



Press Release

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REPORT REVEALS WIDENING GENDER GAP AMONG UK TV DIRECTORS

- **Television episodes directed by women fell by 2.98 percentage points between 2013 and 2016**
 - **Only one in four television programmes directed by a woman**
 - **No broadcaster surveyed improved their percentage of episodes directed by women over the four-year period**

Directors UK is calling for broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend for all programme making to fund career development and industry access schemes to close the gender gap, in response to research revealing a drop in the number of women directors working in UK television.

The recommendation comes from a new report from Directors UK, [Who's Calling the Shots? A Report on Gender Inequality among Screen Directors working in UK Television](#), which looks at gender inequality in directorial roles across the four main UK broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5). The research found:

- All broadcasters showed a decline in the percentage of episodes directed by women between 2013 and 2016.
- A decline of 2.98 percentage points in the share of television episodes directed by women (from 27.29% to 24.31%).
- Only 25% of episodes broadcast were directed by women.
- Factual programming showed the most significant decrease, by 9.8 percentage points. Children's programming came second with a 4.5 percentage point decline.
- On the positive side, Multi-camera & Entertainment increased by 2.8 percentage points and Drama & Comedy showed an increase of 4.3 percentage points. These are two areas where there have been targeted career development initiatives for women directors delivered by Directors UK in partnership with [Creative Skillset](#).

The report revealed that despite the publication of the broadcasters' diversity and inclusion strategies and the introduction of equality monitoring through Project Diamond, run by the [Creative Diversity Network](#), the gender gap increased across all four channels. Channel 4 saw a 5.4 percentage point decline in the number of episodes directed by women between 2013 and 2016, while Channel 5 experienced a 2.9 percentage point drop. In the same period, BBC and ITV saw a 1.8 and 1.5 percentage point decline respectively.

Furthermore, following the launch of Directors UK's [first report in 2014](#), the professional association began working with broadcasters to place women directors in on-set career development placements within Continuing Drama (soaps). The latest research reveals that, since then, Continuing Drama has experienced a 7.3 percentage point increase.

These results suggest that positive interventions do help to address inequality and, as a result, Directors UK is calling for wider-reaching placement schemes to be implemented across all genres of programme making.

Directors UK is now proposing a number of recommendations within the report to help improve equality, transparency and accountability:

- **Broadcasters** to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programme making as a levy to fund industry access and career development schemes for underrepresented groups.
- **Ofcom** to make it mandatory for all UK broadcasters to monitor and publicly report their diversity characteristics of all those making programmes for them, to include freelancers as well as permanent staff. And for broadcasters to monitor and publish the equality data of senior production roles such as producers, writers and directors as well as the heads of departments
- **Ofcom** to set broadcasters targets to use production crews whose gender, ethnic and disability makeup mirrors that of the UK population, both in front of and behind the camera, by 2020.
- **Hirers** to commit to fairer recruitment practices in line with other industries to improve equal access to opportunities for all; in particular, externally advertising roles, the introduction of written references for freelance production staff and a requirement for women to make up 50% of those being interviewed for senior production roles.

Directors UK Board member and factual director, Toral Dixit (*Dispatches, World's Greatest Bridges, What do Artists Do All Day, Mammoth – Back from the Dead*), commented: "It is not acceptable that women make up one third of working directors in the UK but only direct one in four television programmes. To generate a shift towards gender equality, broadcasters must embrace positive interventions across all genres and deliver fair and transparent hiring practices for both freelancers and staff. Targets must be set and tracked through mandatory monitoring so successes can be built on and replicated across the industry."

Directors UK CEO Andrew Chowns added: "While the overall decline is very disappointing, results in Continuing Drama show that collaborative interventions made in partnership with broadcasters and production partners do work to unlock new opportunities for women directors by developing skills and building expertise. These workplace initiatives must now become more widely available, so we are asking broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programmes to fund industry access and career development schemes for underrepresented groups."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

A PDF copy of the full report [*Who's Calling the Shots: A Report on Gender Inequality among Screen Directors working in UK Television*](#) and further information can be found at directors.uk.com/campaigns/gender-equality-in-uk-tv.

The report uses data from 47,444 episodes of UK-commissioned television programmes broadcast on the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 between 2013 and 2016.

