

BBC

BBC DIVERSITY COMMISSIONING CODE OF PRACTICE

The BBC is proud of its unique public service role in the United Kingdom. Its mission is to serve all audiences through high quality, impartial and distinctive content across a range of services which inform, educate and entertain.

The BBC's output must mirror and promote different backgrounds, places, life experiences, languages and abilities. Putting these at the heart of our programmes and services will ensure we are relevant to all audiences and truly reflect a modern United Kingdom.

BBC DIVERSITY COMMISSIONING CODE OF PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

The BBC is proud of its unique public service role in the United Kingdom. Its mission is to serve all audiences through high quality, impartial and distinctive content across a range of services which inform, educate and entertain. Licence fee payers fund the BBC, so they deserve to see their lives, their communities, their stories and the places where they live reflected within the content the BBC commissions across TV, radio and online.

This code sets out the steps the BBC will take when commissioning content across all genres to ensure that it accurately represents, and authentically portrays the diverse communities of the whole of the UK.

Reflecting this diversity provides a depth and richness of creative opportunity, offering a wide variety of voices, perspectives and experiences. BBC Commissioning has an important role to showcase this creativity and ensure these stories are heard. The BBC also brings the UK together through shared experiences, allowing diversity to be understood, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

The BBC's output must mirror and promote different backgrounds, places, life experiences, languages and abilities. Putting these at the heart of our programmes and services will ensure we are relevant to all audiences and truly reflect a modern United Kingdom.

These ambitions are enshrined in the BBC's Royal Charter in one of its Public Purposes:

To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the

United Kingdom: the BBC should reflect the diversity of the United Kingdom both in its output and services. In doing so, the BBC should accurately and authentically represent and portray the lives of the people of the United Kingdom today, and raise awareness of the different cultures and alternative viewpoints that make up its society. It should ensure that it provides output and services that meet the needs of the United Kingdom's nations, regions and communities. The BBC should bring people together for shared experiences and help contribute to the social cohesion and wellbeing of the United Kingdom. In commissioning and delivering output the BBC should invest in the creative economies of each of the nations and contribute to their development.

To deliver the ambition, and to achieve it authentically, the people who work for the BBC, the decision makers, the commissioners, the producers, and the support teams need to reflect the breadth of diversity across the UK. And we need to inspire and support those we work with as creative partners to do the same. As a public service broadcaster funded by the licence fee, the BBC should lead by example and act as a catalyst and enabler for others to deliver on diversity too.

The BBC delivers its value to audiences through its content and programming. We need to put representation of the UK, and the diversity of the communities within it, at the heart of our content commissioning process and decision making. We need to lead the way to ensure those both in front of, and behind, the camera and microphone, reflect the cultures, backgrounds and experiences of the UK today. We need to work collaboratively with all our content makers to do the same, and together we need to ensure that our output is relevant, as well as distinctive and compelling, showcasing the best of the United Kingdom to itself and to the rest of the world.



OTI MABUSE AND JONNIE PEACOCK ON STRICTLY COME DANCING

PURPOSE OF THIS CODE OF PRACTICE

On 13 October 2017 Ofcom issued an Operating Licence¹ for the BBC containing regulatory conditions it considered appropriate for requiring the BBC to fulfil its mission and promote the Public Purposes, including the fourth Public Purpose covering diversity. Ofcom included a specific regulatory condition² for the BBC to establish and comply with a code of practice, approved by Ofcom, setting out the steps the BBC will take when commissioning content across all genres to ensure that it accurately represents, authentically portrays and reflects the diverse communities of the whole of the UK. This code of practice sets out the commitments we will make, the values we want to inspire, and the support we will offer to deliver against our mission.

The code covers all BBC commissioning. It applies to the commissioning of content across BBC network and non-network TV, radio, online and digital content and services in the UK. Where the code refers to the 'BBC' it refers to BBC commissioners. Where the code refers to 'content makers' it refers to production companies be that in-house teams who are part of the BBC Public Service, BBC Studios or independent companies.

