



# English transcript of Lunchtime Live with the BSLBT Executive Producers: Charlie Swinbourne, Cathy Heffernan and Julian Peedle-Calloo

on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023

- translated by Claire Dodds

**All** - Hello there! Welcome.

**Cathy** - We're going to be discussing...

**Charlie** - Nice to see everyone...

**Charlie** – Sorry, I interrupted you there, Cathy. Do carry on!

**Cathy** – Oh sorry! I think we were all busy interrupting each other! Okay, well, in this session, we are going to be talking about upcoming opportunities for making TV programmes, and explaining how you might get involved.

**Julian** – Just before we press on, I want to let everyone watching know that you can send us your questions to us live in English or BSL, in the comments. As we go along, will pick them out and answer them as best we can. First though, I'm going to pass over to Charlie, whose focus is on drama.

**Charlie** – Thanks Julian. If I could just start by explaining a little about my work; I'm an Executive Producer at BSLBT, with a focus on drama. These guys are Executive Producers too, but their focus is on factual programming. I deal with the drama, which is more popular, am I right?

**Julian** – Well I'm not sure about that! I don't know whether our audience today would agree. Is drama really more popular than factual programming? It's up to you to decide.

**Cathy** – We deal with real life, Charlie deals with imaginary stuff.

**Charlie** – Okay, okay, maybe you're right. And I know you will be talking about factual programming today as well, but if I can just talk about drama first?

**Cathy** – Yes, we'll keep the best till last.

**Charlie** – Ha, ha!

**Julian** - Got you there!

**Charlie** – Very funny! Anyway, drama. At the moment, we've got a really exciting new project about to launch next week called **Coffee Morning Club**. This is a new programme, a comedy and it's absolutely fantastic.

**Cathy** – You called it a new programme, but it's a series really, isn't it?

**Charlie** – Yes, a series, you're right, thank you.

**Julian** – There are five episodes I think, aren't there?

**Charlie** – You're right, there are. You know more about it than me! We're being live-streamed, and I feel a bit nervous, that's my excuse. Anyway, so **Coffee Morning Club** is our new comedy and I suppose it's a bit

like **The Office** in some ways. It's set in a Deaf Club which is under threat of closure, and the story revolves around whether or not they will be successful in staying afloat. The characters work to try and save the Deaf Club in various ways. It's a real must-watch and I'm so excited that it's finally come to fruition because we've been working on it for a long time.

**Cathy** – And who came up with the idea for this programme? How did it all get started?

**Charlie** – Well a year and a half ago, when I started this post, **Coffee Morning Club** had already been commissioned. It was written by Matthew Gurney. I know he worked on the script for a long time. When that was finished, last year, we filmed, and then we've been editing. It has taken a long time.

**Cathy** – Where was it filmed?

**Charlie** – In Gloucester. Matthew is actually acting in it as well, along with a lot of other Deaf characters, so there's lots to see.

**Julian** – How many Deaf characters altogether?

**Charlie** – I can't remember exactly. Maybe eight or ten. A lot! There are hearing characters too and honestly, it's really, really funny. I highly recommend that you watch it. It's called **Coffee Morning Club**.

**Julian** – And it's being broadcast in July, is that right?

**Charlie** – Yes, throughout July, starting next week.

**Cathy** – So that series is finished and it's ready to be screened, but you must have other stuff in development. I know there are also some new opportunities coming up. Perhaps you could tell us more about those?

**Charlie** – Definitely. So, at the moment we have three different dramas in development, all at different stages. The development process can be quite lengthy. We start off with a story outline which is then broken down into different scenes which are used to develop a script. The three we're currently working on have involved three relatively new Deaf writers who have been developing their experience. They've made huge improvements and they are all really exciting projects, but I can't really tell you much more than that at the moment. It's top secret!

We also have two new opportunities coming up, which is what I really want to talk about today. They are both little different, as we are looking for something shorter than our usual programming on this occasion. We usually make half-hour dramas or comedies, but on this time we are looking for something shorter.

