

# CHARTER FOR

# CHANGE 2024

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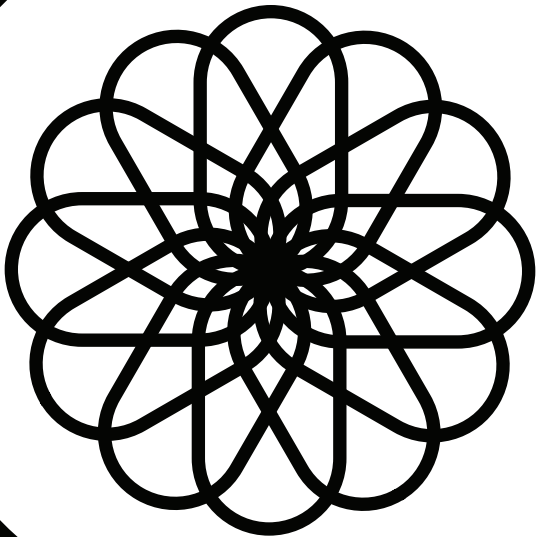
OUR PEOPLE

**2**

OUR CULTURE

**3**

OUR WORK





# INTRODUCTION

An introduction from Jim Coleman, our UK Chief Executive Officer.

The advertising industry has a responsibility for greater representation, both internally and in the work we do.

Our clients have a significant influence on culture. To operate responsibly, we need to build teams that can partner with our clients to create work that authentically reflects all aspects of society – not just those in the majority consciousness – and create a working environment that is inclusive, diverse and equal.

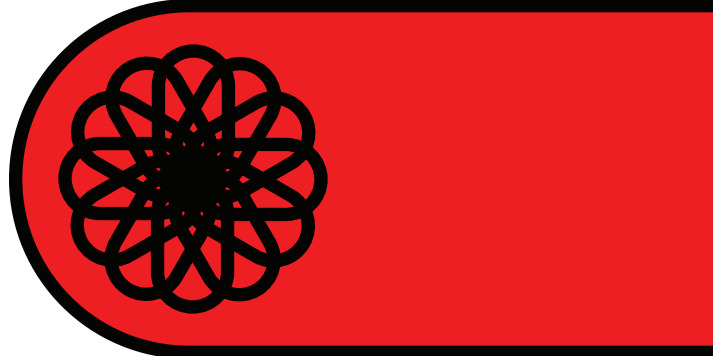
This is why, in 2018, we created our first Charter for Change. It started as a three-year plan with ambitious goals and objectives, and we have made a lot of progress – but the industry, much like society, has moved on significantly.

We now renew our Charter annually with a fresh set of ambitions, across the areas of **People, Culture and Work**, building on what's worked or refocusing on things that

remain important. We update this annually to ensure we maintain momentum, alongside offering greater transparency and accountability. It also incorporates the actions we're taking to ensure we build a culture at We Are Social that is inclusive.

**Front and centre of our Charter in 2024 is the importance of equity, and creating a workplace where all of our people have equal access to opportunities and everyone is respected and treated with dignity.**

**Delivering everything in this Charter is the responsibility of the UK Leadership team, chaired by me.** Actions mean more than words – here you will also see an update on where we are now. We will share an annual report on our progress, both internally and publicly, and are happy to answer any questions about it. We are always looking to improve and be better, and we need your help to do that.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Coleman'.

**Jim Coleman**  
UK CEO

# **OUR COMMITMENTS**

**1**

**We commit to diversity, inclusion and equal representation across all departments and levels of seniority.**

**2**

**Continue to work towards all our people having an equal opportunity to progress.**

**3**

**There are numerous barriers to entry to the creative industries. We will seek to address these through initiatives and support.**

**4**

**We will create a culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance and supports mental health.**

**5**

**We will create a culture of open dialogue, understanding and respect for different cultural and social values.**

**6**

**We will ensure our clients and the suppliers we work with are aware of, and share, our values.**

**7**

**We commit to creating work that is progressive, and which represents different cultural and social values in an authentic way.**

**8**

**We will ensure that on and off screen talent is diverse and representative within our productions.**



1

We commit to diversity, inclusion and equal representation across all departments and levels of seniority.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In November 2023, 82% of our agency participated in an annual survey tracking our progress.

