



# REVIEW OF THE BFI DIVERSITY STANDARDS

A SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS







# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY                       | 3  |
| SCOPE OF THE PROJECT                    | 4  |
| KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS        | 5  |
| 1. FRAMEWORK, LANGUAGE & IT APPLICATION | 7  |
| 2. PROJECT LIFECYCLE                    | 12 |
| 3. ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCIES          | 15 |
| 4. PEOPLE, TECH & DATA                  | 18 |
| 5. EDUCATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT    | 22 |
| 6. NUANCED PERSPECTIVES                 | 26 |
| 7. DRIVING REAL CHANGE                  | 29 |
| FINAL REMARKS                           | 32 |

# Executive Summary

Embracing diversity should be exciting and not a chore. In trying to fulfil the Diversity Standards, applicants should not be more worried about failing; rather, they should see it as an exciting process adding vibrance and value to projects, improving perspective through a wider lens of experience, and fostering creative brilliance that opens doors to greater opportunity across the wider industry.

This report outlines key insights and recommendations from the independent review of the BFI Diversity Standards. New Inclusion, a consultancy specialising in diversity and inclusion, managed this project and gathered data from a wide-ranging pool of stakeholders within the screen industries via qualitative and quantitative methods. The goal is for the BFI to take these insights forward in future revisions of the Diversity Standards. Some headline findings from the survey include:

- **55%** state that the Diversity Standards criteria needed to be updated to a certain degree
- **27%** call for clearer instructions for the actual process of moving through the form online
- **55%** want a specific point of contact within the BFI for guidance on the Standards
- **54%** value access to 'Teach-ins and masterclasses for best practice'
- **49%** are keen to have examples of successful applications
- **22%** would like 'video tutorials' as a helpful resource

Recommendations also focused on making the framework of the Diversity Standards more inclusive to consider nonproduction-based projects; the ability to track and monitor engagement with the Diversity Standards throughout a project's lifecycle; providing centralised and personalised guidance and resources for meeting the Standards; investing in creative ways of educating people on the Diversity Standards; considering nuanced perspectives of underrepresented groups; and overall ensuring the process is far from a tick box exercise, instead taking actions to drive meaningful, sustainable change industry-wide. As attitudes continue to change, there is vast benefit to appreciating the creation of content that is representative of and relatable to broader audiences.

The survey questions for the Diversity Standards were structured to get data and comments on general awareness, applicant experience, ways to improve, adoption, and any recommendations on improving them for the future. Strong themes coming through in both the qualitative and quantitative data call for revised Standards to consider the language used, as well as nuance throughout sector, location, and project size. The BFI has done impactful work around appreciating difference in the Diversity Standards application, such as having separate Standards for the Games Industry, but more needs to be done on the generic language to remove the production emphasis in the way the Diversity Standards are written.

While there is quantitative data around people's perception of the Standards, the qualitative data is rich in recommendations that will support accessibility for a wider pool of more diverse projects. This will in turn increase engagement, create an appreciative understanding, lead to wider adoption and more sustainable change. Ideas and suggestions captured such as a one-stop-shop of resources, upskilling of experts on the Standards, and online conferences are just some of the ideas to bridge the gap between acknowledging the existence of the Diversity Standards and helping people put them into tangible practice.

There is an appetite across the industry for the Diversity Standards to become the status quo, and recognition that the BFI cannot be the sole instigator of change. Through the dissemination of knowledge and resources through training, delegation, and streamlined process of support, a bespoke model of support for the Diversity Standards that engages BFI alongside key change agents within projects can lead to impactful change in representation across screen industries.



# Scope of the Project

The BFI publicly committed to reviewing the Diversity Standards in its Initial Findings report<sup>1</sup> published in January 2020, which highlighted deficits in the Standards' ability to effect change and outlined recommendations to address this. The Standards' credibility comes from their adoption across industry. It was important that the BFI demonstrate a collaborative approach in their development and lead a broad review to improve the current Standards, which will encourage continued uptake and ensure that the Standards are as effective as possible.

The BFI wanted to avail of the services of an external independent consultant to support them in a thorough stakeholder mapping and engagement project to gather feedback for a review of the Standards. The goal of this project is to strengthen the Standards' ability to drive meaningful change, in addition to directly addressing those aspects of inclusion that are underserved by the current version, as set out in the BFI's Initial Findings, as well as the London School of Economics report<sup>2</sup>.

It is hoped to move to a less intricate set of Standards that provides the required nuance, giving them breadth and depth to foster industry understanding and uptake.

There are also goals to ensure that the BFI's processes are streamlined, that partnerships with stakeholders are well managed, and contribute to the improvement of the Diversity Standards.

As part of the review, over 150 stakeholders identified by the BFI were mapped across different levels of interest in and involvement with the Diversity Standards. Categories were defined and individuals were identified within each category.

## Stakeholder Categories:

**BFI (INTERNAL)  
TEAM**

**UNIONS**

**STUDIOS AND  
STREAMERS**

**NATIONAL & REGIONAL  
SCREEN AGENCIES**

**BFI  
PARTNERS**

**INDUSTRY  
BODIES**

**DISTRIBUTORS**

**ACADEMICS**

**BROADCASTERS**

**INTEREST  
GROUPS**

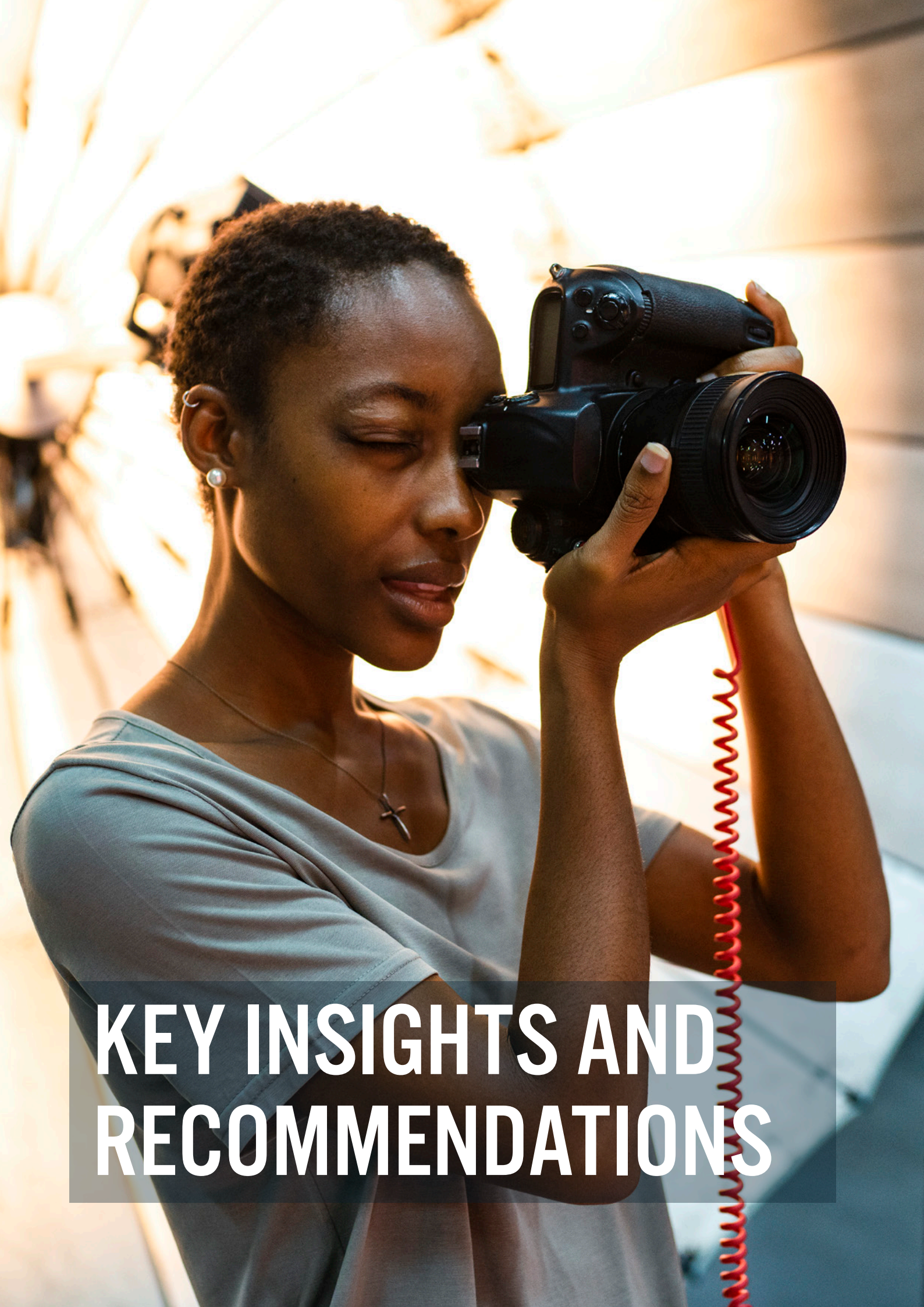
**PRODUCTION  
COMPANIES**

**GAMES  
INDUSTRY**

A hybrid and accessible approach was defined to inclusively gather feedback on the Standards. During April-June 2021, all stakeholders were invited to complete an online survey on the Standards, followed by virtual group meetings to gain more in-depth feedback along with nuanced perspectives. There were 65 respondents to the survey and 66 meeting attendees. Findings from both are played back within this report.