Firstly, we have the **Short Film Scheme**, which is aimed at new writers. If there are people out there who are interested in scriptwriting and looking to get their ideas developed, then this is for you. We are really keen to see everyone's ideas and welcome applications in BSL by video, so don't be put off by thinking you have to get everything down in English. Choose whichever suits you best. If you have a really great idea, then tell us more. Your film must be set in one location though, with a maximum of four characters. If there are people out there who are new to scriptwriting, then do get in touch because we are very keen to nurture new creative talent and we want to give people the opportunities to develop their ideas.

When you are thinking about your story, consider what might have happened to your characters beforehand, as well as what is happening in your drama. It might only be a 10-minute short film, but that's plenty of time for lots of things to happen. We want to see exciting, dynamic ideas.

**Cathy** – What if I have never written anything before, but I have an exciting idea. If I don't have experience of writing for TV, can I still apply?

**Charlie** – Yes, absolutely. In fact, we're actively looking for new writers, so people with no experience should definitely apply.

**Julian** – And if the idea is accepted, what kind of support will you be offering people, to take their idea forwards?

**Charlie** – We will be offering people mentors if they are successful. Their mentor will support them throughout the process, and we will also be running a masterclass, where people will learn more about the process of writing and will be supported through the different stages of creating a script. Successful applicants will also have access to some specialist software called Final Draft. We will be providing that to our writers and supporting them to learn how to use it. So, if your idea for a short film is accepted, you will have help writing it and then we'll see it through to becoming a real film sometime next year. This is a really great opportunity to start developing a career in this area, if that's something you're interested in doing in the future.

**Cathy** – I am sure a lot of the people watching today will be BSL users, and they may be wondering how accessible this process will be to them if English is their second language. How is it going to work? I know you said you welcome submissions from BSL users, but how will the process work?

**Julian** – I'm sure you've had experience of this before Charlie, so maybe you can give this an example of how this is worked for somebody else and what adaptations can be made?

**Charlie** – We are really supportive and open to working in different ways. If people want to apply in BSL, they definitely should. If they want to create the script in BSL, we can certainly support that as well.

**Cathy** – And how would that work? How would you go about creating a BSL script? Would you film it, or...?

**Charlie** – We would provide support to help the writer develop their story in BSL, and that would continue throughout the process. Everybody is different, so there's no one set way of working I could describe here that would work for everyone. We are really happy to work in BSL of course, we are **BSL Zone** after all, so if you feel that working in English is not for you, please don't be put off applying. The key thing for us is your idea, your concept and characters and your story. That's what's important.

**Cathy** – So if people out there are thinking of applying, but want to know more, can they contact you?

**Charlie** – Yes.

**Cathy** – They could have a discussion with you, and you would be able to support them with the application process?

**Charlie** – For sure, yes. People can go to our website where we have a section called **Making TV**... Oh bless you! Julian just sneezed. So, we have a section on our website called **Making TV**. If you go there, you'll see the [commissioning@bslbt.co.uk](mailto:commissioning@bslbt.co.uk) email address. Email marked for my attention if it's drama you're interested in. Julian and Cathy can be reached the same email address too.

**Cathy** – Yeah, I will put the email address somewhere on Facebook where people can find it too.

**Charlie** – Okay, and it's on the website as I say. So that's the **Short Films Scheme**, but we also have a second opportunity that I want to tell people about and that is the **Monologue or Duologue Round**. Again, this is for a short piece, this time with only one or two characters. It should be a simple story and again just in one location. For this round, it's really important to think of the characters' story. What has been happening to them just before we see them? What's happening in the story? So, this is a bit different. We are looking for either new or experienced writers here. The key thing is the story and the characterisation. What is it that you want to say? What is your concept?

**Julian** – And I understand you're looking to increase diversity within the pool of writing talent?

**Charlie** – Most definitely, yes. We want to see diversity right across our productions, not just writers, so that is behind the camera, actors, the whole thing. If you are a writer from a diverse background and you feel like you have a great story to tell, that's great. If your story includes diverse characters, that's fantastic. We are really open to your ideas on this.

**Cathy** – We have a question coming up I believe from somebody watching today. They say that Deaf representation in visual arts, such as photography, cookery, etc., is quite rich, but what about Deaf people in academia, health and social care? It seems that they are not fully covered in the factual programmes. I think that's one for us really, Julian, isn't it?

