

WOMEN IN RAIL MENTORING PROGRAMME

2023 Impact report

The Women in Rail mentoring programme is a sustainable, scalable and transferable cross-company initiative designed to provide a support platform for diverse people in UK rail to grow

Whilst the programme started with gender diversity as the core focus, it has embraced broader diversity over time. Through championing diverse thinking and cross-fertilisation of ideas and networks, the mentoring programme promotes diversity and a culture of equity and inclusion within rail.

The programme is delivered by Moving Ahead, and through this partnership over **1600 participants** from **42 organisations** have participated in the last five years. The 2023 cohort welcomed **452 mentees and mentors from 24 organisations.**



MARIE DALY
Women In Rail Chair and Chief Customer and Culture Officer, Transport For Wales

“ I have loved hearing from mentors and mentees on how this initiative has enabled diverse thinking, career development and evoked feelings of being more connected within the industry. I am proud of our accomplishments in fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment through this Women in Rail mentoring programme.

On behalf of the Women in Rail Board a thank you to everyone who has contributed to the achievements of the programme. This includes the valued participating organisations, the committed mentees, and mentors, and the Moving Ahead team for their delivery partnership working closely with Trustee Rajinder Pryor MBE.

This programme continues to support our collective efforts to make change at scale in the rail industry, driving successes of the joint Women in Rail and Railway Industry Association (RIA) 'Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Charter.' The Charter underpins a commitment to work together, to develop a more balanced higher performing sector and has over 220 organisation signatories. Through leveraging the mentoring programme let us persist in championing equality, diversity, and inclusion across the UK rail industry.

By embracing diversity and inclusion, we are creating a future for rail, where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive. I am excited to build on our partnership with Moving Ahead and supporting organisations - stepping forward into next year's programme, as we reshape the rail industry, making it a more vibrant and inclusive place for all. ”



LIZ DIMMOCK
Founder and CEO of Moving Ahead

“ What a brilliant fifth year for the Women In Rail Mentoring Programme – I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you who have made this year of the programme a success.

A huge thanks to our dedicated and committed programme partners, you are critical to the success of the programme. We have driven highly effective results this year with your support and partnership. I have so much gratitude for Women in Rail bringing this programme to life, demonstrating unshakeable commitment to advancing inclusion. It is Moving Ahead's privilege to deliver this programme for you.

We owe our mentees and mentors our gratitude for being open-minded, exploring new perspectives and being drivers of change. A special thanks to our award winners for bringing their best selves to this programme, embodying the impact that mentoring has. We can feel, see and hear the change you are all creating, much of it evidenced in this report.

I'm reminded why this programme is more important than ever considering the recent uptick in fatigue and backlash towards diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. This often occurs when the aims of programmes aren't clear or aren't measured, and so it's especially important to us to demonstrate the way this programme creates a positive impact for all involved. ”

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

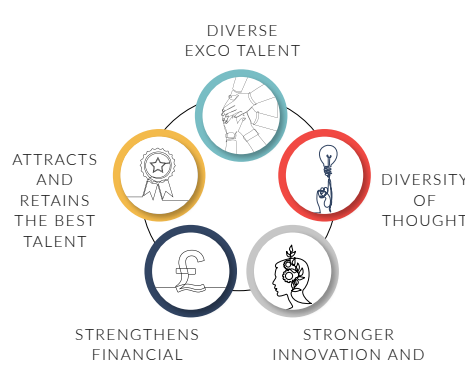
Whilst the proportion of women in rail had been gradually increasing, it dropped to 14.6% in 2022¹

The proportion of women in C-Suite roles in the rail industry was at just 1% in 2021²

Women leaders are leaving their companies at the highest rate in years, and the gap between women and men leaving is the largest it's ever been³

Research shows women are less likely to be positive about their performance and future potential⁴, more likely to underassess their skills⁵, and are less likely to delegate⁶ (missing out on the associated benefits) and are less likely to receive actionable feedback at work⁷

Research finds that companies in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians⁸



Sources: ¹NSAR | ²SWIFT | ³Lean In | ⁴National Bureau of Economic Research | ⁵Harvard Business School | ⁶Columbia Business School | ⁷Harvard Business Review | ⁸McKinsey | ⁹London Business School | ¹⁰Harvard Business Review



HOW DOES MENTORING HELP?

Mentoring aims to **overturn personal barriers to progression** and ignite the recognition of a need for systemic change

Women who find mentors through formal programmes have a **higher promotion success rate** vs. women finding mentors informally⁹

Formal assigned mentoring programmes for underrepresented groups have been **shown to improve manager level representation** in organisations by up to 24% over 5 years¹⁰



“ My mentor has helped me become so much more confident. This has helped me to gain a promotion and more responsibilities. He has helped me more than I think he will ever know! I’m on a development plan to get my boss’s job in the future. I am now more comfortable to speak up if I feel I am struggling. I have been empowered to make changes within our team. He basically made me realise that I do deserve my current job as well as promotions. He has made me see that I am worthy! Very empowering mentor! ”

A mentee

HOW HAS THE WOMEN IN RAIL MENTORING PROGRAMME CREATED IMPACT THIS YEAR?

In the last nine months, the programme has...

EVOLVED CAREERS AND REPRESENTATION...

41%

of mentees have been **promoted, expanded their responsibilities or moved roles** since the programme began



UNLOCKED DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT...

39%

of all participants say they have **unlocked new ideas** to help their organisation as a result of the programme

76%

of participants say programme events have **taught them new things that will change their behaviour**

...BY TACKLING PERSONAL BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

Mentees’ are increasingly confident in their skills, communication and problem-solving.

Two thirds

of mentees agree their mentor has boosted their confidence

Mentees

are **more comfortable asserting their opinions and strengths**, whilst also feeling more able to **network and build relationships**

...BY CHALLENGING SYSTEMIC BIASES

58%

of mentors say their mentee has **heightened their awareness of barriers** for others in the workplace

43%

of mentors **now vocally advocate for DEI** in the workplace, with a third contributing to internal mentoring or sponsorship

“ Our conversations have helped me to more readily recognise and challenge situations where barriers are created for women in the workplace, often unintentionally by men. ”

A mentor

“ My mentor provided the best support for my needs, this included boosting my confidence, helping me deal with a difficult conversation and with my preparation for a promotion. I always had her advice in mind before dealing with a difficult situation. ”

A mentee

HOW YOU CAN CONTINUE TO DRIVE CHANGE IN YOUR ORGANISATION

We recommend our programme partners support their cohorts to enact change and ideas they’ve gained:

- ▶ Seek feedback from this cohort, and encourage participants to share their insights and outcomes with their line managers
- ▶ Promote and, if in a position to, sponsor action amongst mentees and mentors following the programme
- ▶ Check in with past cohorts to gather successful ‘idea to action’ stories that support impact recognition

Create visibility and exposure of the programme and benefits for future cohorts

- ▶ Facilitate opportunities for alumni mentees and mentors to speak to potential applicants and share their stories, creating a legacy and reinforcing a mentoring culture
- ▶ Encourage exchange amongst mentor peer groups to illuminate the lesser known benefits of being a mentor
- ▶ Sign your organisation up to next year’s programme to create ongoing impact and results

For more information, please contact cross-company@moving-ahead.org

