

Our Vision

The Garden is committed to championing diversity and inclusion in a meaningful way. Both on and off screen we are passionate about ensuring all voices are heard.

We understand British television has a major problem in this area and the last few years have really brought these issues into focus. Tackling this is not only a moral obligation but by embracing inclusion we can have a more creative, productive, and happier workforce. In an industry that's all about coming up with new ideas and approaches, finding the best teams to bring them to life, and creating content which appeals to the widest cross-section of society, it's clear that being inclusive is at the heart of this.

Our vision is to attract new talent from underrepresented areas, foster an inclusive culture, and be more accountable.

Our Approach

There are areas where we're proud of our track record, among them the majority female directing team on the 2020 series of 24 Hours in Police Custody, better representation of POC in our permanent staff in recent years, and the on-screen diversity visible in programmes such as 24 Hours in A&E, Our Borough: Love and Hustle, The Unshockable Dr Ronx and Operation Live. In February 2019, we opened a second base in Leeds - The Garden Yorkshire – which is broadening the range of voices and backgrounds within the company and helping us diversify beyond our London roots. We've already filmed our first series of 24 Hours in A&E in Nottingham, which offered a whole host of opportunities to work on a prime-time doc series, and we now staff up new productions and run development between the two sites.

But we also recognise that there are many areas where we have more to do and this plan sets out how we intend to tackle them. Our goals are monitored and updated regularly by our Diversity Working Group (see below for details and contacts) to make sure it's working as we intend it to – and the plan will evolve as our solutions are tested against real-world examples. Whether you're staff or a freelancer, if you want to contribute to the conversation, please get in touch. We welcome feedback and will need your help to bring about change.

Our Goals

Our approach is to be transparent about the tangible actions we are taking to ensure inclusivity. As a medium-sized production company, we want to ensure our efforts make an impact and so we're focusing on specific areas where we can see a clear need. We also recognise that any plan of this kind needs to go beyond who gets hired, to address the experience people have while working at The Garden, and the wider company culture.

ENGAGING AND DEVELOPING TALENT

- **ENTRY LEVEL** – where the barriers to entering the industry are high and a bias towards certain groups exists.

OUR RESPONSE: We bring on two new entrants on to productions and development using two established schemes

- **MID LEVEL** – where there are high drop-out numbers and the absence of training can lead to careers stalling.

OUR RESPONSE: The *Next Level Fund* - every year we ringfence £50,000 which we spend on freelancers on our productions by giving them the help they need to progress in their career. This could be giving someone their first edit, giving someone extra training, or simply more time on a production to strengthen their knowledge of the role.

- **SENIOR LEVEL** – where the make-up of senior leadership teams doesn't yet reflect the country at large

OUR RESPONSE: We informally identify those at producer level from both inside and outside the company and actively track and grow talent towards senior roles.



Creating An Inclusive Culture

Our goal is to ensure there is a supportive and inclusive culture within our company and that everyone in the company treats creating and sustaining that culture as a key part of their job.

MENTORING BY ALL SENIOR STAFF

All senior staff at The Garden have a mentee through industry-wide programmes aimed at supporting people from under-represented backgrounds. They involve training and monitoring and cover both entry-level and mid-level talent – across the country.

We believe mentoring is mutually beneficial, as it allows our senior staff to share the benefit of their experience, while also allowing the mentee to provide an understanding on what it feels like to work in the sector from a different perspective.

BUDDY SYSTEM FOR A SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE

All freelancers who work for The Garden are assigned a 'buddy' when they join. This is someone within the core staff of the company but outside their production, who helps them settle in. Freelancers can ask questions about the company, talk in confidence about personal or work-related issues and give feedback, should they wish. The aim of the buddy system is to provide a supportive culture for all members of staff, ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to be heard and learn from the experiences of other people within the company and from different backgrounds.

FAIR SELECTION

We are working to widen the pools from which we choose, to reach out to all underrepresented groups and to be more broad-minded about what counts as relevant experience. As a result all roles on productions we crew for are advertised, in order to ensure all applicants are given an equal opportunity to apply.

Our senior team and talent execs are responsible for helping attract and retain off-screen talent at The Garden. There are a number of measures in place to ensure we're expanding our talent networks including regular attendance at industry networking events, working closely with the diversity leads at the terrestrial broadcasters, partnering with recognised industry diversity programmes and collaborating with external partners such as TV Talent North, The Neurodiverse Media Community, Deaf and Disabled in TV, WFTV, The TV Collective and more.



ACCOUNTABILITY

DATA AND MONITORING

We continue to make the best assessment we can of all our productions with regard to ethnicity, gender, disability and socio-economic background. We'll check their demographic make-up against our benchmarks – the nation as a whole and the areas we're recruiting from. And we will continue to work with our teams to ensure progress is being made towards being fully representative.

FEEDBACK

The Garden's Diversity Working Group meets regularly to monitor progress, discuss new and emerging talent and consider new suggestions. It consists of:

Andrea Bate-Boyle - Talent Executive
Nic Brown – Creative Director
Lucie Duxbury - Acting Head of Programmes
Fee Freed – COO
Melissa Hameed – Head of Production
John Hay – CEO
Dee Kahlon - Talent Executive

The group welcomes feedback on this plan, and on diversity and inclusion in the company more broadly. Please send any thoughts in the first instance to the group at Inclusion@thegarden.tv.

The Garden's CEO and COO - John Hay and Fee Freed - take ultimate responsibility for the delivery of the initiatives outlined in this plan and will be held accountable by the ITV Studios Board.