**Julian** – Yes, it's a query about factual programming.

**Cathy** - Sorry, Charlie.

**Julian** – Ok, hold that question and we will get back to it later, okay? Thank you. Charlie?

**Charlie** – I feel like I've talked a lot about drama now. People are more than welcome to contact me if they want to and I'm happy to answer any questions, but maybe now it's time to pass over to you two, so you can tell us more about the factual programming.

**Julian** – Okay. And just to repeat, if you are watching at home and want more information or have a question about drama commissioning, you can drop those in the comments in either English or BSL and Charlie can pick those up later on in the live stream. Okay, now over to me and Cathy for factual programming.

**Charlie** – Do you want me to ask the questions? Okay, so, as the Executive Producer for drama, I work on my own. It's a hard life I know! You two work together though, and you are both Executive Producers, both dealing with factual programming. How does that work? Who is responsible for what?

**Julian** – We just split our workload based on what is commissioned, as it comes in. Cathy, for example, was the EP for **Food Fighters**, I've been responsible for the **Sign2Win** series, but I'm now passing that over to Cathy for the special episode we have commissioned. So, we do split the work fairly equally, and we talk about which might be best suited to our skills and agree it between us.

**Cathy** – Yes, so for example, I've been working on the **You, Me, Garden?** special at a Deaf club which has been really exciting. I also worked on **Food Fighters** as Julian said, which was a children's cookery programme, a series of 6 programmes, which we made with Flashing Lights Media and broadcast earlier this year.

It's a competitive cookery programme, where kids get to showcase their skills, but it also includes culturally Deaf elements. So, for example, where a mainstream programme would use audible alarms to alert contestants that their time was up, this uses flashing lights. It was a neat way to show some of the ways in which Deaf people do things differently. That wasn't specifically the aim, as I said it was a cookery programme, but within our factual programming, we are really keen to take all the opportunities we can to incorporate elements of Deaf life, whether that's Deaf issues, Deaf leadership, or Deaf stories. Deaf people want to see themselves represented on screen and it's not always about being Deaf, but simply about living our lives. So, as I said, we've been working on this cookery programme, and the gardening programme, and I know Julian's been busy with **Sign2Win**, which has been very popular.

**Julian** – Yes, **Sign2Win** is very different from a lot of our other programmes. Its focus is heavily on Deaf people, Deaf culture, Deaf comedy, language and humour. All of these form part of the games our contestants play. We could have just lifted the format from a successful hearing gameshow, but that's a bit mundane. We've shown that we can take something like this and make it our own, make it relevant to Deaf audiences. And it's been hugely successful. Everybody loves **Sign2Win** and it's a real feelgood show, too, it makes people happy. The contestants have to use their skills and wit to complete the challenges. We get to see the emotional rollercoaster when they compete. It's been brilliant!

**Cathy** - And of course, there is an opportunity to win some cold, hard cash, so that always helps!

**Julian** – True!

**Charlie** – You're right, yes. And that programme, **Sign2Win**, has been really popular precisely because it highlights so many positive aspects of our culture and the strength of people's friendships and humour, and that's really something special. Have you had good feedback from audiences?

**Julian** – The feedback has been incredible. Overwhelmingly positive. Lots of people have contacted us to say they want to be participants, whether that's because they want to win money or just because they are keen to experience being a quiz show contestant. We haven't really seen Deaf contestants in mainstream quiz shows. This one really resonates with Deaf people because it's based on our culture. There's no

embarrassment or concern about not knowing the answers. People relate to it because they see their culture and identity reflected there, in the structure of the show. And it's great fun! That's the main thing.

**Charlie** – I think there's one thing we perhaps should explain to the audience, and that's a little bit more about what being an Executive Producer involves. A lot of people won't be familiar with the job, and not be clear on what the difference is between EPs and Directors or Producers. So basically the three of us oversee programme making.