Across the business, 51% of our agency identify as women, while 6% did not specify their gender. **53% of the leadership team identify as women**, up 7% from 2022.

LGBTQ+ representation in the agency stands at 16% – a decline of 5% – with 5% not specifying their sexual orientation.

20% of our team come from multi-ethnic backgrounds, the same as the previous year. We have set ourselves a target in 2024 to achieve 25% multi-ethnic representation.

In 2023, 23% of our new joiners were from multi-ethnic backgrounds, as were 1 in 4 shortlisted candidates. Through changing our job boards, working with external partners, and auditing our recruitment process, **47% of our applicants now come from multi-ethnic backgrounds**. Our new focus is to convert these results into tangible hires.

7% of our people have a non-visible disability, up 4% from 2022, while none registered a physical disability. **18% of our people are neurodiverse**, unchanged from 2022. We will now focus on educating our line managers in these areas, as well as our wider agency.

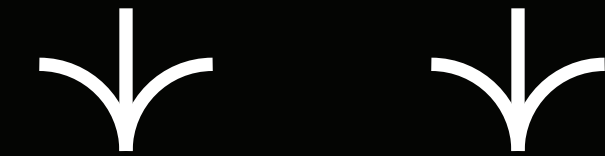
In 2023, our Inclusive Recruitment Workshop was implemented for all of our Local Leadership Team, as well as all key hiring managers. Our Inclusive Recruitment Playbook supports our managers in the hiring process, ensuring our approach is inclusive and consistent.

Our job adverts avoid non-inclusive language, with candidates able to contact us directly with any accommodations required. This is also highlighted in our application form and during the screening process. Our applicant tracking system also uses a scorecard which helps hiring managers ensure interview feedback is fair and consistent.

Our plan for 2024 is to keep working to attract and hire diverse candidates, and focus on the retention and development of underrepresented staff.

# OUR PEOPLE

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Roll out our principles of inclusive hiring to the wider agency and ensure all hiring managers have been trained.
- Continue using specialist recruiters to increase the multi-ethnic percentage of the agency, with the aim to get to 25% of the total staff.
- Roll out education of neurodiversity across the agency, with specific focus on line managers.

## 2

Continue to work towards all our people having an equal opportunity to progress.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

#### GENDER PAY GAP:

April's analysis highlighted a median pay gap of 16.3%.

Due to a lack of turnover at leadership level, our upper quartile has shown little change. The lower middle and lower quartiles have seen a bigger increase in female hires, with the latter seeing particular growth.

Our challenge for 2024 is to progress female careers through the quartiles before employees look to leave.

#### ETHNICITY PAY GAP:

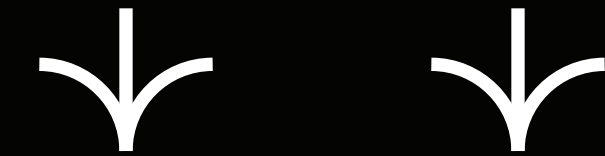
In August 2023, we began evaluating our ethnicity pay gap. This analysis revealed an aggregated median ethnicity pay gap of 24% – greater than the IPA (Institute of Practitioners in Advertising) figure of 21.1%.

White employees were overrepresented in our upper quartile (senior leadership), while a higher proportion of ethnic minority groups were represented at the lower quartile (junior level roles) – thus enhancing the pay gap.

The pay gap is not related to equal pay for similar level roles, thanks to our salary benchmarking and bandings. **Our focus will be on retaining our talent and ensuring they are developing through the agency to reach the higher quartiles.**

# OUR PEOPLE

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Create a Women In Leadership programme.
- Partner with BRIM (Black Representation in Marketing) to sponsor two employees, supporting the development of mid-level Black talent.
- Continue to support returning mums and parents to make sure we don't lose our senior women.
- Strive to hire more multi-ethnic senior leadership members when roles are available through specialist recruiters and job boards.

# 3

There are numerous barriers to entry to the creative industries. We will seek to address these through initiatives and support.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Our 'Next Gen' programme uses work experience, academic partnerships, and immersion sessions to provide a pipeline of young talent coming into the agency and industry.

