

YOU BELONG

BBC Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy



**YOU BELONG
AT THE BBC
BECAUSE THE
BBC BELONGS
TO YOU**

Cover:

Gladiators, Hungry Bear, BBC One

We Might Regret This, Roughcut, BBC Two

Juice, WarnerMedia, BBC Three

Eastenders, BBC Studios, BBC One

FOREWORD

Tim Davie

Director-General



In March 2024 we set out three essential roles that the BBC can play for our democracy, our creative economy, and our society. These are to pursue truth with no agenda, back homegrown storytelling, and bring people together.

Our aim is to prioritise these three roles and deliver a BBC that is more relevant, universally used, and offers outstanding value to all audiences. A big part of this is creating a place that attracts the best people and enables them to do their best work.

We want the BBC to be a uniquely creative, innovative and inclusive organisation, admired across the world and living its values every day. So, diversity, inclusion and belonging matter at the BBC, and we know it matters to our audiences. We must serve everyone, whoever and wherever they are and represent and portray the many diverse communities across the UK.

In 2021, we published a three-year diversity and inclusion plan, and in the same year we rolled out our first ever creative diversity commitments. We have come a long way since then and I am proud of what we have achieved.

We have doubled our committed spend on diverse content, increased the number of women in the workforce so we are at gender parity, and we have increased representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff across the BBC. But there remains much more to do, particularly around disability.

We must also continue to build an inclusive culture where everyone feels empowered to be themselves in work. This will help generate the best ideas, and improve the way we do things. Our diversity and inclusion work is adapting and evolving to reflect our changing focus. It's a challenge I know teams are embracing and one that is driving us to find exciting new approaches and solutions.

For the first time, we are bringing together our workforce diversity plans and our creative diversity plans into one strategy. This document sets out how we intend to go further and faster to build a BBC that is not only truly representative of all the audiences we serve, but an organisation where everyone feels they belong. Our new plans will ensure that, whether you are a member of the audience, a production partner, or an employee, the BBC is for you.

Tim Davie

Director-General



Our mission: Inform, Educate, Entertain

Our strategy: Value For All

Our roles:

Pursuing truth
with no agenda

Backing the best
homegrown storytelling

Bringing people together

The BBC Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy

Workforce:

- Reflect our audiences in our workforce
- Create inclusive and accessible working environments
- Seek insights from our colleagues to improve the way we work

Creative:

- Drive representation in our content on and off air
- Build an inclusive culture on each production
- Strengthen and build on our existing industry partnerships

THE HEADLINES FROM OUR WORK SO FAR

£243m

of existing TV and Radio commissioning budgets spent on content qualifying under the creative diversity criteria from 2021 to 2024. Far exceeding our initial commitment to spend £112 million in three years

TV Access Project

Partnership of ten UK broadcasters and streamers to create a shift in the industry for deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent inclusion on and off screen. In 2023/24, over 30 BBC productions had Access Co-ordinators and we announced new access funding protocols for all productions

Accessibility for audiences

Significant strides to ensure our content is accessible with subtitles, audio-description or British Sign Language, e.g. *Strictly Come Dancing*, *Doctor Who* and *Glastonbury*

Achieved a gender balanced organisation in February 2023

9.7%

representation in off-screen disability. Increased from 5.8% in March 2020

BBC Extend

Relaunched BBC Extend – our flagship programme to ring-fence roles in line with the Equality Act 2010 for disabled people, which can include those who identify as deaf and/or neurodivergent

BBC Enigma

Launched BBC Enigma, our staff network for neurodivergent people at the BBC

11,000

members, collectively, of our staff networks and community groups

2,000+

Over 2,000 people have now participated in our Hot Shoes or 80/20 programmes which give our people exposure and experience of working in other teams across the BBC.

1,300 Early Careers and Staff Apprentices have started on their scheme since 2021. Our award-winning Early Careers Apprentices scheme boasts an outstanding achievement rate of 89% and attracted 27,000 applicants last year.

Launched the BBC Leader Index to hold leaders to account for diversity, inclusion and engagement of their teams.

82%

In 2023/24, 82% of productions met our 20% diverse production teams target, showing a year-on-year increase across disability, ethnicity and socio-economic diversity captured through End of Production reporting



Strictly Come Dancing, BBC Studios, BBC One

WORKFORCE AMBITIONS

Our workforce is our greatest strength. And making sure our workforce represents the audiences we serve is vital to serving and representing everyone, whoever and wherever they are.