<sup>1</sup> BFI Diversity Standards Initial Findings report, January 2020

<sup>2</sup> Race and Ethnicity in the UK Film Industry: an analysis of the BFI Diversity Standards, July 2020



# KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# Key Insights and Recommendations

There was comprehensive feedback from stakeholders with many suggestions and recommendations for the future of the Diversity Standards. For the purpose of this report, they have been grouped into seven main themes with relevant sub-themes. These are as follows:

## 1. Framework, Language & IT Application

- 1.1 General Update Considerations
- 1.2 Language Update Considerations
- 1.3 Achievability and Impact
- 1.4 Sections of the Standards to be Made Compulsory

## 2. Project Lifecycle

- 2.1 Experience of Application Process
- 2.2 Tracking Progress of a Project
- 2.3 Maintaining Momentum
- 2.4 Efforts & Nuance
- 2.5 Retrofitting

## 3. Organisational Efficiencies

- 3.1 Data Collection and Utilisation
- 3.2 Perspectives on External Involvement
- 3.3 Representation During the Review Process
- 3.4 Certification Team being Separate

## 4. People, Tech & Data

- 4.1 People & Roles
- 4.2 Portal & Platforms
- 4.3 Reaching Diverse Talent
- 4.4 Learning Solutions

## 5. Education, Training & Development

- 5.1 Upskilling to Scale
- 5.2 Live Events
- 5.3 Case Studies
- 5.4 Video Content
- 5.5 Educational Focus
- 5.6 Mentorship/Sponsorship/Shadowing

## 6. Nuanced Perspectives

- 6.1 Nations and Regions
- 6.2 Disability
- 6.3 Race and Ethnicity
- 6.4 Duty of Care Guidelines
- 6.5 Remuneration

## 7. Driving Real Change

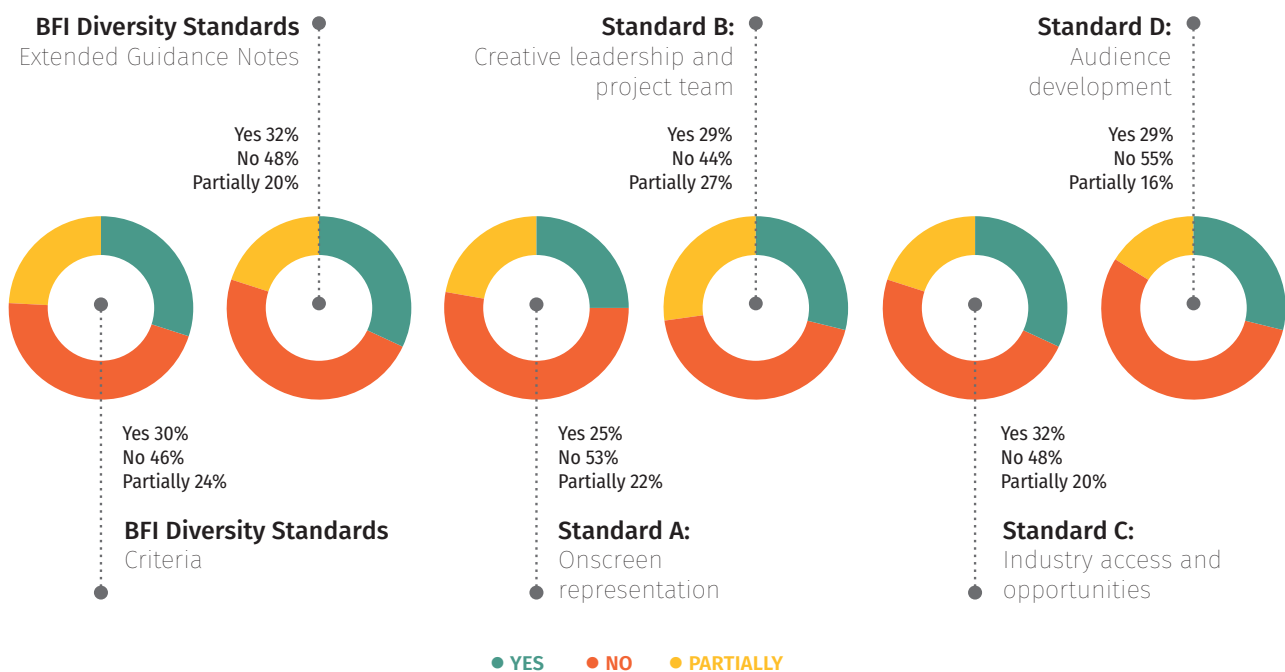
- 7.1 Senior Leaders, Gate Keepers and Decision Makers
- 7.2 Meaningful and Sustainable Behavioural Change

# 1. Framework, Language & IT Application

## 1.1 General Update Considerations

Survey respondents expressed mixed views on the need for updating the Standards. Respondents were asked **‘Do you feel the BFI Diversity Standards need updating?’**, with the majority indicating ‘No’ across all areas. However, when taking ‘Yes’ and ‘Partially’ responses together, a need for attention is noted. Standard B showed the largest distribution of scores, with 56% indicating they either agreed or partially agreed that updates are needed, and Standard C seeing the highest number of ‘Yes’ responses, and ‘Yes’ and ‘Partially’ responses equating to 52%.

Furthermore, with regards to the general updating of the Standards, several comments highlight the need for monitoring of the Standards, with a need for ongoing review and updates to maintain relevance and address changing conditions. This applies to both language and general applicability.



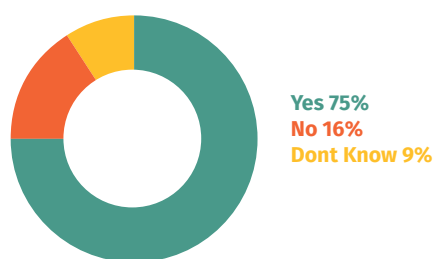
Source: Survey - Do you feel the BFI Diversity Standards need updating?

## 1.2 Language Update Considerations

### Simplify and Clarify Language

It's noted that the Diversity Standards appear to be more complex than they are. Due to the excessive amounts of information, people may feel overwhelmed to engage with the details of the Standards. It would be useful to make things more succinct and accessible.

However, when asked **'In your opinion are the BFI Diversity Standards clear and easy to understand?'** 75% of the survey respondents agree that the Diversity Standards are clear and understandable, with 16% answering 'No' and 9% indicating that they 'Don't Know'.



Within the meetings, the need for clarity around the subjective language in the Diversity Standards was also raised. For example, it should be specified what is meant by 'allowances will be made' for smaller productions and what accounts for 'best efforts' when it comes to meeting the criteria. A non-exhaustive list with examples of such allowances would be welcome, as well as clarity on what kinds of best efforts would be recognised. This is further reflected in the survey data where there was also a call for definitions and data around what is meant by 'significant number of contributors' within the Standards. Furthermore, a need to make the Standards shorter and easier to understand and the need for defining 'best efforts' came through in the survey data.

As a final example, Standard D mentions targeting 'under-served audiences'. It would be helpful to have a list of which groups qualify as under-served. This would make it easier for creators to identify talent as well as have more focused recruitment efforts. While the Standards list and draw attention to the Equality Act 2010's protected characteristics, there is a demand for data reference on which specific groups within those categories require focused attention.

For example, when stating 'Age' as a criterion to meet, it would be helpful to understand – using the backing of data – which exact age groups are 'under-served' in order to consciously target them better.

### Production Bias

It was widely pointed out that the language of the Diversity Standards is heavily production-focused and isn't applicable to non-production related areas of the industry such as exhibition and distribution; they need to be inclusive and tailored to all aspects of the screen industries. Furthermore, where it concerns on-screen representation, there is a bias towards scripted productions, and more specifically of the drama genre.

