

2023



We have signed the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Charter

WR
WORKERS IN RAIL

Railway Industry Association
The voice of the UK rail supply community



The EDI Charter represents our industry's commitment to openly support the EDI agenda.

The Charter is open to all companies, clients and organisations working in the UK rail industry who wish to play a role in promoting positive change in the rail industry. It seeks to recognise and build upon the progress which has already taken place, providing the basis to encourage further collaboration and action across the sector.

For more information on how your organisation can be involved, please email info@edicharter.co.uk



**Railway Industry
Association**

The voice of the UK rail supply community

The EDI Charter for Rail is a joint initiative by Women in Rail and the Railway Industry Association.

Contents

Foreword: Women in Rail and RIA.....	04
Foreword: EDI Charter Chair and Vice Chair.....	06
Foreword: Anit Chandara, DfT.....	10
Jacqueline Starr, Rail Delivery Group.....	11
Why commitment is the key to greater diversity.....	12
Building a Diverse and Empowered Workforce.....	13
EMR Case Studies.....	14
Celebrating Railways' Impact on the UK's Queer Community.....	16
Together for Pride.....	16
Driving Empowerment Through the Women's Employee Resource Group.....	17
Inclusion is central to our future culture.....	18
GBRTT: Looking to the Future.....	19
AtkinsRéalis: Different Makes a Difference.....	20
Launch of the Women at AmcoGiffen Forum.....	22
Mentoring and Reducing the Gender Pay Gap.....	22
Diversity and inclusion starts with research.....	23
CAF launch Women's Network to promote gender equity.....	24
GCRE: Being the Change.....	25
Championing EDI in a rail SME.....	26
Northern is empowering Women.....	27
Kier: Building a more inclusive place to work.....	28
Women in Transport Equity Index.....	30
Developing and retaining our female talent.....	31
Pioneering leader's legacy for female engineers.....	32
Colin Kimber, Pareto EDI Champion.....	32
British Transport Police – Creating a Modern and Inclusive Force.....	33
Arcadis: Creating accountability for positive change.....	34
Neurodiverse recruitment at Ricardo.....	36
Getting back on track.....	37
Building active allyship at PA Consulting.....	38
Embracing EDI for Growth.....	39
SPL Powerlines: Driving HR Excellence.....	40
Worldline: best practice support for parents and carers.....	41
I&D – It's Business As Usual.....	42
Building a Diverse Workforce.....	43
Porterbrook's Diversity and Inclusion journey.....	44
Bringing your whole self to work – an EDI focus for QTS.....	45
Creating a psychologically safe environment.....	46
Attracting & Retaining Diverse Talent.....	47
Positive Action at SWR.....	48
Promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion through our values.....	49
Diversity and inclusion at the Rail Safety and Standards Board.....	50

Foreword

We are delighted to be writing this foreword for the second EDI Charter Annual Report. Women in Rail and RIA first collaborated almost three years ago to start this Charter, and we are incredibly proud of the achievements to date.

In March this year we carried out the annual refresh of the Working Group, and following a competitive process we are delighted that Mandeep Singh has stepped up to become this year's Chair, supported by Ben Evans as Vice Chair. They will continue to build upon the strong foundations laid by outgoing Chair, Rachel Fullard.

The Working Group is made up of diverse individuals from across the industry, and they ensure that we are inclusive and listening to all the different perspectives and voices in rail as we take this agenda forward. The range of lived experience brought by the Working Group is invaluable, and we thank them for continuing to give up their time.

2023 saw the introduction of monthly Signatory Forums, held over Microsoft Teams. These Forums create a space for signatories to come together, hear about examples of best practice from other organisations, and get answers to their EDI queries. We have had presentations from multiple signatories covering topics such as creating employment opportunities for ex-offenders, EDI for SMEs, and the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in the workplace.

The Working Group also put on an event called Neurodiversity in Rail, looking at lived experience and how companies can create a more inclusive environment for neurodiverse employees, all the way through from hiring to day-to-day work. The event also saw a panel covering various different experiences, including ADHD, OCD and having a neurodiverse child.

Women in Rail is proud to partner with RIA on the EDI Charter which is one of our most important initiatives. **Thank you to everyone for contributing to this year's annual report.** All of our work at Women in Rail is about raising awareness of the need for greater EDI and gender balance across the sector and creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce; a workforce that is reflective of the communities we work in.

Growing from strength to strength, we are delighted that the EDI Charter, now in its third year, has over 220 signatory organisations on board, reinforcing the increased focus across the sector on this key business agenda item.

Women in Rail isn't just for women – it's for the entire rail industry. By embracing diversity and inclusion, we are building a stronger future for rail, where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive. Join us on this exciting journey as we reshape the rail industry and make it a more vibrant and inclusive community for all.



Shona Clive
Women in Rail Vice-Chair



Robert Cook
RIA Policy Director



Isabella Lawson
RIA Policy Manager



Sharon Salmon
WR Trustee

At RIA, we were delighted to once again hold our annual Trailblazers Reception in London. Over 200 people attended on the day, celebrating diversity and inclusion in rail and discussing how we can continue to build a vibrant workforce in rail. Trailblazers events bring experienced rail professionals and new entrants together to make connections, share knowledge, and create new networks.

It is amazing to see all the fantastic work that is reflected in the contributions to this review. Including contributions from Jacqueline Starr, Anit Chandarana, and over 35 signatories, this Annual Report is an excellent window into the progress being made across the industry.

It is amazing to see all the fantastic work that is reflected in the contributions to this review!

Finally, we would like to thank Isabella Lawson, RIA Policy Manager, and Sharon Salmon, WR Trustee, for their work in supporting the Working Group and wider EDI Charter activity.

If you would like to find out more about signing up for the Charter and getting involved, contact the team at: info@edicharter.co.uk.



Charting Progress Towards Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Railway

As the Chair of the Charter for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Charter, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I welcome you to our annual report for the year. In reflecting upon our journey, I am heartened by the successes we have achieved in fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment within our signatory organisations and, indeed, across the broader industry.

This past year, we have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in tangible ways. We have celebrated achievements, tackled challenges head-on, and embraced

the vital importance of accountability. Our collective efforts have laid the foundation for transformative change, and I am excited to share our progress with you.

In the coming year, we stand poised to further our mission by dedicating ourselves to four key pillars of action: education & events, signatory engagement, communications and knowledge sharing, and EDI charter and industry reporting.

Education remains at the forefront of our strategy. It is through awareness and understanding that we can truly drive change. We will invest time and effort in educational initiatives that empower our railway workforce to embrace EDI, fostering an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and heard.

Events have proven to be a powerful platform for dialogue and collaboration. Our commitment to hosting more events will facilitate crucial conversations, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives. These gatherings will serve as catalysts for change, inspiring us to take meaningful action.

This past year, we have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in tangible ways.

Sharing best practices is essential for progress. We recognise that every step forward is an opportunity to learn from one another. By promoting and implementing effective EDI strategies, we can set a shining example for our industry and beyond. We aim to collect best practices and be able to regularly report upon the successes and in some cases, pitfalls, of EDI in the railway, to create a balanced representation of the industry perspective.

I am thrilled to welcome Vice-Chair Ben Evans from AtkinsRéalis to our Charter. Ben's enthusiasm and passion for EDI are inspiring. His dedication to crucial issues such as menopause, LGBT rights, and industry awareness of EDI issues will undoubtedly drive our agenda forward. Together, we will expand our horizons, bringing fresh insights and perspectives to the railway.

As an independent charter, we have the freedom to work separately from any organisation or political body. This year, the working group has grown to better serve our signatories – we have welcomed 10 new members who have joined our returning cohort, and their





combined talent, experience and perspectives enable us to provide a well-rounded yet comprehensive approach to EDI in the rail industry.

Our industry is at an internal reflection point, and we recognise the pressing need for increased diversity. However, this is not a mere aspiration; it is a call for accountability. The minority of individuals who have been EDI-focused have already made significant ripples, and now, by collaborating with other industry groups, we aim to create powerful waves of change. We understand that progress can only be achieved through collective action, and we are ready to join hands with like-minded organisations to push boundaries and redefine our industry's future.

As we embark on this pivotal year, let us remember that our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is not just a checklist or an obligation. It reflects our shared values, a testament to our dedication, and a declaration of our vision for a better, more equitable future. Together, we can turn the tide of inequity and bias and create a railway industry that is not only diverse but also inclusive.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have supported our journey thus far, and I eagerly anticipate the achievements and milestones that lie ahead. I would also like to offer my gratitude to our sponsors The Railway Industry Association and Women In Rail, who provide valuable time and resources to drive the Charter's success.

Let us remain determined in our commitment to EDI and continue to build a progressive railway industry for the generations to come, and for the communities we serve.

Mandeep Singh, Chair

Ben Evans, Vice Chair

It's an honour to have accepted the role of Vice Chair for the EDI Charter for Rail Working Group this year. It is most heartening to read through our annual report this year, to reflect on the fantastic work that we are doing across our industry and the obvious passion of the people who are driving the change.

It's timely that I'm writing this having just returned from a lovely family holiday in the Lake District. As well as making for a much-needed break and time away in a beautifully scenic part of the world, it's always refreshing to spend quality time as the lone white middle-aged male minority of the family.

My 15-year-old daughter has developed such an incredible passion for equality, diversity and inclusion. Her own knowledge, awareness and opinions are truly enlightening, and she makes some impressively strong arguments, in particular on social justice and transgender issues. We may not agree on everything, but I always come away from these debates with ideas to reflect on, and dare I say sometimes change my mind. She is proud of me for taking on this role, which really means a lot and spurs me on.

But looking forward I will be challenging myself and asking some fundamental questions of everything we do. What are we leaving for the next generation? Are we really listening and learning from a truly diverse range of viewpoints? Are we, even the most ardent EDI champions amongst us, prepared to evolve and change our own interpretations of what we believe?

We are undoubtedly making crucial steps in the right direction, but I think we're still so far from where we need to be. I hope you are all up for the challenge of taking the next steps in creating a railway industry that is truly equal, diverse and inclusive for all.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter

A pledge for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across the UK railway industry.

Signatories to this Charter aspire to be the best in everything they, and collectively the UK railway sector, do and therefore aim to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter reflects the commitment of the UK railway sector, and more precisely, the Railway Industry Association, Women in Rail and signatory companies, to champion equality, diversity and inclusion in the rail industry and to work together to build a more balanced and fair and high performing sector.

Signatory companies recognise that an inclusive workforce is good for business. It brings diversity of thought, innovation, and a positive workforce culture as well as improved customer relationships. Diversity and inclusion are also increasingly important to rail clients and investors.

Signatory companies support social mobility and are committed to creating equal opportunities for everyone. They recognise the role our industry can play in creating opportunities and unlocking talent. They understand that embedding an inclusive culture within their own organisations, and collectively within the UK railway industry, is crucial to unlocking the potential a diverse workforce can offer. It will help develop the next generation of leaders in rail, make our sector a more attractive career, foster innovation and play a substantial role in the creation of a best in class railway sector in the UK.

The Charter:

- Commits signatory companies to lead by example and make a difference, publicly reporting on their progress.
- Promotes positive change within the signatory companies and across the railway industry by empowering and educating leaders, making employees feel comfortable to challenge negative or discriminatory behaviours in the workplace, and collaborating to share best practice.
- Commits signatory companies to support the progression of diverse individuals into senior roles, develop the talent pipeline and improve representation at senior and executive level of the railway industry.
- Recognises that each signatory company will have different starting point and available resources and that progress will not look the same for every organisation.

Statement for signatory companies – my organisation pledges to promote equality, diversity and inclusion by:

- Appointing a member of the senior leadership team as an 'EDI Champion'.
- Agreeing an action plan and monitoring progress made, including in RIA's annual reporting to their AGM and Women in Rail's annual report. Also, progress to be demonstrated on RIA, Women in Rail, and signatories' websites.
- Providing opportunities for training and education of employees to help tackle unconscious bias and negative behaviours within workforces.
- Creating a culture that fosters inclusion and encourages "quiet voices", including at industry events and in meetings for instance, through 360 feedback on senior and executive teams and reverse mentoring, thus providing a safe space for all employees to talk openly.
- Making recruitment and progression processes accessible and attractive to all to attract retain and develop people of all backgrounds, ages, genders and identities.



This Charter is open to all companies in the UK railway sector who wish to play a role in promoting innovation, agility and positive change in our industry. Not all signatory companies will be able to make the same commitments, but all signatory companies will be asked to pledge to collaborate and take actions that promote better equality, diversity and inclusion in UK rail.



Thursday 16 May 2024
Roundhouse, London

The Women in Rail Awards aim to showcase and reward individuals and companies (large and small) who have made a significant contribution to improving gender balance, equality, diversity and inclusion within the UK railway industry.

Join us as we celebrate those companies and individuals who work hard to improve gender balance, equality, diversity and inclusion within our sector in line with the objectives of the joint WR/RIA EDI Charter.

  #WRAwards2024
womeninrail.org/awards



For more information, please contact Nimble Media at WRAwards@nimblemedia.co.uk or call 01780 432930

Category Sponsors



Fundraising Sponsor



Gift Bag Sponsor



Foreword

from **Anit Chandarana**, Interim Director
for Rail Infrastructure Group, DfT

In preparation for this piece, I was asked two simple questions...at least simple at face value. Those two questions are what EDI means to me and my hopes for the industry we all work in.

Firstly, for me it means that people can come to work feeling they can be themselves and be recognised for the quality of their outcome and their displayed attitudes, rather than some prejudiced view. On top of that organisations, leaders and fellow employees do everything they can to make the workplace live by that value. That's not too much to ask, is it? And to be clear this is not about washing away the differences that exist between any of us but celebrating those differences. I'm sure when I put it that way, most people would agree with me. But the truth, however uncomfortable, is this is not the industry we work within today. What's more alarming to me is when people say to me they disagree with



This is about removing systemic barriers so that everyone, no matter who they are, has the opportunity to succeed within the industry.

this view. Given my stance on this issue, many people talk to me about the inequalities of opportunity and treatment that are very apparent in our beloved industry across many of the organisations that make it up.

And let me be clear, this is not about marginalising people who make up majority groups. If you are white or non-disabled or heterosexual or a man, you should not be fearful that we can only achieve fairness by somehow withholding opportunities because that would be anything other than fair. This is about equity and about allowing everyone the opportunity to be on a level playing field and this is about

removing systemic barriers so that everyone, no matter who they are, has the opportunity to succeed within the industry.

But there is hope. From the work I've seen both within the rail industry and other parts of the transport industry I know we can achieve a better place. Like any problem the industry faces, if we accept the problem and can be determined to resolve the issues, I'm confident we can take the steps to change. The EDI charter is a visible commitment to that drive.

Of course, the position we find ourselves in is true of many industries, but this is OUR industry so it's in OUR hands to make a difference.



Rail Delivery Group are proud signatories of the Women in Rail/RIA EDI Charter

In February 2020, we commissioned an EDI survey of our employees, and the feedback we gained helped to give us a greater understanding of where the gaps are within the company. One particular area of disparity was the gender and ethnicity representation amongst senior leadership, and this is something we continue to work on improving.

As part of my personal commitment to EDI, I have recently created a mentoring circle in conjunction with Empower, RDG's network for women and non-binary people. This gives me the chance to share my experience as a leader and what I have learned along the way; the aim of the mentoring circle is to support our employees with career progression and to recognise challenges they may be facing.

We have a wide range of staff networks at RDG, and they have been doing absolutely fantastic work for their colleagues and the wider industry – for example, our Carer's Community and the Disability Awareness Network have both begun to collaborate with other similar networks across the rail industry. Platform, our LGBTQ network, have recently recruited more allies to their group, and delivered a Knowledge Bite on Why Pride Matters during Pride Month.

I'm very proud of the progress we have made on implementing inclusive policies internally. To highlight a couple of these, we have Fertility Treatment Leave, which provides paid leave for an employee to undergo this procedure, or to support their partner through it. We also



I'm very proud of the progress we have made on implementing inclusive policies internally.

have a Menopause Guidance document, which outlines to employees how to ask for assistance, and the adjustments they can request; this document has been written with inclusivity in mind, as it recognises that it is not only women that are affected by the menopause, but also transgender men and non-binary people.



Why commitment is the key to greater diversity



Organisations of all sizes talk a lot about equality, diversity and inclusion – but if they're really to reap the rewards of a more diverse workforce, they need to back up their warm words with action.

A more diverse workplace is a more innovative one, because it's able to draw on a broader range of talents and perspectives. What's more, at a time when UK industry – transport included – is grappling with a serious skills shortage, a genuine commitment to EDI is particularly essential.

To prove their commitment to EDI employers must be prepared to engage meaningfully with people from underrepresented communities. This must start from the earliest stages of the recruitment process.

Job advertisements can turn off more candidates than they attract, often because they simply aren't engaging enough. So, if you're advertising for a vacancy it's a good idea to have it sense-checked by colleagues throughout the organisation – not just HR.

