The 5 As

GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION IN UK TELEVISION PRODUCTION

In order to ensure the full and equal inclusion of Deaf, Disabled and/or Neurodivergent talent, both behind and in front of the camera, the organisations which adopt these guidelines will:

1. ANTICIPATE

We fully expect to work and continue to work with Disabled people on a regular basis. So, we will keep ahead of the game and ensure our structures, processes and environments are - and remain - inclusive. We will engender confidence among Disabled talent, by actively communicating and demonstrating how we are inclusive. In doing this, we will always seek expert advice and stay up to date with best practice.

2. ASK

We avoid assuming anything, of anybody. So, sensitively and as standard, we will regularly approach every team member- whether they have a condition or impairment that is immediately apparent or not - to invite them to discuss any adjustment needs or access requirements they have in order to fulfil their role. In doing so, we will focus on access and adjustments, not conditions or impairments and we will let Disabled people own those conversations.

3. ASSESS

We value self-reflection. So, we will be clear and transparent about how accessible we are, ensuring that Disabled talent can easily find out about our access provision and support without having to ask. We will consistently sense-check that we have created a working culture where everyone feels open, confident and safe to communicate their access needs, bringing in specialist expertise when needed. We will also regularly evaluate and improve our inclusion policies and practices.

4. ADJUST

We deliver what is needed. So, we will consistently and well ahead of time, put in place any reasonable adjustment to ensure the full inclusion as well as the physical and emotional wellbeing of Disabled talent during involvement with us. This includes during recruitment and the onboarding process. We will do so with the support of relevant experts and ensuring we have sufficient funding in place.

5. ADVOCATE

We set high standards for everyone. So, we will celebrate what Disabled talent bring and actively champion them. We will not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour, language or attitudes and we will think long-term to consistently support the progression of Disabled talent into senior roles.

These guidelines are deliberately not detailed tips or technical instructions, as these can change over time and it would be impossible to provide a definitive list of every access requirement, reasonable adjustment or best practice approach in every circumstance for every individual or production. It is also for each organisation to agree and own how they intend to implement these standards. However, some guidance has been provided below about how the guidelines could be put into practice.

SOME GUIDANCE FOR PUTTING THE GUIDELINES INTO PRACTICE

ANTICIPATE

- Think “access first”; be proactively inclusive and accessible, rather than reactively so
- Have dedicated inclusion policies and processes around recruitment, onboarding, budgets & funding and schedules; time and money should never be a reason for Disabled talent to be excluded
- Recognise that accessibility comes in multiple forms; physical spaces, communication methods, equipment & technology and working practices across all parts of the production cycle need to all be fully inclusive to talent with a range of lived experiences of disability
- Deliberately seek out ways to consistently meet, hire, include and progress Disabled talent, including those you have never worked with before
- Work collaboratively and regularly with skilled professionals, specialist organisations and other relevant groups. This will usually mean people with both lived experience of disability and a professional background and/or training in the field of disability inclusion
- Regularly attend training provided by trusted and reputable suppliers with lived experience of disability
- Ensure you understand the legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 which you must operate within and the funding support that is available, including Access to Work.
- Actively demonstrate how you are inclusive, including using language and making references which signal you understand what is involved in working with and fully including Disabled talent

ASK

- Ensure accessible recruitment and casting processes, consistently offering adjustments and support in order for Disabled talent to fully and equally access the process
- Never ask unnecessarily for details about a person’s conditions or impairments and under no circumstances during the hiring process, where the entire focus will be on talent, skills, knowledge and experience.

- Seek to understand the needs, requirements and preferences of all Disabled talent on an individual basis, remembering that conditions often fluctuate and evolve, as do a person's feelings about and understanding of their condition
- Consider using Access/Disability passports, documents which support access and adjustment conversations with line managers and which can travel with Disabled talent across different employers to ensure they are consistently supported across their career
- Regularly check-in with Disabled talent, to ensure that any adjustments and access support discussed and provided are still fit for purpose
- Put disability inclusion on the agenda – literally –, discussing disability inclusion at every stage of the production process, from development to delivery, and at every key meeting and milestone
- Regularly report and track disability inclusion, confidentially and within legal parameters, through industry tools such as Diamond and as part of your own company data collection
- Respect confidentiality, keeping all personal information secure and only sharing it with anyone who needs to know, and with the Disabled talent's knowledge and express permission; no information regarding a person's impairment or condition is ever public property
- Bring in expertise when needed, in particular working with Access Co-ordinators early at the initial stages of commissioning, crewing up and casting to provide advice and support, and to ensure that physical, social, communication and cultural barriers are removed.

ASSESS

- Produce and keep updated an accurate access statement which covers your current physical environments, communication methods, working patterns and practices, and levels of disability knowledge & understanding
- Clearly communicate these on your website and in other corporate material, and refer to it in your job adverts and posts.
- Ask for feedback from Disabled talent regarding their experience, to identify any potential barriers and areas of improvement for the welfare and inclusion of Disabled talent
- In particular, consider ways to adjust schedules and spaces to allow Disabled talent (and everyone else) to perform at their best.

