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Rail industry still struggling to address gender imbalance

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New figures have suggested that just 16.4 per cent of the UK rail industry workforce is female.

The study, which has been released by Women in Rail, raised particular concerns about the shortage of women in rail engineering, just 4 per cent, and managerial positions.

The majority of women in the industry, 60 per cent, work in customer-facing roles. Health and safety, marketing and organisational roles make up a large proportion of the rest.

Responding to the study, Transport Minister Claire Perry said: "We make up 51 per cent of the population. 47 per cent of the national workforce. But only 15 per cent of the rail workforce.

"The report published by Women in Rail today reveals that out of the 87,000 people working in rail, only 13,492 are women.

"Coincidentally, that is almost exactly the number of women who were working in rail in August 1914, at the dawn of the First World War."

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Rolling stock companies employ the highest proportion of women, 31.3 per cent, while suppliers employ the least, just 5 per cent.

Adeline Ginn, founder of Women in Rail said, "For the first time, we have an actionable benchmark upon which companies can identify and target the key areas for change.

"It is extremely important that the rail industry confronts this gender imbalance, as a first step towards changing it for the better. These changes will need to happen within the rail industry, as well as outside, to encourage women to follow career paths that lead to rail, such as engineering from a young age."