Before posting the ad, send it to the team that the new colleague would be working with. Let them look at it and tell you – honestly, but constructively – whether it would genuinely inspire them to apply and is reflective of their culture/practices.

You also need to think about where you're advertising these roles. A lot of organisations tend to rely on LinkedIn, or on their own website. If these are the only places where you're advertising vacancies, you could be missing out on outstanding candidates elsewhere who may not have considered a career in transport.

In addition, you must think about how you do outreach to underrepresented communities. Ask whether your recruitment process makes the necessary allowances. For instance, are your hiring managers trained in unconscious bias?

By the same token, a lot of employers make use of psychometric testing to help them filter candidates. But this doesn't work for everyone: neurodiverse candidates are often put off by it and many will simply take their talents elsewhere rather than put themselves through it.

Once you've recruited diverse candidates, you need to consider how to hang on to them. The most important point here is that colleagues need to see you are serious about diversity and fostering a lasting sense of belonging for everyone, whatever their background.

As an employer, you should ask yourself: what adjustments are we making to support all our colleagues? What adjustments are being made to accommodate change? This may include, for instance, PPE that's designed for women, separate toilet facilities for female colleagues, adjustments to company documents for visually impaired colleagues, and multi-faith prayer rooms fit for the purpose.

This isn't just a tick-box exercise and must not be treated as one. There must be real change in approaches and behaviours, rather than mere formalities. Colleagues must feel that they truly belong and that their contribution is valued.

Too often, candidates from diverse backgrounds come in and are made to feel like a tick in the box, though not everyone has the confidence to call this out. This is why it's incumbent on employers to make sure they provide a welcoming environment to work in, where everyone is a genuine participant.

The most concrete proof of real commitment to diversity comes when people from underrepresented groups/communities see others like them in senior roles. Of course, pioneers – that is, people who are themselves willing to lead the way in that initial period of change – are highly important too, but employers need to prove to them that they are sincere and serious about creating a more diverse workplace.

In the transport sector, we've already seen positive change driven by some incredible people and teams. But ultimately, we must remember that we can't expect people to stay where they don't feel welcome – and that, if we are to live up to our legal and moral responsibilities for equality, diversity, and inclusion in UK rail, it's our shared responsibility to ensure this doesn't happen.

www.intuitiverecruitment.com
say-hello@intuitiverecruitment.com

Building a Diverse and Empowered Workforce

As highlighted in our Global EDI strategy, “Everyone’s Business”, our ongoing commitment to EDI is fundamental to the realisation of our purpose. EDI is a part of our organisational DNA which helps us to attract the best talent and drives retention and commitment. Our EDI Strategy sets out our approach to progressing EDI aspirations and we are implementing a number of initiatives and actions at all stages of the employee life cycle.

Recruitment wise, our Talent Acquisition Team explores multiple partnerships and collaboration opportunities with the aim of making our intake processes more equitable and inclusive. Recent and current initiatives include:

- Taking part in the 10,000 Black interns scheme, a programme that offers paid internships opportunities that we plan to continue into 2023/24.
- Working with AFBE-UK (Association for Black and Minority Ethnic Engineers) providing transition events for early careers students moving from university into the workplace.
- Gaining endorsement from Work180, a platform dedicated to raising the profile of companies committed to supporting women in the workplace.
- Supporting the East London Business Alliance by offering mentorship to young black men in London who aspire to get into the construction industry.
- Signing up with Evenbreak – a jobsite with an accessible job search for disabled talent.
- We are supporting Leonard Cheshire on their internship programme which looks to provide meaningful paid work placements for high performing undergraduates and graduates who are disabled.
- We are partners with an organisation called Renaisi, who support us with mentoring of refugee talent.
- We are partners with Breakthrough, who support individuals leaving the prison system or at risk of offending. In 2023, following volunteering events and assessment centres, we offered 4 candidates roles with our organisation.
- We are in the process of relaunching a STEM returners programme, with the aim of supporting women and others on career breaks back into the workplace.

We are committed to creating an inclusive candidate experience. Our job adverts clearly highlight our commitment to EDI and our agile working ethos. Gender decoders are used in our job adverts to ensure the language used is gender neutral and inclusive. We are a Disability Confident Employer providing reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees, also offering guaranteed interviews to disabled candidates who meet the essential role criteria.

We actively target diverse candidates with our attraction and campus activities. We use data insights to help shape our strategy and ensure that we are including non-Russell universities, as well as universities that have higher ethnic minority representation. At graduate level, we have removed the requirement for a 2.1 degree, as well as a Masters degree in most roles. This enables us to attract

Our commitment to meaningful goals and actions to support better diversity and inclusion outcomes is unwavering.

greater diversity as we know those entry requirements put in place barriers for students, particularly those from lower social mobility and ethnic minority backgrounds. We have also created new Job Description templates and guidance for hiring managers which have embedded key EDI considerations to ensure the hiring process is inclusive. Guidance is accompanied by mandatory Unconscious Bias training for hiring managers.

Our commitment to inclusive recruitment is backed by measurable progress. We capture diversity monitoring data at every stage of our recruitment process and have introduced EDI workforce dashboards that cross-analyse diversity data across all protected characteristics. This enables us to assess where we are having an impact and focus our action on any areas of disproportionality. Over the past few years, we have seen a steady increase in the recruitment of women and ethnic minorities to the business (for example in 2022, 39% of our new hires were women compared to 36% in 2021 and 34% in 2020).

Our commitment to meaningful goals and actions to support better diversity and inclusion outcomes is unwavering. We will continue to work hard to remove barriers to build a diverse and empowered workforce.

EMR Driver Candidate Recruitment Campaign



In January 2023, East Midlands Railway (EMR) launched our Driver recruitment campaign. As with the whole of the industry, our Driver role is the highest paid frontline role with no barriers to entry – including no qualification entry requirements. Once hired, we train our Drivers using a Level 3 apprenticeship framework, which embeds crucial Maths, English and ICT skills. This means that our approach supports social mobility.

At present, our current Driver population at EMR is 90% male, and the main contributor to our gender pay gap (23.9%). In line with the EMR goal to “maintain or improve current workforce diversity levels of female employees”, appointing more females into train driving within EMR will help reduce the overall gender pay gap.

Alongside females, we are also currently under-represented in ethnic minorities, so our Driver recruitment campaign focused on the attraction of these under-represented groups. To achieve this, we adopted a range of strategies, including:

- Setting clear objectives at the start of the campaign – we agreed an objective to attract at least 15% female and 22% minority ethnic candidates from this campaign
- Targeted social media recruitment using – Instagram, Facebook and TikTok using imagery of our female Drivers and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Press releases, which were picked up by industry and regional publications
- Specific job advert wording
- Blind Screening, which significantly reduces the impact of the recruiting panel’s unconscious bias
- Diverse and gender-balanced recruiting panels
- Tracking progress at each stage of recruitment

Following the campaign, we received 1,200 applications – one of the highest applicant rates we have ever had for a Driver campaign. Successful candidates were then entered into a Driver Talent Pool – this means that when there is business need for additional Driver apprentices there is access to an immediate pool of suitable and successful candidates.

Out of the applicants, 12% were females and 24% were from an ethnic minority. The lower than expected number of female applications is primarily due to social media policy changes from Meta group, who have changed their policy in line with American legislation to state that any job marketing must be shown to profiles of both sexes, which impacted our ability to target females specifically through Facebook and Instagram. The number of applications from people from ethnic minorities is a huge step up from 18% in the previous campaign and surpassed the target of 22%. We believe that this is primarily due to the promotional video featuring employees from ethnic minority groups.

At EMR we remain concerned about the apparent racial bias built into the Driver testing process, as prescribed by the industry standard. Future campaigns will look to try to address the low success rate of candidates from a minority ethnic background through targeted sessions to further inform them about the selection process and aid their preparation.

We have written to the Train Driver Academy to encourage them to review the testing process at an industry level. To date no response has been received however, we continue to push for this to be reviewed and addressed.

EMR Celebrates the Windrush Generation

To honour the significant milestone of Windrush 75, East Midlands Railway, in collaboration with Museumand, the National Caribbean Heritage Museum, organised a special rail journey to London.

This year marks the 75th anniversary since the HMT Empire Windrush docked in Tilbury, Essex, on 22 June 1948, carrying passengers from across the Caribbean. People from across the then British Empire were encouraged by the government to move to the UK to help with post-war labour shortages and rebuild its battered economy.

Many of those who came became manual workers, drivers, cleaners, and nurses in the newly established NHS, and many joined the railway, then British Rail. British Rail actively recruited West Indian immigrants, including some of the people who arrived on board the Empire Windrush in 1948.

This government-supported mass immigration programme changed British society and culture, increasing its diversity and bringing with it a new cultural dimension to British society influencing our foods, music and culture.

EMR, in collaboration with Museumand hosted a heritage train trip on the 18th July 2023, in order to share stories and celebrate the Windrush generation.

EMR facilitated a group of Families and Friends connected to the Windrush Generation, in their 75th anniversary year, to travel to London as part of the year long commemorations. Collaborating with Museumand, the National Caribbean Heritage Museum, based in Nottingham, as well as EMR's 'RACE Employee Network Group', people shared stories of those who worked on the railway. The museum collected stories to share across the anniversary year and whilst in London visited the national monument at Waterloo station.

All passengers were provided with a Souvenir Booklet, which outlined the following:

- Who are the Windrush Generation?
- Life on the railways during the Windrush era
- Asquith Xavier – Challenging the colour bar in British Rail in London
- The Railway Stations in the centre of Nottingham
- Remembering the Marshalling Yards in Nottingham
- Allan J. N. Ross – A Nottingham story of camaraderie and work in railway marshalling yards
- Keeping Britain on Track – What's next for the descendants of the Windrush Generation?

When the heritage train trip reached London, former railway workers and their families had the opportunity to visit commemorative plaques installed to honour two railway workers from the Windrush Generation, and the National Windrush Monument at Waterloo Station.



"I just want to say what a great day out we had on the Windrush Train Ride to London. So many stories. So many laughs."

Some of the feedback from the day:

"I just want to say what a great day out we had on the Windrush Train Ride to London. So many stories. So many laughs. A few songs and a prayer for a safe and happy journey. Well the prayers worked, it was all marvellous."

A big thank you to Catherine, Lynda and their colleagues whose hard work helped to make it all possible. Kaye and her East Midlands Railway staff were great chaperones and looked after us all with snacks and drinks, which helped to make the day a great success."

David Hutchings

"What an amazing day yesterday!! Facilitated by a great team, who made everyone feel comfortable and appreciated, it will be long remembered by those who were part of the group. Already we have received text and e-messages, and some lovely calls. Thank you for being community heroes."

Lynda and I cannot thank you all enough for the behind the scenes work you did in making the occasion happen, and then on the day entering into the spirit of things, 'smoothing' the seating arrangements with other passengers and providing the hospitality. David serves a good cup of cha! Kaye and Nicky, your friendliness and warmth provided the X factor that made the day go so well. Thank you all for everything."

Looking forward to working with you all again in the future."

Catherine Ross, Museumand



Celebrating Railways' Impact on the UK's Queer Community

This year during PRIDE month AECOM's Pride Europe Network and HS2's Onboard Network, collaborated in a Mega-Inclusivity on Mega-projects event. This event intended to foster inclusivity, knowledge exchange and underscore railways' transformative role in the UK's queer community, resonating with the spirit of progress.

Background: AECOM's Pride Europe Network and HS2's Onboard Network share a resolute commitment to cultivating inclusive workplaces for the LGBTQIA communities and allies in their organisations. Their collaboration resulted in an impactful event, igniting insightful dialogues and experience sharing.

Contextual Significance of Railways: The emergence of railways had a profound impact on the queer community by introducing remarkable opportunities for movement and travel. Historically and today, queer venues and LGBTQIA bars often cluster around railway termini. Notably, stations correlate closely with cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, and more, forming integral hubs of queer activity.

Collaboration Event Highlights: The collaborative events embraced historical and modern nuances, offering participants the opportunity to:

1. Network Synergy: Participants shared insights on collaborating within ERGs/Staff Networks, unveiling strategies to amplify inclusivity.

2. Impactful Initiatives: The events spotlighted impactful network events, showcasing their resonance within the community and fostering learning.

3. Influencing Best Practice: ERGs/Staff Networks' role in shaping organizational cultures and policies came to light.

4. Reflect on History: Attendees engaged with "A Little Queer Railway History," exploring its relevance to contemporary inclusivity efforts.

Conclusion: AECOM's Pride Europe Network and HS2's Onboard Network's collaborative events exemplify history, diversity, and dialogue's potency. By honoring railways' impact on the queer community, these organizations have spurred progress and inclusion. This case study underscores partnerships' transformative potential, igniting positive change in workplaces and industries.

Together for Pride

LNER

London North Eastern Railway (LNER) proudly revealed a new named and full liveried Azuma train as Pride celebrations got underway across the UK this summer.

Named 'Together', it celebrates LNER's support of Pride activities on the East Coast route as well as a long-term commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives for colleagues, customers and communities throughout the year. The name was chosen by LNER colleagues and a special train naming panel.

The design of the eye-catching livery is the first in the Azuma fleet to feature on each of the nine carriages and has been created by LNER colleagues. The livery features eight LGBTQ+ flags, demonstrating the breadth of colourful and diverse identities within the community.

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER, said: "At LNER, we truly focus on creating an inclusive workplace where our people feel able to be themselves.

"Every year our colleagues get fully onboard with supporting our activities at Pride celebrations. The introduction of 'Together' means that we will have a visual reminder for all our communities to enjoy and engage with and its colourful design is a popular sight on our route."



LNER has welcomed the newly formed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team of Tracey Barber and Craig McNally, who are working to deliver LNER's ED&I Strategy.

Craig said: "I'm really proud that we are able to continually support our LGBTQ+ communities. More than 9 per cent of our colleagues have shared with us that they're part of the LGBTQ+ community and it's important to us that they feel they can be their authentic selves at work."

Tracey said: "I am delighted to have recently joined a business that is both committed to, and passionate about, creating a diverse, inclusive and engaged culture."

Driving Empowerment Through the Women's Employee Resource Group

In the world of today, leadership isn't just about guiding from the front; it's about inspiring transformation and driving change from within. Charlotte Briers, a true advocate for empowerment, diversity, and progress, is spearheading remarkable strides as the lead of Alstom's Women's Employee Resource Group (ERG) – "Voices of Women".

Charlotte has cultivated a thriving community within the Voices of Women. Guided by her unwavering belief in the power of collective voices, she has championed a safe space for women to share experiences, learn from one another, and uplift each other in their professional pursuits. Her greatest impact is her dedication to inclusivity. Through innovative initiatives, she has woven an environment where diverse perspectives flourish. Her efforts extend beyond just gender; she embraces intersectionality and emphasises the importance of equal opportunities

for all, working closely with Alstom's other ERGs – Voices of Pride+, Voices of Disability and Voices of Cultural Diversity.

At the heart of Charlotte's leadership lies a commitment to sponsoring and showcasing others. She wanted to provide all our female employees with visibility of great female role models, at different levels of the organisation and launched the Women@Alstom Spotlight series. Each month the VoW group highlight a different female leader from across the UK & Ireland business, showcasing the fantastic role models who are enjoying rewarding careers while inspiring a future generation of women to aspire to similar careers. Charlotte led the way by being the first person to take part in the series. Charlotte then mobilised others in the group to ensure each monthly spotlight, included not only the female leader sharing her career highlights, but also developed a case study for each leader, with a posting on the internal VoW site, a brochure featuring all female leaders, an internal communication and a public LinkedIn posting.

In the heart of our organisation, Charlotte is seen as a beacon of change.

Charlotte is committed to driving change, one initiative at a time. From raising awareness of female PPE, introducing period care products in public toilets, promotion of inclusive language, Skip Meetings, championing International Men's Day, to ensuring policies are inclusive and arranging networking events. Charlotte orchestrates initiatives that fuel professional and personal growth. Her visionary approach infuses these programmes with innovation, sparking discussions around evolving workplace dynamics and societal shifts.

With Charlotte's forward-looking perspective, she is driving a renewed focus on preparing women for leadership roles across various industries, fostering a pipeline of confident and capable future leaders.

In the heart of our organisation, Charlotte is seen as a beacon of change. Her tireless dedication, amplified by her compassion and insight, is instrumental in shaping a workplace that celebrates the strength of diversity and the potential of unity.

Through her role at the helm of the Voices of Women, Charlotte continues to light the path toward a more inclusive, empowered future for us all.



Inclusion is central to our future culture

Last year a cross-sector group set out to develop a framework for rail sector culture.

When we refer to rail sector culture, we mean **the way work gets done to achieve railway objectives across and within the sector organisations.**

We're sure you will have heard many references to the importance of culture change. It is mentioned throughout the Plan for Rail 16 times, but there is no single articulation of what that looks or feels like in practice.

Recognising that that people were already working to change things, we wanted to provide a 'north star' to make sure that what we were all doing is aligned.