While there are separate Standards for the Games Industry<sup>3</sup>, Standard A does not explicitly account for games without traditional 'characters', e.g., puzzles and/or other genres without any 'lead or playable characters' in them. If Standard A is not applicable to a specific game, then the creators could focus on the other three Standards since there is no compulsory requirement to meet all four of them.

In the survey feedback, respondents noted that there was a feeling of bias towards the standards application in the production sector, and how they may be applied in other sectors such as television, video games and exhibition. It is noted that there is need for focus on both producers and the editorial support to be more mindful of their own biases and the practicality of their application

### Set the Standards to be Anti-Racist

During a few of the meetings, it was highlighted that the language of the Standards must reflect that anti-racism is a vital priority for the sector and that the Diversity Standards has the unique ability to educate people both as participants and users of it. The Standards can explicitly acknowledge the different kinds of oppression, e.g., sexism, racism, ageism, classism, and ableism etc., and directly speak to the experiences of minoritised and marginalised talent.



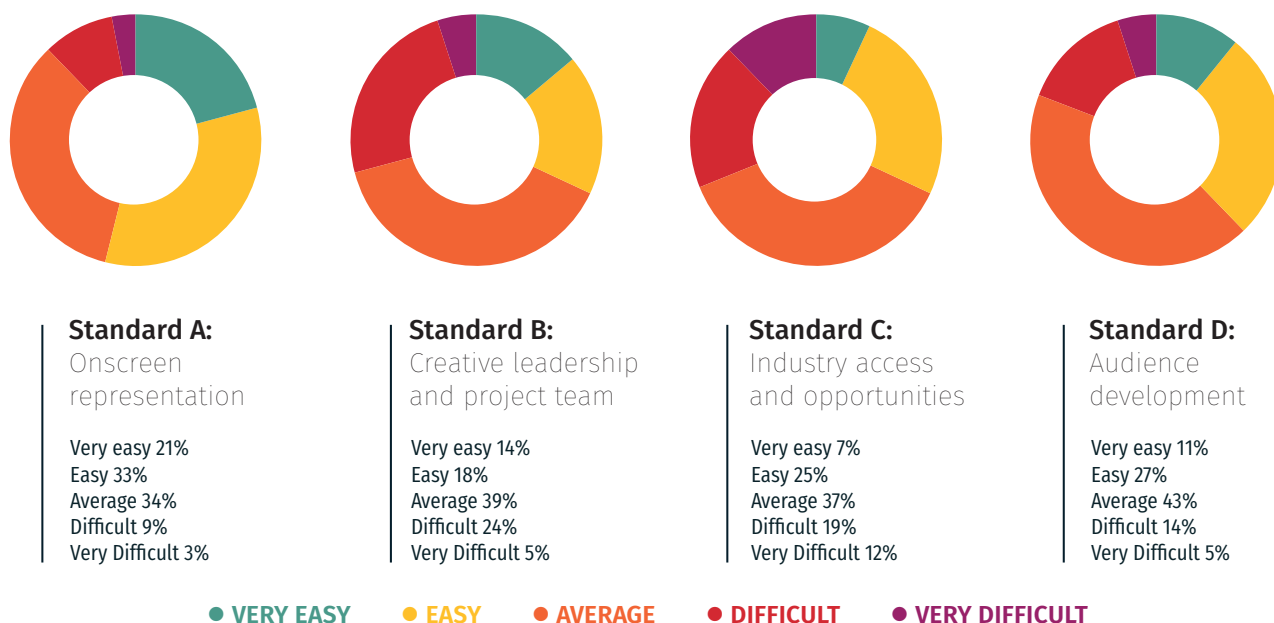
### 1.3 Achievability and Impact

When asked ***'In your opinion, how achievable are the BFI Diversity Standards to meet for applicants?'***, survey results indicate an average achievability score, ranging from 34% for Standard A to 43% for Standard D. Standard A (Onscreen Representation) is indicated to be the easiest of the Standards to meet, with responses of 'average', 'easy' and 'very easy' equating to 88%. Regarding Standard B (Creative Leadership), 29% of respondents rated achievability as 'Difficult' or 'Very Difficult'.

A similar trend is seen with Standard C (Industry Access and Opportunities) as 31% indicated a negative

experience. Standard D (Audience Development) is seen to have a more positive perception in terms of achievability, with 38% indicating the experience to be either 'Easy' or 'Very Easy'.

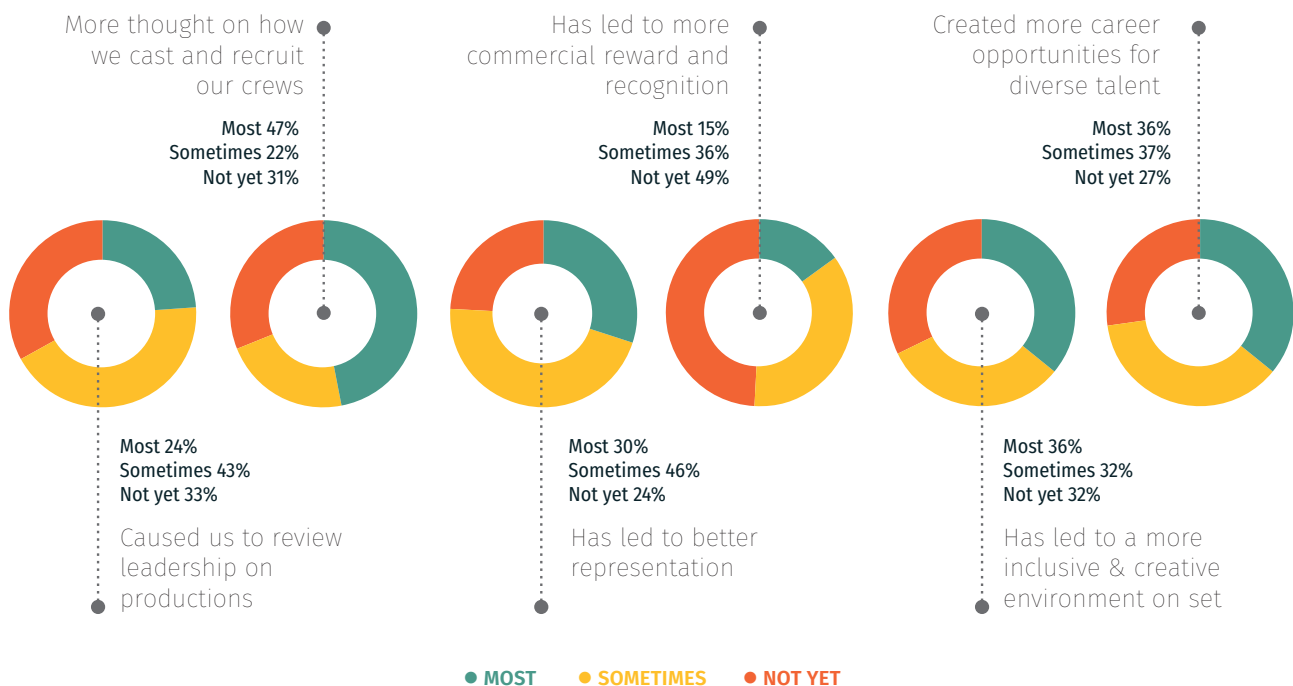
Write-in responses from survey highlighted the desire to understand how much value the Diversity Standards have when it comes to funding and supporting industry growth. This again supports the need to appreciate differences across sectors, and the appreciation of nuance within projects, locations, and sectors.



**Source:** Survey - *In your opinion, how achievable are the BFI Diversity Standards to meet for applicants?*

When asked ***‘As someone who has adopted and is using the BFI Diversity Standards, how would you rate the following in terms of its effectiveness and impact?’***, the most positive response was the ‘recruitment of cast and crews’ with 47% agreeing this to be happening ‘Most of the time’. Having ‘led to more commercial reward and recognition’ was the lowest rated statement for

effectiveness and impact with 49% choosing ‘Not Yet’ as a response. 43% said it ‘Caused them to review Leadership on Productions’, with one-third indicating this was yet to happen in their experience. 46% of respondents agreed that the Standards ‘led to better representation’, and a further 30% suggesting this to happen most of the time.