ADJUST

- Ensure all adjustments and access is set up and functioning before Disabled talent begin their role
- Have contingency plans and/or back-up resources in place, should the original access provision fall through

- Get funding secured in advance– whether from Access to Work, from within your budgets or from a third-party fund
- Be open to doing things differently, providing the option for Disabled talent to carry out their role in more than one way, according to what best suits them, and with an emphasis on outcomes rather than processes
- Value flexibility as a tool which not only support the inclusion of Disabled talent, including through remote working, flexible hours and job shares, but also fuels the creative processes
- Appoint a trust point of contact for Disabled talent, known as an Access Contact, who is embedded within the team (in the same ways as Safeguarding Officers are existing team members) and with whom Disabled talent can liaise if they have any questions, concerns or observations
- Work with trained Access Co-ordinators who can assess access needs, oversee the implementation of access plans and adjustment agreements, and ensure best practice is consistently followed
- Adjust for everything, remembering Disabled talent have access needs not only in their day jobs, but in every part of their professional lives - from training courses and employment requirements such as appraisals, to company announcements and wrap parties or networking events

ADVOCATE

- Regularly make your expectations clear for everybody in the team when it comes to disability inclusion
- Always challenge assumptions, ignorance and ableism/disablism
- Work with Disabled talent because they are Disabled, not in spite of their being Disabled, recognising that they bring distinctive skills, experiences and perspectives
- Guarantee equal pay for equal work, ensuring all Disabled talent are paid consistently with their non-disabled peers, and any specific expertise they are asked to provide in their role, in relation to being disabled, is recognised in how they are rewarded
- Consider the long-term career progression of every Disabled person you work with, at whatever level, supporting them in ways they might develop beyond their current role.
- Be an advocate and ally among your peers and networks for the talented, experienced and passionate Disabled people in our industry.

APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

These standards reflect a collective responsibility to radically change the culture and practices of our industry so that we do not continue to "utterly and totally fail" Disabled people. *(Jack Thorne, McTaggart Lecture 2021).*

The 5 As have been drawn up by, and in close consultation with, professionals from across the industry with lived experience and specialist expertise of disability. They are open to being adopted by any broadcaster, streamer, production company or industry body who wishes to do so.

Once these standards have been widely communicated and adopted, we believe that well informed, inclusive practical responses will then follow – and indeed become second nature.

These principles should be followed in conjunction with all relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, other pan-industry commitments such as the Freelance Charter, and each broadcaster's own guidelines for diversity and inclusion, where relevant.

APPENDIX 2: MONITORING

It is our intention to create a system by which we monitor the application and measure the impact of these standards among the organisations who adopt them. After taking advice and carrying out consultation, we intend to publish details on this by the end of 2022.

APPENDIX 3: DEFINITIONS

To paraphrase the UK's Equality Act 2010, someone is Disabled if they have one or more physical or mental conditions that are long-lasting and have a substantial adverse effect on day-to-day activities. This covers a wide and diverse range of conditions, impairments, injuries and illnesses, including those which are not immediately apparent such as mental health conditions, chronic conditions, neurodivergence or learning disabilities or difficulties.

It is for each person to decide if they identify as Disabled under this definition. Many people have conditions or impairments which are not immediately apparent to an outside observer, but definitely entitle them to identify as Disabled. Some have conditions or impairments which, to an outside observer, might meet the criteria and will choose not to identify as Disabled. Others may choose not to disclose or share openly that they are Disabled. Please note, you may still have legal duties towards all these groups under the Equality Act 2010 *(see below).*

In this document we have used the term "Disabled", in which we also include those who are Deaf and/or Neurodivergent. We recognise that some people prefer to use the full term "Deaf, Disabled and/or Neurodivergent", or other terminology – and that terminology changes over time.

We use the term “Disabled talent” to refer to both on-screen presenters, contributors and performers, and off-screen administrative, managerial, production, editorial and craft professionals – whether employees or freelancers.

Access Co-ordinators ensure that access and adjustments are provided so that contributors, presenters, actors and crew members can give their best work. Working from greenlight to post-production, the Access Coordinator is the bridge between production, cast and crew. They collaborate with existing diversity officers and heads of department, deliver best practice, and ensure that productions value hiring Deaf, Disabled and / or Neurodivergent talent.

Access Contacts are a single trusted point of contact within the production team and named on the call sheet with whom Disabled talent and contributors can liaise throughout and after the production process, and who will provide pastoral care. They are senior enough to be able bring about changes themselves, or to authoritatively represent the welfare of disabled contributors and advocate for them to the senior leadership on a production. They should have received some training from an appropriate trainer in disability awareness and inclusion.

APPENDIX 4: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We particularly acknowledge the following sources in drawing up these principles:

- The Contractual Commitments – The Fundamentals, drawn up by Tanya Motie and Liz Carr
- The Freelance Charter from the Coalition for Change, with particular input from Deaf & Disabled People in TV, Triple C DANC and Underlying Health Condition
- The Channel 4 introductory guides to hiring, including and progression talent, co-ordinated by the C4 Creative Diversity team in partnership with 104 Films, Creative Diversity Network, Deaf & Disabled People in TV, FWD-Doc, TripleC DANC, and ThinkBigger.