Inclusion was at the heart of our approach. We set out to hear what people had to say – we spoke to hundreds of individuals from our own organisations (DfT, GBRTT, NR, ORR, RDG, RSSB, and Transport Focus) as well as from train operating companies, Railway Industry Association and Connected Leaders cohorts.

Through that listening and engagement exercise we identified seven common attributes where we need to think, feel, and do things differently: **collaboration, commitment to our people, customer focus, innovation, safety and wellbeing, sustainability, and value.**

Equality, diversity and inclusion is an important aspect of each of these:

- We need to work in partnership, understand the needs of different groups and give different people equal voice.

- We need to create an environment that attracts and retains a diverse workforce.
- Our railway needs to meet the needs of ALL customers.
- We want to provide a safe space to try new things, foster diversity of thought and learn from others.
- We want everyone to feel physically and psychologically safe in our places of work and on the railway.
- We want to make decisions that support the green agenda and our communities.
- We want to make decisions that support long-term value for all rather than short-term decisions that only benefit the majority.

But we can't wait for the future. Despite the uncertainty and ambiguity, we need to change the way that we behave now. Through our culture we can make a positive stand and effect change within ourselves, our organisations and across the sector. So, we are standing together, building partnerships, calling out the tensions between us, and challenging each other to live by these principles. We are doing things differently.

Please consider what you could do differently. What small action can you take to make a big impact on inclusion and our sector culture?

If you would like to find out more about our plans or you are interested in finding out more about the Rail Sector Cultural Framework, please contact claire.randall@df.gov.uk

7 ATTRIBUTES OF SECTOR CULTURE



GBRTT: Looking to the Future

GBRTT has two Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) project leads Apeksha Naik and Odis Palmer whose roles focus on these key areas:

- Ensuring EDI is embedded into all aspects of the GBRTT experience for its people
- Ensuring that GBR when formed has an inclusive culture and is forward thinking in how it approaches attraction, recruitment, retention, and development of its diverse people
- Preparing GBR to be the guiding mind when it comes to ensuring rail progresses on its EDI maturity journey
- Collaborating on making the industry more diverse and inclusive with Rail Delivery Group's Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and as Co-Chairs of Rail Unites for Inclusion

Apeksha and Odis approach their internal work at GBRTT as the testing ground for best practice ways of working. An example of this would be their work with their central EDI employee network called the 'Inclusion group' and the subgroup known as the 'Inclusive Minds Team'. This team made up of diverse colleagues from across GBRTT was formed to address the challenge that there is a lack of diversity in our senior leadership teams across rail. Their regular sessions with the senior leadership team in GBRTT are designed to encourage diversity of thought and provide fresh perspective not just EDI related but also general best practice ways of working. They also empower and enable leaders to speak on EDI subjects with more confidence as advocates and allies.

They work closely with RDG, DfT and Network Rail in the capacity of being that conduit for EDI cultural connection, bringing the respective employee network groups together to collaborate and share their events and initiatives. They also work more broadly with these rail partners to establish what we can do now to make rail a more inclusive sector to work in, as well as co-developing the guiding mind principles that will drive the future of EDI within rail.

These guiding mind principles will form part of the strategic EDI solutions in response to the Plan for Rail i.e., Commitment 61 states that *"Diversity across the sector will be improved through the inclusion of stretching measures in contracts to actively promote and increase recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce."*

They will also support the delivery of:

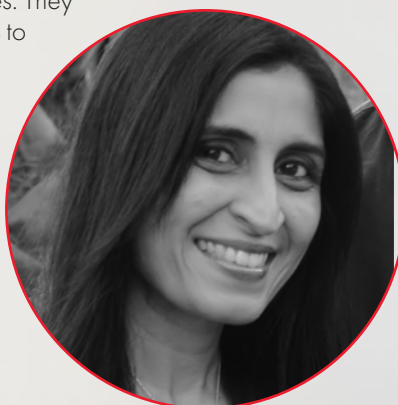
- Creating a more accessible and inclusive railway for customers and their communities through improvements to stations and trains

- Empowering rail's people through training, development, collaboration to create an inclusive, diverse working culture and career opportunities
- Improving the customer experience and focusing on services that meet customers' needs.
- Bringing the right industry people together to deliver timely and smart solutions.

Apeksha and Odis also collaborate with industry partners such as Rail Delivery Group's Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group to ensure we strive to create a culture of inclusion and belonging in the industry. They both also Co-Chair the Rail Unites for Inclusion (RUI) group, which promotes EDI across the rail industry highlighting and addressing issues

Apeksha and Odis approach their internal work at GBRTT as the testing ground for best practice ways of working.

faced by our customers, colleagues, and communities. RUI collaborates with EDI-related organisations across the rail industry, including members from regulators, TOCs, FOCs, trade union representatives and parts of the supply chain including external industries keen on sharing inclusion best practice. RUI also collaborate and build relationships with industry employee network groups and industry EDI support groups like Ethnicity and Race in Rail, Journey, Muslims in Rail, EDI Charter, Women in Rail, Women in Transport and Young Rail Professionals. They are all committed to achieving the same goals of creating a society that is fair for everyone. Through sharing best practice and acknowledging the shared challenges, they aim to better inform GBRTT and the industry to find collective EDI solutions.



Different Makes a Difference

We're not all the same, and that's our greatest strength. In 2021, we launched our Different Makes a Difference strategy, to create and maintain an inclusive culture where everyone belongs, can be their true self and reach their full potential. We are coming to the end of our three-year strategy, and we believe we have made strides towards weaving ED&I through everything we do and removing barriers to create an environment where our people can thrive.

One area where we have made meaningful progress is the career progression of women and colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds. We have held roundtable events to understand lived experiences and personal challenges to career progression and have implemented targeted support such as career coaching and sponsorship, as well

By nurturing neurodiversity, we are making AtkinsRéalis a better place to work for all.

as continuing to engage with employees company-wide on the theme of allyship. Since 2021, we have had sustained increases in the number of women in the business (from 30.4% to 31.7%) and our manager and leader population (20.1% to 23.5%). There is obviously more to be done, but we are looking forward to building on this success in the next phase of our strategy.

Our 'Different Makes a Difference' strategy was Highly Commended for 'Best Place to Work' at the National Rail Awards this year and was also shortlisted for 'Employer of the Year' at the SPOTLIGHT Rail Awards.

Nurturing neurodiversity

Ian Chapman – Practice Director, Transport Systems Integration

"Since my sons were diagnosed with neurodiverse conditions, I am striving to make a difference and not only provide equal opportunity by removing barriers, but to recognise that neurodiverse people have a proven capability to avoid normative thinking and bring much needed 'diversity of thought'.

Neurodiverse people's brains are wired differently, which means that they bring strengths in the way they work and spot solutions that a neurotypical person might never see. A team with different perspectives, backgrounds and experiences are bound to be more innovative and deliver better solutions.

As part of my involvement with our Neurodiversity network, which has over 900 members, we are making positive changes beyond just raising awareness, including:

- Sharing **fair recruitment** guidance – making our interviews more neurodiverse-inclusive and providing training to all employees who are actively involved in recruiting new team members
- Introducing reasonable adjustment **HR policies** – ensuring we make changes for our team members that reduce levels of anxiety and remove barriers as much as possible, which applies to all our teams, both neurodiverse and neurotypical
- Initiating **inclusive offices** – providing flexibility of sensory experience to reduce anxiety including adjustable lighting, biophilia, airflow and acoustic partitioning, and spaces to concentrate and rest as well as changes to signage and visual noise

By nurturing neurodiversity, we are making AtkinsRéalis a better place to work for all and gaining the benefits of diversity of thought by allowing everybody to be themselves."

Advocating for change with our Menopause network

Mel Redfern – Senior People Operations Advisor, Mental Health First Aider and Menopause Advocate

"I'm driven by educating and raising awareness in and outside of the workplace, supporting people to have open conversations and giving them a safe place to share lived experiences. My ultimate goal is that all mental health and wellbeing is deemed business as usual, taken as seriously as health and safety and not an add-on.

I attended a Health and Wellbeing at Work conference in 2017 where I listened to an empowering talk from an individual about their mental health and menopause journey. Menopause was not something I had heard much about, and I didn't understand the psychological impact until that day. It made me think we were missing something, particularly in a male dominated organisation.

On my return to the office, I spoke to my line manager to get this conversation started. She was thoroughly supportive and with my colleague Alison Bryan, I established the Menopause Employee Network which has been recognised by the RIA Rise Awards, CIHT Awards and National Highways Industry Awards.

AtkinsRéalis is creating an environment where menopause and the impact on individuals is better understood and actively supported. We have 30 trained female and male Menopause Advocates providing one-to-one support for employees and guidance for line managers, educating and



supporting our staff with published fact sheets and guides, and hosting regular coffee stops and Lunch & Learns.

AtkinsRéalis recognises that menopause symptoms can negatively impact women's wellbeing at work, and signed the Menopause at Work Pledge in December 2021 and are working towards Menopause Friendly Accreditation."

Inspiring engineers of the future with Governors for Schools

To help address the skills and diversity crisis in the engineering sector, whilst supporting social mobility and the levelling up of communities, AtkinsRéalis is leading the change through our partnership with education charity Governors for Schools. The programme will place 150 talented volunteers on school boards across England and Wales by 2025 to raise awareness of STEM subjects and ignite young people's passions for engineering.

We are creating a network of dedicated governors who are trained and supported to educate young people on STEM and potential jobs of the future by creating a line of sight back to the rail industry for work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. In 18 months, we have already placed 67 Governors donating over 21,000 hours of skills-based volunteering time. Together, we are dedicated to making the most impact by partnering with girls' schools, schools in areas of deprivation and SEND settings, and working with young people in primary school from the age of 4 through to adults in college education.

Our partnership is already gaining recognition in the industry. AtkinsRéalis and Governors for Schools won in the 'Inspiring Change in Education' category at the Inspiring Change Awards earlier this year, and the partnership is also shortlisted for the 'Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative of the Year' in the Construction News 2023 Workforce Awards. AtkinsRéalis are proud to be pioneering this programme to create real change for future generations. Thank you to all our passionate governors for making it happen.

Meet some of our Governors:

Farzana Hampshire – Operations Manager, Engineering

"I'm always interested in giving back and helping to add social value in my community. I hadn't realised that you could become a governor anywhere and so, after attending a talk

on the subject, I decided to take on the role at two schools in a socially deprived area near me that work together as a federation with one governing body – Redwood and Park View primary schools.

From a governance point of view, working with two schools is interesting as it gives an added dimension to our work. What might work for one school and its community may not necessarily work for the other, so we must keep that in mind and balance the different requirements across the two schools.

I believe secondary school can be too late to start conversations around STEM, so it's valuable to engage children from a young age so they understand the variety of options available to them. Both my husband and I are engineers and many of my friends and family are 'sciencey', so my own children are completely immersed in that world. A lot of children don't have that in their surroundings and so I'm pleased that I can give others the opportunity to explore potential passions for STEM. We've already undertaken some STEM activities with the children and it's truly inspirational to see the interest and awe light up their faces with some of the activities they've taken part in."

Craig Kearney – Practice Manager, Highways (Wales)

"I became a school governor as I wanted to put my life experience to good use and give something back to the community and our future workforce. I feel passionately that STEM is underrepresented by diverse students such as girls and those from low socio-economic backgrounds, and so I decided to become a Governor at Maes Y Morfa Primary School in Llanelli, South Wales, which is in a socially deprived area.

It's early days in my relationship Maes Y Morfa Primary School, but we have already helped deliver several STEM days and I am working on a programme of STEM focussed classroom enrichment by AtkinsRéalis staff over the next 4 years. I have also been involved with solving some structural issues with the school building, which as an engineer I find really exciting!

The feedback from the school and the children has been overwhelmingly positive and all are excited to see where this collaboration takes us."



Farzana leading a STEM-focused assembly



Craig leading a classroom STEM session

Launch of the Women at AmcoGiffen Forum

This year we are thrilled to have launched our Women at AmcoGiffen Forum.

The forum provides a platform to empower all our people to thrive in a safe space. We aim to achieve this by creating a culture of growth and opportunity to allow positive change by:

- Providing a voice of equal opportunities and gender quality
- Implementing initiatives that meet our SPIRIT values (Safety, Professionalism, Integrity, Respect, Innovation & Teamwork)
- Meeting the forum values which are to Inspire, Include and Invigorate
- Planning activities to drive change
- Providing mentoring and promoting career development opportunities
- Improving operational facilities for female colleagues
- Supporting work-life balance and much more

Since launching the forum in January 2023 we have successfully gained accreditation with the Employers Domestic Abuse Covenant (EDAC). We are working jointly with EDAC on our action plan to raise awareness of domestic abuse throughout the business and directing colleagues to support available as well as helping create inclusive workplace opportunities for women affected by domestic abuse. We want to help create a safe space where everybody feels valued and has access to development and mentoring opportunities to help them thrive in their careers.

All of our forum members sign up to become active STEM Ambassadors to help inspire a future generation of female talent into the Rail Industry. Our passion is to help make an impact in the industry to bridge the gender balance and support our female colleagues in reaching their full potential.

We look forward to the continued growth of the forum and helping shape the way for females in the industry.



Mentoring and Reducing the Gender Pay Gap



At Transport for Wales, we value diversity. It makes us stronger, helps us understand our customers better, make better decisions and be more innovative. Everyone's different and has their own perspective so we're building a diverse team that mirrors the communities we serve. We're determined to be one of Wales' leading inclusive employers through this. We're creating an inclusive transport network that everyone in Wales can be proud of.

We recognise that there's still work to be done in reducing our Gender Pay Gap, but we're proud to report a significant 19% reduction as of March 2023. This achievement is a testament to our commitment to positive change and to the work of our team in developing women within our business.

One of the ways we've achieved this is through our proactive approach to developing women in leadership and expanding upon steps made in previous years.

This year saw us continue to be involved in the Women in Rail Mentoring programme and Women in Transport LEAD programme. We also launched our own internal Elevating Women in Leadership programme in conjunction with LHH (Lee Hecht Harrison) which has enabled us to provide tailored development to 20 women across the whole organisation. It's been great to see women from all areas of our organisations nominating themselves for career development. The programme has 3 key themes:

- Career Activism
- Strengthening confidence and resilience
- Personal Impact and Brand

The programme launched in January 2023, and we'll review the progression and development of all 20 delegates as a longer-term measure of success.

In addition to women in focused learning, Transport for Wales saw 52% of the overall qualification undertaken by our teams completed by women. 24 women took advantage of other development opportunities such as qualifications, vocational and skills-based courses and this is an area that we want to continue to develop year on year.

At Transport for Wales, we're dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment and one where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work. We want our people to thrive.

Diversity and inclusion starts with research

The Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education at the University of Birmingham is a vibrant, diverse space committed to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion under the leadership of Dr Holly Foss, who chairs the School of Engineering committee for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

At BCRRE and the School of Engineering, we know that championing and building diversity and inclusion is not a task and finish one-off project, but an ongoing attitude and commitment, with projects, pitfalls, and stumbles along the way. For us, diversity and inclusion work is about maintaining a curious and compassionate dedication to learning and making things better. This ethos is at the very heart of engineering, which is why our strategic aim is to embed EDI across all areas of our work and why we are committed to developing our expertise and portfolio, particularly in research. EDI-oriented research is as much about ethos as it is about topic. And at BCRRE we are proud to harness both. Diverse and inclusive research practice ensures the who, what, how, why, and results of research all celebrate EDI throughout. This means being attentive to the people involved in doing, using, and benefitting from the research, their needs, inclusion, and engagement. It means exploring the structures around the research governance, including funding, intellectual property, data, and process and contracting. And it means a transparent and supportive communications and route to market.

We are proud to be the home of a range of dynamic and innovative projects across a wide spectrum of areas. Doctoral researcher, Kim Harding is studying inclusive design and passenger experience for neurodivergent individuals. Through user-centred design and human-centred systems engineering, the project aims to holistically capture what passengers want and create an inclusive design strategy for railway infrastructure implementation, without which the railway cannot capture the breadth of who we are as

individuals. Likewise, Noodhir Sobun, PhD candidate and senior system safety engineer at RSSB is set to transform the way industry focusses on wellbeing through his work on health and wellbeing performance indicators, dashboards, and management in the railway to support the sector. Researcher Dr Joe Preece focuses on how state-of-the-art technology can build inclusion. His recent wayfinding project uses pathfinding algorithms and intuitive sensors for an augmented reality tool assisting accessibility for all. And Dr Holly Foss is set on enhancing recruitment, retention, and development for the sector through inclusive recruitment

For us, diversity and inclusion work is about maintaining a curious and compassionate dedication to learning and making things better.

and education. Additional BCRRE projects include work on welfare facilities, such as toilets, for train drivers, rail workers, and the freight sector and the development of our inclusive events charter to be launched later this year.