### 1. UPSTARTS:

Upstarts is aimed at 16-18 year olds who are still in full time education. We partnered with the London Screen Academy to provide a week of work experience for eight successful candidates, helping them gain insight into social media marketing and agency life.

### 2. ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS:

We are building relationships with universities and colleges whose course content aligns with what we can offer. These partnerships aim to provide paid placements, inspiration sessions, mentorship with key staff, and the opportunity to work on live and mock briefs.

### SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION ARTS:

The most awarded creative school in the world, the SCA is committed to increasing diversity of talent. We have provided funding for four students to attend the school for the year and prepare for a creative role, with our second paid placement joining us in January.

### RAVENSBOURNE AND FALMOUTH:

We spoke at Ravensbourne's 'Rave Late' event as part of our efforts to support and develop future talent at the university. We also partnered with Falmouth's Creative Advertising and Creative Copywriting course to set a brief for third year students, with those who presented the best idea winning a six week paid placement with the agency.

### BIMA:

We maintained our commitment to the BIMA annual Digital Day, which teaches 11-16 year olds about digital careers. Four volunteers from our Creative and Design teams spent the day supporting 30 students in creating a mock brief for Vue Cinemas.

### INSPIRATIONS & IMMERSION SESSIONS:

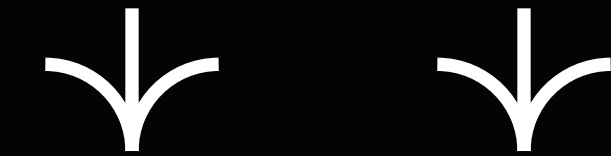
We are keen to engage with students about working in the creative industry, while showcasing some of the projects they could be involved in. This year we have visited a number of schools and colleges and run sessions organised either from established relationships or through programmes such as BIMA.

### APPRENTICES:

We currently support professional development for employees using our apprenticeship levy, predominantly with accountancy and finance qualifications.

# OUR PEOPLE

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Continue our partnership with the **School of Communication Arts** to bring new talent from diverse backgrounds into the agency. We will support two employees through the Advertising Creative apprenticeship standard.
- Continue to partner with **Ravensbourne and Falmouth**, providing immersive agency days, portfolio reviews and briefing tasks to support the academic courses.
- Continue our partnership with **BIMA**, including our involvement with Digital Day.
- Continue our commitment to Upstarts by offering a week's work experience over the summer, introducing them to the industry and inspiring them to pursue a future in it.
- **Donate up to 25% of our apprenticeship levy to an educational partner.**

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We will create a culture that promotes a healthy work-life balance and supports mental health.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

**26% of our people have told us they have a mental health condition.** To promote positive mental health in the workplace and beyond, our Good Stuff programme delivered a calendar of touchpoints through agency communications. We also partnered with Self Space to improve mental health support, and initiated various workplace communities.

**SELF SPACE PARTNERSHIP**

Self Space provide flexible therapy solutions for our employees, offering preventive support while challenging stigma. Our people can access free support quickly in person or virtually, match with therapists for individual needs, and attend effective in-person workshops.

**The percentage of employees who felt there is enough awareness, education and support around mental health at the agency rose to 65% in 2023.** We will work with Self Space and particularly our managers to help spot the early signs of poor mental health in their teams.

To establish a sense of community through sport, hobbies and common interests, we have initiated activities, walk and talks, and a book club. We will increase our efforts in 2024 to build relationships and protective factors that support good mental health.

**WE ARE SOCIAL PASSPORT**

The WAS Passport programme lets our people work in one of our global offices for up to two weeks a year. This year, 26 London employees have visited 9 markets around the world.

**WORK FROM ANYWHERE**

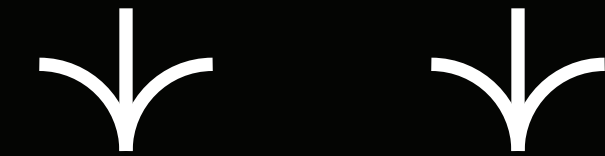
Our Work From Anywhere programme lets our people work anywhere they like for two weeks a year. This year we have had 73 requests.

**HYBRID WORKING**

We have continued to monitor and assess our flexible and blended working approach. Office attendance requirements will increase to **3 days a week in 2024** – we feel that by offering this working pattern, business needs are met by providing tangible time to build relationships and collaborate, while staff are afforded the flexibility to work remotely two days a week.

