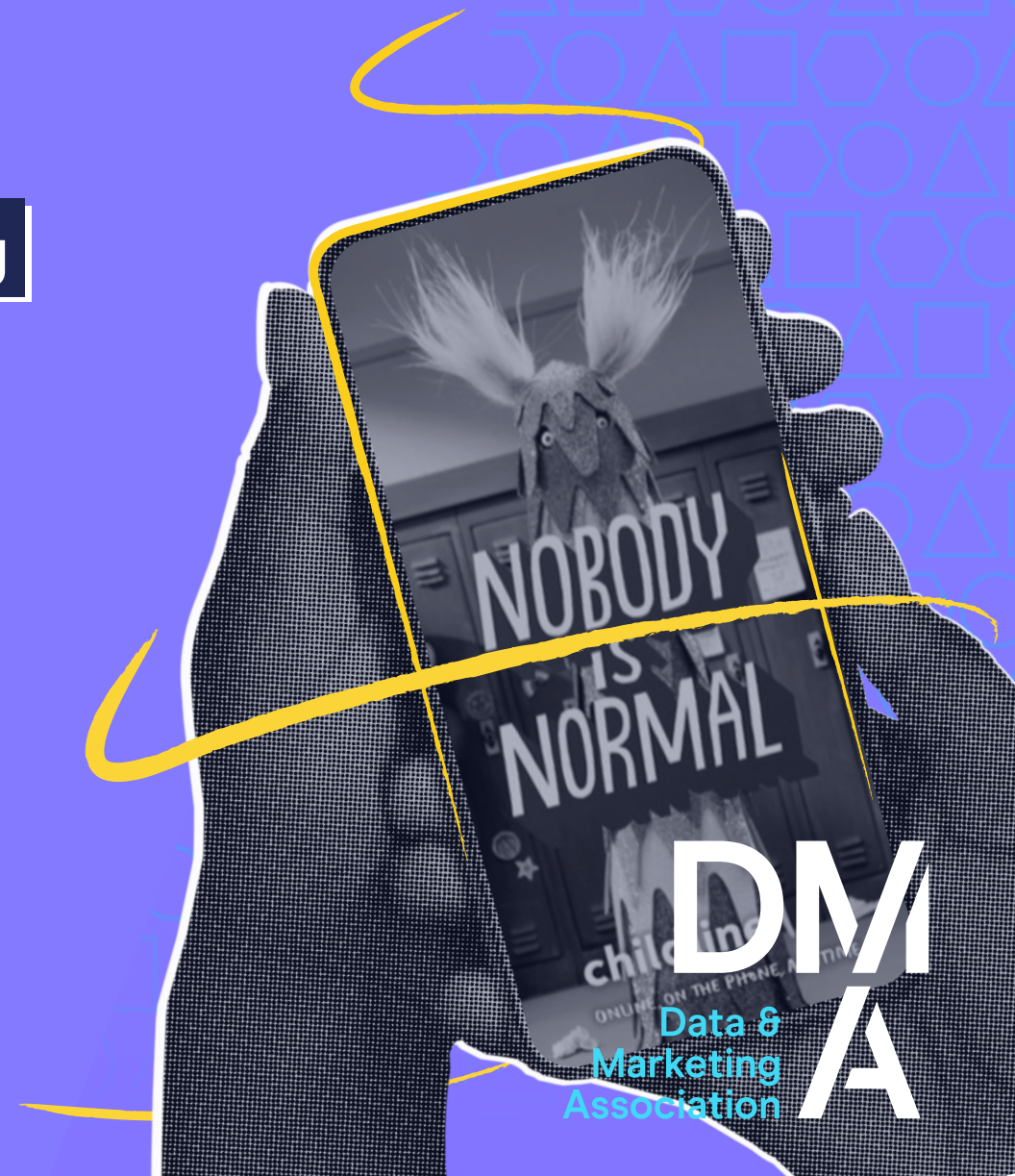
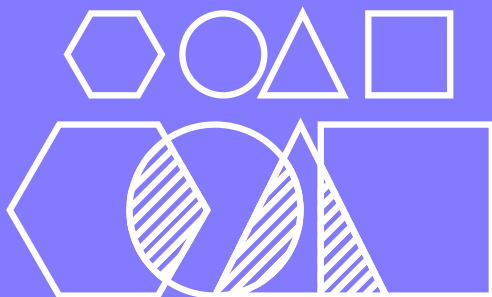


# Creative

## Diversity #2

It's Okay to Not Feel Okay

Great British Creativity



**DM**  
Data & Marketing  
Association  
**A**



the gate

childline  
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

BLINKINK

that Always Was

ROWDY

the gate

## Different is the ~~New~~ Normal ^

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Childline's Nobody is Normal, a stop motion ad by creative agency **The Gate**, aims to open conversations between a child who is struggling and someone they trust. Launched during the pandemic, a time when the charity has experienced a huge spike in children seeking their counselling services, the response to the ad was overwhelming.

"Personally, it was the most successful organically shared ad I have ever made," said Senior Copywriter Rickie Marsden, adding that some of his friends who're teachers told him children were watching it in schools and making their own creatures to represent how they felt different. "Nobody is Normal is that first step to understanding," he said.

The campaign ran across targeted digital and social channels.

Read on for our interview with Rickie.

childline  
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

BLINKINK

ROWDY

BLINKINK

ROWDY

the gate

childline  
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

BLINKINK



## What inspired you to create *Nobody Is Normal*?

The inspiration came from trying to speak to ourselves when we were younger. When you grow up, you learn that what makes you different is what sets you apart in the world.