**Cathy** – Yes, **BSL Zone** don't actually make the programmes that you watch. The programmes are made by various different production companies who put forward their proposals for programmes to us. We then choose the programmes that we feel are the best fit for our audience, the things we think people will want to see, and then we commission those programmes, which means we fund the production companies to go off and make them. Our role as Executive Producers is to liaise with those companies. We are responsible for overseeing the making of the programmes, as Charlie said, and to make sure that the programme is delivered on time and is something we want for our audience. I think that's a fair summary, would you agree?

**Charlie** – Yes, and for factual programming, I'm assuming you communicate a lot with the company that's making the show, to offer advice and support, to check the scripts, provide feedback on changes, that kind of thing. Are you involved throughout the process?

**Julian** – Yes, we give them feedback throughout. We are also involved in the editing, providing feedback at that stage to make sure that programmes are understandable and engaging for our audiences.

**Charlie** – Yes, I oversaw the editing for **Coffee Morning Club** and I think I watched the same episodes about 10 or 12 times and offered feedback. The team working on it were fantastic. The director, the producers, everybody, they all did a great job. During the edit, I made suggestions about which bits I thought worked really well, and which bits could perhaps be made shorter. It's a really interesting job.

**Cathy** – Yes, really, we're all working together to make a programme or a series of programmes as good as it possibly can be, so it's definitely a collaborative thing.

**Charlie** – Yes, for sure.

**Julian** – I agree.

**Charlie** – And I know that you have some upcoming opportunities within factual programming too, like those we currently have in drama, for...

**Cathy** – Something just fell over off screen!

**Charlie** – Yes, somebody just knocked over a jar of pens and they've gone everywhere. Sorry, that was a bit distracting!

**Julian** – That kind of chaos is normal for television!

**Charlie** – So, new opportunities for people to put forward their ideas - what can you tell me about what's going on at the moment?

**Cathy** – Maybe before we talk about the commissioning rounds we've got coming up, perhaps I should tell you a little bit about some of the work we've done previously, commissioning new programmes or films from newcomers to the industry who want to make something for TV. In the past, we ran a short films scheme where people could apply with their ideas. Last year we chose two projects put forward by people who had little or no prior experience in TV, and we made two short films. Both of them have been very popular online. One was called **Klarissa**, about a Deaf artist from Northern Ireland talking about identity. The other one was called **CODA**...?

**Julian** – **CODA**, that's right, I think.

**Cathy** – About CODAs. I'm not 100% sure on the title though. It's a lovely film about...

**Julian** – **CODA & Proud!** That's it.

**Cathy – CODA & Proud.** Yes, thank you Julian. And it's a lovely film about two children who talk about their identity as CODAs. That film was made by a Deaf woman with two hearing children who wanted to see her own children's experiences as CODAs represented on TV, but could not find anything out there, not for children anyway. That was her inspiration for the film, and she approached us through the short film scheme to make that film.

We recognised, though that there was some difficulty around a lack of opportunities for people who had some experience, and who now wanted to progress to the next level, working as an Assistant Producer perhaps, with the aim of becoming a Producer or Director in future. So, two years ago, we started our **New Directors Initiative** to encourage people with little, or no experience of making a full-length programme to get involved, working as Directors or Producers. We collaborated with one particular production company who are experienced in factual programme making for this. One of these programmes, **Birmingham Made Me**, will be delivered soon and will come out at the end of this year which is very exciting. We have a second programme in production at the moment, being worked on by an upcoming Producer, which is very exciting. So there have been previous opportunities, but at the moment we do not have any open opportunities for new filmmakers. We are planning to get something up and running soon though, so do keep an eye out if you're interested in factual programming and are on the lookout for an opportunity. Keep in touch with us, keep an eye on our website and look out for upcoming commissioning rounds.

**Charlie** – If people have an interest in working on Deaf programmes or in television, I would really encourage them to get in touch with any of us really, just to register their interest. We are really happy to make a note to share your names with production companies, with your permission, of course.

**Julian** – Yes, and we are always open to discussion in the first instance, so you are definitely welcome to get in touch to discuss your ideas with us. We are really happy to offer advice and guidance about which production companies BSLBT has worked with previously and signpost you to them, if you want to work together with them on an application.

**Charlie** – But you don't have any open opportunities for new talent at the moment?

**Julian** – No, but we do have two commissioning rounds coming up, one for a documentary, and one for formatted programmes. Cathy, do you want to explain more about the documentary?

