

Speech: Does British television and film reflect the diversity of our modern nation?

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this event to celebrate the second anniversary of Channel Four's 360 Diversity initiative.

It's been fascinating to hear Charles talk about Channel 4's great work in this area.

I look forward to hearing more about your Year of Disability, where I know you have met and in many cases exceeded your commitments.

For example, the doubling in the number of disabled people in top shows on screen. And off screen, the increase in apprenticeships offered to disabled people.

I know the real reason most of you are here is to listen to the brilliant Riz Ahmed – so I won't keep you for too long.

I am here to talk about diversity.

There's no better place to start than to pay tribute to this year's eventual and deserved Oscar winner Moonlight.

Moonlight told the story of a gay black man, but it didn't speak just to a gay black audience. It spoke to anyone who's tried to find a place in the world, and a person to stand beside them in it, to anyone who's struggled.

And it hasn't only been a critical success – it has done brilliant business at the box office too.

Black stories, gay stories, the whole gamut of stories should be told not because it's the right thing to do but because they appeal to us all.

Tell a good story and people will pay to watch and maybe even hand you a shiny statuette if you tell it really well – once they've opened the right envelope.

That's what Moonlight's win teaches us.

On becoming Minister of State for Digital and Culture I made expanding access and diversity one of my top priorities.

It is a central tenet of this Government that everyone, from every background, of every colour and identity, from every part of the country should have equal chance to succeed. That means an equal chance to access arts and culture.

TV brings culture – high-brow, middle-brow, resolutely low-brow – into homes across the land.

And just as TV audiences are wide and diverse, the industry should be too.

While there is already a push for greater diversity on-screen, and we will continue to support that, it must be matched by a similar drive behind the scenes.

Among writers, directors, commissioners and executives.

Television, this proudly demotic medium, should reflect our richly diverse society not only on screen but behind the scenes. In the production offices and commissioning meetings. It shouldn't be an echo chamber for one type of person.

I was delighted to launch Diamond in August, and I am sure it will go from strength to strength.

So ask yourself this:

New technology and distribution is making it easier to break through. But does commissioning reflect the diversity of our modern nation?

Strides are being made on gender, disability, sexual identity, and ethnicity.

But what of social diversity too?

I'm delighted by progress. I'm glad there's a growing consensus that diversity is here to stay. But I'm determined there's more to be done.

Soon I will be holding a 'diversity and social mobility' forum at the world-famous Abbey Road studios. For the first time as a Department, we will be bringing together stakeholders from right across culture, media and sport.

We will celebrate success, and set out what more we can do.

As your Minister, I am determined that by working with many of you in this room, we can make real progress in this area. And ultimately by working together we will reach our goal: of a country that works for everyone, where each and every person has the chance to reach their potential.

[Press release: The UK's Best Apprenticeship](#)

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), an acknowledged world leader in science, technology and innovation, is excited to be coming to this

years What Career Live event at the NEC. This year Dstl has increased the number of apprentices that it wants to recruit to 31. These vacancies cover cyber security, software development, aerospace engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, data analysis and business Administration Support.

Dstl is not just any employer. Our apprentices get to work on some of the UK's most exciting and interesting science and technology programmes. Many of them have international and well as national implications. In recent years, for example, current and former apprentices have worked on space satellites, drones, stealth aircraft and tackling the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, to name a few.

Some of our recent trainees have produced a YouTube video about an innovative project that they have delivered to help tackle cyber attacks on the UK. This is the type of innovative project that our 2017 apprenticeship entrants will be working on.

[YouTube video](#)

Jade Ward, Dstl's Apprenticeship Resourcing Adviser said:

Dstl is justifiably proud of its nationally recognised apprenticeship scheme. Our scheme is different to most others because our apprentices make a contribution to the security, defence and prosperity of the UK. The fact that many of our former apprentices now hold senior positions in Dstl, the MOD and in the private sector is a reflection of the quality of our scheme.

She added:

If you'd like to find out more about our apprenticeship scheme please come and see us on stand A200, next to the visitor's café and parents and advisors lounge.

Ollie, a first year mechanical engineering apprentice from Bromsgrove said:

I didn't want to go to University so when I was coming to the end of my course at the South Bromsgrove Sixth Form, I started to look for a local apprenticeship. At the time I wanted to live at home so wasn't looking much further afield than Birmingham. However, that all changed when I looked at the Dstl apprenticeship programme. The opportunities and training that Dstl offers are second to none, so I knew that I wanted to work for them.

