Everyone has a story

The BBC’s Diversity Strategy 2011-15
“Showcasing the UK’s complexity and diversity — on and off air — in the programmes we make and the stories we tell, as well as through the people we work with, is fundamental if the BBC is to successfully deliver Putting Quality First.”

Mark Thompson
Director-General

May 2011
Headlines

The BBC is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, both in our working environment and in our output.

We aim to reflect the diversity of the UK and make our services accessible to all.
We are committed to providing a working environment that is free from harassment, intimidation and unlawful discrimination.
We value and respect every individual’s unique contribution to the BBC and seek to ensure that no one group or individual is unlawfully disadvantaged.
We view equality and diversity as a creative opportunity to embrace, respond to and be relevant to the totality of the UK’s audiences — and recognise that in order to do this we need to create a working environment that empowers all of our employees to thrive and achieve their full potential.

We regularly review our employment policies and practices. We expect everyone who works for and with the BBC to act in accordance with these statements, and work with us to further our strategic equality and diversity objectives:

• advance equal opportunities to diversify and develop our workforce at all levels to better reflect our audiences
• deliver high quality programming which reflects modern Britain accurately and authentically
• connect with our audiences, including our underserved audiences, to inform the quality and direction of our content
• build in accessibility from the start when developing new products and services, and ensuring sustainable and ongoing accessibility
• achieve systematic and consistent consideration of equality and diversity within BBC planning and review processes, and meet our public purposes and duties
Context for a new diversity strategy

The challenges of diversity in the UK offer a genuinely creative opportunity for the BBC to deliver original and distinctive programming that can surprise and engage audiences.

The BBC is a unique British institution, with a long and proud history of independence and innovation, entrusted with a huge responsibility – to inform, educate and entertain the whole UK population through programmes and services of high quality, originality and value.

Despite ever increasing diversity within that population, BBC services still reach an average of 97% of the UK’s television viewers, audio listeners and web users every week. In fact, someone switches on or switches over to the BBC on TV, radio or online around 175 million times each day.

Quite simply, our determination to visibly increase our diversity on and off air is part of our fundamental commitment to serve all our audiences.

We are focused on delivering quality at the same time as we maintain the highest values and standards. Reflecting diversity through who we are and what we do is core to achieving those ambitions, enabling us to share stories that offer something to everyone in our audience, and that reflect our audiences’ diverse experiences in an authentic and credible way.

Everyone is different and everyone has a story. To keep up to date on how we are meeting our promises and challenges outlined here, visit www.bbc.co.uk/diversity.
Why diversity matters

There are around 60 million people in the UK – and we are all different by virtue of our own particular circumstances: from age and gender, disability and race, religion and sexual orientation, where we come from and where we choose to be, – and other circumstances that form who we are and what our story is.

So, as a broadcaster, for the BBC the case for exploring diversity is simple:

**Our audiences** are becoming increasingly diverse and are ever-changing – both in make-up and in expectation. We must strive to stay relevant to all our audiences.

**Our creativity** – diversity is a creative opportunity for us to tell new and original stories, and to generate genuinely distinctive content.

**Our funding** – most UK households pay for the BBC through the licence fee, and should see themselves and their lives reflected through our services.

**Legislation** – the law is clear, and supports the advance of equality.

And as an employer and partner, the case is equally clear:

**Our mission to deliver quality** – efforts to provide quality and value for all audiences ensures diversity stays at the heart of our work.

**Our values** – a core organisational value is that ‘we respect each other and celebrate our diversity so that everyone can give their best’. A workforce which fully reflects our society enables us to reflect our own diversity through our programmes and content.
Internal drivers for change

Put*ng Quality First – the BBC’s editorial strategy

2010 saw the BBC undertake a comprehensive review and consultation on our service portfolio and our editorial offer, which will now see a renewed focus on:

• the best journalism in the world
• outstanding children’s content
• inspiring knowledge, music and culture
• ambitious UK drama and comedy
• events that bring communities and the nation together

Putting Quality First was published in March, and the BBC Trust gave its approval (with some caveats) in December, around the same time that a new six year licence fee settlement was agreed.