**Cathy** – Sure. This round is to commission a documentary. We want people to tender for a single documentary and we're looking for a powerful story with strong characters. It needs to tell us... Sorry, I've lost track. Let me go back...

**Charlie** – You were talking about characters.

**Julian** – Yes, so the focus is on character.

**Cathy** – Yes, okay, so we want a really powerful story with strong characters that is appealing to our audience. We want this documentary to tell us something about Deaf people's experiences. Previously we have commissioned programmes, such as **Being Marcus** or...

**Julian** – **I Want To Change The World.**

**Cathy** – Yes, that's another great one! A fascinating look at the Deaf child in a mainstream setting, and the other about a transgender Deaf man. We want more like that, definitely. Our community is hugely diverse, and we want to show that.

**Charlie** – So it needs to be a really human story.

**Cathy** – Yes, a personal story, but also something that tells us about the richness and diversity of our community. We are keen to hear from people who feel that their stories have never really been shared on screen before. Perhaps older Deaf people or Deaf people with disabilities, LGBTQIA. We're open to anything. We are keen that this opportunity is used to reflect our audience. We want it to surprise and challenge us.

**Julian** – Yes, we want the audience to learn something new, and to be moved by what they see too. That's our aim.

**Cathy** – Exactly, yes.

**Charlie** – And it's just a single documentary, is that right?

**Julian** – Yes, it's just a single half-hour programme.

**Cathy** – Well it's one for now, and of course there will be other opportunities in the future, but at the moment we're just looking to commission one. We really welcome applications from all parts of the community. On this occasion we will only be commissioning one though.

**Julian** – If you have an idea for this, do we get in touch with me and Cathy. Would be more than happy to arrange a time to meet and talk your ideas through with you and will support you if you want to apply.

**Cathy** – Another opportunity, Julian, is...

**Julian** – Yes, the format commissioning round. We are looking to commission... how many episodes?

**Cathy** – Five!

**Julian** – Five, that's right, five episodes...

**Charlie** – What is a format?

**Julian** – That's a very good question Charlie. A format programme is something like **Sign2Win** or **You, Me, Garden?**.

**Charlie** – So you're kind of repeating the structure of the programme in each episode?

**Julian** – Yes, the format, the structure of the programme is repeated. So, there are familiar elements that repeat in each programme. I can see we have more questions coming in through the comments though, so let's hold on the format for now and address those.

**Charlie**, it looks like you've got a question from Kevin Buckle who is asking whether there will be any more drama programmes focusing on language deprivation in education. Do you have plans to include anything like that?

**Charlie** – That is a good question. At the moment there are no plans for anything like that. Thanks for your question though, Kevin, because it is an area that we could focus on in the future. How it works with drama applications is that it really depends what kind of submissions get put forward.

**Julian** – Maybe Kevin could be one of your new writers?

**Charlie** – Yes, maybe! Kevin, you might like to put forward your ideas for a story. I think language deprivation is really important area that affects a lot of Deaf people, so definitely it would be something we would be interested in. It's certainly something I'd like to do in the future.

**Cathy** – It's a topic a lot of Deaf people feel passionately about, isn't it Charlie? They want to raise awareness about the challenges of language deprivation and there are lots of other issues that relate to it which are also important. What would be your advice to people watching who are perhaps thinking of writing a proposal around this topic? How would you go about developing a story around that?

**Charlie** – That's a really good question, Cathy. If there are people watching who are really interested in telling a story about language deprivation, or want to see something like that dramatised, and are wondering how to create a story around it, my advice would be to focus on the characters. How might they have been affected by language deprivation early in life and how has that impacted on their ability to learn? Perhaps they were educated orally and became sign language users later in life. You need to think about how we see the story through their eyes. Remember though that for this film opportunity, we are looking for an idea set in a single location with a maximum of four characters.

**Julian** – The idea might also be suitable for the other round, the monologue and duologue round.

**Charlie** – Yes that's true. It could work for both. Either way, think about how the character is affected, and who the other characters in the story are - a teacher perhaps, parents, siblings, friends? Think about how

we as the audience see and understand the impact of language deprivation. That's the kind of starting point you need to think about when you're creating your story. And as I say, it can be about anything, but thank you, Kevin, for raising this topic.

