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News in brief...

Go-Ahead into German market

The group is set to enter the German rail market having been awarded Netz 1 – Lot 2 and Lot 3 of the Baden-Württemberg rail network. The contracts, starting in June 2019 and running until 2032, are expected to generate combined revenues of around €1.6 billion. Operating company Go-Ahead Verkehrsgesellschaft Deutschland will run 3.7 million train kilometres each year for Lot 2 and 4.4 million train kilometres each year for Lot 3. Go-Ahead CEO David Brown, said: 'We are pleased to be able to bring our expertise to the German market.'

A rail tax

Campaign for Better Transport has warned that continued rail revenue growth could result in passengers effectively being

Report on gender balance calls for change

Just 0.6 per cent of women working in the rail industry have progressed to director or executive level according to a ground-breaking report from industry group Women in Rail.

The study, which reveals that out of the 87,000 people working in rail, only 13,492 are women, represents one of the first times that data on gender diversity has been collected for the rail industry as a whole, and across its different subsets.

The report was released at Women in Rail's annual conference opened by Claire Perry, parliamentary under secretary of state at the Department for Transport, who pointed out that the number of women working in rail now is almost exactly the same as in August 1914, at the dawn of the First World War.

'The result is' said Perry, 'that when it comes to gender equality the rail industry risks looking like the industry that time has left behind.'

Talking about the fact that half of women working in the sector are in operational, customer-facing areas such as catering, ticketing and stations retail, Perry said she was 'glad' these women are leading the way for the rest of the sector, but that it is 'wrong' that only 19 per cent of women in rail are in managerial roles, and that they make up only four per cent of rail engineers, and that only 0.6 per cent have progressed to director or executive level.

This 'lopsided' distribution of women in rail does damage to equal pay, Perry pointed out, with the starting salary for a station assistant starting at £12,500 a year. Meanwhile Network Rail is advertising for engineers at starting salaries just under £40,000 rising far beyond that after promotion.

'So when women are prevented from taking the jobs they could excel at just because they are women, they're not just having their choices restricted, they are missing out economically,' said Perry.

Talking of the good evidence that teams and boards that include women make better decisions, as long as the industry fails to draw on the 50 per cent of available talent represented by



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charged a 'rail tax', equivalent to an income tax of up to five per cent for commuters, or £7.50 per intercity journey, with an ever growing percentage of income from fares transferring directly to the government. Its new report into the future of rail financing Future Rail Funding: Passenger Opportunities says government income from rail franchise premiums could increase to up to £3.7 billion by 2020.

Record high for LU

More people are using London Underground than at any point in its 152-year history says TfL. The busiest day ever was 9 October which saw 4.735 million customers. The previous record was 28



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women it is likely to be less innovative, less efficient and less productive than it ought to be. 'Other sectors learnt this lesson long ago' said Perry, and 'if they have made such progress there really is no excuse for rail. There's is so much more to do.'

Perry suggested the industry could look at shift patterns and teaching girls the value of engineering qualifications so they can enjoy 'fantastic lifelong careers'.

She concluded: '100 years ago, we kept the railway running during the greatest challenge it had yet faced. We might have started the war with 13,000 women working in rail, but by its end there were 70,000. It shouldn't take another World War to see change like that again.'

Adeline Ginn, founder of Women in Rail talking of the report 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.'

Picture across the industry

Across the rail industry's subsets, rolling stock companies have the highest proportion of women with 31.3 per cent. This is followed by technology service companies at 22 per cent, train operating companies at 20 per cent, manufacturers at 12 per cent and suppliers at the lowest proportion at five per cent¹.

The conference also featured presentations from HS2's Beth West, Anna Walker of the ORR and HS1's Nicola Shaw, who spoke about her work on the Shaw Report into the future shape and financing of Network Rail.

¹ data sourced from across the whole industry

Claire Perry

