



30 April 2009



BROADCASTERS LAUNCH NEW DIVERSITY PLEDGE

Production companies in the region are being encouraged to sign up to a new Diversity Pledge by the UK's major broadcasters.

The Diversity Pledge aims to help independent production companies, in-house producers and suppliers to take measurable steps to improve diversity in the industry.

Created by the Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) in partnership with Pact and supported by the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network, the initiative is an important tool to help the media industry better reflect modern Britain.

The Pledge was launched in the North by the Cultural Diversity Network North (CDN North) at an event in Manchester last week.

Aaqil Ahmed, Chair of CDN North and Commissioning Editor at Channel 4 hosted the launch with Stuart Cosgrove, Head of Nations and Regions at Channel 4 and Oona King, who was recently appointed as Channel 4's Head of Diversity.

CDN North was founded in 2004 to help the media industry in the region support its distinctive diversity needs. The network consists of major broadcasters, partners and public sector agencies including BBC, ITV, Northwest Vision and Media and the North West Development Agency.

Major broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky expect all of their suppliers to sign up to the Pledge and for the first time, companies will have to demonstrate the measures they are taking, introducing an element of accountability into the production sector.

The Pledge is split into four sections covering various aspects of diversity and companies will be asked to sign up to a minimum of two:

1. Recruit fairly and from as wide a base as possible and encourage industry entrants and production staff from diverse backgrounds.
2. Encourage diversity in output.
3. Encourage diversity at senior decision-making levels.
4. Take part in, or run, events that promote diversity.

Aaqil Ahmed said: "The aim of the Pledge is to change the face of British television onscreen and off and here in the North of England, it's vital that we genuinely reflect the diverse demographics of the region.

"We've designed the Pledge to be entirely flexible, and hope that within a year, anyone doing business with us will be signed up



“Diversity in the modern workplace isn’t just about a particular group; it’s an inclusive approach that should run throughout an organisation, encouraging talent and participation regardless of background, gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.”

Also speaking at the launch in Manchester was Miranda Wayland, Diversity Project Manager at North West Vision and Media, who work on behalf of the digital and creative industries in the region.

Miranda said: “To make sure what is shown on the screen is fair and accurate, it’s vital to have a diverse workforce behind the camera and a diverse cast onscreen. To do this, the industry needs to collaborate by sharing good practice and providing skills to those people who may not usually have the chance.

“Initiatives like our Media Apprenticeship and Media Foundation Placement Scheme help people from diverse backgrounds to work in the industry by offering placements with some of the biggest names in the business.

“As an industry, we can achieve so much more by working together and enabling talented individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the way we shape television.”

A number of production companies attended the launch event, including Liverpool-based Lime Pictures, which produces Channel 4’s Hollyoaks.

Darren Minshall, Head of Human Resources at Lime Pictures said: “Lime Pictures have been working in partnership with the CDN North for several years. Our commitment to the CDN Diversity pledge reinforces our continual aim in attracting, retaining and developing exceptional diverse talent within the industry.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- Northwest Vision and Media works on behalf of the digital and creative industries in the Northwest to create a world-class digital and creative economy within the region. We provide strategic leadership, help to build businesses, develop skills and talent, encourage and invest in production and inspire audiences. Find out more at www.visionandmedia.co.uk
- Northwest Vision and Media is funded by the UK Film Council, the Northwest Regional Development Agency, European Funds, Skillset, local, city and council authorities across the region.

About the CDN



- The Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) began in 2000, when all Britain's major television broadcasters joined forces to achieve fairer representation of ethnic minorities both on and off screen. The challenge was, quite simply, to change the face of television. Instigated by Clive Jones, then at Carlton Television, CDN members agreed to develop cross-industry initiatives and share expertise, resources and good practise, to ensure that television responded to Britain's increasingly multiracial society.
- The CDN remain committed to improving the representation and portrayal of ethnic minorities and other under-represented groups throughout the broadcasting industry. "Diversity" in its broadest sense goes far beyond a tick-box analysis of different groups. Diversity is an inclusive *approach* that should run throughout an organisation to encourage talent and participation regardless of background, gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- The Cultural Diversity Network North (CDN North) was founded in 2004 to help the media industry in the North support its distinctive diversity needs. Its primary focus is to increase ethnic diversity within the media in the North. The network consists of major broadcasters, partners and public sector agencies.

For more information about the CDN please visit: www.culturaldiversitynetwork.co.uk

Contact Details:

For further information please contact the Northwest Vision and Media Communications Team

Kate Lowe
Communications Manager
T +44 (0)161 244 4639
M +44 (0)7525 966 491
katel@visionandmedia.co.uk

Sarah Tulley
Communications Executive
T +44 (0)161 244 3746
saraht@visionandmedia.co.uk

Belinda Adeoye
E-Communications Manager
T +44 (0)161 244 3756
belinda@visionandmedia.co.uk