**Source: Survey - As someone who has adopted and is using the BFI Diversity Standards, how would you rate the following in terms of its effectiveness and impact?**

*“The Standards work well and has generated some really interesting topics and conversations, creating meaningful thinking around diversity for all of us.”*

**MEETING ATTENDEE COMMENT.**

The largest distribution of responses was seen when exploring the ‘inclusivity and creativity environment on set’, with a slight majority indicating this to be case most of the time at 36%, and just shy of one-third of respondents agreeing with ‘Sometimes’ and ‘Not Yet’ at 32% each. A slightly more positive perception was shared with regards to career opportunities for diverse talent, with 36% seeing this impact ‘Most of the time’ but as has been seen in other questions and throughout meetings with stakeholders, career development is needed as a focus within the industry.



## 1.4 Sections of the Standards to be Compulsory

The Diversity Standards should encompass all forms of underrepresented groups, across all levels and positions. It has been observed that people tend to prioritise some criteria over others to meet the Standards when in fact more intersectional diversity needs to be the focus. It was noted that best-in-class performance would be creators meeting all four of the Standards; currently, applicants need to meet the criteria of at least two of the four standards.

When asked to ***‘Select parts of the BFI Diversity Standards you would like to see made compulsory and rank your choices according to priority’***, Standard B1 relating to Department Heads was the highest ranked by a sizable margin, with the rank distribution data confirming all respondents having placed this as the top position. This was strongly emphasised upon in both meetings as well as survey comments from a broad stakeholder base.

Standards B2, C1, and A6 relating to other key roles, paid employment and casting respectively were ranked similarly, with Standard D1 relating to disability access completing the top five. Standard D4 was ranked lowest, with ranking distribution confirming this to be of the lowest priority for being made compulsory.

According to some stakeholders, people are unlikely to engage with the Diversity Standards meaningfully unless they are compelled to meet the criteria or are motivated to do so. Tax relief is one such motivator that was raised in both the survey responses and the virtual meeting discussions.

*“Awards and Tax Relief should only be accessible with diverse representation behind the camera.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

While there are strongly held views among certain respondents that the Standards should be made compulsory to avail tax relief, it should be clarified that the UK creative review tax relief rules and mechanisms are purely administered by the BFI on behalf of UK Government and are not determined by the BFI.

| Rank | Section                                 | Score |
|------|---|-------|
| 1    | Standard B1 (Dept. heads)               | 571   |
| 2    | Standard B2 (Other key roles)           | 446   |
| 3    | Standard C1 (Paid employment)           | 445   |
| 4    | Standard A6 (Casting)                   | 427   |
| 5    | Standard D1 (Disability access)         | 414   |
| 6    | Standard A1 (Lead roles)                | 390   |
| 7    | Standard A2 (Other roles)               | 355   |
| 8    | Standard C3 (Career progression)        | 349   |
| 9    | Standard C2 (Training & Development)    | 319   |
| 10   | Standard B3 (Other staff)               | 316   |
| 11   | Standard B4 (Regional employment)       | 292   |
| 12   | Standard A4 (Other storyline)           | 268   |
| 13   | Standard C5 (Mentoring)                 | 247   |
| 14   | Standard A3 (Main storyline)            | 239   |
| 15   | Standard C4 (First job)                 | 221   |
| 16   | Standard D2 (Under-served audiences)    | 207   |
| 17   | Standard D3 (Outside of central London) | 163   |
| 18   | Standard D5 (Partnerships)              | 152   |
| 19   | Standard A5 (Location)                  | 127   |
| 20   | Standard D4 (Promotional & Marketing)   | 116   |

**Source: Survey - Select parts of the BFI Diversity Standards you would like to see made compulsory and rank your choices according to priority.**



# PROJECT LIFECYCLE

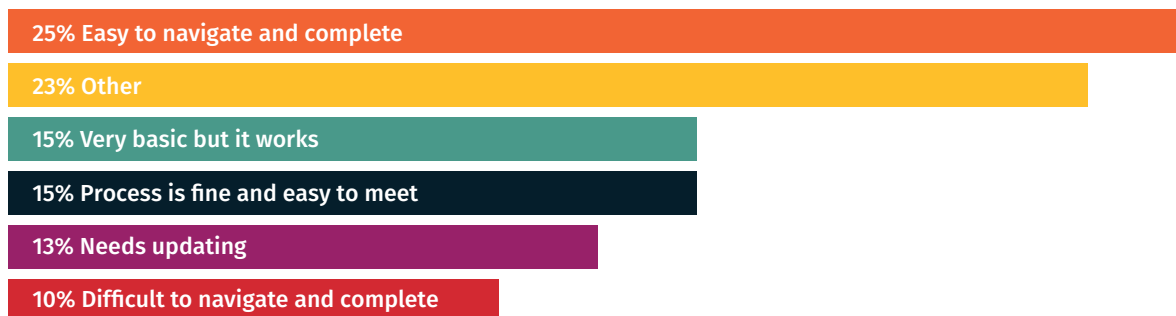


## 2. Project Lifecycle

### 2.1 Experience of Application Process

When asked ***'What is your experience of completing the BFI Diversity Standards application?'***, 25% agreed the experience to be 'Easy to navigate and complete'. A further 15% agreed the process itself was fine, and another 15% citing the experience as basic but fit for purpose. With regards to a less positive experience, 23% indicated the application needs an update or considered it difficult in both navigation and criteria for completion.

Survey respondents indicated while the process was easy to navigate, diversity data required for their cast and crew can be difficult to collect. Some stated that they found the questions difficult to apply to a small company. 27% of responses call for clearer instructions on the online application form.



**Source:** Survey - *What is your experience of completing the BFI Diversity Standards application?*

### 2.2 Tracking Progress of a Project

Even though the production team looks at unit lists and what's happening on set, including counting the number of underrepresented people, there appears to be a lack of clarity on following up with a project to ensure that they are meeting the Diversity Standards in a holistic way.

It is noted that people who apply for the Film Fund are required to engage with the Diversity Standards at an early stage before pre-production, where they communicate how they intend to meet the criteria over the duration of their projects. However, further work needs to be done to monitor and evidence how an applicant follows through on those intentions during the course of their project.

While staff from the Film Fund support producers with completing the application forms, there needs to be a logical point at which the Certification team comes in to carry out checks. It was noted across more than half the meetings held that there is an appetite for the BFI to build multiple checkpoints during the lifecycle of a project to ensure it is meeting the Diversity Standards through conscious decisions creating change in the industry at

large, and not as a tick-box exercise. It monitors whether or not the initial intentions of meeting the Standards declared upon application are genuinely enforced and delivered throughout the course of project, and not deprioritised once funding and/or support is received.

### 2.3 Maintaining Momentum

It is noted that while there is a lot of excitement around the Diversity Standards at first, it is hard to maintain that momentum beyond the application/initial stages. This is especially magnified when productions are being managed from overseas.

#### Lack of Motivation in Games

It was highlighted that maintaining momentum within the games industry is more difficult. Those in Film and TV have the incentive of getting funding in exchange of meeting the Standards; however, this is not the case with games. Due to the lack of support mechanisms in place to support the journey of people within games, there is less motivation to follow through.

## Repeat Applicants

The BFI receives quite a few repeat applicants; however, the view of various stakeholders is that they seem to have become complacent with their applications by knowing what would help them meet the Diversity Standards, for example achieving a 50-50 gender balance with ease (also noted as the highest stat in the BFI's Initial Findings report across Standards A, B & C). It is suggested that the BFI has some sort of mechanism or process to follow up with those applicants to see what lessons they have learnt and how they can be encouraged to push forward for better progress, be creative with their approaches, and learn from past applications.

## 2.4 Efforts & Nuance

It was suggested to find ways to incentivise progressive organisations making genuine efforts towards continual improvement. Such recognition may encourage other organisations to follow suit. Some productions may have good intentions to meet the Diversity Standards but are constrained by issues beyond their control, e.g., a lack of diversity in the existing local talent pool. In such cases, there is a wish to recognise the efforts taken by a team in trying to meet the criteria by exhausting all available options.

There is a desire to keep the Diversity Standards as flexible as possible to attract more engagement and not have rigidity in its framework. Maintaining flexibility and making space for additional nuance would motivate people to be creative in the ways that they could meet the criteria while not perceiving it to be a chore that needs completing.

## 2.5 Retrofitting

It was observed that unless Film and TV productions have gone through the BFI funding process, they may not have proper awareness of the Diversity Standards until much later, for instance when wanting to qualify for awards criteria. Due to being introduced to the Standards very late in the production lifecycle, applicants have not managed to verify the diversity of their teams and/or have not provided the kind of diversity training stated in the Standards. This point came across in the meetings as well as in survey responses.

