

ITV Studios launches new programme for disabled writers to develop scripts

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ITV Studios is today launching its Disabled Writers in Development programme, aiming to elevate the talent pool of disabled writers to prepare them to be commissioned by ITV and the wider industry. The Disabled Writers in Development programme will be paid for through the £500k Diversity Development Fund which was also created to develop new ideas and talent.

The new programme, supported by Patrick Spence's scripted Studio and Tall Story Pictures, will run over a 12-month period. Four writers will develop an ITV-focused idea and write a pilot script. They will then have the opportunity to pitch in a meeting with ITV's Head of Drama Polly Hill and the drama commissioning team.

A Development Executive from each label will work with two writers, supporting and developing their individual projects.

In addition to this, one Trainee Script Editor will be placed at Patrick Spence's scripted Studio and one within Tall Story Pictures as part of the ITV Studios Production Training Scheme. These trainee placements have been ring-fenced for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people who will work alongside each label's Development Executive to assist the writers in development.

To apply, writers must submit a sample script. Applications are open to disabled people only and writers should have at least one professional writing credit (for television, theatre, short film or radio which they have been paid for).

Applications are open now and will close on Friday 9th September. For more information and to apply visit: <https://itv.referrals.selectminds.com/jobs/itv-studios-disabled-writers-in-development-2137>

ITV continues to promote an inclusive and diverse workplace, the broadcaster recently launched its Diversity Commissioning Fund which ring-fences £80m of the content budget to be spent over the next three years to drive change in racial and disability equity. The Disabled Writers in Development programme will be paid for through the £500k Diversity Development Fund which was also created to develop new ideas and talent.

Catherine Oldfield, Creative Director at Tall Story Pictures, said:

"We're completely delighted to be involved in the Disabled Writers in Development programme, and to further the work Tall Story Pictures does to support talent from under-represented groups and help make our industry more diverse and inclusive. The industry needs long-term, sustainable change and we are proud to be a part of delivering this."

Callum Dziedzic, the Development Executive from Patrick Spence's Studio who will be involved with the programme said:

"I feel so proud to be a part of this. It is a wonderfully tangible way to boost the careers and talents of disabled writers."

"The Disabled Writers in Development programme will not only amplify the diversity of stories we tell here at Patrick Spence's Studio, but hopefully bring meaningful change to the wider industry as well."

“Patrick and our team have a brilliant track record for giving authorship opportunities to new talent and this programme will shine a spotlight on some amazing disabled creators of the future.”

Sam Tatlow, Creative Diversity Partner at ITV, said:

“At ITV, we’re continuing to ensure that we are representative of our audience all year round. A programme like this will create unique opportunities for Disabled editorial talent and encourage those who hadn’t considered a career in production to pursue it. As well as, creating a platform to bring their ideas to life.”

According to the Creative Diversity Network’s Diamond data, Disabled people remain underrepresented in the industry and particularly in off-screen roles with the Fifth Cut report showing that 4.5% of off-screen roles at ITV were filled by people who identified as disabled. ITV supports the CDN’s Doubling Disability initiative and has been working collaboratively with the industry to address this. The Disabled Writers in Development programme is one example of how ITV is addressing this underrepresentation.

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