



**DIVERSITY IN
ADVERTISING
AWARD 2024**



Inclusive by Design

The Diversity in Advertising Award:
Challenging our industry to reach more
of the population than ever before, by
making TV ads 'inclusive by design'

Background to The Brief

Channel 4's Diversity in Advertising Award has played a huge role in encouraging the industry to be more representative of the UK. In the last eight years, we've seen brands such as FIFA, Lloyds, Starbucks, E45, Vanish, Maltesers, Tena and the Royal Airforce represent and reflect women, the LGBTQIA+ community, those with both visible and non-visible disabilities, and those from ethnic backgrounds, within advertising.

All of us here at Channel 4 strongly believe there needs to be more representation in advertising and as much as we've shifted the dial over the last 8 years, there is still plenty more for us all to do.

Channel 4 exists to make change. We do this by representing unheard voices, challenging with purpose and constantly reinventing entertainment.

In March this year, we launched our first ever equity strategy, "Equity by Design", an ambitious framework that sets out how we will create fair outcomes for everyone and accelerate change in the industry.

With that in mind, we are changing things up and rather than just asking brands to be more representative of the UK in advertising, we're calling for brands and agencies to reach more of the UK by removing the barriers some people face or experience by ensuring the ad itself is made 'inclusive by design'.

Why now?

According to the RNID, there are 18 million people in the UK who are deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus. In addition, RNIB states there are over two million people living with sight loss in the UK. That's a large proportion of the population who are currently not able to easily access or understand adverts.

And it's not just people who experience sight or hearing loss that expect or need media to be accessible. What about British Sign Language (BSL) users or the fact that we have an aging population, people with learning difficulties or cognitive impairment and reportedly four out of five 18–25-year-olds choose to use accessible features such as subtitles all or part of the time.

However, this brief is not as simple as creating your campaign ad and just adding audio description and subtitles, as at present, closed caption subtitles and audio description are not currently available across UK broadcast streaming platforms due to delivery timelines and technology. While the UK's commercial broadcasters are working hard alongside Thinkbox, ISBA, the Ad Association, and other partners to try and solve some of these technical hurdles, in the meantime we are encouraging brands to lay the foundations for inclusive design practices and accessible advertising. Below, you can read more about the positive strides Channel 4 are making in this space for this year's Paralympic Games.

So, what do we mean 'Inclusive by design'?

This year's brief is a call to arms to make your ad inclusive by design, by using practices that make it possible for consumers with a range of needs to fully experience your brand, receive and understand all communication, and take advantage of opportunities to engage with your services, or products. So ads will ensure audiences with visual impairments can follow the dialogue and audio cues and should integrate audio descriptions that narrate visual elements, actions and important contextual information. For the hearing impaired, ads will also utilise strong visual storytelling techniques where the narrative is conveyed primarily through visuals. This is what we mean by 'Inclusive by Design'.

Why should brands get involved?

With clear compelling storytelling, the right visuals and audio that closes the loop, your ad can capture the attention of those who are currently excluded. These techniques will set you apart from your brand rivals, giving you a competitive advantage and positively impacting your bottom line.

If more ads use inclusive techniques while we work on making our platforms ready for use, our advertising can reach an additional 14m people across the UK. Reaching more of the population with your advertising will drive revenue for your business and ultimately brand favour among those impacted by accessibility issues.

And it's not just those with accessibility issues. Let's not forget 72% of the population who are dual screening or have English as a second language. So, this brief doesn't just make economic sense, it's also a moral and social demand to put inclusion at the heart of advertising and marketing in the best creative tradition within the industry.

What we're looking for

Great advertising is about good storytelling. The creative industry includes some of the most compelling, creative and strategic minds and this brief is hoping to reach them directly. We're testing your creative abilities here and if done right, this campaign has award-winning written all over it.

It's easy to think of accessibility as an add-on, at the final stages of execution. But this is a chance to shape your communication around the objective of being inclusive to more audiences. In the same way that diverse representation should be an input to the brief not an afterthought, inclusion should be a strategic consideration, not just an executional one.

There are many ways to approach it. It could be about integrating inclusion seamlessly into your current campaign narrative so that it feels completely natural and incidental. Or you could shine a light on the accessible aspects of the ad in order to promote awareness of the issue and get others to sit up and take notice. Making change takes many forms; and we are open to all of them.

This is a challenge that requires the best of strategic and creative thinking combined. Even going through the process of conceiving and creating this ad will break down barriers and open minds to what's possible. Ask different people about their experiences, talk about the issues, get up close and personal with the problem and then box your way out of it creatively. We're excited to see where you go.

The inclusive practices and questions to ask yourself (as a starter for ten)

To start, once you've mapped out your idea, imagine watching your ad with your eyes closed.

- Did you mention your brand name or hear your sonic sound?
- Have you thoroughly described your brand vision, your product, service, or story?
- Is it clear what the ad is trying to do just by hearing it?

Have you considered wearing noise-cancelling headphones and watching your ad?

- Can you see in your idea the brand behind the ad?
- Is the ad eye-catching enough without sound to entice an audience?
- Can you tell your story in visuals only?

There are plenty of other audiences to consider here so we advise thorough user-testing. We are not however asking that your TV ad reaches everyone. Creating an ad that reaches every single audience is a tough ask but we are hoping by making some of these significant changes, your ads will at least reach those with visual or hearing impairment and therefore more of the population than they have before. What we highly recommend is that other executions of your campaign across a range of media also include inclusive design considerations.

We are of course at the very start of this journey, and we need your ads to kick-start a movement for the future.

Who can enter?

Entries are welcomed from any part of the advertising industry and for ideas covering all brands that are suitable and legal to advertise across Channel 4 platforms. Entries can be submitted by creative agencies, media agencies or by brands direct - but all entries must come with direct endorsement of the concept from a senior figure at the brand featured.

Remember the brand objective

By embracing the spirit of inclusive design, we encourage you to consider a suite of versions of the same creative which are tailored to better suit different audience groups, so that 2024's Diversity in Advertising Award can also reflect and celebrate the diversity of advertising.

Be sustainable

The winning Diversity in Advertising Award ad must follow AdGreen guidelines provided by the Advertising Association which helps eliminate the negative environmental impacts of production.

Check the entry criteria

[Please click here to view the entry criteria](#)

Key Dates

Your 2-page PDF Summary must be entered by:

4pm 20th September 2024

Creating a legacy after the Paralympic Games

To make a big move into the right direction, Channel 4 have just announced a big change this summer. While all our linear programming allows for the delivery of commercials with built in subtitles, during the 2024 Paralympic Games, our ambition is to make all commercials with closed captions available on all major points of viewing for all live broadcasts of games.

Adverts with subtitles will be supported across linear Paralympic Games coverage across Channel 4, More4 & 4Seven. Adverts with subtitles will also be supported on Channel 4 streaming wherever viewers can access programme subtitles on 'watch live' in the C4 streaming app. We are aiming for 100% of the ads during the Paralympic Games to be more accessible over the course of the coverage.

But this is just the start. Along with our partners at Clearcast, XR Extreme Reach, & Peach, we are aiming for 100% subtitling available on all advertising on Channel 4 in future. More details on this are yet to come.