*“The BFI should work with government to recruit new members to the standards matter of ongoing good practice, rather than adoption of the standards being driven by award eligibility.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

Despite the BFI's efforts to advocate for early adoption and take up of the Diversity Standards process, it was noted that applicants still try to retrofit the criteria in a way that is not meaningful nor with the right intent.





# ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

### 3. Organisational Efficiencies

With regards to the overall process, it has been noted that there would be less back and forth between the BFI team and its partners if all the information around the Diversity Standards were centralised in one place.

It was also mentioned to have a future set of Standards that caters to short films and documentaries, providing the opportunity to submit a condensed writeup of text explaining how they intend to meet the criteria. This would make it less onerous for smaller projects. It should be pointed out that these specific Standards do exist, and that greater awareness-building of their existence is required.

#### 3.1 Data Collection and Utilisation

Stakeholders mentioned that the BFI Diversity Standards would benefit from having a more data-driven analysis to build upon BFI's capacity to identify and address trends and emerging themes from the data collected. The Standards should ideally be an ever-evolving concept that continues to grow and respond to data trends. There needs to be work done on having better conversations around Standards data and the readiness to accept any difficult findings as a result. It was also suggested that diversity data be collected at different phases of a project as the diversity demographics on a project may be very different upon completion compared to when it started or was proposed.

It is recommended that the BFI engage external expertise when it comes to Standards data collection and evaluation. Such experts would be qualified and experienced to look at inclusion data in order to go beyond just collection and reporting in an objective and impartial way. As an example of a usable resource, courtesy of UKIE there is a lot of data on the games industry around the makeup of the industry. The Diversity Standards could align itself to reflect that data. It could shine a light on which areas or groups of the industry need attention.

It has been flagged that the Diversity Standards could improve how it accounts for intersectionality. For instance, the Standards have criteria across different diversity dimensions but does not acknowledge nor capture the interconnected and overlapping nature of intersectional representation for different groups.

*“Intersectionality needs to be taken into account. When gender and race are separate, it is easier to pass with a white woman than it is a person of colour. Women of colour are so absent from the industry they ought to be able to count for both gender and race which the standards do not currently allow. “*

#### SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT

Furthermore, with regards to data, it was proposed that films should not be offered certification and/or qualifications for tax relief without comprehensive diversity data submitted. This form of evaluation would ensure accountability on diversity from the screen industries more broadly.

#### 3.2 Perspectives on External Involvement

The general stance on employing an external review board is that it would only add more bureaucracy and may hamper project timescales causing a delay in how quickly an application can be processed. However, there is a positive view for a broader team of people, potentially comprised of various industry stakeholders, to look at a selection of projects – especially ones that are tricky to assess. Additionally, it would be useful to engage with industry stakeholders on a more regular basis with the Diversity Standards to support the evolution and wider adoption of the Standards.

### 3.3 Representation During the Review Process

It has been raised that a panel of decision makers evaluating the applications submitted for BFI funding should ideally be representative and reflective of the underrepresented groups it seeks to champion. More diverse panels would be better positioned to authenticate or validate the submissions that centre people with different lived experiences.

While the BFI assesses applications using a case-by-case method and involves external feedback wherever required on an ad-hoc basis, there is a desire to have access to additional resources and links to organisations that can provide professional guidance on 'getting representation right'.

### 3.4 Certification Team Being Separate

It is reported that having the Certification team handle the Diversity Standards separately has worked well for them.

The distinction has sparked meaningful dialogue around inclusion and having that consistent source of professional 'second opinion' ensures diversity of thought across the BFI. Due to the high turnaround of projects and applications, combined with the lack of resources, the Certification team need support for a faster turnaround with processing applications. Additionally, despite having an automated system, should there be a delay from the Certification team due to any reason, the Film Fund team may not always be notified/updated in real-time, causing a gap in communication. There was unanimous support for having more people and resources to be allocated to the Certification team.





**PEOPLE, TECH & DATA**

## 4. People, Tech & Data

### 4.1 People & Roles

#### Standards Marshal/Advisor and Accessibility Officer

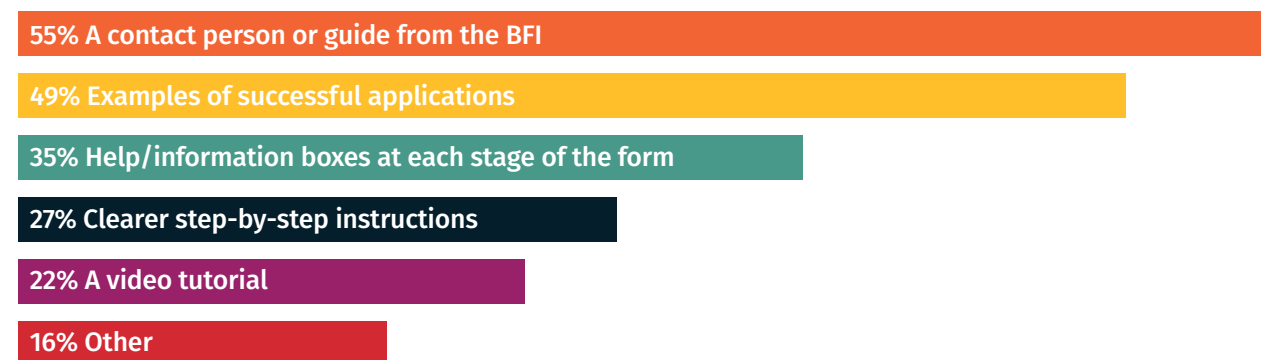
Suggestions were to have more robust insights into the groundwork of various projects. Stakeholders expressed that the BFI could mandate having a Diversity Standards 'marshal', 'steward', or 'advisor' to be a monitor on set/site. This could potentially be an aspect introduced in the criteria to further ensure that all projects are committed to creating diverse and inclusive workspaces. Stakeholders via both the survey and the virtual meetings stressed the need for accessibility to be considered as a core piece with the Standards review. The BFI could either provide an in-house accessibility officer or externally qualified advisors to liaise with projects and assist with issues concerning accessibility. Having a dedicated person for this would take the pressure off both parties to take charge and offer professional support.

#### Prioritised Direction from the BFI

As an industry body, the BFI is suggested to strategically identify key focus areas that senior leaders need to pay attention to while trying to meet the Diversity Standards. By prioritising what leaders need to focus on, they are provided with more direction and clarity as to what needs to be achieved.

Examples of such direction could include:

- Guidance on reaching a diverse workforce to access talent.
- A sense check of what is required from the Diversity Standards for better planning. This could be in the form of simplified materials to read or an interactive webpage with drop-down menus providing specific information.



**Source: Survey - What would make the BFI Diversity Standards application process simpler?**

#### Human Consultation and Dedicated Contact at the BFI

In conversations, there was a strong emphasis to have a dedicated point of contact at the BFI to assist with the Diversity Standards. Additionally, the survey asked what would make the process simpler, the top chosen response was a specific point of contact within the BFI for

guidance with 55% of respondents choosing this option. A more hands-on consultation service and the ability for applicants to speak to someone could help applicants towards understanding how best to meet the Standards in a holistic fashion, leading to meaningful commitment from all interested parties.

## 4.2 Portal & Platforms

There's appetite to see the online application process be a lot more streamlined, accessible, and tech savvy. The BFI are encouraged to create an online portal that would provide applicants with guidance on navigating the Diversity Standards. A suggestion from the discussion groups around the portal was that depending on the type of applicant and nature of their project, the portal would automatically bring up the relevant set of information from the Standards, accompanied by guidance and case study examples. Contingent on the size and scale of the project, the portal would curate specific guidelines so that applicants aren't overwhelmed by irrelevant information that they would generally need to wade through, and only respond according to their requirements.

When asked **'What would make the BFI Diversity Standards application process simpler?'** 35% said that 'Information at each stage of the online form' would be of use. Furthermore, survey respondents suggested having multiple users be able to log in simultaneously to enable collaboration on their application form.

## 4.3 Reaching Diverse Talent

Stakeholders expressed frustration towards their lack of access to diverse talent and said that they can feel ill-equipped with the necessary tools or training to source and hire more efficiently. They would find it extremely helpful if through the BFI or third-party organisations, they could be directed to a public database or industry resource of self-identified talent in the industry to reach talent more efficiently and quickly. This would also evade the notion of a 'lack of diverse talent' which is an issue widely cited in the industry. 64% of survey respondents overwhelmingly voted for a database of such talent to be created to help Diversity Standards users meet requirements. While this was a very strong point coming through from both survey and meetings held, there was an acknowledgement too that while a database would be an ideal resource for the identification of talent, the reality is not that simple. There is difficulty in both

the disclosure of some unique diverse identifiers, as well as gathering this data from members throughout a project lifecycle. There can be stigma and discrimination experienced based on some characteristics, and talent may not feel comfortable in making aspects of their identity publicly known. For those gathering the data, there can be difficulty in the simple practicality of the process, as highlighted in some of the write-in responses in the survey.