## Often copywriters write for an adult audience. Was it difficult to get into the mindset of a teenager?

The whole creative team had their own experiences of not feeling normal growing up and wanting to, making it easy to breathe life into that thought.

## What advice would you give to other creatives looking to do projects for a younger audience?

Don't patronise. As adults, it's easy to look back and think it was much simpler and that we didn't have complex emotions, but we did, and children do. They just have less experience of how to handle them.



The final scene, the school dance, when the main character reveals their true self, before everyone else does too.







## What was the process?

Initially, we came up with Nobody is Normal in a different guise. Still for **Childline**, it was originally intended for the Channel 4 Diversity in Advertising Award. We didn't end up submitting to the competition, but **Childline** came back to us as they loved the message and wanted us to expand on the concept for them.

## What techniques did you use?

We used B-movie horror films for inspiration. Stop motion often feels cute and childlike, but we wanted to give this a strange feeling and an otherness that represents how children really feel. The lighting and camera angles were planned before the final designs of the characters.

## Radiohead's classic "Creep" seems like the perfect choice. Were there any other song contenders?

"Creep" was something we had in mind from an early stage, though we had heard it's difficult to get the rights to it. We're dreamers, and luckily our incredible producer, Susie Innes, made it happen. Our second choice would have been equally as hard to get the rights to: "I've Got You Under My Skin" by Frank Sinatra.



The characters are so vibrant and unique.

How did you come up with them?



This is largely down to the incredible Catherine Prowse, who we worked with on the characters. Each one was approached individually and given their own style.

We took different topics that children spoke about in the messaging boards on the **Childline** website and used them as inspiration, trying to visualise those topics in the best way.

Body dysmorphia, anxiety, and depression are all covered. If you pause on the final dance scene when everyone reveals their inner creatures, you can see the various topics.



## How did you communicate the emotion of loneliness without overstepping into complete sadness?

This was a fine balance. We wanted the story to have peaks and troughs to keep the audience captivated. No matter how short a piece is, it's important to give the audience a story arc to follow, so they can truly put themselves in the shoes of the hero.



## Why did you choose not to have audible dialogue?

To have the widest reach possible. We wanted the actions to speak for themselves. Every decision aimed to drive home the message of Nobody is Normal, and we didn't want to be lazy and try to explain that with dialogue. It was brave of **Childline** to let us to do that and a testament to their entire team.



## Are there any subtle details that are important, but people might not pick up on right away?

The amount of effort that went into the creatures in the final scene, and the camera angles used to portray a sense of discomfort in the hero.







## What was the biggest challenge?

Definitely the pandemic. The original launch date was sooner, but it got pushed back due to filming restrictions. We were lucky that a lot of the work could be done remotely, so it didn't affect the production as much as it probably affected others.

## What was the most exciting part?

Seeing the sets and characters come to life. It's the first stop motion ad we ever made. Every time we got a new picture of the work from the model makers, it was like receiving a little Christmas present in our inboxes.

## What advice would you give other creatives looking to do a stop motion ad?

A stop motion ad is something I've wanted to create for years. Sadly, it's one of the most expensive art forms, as it's labour and time intensive. The best advice I can give is to never fall out of love with great craft. Fight for it and find a client who sees the benefits.





Dove

## What other creative work around diversity would you recommend checking out?

When I think of diversity campaigns, the first brand that comes to mind is **Dove**. They've done some incredible work over the years tackling real issues that women face.

**Maltesers** did a great job with their work that won the Channel 4 Diversity in Advertising Award in 2016, the year of the Rio Paralympics. The award focused on the representation of people with disabilities in advertising.



Maltesers

## What advice would you give to others looking to do projects on diversity?

Make sure it's something you believe in. Don't create projects on diversity for brownie points or because you think it's trendy. It'll never come across as genuine. Believe in something passionately and use your creativity to help make a difference.

You can watch Nobody is Normal and see the full list of credits, [here](#).

Plus, check out the DMA's other work around [diversity](#) and within our [Great British Creativity](#) campaign.



**About the**

**Great British Creativity**

**Campaign**

This campaign shines a light on one of UK business' most valuable resources.

Through keeping our community up to speed on the finest, fiercest examples of copywriting, design, and art direction in the marketing industry, we aim to raise awareness of creativity's often overlooked importance in brand-customer relationships.

Our on-going campaign research helps us to better understand how consumers view creativity in relation to their interactions with brands; our virtual events, both for professionals and young talent, offer expert-led insights on creativity in business; and our content, from editorials to podcasts, inspires creatives to push the boundaries of their craft and gives them the tools and resources to do so.

Led by an advisory board formed of industry leaders, we ensure that our themes and objectives remain relevant to the industry they represent.

Join us in the fight for creative work and talent to be recognised, respected, and celebrated; join us in the fight for the power of the word and beyond.

Find out more at [dma.org.uk/greatbritishcreativity](https://dma.org.uk/greatbritishcreativity).



## About the DMA

The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) is the driving force of intelligent marketing.

Guided by our customer-first principles enshrined in the DMA Code, we champion a rich fusion of technology, diverse talent, creativity, research, and insight to set standards for the UK's data and marketing community to meet in order to thrive.

We deliver this mission through a fully integrated classroom-to-boardroom approach that supports you, your team, and your business at every stage of your development.

Through DMA Talent, we create pathways for the next generation of marketers; our world-class training institute, the Institute of Data & Marketing, delivers learning to corporations and individuals; and through the DMA, we deliver advocacy, legal, and compliance support, as well as research, insight, and a packed events calendar.

With more than 1,000 corporate members, we are Europe's largest community of data-driven marketers.

[www.dma.org.uk](http://www.dma.org.uk)