First and foremost, we aim to attract, employ and retain the best possible talent into the BBC whatever their background.

Whilst our ambition to build inclusion and belonging applies to the whole BBC, including internationally, in the UK we are also guided by our ambitious workforce diversity goals, to help us develop a BBC that reflects the shape and make-up of the UK and the audiences we serve. The right representation within the BBC, helps us ensure the right representation and portrayal in our content.

Our goals serve as a guide, designed to help ensure we recruit from the widest possible talent pool showcasing that the BBC is for everyone, including those who may not currently see it as a place for them. We are striving to eliminate barriers so that everyone has the opportunity to join and thrive at the BBC.

In 2021 we committed to be a modern 50:20:12 organisation, that's 50% women and 50% men, 20% from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background and 12% disabled staff, by March 2026.

In 2022 we said 25% staff will come from working class backgrounds by 2027.

Our last audited figures from the Annual Report and Accounts 2024 show our workforce is made up of:

- 50.1% women
- 49% women leaders
- 17% Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff
- 14.4% Black, Asian and minority ethnic leaders
- 9.4% disabled staff
- 7.9% disabled leaders
- 21.1% working-class staff
- 19.3% working-class leaders

Building on our progress

We are proud of the progress that has been made, but we know we have more to do to ensure we truly represent the audiences we serve, particularly in the areas of ethnicity and disability.



Election 2024

We also know that the labels we're using to set these workforce goals may not represent the way in which everyone chooses to describe themselves. These groupings are important to hold ourselves to account, report on our progress and ensure we're focused on dismantling the barriers that are experienced by people from different backgrounds. We're also looking at how we represent and reflect our audiences more widely, for example, ensuring our LGBTQ+ staff, faith groups and people of different ages feel a sense of belonging at the BBC.

It is right that we always review our plans and as part of this next phase of our strategy we will align our plans to the new Charter period, aiming to meet all our goals by 2027.

Additionally, to align with industry best practice and to give more visibility to our neurodivergent staff, from 2025/26 we will measure the percentage of colleagues who are disabled, as well as those who are deaf and/or neurodivergent. This means our 12% disability target will be replaced by a new goal of 14% that measures the combined total of deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent staff. We have enhanced the BBC Extend programme to help us achieve this level of representation.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, Extend provides ring-fenced roles for disabled people which can include those who identify as deaf and/or neurodivergent. In addition, we are reviewing and improving processes to enable all colleagues to receive necessary adjustments as soon as possible.



DELIVERING ON OUR STRATEGY: OUR WORKFORCE

Some of our key focus areas across the life of this strategy include:



Jake Brown, *The Traitors*, Studio Lambert, BBC One

Reflecting our audiences in our workforce, by:

- enabling more inclusive recruitment and onboarding practices to ensure we attract the widest possible pool of diverse talent
- continuing our focus to recruit Early Careers Apprentices from diverse backgrounds across the United Kingdom through our award winning programme
- enhancing our development and progression offering by expanding the impact of our career development initiatives including 80/20 and Hot Shoes
- reaffirming our commitment to BBC Extend, our flagship programme to ring-fence roles in line with the Equality Act 2010 for disabled people, which can include those who identify as deaf and/or neurodivergent
- building on the success of RISE and Elev8 – our mentoring and development programmes to progress talent from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent staff

Creating inclusive and accessible working environments, by:

- the rollout of Inclusive Leadership training for managers and new training for staff to ensure diversity is appreciated, and everyone is encouraged and supported to participate fully
- reviewing and updating our policies and procedures to ensure they promote inclusion and provide the right support
- ensuring inclusive accessible designs, cultures and communications, with enhanced workplace support and a streamlined process for obtaining adjustments, including assistive technology (with appropriate training) for our deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent staff
- putting accessibility at the heart of our digital transformation and a foundational element of the user experience and product lifecycle

Seeking insights from our colleagues to improve the way we work, by:

- enhancing the effectiveness of Staff Networks by offering new resources and structures, with the support of the Executive Sponsors and HR Directors
- continually improving our staff experience, by developing better insights on the barriers and enablers to inclusion for our staff



Gary O'Donoghue

DELIVERING ON OUR STRATEGY: OUR STAFF NETWORKS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Our staff networks sit at the heart of building a sense of belonging at the BBC

We are immensely proud of our nine thriving staff networks, which collectively now have over 11,000 members. They play a vital role in building mutual understanding, collaboration and celebration of our unique communities across the organisation.