We're also developing the next generation of engineers within postgraduate and degree apprenticeship educational programmes in railway systems, railway safety, and digital railway leadership, all of which focus on putting people at the heart of railway engineering. Our programmes draw extensively from industrial expertise through guest lectures and the valued input of our industrial advisory board, which includes the EDI special interest group for impactful academia-industry collaboration and learning. We also run regular cake and care events for all staff, reflecting the importance of open and supportive conversation around EDI to generate change.

We know EDI work is a constant process of critical reflection and development and we're excited to be part of this.

If you're interested in more information about BCRRE or would like to collaborate, please get in touch.



CAF launch Women's Network to promote gender equity

As a geographically diverse organisation, CAF face the challenge of disconnect between our locations. Our colleagues are spread across the UK and this can inevitably make building workplace relationships more challenging. Recognising the gender disparity of our current demographic, and subsequent barriers that women at CAF face when trying to connect with one another, our EDI Champions proactively sought to improve the workplace for women by establishing a dedicated Women's Network earlier this year.

The Women's Network was established to provide an opportunity for connection and support, to enable women to share ideas and, raise concerns in a supportive environment. It was created to provide a forum for women at CAF to relate to one another and share advice, knowledge and experiences between themselves, with an emphasis on building connections through collaboration, and also having a little fun along the way.

Feeling included and having a sense of belonging is so important to each and every one of us and our Women's Network offers a safe space for women to discuss, and to start to tackle, some of the challenges our organisation, and the rail industry face as a whole. A diverse range of topics feature on the Women's Network calendar and through CAF's partnership with WISE (Women in Science & Engineering) the network is able to offer masterclasses and webinars on themes such as Imposter Syndrome and Menopause to all members.

Through involvement in social value initiatives, and by establishing key charity partnerships, our Women's Network has already started to make positive social impact at CAF and tackle wider societal issues such as period poverty. Our Women's Network has been able to ensure dignity for everyone in the workplace by providing free access to

sustainable period products across all depots and locations thanks to their recent partnership with social enterprise of the year, Hey Girls. Hey Girls work to improve period equality for everyone and believe that period products and education is a right, all whilst being kind to the environment and planet by using plant-based disposables and zero waste reusable products. For every product bought, Hey Girls donate to those in period poverty and have donated an incredible 30 million products so far and CAF are proud to be a part of their journey!

In addition to the Hey Girls initiative, the Women's Network has completed a full review of women's PPE to ensure that CAF's workwear is comfortable for our female colleagues and the sizing CAF offer is suitable for women, and necessary adaptations are made. Recognising that female fit PPE is a crucial step towards achieving gender equality within the workplace, the network hope to expand CAF's current PPE range to ensure that all women at CAF feel comfortable, safe, and happy in what they're wearing!

Having recently conducted a 'Female Friendly Facilities Audit' across the organisation, our Women's Network are currently in the process of reviewing their findings and devising an improvement plan, highlighting areas of concern and proposing recommendations to the Operations teams. The Women's Network are striving to ensure that CAF's working environments are gender equitable and are meeting the needs of women. Providing a comfortable working environment is crucial in attracting more women to work in the industry and a key retention exercise!

CAF are proud to support the Women's Network and recognise the value this is bringing to the workplace and the support the network is offering our female colleagues. This is just the beginning and we're excited to see where the journey takes us!

Being the change...

Rail is a great industry in which to work. Everywhere you look there is creativity and originality and across the country there are so many exciting and transformative rail infrastructure projects in which to get involved and build a career.

But none of that should obscure the fact that the rail sector needs to change. It needs to do more to encourage a greater diversity and range of people to work in the industry – both today and for tomorrow.

In part this is about making sure that the rail industry looks, feels and sounds like the communities it has the privilege to serve. In such a tight labour market as today, the sector also needs to think carefully about its own future and understand how it can attract the talented people it needs for tomorrow.

At the Global Centre of Rail Excellence the task we have set ourselves is to be a part of those positive changes. The reasons why this is so important to us are embedded in the roots of how GCRE came into being in the first place.

GCRE is not your average rail infrastructure development. Its genesis, in fact, came from outside the industry. It developed as an economic development opportunity in the South Wales coalfield and so by its very nature, disrupting the status quo to create new jobs and skills opportunities has been the GCRE mission from the start.

We want GCRE – and the rail industry itself – to be seen as an attractive, accessible and achievable career path for a diverse range of people, in particular for the women and girls who live locally to the site, many of whom will face structural barriers of poverty and income inequality, on top of the gender discrimination they will encounter.

In addition to this we are also mindful that GCRE will be a site for cutting edge rail testing, research and innovation. That,

in turn, shapes the way that we see the development of the organisation itself – GCRE has to embody new thinking and ideas in the way it develops, as much as be a place to help clients with their own innovation.

As an organisation, GCRE is still young in its development, but these important factors have already shaped positive actions we have taken to ensure that as GCRE and its own working environment develops, it is playing a positive, contributory role in building the more diverse rail industry of tomorrow.

Some of the early steps we have taken have included:

- Building diversity into the senior structures of the GCRE organisation, including ensuring that 50% of the GCRE board are female and led by a female Chair
- Committing to tangible actions in our own organisation by signing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion charter with myself, a member of our senior leadership team, appointed as our EDI Champion
- Funding the development of the Primary Engineer programme in local schools to help get young people interested in engineering and encourage a more diverse range of people into rail
- Playing a leadership role in advocating for wider changes in the industry by organising jointly with Women in Rail a recent conference at the GCRE site (below), exploring ways to improve diversity and equality in the sector

Building the railway of tomorrow – the industry with equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart – will need clear and long-term commitment from us all.

GCRE is committed to playing its part in that work and to being a positive advocate for the changes we need to see in the rail industry.



Championing EDI in a rail SME

Barry Michael Aldridge is the Head of Marketing for SME Flotec Industrial Limited and in December 2022 was appointed the EDI Champion for his organisation.

Aldridge felt it important to support the Railway Industry Association (RIA) in its commitment to work together to build a more balanced, fair, and high performing sector.

Barry is a fully chartered marketer and fellow member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and joined the rail sector in 2017, having gained substantial experience in various business to business (B2B) industries.

Loughborough-based Flotec is a trusted and leading supplier of reliable hose and engineering solutions to the rail market.

The company supports train operators in solving engine cooling issues to improve fleet efficiency and help towards a better passenger experience.

Having a vested interest in equality, diversity and inclusion, Barry speaks of the signatory:

"EDI is a subject matter that resonates incredibly close to my heart.

When first discovering the rail sector, I was immediately captivated by its creativity, diversity, kindness, and inclusion.

Our sector is wonderful and quite unlike any other I have ever worked in. I couldn't imagine being anywhere else.

The EDI Charter venture from Women in Rail and RIA is testament to the railway family, our people and what we are striving to achieve.

The Flotec team is small, consisting of just twenty-five, but within ourselves are incredibly diverse, where inclusion is an organically natural way of being.

So, signing this Charter seemed the ethical and obvious thing to do.

It is my firm belief that EDI helps drive innovation which is important for the rail sector and those who work within it and rely on its services."

Shortly after signing the EDI Charter, Barry was invited to speak at a monthly RIA signatory forum, where he shared his personal experience of being the victim of a hate crime and the effect it had had on him, family members and friends.

He highlighted a genuine need for equality, diversity, and inclusion. An honest and candid presentation, it revealed

that for Barry, adopting and encouraging ethical behaviour is more than a corporate box ticking exercise but intrinsic towards making people, communities and societies feel safe, valued, included, and respected.

Barry has made progressive change within Flotec in numerous ways. He has penned visions, mission statements and core values with one of the values being:

Belonging, Empowerment, Ownership and Accountability:

- To be a culture of diversity, inclusivity, creativity, innovation, teamwork, and family.
- For each person to feel valued, appreciated and belonging to the Flotec culture, its shared mission, and values.
- Each person to feel empowered and take ownership and accountability of their work.
- To acknowledge, celebrate and reward successes and achievements.

Additionally, Barry has worked towards making the company a Disability Confident Employer.

More recently, Barry has completed an ED&I in Marketing Principles course through the Chartered Institute of Marketing, earning him an official EDI qualification!

When asked what his on-going plans are regarding equality, diversity and inclusion, Barry summarises:

"I am going to take my recent academic learnings and embed them within the overall Flotec strategy.



When first discovering the rail sector, I was immediately captivated by its creativity, diversity, kindness, and inclusion.

Moving forwards, I would like Flotec to be recognised as an SME ambassador for EDI and ethical business conduct within the rail sector supply chain.

Obviously, I enjoy the prospect of having more direct involvement with the wider rail sector, demonstrating the needs and advantages of adopting EDI strategies and behaviours."

Barry Michael Aldridge – Head of Marketing for Flotec Industrial Limited

Northern is empowering Women

Northern is empowering Women. Celebrating International Women's Day with the 'Go do Her Thing' Campaign.

International Women's Day serves as a global platform to celebrate the achievement of women, highlight gender equality issues, and promote a more inclusive society. Our recent campaign for International Women's Day – 'Go Do Her Thing' was created to support 2023 theme #EmbraceEquity to raise awareness about equity and inclusion in the business.

The 'Go do Her Thing' campaign was designed not only to highlight the accomplishments of women in the business but create a supportive and safe environment for women to speak their minds and thrive. By using various communication channels, we aimed to amplify our messages and initiatives and created opportunities to engage on the topic both internally and externally

We placed real women at the center of our 'Go Do Her Thing'

A lot of activity took place within Northern, encouraging all colleagues to get involved throughout the month. We shared videos, thought provoking articles, webinars, workshops, and shared best practice from both within and outside of the rail industry. We also set up a new women's network, empowering women to discuss the things that matter to them, connect with like-minded colleagues and share experiences. By providing a space to share their knowledge, thoughts, and ideas, we empowered our women, and men, to be advocates for change. The network also highlights the importance of building a strong support system within the business.

One of the standout features of our internal campaign was the launch of our first female 'HackHerTon'. This event provided a platform for women to come together, share their creativity and discuss how Northern could improve the colleague experience. The group continues to meet regularly to discuss the progress of the proposed initiatives and ideas.

Through our social media platforms, we also initiated conversations both internally and externally about the importance of diversity in rail. On Yammer (our internal social media channel) we ran a campaign, encouraging colleagues to celebrate and recognise the women that had a positive impact on their lives, both personally and professionally.

Seven colleagues featured as part of a 'Women in Uniform' exhibition in Haworth Art Gallery, celebrating Black, Asian, Hispanic and Arab women in the industry, and showcasing what their uniform means to them.

The content shared in our internal campaign received almost 12,000 views from colleagues and externally, our campaign was featured in over 51 pieces of media coverage, including slots on Yahoo! Uk and Ireland, with almost 2,000,000 opportunities to be viewed by the public.

The campaign was a huge success, not just in terms of engagement metrics but also in its profound impact on raising awareness about diversity and inclusion. By spotlighting authentic stories, engaging in meaningful conversations, and encouraging collaborative efforts, we have taken a significant step towards shaping a more equitable work place at Northern. This success reinforces our dedication to continue these initiatives and drive culture change in the business.

Building a more inclusive place to work

Kier is committed to having a culture where everyone feels able to belong, contribute and thrive.

We understand the importance of creating a workplace and an industry where everybody, regardless of their identity or background, feels they can have their voice heard and fulfil their potential.

The Empower Programme

Empower is Kier's talent development programme aimed at addressing the specific challenges and barriers to progression that individuals from minoritised groups can face in the workplace. We recognise that there is more to be done to increase the diversity within our senior leadership population and we are committed to changing this by investing in our future leaders and diversifying our succession planning.

Through Empower, colleagues take part in a varied nine-month programme designed to support their career goals. Through formal learning modules, reverse mentoring with members of our Executive Committee, and working on a business inclusion project, participants develop their leadership skills.

At the end of the programme participants come together at a capstone event attended by senior leaders from across the Group to present their project findings, celebrate their hard work, and be recognised for their achievements.

At our capstone event in February 2023 pride and passion was evident throughout the day, with our first cohort described as 'pioneers'.

Empower continues to go from strength to strength, with our second cohort now having completed their programme, and our third cohort about to start.

"Our project focused on attracting apprentices to Kier. We looked at creating a support app, giving school leavers useful information before starting their apprenticeships at Kier and allowing them to feel comfortable and prepared for their new role. We presented these ideas to our Executive Committee in July, which gave me an opportunity to further develop my presentation skills."

"Through reverse mentoring I have also had the opportunity to mentor Alpha Amar, Kier Group's corporate development director and part of our Executive Committee."

"This has been a great experience – having very different roles within the business it has been valuable to share our experiences and I have learnt so much. I've also built my network and met fantastic colleagues from across the Group."

Gaby Grant, MRICS

Senior Quantity Surveyor, Kier Transportation



Kier Empower programme capstone event 2023

"I'm extremely proud of Kier's Empower talent development programme, which is aimed at helping those from under-represented groups develop into management and leadership roles."

"Every year, I make it my mission to travel to projects across the UK, engaging with colleagues through site visits and employee roadshows, to listen to them and find out more about what matters to them. And then consider how we can effect change."

"The Empower programme extended this to provide 1:1 reverse mentoring and I have been paired with Jordan and Nicola, both exceptional talent in our business. Over several months, my mentors and I have met up regularly and shared our hopes for diversity and inclusion at Kier, and they have helped me understand some of the battles they'd had to overcome. I have learned so much and am committed to turning some of their ideas into reality."

Andrew Davies

Chief executive, Kier Group

"I was attracted initially to the Empower programme as it offered reverse mentoring. Having been in the industry for over 20 years I felt this was an opportunity to share my journey and experience with senior leadership within Kier and shape pathways for women to progress in the industry in the future."

"I certainly had that opportunity being paired with Andrew Davies, with whom I discussed imposter syndrome and the value of mentors and sponsors for retaining those from underrepresented groups."

"Having experienced considerable self-doubt over the years, the Empower programme has given me the confidence in my skills and experience and allowed me to greatly develop my internal network. It was a safe space for people who are in the minority to grow and share their skills, knowledge, and experience."

Nicola Tremayne

Project Manager, Kier Transportation

Expect Respect

Expect Respect is a Group-wide, long-term campaign that outlines the behaviours we expect when working for Kier. It sets out the standards on inclusive language and communicating Kier's zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying and harassment, with clear signposting to our call it out helpline.

We introduced our five respect basics, developed with input from our people, including colleagues who are part of our Kier Inclusion Network. Our five respect basics are:

- Banter is not an excuse
- Call it out
- Be open minded
- Respect each other
- Take action

Expect Respect imagery is displayed across Kier sites, depots and offices, with all colleagues completing Expect Respect e-learning and toolbox talks.

We utilised inclusion survey feedback when creating new posters, educating on harmful language, and including photos of real Kier employees.

In March 2023 we launched the Expect Respect Game, an interactive board game to engage employees in open conversation. Players make their way round the board, collecting points by collaboratively deciding on the most inclusive approach to real life scenarios.

A number of our colleagues also featured in a successful Expect Respect campaign launched by the Integrated Programme Alliance in Birmingham. Aimed at reducing road worker abuse, it reached over 1.75 million through regional, national, and trade press.

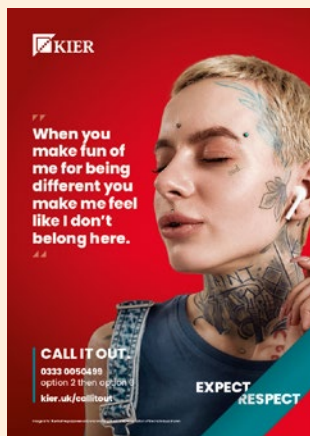
Following its success, we are committed to ensuring that our campaign, and the principles that underpin it, remained accessible and engaging.

Employee Networks and Inclusion Champions

Everyone at Kier has a part to play in building an inclusive workplace. Our employee networks are a safe place for people to share their experiences and come together to drive D&I across the business. The networks are open to all, fostering a culture of allyship, responsibility and accountability.

Kier currently has seven employee networks.

- **The Kier Inclusion Network**, our primary network that drives inclusion across all characteristics within Kier
- **The Pride Network**
- **The Gender Alliance & Inclusion Network**
- **The Racial Inclusion Network**
- **The Ability Network**
- **The Armed Forces Network**
- **The One World Network**



We also recognised that some of our employees were not aware of the important work happening in the inclusion space or had great ideas and insights but weren't sure who to share these with. To rectify this, we chose Inclusion Champions from all areas of the Group to promote our activity and encourage others to get involved. This voluntary role supports our D&I teams and Employee Networks to drive change by tackling stigma and instigating initiatives to ensure everyone can Expect Respect.

Supporting employees when they need it most

We believe it's important to give our people the time and support they need when they need it, from welcoming new family members, grieving after a pregnancy loss or managing menopause symptoms.

Alongside our enhanced maternity, adoption, shared parental, and paternity leave, parental leave, pregnancy loss, and flexible dependant leave policies, we have introduced a suite of other policies to support our people during important, life-changing moments.