*"As a production company it's hard to look back at shows we made up to a year ago and try and work out where the diversity sits with the crew. We don't hold data as we aren't allowed to store special characteristics data."*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

Finally, it was suggested to encourage and incentivise jobs to be widely advertised through mainstream platforms and niche interest groups to ensure the opportunities are reaching a wider pool of people. Such talent databases can include information on initiatives such as Into Games, Limit Break, and Code Coven to promote industry access and opportunities to assist people with getting into the games industry.



## 4.4 Learning Solutions

### One-Stop Shop of Resources

As per the suggestions within the survey responses, there is a call for toolkits and resources. There is an overwhelming desire for the BFI to create a one-stop shop of resources related to the Diversity Standards via an online webpage or portal. Given that there is a demand for producers to make greater inroads with diversity & inclusion and learn more, a centralised platform/space like this would be advantageous to them. This comprehensive one-stop shop for the Standards could include:

- **Directory:** A database of various diverse talent groups, networks, and organisations.
- **Training Suite:** A training suite for each individual Standard; this could be video tutorials, online seminars, quizzes, bite-sized educational explainers on different aspects of diversity and inclusion. They could be part of the Diversity Standards and/or Certification process.
- **Roadmap:** A flow chart or roadmap that could describe the different pathways a production could adopt to reach diverse audiences through outreach strategies.
- **Niche Areas of Interest** to consider and have more information on, such as festivals, exhibitions, or audiences.

An additional point was made on Job Adverts, though not for BFI's role but for the wider industry: Adverts should be written more inclusively and made more widely accessible for a diverse pool of talent with supportive policies on flexible work hours, parental/childcare, etc. This would support the crewing up process, attract a broader applicant base and the use of filters, keywords and/or hashtags can be beneficial.

Note: It is acknowledged that while currently there is a page of resources on the BFI's website, it has minimal information or historical links, which need validating and updating.

### Gamify it!

From a User Experience (UX) point of view, it would help to have a UX expert evaluate the online process to make it more digestible for the common person to read it. A suggestion was to gamify the process, for example, a quiz that gives applicants feedback on how they're performing. Digital tokens in the form of graphics or animations could be assigned as rewards and then shared on social media to generate engagement and wider recognition. This gamification could encourage others to also engage with the Diversity Standards.



# EDUCATION, TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

## 5. Education, Training & Development

A consistent theme throughout the data is the need to recognise the duty of the Standards to improve opportunity, representation and good hiring practices of diverse talent to the industry, but also to support their continued career growth. Applicants tend to be very engaged with the Diversity Standards as they want to get it right; therefore, there is a wide appetite for various kinds of specific training on the Standards at different points/stages in a screen industry career development cycle. The needs to be more focus on growing the talent pipeline in terms of development and training.

*“A greater focus on growing the talent pipeline to create a broader pool of diverse talent from which to hire onto productions is needed. BFI should also include an option for productions to support third party training organisations where their project may not be in a position to create its own program.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

64% A database of companies that can help with this work

62% More accessible and succinct case studies on the BFI website

54% Teach-ins and masterclasses for best practice

18% Other

**Source: Survey - What practical resources would help users to meet the BFI Diversity Standards?**

### 5.1 Upskilling to Scale Training

When asked **‘What practical resources would help users to meet the BFI Diversity Standards’**, 54% of survey respondents selected **‘Teach-ins and masterclasses for best practice’**. This was also expressed strongly in the virtual meetings, along with a model to have others trained up as experts on the Standards, hence, providing the opportunity for an outsourcing of Standards advice, teaching and support.

An accredited and certified course on the Diversity Standards for individuals to become trainers for future upskilling of others is one way of cascading knowledge in a Train-the-Trainer type format. This would spread knowledge about the Standards more widely while ensuring quality training being more accessible. This would improve the availability of programmes to teach the Diversity Standards to interested parties and at what points to introduce them. This would tie-in nicely with having Diversity Standards marshals and advisors available.

### 5.2 Live Events

#### Online Conferences

This could be series of regularly scheduled conferences with a range of topics including dedicated sessions on the different Standards A to D. These sessions could be webinars, panels, teach-ins, and/or activity-based workshops. Such conferences could be hosted in partnership with different organisations such as Screen Skills and/or screen related companies. Having such conferences online would ensure a wide reach and address issues around accessibility. Sessions could be recorded and hosted on the BFI’s website for anyone to access on demand. The BFI could host talks and/or panels with successful creators to share knowledge through their experiences with the Diversity Standards. Overall, this could be a great way to engage with people interested in the Diversity Standards and offer immediate interactive guidance around it.



## Exhibition and Distribution - Specific Training

Due to the lack of Diversity Standards training related to exhibition and distribution, especially for smaller companies and/or low budget projects, the BFI could champion training programmes. The training would ideally include guidance on areas mentioned by stakeholders, such as: work experience, internships, and equitable pay.

## 5.3 Case Studies

Having case studies to learn from was by far the most popular request in the discussions. These case studies would ideally include a few examples successful as well as unsuccessful projects. Suggestions were to look at having this information following lessons learnt exercises and be designed to improve an applicant's understanding and experience with the process.

49% of survey respondents identified having information regarding successful applicants useful towards making an application process simpler (Data Reference: As shown in Graph 3.1). Such case studies could cover categories including: genre, style, budget, scale, and territory, spanning a wide variety of projects. It would be valuable for people to understand how the Diversity Standards have helped artists do their jobs, give back to the industry, and drive change.

It was noted that some projects may be smaller, and for privacy reasons, may require anonymity as the case studies would point towards the diversity make-up of the creators, cast, crew, and where relevant, other parties involved.

Similarly, while there is a desire to learn from successful case studies and stories, it was recommended to also learn through failure, i.e., those projects not successful in meeting the Diversity Standards criteria due various reasons. Having data around what sorts of projects did not get funded would provide a unique set of insights into what not to do during a project's lifecycle as well as being mindful of the types of failures that may occur at specific points in the process.

## 5.4 Video Content

The survey asked what would make the application process simpler and 22% of the respondents selected 'video tutorials' as a helpful resource. However, in almost all the meetings, there was a resounding call for short videos and video tutorials, especially as the way forward for the Diversity Standards to evolve and get greater traction, interest and build awareness. Since all the training and guidance materials are being offered in print and/or written format only, instructional videos around the Diversity Standards would be a useful resource to produce and host on the BFI's website. Such videos would be bite-sized instructional videos that address each of the criteria while providing case studies of successful applications. Content would need to be responsive, accessible on various devices, and appropriately captioned and sign-language interpreted. Videos showcasing best practice could be produced in collaboration with the BFI's partners. Though, stakeholders suggested that these videos are best coordinated and led by the BFI.

## 5.5 Educational Focus

There is value in introducing the BFI Diversity Standards earlier on in education systems to equip future industry talent with the knowledge well before they go into working in the screen industries. They would be familiar with the workings of the Standards, appreciate its purpose, and be better positioned to meet its requirements. In fact, there is a demand for such training as students want to learn more and discover recommendations and new ideas. It would also be useful for future applicants to see what best practice looks like, to know how they can move the dial, and to understand what opportunities are available to them. It was suggested that more productions could get involved with this early engagement by having members of their cast and crew go to educational institutions to demonstrate career opportunities and pathways for screen industries to encourage interest and personal development. While outside the scope of the BFI Diversity Standards, this point holds immense merit in how the industry can step up and support education, awareness and behavioural change.

*“The issue of supply is always a key consideration - it’s one thing imposing or agreeing standards but in parts of the country it could be extremely difficult to meet those criteria as the workforce, with the necessary level of experience, is just not available. Therefore, if you want to see change, you also have to invest in developing/training to ensure there’s a steady flow of talent entering the industry.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

In the games industry, smaller companies may be unable to invest in training (e.g. around neurodiversity), and rely on charities (like Autistica) to support them. All forms of training need to be accessible to people of different socio-economic backgrounds. Training programmes that are cost-prohibitive cause exclusion and an unlevel playing field. Where possible, students could be provided with the opportunity to evaluate a project using a journalistic lens to understand how it would have met the Diversity Standards. This would bring the training to life by focusing on real-life examples and in some ways, a live case study approach.