Our networks reflect the needs of staff, respond to societal changes and help us understand how we can help everyone realise their potential and feel supported here. Most recently, we have introduced the Enigma network for neurodivergent staff, and, as part of BBC Embrace, our multicultural network, we have added the Jewish Staff Network and BBC Salaam for Muslim staff. We also have some informal networks such as our Carers network, Stammering network and other community groups including hubs across the United Kingdom and in BBC Studios.

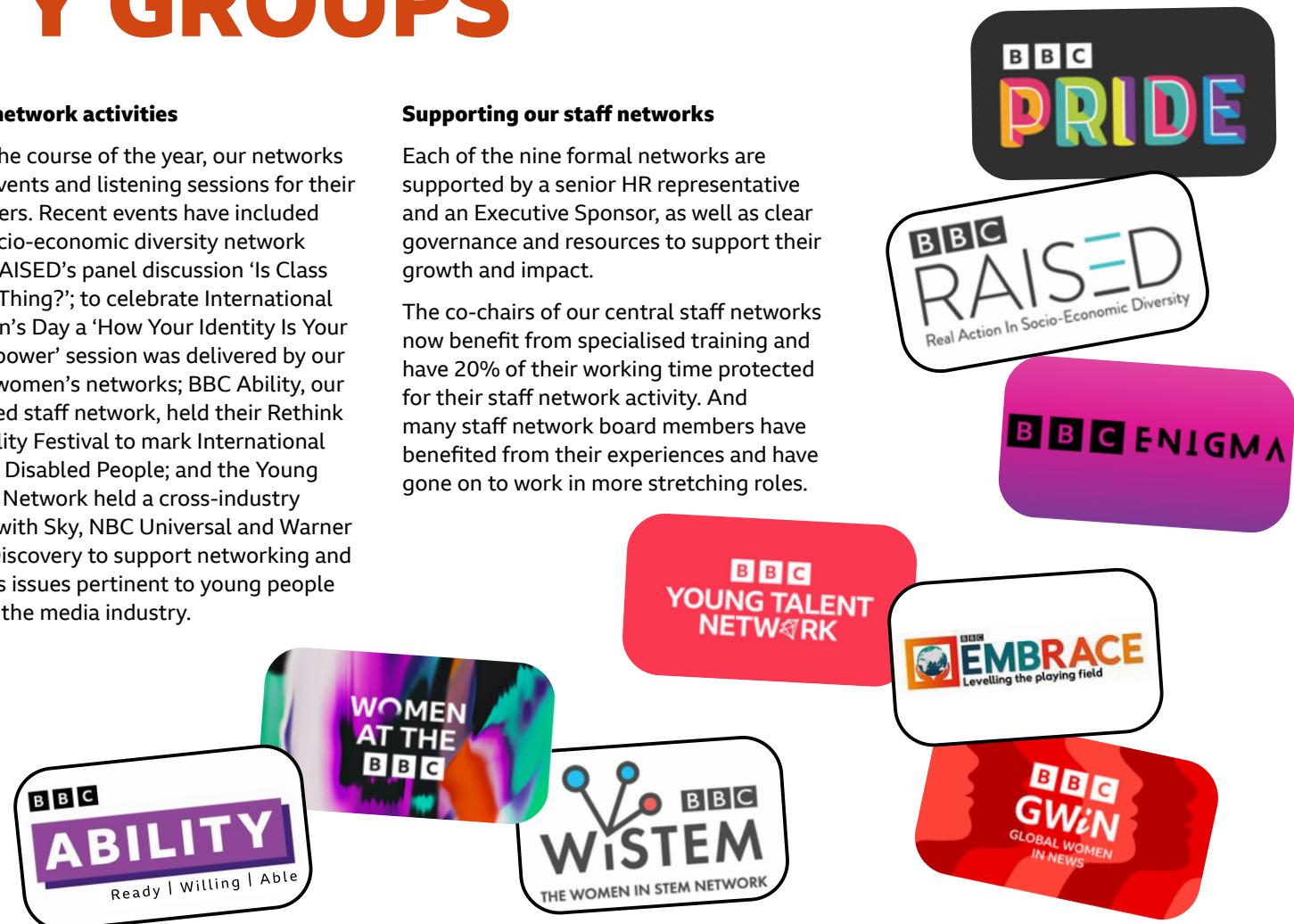
Staff network activities

Over the course of the year, our networks host events and listening sessions for their members. Recent events have included our socio-economic diversity network BBC RAISED's panel discussion 'Is Class Still a Thing?'; to celebrate International Women's Day a 'How Your Identity Is Your Superpower' session was delivered by our three women's networks; BBC Ability, our disabled staff network, held their Rethink Disability Festival to mark International Day of Disabled People; and the Young Talent Network held a cross-industry event with Sky, NBC Universal and Warner Bros Discovery to support networking and discuss issues pertinent to young people within the media industry.

Supporting our staff networks

Each of the nine formal networks are supported by a senior HR representative and an Executive Sponsor, as well as clear governance and resources to support their growth and impact.

The co-chairs of our central staff networks now benefit from specialised training and have 20% of their working time protected for their staff network activity. And many staff network board members have benefited from their experiences and have gone on to work in more stretching roles.



CONTENT AMBITIONS

Our creative diversity commitments seek to drive greater authenticity in our output, raise our ambitions for diversity within production teams and improve inclusion.

2023/24 saw the conclusion of our three-year creative diversity commitment to invest at least £112 million of existing commissioning budgets on diverse and representative content (with criteria including on-air portrayal, off-air production leadership and/or company leadership) across TV and Radio, as well as seeking a 20% off-screen diversity commitment from our TV production suppliers.

This has been the largest financial investment in the industry in diverse content, looking holistically at representation both on and off air. We're proud that we have doubled this spend over the three-year period, investing £243 million of existing commissioning budgets. In addition, 82% of all TV productions are meeting or exceeding the 20% off-screen target.

We have seen the significant impact of coming together as an industry through the TV Access Project, as we work together to drive greater representation and inclusivity of deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent talent.

We have also made meaningful and important strides in the accessibility of our content for audiences from usability and user experience to features such as subtitles, audio-description and British Sign Language (BSL).