Our surrogacy leave, foster care, and fertility treatment policies developed from Kier's recognition that there are many possible journeys into parenthood, guardianship, and caregiving. These each have unique challenges yet are all made easier in some way by having a supportive and understanding employer with clear, accessible processes.

In 2021, we signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge, actively committing to talk about the menopause and support those affected. There is often a stigma around discussing the menopause, but at Kier we are committed to changing this and building an open and inclusive culture with our Menopause Guidance Policy and internal 'Let's Talk Menopause' Community.

In January 2023 we introduced our partnership with Grace & Green, providing period products that are free to access within the workplace. We believe Kier has a responsibility as an inclusive work environment to tackle the stigma around menstruation and empower people who menstruate within our workplace. This means having clear support systems and wellbeing policies in place and making reproductive and menstrual health part of our wider diversity and inclusion strategy.

Our journey continues...

Through regular reviews of our D&I roadmap, employee surveys and Gender Pay Gap reporting, we recognise that there is still work to be done.

We are not yet where we would like to be, and we know our people and their inclusion are crucial to the growth and evolution of Kier.

"Our progress and commitment to supporting our employees through every stage of their lives, recognising the importance of a good work/life balance, and ensuring we have a diverse and engaged workforce are driving us in the right direction. We will continue working hard to make strides that empower our employees and encourage more people to join and thrive in our industry."

Mandy Duncan, Managing Director – Rail & Aviation, Kier Transportation

Stay tuned with Kier's progress, visit www.kier.co.uk.

Creating an Equity Index

Women in Transport is a proud signatory of the RIA/ Women in Rail EDI Charter and continues to further the aims of making the transport industry more diverse and representative of our society. Transport is a vital industry, employing over 1.5 million people but faces a pressing challenge of attracting, recruiting, and retaining diverse talent. With only 21% of women working in transport, the sector is still heavily male-dominated.

What is the Women in Transport Equity Index?

The Women in Transport Equity Index Project is a groundbreaking initiative that aims to revolutionise the transport sector by promoting equity and diversity. We believe our collaborative index is unique in providing the essential data that uncovers the true gender diversity in transport-related positions and recognise and reward best practices across the sector.

The survey

Our survey is thoughtfully designed to be efficient yet comprehensive, comprising questions that also address intersectional aspects.

Our initiative places diversity and equity at the forefront of change. It accomplishes this by curating a range of indexes that show performance across various sectors and tracks progress within the transport industry. By participating, companies receive a free overall score across ten equity standards and get the opportunity to assess their performance against industry peers. Participating companies

also receive a comprehensive 25-page report that features benchmarking data, with invaluable data they can use to develop EDI initiatives.

How does the index showcase excellence?

We believe in acknowledging excellence and celebrating progress. Top-performing companies are also showcased in the report, with the top five in each sector receiving a certificate of success recognition and a marketing badge, which can be publicly displayed to show their achievement.

Groundbreaking potential

The Women in Transport Equity Index is not confined to being just an index; it is a catalyst for continuous improvement. By publishing the index annually, awarding badges, and offering solutions through Women in Transport's Knowledge Hub, the initiative encourages companies to take action, stimulate positive change, and cultivate an industry characterised by equity.

The initiative emphasises that equity transcends being a mere initiative or programme; it is the outcome of embracing diversity, championing inclusion, and implementing major action.

The potential of the Women in Transport Equity Index goes beyond setting a new global standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through collective efforts, the index seeks to reshape the transport sector, crafting a future where every individual enjoys equitable access to opportunities, resources, and the means to thrive.

Equity Index 2023



Accelerating Diversity and Inclusion Through Data

Sponsors



Partners



women in transport
all party parliamentary group



Supporters



Developing and retaining our female talent

Retaining our female talent is vital for our business and drives us to develop women, including enabling them to speak up and be heard. So in response to feedback, we created a comprehensive programme of development, designed to support women at every stage of their career, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Seven Pillars of Business Confidence:

Designed specifically for women identified as emerging talent, this 20-week course aims to engage and inspire through a series of high impact and practical workshops.

Areas of focus include "Personal Power: learning how to express your authority" and "Find Your Voice: creating your own inner support crew".

Since its inception, 39 women have completed the course, with 40% achieving promotion and 97% staying within the company.

Feedback shows attendees are more confident in the workplace:

"I am now a Line Manager – I asked for more responsibility, and I got it, and I would never have done this before. I am also mentoring women using my newly acquired skills and am seeing them develop."

New Year, New You:

To broaden access to these Seven Pillars outcomes, we developed a supplementary programme open to all our women. Comprising of four online hour-long modules, over four months, it introduces practical techniques for personal development, including "Managing difficult conversations" and "8 ways to delegate successfully".

We've supported 491 women in their personal development, and we know from their feedback this is helping them to become more persuasive and assertive in a safe, inclusive environment.

Inspire:

Inspire is an intensive course that combines one-to-one sessions, peer mentoring and group challenges to support women into executive level positions. It focuses on self-development with topics including leadership presence, resilience, and career strategies. Within two years of completing the programme, 89% of attendees had changed role with 67% achieving promotion. This feedback from a Project Director summarises the impact in action:

"One of our delivery project managers participated and it immediately helped to develop her confidence and make more structured career progression plans. Even with 10 years' experience, development in the areas

covered was quickly evident. She was recently promoted to Senior Project Manager, with significant growth due to the Inspire course."

Women's Mentoring Programme

Finally, our mentoring programme has been introduced to give women development opportunities, both as a mentor and mentee. Its purpose is to get senior women engaged in supporting our women's career development objectives, and specifically designed to create a virtuous circle, where the first cohort of mentees became the second cohort's mentors and so on.

To do this, we created short-term mentoring with a specific goal over three months, based on wants and needs. We connected mentors and mentees from across the business to provide independence and exposure to diverse experiences. This was supplemented by group mentoring for others who would benefit from shared experiences and facilitated conversations.

In 2022, 55 mentees, with a further 17 as mentors were taken through two cohorts of the programme. Feedback from attendees includes:

"Being part of the programme has shown me that anything is possible, and difficulties can be overcome with the right attitude, training and support."

We've seen an amazing halo effect on all our people because of these programmes. As Julie Owen, CFO and Chair of UK Board, says *"Our comprehensive programme is getting those of us in leadership positions to challenge what we think we know and re-evaluate our own styles. I'm proud of the positive impact this is having for all our people and delighted to have external recognition through winning the 2023 Women in Rail Award for Best Training or Development Programme Award!"*



Pioneering leader's legacy for female engineers

This September, Jane Austin, director of engineering and asset management for Network Rail's Wales and Western region, will be retiring after an outstanding career spanning more than 30 years in rail.

Jane joined British Rail in 1992 as a management trainee and has since gone on to try her hand at a variety of diverse roles, including working in pway, switches and crossings, designing bridges as well as working to protect and enhance railway assets. Jane has clocked up some notable achievements throughout her career including delivering the electrification of Paddington to Cardiff as well as successfully working on huge upgrade programmes.

Earlier this year, Jane was fundamental in the emergency repairs to Nuneham viaduct in Oxfordshire, which was closed in April owing to structural problems with one of the abutments. The team on site achieved the remarkable feat of completing the repairs in only 10 weeks, with the railway opening earlier than expected.

After having joined the railway at a time when women were perhaps few and far between, Jane has been a

great supporter for women, not only encouraging more females to join the industry but also pushing boundaries, breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes, encouraging organisations to think and behave differently. She has led the Everyone Matters Board in recent years, a forum for Network Rail's regional diversity and inclusion networks to come together and discuss how to best serve its employees while promoting respect and equity. Both as a diversity and inclusion champion and the executive leader for the Everyone Matters Board, Jane has set an example as a trailblazer and pioneer, becoming a role model for women across the industry.

Her example is a shining light for those who hope to follow in her footsteps.



Colin Kimber

Operations Director – ED&I Champion Pareto FM



Colin's journey in FM is nothing short of exceptional. From leaving a career as a professional dancer to operationally leading one of the most successful service providers in FM, Colin is an inspiration. In the last five years Colin has become one of the most important leaders in the FM sector from an operational, customer relations, inclusive and ethical perspective. Today, Colin sits as the Operations Director for Pareto FM and is accountable for over £35m of company turnover and over 500 team members. Working with the board Colin has transformed Pareto into a remarkable organisation which has included founding the Inclusion Committee, the HSEQ committee and the Green Committee. All driven by Colin and all on his own initiative, along side his operational day job. Colin is an exceptional leader and has set the tone for the future of the FM sector. Willing to lead in terms of LGBT+ and creating an inclusive workplace, there is no one else quite like him.

It wasn't until Colin joined Pareto FM in 2017 – a progressive and inclusive business set, to disrupt the Facilities Management industry and became part of LGBT+ in FM that he found his voice. His voice was being heard and beginning to unlock doors. Immediately Colin could see the potential of what could be achieved if you are in the right environment not just as an individual but within the FM industry.

Colin went on to co-create and chair the Pareto's Inclusion Committee. The brief and focus was to embrace and enhance Pareto's reputation as a positive disrupter around social value, within the industry and beyond. To continue to challenge the status quo, nurture an environment where people can be themselves and promote a supportive culture that celebrates equality and diversity.

Colin's impact and influence spreads wide across the FM Industry as a member, ambassador, judge, and voice for LGBT+ community, actively partaking in events, webinars and roundtables. More recently, Colin has been instrumental as a member the IWFM (The Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management) steering committee guiding the IWFM's approach to ED&I advising on their statement, annual awards process and ceremony.



British Transport Police – Creating a Modern and Inclusive Force

As Proud Guardians of the Railway, it is our duty to protect the railway and the travelling public. It is equally vital that our own people are well equipped, well cared for and well led. Our family friendly offering plays a huge part in that, and we are proud to share with you the work we have been doing in this area. Over the last two years, living our values of #WeCare and #WeDoTheRightThing, we have made some significant changes and improvements towards gender equality in our policies and processes.

The driving force for change was one of our own people, Lucy-Jane Milton, who had her own loss in April 2018 when, at 32 weeks pregnant, her daughter Ellie was stillborn. Being vocal about her experience was part of her grieving process and she used that to share her story and started to see just how many others were similarly affected. When she spoke, the organisation listened and that year, supported by our Female Police Association, Director of People & Culture, Rachael Etebar and Assistant Chief Constable Charlie Doyle, we covered baby loss awareness week for the first time. This was the start of the change.

Lucy joined the Inclusion and Diversity team last year as a business partner, leading on the programme 'Engaged & Involved'. From there escalated the efforts by enabling the organisation to care for others in the same situations and supporting them with policy change. This work led to British Transport Police deciding to pay parental bereavement leave at full pay in recognition of the significant emotional and financial impact of pregnancy loss or the death of a child under 18.

We increased maternity leave to 26 weeks full pay, in line with the increase across all UK police forces. It was important that this also applied to adoption leave. Every family looks different and can come together in a million different ways.

We also introduced paid miscarriage leave to the organisation. Giving it a specific name, did two things; allowed us to break the



We have made some significant changes and improvements towards gender equality in our policies and processes.

taboo around baby loss, encouraging employees to share the real reason with us so we can better support them and secondly, it removed any ambiguity for supervisors meaning more consistent support. It is important that this also applies to termination for medical reasons AND that it applies to either partner. Not only was it a priority for us to acknowledge our male colleagues' mental health in this but also for same sex couples. A loss is a loss, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Furthermore, we have a network of peer supporters managed by our wellbeing team. This includes people with specific experience in pregnancy, maternity, paternity, perinatal mental health, adoption, fostering and IVF. There is a diverse mix of backgrounds and experience to help support our people.

Dads matter too! They often do not get as much support in this space. We found that 61% of new dads only took the first week of paternity leave as they couldn't afford the second week at reduced pay. Therefore we increased the entitlement from 1 week at full pay and 1 week reduced to 3 weeks full pay. Not only has this received so much positive feedback from new parents, but it demonstrated a more strategic commitment to supporting families and to gender equality.

In November 2022, our efforts were recognised by Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) in the Exceptional Impact category, created specially to recognise our family friendly work and for Ellie.



Creating accountability for positive change

About Arcadis

At Arcadis, our passion is to improve quality of life through the projects we undertake for our clients. Our global values guide us in everything we do. Our primary aim is long-term value creation for all stakeholders, delivering sustainable solutions to clients, and the communities we serve.

Gender Inequity

Gender diversity is an issue that has faced not only the infrastructure sector, but the wider industry for far too long. The lack of diversity is stifling innovation, limiting much needed change, reducing opportunities to drive efficiencies and hampering access to much needed talent.

We want to build an equitable, inclusive and resilient Arcadis, to empower our leaders to be bold.

We already know that more diverse teams offer a competitive advantage, and at a leadership level diverse boards are more stable and fair better during times of crisis. However, despite this and numerous other efforts to address the imbalance, only 15% of the construction workforce is female, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

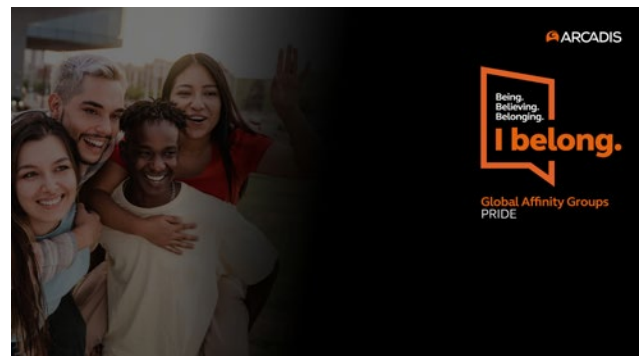
Diversity Belonging and Human Rights (DBHR) is integral to 'improving quality of life'. By respecting human rights within our business, and in the relationships with supply chain, clients and communities, we are contributing to solutions that meet the pressing social challenges of our time.

Our Goal: to build an equitable, inclusive and resilient Arcadis, to empower our leaders to be bold in recognizing their individual impact and responsibility, and to encourage all Arcadians to take collective ownership for creating a culture of belonging, in which everyone can thrive.

We are showing this commitment through global programmes such as:

Our five Global Affinity Groups Access & Neurodiversity, Age Representation, Ethnicity & Heritage, Gender, and PRIDE – we have created executive-sponsored forums for employees to represent their needs and lived experiences. Our intersectional approach also embeds areas such as faith, veterans & well-being. Our Affinity Groups are actively curating a renewed workplace culture where we can make impactful change together by:

- Sharing and supporting by creating community safe spaces for Arcadians



- Celebrating and educating by establishing a digital resource hub, inclusive language guide, "I Am Remarkable" personal brand workshops and schedule of monthly webinars reaching over 20,000 Arcadians
- Advocating for communities by challenging bias in behaviours, processes and existing ways of working, language used in training materials and in meetings
- Consulting and advising by providing strategic input to leadership on decisions that affect employees and spearheading the development of global frameworks such as our Social Justice Framework

Our Global Sponsorship Programme in which influential leaders use their political and organisational savviness to advocate for, and support, individuals' growth opportunities. Research and insights tell us that sponsorship tends to occur less organically for members of under-represented groups and women and so we're working to bridge the gap and create more opportunities for all. This program has opened with our first cohort of 80 pairs (sponsor with sponsored). Although this programme is open to applications from all Arcadians, we encouraged applications from under-represented groups to participate and benefit from targeted sponsorship that will, in turn, ensure equity across the company in growth opportunities.

In January 2023 we launched our I Belong campaign, to demonstrate how we're applying this commitment through the voices of our people. I Belong embodies what it means to feel included and empowered within Arcadis; it's a concept about Arcadians, for Arcadians. It's a demonstration of our culture and a celebration of the people who create it. Through I Belong we're elevating each other's lived experiences – creating a space that celebrates our diversity and unique perspectives, enhances inclusion and profiles challenges.

Our Women of Colour (WoC) programme demonstrates recognition that the women of colour within our business experience significant bias and challenge. Through the programme, we've heard firsthand how these experiences continue to affect Arcadians from that community. Our aim is to improve the employee experiences of women of colour in our business and increase access to equitable opportunities.

To do this, we have set up workstreams focusing on WoC Forums, WoC Role Models, Remedy Ecosystem and Advocacy guidelines.

Demonstrating Best Practice Solutions

When we launched our global Maximizing Impact Strategy in 2020, we made a decision to include inclusivity targets alongside our financial ones. One of these targets – our 40% women in the workforce, 30% women in leadership – has accelerated our drive towards gender parity. Since 2021 we've made significant strides in improving representation, investment into gender focussed programmes and increased engagement and accountability across the business.

In June 2022 Arcadis UK&I introduced the PARRR Programme to its Mobility Sector. This programme focuses Gender Equity through the lenses of Parity, Awareness, Recruitment, Retention & Returners, taking a programmatic approach to diversity, aimed around increasing representation of women, reducing gender pay gaps and ultimately achieving gender equity.



