry practice. The recommendations set out in this report are directed at stakeholders operating at all levels of the industry and attempt to highlight the changes that could be made by individual industry professionals, broadcasters, regulators, and the UK government to make the sector more accessible and inclusive for deaf people. The recommendations address issues with access to relevant and experienced communication support and the impact this has on the opportunities deaf people have to take up different roles and progress in their careers. In addition, recommendations have been differentiated to speak to the different contextual complexities of working in deaf-led media organisations, on deaf content for mainstream broadcasters, and on content for mainstream audiences.

Ultimately, the deaf professionals behind the camera, as demonstrated in this report, have been discriminated against and marginalised. This must change. This report can act as a springboard for further research, new ideas and challenges to the present working practices in the media industry for the better, towards a more accessible, representative and welcoming landscape for all.

Once specific gaps for all different types of disabilities are also identified and addressed, the inequalities of deaf people in the off-screen industries could be finally and fully understood. This could in the longer term close the gap and increase inclusion, moving beyond the static growth we have seen in the last few years. As with other marginalised groups in today's diverse society, deaf people are not here to tick any boxes – they bring lots to the table; their experiences, stories, adventures, failures, victories, and most importantly of all, their talent.

For film and TV productions to benefit from all the things deaf people bring to the table, the off-screen industry needs to move from well-meaning words to tangible change. This means it's time for the industry to listen and act, it's time for deaf people in the industry to be **UNMUTED**.

References

Ansell, Kate (2021), *Career Routes and Barriers for Disabled People in the UK TV Industry.*
https://bcuassets.blob.core.windows.net/docs/disability-in-tv-reportv3-132741800991883115.pdf

Brinkmann, Svend and Steiner, Kvale (2015), *InterViews: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing. Third edition. Sage.*

British Film Institute (BFI) (2020), *Diversity Standards Initial Findings.*
https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/reports/bfi-diversity-standards-initial-findings

CAMEo (2018), *Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review*
https://www.bfi.org.uk/industry-data-insights/reports/workforce-diversity-uk-screen-sector-evidence-review

Creative Diversity Network (2021a), *Doubling Disability.*
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf

Creative Diversity Network (2021b), *Interim Report on Doubling Disability.*
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf

Creative Diversity Network (2021c), *Employing the change-makers: Full Report on Doubling Disability in TV Broadcasting.*
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DD-Full-Report.pdf

Creative Diversity Network (2022a), *The Fifth Cut: Diamond at 5.*
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/TheFifthCut-Diamond-at-5.pdf

Creative Diversity Network (2022b), *Disability Deep Dive.*
https://disability-deep-dive-2022.squarespace.com/

Creative Diversity Network (2023), *Diamond the Sixth Cut.*
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Diamond-The-6th-Cut-July2023.pdf

Creative Diversity Network (2023), Diamond: The Seventh Cut
https://creativediversitynetwork.com/diamond/diamond-reports/diamond-the-seventh-cut/

Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) Disability Commission (2021), *NOW IS THE TIME*
https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CSJJ8819-Disability-Report-190408.pdf

Eikhof, Doris Ruth (2024), *Diversity and Inclusion: Are We Nearly There Yet? Target Setting in the Screen Industries. Routledge.* https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/77186/9781003852209.pdf

Film and TV Charity (2021) *Think Piece on Anti-Racism in the UK Film & TV Industry.* https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/assets/documents/Reports/Sasha-Salmon-Think-Piece-Anti-Racism-Film-and-TV-Charity.pdf

Film and TV Charity (2022), *The Looking Glass Report.* https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/research-impact/reports/looking-glass-22-report/

FWD-Doc (2021), *A Toolkit for Inclusion & Accessibility: Changing the Narrative of Disability in Documentary Film* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dd1c2b5a0f7a568485cbedd/t/602d4708d39c1d1154d0902a/1613581716771/FWD-Doc+Toolkit+small.pdf

House of Commons Library (2024), *Disabled people in employment* https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/

House of Commons Library (2024), *The Gender Pay Gap.* https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn07068/

Kuenburg, Alexa; Fellinger, Paul; Fellinger, Johannes (2016), 'Health Care Access Among Deaf People'. *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 21: 1. Pp 1-10.* https://academic.oup.com/jdsde/article/21/1/1/2404217

Ladd, Paddy (2003), *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood.* Multilingual Matters

Lane, Harlan (1984), *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf.* Random House.

National Deaf Children Society; https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/language-and-communication/spoken-language/lip-reading/ (Accessed June 2024)

Ofcom (2023), *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in TV and radio, 2022/23.* https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/273326/Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-in-Broadcasting-2022-23.pdf

Office for National Statistics (2023), *Disability pay gaps in the UK, 2021* (latest release) https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitypaygapsintheuk/2021

Office for National Statistics (2024), *Labour market status of disabled people*
https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08

Platt, Jonathan; Prins, Seth; Bates, Lisa; Keyes, Katherine (2016), 'Unequal depression for equal work? How the wage gap explains gendered disparities in mood disorders'. *Social Science and Medicine* Vol. 149. Pp 1-8.
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277953615302616

Randle, Dr Keith; Wing-Fai, Leung; Kurianl, Juno (2007), *Creating difference: overcoming barriers to diversity in UK film and television employment.* University of Hertfordshire.
https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/4575/904076.pdf

Randle, Dr Keith & Hardy, Kate (2016), 'Macho, mobile and resilient? How workers with impairments are doubly disabled in project-based film and television work'. *Work, Employment and Society* 31:3. Pp. 1-18.
https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/2299/17505/0950017016643482.pdf

Roy, Arundhati (2004), 'City of Sydney Peace Prize Lecture; Peace & The New Corporate Liberation Theology'. *CPACS Occasional Paper No. 04/2.*
https://sydneypeacefoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2004-SPP_-Arundhati-Roy.pdf

Saha, Anamik, (2018), *Race and the Cultural Industries.* Polity Press.

Salmon, Sasha (2021), *Think Piece on Anti-Racism in the UK Film & TV Industry.* Film and TV Charity
https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/assets/documents/Reports/Sasha-Salmon-Think-Piece-Anti-Racism-Film-and-TV-Charity.pdf

Scope (2018) *Disability Perception Gap.*
https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/disability-perception-gap/

ScreenSkills (2019), *Annual ScreenSkills Assessment.*
https://www.screenskills.com/media/2710/2019-05-20-executive-summary-annual-screenskills-assessment.pdf

Underlying Health Condition (2021), *Everybody Forgot About the Toilets.*
https://underlyinghealthcondition.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/finalised-underlying-health-condition-report-tv.pdf

van Raalte, Christa, Richard Wallis and Dawid Pekalski (2021), *Disability by Design: Representation in TV.* Bournemouth University.
https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/35896/1/BU_Disability_by_Design_2021%20%281%29.pdf

Acknowledgements:

Enormous thanks to Helen Hamston, Diane Kemp, Adam McCormick, Dr Jami Rogers, Marcus Ryder and Professor Panayiota Tsatsou for their contribution to **UNMUTED**.

BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Sir Lenny Henry Centre
for Media Diversity