## 5.6 Mentorship, Sponsorship & Shadowing

The Diversity Standards are encouraged to include considerations for mentorship, sponsorship and/or work shadowing for emerging talent from underrepresented groups who are not necessarily able to access job opportunities or share work experiences in the industry. The sharing would include the kinds of projects they’ve worked on, the avenues taken, the barriers faced, the best ways to navigate, and retention of talent. An effective way to learn would be from the experiences of other artists from underrepresented sectors and/or communities who’d be willing to share their journeys and open doors to improve career pathways as sponsors.

Work shadowing involves spending time and observing someone else perform their role. It promotes understanding and gaining experience through on-the-job learning. It was suggested that work-shadowing become a part of the Standards criteria, as it differs from mentorship and can bring about meaningful opportunity for diverse talent to learn by association and gain practical experience.

*“Standard C being compulsory while B isn’t, mirrors the focus towards getting people into the industry at an entry level without a robust strategy on how to develop and retain them. Having interns/early career employees from underrepresented groups is an important first step but doesn’t necessarily translate into sustainable careers.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT**

The games industry would like to see more sponsorship of emerging talent; for them to be promoted, helped move forward, and paid to develop their skills. This could also prevent attrition of key talent. Member of dominant groups, especially in senior positions, can use their privilege to champion young talent, share skills, and sponsor diverse talent.



# NUANCED PERSPECTIVES



## 6. Nuanced Perspectives

It is vital to build on the required nuances that would give the Diversity Standards the breadth and depth to work across all aspects of the broader screen and encourage a change in attitudes to foster understanding and uptake in the industry.

### 6.1 Nations and Regions

#### Demographic Data and Areas to Target

It has been pointed out that the Diversity Standards have a London-centric lens and that it does not fully consider participation outside of London and the South East of England with as much significance throughout the criteria. This is also reflective of the wider industry wherein job opportunities are highly concentrated in areas such as London and the South East. When it comes to ensuring substantial representation across the nations and regions, there have been requests for nuanced diversity data relevant to those local populations to gauge what kind of a demographic is being worked with.

*“There’s no resistance at all to adopting them, it’s just understanding the practical roll out in parts of the UK that are less ‘diverse’ and making sure we are not creating additional barriers to growth in the regions which cannot be met because of the demographic.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

There needs to be a broader lens applied to diversity and a better cognizance of various categories of marginalisation across different regions. This requires going beyond the default mindset of just thinking about race and ethnicity, by bringing in diversity of thought to include the nuances of disability, socio-economic status, etc. within these considerations. Once that data is available, it would be easier to be ambitious and strategically target those areas that need attention. The Diversity Standards need to emphasise the need for projects to use local talent to promote regional representation.

#### Socio-Economic Differences in Regions

An example would be the ethnic makeup and socio-economic backgrounds of the Scottish population. In

order to effect the greatest possible change, the diversity targets outlined in the Standards need to respond to the challenges facing the local population in terms of representation. Dedicated guidance should be provided.

*“It’s too easy to meet certain categories by touting that your team / on-screen has 50/50 gender split. There should be more of a focus on socio-economic opportunities and regionality (outside London and SE).”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

Currently, Scottish productions use subjective language like ‘significant representation’ rather than rigid percentages due to their local population having disproportionately low numbers of ethnically diverse people. The Diversity Standards need to acknowledge and make stronger consideration for socio-economic differences across various regions.

### 6.2 Disability

There needs to be a cultural shift in how disability is seen throughout creative industries, and the Diversity Standards have a pivotal role in achieving this. Firstly, accessibility should not be an afterthought, and should instead be a pivotal piece from the outset of planning. The Standards could provide concrete examples around the spectrum of disability and highlight the value of responsible and knowledgeable decision making regarding disability inclusion. An example of this universal accessibility approach relates to working remotely and how the pandemic has enabled greater accessibility for disabled talent. This reduces the challenges brought about by travel and increases opportunities to attain work, both on location and virtually. Keeping this in mind for accessibility of resources should be the norm.

*“Ensure all material online is also accessible for widest audiences e.g., BSL/audio description + captioning as standard.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

There is concern that some accommodations may not stay after the pandemic. In a bid to address this the Diversity Standards may flag the benefits of remote or virtual working within key roles in an effort to commit to accessibility. This would benefit more than just those with disabilities as it would allow people to have access to spaces, meetings, and resources that they may otherwise be excluded from.

With regards to storytelling around disability, there is a feeling that sometimes applications to the Diversity Standards are unsuccessful due to an ableist view of what disability is and it would be helpful to have a disability researcher or advisor on a project's team. It was flagged that should such an advisor not have the authority for decision making, it could pose a risk of not following sound advice on authentic and meaningful representation. This could risk their involvement to be seen as tokenistic.

### 6.3 Race and Ethnicity

It was stressed that projects can pass the Standards without any racial and/or ethnic representation due to the lack of specificity or mandate that racial or ethnic diversity are crucial areas to consider. Previous research and recommendations in Dr Clive Nwonka's report were referenced. This is also a result of creators being able to pick and choose other dimensions of diversity over race and ethnicity. For example, a production may have a significant number of women in leadership roles but no women of colour. While this was raised as a concern, there were no recommendations on what specific race and/or ethnicity targets could look like within the Standards.

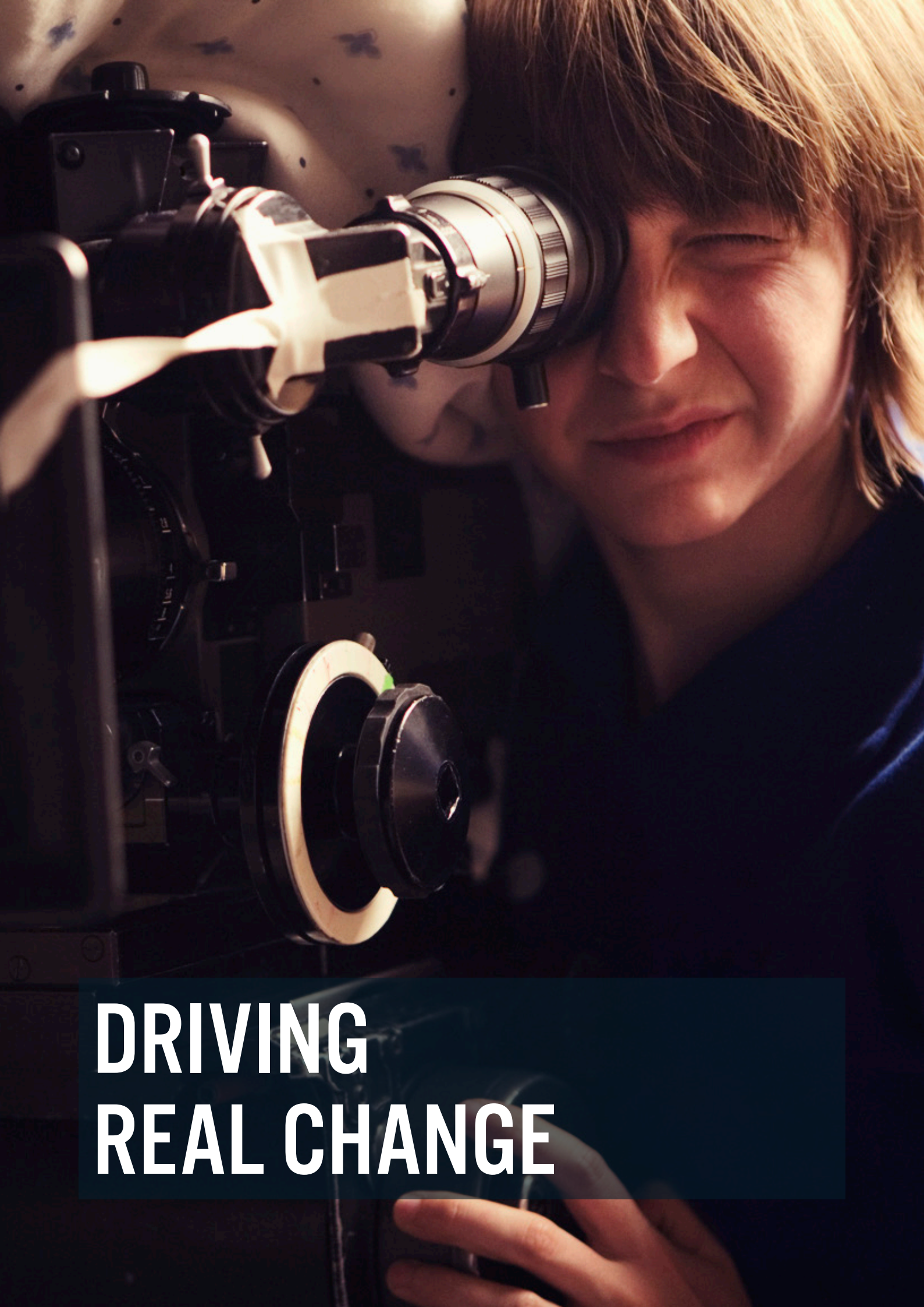
### 6.4 Duty of Care Guidelines

While hiring diverse talent is important, it is noted that taking care of them is equally necessary. Simply including underrepresented/minoritised talent without any policy or measure in place to protect them was cautioned. Several underrepresented groups face a disproportionate amount of financial and emotional fatigue, thereby causing them to drop out from projects and/or leaving the industry.