PARRR is structured around six key workstreams, outlined below, each with Executive Sponsors who are fully accountable for the delivery of cultural and behavioural change:

Our Women in Mobility Workstream has been created to help understand why there is a disproportionate lack of women in Infrastructure. There is a recognition that the problem is not one for women to solve, but everyone has a part to play. In acknowledgement of this, the Women in Mobility Workstream has ensured that every leader within the Mobility business has committed to personal action that they are being measured against.

The Women in Mobility network has been focusing on barriers women face within the industry. Feedback has been turned into a series of anonymous videos produced by the Allyship workstream, read by male allies, designed to educate us all about behaviours and actions that can impact others. These videos are being rolled out alongside a structured Allyship Training programme.

Our Client Engagement Workstream is focusing on how we can work with Key Clients: Network Rail, HS2, National Highways, TfL, the wider industry, and suppliers to foster diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for us all.

Developing a DEIB Client Engagement Toolkit, looking beyond gender to neurodiversity, ethnicity, and disability.

Our Recruitment Workstream is focusing on DEIB training and guidance for our hiring managers, ensuring a balanced interview panel and candidate pool for external hires. Our Retention workstream is focusing on Mentoring and Reverse Mentoring, proactive succession and talent management, alongside focusing on building confidence through Role Modelling, Awards and leadership / development programmes. We have also set up a Mobility STEM Ambassador Network that comes together regularly to share knowledge and showcase best practice examples, promoting the use of our UK&I CSR day, creating a wealth of resources to support diverse STEM engagement with the next generation of talent.

What were the results?

We know we are having an impact. Our data points show an increase in our gender balance, but more importantly we are seeing a real change in our people's mindset, with positive shifts in our culture and behaviours. Increased involvement from a broad section of our most senior leaders has bought these issues unequivocally and consistently into the spotlight. We have further built our community of allies and the activities this group are undertaking have accelerated a culture of understanding and empathy. We are also seeing greater connectivity in our global business on this issue, which is leading to best practice sharing and impact at a greater scale. Ultimately, we know we are on the journey to better outcomes because our people are telling us this.

What does the future look like?

Gender has been the primary focus of the PARRR programme to date, because we know it is where the industry has the biggest need for improvement. But for Arcadis, this is just the beginning. Our intersectional approach is expanding the focus rapidly across all aspects of diversity including ethnicity, age, faith, neurodiversity, disability and LGBTQIA+; with a clear goal of 'equity for all'.

Moreover, it is impossible to reflect on the issues affecting diverse groups without reflecting on the clear need for industry change for the benefit of everybody. People are the foundation of the industry, and it is widely recognised that we do not work in an environment that is positive for anyone. Statistics on poor mental health in the sector are one lens through which we see a clear need for progressive improvement. It is also the case when we consider the fact that many men require more flexible working arrangements to enable them to fulfil care commitments. In essence, a more flexible, inclusive, and diverse industry is good for everybody.

Recommendations for change

We recognise that no one organisation has the perfect solution, and everyone is learning as we collectively go on the journey of enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion in the industry. It is vital we learn from each other. To date, our three main takeaways for all to consider are:

- Making senior leadership visible and accountable in the workstream accelerates momentum;
- Creating a culture of allyship drives empathy and focus on behaviours;
- Honest self-reflection through open engagement is the best place to start for developing the strategy and associated workstreams.

Neurodiverse recruitment at Ricardo

As one of the inaugural signatories of the Women in Rail EDI Charter, Ricardo's UK rail team is now three years into a journey of embedding inclusion and diversity into day-to-day activities.

During that time, we have launched an EDI Taskforce to test ideas and share experiences; formalised hybrid and flexible working arrangements to help colleagues manage their work-life balance; and invested in diversity training and awareness events for managers and team members alike.

Less visible, but no less important, has been the changes to our recruitment processes – not just to appeal as an employer across genders and cultures, but to neurodiverse candidates as well.

By introducing more awareness of neurodiversity, we hope to broaden our appeal and improve the diversity of our teams.

Neurodiverse thinking

Neurodiversity is about recognising not all minds receive and process information in the same way. Conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia, for example, mean there are large numbers of people in the workforce who think, learn and process information in different ways.

Yet whilst they remain highly prized candidates – with strengths and attributes of great value to a technical and

analytical business like ours – standard recruitment practices can present a barrier to individuals diagnosed with such conditions.

"Many of the tasks we perform for clients requires meticulous attention to detail," says Claire Ruggiero, Ricardo's rail business UK and Ireland Operations Director. "Within our teams we often need individuals with an encyclopaedic knowledge of standards and regulations who can concentrate for long periods on detailed technical documents. Or colleagues who enjoy being immersed in large data sets searching for faults, trends or opportunities for improvements."

"Through our EDI learning and discussions, we realised that we needed to change our approach if we were to encourage more applications from neurodiverse individuals with so much to offer our business" says Claire.

Look for skills and capabilities, not just personas

Recruitment adverts, for example, have undergone a notable shift in emphasis. Previously, job descriptions could be lengthy and detailed, yet still contain ambiguities around responsibilities, hours, locations and expectations. Now the copy is concise, in plain English, and more realistic about the requirements of each role. Phrases like 'outgoing', 'first-class communication skills' or 'outstanding networker', for example, would routinely feature in job adverts, even if such characteristics were less relevant to the specific position we were recruiting for.

The interview process has also changed. Candidates with autism, for example, can be at a disadvantage during interviews by phone as they may find it harder to follow the tone and rhythm of the conversation without visual cues. As such, we always offer in-person meetings. Meanwhile, although interviewers in every industry and situation have long been encouraged to observe body language and verbal skills during their discussions, we teach our managers to focus on the skills we need rather than make judgements on a candidate's persona.

"By introducing more awareness of neurodiversity, we hope to broaden our appeal and improve the diversity of our teams," says Claire. "And, as the profile of our teams change, so will other aspects of our culture and working environment".

"We need a diverse and technically competent team because we've always known it's a benefit to our business. Being part of the Charter and learning from all the great work that goes on across all signatory organisations has been the impetus to identify some of the less obvious ways we were inadvertently excluding candidates".

"It's been great to see the benefits our new policies are already having. But, of course, it is a journey and there is much more to do."



Getting back on track

Earlier this year, we launched our first Career Returner Programme to attract proficient and accomplished professionals into our ever-evolving business. As we navigate this exciting stage at Nuclear Transport Solutions, attracting experienced individuals alongside our early careers programme becomes imperative as the nuclear sector is on a mission to attract thousands of new workers to the industry



We've embraced a fresh perspective by initiating the Career Returner Programme. The outcomes have been remarkable, benefiting both our recruits and the organisation. Extending an opportunity to individuals who have taken breaks for various reasons yet bring a wealth of experience, has the potential to be transformative, especially for those who find re-entry into the workforce challenging.

Notably, a staggering 97% of applicants and all successful recruits were female. This achievement stands as a remarkable triumph in an industry traditionally perceived as male-dominated.

From being the only UK rail operator transporting nuclear materials to providing global nuclear shipping capabilities, we aim to ignite interest among diverse talent pools. Achieving this involves matching the right roles with the proper avenues of communication, with the Career Returner Programme serving as a particularly promising pathway.

Here are some testimonials from two of our employees who joined via the Career Returner Programme:

Why did I choose the Career Returner Programme with NTS, and how is it going so far? A reflection at the mid-point.

"I came from a very competitive corporate background, having previously worked at Maersk, one of the largest container shipping companies in the world. My journey at a massive international enterprise exposed me to significant opportunities; however, this also brought a sense of urgency, long hours, and stringent deadlines, leaving no room for error. While challenging, it was fulfilling, and during my break from the corporate world, I missed working on projects.

"Working in the nuclear industry involves an entirely different level of responsibility. Naturally, I anticipated the Career Returners Programme at NTS to mirror the intense pace and gruelling interview process I'd encountered in my past roles. To my pleasant surprise, each interview was a blend of

professional but friendly chats with lots of jokes and laughter. It was then that the realisation dawned upon me. Observing individuals who excelled at their serious roles yet remained approachable and light-hearted affirmed NTS as a great place to work.

"Currently, my role involves planning and assisting in the delivery of Organisational Excellence (OE) training, helping the other teams gather process improvement ideas and supporting the delivery of those projects. Our team is still new, and I enjoy being part of the group that will set the standards, policies, and strategies for future OE initiatives. The collaboration moments, filled with energy and buzzing ideas, are the icing on the cake.

"This is exactly the role I'd have chosen for myself if I saw the roles available for the Career Returners Programme before the application."

Mila Fadeeva, Organisational Excellence Manager at NTS

Rediscovering my career path through the Career Returners Programme

"I came across the Career Returners Programme by chance. After a hiatus spent raising my children, securing a job had proven challenging, despite performing well in interviews. The feedback was that while I interviewed impressively, the chosen candidate had more experience.

"I stumbled upon a Resourcing & Onboarding Administrator role at NTS, tied to the Career Returners Programme. Given the transferable skills gained as a parent, the notion of welcoming individuals back into the workforce after parenting resonated deeply with me. Researching the programme affirmed its alignment with my aspirations, so I applied.

"The best thing about my job is the unwavering team support. From day one, I was made to feel part of the team, and that sense of support has remained constant throughout my journey so far."

Corinne Alcock, Resourcing & Onboarding Administrator at NTS

As we prepare to relaunch the programme this year, our commitment to embedding the understanding that career gaps need not impede the drive and skills someone brings to our business is unwavering. We eagerly anticipate extending roles that cater to a diverse range of talents while being flexible and nurturing.

For further information, reach out to isobel.moneykyrle@ntsglobal.uk. Let's keep the momentum going and get careers back on track.

Building active allyship at PA Consulting

We believe diversity fuels ingenuity

When you bring people together with diverse backgrounds, identities and minds, and embrace that difference through an inclusive culture where your people feel empowered to thrive; you unleash the power of diversity.

At PA Consulting we are on a journey to create an ever more inclusive place to work. We are proud to be an active Charter signatory and chaired a community forum earlier in the year where we explored the Charter's collective insights on how to improve LGBTQ+ inclusion in the rail sector. You can find an infographic summary of our discussion on the Charter's LinkedIn page.

We are on a journey to create an ever more inclusive place to work.

Building active allyship

A key challenge when creating an inclusive and diverse culture is managing how we communicate with our wider teams. Often, inclusion and diversity (I&D) efforts involve a small, passionate group of colleagues sharing information "at" their peers. This type of passive I&D engagement is important but usually it has a limited impact and, if overdone, can risk people disengaging.

Instead, we have found that inviting our teams to play an active part in discussions is more effective in maintaining strong engagement. Whenever we hold events or celebrate key dates, we now always include an element of 'activating the allyship' of our audience. It means we create lasting commitment and an emphasis on action-oriented personal growth, rather than just brief bursts of activity.

You can create active allyship moments in any event you organise by focusing on what you want your audience to: 1) think, 2) feel, 3) do. Passive allyship usually focuses just on the first, but active allyship covers

all three. You may also find it helpful to use that approach to structure how you design your future engagements.

Examples you can apply

Here are some successful examples we have delivered this year:

- 'Fast for a day' – during Ramadan we invited our teams to 'fast for a day' before breaking their fast in a big office get-together. It helped bring to life the lived annual experience of our Muslim colleagues for the rest of the firm. Those involved were able to better understand the effect fasting has on your energy and concentration levels, encouraging everyone to be extra considerate throughout the period.
- 'Allyship pledge' – during Pride month we invited people to make an "allyship pledge" by writing down what specifically they were going to do differently to become a more active ally for the LGBTQ+ community. We gave everyone the option to make their pledge public and we shared some to inspire people to recognise the difference they can make.
- 'Conversation toolkits' – during the first half of the year we provided our working level I&D leads with the tools and information to deliver high-quality workshops on key topics covering allyship, gender identity and gender allyship. The toolkits were packed full of stats, research and case studies, informed by the first-hand experience of our I&D networks. These toolkits empowered our colleagues to hold genuine discussions with their peers.

Make I&D a topic that everyone is responsible for pursuing

Active allyship is the way we can all make the most progress in our I&D efforts, as by properly engaging our wider firm we can multiply our impact. We'd love to share our conversation toolkits with any member of the EDI Charter, to help support great conversations in your teams, or provide other examples of how you can apply active allyship. Get in touch with the PA I&D team who can send you the materials at: inclusion@paconsulting.com. www.paconsulting.com



Embracing EDI for Growth

The Hub – Transport Advisory

Founded in 2020, The Hub has had a unique journey in building a business with equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at its core. As a current team of 12, we have learnt that implementing EDI in a smaller business is different from doing so in larger organisations.

Diversity of thought amongst our team is paramount to the success of any consultancy business. Through embracing equity, we have created an inclusive workplace, encouraging people to bring their whole selves to work and driving the growth in size of our diverse talent.

Implementing our EDI Principles

As we grew, we recognised the need to adopt our own EDI principles to guide our growth and culture. These principles underpin our ambition of having a workforce truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

Creating our EDI principles was an important steppingstone to sign the EDI Charter for Rail, which has connected us to organisations across the industry and given us learning opportunities and ideas to implement ourselves.

EDI in Recruitment

As a small business, each addition to our team has a big impact on our team culture. As we took steps to grow our team, we realised that to keep EDI at

the forefront, it had to form a core part of our recruitment practices.

Without the means of much larger companies, through research we applied best practices on a scale that matched our size:

- Using a gender decoder to ensure our job descriptions do not repel certain groups of candidates
- Ensuring diverse hiring and application review panels – including varying levels of seniority
- Prioritising screening calls as a measure of aptitude rather than just CVs and cover letters for graduate roles to create a greater diversity in the background of candidates at the interview stage

Through embracing equity, we have created an inclusive workplace, encouraging people to bring their whole selves to work.

As a result of these steps, we have seen an increase from 15% to 35% in female applicants to our graduate scheme and a 50% increase in offers made to those with diverse backgrounds.

Creating an Authentic Culture

As a small business, we have taken an alternative approach to celebrating EDI and our employees' backgrounds, steering away from descriptive presentations. Through encouraging discussion, we have been able to explore EDI topics in a more dynamic way and understand how different topics impact our team, in both their personal and professional lives.

Our monthly "bring your culture to work" days have triggered thought provoking conversations around the meaning of inclusion, societal change, and heritage and culture as we recently explored when celebrating South Asian Heritage Month.

This culture of inclusiveness and openness provides a sense of reassurance, and our team genuinely feel comfortable bringing their true selves to work, knowing we celebrate the values that make each of them unique.

While our approaches to EDI are specific to our business, we believe that there are elements of our approach that companies of any size could adopt.

Joining the EDI charter for Rail, we warmly welcome the spotlight that is being shone on SMEs and the need for more diversity in our industry that we all need to drive together.



Driving HR Excellence in Rail Electrification

Toni Kirby is a dynamic and accomplished HR Director at SPL Powerlines UK Limited a leading electrification rail company in the UK. Her journey with the company began in 2014 when she joined as a HR/HSQE Administrator. Through dedication and remarkable growth, she ascended the ranks, becoming a pivotal figure in the organisation's success story. Toni's journey is an inspiring testament to her resilience and her commitment to fostering positive change in a challenging industry.

In the fast-paced world of electrification rail, where major transformational projects and intricate operations intersect, individuals like Toni Kirby shine as beacons of HR excellence. Toni's journey within the company, from an HR Administrator to a commanding HR Director, is a journey of determination, innovation, and remarkable achievements.

Taking on her role at the helm of the HR department after the former HR Manager departed in early 2015, Toni was entrusted with the challenge of navigating through significant changes and uncertainties brought about by the company's joint venture with Carillion in 2018. Undaunted by the hurdles, she demonstrated a remarkable aptitude for leadership and an unparalleled work ethic. The company quickly recognised her potential and innate talent.

Toni's journey into a predominantly male-dominated rail and construction environment was nothing short of exceptional. Her ability to embrace the challenges with a positive, open, and professional attitude set her apart as a true collaborator. In an industry where gender diversity can be an uphill battle, Toni's ascent to a leadership position serves as a shining example of breaking barriers and defying stereotypes.

At the heart of her accomplishments lies Toni's "CAN-DO" mentality. Her fearlessness in tackling tasks, regardless of their scale, coupled with her adeptness at managing a diverse array of responsibilities, has solidified her position as a central figure within the organisation. Reporting directly to the joint Managing Director's and collaborating closely with other senior directors and teams, Toni's influence is far-reaching.

As the linchpin for Directors/Senior Managers in Scotland and England, Toni masterfully orchestrates the efforts of a team of two direct employees, providing guidance, fostering teamwork, and driving the company's HR strategy. The vast geographical scope of her responsibilities, encompassing locations like Coatbridge, Doncaster, Derby, and

Leicester, underscores her commitment to on-the-ground engagement.

With oversight of around three hundred full-time employees and two hundred contractors, Toni's management prowess shines through in her daily operations. Juggling the multifaceted aspects of HR, from recruitment to employee engagement, compliance, training, wellbeing, and beyond, highlights her exceptional ability to harmonise diverse functions toward a unified purpose.

