

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

#### **Values and Principles**

The success of our business relies on our attracting and retaining people – both on- and off-screen – from the widest possible backgrounds, with the widest, most diverse range of attitudes, opinions and beliefs. It is only through ensuring diversity in the production process and other parts of our business that we can ensure we continue to offer creativity, innovation and distinctiveness in our on-screen programming.

In everything we do we seek to respect people for who, not what, they are. We judge people only for the way they do their job and for what they can contribute. We aim to foster an environment in which everyone feels free to contribute without fear and to maximise their potential without unfair impediment.

#### **Duties under the Disability Discrimination Act**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 prohibits discrimination in relation to employment of disabled people, including recruitment, training, promotion, benefits, dismissal, etc. It requires employers to make “reasonable adjustments” for a disabled person put at a substantial disadvantage by a provision, criterion or practice, or a physical feature of premises. It also requires service providers to make “reasonable adjustments” for disabled people.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the Act to insert the Disability Equality Duty, known as the general duty, into the Act. The duty is aimed at tackling systemic discrimination and ensuring that public authorities build disability equality into everything they do. It came into force on 4 December 2006.

Section 49A of the Act says that public authorities must, when carrying out their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to meet disabled peoples’ needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

The Disability Equality Duty only applies to Channel 4 in respect of its public functions. However, Channel 4 is, nevertheless, committed to promoting disability equality in carrying out its activities.

### **Policies and Compliance**

Channel 4 has a Diversity and Equality Policy, as well as a Disability Policy, published on the company intranet. The policies set out how the Channel promotes equality and fairness of treatment for all its employees. The Channel will review and update these policies regularly to ensure we operate according to these principles and best practice.

Every individual working with Channel 4 is responsible for adherence to the Channel's diversity policies, expected to apply the principles in their day-to-day work and interaction with the Channel, and to ensure that disability equality is promoted throughout Channel 4.

The Channel 4 Board is responsible for ensuring the organisation fully complies with these policies; each member of the senior management team has responsibility for compliance in his/her own area and this is overseen by the HR team.

Progress on compliance with our diversity policies will be monitored and reported to Channel 4's Executive Committee and Board twice a year.

## **Assessment**

Channel 4 reviews its policies and initiatives annually and where we identify areas which we believe we can improve on, we seek to implement strategies to meet these. As stated above, our assessments and proposals for improvement will be regularly reported to the Board and we will seek to update this policy document to reflect any changes.

## **Monitoring our policies**

Channel 4 will monitor the impact of its internal policies through regular review of its disability monitoring data, employee perception surveys, and regular face-to-face consultation with internal stakeholders.

## **Publishing results of assessments, consultations and monitoring**

The results of our actions, policies and monitoring will be written up in our annual Ofcom Equal Opportunities Report and made available on request.

## **Employment and training**

Channel 4 is committed to inclusive employment policies which reflect and value diversity. We promote equality and fairness of treatment by:

- Interviewing applicants with a disability who meet the criteria for a job vacancy and considering them on their abilities
- Consulting disabled employees regularly about what we can do to make sure they can play a full and active role in the life of the Channel
- Ensuring all Channel 4 facilities, including buildings and websites, are accessible to employees and others who work with the Channel
- Communicating our policies to all applicants, employees, agency workers, freelancers and third parties working on our behalf (such as recruitment, training and temporary staff agencies)
- Advertising vacancies across a range of media to ensure we receive applications from the widest cross-section of the community
- Making every effort when employees become disabled to ensure they stay in employment, including consideration of reasonable adjustments to the workplace or working practices

- Dealing promptly with complaints or grievances
- Helping key employees develop the sensitivity to disability needed to make these commitments work
- Reviewing these commitments regularly and what has been achieved, planning ways to improve them and letting all employees know about progress and future plans
- Making our policies and progress available to external parties should they request the information

## **Programmes**

### **Disability on screen**

Channel 4 tries to engage a broader audience – including those who might feel they are not interested in the subject – in the issues raised by disability through innovative, revealing and honest programme making.

We also aim to commission programmes that fully reflect disabled people's participation in society, featuring people with disabilities across all genres and parts of the schedule, aiming to give disabled people a voice on subjects beyond their experience of disability and show that disability is just one aspect of their lives.

Examples of programmes featuring disabled people or disability issues are included in our annual Programme Review and Statement of Programme Policy, available at: <http://www.channel4.com/about4/programmepolicy.html>

We have compiled a Guide to Improving On-Screen Diversity, highlighting best practice and sharing tips from production companies, which is available online at [www.channel4.com/4producers](http://www.channel4.com/4producers) and has been sent out to programme suppliers.

### **Employment of disabled people in production**

Channel 4 funds a number of initiatives aimed at increasing employment of disabled people in production. We aim to nurture disabled talent at all levels, from runners through researchers to experienced producer/directors, via a range of structured traineeships and supported placements at independent production companies.

In addition to training initiatives we have launched a new 12-part half-hour documentary strand which will give deaf or disabled directors the opportunity to gain a first major broadcast credit. The series will run on Channel 4 from April to June and will become an integral part of Channel 4's talent ladder, leading from FourDocs through 3 Minute Wonder to feature-length documentaries.

More details are available at: [www.channel4.com/4talent](http://www.channel4.com/4talent)

## **Access services**

### **Subtitles, sign language and audio description**

We work on the principle that disabled viewers don't want 'ghettos' of dedicated 'disability' programming but greater access to the mainstream schedule. More than 90% of Channel 4 programmes in peak are subtitled.

Ofcom sets quotas for subtitling and sign language provision (for deaf/hard of hearing viewers) and audio description (for blind/partially sighted viewers) and the Channel produces regular reports detailing the services delivered.

We exceed Ofcom quotas for all services on Channel 4 and E4, and we also provide subtitles and audio description on More4 and Film4. We meet with disability groups two or three times a year to discuss access services issues.

Other initiatives include producing promotions to raise awareness of access services and the provision of a phone line and a one-stop shop on the website for details of BSL signed and audio described programmes: [www.channel4.com/access](http://www.channel4.com/access)

### **Web accessibility**

We attempt to fulfil most of the Web Accessibility Initiative's Level 1 and Level 2 guidelines and to give all our users the most positive experience from their visits to our sites.

Style guidelines for internal and external producers with accompanying checklists are all in use, and in 2007 we are extending this to a developer's guide, including accessibility requirements for third parties who build sites for us.

### **Access to Channel 4 buildings**

There is generally good access but various improvements are in progress and planned within the ongoing refurbishments programme. Some information about access to the Horseferry Road building is at:

<http://www.channel4.com/about4/channel4building.html>