**Cathy** – I think we have a question for us this time, Julian.

**Julian** – Yes, it was another question from Kevin Buckle. I think you read it out before Cathy, didn't you.

**Cathy** – Yes but let me repeat it before we answer it. So, Kevin was saying how on-screen representation of Deaf people in the visual arts is quite rich, but what about Deaf people in academia, health and social care. He feels our programmes lack representation of these groups.

**Julian** – In response, I should say that **This Is Deaf** did cover a number of related topics, such as mental health, where experts were interviewed. For example we had... I can't remember his name... Lovely man... Herbert! Herbert Klein, talking about mental health with Richard France. That was a real in-depth look at the subject of mental health support in the past, the stigma and the fear of being exposed. So that topic certainly has come up in **This Is Deaf**. That series actually covered a number of quite serious topics.

But what about whole programmes focusing on some of these, Cathy?

**Cathy** – Another thing I would say is that there are a couple of challenges around, for example, health and social care. Firstly, any professionals working in these areas have an obligation to remain confidential. It's quite difficult for them to participate because there are limitations as to what they can talk about. Sometimes if you want the full story, it's easier to bring in somebody who has experienced the system from the other side, as a patient, because of course they are free to talk about their own experiences.

**Julian** – You're right Cathy, and there are restrictions on filming professionals at work too, which makes it difficult.

**Cathy** – If you are clever about how you approach it though, I would not say it was impossible. You're right Kevin, there are a lot of professionals out there who do really interesting and important work and perhaps they haven't been represented in our programming as fully as they could be.

**Julian** – But again, with this upcoming documentary being commissioned, perhaps if you have an idea you could get in touch with us and talk it through, see how you can develop it further.

**Cathy** - And as Charlie was saying, think how you can develop a story from a topic you are interested. When you do that for a drama, you have to think about characterisation and story and how they can reveal the topic. I would say it's similar here for the single documentary. If you have an interesting topic or there is a particularly interesting person you want to focus on, you need to think about how the story can be told. What is the story here? That's what we want to know.

**Julian** – Yes, and you might need to think about the back story to your piece too, so the audience has a context and knows what's coming as the documentary captures the important moments in the here and now. The messages in your story need to link back to the past.

**Cathy** – And if the event you're interested in happened in the past, then you need to think about something in the present day which we can film and link back to it.

**Charlie** – Sorry to interrupt, but it's interesting, isn't it, how documentaries and dramas can be quite similar in some ways. They usually follow one person's journey. Sometimes it can be a group of people, but there always needs to be a starting point, and then a period of change and then a resolution. I'm thinking about that earlier question - you could have a journey through academia as your story, and that gives you scope to add extra information.

**Cathy** – Yes, that's true.

**Charlie** – Julian, earlier you were talking about the format commissioning round. I don't think you finished what you were saying?

**Julian** – Format, yes right. Although, please do keep sending your questions in. Okay, so in terms of the format commissioning round, we are looking to commission a series of five new lifestyle programmes. So,



that might be house makeovers, some kind of cookery programme again. Our audiences seem to like cookery programmes, I think, but I don't know, so tell us. What other kinds of formats might there be Cathy? Comedy?

**Cathy** – Comedy programmes, yes...

**Julian** – Discussion programmes...

**Cathy** – We were talking earlier about how there are so many dating programmes now, so maybe we could have something like that, where older Deaf people find love. I don't know, it's just an idea. I'm sure there are people with plenty of good ideas out there, and we'd really like to see them.

**Charlie** – A lot of people seem to really love dating programmes. How many episodes are being commissioned this format?

**Julian** – Five.

**Charlie** – Okay, so the format needs to be strong enough to sustain five episodes.

**Julian** – Yes, and if it's successful, we might choose to commission a further five, and so on. It's possible.

**Cathy** – It could be like **Sign2Win**, where the template is repeated faithfully within each episode. In **Food Fighters**, the format was similar each time, but they were connecting elements between each episode, building up to a final. In **Sign2Win**, each episode is a one-off, where the winning couple take the prize. Both of those would work.