Toni's legacy of achievement is marked by her proactive approach to change management. Over the years, she has spearheaded the implementation of transformative systems and policies, including the successful integration of the ADP HR and payroll system. Her current endeavor, introducing the innovative "cash in hand" benefit scheme and the "salary sacrifice scheme", exemplifies her commitment to enhancing employee experiences.

One of Toni's most impactful achievements lies in her dedication to curbing high staff turnover prevalent in the industry. Together with her team, she crafts pioneering training programs that emphasise professional development, health and wellbeing, mentorship, and formal training. By reducing turnover, Toni not only contributes to cost savings but also nurtures a skilled and engaged workforce.

Toni's role as a torchbearer for gender diversity and inclusivity initiatives further underscores her commitment to progressive change. She ardently champions Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) principles, propelling the company's efforts to create an equitable workplace. As an advocate for women in rail, she embodies the values of integrity, respect, innovation, and ethics that define the organisation's ethos.

Beyond her professional achievements, Toni's character shines through as a humble, appreciative, and compassionate individual. Her willingness to go above and beyond, her instinct to give before taking, and her dedication to driving positive change make her an exemplar of what can be achieved through the right attitude and unwavering dedication.

In conclusion, Toni Kirby's ascent from HR Administrator to HR Director within an electrification rail company is an inspiring narrative of personal growth and professional achievement.

Her journey reflects her resilience, commitment, and the transformative impact of an individual driven by a genuine desire to make a difference. Toni's contributions to the electrification rail sector reverberate far beyond her immediate role, serving as a guiding light for the industry's evolution.



Worldline: best practice support for parents and carers

At Worldline we are proud to be listed as a Times Top 50 Employer for Gender Equality for the second year after applying for the first time in 2022. Our 2023 submission feedback showed considerable improvement in the "Policies to Support Parents and Carers" section scoring above average for action and impact.

Our Leadership Team openly speak about caring responsibilities (school run/family member ill) on All Employee Calls and frequently state "Family comes first". They set the tone, leading the way to ensure that working parents and carers do not face stereotypes or bias at work and encourage all employees to take leave. Our Diversity and Inclusion survey in 2022 showed that 42.19% of our employees have caring responsibilities.

To support working parents and carers to flourish and progress at work HR deliver training to equip Line Managers on our working policies and practices. This ensures they understand their responsibilities and support expected from them and what employees are entitled to.

Support in place to help employees combine work/home life includes:

- Inclusive family policies ensuring all genders are able to care
- WISE women community: discussions on parenting, return to work, meeting our own needs
- Worldfest: annual free family fun day out introduced in 2022
- From Babies with Love gifts for new parents introduced February 2023
- Head office immersive-sensory suite to relax, meditate, rejuvenate

Our family policies are promoted externally, referenced during recruitment. Internally they are published on our HR portal, frequently referenced through various communications:

- Maternity, non-birth parents: Adoption/Surrogacy: full pay 18 weeks, bonus first six months after returning from maternity. Policy includes return-to-work-plan, phased return
- Paternity: updated 2022 renamed to Family, 2 weeks enhanced to 6 weeks
- Employer with Heart Charter providing parents of premature babies up to 10-days-paid-leave. Extended to include babies not premature but needing to remain in hospital immediately after birth
- Time Off: up to 5 days paid, 12 month rolling period, for dependents/domestic emergencies. Includes antenatal appointments (birthing and non-birthing partners). Updated summer 2022 to include attending school

plays/sports days/first day starting (primary/secondary). Extends to grandparents.

- Buy leave: up to 10 days
- Career break/sabbatical policy: 1 month-to-1 year. A woman employee is currently in Australia with young daughter cherishing time with elderly parents.
- Flexible Working: part time/term time/job sharing/reduced hours/flextime/compressed hours to fit around

Our Leadership Team openly speak about caring responsibilities on All Employee Calls and frequently state "Family comes first".

caring responsibilities. Can be permanent/temporary/ad-hoc/trial periods offered.

- Hybrid policy: reinforced by CEO directly to all employees so employees know how managers are accountable for supporting them. 3 days office, 2 days home.
- During key holidays Easter/Christmas/Summer, all employees can work from home 100%, thus enabling all genders to better manage and share childcare/caring responsibilities, reducing transport/childcare costs.
- Working from home extended 100% during rail strikes, acknowledging difficulty juggling work and getting to/from childcare.

Annual survey evidence of impact:

- "CEO approach to hybrid working is a breath of fresh air.
- "It is great that Worldline is working to ensure our benefits and policies are in line with the modern world."
- Overall perception/"Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work." +19%. Achieved Great-Place-To-Work accreditation.



I&D – It's Business As Usual

At GHD we are on a journey towards a more inclusive workplace, aligning every step with our company culture by framing our four core values at GHD of Safety, Teamwork, Respect, and Integrity, with an Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) lens. We established our I&D Strategy with a clear goal: to achieve a culture of belonging and trust where all our people can thrive. By implementing metrics to measure our progress, we aim to build a culture centered on accountability. The addition of I&D goals being incorporated into our people development plans and within the talent management process is a foundational step in our I&D journey.

While attracting talent with diverse perspectives, identities, experiences, backgrounds, thinking and leadership styles is vital to representing the communities we serve, it is our

approach; it is important for us to weave I&D into the fabric of our organisation by bringing it to life through our values, making I&D part of “business as usual”, leading through an inclusive lens, and creating spaces for all voices to be heard.

A Voice in Rail

Based in the UK, Kristi Fleet-Chapman, Executive Advisor – Management Consultant, has led her team to support the delivery of a major UK infrastructure operator’s asset management and strategic business plan regulatory submission. From the early stages of strategy development, Kristi has led her team to transform ideas identified by the client and their stakeholders into opportunities with supporting business cases that were brought to life within the strategic business plan.

We are committed to reaching our gender diversity targets across all levels of the business by 2030, implementing diverse interview panels and shortlists to improve recruitment.

Kristi’s subject matter expertise, drive and strategic mindset have proved invaluable to the client and the development of their regulatory submission. She has been provided with the opportunity to lead the development and delivery of this high-profile client account, guided and mentored by industry and market experts. She stated, “I have felt empowered by my peers to follow my instinct and build a relationship with this client. This has spanned across multiple functions within their organisation and enabled us to make huge impact in both developing and delivering their organisational goals.”

Driven by our gender targets, our UK Advisory teams working within the rail industry are often made up of an even gender split, with many projects being led by women. While we recognise that we still have more room to grow, we are proud to be contributing to diversifying the rail industry so that women like Kristi can shine irrespective of how they choose to identify.

culture of belonging where all our people thrive that sits at the heart of our organisation. We are committed to reaching our gender diversity targets across all levels of the business by 2030, implementing diverse interview panels and shortlists to improve recruitment. There is fierce competition for top talent and market pressure for greater transparency and accountability. This means we need to not only embrace but demonstrate progress on our I&D commitments. Embedding I&D into our company culture is not a one size fits all



Building a Diverse Workforce

Infinitive Group believes that embracing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is not just a checkbox, but a driving force for innovation and success. We believe that EDI is the cornerstone of progress and so we have embarked on a mission to build a team that harnesses a myriad of perspectives and backgrounds, driving us towards uncharted horizons.

Recognising the subtle biases that can creep into a small-scale recruitment process, we decided to collaborate with an external recruitment agency that shared our passion for EDI. To reshape our recruitment strategies, we enlisted the support of Selective Resourcing, an outsourced talent partner for the transport sector with a deep passion for enabling companies to achieve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within their teams.

"We started working with Infinitive Group a year ago, empowering their growth plans. Good leaders recognise that creating a diverse workforce is a key enabler to success. Infinitive Group not only recognises this but already radiates the initial phase of EDI in providing Equity for all. The environment created provides a great foundation to attract candidates to the business." said Joanne Hall, from Selective Resourcing.

"As Infinitive Group's recruitment partner, we've used this brilliant foundation and developed a strategy to target, attract, engage, and support a more diverse range of candidates."

Our candidate marketing strategy provided the option to reach out to candidates outside of the team's network bringing fresh perspectives. We supported candidates by communicating our scheduling during the job briefing meetings. This is a massive help to candidates with caring responsibilities, who are neurodivergent, who get anxiety and who practice faith at specific times/days."

Our journey towards building a diverse workforce has already reaped remarkable rewards. Our team composition now includes members from outside of the railway industry, injecting fresh perspectives into our problem-solving and driving creative breakthroughs. We have also established a wide range of neurodiverse thinking and working to support us in delivering the very best for our clients.

Inclusivity isn't just about bringing people in; it's about making them feel at home. We

knew that retaining a diverse workforce required creating an environment where every individual's contribution was valued and acknowledged. To support this, we've taken steps to support the neurodiversity of our team by conducting a series of mental health workshops. Facilitated by Adam Hillaby at LBScoaching, Adam had the following to say;

"These workshops help create a safe psychological space within the workplace. The aim of the workshops is to help the team understand how individual behaviours impact others. They also focus on how to improve mental well-being using mindfulness. The workshops are designed using NLP (neurolinguistic programming) and CBT (cognitive behaviour

therapy) models. After an initial full-day workshop, fortnightly workshops were designed to be around an hour long with full engagement from the teams."

Our partnerships with Selective and LBS Coaching have allowed us to navigate the challenges of attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse workforce successfully. This holistic approach hasn't just achieved our EDI goals; it has positioned us for sustained growth, innovation, and excellence in an ever-changing business landscape.

Our candidate marketing strategy provided the option to reach out to candidates outside of the team's network bringing fresh perspectives.





Porterbrook's Diversity and Inclusion journey

As a signatory to the EDI charter, Porterbrook's journey has developed over the last few years.

We are committed to developing an inclusive environment that ensures people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. We want all our employees to feel that they belong, that their contribution matters and that they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.

To support our journey, our EDI group meets every 6-8 weeks and is made up of members from across the entire business at various seniority levels, providing an opportunity to raise issues from a wide range of perspectives. All employees also have access to online training on diversity and inclusion, with mandatory training for hiring managers.

Porterbrook focuses on all aspects of employees' health and wellbeing, including social, physical and psychological wellness. In addition to signing the Rail Mental Health Charter, we have several Mental Health First Aiders who have undertaken training to gain valuable skills.

Within the business we have a dedicated menopause workstream which includes ambassador-led workshops and internal communications to improve awareness across the business. We have signed the Menopause Workplace Pledge with Wellbeing of Women which champions non-judgemental menopause support in the workplace.

More broadly, we champion equality, diversity and inclusion across the rail industry. For the past three years we have donated to various charities including Women at the Well, providing support for vulnerable women who are caught in multiple cycles of abuse and social exclusion, and Crossroads Derbyshire who support people suffering the damaging effects of domestic abuse.

We are a proud Disability Confident Employer and Living Wage Employer, and are committed to supporting the development of our people by joining The 5% Club, an industry-led initiative that drives momentum into the recruitment of apprentices, graduates and sponsored students.



In 2022, our CEO Mary Grant signed the Neurodiversity in Business (NiB) Charter. Partnering with NiB aligns with our commitment to be an equal opportunities employer and a truly inclusive workplace.

At Porterbrook, we have several policies and practices in place that promote retention of female talent throughout the company, including enhanced maternity and paternity leave. We promote a healthy work/life balance through an option of flexible working where employees can work from home up to two days per week. Currently 90% of the company are utilising this.

We have partnered with Holbrook School for Autism and are currently supporting 10 students through employability workshops. This employability programme reflects our diversity as a company so that younger generations see rail as an inclusive industry. This is an initiative we are rolling out to support local communities around our Long Marston and London office.

Our diversity and inclusion journey has seen a positive impact on our workforce, which was demonstrated in our 2022 Pulse Survey. 95% of our employees feel they are accepted at work with 91% feeling all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected.

"Our Diversity and Inclusion strategy sits at the heart of ensuring Porterbrook continues to be an employer that values and welcomes the different ideas, skills, behaviours, and experiences of our colleagues"

Mary Grant, CEO

We are committed to developing an inclusive environment that ensures people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work.

Bringing your whole self to work – an EDI focus for QTS

QTS Group is working hard to improve equality, diversity and inclusion across all departments and introduce processes and working practices to allow people, regardless of gender, race, identity or background, to feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work.

This work is ongoing but over the past 12 months has included steps such as, the creation of an EDI forum which ensures all divisions and roles within the business can have their voices heard. With 17 members from across the Group acting as EDI Ambassadors, reporting into our EDI Working Group and providing input at our quarterly EDI meetings, a lot of effort is being put into ensuring these voices are heard.

One particularly important outcome from the Forum was our EDI mission statement – Diversity & Inclusion : Bring Your Whole Self to Work – this reads: “QTS is on a journey to ensure we are embracing diversity, equality and inclusion in a serious way. We are committed to investing in building a team with a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and views. We know diversity drives success, so we are building a culture where difference is valued, and everyone is welcomed.” Having this mission statement publicised throughout our organisation keeps our focus on achieving our EDI goals and makes us accountable to our team members.

QTS also works closely with Women in Rail and the Armed Forces Covenant, and has developed training courses with a focus on diverse recruitment and progression, in order to pull from as many resources as possible when looking at management and leadership. Two directors, Lorna Gibson (Training Director) and Lisa McKellar (Marketing and Social Value Director) engage with Women in Rail Scotland directly, as Chair and Steering Group member, respectively. This allows high-level discussion to take place based on the work done with Women in Rail. The creation of an Armed Forces Champion, Jane McFadzean, has allowed QTS to engage more with the Forces community. Most recently, QTS gained the Silver Employer status through attendance at key events and creation of work experience placements for leavers, as well as the work we do with our own Service leavers, military spouses, reservists and cadet volunteers.

Providing young women with structured work experience opportunities at QTS has allowed them to view the company and industry in a new light, gaining a better understanding of what jobs really are available and the different pathways into these. Evie Lightburn and Daisy Pollock both spent a week, each working with a variety of teams at QTS, including visits to sites, where they learned about the opportunities available in the railway. Daisy gave feedback saying:

“It has given me a great insight into everything that QTS do and all the stuff that goes on in the background.”

“Before I had my work experience I was interested in quantity surveying but I have now set my sights on becoming an estimator within the rail industry. So many people gave up their time to give me an insight into their department and I’m really grateful.”

Following participating in the award winning QTS Rail Skills Academy programme, Chantelle Nisbett found her skills lay with the workshop team, something not generally opened to Skills Academy participants, and so arrangements were made to allow her time to develop her skills there. Chantelle now works full-time in the workshop and feedback from staff who work with her has been exemplary.



Eighteen-year-old Kya McTaggart joined our civils Scotland team for two weeks of work experience in late 2022 and has gone on to join them full-time as a trainee operative. Kya has been flourishing in her role, impressing managers and supervisors with her enthusiasm and dedication.

Changes have recently been made at the QTS HQ in order to make it a more inclusive office. The introduction of a Multipurpose Quiet Room, converted from a meeting room, has allowed those in need of it, a private place with a locked door, whether this be for prayer, personal medical purposes or just a quiet time. The room has recently been used by one member of staff as a space to breastfeed and express milk after returning from maternity leave.

As well as this, our home and flexible working arrangements have been further extended past the maternity leave period for new mothers to allow for an easier transition when returning to work.

All of these initiatives and more have allowed QTS to become more inclusive overall. However, we recognise there is still work to be done with regards to gender balance and diversity and inclusion in general. We will continue to work towards becoming a completely inclusive and equitable workplace.

Creating a psychologically safe environment

Sam Uren, Director of SLC Rail, shares SLC Rail's approach to embracing equality, diversity and inclusion and explains the importance of creating a psychologically safe environment.

SLC cares about how the rail industry serves its passengers, we only work on projects where we believe a positive impact can be achieved. We provide opportunities for all to engage in schemes, whether as part of the community or through working within the rail industry. We do this by embedding EDI into everything we do including in project delivery to support co-creation in an inclusive and psychologically safe environment.



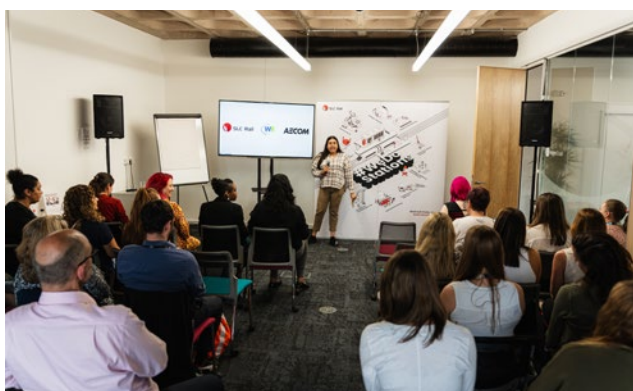
A psychologically safe environment – as is being fostered in SLC – encourages people to speak up wherever possible from their own perspective recognising that the impact that we make as individuals will be limited but, if supported by a wider team, can step by step deal with inequalities across our industry that still persist today.