Together, the strategy and the ability to plan our spend and investment have given us a clear focus on where the BBC is heading. We are now working out how we can best get there.
External drivers for change

**Equality Act 2010 – the Public Sector Equality Duty**

The new Equality Act 2010 has simplified and strengthened the law on equality and diversity and has, in particular, introduced a stronger public sector equality duty.

The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of individuals based on the ‘protected characteristics’ of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Gender reassignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and civil partnership</td>
<td>Pregnancy and maternity</td>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and belief</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But more than this, it puts the responsibility on the BBC, as an organisation, to consider how it can advance equality of opportunity for people irrespective of their own characteristics and to foster good relations between all people and groups.

This ensures that we integrate the consideration of equality and good relations into our day-to-day business, requiring us to be transparent and open by showing how we are meeting the general duty, setting equality objectives and publishing equality information.

The BBC has a partial exemption from the Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to activities which are closely connected to providing a content service in order to protect the BBC’s editorial independence. Exempted activities include for example, commissioning, production, casting, editorial policy and scheduling. However, the BBC’s Royal Charter and its public purposes clearly require BBC content to reflect the diversity of the UK and shape our broad diversity work.
Engaging with audiences and staff

We talk to the public regularly. Face-to-face qualitative research and a range of public attitude surveys highlight the audience’s views of the BBC and in turn help inform the direction of our programming. Understanding what audiences think about our offer is crucial in helping us improve how well we reflect them. What our staff think about their experience at work is equally important.

Some of the information we draw on includes:

- Qualitative and quantitative audience research and performance data
- Portrayal monitoring data collected by the industry-wide Cultural Diversity Network
- Data on diversity inside the BBC

We also jointly commissioned audience research with the BBC Trust and conducted a consultation with both the public and with staff focused specifically on our proposed strategic equality and diversity objectives, exploring people’s expectations, thoughts and views. Both the public and staff strongly supported our ambition to keep diversity as a dynamic core organisational imperative, and not reduce it to a box-ticking legal obligation.

Audience research and performance data

We regularly track routine audience activity — monitoring how people are using our services and what they think of them. We use a variety of tracking studies such as the Brand and Reputation Tracker which measures perceptions of audiences to BBC services, as well as industry-wide media consumption surveys like RAJAR and BARB, respectively the official measurement bodies of radio and television audiences.

We also conduct discrete and bespoke pieces of research that look at, for example, the inclusive portrayal of our audience or which help us to understand the attitudes and behaviours of different audience groups in greater depth. Over the last three years, we have conducted research and consultation with disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and people across the devolved nations and English regions. Each piece of research has pointed to common perspectives on how people feel they are portrayed – audiences understand that the media, and television in particular, is very powerful in influencing attitudes and across all boundaries and characteristics different UK communities consistently challenge the BBC to improve its portrayal of their own reality and experience.

And this is our audiences’ minimum expectation. Not just more portrayal, but a balanced portrayal that reflects their experience in a way that is accurate, authentic and non-stereotypical, across a range of programme genres, and where ‘difference’ is sometimes incidental and not always the primary point to a story we are telling.
Portrayal data collected by the Cultural Diversity Network

The Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) is a partnership of the main UK broadcasters and other industry bodies working together to improve diversity on and off screen, across the broadcast and wider creative media industry.

The CDN conducted a snapshot analysis of the diversity of people represented on UK television in 2009 by age, gender, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Its findings included:

- Men occupy double the screen time versus women – little change from previous studies
- Disabled people made up less than 1% of the TV population (compared to 20% of the audience)*
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people were 10 times less likely to be visible within the TV population compared with population estimates
- Black and minority ethnic people represented 10% of the TV population compared with nearly 13% of England’s population

We will continue to add breadth and depth to our understanding and knowledge in order to inform our decisions about programming.

Data on diversity inside the BBC

We monitor the diversity of our staff to understand the make-up of our workforce and identify any barriers which may be affecting the recruitment, progression or experience of any group of staff.

Historically, we have collected information at point of recruitment and via regular staff surveys on the age, gender, disability and ethnicity of our staff. We have recently introduced new categories on religion & belief and on sexual orientation. We have recently conducted an internal staff census to update existing information and collect new information around these new monitoring categories.