In September 2024, we announced the next iteration of our creative diversity commitments, which form a key part of our strategy.



Toby (Sekou Diaby) and
Jaheim (Josh Tedeku),
Boarders, Studio Lambert,
BBC Three



Blue Peter, BBC Studios, CBBC

DELIVERING ON OUR STRATEGY: CONTENT

Some of our key focus areas include:



Mr Loverman, Fable Pictures, BBC One

Driving representation on and off air by:

- investing a minimum of £80 million annually in content that meets the BBC's creative diversity criteria for TV and Radio
- increasing our focus on aligning diverse on-air storytelling with stronger off-air representation in senior production roles and leadership within production companies
- holding ourselves to account by reporting annually through refreshed reporting, with greater specificity rather than the grouping of diverse characteristics
- raising representation targets for TV production teams across ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic diversity from 20% to 25% across all production roles

Building an inclusive culture on each production through our new Inclusive Production Principles:

- hair and make-up: Productions will provide specialist hair and makeup stylists to work with afro textured hair and a variety of skin tones
- accessible productions: Embedding guidelines from the industry-wide TV Access Project on all productions, including access co-ordinators, accessibility of set locations and post-production houses
- DEI education and insights: Access to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) education training and resources on all productions to foster a culture of inclusion and transparency

Building on our existing industry partnerships by:

- supporting underrepresented production talent and diverse-led productions, such as through Elevate and the Small Indie Fund
- collaborating on pan-industry interventions, such as the TV Access Project

CONTENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The three essential roles the BBC will prioritise to deliver value for all audiences are pursuing truth with no agenda, backing the best homegrown storytelling, and bringing people together. All three depend on the BBC setting the very highest standards for diversity and inclusion, on and off air. This year the BBC has produced award-winning programming that has inclusion and authenticity at its core.

A multitude of productions demonstrated high standards of diversity and inclusivity, with increased representation with titles meeting our creative diversity criteria of portrayal, representation in senior production leadership and/or company leadership.

In Scripted, BBC Comedy produced shows that portray characters and situations that are funny and challenge stereotypes, including *Dreaming Whilst Black*, *Juice* and *Man Like Mobeen*, all with strong representation on and off screen. We're proud to be nurturing homegrown emerging British actors and creatives with both Gbemisola Ikumelo (*Black Ops*) and Mawaan Rizwan (*Juice*) winning BAFTA and RTS performance awards. These titles have been renewed, highlighting our commitment to comedies telling underrepresented stories. In Drama, titles with representation and authenticity at their core include *Boarders*, *Waterloo Road* and *Best Interests*, written by Jack Thorne.