The code covers diversity of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background. It also covers representation of the nations and regions of the UK.

The code of practice formalises the actions that the BBC will take, when commissioning content, in respect of:

- on-air portrayal and casting³;
- workforce diversity of commissioning and production teams⁴;
- expectations for content makers working with the BBC
- key interventions and enablers within the commissioning process
- the support the BBC will offer to enable the development of the production sector in line with our diversity aims

This code of practice sits alongside a suite of commissioning guidelines that the BBC publishes to set out its relationship with producers and content providers⁵. More information can be found on:

Content

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/>

Radio

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4VknIDlp7HSbMYGJ8xTJ4ft/how-we-commission>

Each of the BBC main commissioning areas has more detailed information on diversity which can be found here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/tv/production/articles/diversity>

The BBC is required to monitor its progress against the code of practice and must report annually to Ofcom on its compliance during the previous financial year. To comply with this requirement we publish an annual report mapping its progress in the areas of representation, portrayal and diversity against its published strategy.⁶

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/diversity/strategy>

We have set the code out as a series of principles outlining our expectations for content makers working with the BBC, what we envisage to be the key interventions and enablers within the commissioning process and the support the BBC will offer to enable the development of the production sector in line with diversity aims, including what support we will provide for change, and what steps we will take to assure delivery.

We interact with a large number and wide variety of content makers, some of whom are small businesses. We are aware of the possibility that the code might place an undue burden on small producers working for us – we have, therefore, provided additional guidance for small businesses on our application of the code, or refer them to where they can find more information and guidance.

We acknowledge that diversity, portrayal and representation are complex areas. The UK is made up of many distinct communities. Therefore within this code of practice we need to allow the flexibility for services to reflect different communities at different times through programmes, seasons, campaigns or support activity. Where this is the case we will reflect and report that activity in the report above, as well as reporting progress against our targets overall as a corporation