**OUR PEOPLE**

**IN 2024 WE WILL**



- Maintain Self Space as a core part of our benefit offering.
- Expand and embed community groups and introduce more regular sports clubs.
- Establish a WAS Wellbeing Zone with a clear escalation route.
- Maintain a regular calendar of touchpoints and communication, including a What's On noticeboard.
- Focus on financial wellbeing support for all.
- Encourage greater use of CSR days by launching an all agency challenge.
- Set up a parenting group to provide insights into our inclusive policies and processes.

5

We will create a culture of open dialogue, understanding and respect for different cultural and social values.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

We want to create an agency environment where everyone feels they belong, and where we can openly talk about our cultural and social differences. In our 2023 survey, **69% of people said they feel they belong here, while 81% said they feel respected at our agency.**

### LUNCH AND LEARNS

In 2023, Tom Fadden spoke to us about marketing to the disabled community, while Kim Erin Cowley talked during Pride about her transition journey in the 90s. South Asian Heritage Month also saw the What is This Behaviour? podcast speak about how agencies can better incorporate South Asian communities.

### BLACK PERSPECTIVES

As part of our commitment to platforming more diverse voices in the industry, in 2023 we relaunched our Instagram Live series Black Perspectives. We ran four episodes interviewing Black creators and entrepreneurs, with one hosted on our LinkedIn platform during Black History Month, focused on inspiring Black female creators and their stories.

For 2023, we reviewed our EDI training syllabus, focusing on Introduction to EDI and Neurodiversity Awareness for Managers. Introduction to EDI covers inclusive language, microaggressions and unconscious bias, and has earned positive feedback from attendees.

### WAS VOICES:

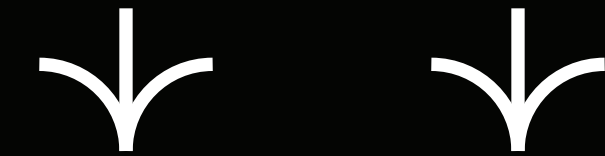
**WAS Voices is a volunteer Employee Resource Group (ERG) that represents different groups in the agency to help inform, deliver and evolve our Charter's ambitions.**

The ERG has helped us mark key religious days observed by those in our employee base, including Diwali and Rosh Hashanah, as well as important cultural days and events, such as Stephen Lawrence Day.

After reviewing our previous education offerings, the ERG proposed we focus our curriculum on one course, bringing everyone to a baseline understanding of key EDI issues and terms.

# OUR CULTURE

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Introduce Inclusive Leadership training to help our senior leaders more confidently and effectively engage in EDI topics and issues.
- WAS Voices will continue to deliver cultural events quarterly and also focus on supporting commitments in the charter.
- Continue with our anti-racism education programme, with internal and external speakers from different cultural and social groups.
- Commit to updating our agency more often on how we are doing against our goals.



6

We will ensure our clients and the suppliers we work with are aware of, and share, our values.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

In 2021, we launched an Anti-Discrimination Code of Conduct which clearly defined the key behaviours that we expect from those we deal with across every part of our business. This continues to be shared with all our existing clients and suppliers, and has been included in all RFI responses and new business pitch presentation documents.

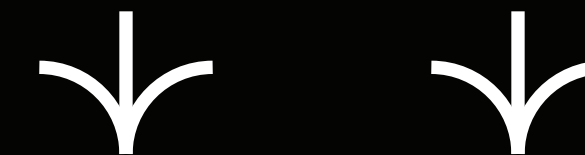
**The Code of Conduct has been positively received by clients and suppliers.** It helps to ensure an environment where we work only with businesses that operate with integrity and decency.

The key principles of this code remain:

- We expect all personnel to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, pregnancy, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- All allegations of discrimination will be taken seriously and the appropriate action taken.
- We expect that our suppliers and third parties can demonstrate diversity within their own workforces and within their supply chain, or will show a commitment and action plan towards this.
- No brief that encourages or incites discrimination, racism or racial segregation will be accepted.
- There will be no association with any organisation that promotes hate or funds supremacist activity.