**Julian** – So Cathy, you were the EP on **Food Fighters**, which was a competition format. **This Is Deaf**, which I was involved with, was not competitive, but is also an example of a format, where different topics are discussed each episode.

**Cathy** – **You, Me, Garden?** did not have a competitive element either, but it's also a format, so it's quite broad.

**Charlie** – The format seems pretty open to different ideas, depending on what people come forward with. You don't really have any fixed ideas about what subjects you want covering, so you are open to pretty much anything, is that right?

**Cathy** – Yes. I think we have a few more questions over there... The first one, I think you should answer, Charlie.

**Charlie** – So, Connor Fergus is asking - when you look for applicants for stories, do you look for certain scripts or subjects to tackle or is it open to anything? I think we've just answered that! For both drama and factual really, we are open to anything. We are not looking for anything specific on a particular topic. We are looking for interesting stories.

**Julian** – It's the story that's important, isn't it?

**Charlie** – That's key. Yes, whatever your subject is, you need a strong story to carry it. I would imagine it's similar for factual programming, isn't it?

**Julian** – Yes, I would say so.

**Cathy** – Yes, I would say we're open to all ideas. One thing I think is key for us at the moment though is representation of diversity. We want to try and encourage people from diverse backgrounds to come forward with their ideas. I think that's particularly important within factual TV at the moment.

**Julian** – I agree.

**Charlie** – Looks like there's another question there from Kevin again.

**Cathy** – So Kevin was wondering whether there are any filmmaking courses run by Deaf people who work for TV production companies here in the UK. Do you know of any film courses Julian? I can't think of any, no. Not any that are run by Deaf people, no.

**Julian** – No, and nothing related to ethnic minorities either. You see there Cathy, the second element of Kevin’s question?

**Cathy** – I thought that was a separate question? It reads like two different questions to me.

**Julian** – Yeah, you’re right.

**Cathy** – I’m just trying to clarify if there are two questions there.

**Charlie** – I think Kevin is linking the two and asking whether there is any training, but also whether within that, there are any efforts being made to recruit Deaf people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Cathy** – I don’t know. I personally have not heard of any courses that are run by Deaf people.

**Julian** – No, but I know of some more specific workshops that have been provided. The runners’ workshop that Flashing Lights recently announced, for example. So, there are pockets of training out there. I know that workshop aims to explain what the role of a runner is, and there is the potential for attendees to be involved in productions in the future. I think that happened recently and I also think Drummer TV did something similar on runners before. There are different levels of work within TV production and usually you have to work your way up. Normally you would start off as a runner, which is the most junior position, and then work up to a more senior post.

**Cathy** – I would imagine in short films it’s the same, is it Charlie?

**Charlie** – Well, within the short film scheme, as I said earlier, a training element will be provided in the form of a masterclass. Successful applicants will also have a mentor and we are also giving them specialist software. I think that will encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to apply. I should also say that the short film scheme not only has the writing element, which I’ve described here today, but when the film is actually being made by the production company, because, as **Cathy** said earlier, we don’t make our own programmes here at BSLBT, then I think there will be other opportunities at that stage for people to get involved in working behind the cameras as well as acting opportunities. So, there will be other opportunities later.

**Julian** – We recently did short film and a PD... [**Cathy** interrupts]. We’re talking about ethnic minorities, underrepresentation, and how we can increase representation.

**Cathy** – Yes, so, definitely television at the moment is not representative enough of the community we live in, so we do want to try and diversify our outputs. We are tackling that on two fronts. Firstly, we are aiming to recruit more people from underrepresented groups to work on camera, but we are also aware that we need to increase representation behind the camera too. We will work on this from a number of different angles and are open to trying different things, but one thing we want to be open and honest about is that if you do feel there are barriers to your own participation, we would really like you to get in touch. We are absolutely open to talking to you about what solutions you feel would be helpful. Tell us more about who you are, tell us what you feel. What are the barriers holding you back? With an open dialogue and the right support we can change this.