¹ "Operating Licence for the BBC's UK Public Services" issued 13 October 2017

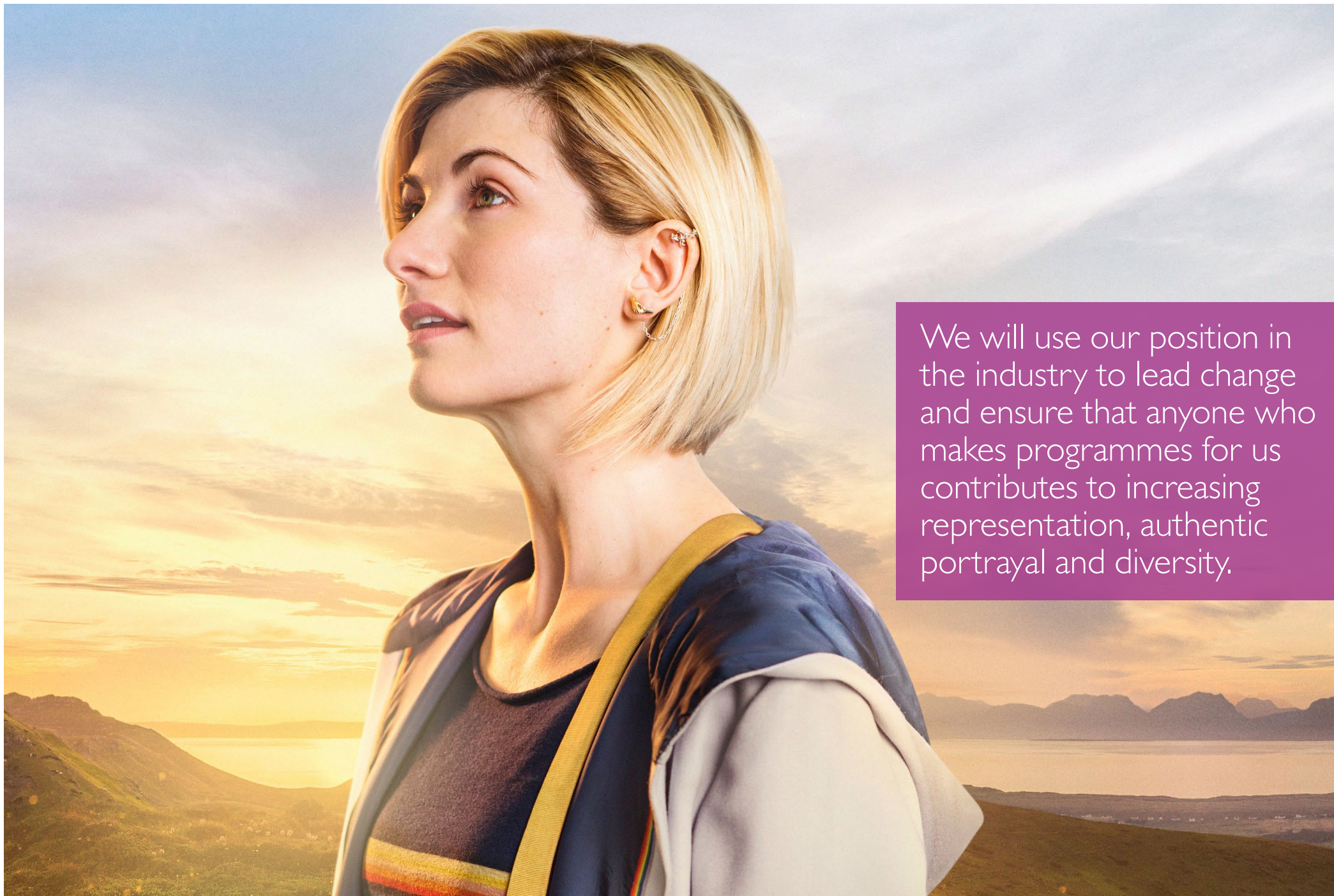
² Condition 2.46 of Operating Licence

³ Condition 2.47.1

⁴ Condition 2.47.2

⁵ This includes production and commissioning decision process Condition 2.47.3

⁶ Condition 2.48



We will use our position in the industry to lead change and ensure that anyone who makes programmes for us contributes to increasing representation, authentic portrayal and diversity.

PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE

PRINCIPLE 1: BBC COMMISSIONERS WILL LEAD BY EXAMPLE

We are a publicly funded broadcaster with a unique role in the UK creative ecology. We will use our position in the industry to lead change and ensure that anyone who makes programmes for us contributes to increasing representation, authentic portrayal and diversity.

WHAT WE WILL DO OURSELVES:

We will look to our own commissioning workforce, processes, decision making and culture to deliver our objectives.

In line with our editorial guidelines, we will, work in partnership with other relevant bodies to support the understanding, engagement and application of diversity and inclusion policies and promote a more inclusive culture across the production sector.

We will regularly engage with and work in partnership with local cultural, development and screen agencies to support accurate and authentic representation and portrayal and to promote diversity and inclusion.

We will offer advice and guidance where possible to those productions which experience greater challenges due to the nature of the programme, geographical location and/or access. We will also share best practice across productions where appropriate.

We will make funds available on a case by case basis, where we consider real progress can be achieved in representation, portrayal and diversity.

We will make clear in our communications what our representational priorities and expectations are through our commissioning website and regular creative briefings to the production sector.

We will monitor progress and compliance against this code and our published targets, and take action where we are not achieving our commitments or ambition, holding ourselves and others to account.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR PROGRAMME MAKERS:

We will only work with content makers who have a diversity and inclusion policy in place. This is a contractual requirement. For those who do not currently have a policy, a template is available from the Creative Diversity Network (CDN):

www.creativediversitynetwork.com/resource/template-equality-and-diversity-policy/

In addition we require that all content makers comply with all current anti-discrimination and data protection legislation, and the related Codes of Practice.