He added:

When it came to moving away from home it wasn't the easiest but once I had started the apprenticeship at Dstl I knew it was the right decision. The course has already covered many different aspects of mechanical engineering not just on the theory side, but also on the practical side developing hand skills and machining skills.

The quality of Dstl's programme for School and College leavers has recently been recognised by [All About School Leavers](#). Dstl's programme is ranked second in the public sector and 32nd overall.

All Dstl's apprentices have the opportunity to gain internationally recognised qualifications as well as sponsorship towards a degree and post-graduate qualifications. Apprentices can also apply for overseas postings and secondments when they have finished their training.

Dstl's apprentices are based at our Porton Down site, near Salisbury and Portsdown West site, near Fareham. Relocation packages may be available to outstanding applicants.

Dstl has a diverse, inclusive workforce and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants. Apprentices at Dstl enjoy a range of benefits including a competitive salary and 25 days paid leave a year.

The last day to apply for one of Dstl's exciting apprenticeships is 31 March 2017.

Further details of Dstl's apprenticeship programme can be found online on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) and Dstl Early Careers [Facebook page](#).

What Career Live is running at the NEC from 3 to 4 March 2017. Come and meet us!

Green Party warns Government cuts to policing are putting lives at risk



Green Party

The Green Party is warning of the danger of underinvestment in public services following the revelation policing in England and Wales is in a “perilous state” due to Government cuts [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The devastating impact of Government underinvestment is clear. Severe budget cuts mean some police officers can’t properly respond to emergencies, track down offenders or protect domestic violence victims. This is now clearly putting lives at risk.

“Underinvestment in the NHS, social care and prisons has already created even greater need, and put even greater strain on public services. Rather than being dealt with appropriately and sensibly, problems are being passed from one agency to another, including the police service, and greater cost being incurred in the long run.

“Despite the hard work of those on the frontline, the people who deserve help, support and protection are being left without it. These cuts are short-sighted and no solution. The Government must recognise this urgently before the budget next week, and change course, otherwise even more lives will be put at risk.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/02/inspectorate-police-engaging-dangerous-practices-austerity-cuts-diane-abbott>

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2015 – present Beijing, Political Counsellor 2013 – 2015 Beijing, Outreach and Bilateral Counsellor 2010 – 2013 Hanoi, Deputy Head of Mission Oct 2009 – April 2010 Maternity Leave Apr 2008 – Oct 2009 Roles in Policy Planning, Strategy, Resources and Finance May 2007 – Apr 2008 Maternity Leave 2006 – 2007 Head India, Nepal, Bhutan Team 2005 – 2006 Head Strategy, International and Media, Afghan Drugs Interdepartmental Unit 2001 – 2005 Hong Kong, Vice Consul Economic 2000 – 2001 Desk Officer Conflict Prevention, Refugee Policy & Humanitarian, United Nations Department 2000 Joined FCO

[News story: New low carbon heating for Gateshead unveiled](#)

The newly-completed Gateshead District Energy Centre is the first of its kind and scale in the North East and will generate and supply low-carbon, low cost energy for up to 350 local homes and businesses in the area.

On a tour of the new centre Minister for Industry and Energy, Jesse Norman said:

This investment in local energy supplies is intended to deliver low carbon energy at competitive prices for local customers. It is a great example of the kind of local initiatives our new Industrial Strategy is looking to support.

Through our ambitious Industrial Strategy Green Paper, the Government is working hard to promote growth across the North East and the rest of the UK, and to ensure the supply of secure, affordable and low-carbon energy for businesses and households.

Unlike conventional power stations, Gateshead's District Energy Centre is capable of capturing waste heat created during the energy generation process and recycling it to keep buildings nearby warm. In addition the network has been designed to ensure the Energy Centre will be able to meet all the energy needs of future developments planned for Gateshead town centre, underpinning the redevelopment of the Baltic Business Quarter, plus the Gateshead Quays area and major housing developments.

The energy centre uses a pair of 2MW gas-powered combined heat and power (CHP) plants to generate enough electricity to power 5,000 homes, with the waste heat from the engines being recovered to provide hot water for heating.

Affordable energy and clean growth is a key pillar of the government's Industrial Strategy green paper, with a clear commitment to ensure the supply of secure, affordable and clean energy for businesses and households across the UK.