**Julian** – I have to say, **This Is Deaf** had fantastic representation of ethnic minorities at every level. The AP and Researcher were both really brilliant.

**Charlie** – What is an AP, Julian?

**Julian** – Oh sorry, an Assistant Producer. You’re right. I shouldn’t assume that everybody knows the acronyms of the TV world. Assistant Producer and Researcher, so the Researcher investigates the story and passes on what they have found to the Producer, who then creates a script and a plan for filming in order to make the programme. And, as I say, there were many people from ethnic minority backgrounds involved in making that programme, which is brilliant and I do think we are seeing increasing levels of representation, would you agree Cathy? What about the PD in your programmes too Cathy?

**Cathy** – Yes, you’re right, both PDs...

**Charlie** – What is a PD?

**Cathy** – Oh, whoops!

**Julian** – Sorry. Producer Director. I should leave you to explain that, Cathy.

**Cathy** – So, Producer and Director are usually two different roles, but in factual TV often one person does them both. That person is known as the PD because they both produce and direct the programme.

**Charlie** – The producer arranges things, gets everything set up and the Director has the overall vision for the programme. So, taking on both roles together is obviously a very important job. And the three of us have all worked in a variety of those roles. I've been an AP before, Julian and I both worked at **See Hear** before, where Julian was the Assistant Producer, and I was a Researcher. That must've been about 15 years ago now! Cathy, I'm sure you have worked as a PD a lot. I've done it, and Julian has too.

**Julian** – Cathy, you've worked as a Researcher a lot too I believe, in Ireland, right?

**Cathy** – Yes, I've been a Researcher, I've been an AP, an Assistant Producer, a Producer, a Director and a PD.

**Charlie** – We have been busy people over the years and have had a lot of different jobs! We have a wealth of experience between us.

**Julian** – If you have any more questions, now is the time to ask.

**Charlie** – Yes, it's your last opportunity before we finish.

**Charlie** – Do you want to explain this next question?

**Cathy** – I'm not sure it is a question. I think it's just a comment, which is fine. Kevin raised the issue of intersectionality, which I would sign like this. He is suggesting this topic should be debated.

**Julian** – Intersectionality. Yes, I would sign it something like that too.

**Charlie** – It's really useful for people to tell us what is important to them, to the audience. What do you want to see. We are definitely keen to hear your ideas about programmes we might make in the future. There are lots of different issues or areas that interest people, so we can't guarantee that we will definitely cover everything, but we really do appreciate you taking the time to contact us, so please keep emailing. Do let us know what is important to you.

**Julian** – And as I said before, we would be more than happy to meet with you and talk about your ideas.

**Cathy** – The contact email address is on the website.

**Charlie** – The email address is [commissioning@bslbt.co.uk](mailto:commissioning@bslbt.co.uk). Okay, but take a look on the website just to make sure though.

**Julian** – So we are nearly finished now. Do either of you have any last words of advice before we wrap up?

**Charlie** – I just really want to thank people for watching. I really appreciate your time and your questions and your ideas. Really, in terms of drama, I would say if you have any ideas for a story, if you're really passionate about something or you can picture great characters, then get in touch. It doesn't need to be a finished product, it can be something you're still developing, so please do get in touch with me for a chat, that's absolutely fine. And don't forget, you can apply in BSL or in English. I can't wait to hear from you! Please get in touch.

**Cathy** – I'd say the same really. We really welcome any ideas you may have. Whether you are experienced or have a clear vision about what you want to do, or if you are still thinking about taking your first steps into TV, and you want bit of help or advice about how to get your foot in the door, it doesn't matter. We're waiting to hear from you, whether you're a new writer or somebody with more experience, whether your idea is fully formed or still developing, it doesn't matter, just bring it to us, we'll discuss it and see where it goes. TV work is all about collaboration and teamwork and conversation, so do get in touch.

**Julian** – And remember, you are our audience, you watch our programmes, so we rely on your feedback and your ideas to deliver the kind of television that you enjoy watching, right?

**Charlie and Cathy** – Yes.

**Charlie** – Don't forget though, Julian, that drama is much more popular than factual programming, okay!

**Julian** – No, factual is best.

**All** – Anyway, thank you everyone and goodbye.