In the last 12 months, we have been promoting an understanding of this philosophy, especially to our new employees from who are used to different organisational cultures. Our wellbeing framework has enabled people to reflect on their own challenges both inside and outside work and open up to a safer dialogue about their own experiences. In order to facilitate the debate we have welcomed a range of guest speakers on various subjects including neurodiversity, menopause, suicide, and workplace bullying, as well as recorded and shared discussions in

We provide opportunities for all to engage in schemes, whether as part of the community or through working within the rail industry.

By allocating diverse teams on projects we are more likely to get EDI right and support passengers and communities effectively and ensure that we have a railway suitable for all users. It is essential that the industry understands the true diversity and complexity of our population through ensuring relevant representation on projects.

Embracing diversity is not in an altruistic action, but is important to meet the wider public's needs. As a result, our EDI policy supports those with protected characteristics but also additionally fosters an understanding of each individual and their personal, mental, and physical challenges and how these barriers can be overcome. We aim to empower individuals to lead positive change through innovative and creative problem-solving in project delivery by sharing their own unique viewpoints.



SLC hosted a Women in Rail event in June, which looked at the make safety seen theme for International Women in Engineering Day.

specialty produced videos by our employees on anxiety and depression and LGBTQ+ challenges within the rail industry. Senior leaders participate in these activities in a very evident manner sharing their personal journeys and their current challenges. More events are lined up for 2023, including talks on Imposter Syndrome, Spoon Theory (part of our work on designing for disabilities), and Being a Modern Muslim.

How we operate day-to-day is a crucial part of our ethos. We have a number of social clubs and events set up within our Birmingham office centred around our wellbeing space and outside patio. Dry January was an opportunity to run a series of social events that supported our inclusivity and highlighted the effect of alcohol on the body. Additionally, we promoted our psychological safety externally through our annual Women in Rail event, attended by a diverse mix of people from across the rail industry.

The work has not just been limited to talking. In 2023, we have reviewed and updated all our benefits packages and policies for modern-day issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and the hybrid working environment. We also focused on those with higher levels of vulnerability or challenges than others with the introduction of emergency parental leave, carers leave, and abilities to have time to support religious observance or domestic duties. In addition, as we are venturing into the international markets, we have spent time looking into what we believe as a company is the environment we should be working in and understand how this affects our people and business.

2023 has been a huge year for SLC, and for an SME, we are proud of the impact that we are making in terms EDI and the industry.

Attracting & Retaining Diverse Talent

Since setting up our D2 ED&I working group back in early 2021, we have looked at a number of initiatives to help us build on our inclusive culture. In 2022 we looked at awareness and education, putting in place monthly ED&I bulletins and a number of training sessions around unconscious bias. The focus for 2023 has been around recruitment and retention, how do we attract diverse talent and retain the talent we have. We decided to test our current recruitment process and hold ourselves to account. Our ED&I team trialled some unconscious bias testing within our hiring team at D2 for our graduate intake.



In 2023 we launched our D2 graduate programme, our philosophy is to recruit the best talent from a range of different backgrounds, bringing unique perspectives and new ideas into the business.

In 2023 we launched our D2 graduate programme, our philosophy is to recruit the best talent from a range of different backgrounds, bringing unique perspectives and new ideas into the business. The graduate hiring process has given us a great opportunity to look at our recruitment and test ourselves with an unconscious bias Lense. Whilst our usual recruitment process would be to assess CV's, with this year's intake we created a detailed list of requirements and assessment criteria that would be used to mark each application submitted for the programme. The assessment criteria included elements of demonstratable skills or achievements (such as specific university graduation year, maximum expected work experience, etc) as well as some soft skills. We then asked two groups of managers to read the applications and pick 20 candidates they would like to interview. One group was asked to assess applications against the set criteria provided, while the other group was asked to pick candidates that would be "best for the job" based on their CV's alone. The results showed a difference between the two lists, the best for the job CV reviews weighted more towards white males with more work experience, and the set criteria list which focussed on a set of skills required to do the job provided a more equal gender split.

The lessons we have taken forward as a business in this trial is to approach each hiring process with a set assessment criteria to identify best candidates in our applicant pool.

Having trailed and tested this process at every stage, even though we did not introduce any measures of positive discrimination or diversity targets, our team will now be bringing in two female graduates and one male from the graduate intake. It's a significant change, particularly since over the last four or five years we have only had two female graduates join the D2 team.

"The graduate intake trial has proven to be a great exercise looking at how we recruit and help mitigate unconscious biases and stereotypes that can influence hiring decisions. Our next step is to implement standardised procedures, criteria, and training in recruitment across the business which will lead to more objective evaluations of candidates and help us to continue to build a diverse and inclusive workplace at D2."

Sarah Barnes, D2 ED&I Champion.

As a company we are not afraid to look at our ways of working and how we can improve them. Our ED&I working group continue to provide great insight to our teams and guiding us through our ED&I journey.

Positive Action at SWR

We were very pleased to achieve 'Silver' in the Inclusive Employers Standard earlier this year. The IE Standard is an evidence-based workplace accreditation tool which measures inclusion and diversity within an organisation. It covers all the protected characteristics and broader inclusion and diversity themes.

As part of our positive action initiatives, we have been running a number of 'Have a Go Driver Days' to give women the opportunity to find out more about being a train driver. The day gives women the chance to try out our driver simulators, hear from female drivers, and learn about the recruitment process, including a mock assessment.

We also held a day for women at Wimbledon Engineering Depot to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day. Women from across the organisation attended the day to find out about a variety of roles at the depot and hear from women who work there about their experiences in engineering.

To increase knowledge and understanding of inclusion and diversity, we offer a range of training to all colleagues and managers in the organisation. These include a webinar series called 'Everyday Inclusion' covering topics such as intercultural communications, intergenerational working and stress awareness. We also created a number of inclusion and diversity e-learning modules which are available to all colleagues to complete and we run mandatory manager training which focuses on how managers can support colleagues to create an inclusive workplace.

Our staff networks have held a number of events and webinars to raise awareness of a broad range of inclusion and diversity topics. These have included:

- Our disability network celebrating Carers Week where individuals nominated colleagues to be recognised for their hard work as a Carer. As a result of this week, the group are now looking at what support we can offer Carers at SWR.
- The women's network raising awareness of domestic abuse and the support available through a webinar delivered by Hampshire Constabulary. The network also assisted with the creation on the new Domestic Abuse Guidance which was launched organisationally wide.
- Our LGBT+ network helped to launch our new Pride train which incorporated the colours of the new Intersex Progress Flag. They also contributed to our first guidance document "Supporting Trans and Non-binary colleagues".



As part of our positive action initiatives, we have been running a number of 'Have a Go Driver Days' to give women the opportunity to find out more about being a train driver.

At the start of 2023 we ran our first reverse mentoring programme which had an inclusion and diversity focus. This involved our Executive Team being mentored by members of our staff networks to give them a greater understanding of the experiences of colleagues from underrepresented groups. The programme also gave staff network members exposure at a level they would not normally experience.

We received great feedback from the participants with 100% of respondents wanting to continue their mentor/mentee relationship after the programme had finished.

Below are two quotes from members of Exec Team who were mentees:

"Being part of this programme and being paired with my mentor has really enriched my life! I have learnt so much but feel quite humbled and also feel that I have been blind to many issues that colleagues within the organisation may face. I want to continue the discussions with my mentor if she wishes to and hope that our discussions have helped her with her career and confidence too."

"What a great experience; I've learnt so much about myself, about D&I in general, about my mentor, about deep-rooted prejudice and cultural or religious barriers; I've thoroughly enjoyed my conversations, being challenged and openly discussing things I wouldn't normally and with someone I wouldn't normally."



Promoting Equality, Diversity & Inclusion through our values



Hilary Skinner – an inspirational member of the COWI family

Hilary is a Director and Geotechnical Engineer with over 20 years of experience working on projects in the UK and abroad. She counts herself fortunate to work on both some of the largest rail projects – like HS2 and Crossrail, and also smaller often more challenging projects such as UTXs and excavations near our rail infrastructure. She is accomplished in the development of unique, practical solutions using a strong research background. Hilary is committed to the development and profile of geotechnics via ICE, BGA, Ground Forum and CIC.

She is also living with MS.

COWI is committed to best practice around EDI and strives to make our workplace the best it can be.

Here is Hilary's story:

"With my MS I am confined to a wheelchair and need to manage fatigue and limited limb mobility. When I get tired everything seizes up including the strength of my voice. I need carers to assist me with all daily tasks, but with the right help none of this stops me enjoying both life and work. I thought it might be useful to describe the work modifications

I have needed and how the company has responded to my requirements due to my condition.

As my condition has worsened, I have progressively moved to working from home and I now do so full time, allowing me to manage my fatigue and adjust my work schedule around the carers. This is of primary importance to allow me to function throughout the working week.

COWI have supplied me with everything I need to work from home comfortably. I have the usual laptop, docking station and large screen setup. My hand and arm mobility are restricted so I struggle to type or write. In addition, I use a lapel microphone which I have adapted, and I also have

"This is a forward-thinking company who lives by its values. I enjoy working for COWI and feel that the support given enables me to work to my very best."

the use of dictation software. Anyone who has used this type of software knows the frustration of predictive text, but my colleagues support me by minimising the amount of writing which I need to do.

When I was first diagnosed, I was very afraid to talk to my employer, but I knew I would have to as my condition is progressive. I am pleased I plucked up the courage to be open with my line management and HR Department because they have been incredibly supportive.

In this post-Covid world there is much greater awareness of both physical and mental issues which may require support and COWI has put in place both formal and informal processes to help everyone concerned. I know that I can ring for support any time whether for a chat or to adjust how I am working. This is a forward-thinking company who lives by its values. I enjoy working for COWI and feel that the support given enables me to work to my very best."

Recently we celebrated Hilary on her achievement: winning not one but two Women in Construction & Engineering awards for the Best Geotechnical Engineer and Distinguished Winner of the Year.

Well-deserved recognition of Hilary's high-quality contribution, who is an incredible inspiration to many women in the engineering industry.

Diversity and inclusion at the Rail Safety and Standards Board

At the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), we have always believed in setting the right conditions for colleagues to thrive. We want to provide a collaborative, healthy and safe working environment in which everyone is treated fairly and feels a sense of belonging. So, over the last few years, we have taken steps to improve diversity and inclusion across the organisation.

Creating company-wide engagement opportunities and forums which foster employee participation has been crucial to raising awareness of diversity and inclusion, holding awareness days, and sharing and championing new ideas. The forums enable colleagues to contribute towards a healthy, positive and inclusive culture.

In 2020, we voluntarily published our ethnicity pay gap. This gave the issue the necessary visibility within the business and led to positive action. It is via our engagement forums that our workforce was able to express that the acronym BAME did not accurately reflect the diversity of the group, and that B.A.M.E, which we now use, would be more suitable. This is a small but important step in the right direction.

Transitioning to smarter working has been a key contributor towards an inclusive culture at RSSB. Our colleagues have different needs, and we aim to provide a working environment that is welcoming and empowering for all. Our smarter working policy delivers a work-life balance that benefits the individual, team, organisation, and ultimately our members and stakeholders. It also supports employee retention and our ability to attract diverse talent.

Providing a positive applicant experience, through clearer messaging on our culture and values, and by including employee profiles, has also been key in attracting and hiring diverse talent. Meanwhile, investing in line management capability has resulted in more structured and streamlined recruitment processes, and more diverse interview panels. Recognition of transferable skills, and improved clarity in role descriptions, has further supported employee retention and

career development opportunities, in addition to our wider diversity and inclusion aims.

Conducting periodic employee engagement surveys, which include questions on diversity, inclusion, and health and wellbeing, enables us to collate real-time feedback and use this to inform our strategy.

Reflecting RSSB's work on the industry's health and safety strategy, Leading Health and Safety on Britain's Railway, our internal health and wellbeing initiatives focus on the complete

We're developing solutions which we anticipate will go some way towards improving social mobility and tackling economic inequality.

health of our workforce. A pillar of our wellbeing programme is the Wellbeing Champions initiative. Our passionate team of Wellbeing Champions provide colleagues with informal support, helping them to navigate challenges, and they raise awareness of the different factors that affect wellbeing.

Long term, we want to embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our day-to-day business operations, helping to create a more equitable workplace, industry and even society. This bigger thinking is reflected in our work in sustainability, which seeks to put rail at the heart of our communities. Collaborating with the Social Sustainability Working Group, we're developing solutions which we anticipate will go some way towards improving social mobility and tackling economic inequality.

Our efforts so far have been well received by our employees, with colleagues scoring us 8.3/10 for diversity, 8.4/10 for inclusiveness, and 8.3/10 for health and wellbeing in our employee engagement surveys, demonstrating a positive and inclusive culture at RSSB. Whilst we celebrate our successes, we will continue to look out for opportunities to do even better.

THE BIG RAIL DIVERSITY CHALLENGE 2024

**WEDNESDAY
19 JUNE 2024**

NEWARK SHOWGROUND

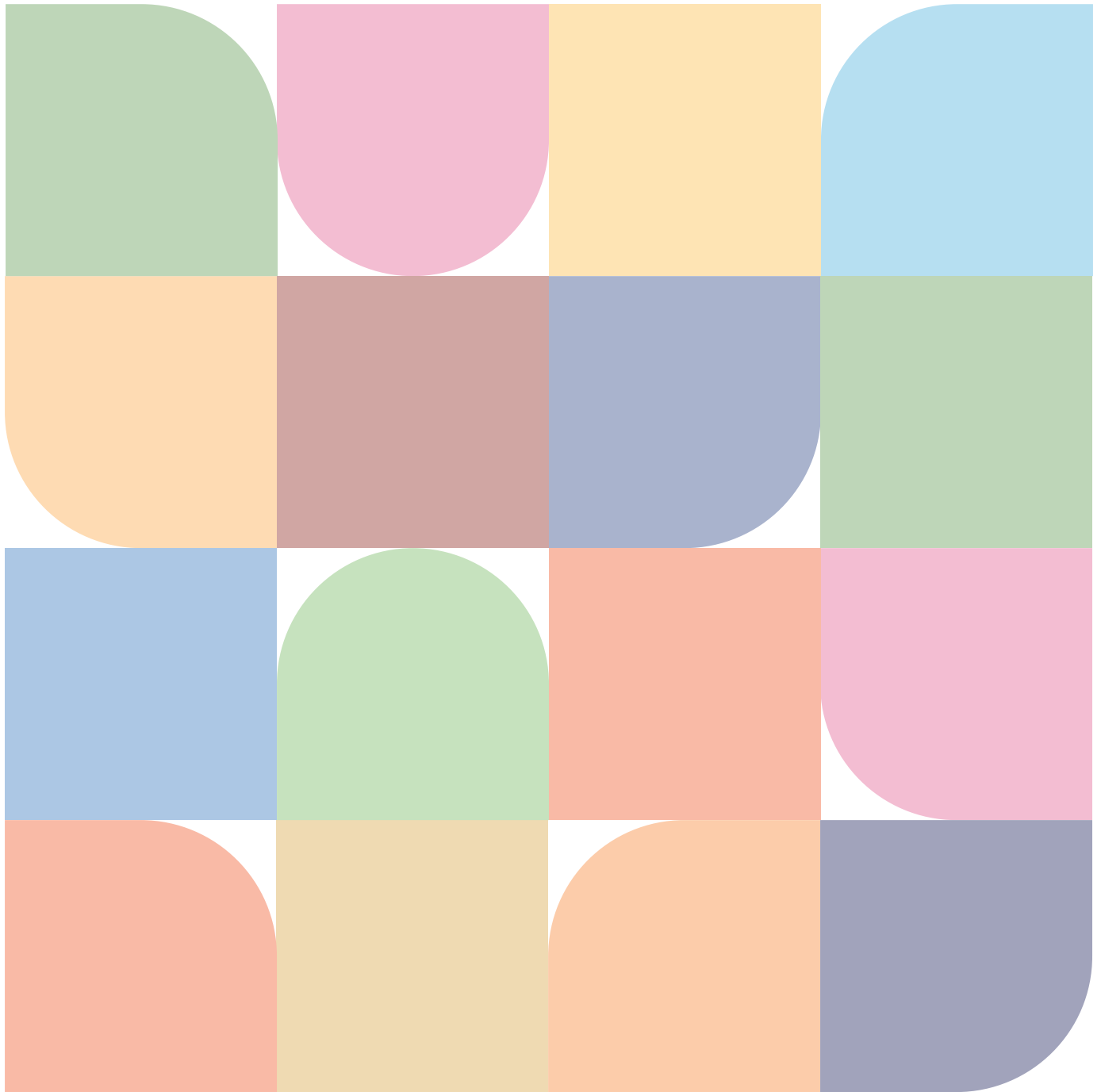
NEWARK SHOWGROUND

Gender Diversity: Better for People, Better for Business, Better for Rail.

Enter your team today

Brought to the industry by





**Railway Industry
Association**

The voice of the UK rail supply community

