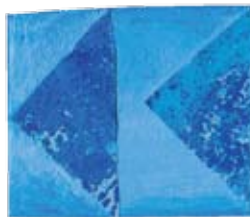
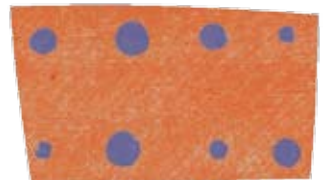


# Equal Opportunities Report 2008

## Executive Summary



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This is the first annual report on Equal Opportunities in the Broadcast Industry produced by the BTR, based on broadcasters' returns to Ofcom for the 2008 round. It is the fourth in the series instigated by Ofcom and will be the last report in the current format. It covers the period January to December 2008.

The scope of this report is also bound by the guidance requirements on promoting Equal Opportunities, as set out in the 2003 Communications Act. With effect from April 2009 the BTR is the co-regulatory body for Equal Opportunities.

This report shows how women, people with a disability and people from minority ethnic groups are currently employed across the broadcast industry and how this compared to their employment a year ago. The report also considers the actions broadcasters state that they are taking to promote Equal Opportunities in employment on race, gender and disability.

## ***Falling employment across the industry***

The broadcast industry has been characterised by challenge and change over the past year. The radio broadcast sector has been experiencing consolidation, leading to a smaller number of larger players. Competition across both the commercial television and radio sectors continues to grow. The consolidation and competition has been compounded as the recession has increased financial pressure on broadcasters and advertising revenues have fallen.

It is of little surprise, therefore, to see that the total employment figures reported by broadcasters have fallen in a year by almost 6% to 68,391. However, this fall in employment does not appear to have disproportionately affected people from minority ethnic groups, women or people with disabilities.

According to the returns from broadcasters, little employment has been lost from permanent staff, which has fallen by just 2% to 58,658. However, a much larger reduction in freelance/contract staff of 29% has taken place over the past year, bringing total employment of this group to 9,733.

## ***Women are employed in equal numbers to men overall but under-represented in the most senior and technical jobs***

Women do not appear to have been more adversely affected than men by the fall in employment of freelance/contract staff. Women's representation of this group has increased by 6% to 47.6%. The total number of women employed in the industry overall has fallen for the second consecutive year by 1%. However, as the whole number of staff employed in the industry has also fallen by 1%, the proportion of women employed remains constant at 45%.

There has been no change over the past year in the overall representation of women at the most senior levels (including Board and senior management roles) across the industry as a whole, which remains at 32%. In 2008, 785 women were employed at Board and senior management level across the industry. Almost one in five (18%) of broadcast Board-level positions are occupied by women; this compares favourably against the 12% directorships held by women in FTSE 100 companies. However, it remains low for this industry considering that around 40% of junior and middle managers are



women. Women continue to be almost evenly split across the industry between management and non-management roles. They are represented in similar numbers to men in roles related to programmes/programming (46%), sales/marketing (57%) and in support functions/administration (50%). However, women continue to be under-represented in technical/engineering roles across the industry. The proportion of women in these roles has fallen by 6% over the last year to 23%.

***Employment of people from minority ethnic groups is increasing; but very slowly***

The actual number of people from minority ethnic groups employed across the industry has fallen slightly over the last year from 6,869 to 6,707. As the overall number of people employed in the industry has also fallen, their representation of the total workforce remains at about the same level in 2008 (9.8%) as it was in 2007 (9.6%). Over the last four years the total employment of people from minority ethnic groups has increased by 1% - a rise in actual numbers of around 1,000 people. Whilst the representation of people from minority ethnic groups in the industry is in line with their representation in the UK workforce as a whole, it is far less than their

representation in the London workforce (24%), where many broadcasters are based.

The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the pipeline to senior management roles is increasing across all broadcasters. However, there has been no change in the representation of people from minority ethnic groups at the most senior levels in the industry as a whole over the last year. They make up 6.6% of Industry Leaders (Board and Senior Management).

People from minority ethnic groups are quite evenly represented across the different employment categories in the industry as a whole, with slightly more represented in programmes/programming and technical/engineering roles than in sales/marketing and support functions/administration roles. There has been little change in the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups over the past year in permanent employment across the whole industry and a slight fall of 1% in their employment as freelance/contract staff. This compares with an overall fall in people employed across the industry of 6% in this time period.

### ***Very few people with disabilities are employed within the industry***

In 2008 the total number of people with disclosed disabilities employed in the broadcasting industry fell slightly by 48 to 1,440. The proportion of people with disclosed disabilities employed within the industry therefore remains static at 2%. There has been almost no change in the employment of people with disclosed disabilities in radio-only, television-only or dual-platform broadcasters. Despite a fall in total numbers at Board level across the industry over the last year, the representation of people with disabilities at Board level has remained the same – 1%. Whilst the number of people with disclosed disabilities has changed slightly within the different employment categories over the last year, as their numbers are so small, this has not affected their percentage representation. The representation of people with disabilities within the broadcast industry compares unfavourably with an estimated 19% of the working age population who have a disability in the UK.