The BBC Executive reports in detail to the BBC Trust annually on how it is delivering equality for its staff. Historically, this report has provided in-depth analysis of the diversity of BBC staff with particular emphasis on disability, ethnicity and gender. The report comments on those key issues identified during the year and which need to be addressed, for example underrepresentation at senior levels. From 2012 onwards, this report will expand its scope to include age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Reports from previous years can be found on the BBC Trust’s website at www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/about/how_we_govern/diversity_equality/.

We will continue to look at other ways to improve the quality and usability of the data we collect so that we can better understand both our staff but especially the extent to which different audience groups use our services and what they think of them.

Recent research can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/diversity.

* Communications Research Group 2010
Our strategic equality and diversity objectives

We have used what we have learned to craft five pan-BBC inter-dependent strategic equality and diversity objectives that will help us to deliver maximum impact and benefit to audiences, staff and suppliers:

Advance equal opportunities to diversify and develop our workforce and our senior leaders so that they better reflect our audience.

Deliver high quality programming which reflects modern Britain accurately and authentically.

Build in accessibility from the start when developing new products and services, and ensuring sustainable and ongoing accessibility.

Connect with our audiences, including our underserved audiences, using different methods to inform the quality and direction of our content.

Achieve systematic and consistent consideration of equality and diversity within BBC planning and review processes, and meet our public purposes and duties.
Divisional Diversity Action Plans

We have created a framework to support the different BBC departments as they locally identify how they will deliver against each of our strategic equality and diversity objectives.

Every BBC division must produce a Diversity Action Plan that sets out the steps it will take on the ‘shop floor’ to contribute to the wider BBC’s progress against each objective.

These Diversity Action Plans are rolling one year plans, with actions reviewed and progress published. Diversity Champions will sit on the divisional board to act as a senior advocate to promote diversity within the division. Each Champion is supported by a divisional Diversity Action Group.

The divisional Directors will come together at the Diversity Board at least quarterly to share successes and issues, and work together to deliver the objectives for the whole BBC.

The Diversity Board is chaired by the Director-General, who will report annually to the BBC Trust. The BBC’s central diversity function is available as a resource to advise the Diversity Board, as well as co-ordinating the Corporation’s work on diversity. The Director-General reports progress annually to the BBC Trust.

Divisional Diversity Action Plans are available at www.bbc.co.uk/diversity/strategy.
Meeting our new objectives

Our vision on diversity requires all staff and – crucially – all senior managers to understand their role and responsibility in helping the BBC achieve its goals.

We will support staff as they develop their awareness and understanding of the issues, and will help them develop their confidence to act positively in meeting our strategic equality and diversity objectives.

Advance equal opportunities to diversify and develop our workforce at all levels to better reflect our audience

Our plans to meet this objective include:

• An improved careers website on www.bbc.co.uk/jobs will provide better information on opportunities available at the BBC, the application process, and career information

• We will review the existing training provision available for BBC staff responsible for making recruitment and selection decisions, delivering a training and information package that is interactive, informative and monitored for compliance. It will also introduce a focus on unconscious bias

• We will work to attract a diverse range of candidates to BBC North, where they can contribute to its mission to drive outstanding creativity. Interested in opportunities there? Visit www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/north/

• We will continue to target those sections of our audience under represented in our workforce. We will also continue with local initiatives that help to widen the diversity of people at the BBC
Deliver high quality programming which reflects modern Britain accurately and authentically

Examples of what we will do include:

• We will continue to address how we portray specific sections of the audience – including women, black and minority ethnic people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, disabled people, people of different age groups and trans people – to ensure that it is fair and accurate.

• We will broadcast a Mixed Race season in autumn 2011, offering a distinctive range of programming that focuses on some of the stories from the fastest growing ethnic group in the UK.

• We are committed to spending half of our network production budgets on programming made outside London by 2016, and so better reflect the diverse creative talents found across the UK.

Connect with our audiences, including our underserved audiences, to inform the quality and direction of our content

To meet this objective we will:

• We will take a leading role on behalf of other broadcasters to promote diversity on and off air, as the industry chair of the Cultural Diversity Network until the end of 2012.

• We will commission audience research and consultation on the portrayal of age across broadcasters to inform output and employment practice across the industry.