In 2014, Directors UK issued its first report on female directorial representation in UK television production [*Women Directors - Who's Calling the Shots?*](#) It highlighted the challenges facing women directors revealing that only 27% of the directing workforce across all genres were women and explored each genre in more depth.

ABOUT DIRECTORS UK:

DIRECTORS UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 7,000 members - the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

- To become a member of Directors UK for access to training, benefits and discounts, please visit www.directors.uk.com/join or contact us directly at membership@directors.uk.com
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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Who's Calling the Shots: A Report on Gender Inequality among Screen Directors working in UK Television

KEY FINDINGS

- The 2013-2016 period saw the percentage of television episodes directed by women decline from 27.29% to 24.31% (down by 2.98 percentage points). While in the same period the percentage of episodes directed by men increased from 72.67% to 75.53% (up by 2.86 percentage points).
- Of episodes broadcast across the four television channels between 2013 and 2016, on average only 25.03% were directed by women.
- In terms of quantities of working individuals in the dataset, 66.5% (2,916) were men and 33.1% (1,452) were women. 0.4% (20) were unavailable.
- Women make up a third of the workforce in the dataset, but only direct a quarter of the work.
- The percentage of episodes of lifestyle, entertainment and reality programming directed by women declined by 13.5 percentage points in this period, but this subgenre still has the highest percentage of episodes directed by women; on average 35.7%.
- The Drama & Comedy and Multi-camera & Entertainment genres both show growth in the percentages of women directing programmes from 2013 to 2016 (a 4.4 percentage point growth and 2.8 percentage point respectively).
- Continuing drama (soaps) saw a noticeable growth in the percentage of episodes directed by women (it increased by 7.3 percentage points) as did single drama (by 11.4).
- No broadcaster managed to improve their percentage of episodes directed by women over the four-year period despite the publication of goals, interventions and diversity and inclusion strategies.
- Interventions to place women into specific shows and within specific genres appear to boost the numbers within a given category, but do not bring systemic change to overall programme making.
- Channel 4 saw the greatest decline (by 5.4 percentage points) in the share of episodes directed by women, followed by Channel 5 (by 2.9 percentage points). The BBC and ITV saw a 1.8 and 1.5 percentage point decline respectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1/ Existing diversity information collected by Ofcom does not contain comprehensive data surrounding freelance programme makers. We are calling for Ofcom to make it a mandatory annual requirement for all UK broadcasters to monitor and publicly report on the diversity characteristics of all those making programmes for them. This reporting must include both permanent staff and freelancers.

In particular, we would like to see broadcasters monitor and publish the equality data of senior production roles such as producers, writers and directors as well as the heads of departments.

This transparency will make broadcasters accountable for the effectiveness of their equality, diversity and inclusion actions and commissioning goals and identify areas of concern that can be positively addressed.

2/ We call for Ofcom to set broadcasters targets to use production crews whose gender, ethnic and disability makeup mirrors that of the UK population, both in front of and behind the camera, by 2020.

Broadcasters should be required to show evidence of initiatives undertaken year on year to improve diversity and inclusion as well as presenting statistical results.

3/ We call on broadcasters to take practical measures to improve the diversity of their programme makers and to build the following provisions into their commissioning contracts:

- Unconscious bias training for everyone in hiring or hiring approval positions in broadcasters and production companies.
- A commitment to regularly bring commissioners, production companies and freelancers together to network to improve job mobility within the industry.
- A commitment to fairer recruitment practices in line with other industries to improve equal access to opportunities for all; in particular, externally advertising roles and the introduction of written references for freelance production staff. Hirers should also commit to women making up 50% of those being interviewed for senior production roles.

4/ For all broadcasters to commit 0.25% of their commissioning spend across all programme making as a levy to fund industry access and career development schemes for underrepresented groups. Currently only high-end drama and children's programmes are part of industry training levies.

DATASET

The dataset covers 47,444 episodes directed by 4,388 directors broadcast by the four principal UK terrestrial broadcasters – BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 – between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. An episode represents a single programme, for instance a documentary, or a single episode within a television series or serial. The dataset is broken down into five genres:

1/ Factual – 46.9% of total dataset (22,280 episodes)

2/ Multi-camera & Entertainment – 26.1% of the total dataset (12,423 episodes)

3/ Drama & Comedy – 18.2% of the total dataset (8,667 episodes)

4/ Children's – 8.2% of the total dataset (3,906 episodes)

5/ Animation – 0.3% of the total dataset (168 episodes)