We encourage all content makers who work with us to bring these policies to life and actively engage in shaping and changing the culture, recruitment and working practices within their companies to fully realise their ambitions. We will support relevant sector initiatives to help achieve that.



We expect all content makers to come to us with ideas that already have diversity, representation and inclusion built into their development.

PRINCIPLE 1: BBC COMMISSIONERS WILL LEAD BY EXAMPLE

continued

All content makers are asked to adhere to the BBC Content Diversity and Inclusion Commissioning Guidelines, which the BBC commits to keeping up-to-date. These can be found at:

Content

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/site/diversity-inclusion-commissioning-guidelines-bbc-content.pdf>

Radio

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/bbc-radio-diversity-commissioning-guidelines.pdf>

We expect all content makers to come to us with ideas that already have diversity, representation and inclusion built into their development. Those that support our editorial strategy and our goals stand the greatest chance of being commissioned.

All content makers will be expected to engage in a dialogue with their commissioner about representation, portrayal and diversity, both on and off air, as part of defining the commissioning specification agreed between supplier and commissioner prior to a commission.

The individual at the production company accountable for delivery against agreed diversity objectives will be identified in, and be asked to sign, the commissioning specification as confirmation.

All content makers will be required to comply with the agreed approach and delivery as agreed in dialogue with the commissioner as recorded in the commissioning specification. Where critical changes occur that impact the production company's ability to meet our diversity requirements, this must be flagged up to the commissioner and or BBC business affairs as a priority.

All content makers will be expected to highlight any discrepancy between the commissioning specification and the delivered product with an explanation of what the specific barriers were for success.

All content makers will be expected to demonstrate their compliance with the guidelines and the commissioning specification agreement. At the point of delivery the diversity of a programme may be evidenced through the reporting method specified at the time of commissioning

We aim to work collaboratively and support those producing content for us but where producers continually fail to meet expectations or do not engage with the code, the BBC will take appropriate action.



To strive for authenticity in all incidental portrayal of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geographical location, social class, religion and religious beliefs and disability for all role types, in line with our editorial guidelines.

PRINCIPLE 2: PORTRAYAL SHOULD BE AUTHENTIC

To support the BBC's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, commissioning editors will actively engage with producers to improve representation, taking into account the genre, existing talent base, geographical location, the specific nature of the programme, existing portrayal performance and the types of decision that informs.

WHAT WE WILL DO OURSELVES:

We will take positive action to support and develop talent from diverse communities, both ourselves and through partnerships.

We will seek out new and established writers to tell stories based on real life experience to give our scripted content authenticity.

We will seek out and develop directors who can bring those stories to life through their own experiences and understanding.

We will actively engage in conversations with content makers about any particular authenticity issues in specific productions and capture any agreements in the commissioning specification.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR CONTENT MAKERS:

To share a list of all key on-air talent roles with the commissioner to demonstrate their commitment to having a diverse range of talent.

To set out for each production what measures will be taken to ensure authentic on air representation, portrayal and diversity (as set out in the commissioning specification).

To strive for authenticity in all incidental portrayal of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geographical location, social class, religion and religious beliefs and disability for all role types, in line with our editorial guidelines.

To actively seek out and develop new writing and directing talent within and across productions on a regular basis.

To provide all required diversity information of perceived and actual diversity of on-air talent by the means specified at the time of commissioning.



We are committed to eliminating all barriers during casting that exclude diverse talent to ensure we are open to all interpretations of a role and provide equal opportunities to the broadest range of talent.

PRINCIPAL 3: CASTING SHOULD BE OPEN AND FAIR

We are committed to eliminating all barriers during casting that exclude diverse talent to ensure we are open to all interpretations of a role and provide equal opportunities to the broadest range of talent.

WHAT WE WILL DO OURSELVES:

We will cast our content without prejudice or pre-conception, with the aim of reflecting diverse communities, backgrounds and beliefs across the breadth of our output, and all nations and regions of the UK.