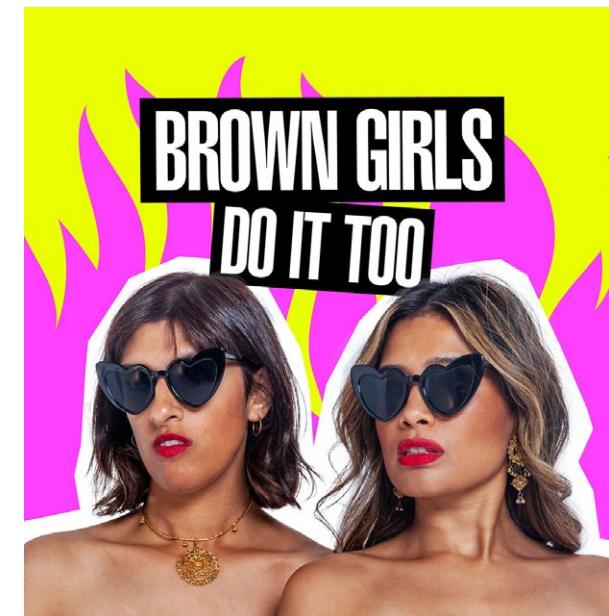
Ability, BBC Radio 4

In Unscripted, we've also seen the impact of content which connects people and brings in young diverse audiences, with titles such as *Gladiators* and *The Traitors* being applauded by viewers, especially families, for inclusive representation embedded throughout the cast and contributors.

Our groundbreaking storytelling continues to set us apart, demonstrated by titles such as the *Grierson* and RTS award-winning *Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland* and *Rose Ayling-Ellis: Signs for Change*.

Cbeebies Bedtime Stories continues to show the strength of representation in reaching our diverse audiences with readers such as Abtaha Maqsood, Mr Motivator, Carlos Gu and Lenny Rush. This year they celebrated deaf awareness week with new reader Rayane Cordell from *Dog Squad* and his hearing dog.

In our audio offering, Radio 4's *Ability* is a sitcom written and performed by disabled actors and comedians which tells the story of Matt who has cerebral palsy. BBC Radio 1Xtra continues to champion Black British culture. *The Carnival Family* celebrated the unsung heroes of the Notting Hill Carnival.



Brown Girls Do It Too, BBC Sounds

BBC Sounds' *Brown Girls Do It Too* is a celebration of identities through honest, and funny conversations.

Accessibility of our content has been a key area of focus for us. The 20th anniversary series of *Strictly Come Dancing* was live signed for the first time, enabling audiences using British Sign Language (BSL) to fully engage in the show and be part of the voting. Every episode of *Doctor Who* on iPlayer now has subtitles, audio description and signing. We've ensured accessibility of our live events such as *Glastonbury* and *Eurovision*. A signed version of *Newsround* is also available to watch every weekday for children who use BSL.

A BBC FOR ALL OF US

The ambitions that we have for this strategy are shared by the BBC Executive Committee. Here are some thoughts from some of them on why it matters to them:



“

Our staff networks are at the forefront of creating a more diverse and inclusive BBC. They provide safe and trusted spaces for communities to come together, to share opportunities and discuss challenges, ensuring all voices are heard. Our staff networks play an essential role in our strategy, as we pursue a greater sense of belonging at the BBC. I'm privileged to be the Executive Sponsor for the Ability network and proud to champion representation and allyship across the BBC.

Leigh Tavaziva
Chief Operating Officer



“

I am immensely proud to be the executive sponsor for our newest staff network BBC Enigma – a dynamic and thriving community for our neuro-divergent colleagues, and a place for allies to join and learn. The network is already blazing a trail with its innovative programme of work with partners inside and outside the BBC. It also has a crucial role to play in building a sense of belonging across the whole organisation, ensuring all our bases right across the United Kingdom are inclusive and welcoming working environments.

Rhodri Talfan Davies
Director of Nations



“

We're committed to championing British storytelling and recognise the vital role of diverse-led indies in bringing authentic stories to life. By boosting our investment in diverse content and raising our off-screen diversity targets, we're focused on delivering the most distinctive content with breadth and range for audiences across the United Kingdom and supporting the United Kingdom creative industries.