### ***There are wide differences in the approach taken to promoting Equal Opportunities to date***

Almost all broadcasters report that they have an Equal Opportunities policy in place. Five broadcasters either did not respond to this question or stated that they did not have a specific Equal Opportunities policy in place. The majority of actions are aimed at ensuring Equal Opportunities in the recruitment and selection process. The second most common arrangements reported were “positive actions” aimed at helping to overcome the under-representation of women, people with disabilities or people from minority ethnic groups employed by the broadcaster.

Very few broadcasters referred to making arrangements to ensure that once people from under-represented groups had been employed, they would enjoy Equal Opportunities and be supported in developing their career and reaching their full potential.

That is, Equal Opportunity arrangements that related to training and development, appraisal and promotion were scarce.

Very few broadcasters report that they take steps or have the systems in place to monitor their progress on Equal Opportunities. The most common area where monitoring took place was recruitment and selection. However, relatively few broadcasters, who reported that they did take action to ensure Equal Opportunities in recruitment and selection, collected monitoring information to ensure that their actions were making a positive impact.

Despite several broadcasters taking some action to promote Equal Opportunities, the employment data collected for this report indicates that barriers persist to recruiting people with a disability, in particular as well as people from minority ethnic groups, to the industry. It has been commented on elsewhere that the broadcast industry lacks a strategic approach to managing equality and diversity. Indeed, the results of this analysis indicate that very few individual broadcasters have a strategic approach to managing Equal Opportunities or diversity.

A more planned approach is needed for the future.

Overall, the arrangements for Equal Opportunities or actions being taken do not fully address the barriers to equality within the industry identified in several recent reports, which include:

#### **a) Informal Recruitment Practices:**

The description of the industry as one that often relies on contacts and networks to gain entry to jobs and organisations is a practice that has been identified as more disadvantageous to women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with a disability. Unpaid work placements are a particular barrier for people from low income backgrounds.

- b) **Attitudes & Perceptions:** Reports have highlighted the tendency that persists within the industry to make assumptions about the potential of professionals with disabilities or pigeon-hole them and professionals from minority ethnic groups into projects and programmes based around their own identity group. Stereotypes about the potential of women to succeed in more technical and engineering roles are also reported to continue.
- c) **Lack of Role Models & Mentoring:** The lack of senior level role models and availability of mentors, in particular for people from minority ethnic groups, people with a disability and women with care responsibilities has been highlighted as an important career-limiting factor.
- d) **Accessibility:** Reports of premises and accommodation that are not accessible to people with disabilities, or of a lack of reasonable adjustments being made to meet the needs of people with disabilities continue.
- e) **Lack of Clear Entry Routes & Career Paths:** The lack of professional status and clear career paths has been highlighted as discouraging people from minority ethnic groups in particular from entering the industry.
- f) **Freelance Working:** The uncertain nature of freelance work and the prevalence of it within the industry has been highlighted as a barrier to women with care responsibilities in particular and has been shown to account for some women dropping out of the industry. It is also thought to adversely affect more people from minority ethnic groups, who are more likely to belong to lower income households than the average white British household.
- g) **Lack of Good Practice Approach to Diversity in Organisations:** The approach broadcasters are taking

to achieving equality and diversity has come under criticism in recent years. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is often a good level of top commitment to this issue, it is argued that this has not translated into good practice throughout the organisation. Broadcasters are criticised for treating equality and diversity as an “add-on” marginal issue rather than one that is central to its business. It has been argued that whilst special entry programmes and positive action initiatives play an important role, they do not address the remaining barriers in the mainstream organisation and industry. Employing Specialist Diversity Professionals to “do diversity work” and failing to spread accountability across the organisation, and in particular in senior and key decision-making roles, has also been highlighted as a cause of lack of progress.

Without a more planned or strategic approach to addressing the inequalities that persist across the industry at an individual broadcaster and sector level, it is difficult to see how change will be achieved in the short or medium term.

### Next Steps

Looking ahead, the BTR is working closely with the industry and other stakeholders to ensure all are engaged in the development process to promote Equal Opportunities in employment. Broadcasters are looking for co-regulation to provide a robust model that individual organisations can measure themselves against and that will provide them with feedback on their performance. The proposed approach for co-regulation to be rolled out in January 2010 will still have the two components of qualitative and quantitative data, but with an emphasis on a process of self-evaluation, based on a new model being developed in partnership with the Equal Opportunities Industry Planning Group.