We will encourage and support interventions or initiatives to reduce barriers and promote opportunity.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF OUR CONTENT MAKERS:

To set out for each production what measures will be taken to remove any barriers in casting (as set out in the commissioning specification).

To arrange castings in places with suitable accessibility.

To evidence that all productions and sets are fully accessible from a disability point of view, where there is a barrier to making this possible e.g. historical buildings, the production company will advise the BBC commissioner and outline the measures taken to make reasonable adjustments.



We are committed to increasing diversity in senior creative and decision making roles. We will actively seek out, develop and promote individuals who have the potential to be the leaders of the future.

PRINCIPLE 4: A DIVERSE WORKFORCE MAKES BETTER CONTENT

Richness of background and experience behind the scenes is just as important as it is on-air if we are to reflect the diversity of people in the UK and change the way we work and think. We want to see diversity at all levels from Runner to Executive Producer, from Personal Assistant to Channel Controller. We are committed to working with suppliers to support progression of diverse talent and retention of those already working at a senior level.

WHAT WE WILL DO OURSELVES

We are committed to increasing and accelerating opportunities for entry level talent regardless of their background. We will ensure our apprenticeships, our training schemes and our recruitment practices actively attract and seek out applications from candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and experience.

We are committed to increasing diversity in senior creative and decision making roles. We will actively seek out, develop and promote individuals who have the potential to be the leaders of the future. We will shape our recruitment practices to encourage increased participation from these groups.

We will ensure that the abilities advertised for our vacancies are true requirements of the role and are not an unnecessary barrier to participation from any particular group. We recognise we need to do more to improve our reach and use new platforms to ensure we are connecting with hard to reach communities.

We will give clear and honest feedback to the content maker where a proposed diverse talent that has been put forward is considered unsuitable by the commissioner.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR CONTENT MAKERS:

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

For returning series, production companies will be expected to highlight which positions within the production have been extended to 'new and or established' diverse talent that they have not worked with before. The BBC will support this as appropriate.

We expect all content makers to operate in accordance with the law and Equality Act 2010 to source diverse crews for their production.

We expect all content makers to support junior talent from across the spectrum by having:

- a. Eliminated unpaid internships on productions for the BBC; make all paid internships and time-limited unpaid work experience open to a diverse pool of talent.

- b. Where possible, provide at least one paid training and development placement on appropriate productions to either a participant or alumni from approved industry schemes. We note that smaller production companies may not be able to fully comply with 4b due to limited number of positions. However, where there are requirements to 'crew up' for production we expect them to actively consider a wide pool of potential candidates from diverse backgrounds and actively seek new talent
- c. Ensure that the abilities advertised are true requirements of the role and are not an unnecessary barrier to participation from any particular group.

- d. Job opportunities should be advertised using a variety of methods so that they can be seen by the widest group possible.

We expect all content makers to provide all required diversity information of production crew by the means specified at the time of commissioning.



PRINCIPLE 5: MEASUREMENT

The BBC will monitor and report compliance with the code of practice annually for the previous financial year.

We commit to the following activities to monitor compliance with the code:

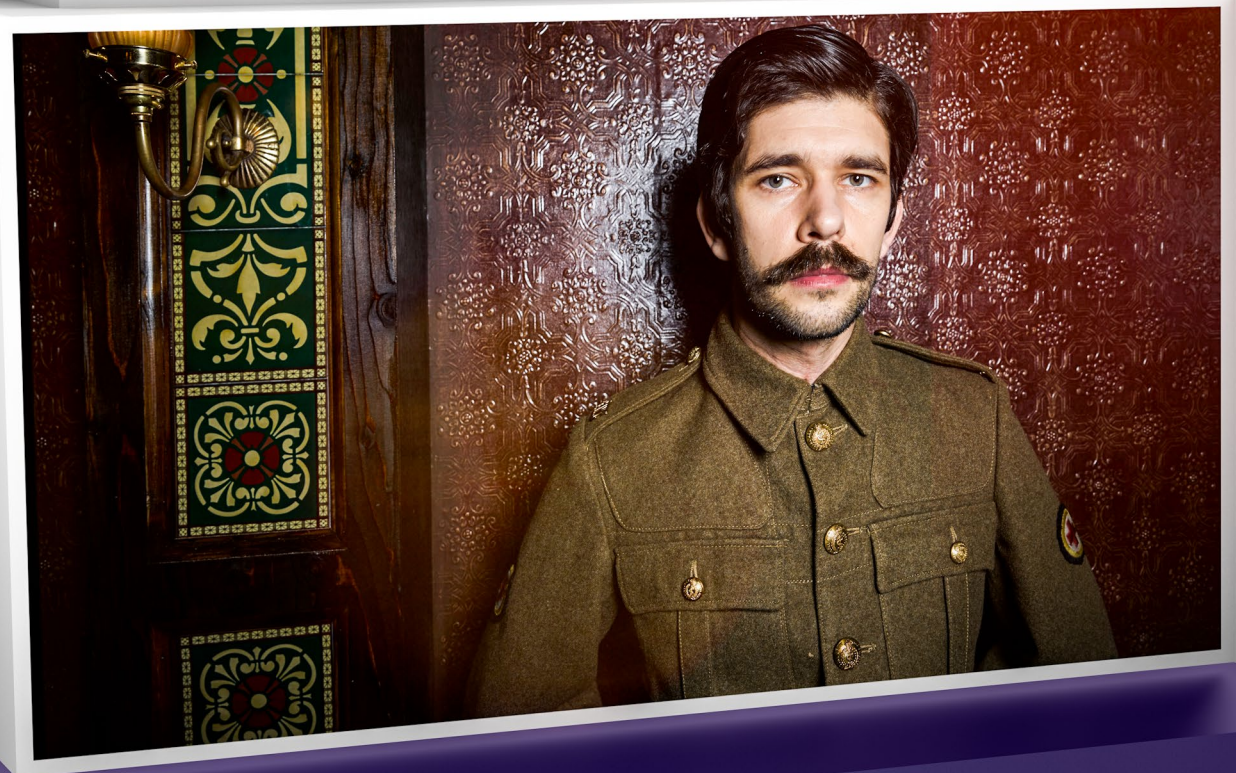
1. We will monitor our own workforce in compliance with the code.
2. To monitor representation and portrayal of our content we will look to a number of different sources depending on the platform and availability of data. We will use the best BBC data, survey data, illustrative examples and, as appropriate, industry data. The sources and quality of data vary with platform as a single cross platform dataset does not exist. Reporting will need to evolve in line with system development and industry take-up of reporting information. For television unlike for radio or online, there is an industry-standard resource, Diamond, for tracking diversity both on and off screen in the productions we commission. As Diamond develops over time we will work with the CDN and other partners to broaden the scope to record a broader range of diverse communities. Until that is possible we will report by example on those communities that are not covered.

3. We will expect production companies to complete representation and diversity information by the means specified at the time of commissioning. Data for all programmes includes the actual diversity of all on and off air roles and the perceived diversity of on-air roles, as required. This will be monitored and reviewed, and lack of compliance will inform future commissions.
4. We will expect production companies will respond to confidentially shared insights taken from our reports to identify and address challenges in increasing diversity on and off air.
5. We will expect production companies will assure their compliance with this code and where necessary provide additional relevant information on request.
6. We will report progress against the code on an annual basis. Reporting on actions we have taken in the previous financial year to support our objectives as well as representation, portrayal and diversity outcomes across our content by platform.

REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

From time to time we will review the code to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Any changes and amendments to the code will be made in consultation with Ofcom in line with their specified procedure.⁷

⁷ Condition 2.49.1



BBC
For all of us.