Charlotte Moore
Outgoing Chief Content Officer



“

By embedding diversity, inclusion, and belonging in everything we do at BBC Studios, we can build a culture where every person who works here feels heard, valued, and empowered. Before joining BBC Studios, I had rarely experienced a working environment where I could truly be my authentic self. I now want to ensure that everyone working for us has the same opportunity to thrive in a culture that embraces who they are. This will mean we can continue to create world-leading, authentic content that inspires conversations and helps us all make sense of the world we live in.

Tom Fussell
CEO BBC Studios



As we embark on the next phase of our work, to build on the progress already made in diversity and inclusion over the last period, I am eager that we put a strong focus on creating a sense of belonging at the heart of everything we do for our workforce, our partners, and our audiences. It is our hope to create a BBC that represents all of Britain and its vibrant diversity in a positive and impactful fashion.

We know we want to go further and faster with our goals to enhance the diversity of our workforce and strengthen our talent pipeline, as we create working

environments that are truly inclusive and accessible. Our focus on belonging will aim to create environments in which all our staff can have conditions to thrive and in turn, do their best work for our audiences. And we will continue to drive authentic content with our 'on and off screen' representation, as well as supporting producers to work towards more diverse production teams which will allow everyone to experience the BBC's work in a powerful manner. In turn, we'll have a BBC where the very best people do their best work, establishing a creative, innovative, and inclusive organisation that's admired worldwide.

We truly want to ensure that we're a workplace that isn't just diverse and inclusive but values everyone for their uniqueness – diversity of who they are, how they think, and how they work. We are setting the bar higher – focusing on belonging and ensuring that all our staff, partners, and audiences feel valued at the BBC. Our bold vision is underpinned by a clear mission statement: You belong at the BBC because the BBC belongs to you.

Uzair Qadeer
Chief People Officer



Appendix: Assessing our progress

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN 2021–2023

Our 2021–2023 Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan was designed to shape a more creative, inclusive, and diverse organisation.

Some key areas of achievement have included:

- all of our career development schemes were open to all staff and all either met or exceeded our 50:20:12:25 diversity goals
- our 2024 survey showed we are making steady progress in this area: 78% of staff feel their manager builds an inclusive team environment, up five percentage points from 2022; 70% feel they can be their authentic selves, up three percentage points from 2022 and 68% feel they belong at the BBC, up four percentage points from 2022
- our one-year Accelerator Programme prepared participants for roles of greater seniority or complexity or depth. From over 900 applications, 26 individuals were selected to participate and, since the programme ended, 44% of participants had been promoted and a further 32% had taken on more stretching, broader responsibilities, inside or outside the BBC
- our award-winning Early Careers Apprentices Programme is about increasing the number of entry level opportunities across the organisation. So far, we have employed over 700 Early Careers Apprentices from a diverse range of backgrounds, including 70% of the latest cohort from outside London
- our staff apprenticeships are enabling colleagues to gather knowledge, deepen skills and gain formal qualifications
- colleagues spend at least 20% of their normal working hours on a staff apprenticeship, and so far over 250 staff have participated, receiving industry designed training from leading apprenticeship providers whilst remaining within their existing role
- with our 'Accessible First' approach we have reviewed existing policies in consultation with staff and implemented a series of changes to improve inclusivity for disabled staff
- our Disability Passport scheme has helped over 100 staff have conversations with their managers about the adjustments they need, with additional funding put in place to upgrade our technology where needed
- a new Disability Allies programme is helping staff take an active role in these changes, and targeted recruitment campaigns are helping attract disabled talent to News, Nations and Content, through our award-winning BBC Extend programme
- to help our teams recognise the value of diverse talent we produced a new hiring toolkit for Team Leaders that helps them check and refine their process for any potential bias. We followed this up with a new values-based interview framework, designed to recognise a candidate's potential rather than just their experience
- we rolled out a new Senior Leader Index, which helps leaders understand the diversity of their teams and how engaged staff are, to introduce a new level of accountability and help our senior team continually develop
- to improve the diversity of senior leaders, we focused on how to support our future leaders to perform at their best and maximise their potential, no matter what their background
- to meet a gold standard for inclusion, we launched an Inclusion Toolkit to educate and equip all staff with an understanding of how they can create an inclusive culture for everyone in their role



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