• We will explore ways to improve and use our own knowledge about the perceptions and experiences of different audience groups, such as East Asian people and trans people.

Build in accessibility from the start when developing new products and services, and ensuring sustainable and ongoing accessibility

Our plans include:

• We will establish BBC Access, chaired by a senior member of the BBC’s Executive Board (a role inaugurated by Chief Financial Officer Zarin Patel), to ensure accessibility is delivered for disabled staff and disabled audience members.

• We will offer targeted training to develop knowledge and expertise among staff tasked with building accessible products and services.

Achieve systematic and consistent consideration of equality and diversity within BBC planning and review processes, and meet our public purposes and duties

Examples of how we will do this include:

• We will ensure that we consider equality and diversity, and identify opportunities to advance these principles, as we implement our Putting Quality First strategy.

• We will ensure that equality and diversity considerations are a key part of the procurement process to renew the contract to collect the licence fee on our behalf.
Other successes so far

Although the new strategy gives a clear focus for the BBC, we have historically had some clear successes in identifying issues and driving change for the better, including:

• An extensive Resourcing Service Review examining issues of recruitment and retention, and which made a number of recommendations which are being implemented as part of the BBC's ongoing programme of continuous improvement.

• Our work placement scheme for disabled people, Extend, offers short-term paid work placements. This year we introduced ManageAble, targeting placements in senior and decision-making roles. See more at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/extend/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/extend/).

• Work schemes across the BBC target people from a wide range of backgrounds – for example, BBC 2012 Apprenticeships offer opportunities to people from the six Olympic boroughs, and BBC North recently announced its new entry level apprenticeships programme for up to 100 young people from the Greater Manchester area. We are also involved across the whole UK in the government's Business Pledge initiative.

• We run the Journalism Trainee Scheme and the Journalism Talent Pool (for already trained journalists) to increase diversity among our journalists. Both routes are identifying a more diverse pool of journalistic talent in terms of gender, ethnicity and social diversity than ever before. We are also aiming to attract more disabled journalists through these initiatives in the future: [www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/jts/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/jts/index.shtml).

• We take part in benchmarking exercises with other organisations in both the private and public sectors to ensure that we are following best practice and inform future commitments.

• We ran a programme of diversity awareness workshops across the UK for senior managers in 2009, and have now developed a bespoke online training module for all staff, launching this year.

• With the BBC Trust we have examined BBC portrayal of diverse audiences including disabled people, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and people from different regions and nations in the UK.

• Our in-house television production division has signed up to the Diversity Pledge which is a joint initiative between the Cultural Diversity Network and independent producer trade association Pact. The Diversity Pledge commits all BBC in-house productions to address diversity through their employment practice and their portrayal: [www.culturaldiversitynetwork.co.uk/pledge.php](http://www.culturaldiversitynetwork.co.uk/pledge.php).

• A range of content across our services marked the International Day of Disabled People in December last year. BBC News channel, for example, covered a series of items under the banner Access All Areas: [www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2010/11/access_all_areas.html](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2010/11/access_all_areas.html).

• BBC Three has developed its Insider panel of 16-24 year olds from a range of backgrounds, and who engage with channel management on a range of topics, helping programme decisions and offering an instant source of feedback.

• We took an in-depth look at the portrayal and inclusion of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) audiences. Unprecedented audience research and a public consultation were commissioned, and the recommendations are being implemented. For more look at [www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/).
We worked with Channel 4 to understand the views of disabled audiences about content and accessibility of services. The research is helping us make more accurate portrayals of disabled people and be more inclusive of disabled people in programmes that are not specifically about disability.

We are committed to broadening the nature of our programme supply so that by 2016, half of our network television content will come from outside London, better reflecting the diversity of creative talent around the UK and to the UK.

The negative portrayal of different regions and nations can concern local audiences, wherever they are. Accuracy and authenticity are key to improving portrayal in this respect and the BBC's local programmes and increased network supply from beyond the M25 will help improve audience perceptions of our offer.