**OUR CULTURE**

**IN 2024 WE WILL**



- Continue to actively promote our Code of Conduct when pitching for new business.
- Always share the Code of Conduct with all new clients and suppliers, and have inclusive conversations with both new and existing parties.
- Discuss the Code of Conduct at internal quarterly client business reviews.

7

We commit to creating work that is progressive, and which represents different cultural and social values in an authentic way.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In 2023, we put greater focus on ensuring that the content we create is more accessible and consumable by people who are visually impaired and/or hard of hearing – disability having previously been the least talked about aspect of diversity within the agency.

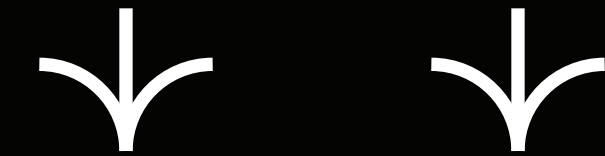
Our vibrant work for Amazon Music, despite the challenges of high volume and fast turnaround times, is a key example of this focus in action. The Amazon Music account is also notable for its Diversity and Representation mission, which articulates how we ensure diversity through our work with creators, through tone of voice/language, through the representation of multiple musical genres, and through the insights and creative ideas themselves.

We've kicked off an initiative with Strategy and R&I to ensure we are bringing wider and more inclusive insights into creative briefs, and also to improve the way we gather and share our expertise on the understanding of diverse audiences.

**Diversity and inclusion cannot simply be added in at the end of a creative process.** Such thinking is required from the first piece of research to the last task of production.

# OUR WORK

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Audit and refresh our connections to organisations and community groups that help us gain deeper insights into the needs and motivations of diverse audiences – with an end goal of creating representative work.
- To ensure diversity and inclusion aspects of briefs are more visible, we will review how we collate unbiased insights, implement an internal cultural counsel, improve the creative process of creating work and provide necessary training.
- Extend internal initiatives (e.g. our Black History Month poster series), and create vibrant, external facing social comms.

8

We will ensure that on and off screen talent is diverse and representative within our productions.

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

On-screen representation has become more deeply embedded in our processes, from client brief through to production. However, more focus is required on specific / less visible groups, while continued monitoring and data collection remains essential.

More effort is also required to tackle the more urgent and challenging issue of representation behind the camera. In response, our dedicated production division We Are Social Studios has been developing a culture of accountability, with a 'triple bottom line' approach that values social and environmental impact on a par with financial results.

This means setting targets, proactively championing a more diverse talent pool through the growing resources now available to producers, then monitoring the results in order to evaluate and improve.

To combat challenges around the increased administrative workload and encouraging busy crew members to engage, we have introduced a minimum standard of capturing self-identification data for directors, photographers, cinematographers and all on-screen talent on every production, with a view to capturing data for every crew and cast member.

We met our 2023 target of ensuring that 1 in 3 selected directors / photographers are from an underrepresented group (36.36%). We are setting ourselves a more ambitious target for next year of 1 in 2.

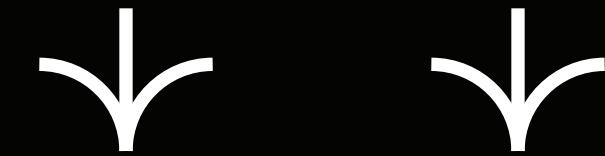
Other notable statistics include **55.2% of our on-screen talent being from ethnic minority groups**, with only 29.8% being white British. In 2024 we will begin to include influencers and creators who are not part of campaign productions in this calculation.

Anecdotally, we have also seen progress in diversifying traditionally homogenous crew roles as the creative leaders on our projects become more diverse – for example, one production where our camera and lighting teams were 75% female or non binary.

As well as encouraging more equitable outcomes, this has the positive effect of making our sets feel more welcoming.

# OUR WORK

## IN 2024 WE WILL



- Ensure at least 1 in 2 directors/photographers are from an underrepresented group.
- Engage in further training and awareness activity to deepen our understanding of less-discussed issues of representation on and off screen.
- Expand our DE&I remit to include creators, influencers, and production activity undertaken by other parts of the business, to ensure more accurate data.
- Continue to encourage our producers to mentor, and give them the training to do so.
- Develop a production-specific work experience program that connects underrepresented groups with the roles they find hardest to access.