- A clear link between the Standards and the BFIs guidelines on bullying, harassment, and racism.
- Greater duty of care and guidelines on safety, violence and sexism.
- Talent must be paid well, treated correctly, and provided with encouragement and support.
- Employees should not be overworked throughout the creation process. This is especially apparent in the games industry where people are expected to work overtime during the development of a game.

### 6.5 Remuneration

The BFI is urged to ensure that everyone working on a funded production is not only paid but paid fairly. Pay parity and equity must be considered to avoid having a pay gap. One way to enforce this would be by making fair wages/payments as mandatory elements in the Diversity Standards. From a survey point of view, Standard C1 came in as the third highest voted Standard to make compulsory.



**DRIVING  
REAL CHANGE**



## 7. Driving Real Change

Given that a lot of the talent's employability is down to referrals and word of mouth, the industry can have its gate keepers. Hence, there is a need for significant advocacy and allyship within and across the screen industries.

### 7.1 Senior Leaders, Gate keepers & Decision Makers

#### Senior Leaders and Their Influence

Feedback suggests that there is value, especially with large studios, to try and influence senior leadership within those organisations greenlighting projects. It would be useful to examine the current existing power dynamics within the industry and check if the decision makers are themselves representative of the population's diversity.

There is a discomfort with not being able to see diverse representation at senior levels and there needs to be efforts to raise awareness of the impact of gatekeepers and senior people in positions of authority to not perpetuate hiring in their own image. Conversations also flagged that it is always risky for talent from underrepresented groups to be brought into non-diverse spaces at a lower rank and/or be line-managed by someone that is not sensitive to their lived experiences. It was stressed that studios need to protect against any exploitation of underrepresented groups in their workforce.

*"It would be good for all HoDs to attend a BFI Diversity Workshop - this will bring change as the producers can support (and send memos) but the Standards do need to be absorbed by all HoDs."*

**SURVEYS RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

While organisations can hire diverse employees into leadership, sometimes the nature of their role does not guarantee that they can impact creative decisions on the kind of content being produced. For example, someone senior in HR and/or marketing may not have a say on the narrative, storyline, or characters. While such Heads of Department (HoD) roles can make the Standards easily achievable, it doesn't translate into changing the

make-up of diverse teams on projects. It's an easy box to tick. Senior leaders on a project must ensure that their projects are meeting both Standards B and C as their production progresses.

#### Generational Divide

It's noted that younger emerging talent and people with lower budgets are more in tune with the ethos of the Diversity Standards. Younger generations engage with it using a positive attitude and a mindset of this being the norm. They appreciate the nuances of inclusion and are better equipped to drive positive change. It should be noted, however, there is also often an assumption that industry entrants are always young. The Standards should emphasise that any generational consideration is not ageist, on either side of the spectrum.

*"Emerging talent' isn't always 20 years old. We've seen many older people 40-50 unable to access new entrant services when they switch careers and are just starting out. Open up access to older people, who are largely overlooked as new entrants."*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

## Greater Expectations from Big-Budget Films

Big-budget films can create change using their influential power. It was deliberated that the bar needs to be higher for projects with significantly larger budgets, simply because they have the resources to meet the Standards and there should be no excuse for not getting it right. There could be a tiered approach where films making use of tax relief with substantial production budgets and resources, could have greater expectations to fulfil the criteria – and demonstrate that they are doing well. The intention is not to penalise a film for the amount of money that it spends in the UK, but there is a need to acknowledge the scale and scope of the project.

## 7.2 Meaningful, Sustainable and Behavioural Change

It was noted from the discussions that applicants can comply with the Diversity Standards without truly bringing out any sustainable changes to their practices and this is something that the Certification team cannot account for. When talking about cultural change, what is required is 'structural change'. This would encompass tangible accommodations, e.g. ring-fenced budgets for accessibility, childcare on set as the norm, and more time to recruit diverse talent for more thoughtful and sustainable hiring.

*“Achieving the standards is not challenging. Whether these standards are making real change in the workforce has yet to be proven and, I would argue, looking at HOW people are employed, rather than who is employed, will be far more effective.”*

**SURVEY RESPONDENT COMMENT.**

Due to the transient and short-term nature of productions, it is hard to create and monitor any long-lasting change. Larger productions can easily manipulate the quantifiable aspects of Standard A by hiring diverse talent, however it is hard to guarantee that the quality of the subsequent representation is nuanced and positive. This is especially harder to achieve if the commissioner (or decision maker) is not from a minoritised background. When projects are required to crew up within a short span of time, they tend to hire team members from within their own inner circle and/or close relationships. Time is a constraint that needs more strategic consideration and planning to break the cycle as such projects may frequently have short lead times.





**FINAL  
REMARKS**



# Final Remarks

The BFI's ambition with this Review was to solicit feedback from a broad group of stakeholders across the wider screen industries on what they would need to consider with a future revision of the Diversity Standards. The data, insights and nuance captured as part of this process provide the BFI with helpful critique. While there were numerous suggestions, the key recommendations within this report are grouped into the following seven broad themes.

## **FRAMEWORK, LANGUAGE AND IT APPLICATION**

Updating how the Standards are written to improve achievability and impact

## **PROJECT LIFECYCLE**

Ways to create better balance between intent, progress, and results

## **ORGANISATIONAL EFFICIENCIES**

Greater diversity and data-driven administration of the Standards.

## **PEOPLE, TECH AND DATA**

Greater access through shared efforts and technology

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Evolution of learning and upskilling resources

## **NUANCED PERSPECTIVES**

Additional considerations beyond the obvious

## **DRIVING REAL CHANGE**

Future-focused inclusion for the screen industries

Stakeholders felt strongly that the next few years should look at making inroads with the BFI Diversity Standards to become the required norm industry-wide to apply for funding, and wider adoption for best practice. The Standards should not only be a consideration when wanting funding, nor at the end of a production when qualifying for Awards; rather it should be considered of strategic importance ahead of a project's timeline.

There needs to be a concerted and collaborative effort towards the reframing of purpose and intent, especially with the desire to 'get things over the line' versus wanting to drive sustainable change. Successful applicants should be encouraged to look at results versus intentions, conduct lessons learnt exercises to educate on the lived experiences of their projects, and create a culture within the industry where insights support a growth-mindset of decision makers who are prepared to listen, learn, adapt, and adopt the right behaviours for sustainable change.

There needs to be a cultural, social, and regional shift with the help of unions and trade organisations to help everyone, at all levels, make the best and most inclusive decisions. It was suggested in one of the discussions

that "the Diversity Standards be more of a floor rather than a ceiling", acting as a baseline to aim for and then go beyond by reaching higher levels of diversity and inclusion.

The team at New Inclusion are immensely grateful to the stakeholders who have engaged with the survey, as well as the virtual meetings, to give their time, provide us with their valuable insights, perspectives, and priorities. Every interaction has been a meaningful one; reflection of what doesn't work well, flagging points of exclusion, highlighting points for inclusion with constructive critique for improvements and new ideas for consideration to improve the adoption of the Diversity Standards as well as the application process.

We are proud to have supported the BFI in this vital project towards the next iteration of the Diversity Standards and its evolution and meaning for the future of a more inclusive industry. It is our hope that this piece of work helps make the ripples already emanating through the industry into waves, as we all strive to create a more inclusive world, both on and off screen.





REVIEW & REPORT BY  
NEW INCLUSION FOR THE BFI

Designed by [katestuartdesign.com](http://katestuartdesign.com)