The Digital Switchover Help Scheme gives older and disabled people practical assistance to make the switch to digital TV, scheduled for completion in 2012. The service is provided on behalf of the BBC by Eaga, which is very experienced in delivering a range of high quality services to older and disabled people. An independent audit of the service found that the key parts of the service are examples of best practice in meeting the needs of disabled people. See more details at [www.helpscheme.co.uk/](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk/).

BBC iPlayer was built in consultation with accessibility specialists and features television-style access services: subtitles, British Sign Language and audio description. BBC iPlayer is the only on-demand catch-up service in the world to include audio described programmes. Sign Zone on the BBC iPlayer provides a directory of recent BSL content available to watch at any time.

My Web My Way helps disabled people to get the most out of BBC services online. It was developed in partnership with national charity Abilitynet. [www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/accessibility_beta/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/accessibility_beta/).

The BBC Trust gave approval for the BBC to continue with joint venture YouView (previously Project ‘Canvas’) – an internet-connected upgrade to the UK's free-to-air digital TV platforms Freeview and Freesat, and create a subscription-free content alternative for audiences in a market dominated by pay-TV – on the condition of providing a number of accessibility and usability features within 12 months of launch. [www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/canvas/canvas_conclusions.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/canvas/canvas_conclusions.pdf).

During 2011 we will open a new media centre on the site of London's Broadcasting House which will house all our national and international journalism, and most of our network radio services. We have been working to ensure that this state-of-the-art facility is fully accessible to disabled staff, contributors and members of the public.

All major capital investments involving spend of over £500,000 are reviewed to ensure that they have adequately given consideration to relevant equality and diversity issues.

Diversity is championed at Executive Board level: Tim Davie, Director of Audio & Music, led on work to improve how we portray lesbian, gay and bisexual people; Zarin Patel, Chief Financial Officer, is Disability Equality Champion; and Mark Thompson, Director-General, is Chair of the industry-wide Cultural Diversity Network until the end of 2012.
An accountable BBC

The Director-General chairs the BBC's Diversity Board, which meets quarterly and is attended by all divisional directors who report progress against their divisional Diversity Action Plans.

The Diversity Board advises on issues of equality and diversity, supporting and encouraging the divisions, and maintaining momentum.

The Director-General, on behalf of the BBC Executive, reports to the Trust each year on how we are meeting our obligations and promises on diversity:

• overall progress against our Diversity Strategy
• equality in employment
• legal compliance with the public sector equality duty

The BBC Trust approved this strategy in March 2011. The BBC Trust is a partner in the BBC Executive's aspirations on diversity and has its own Diversity Action Plan, which sets our how the Trust is meeting the BBC's new strategic equality and diversity objectives.

To find out more about the BBC and diversity go to bbc.co.uk/diversity.
Find out more about the BBC

Contacting the BBC

If you want information or to know more about how the BBC is run please visit www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc. Here you will also find a blog where senior staff and experts regularly give an insider’s view of what is happening at the BBC.

For tickets to shows, tours and events please visit www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours.

If you have a comment, appreciation or complaint about BBC programmes and services please visit www.bbc.co.uk/feedback.

Or write to BBC Audience Services, PO Box 1922, Darlington, DL3 0UR.

Comment line tel: 03700 100 222*
Other queries tel: 03700 100 123*
Textphone 03700 100 212*

Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Credits
Photographs used are ©BBC or used under the terms of the PACT agreement.

BBC Trust

If you have any comments or questions about the work of the BBC Trust you can contact it direct by post, email, or telephone.

BBC Trust Unit
1st Floor
180 Great Portland Street
London W1W 5QZ

Email: trust.enquiries@bbc.co.uk
Telephone: BBC Information line 03700 103 100†*
Textphone: 03700 100 212*

Lines open Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 5.30pm.

BBC Audience Councils

The Audience Councils in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, help the BBC Trust to understand the needs and concerns of audiences throughout the UK. To contact the Audience Councils:

Audience Council England
Email: audiencecouncil.england@bbc.co.uk

Audience Council Scotland
Email: acs@bbc.co.uk

Audience Council Wales
Email: acw@bbc.co.uk

Audience Council Northern Ireland
Email: audiencecouncil.ni@bbc.co.uk

† Calls maybe recorded for training purposes.
* 0370 numbers are ‘UK wide’ and cost no more than calls to 01 or 02 geographic numbers.