

Women in Rail Adeline Ginn



Support in times of crisis

The dedication of the Women in Rail team to support our members across the country has been stronger than ever says **Adeline Ginn**, Founder and Chair of Women in Rail, Group Strategy and Legal Director at CPMS Group

The last few months have been difficult for many of us. None expected this year to be marked by the global pandemic, lockdowns, increased anguish, especially for women and people from ethnic minorities disproportionately affected by the crisis, acts of hatred including against station manager Belly Mujinga and George Floyd which triggered the Black Lives Matter movement, an alarming rise in domestic violence and, at the same time, amazing dedication and compassion, especially from NHS staff, carers and key workers.

In these difficult times, the determination of the WR team to make a difference and support our members, albeit virtually, across the country has been stronger than ever.

In April, we shared links to organisations offering support to individuals and families affected by the pandemic, including NHS support and volunteering lines, local foodbanks, domestic abuse helplines, mental health and wellbeing resources, but also online training courses on CV writing and interview techniques.

We also transferred our cross-company Mentoring Programme to a virtual platform, ensuring our 340 mentors and mentees, including twelve pro-bono pairs, continued to benefit from our mentoring Masterclasses

and events. We are delighted the Programme enabled two pro-bono mentees to secure jobs in our industry.

From March through to August, we partnered with Minerva Engagement and hosted free weekly 30 minutes wellbeing webinars to help our members take care of themselves during the crisis.

In May, we started sharing inspirational quotes to give mental strength and hope to our readers. We also launched our CuddleCards competition, inviting budding artists of all ages to design a postcard for loved ones, thus helping parents keeping children entertained during half term. Winners received their card printed professionally in A5 format.

Throughout the year, the WR regional groups renewed their efforts to support our members, conducting mental health webinars, career development workshops and, of course, fun events such as tapas and salsa nights, quiz nights, and our very popular virtual pamper and aromatherapy sessions.

We continued to showcase all forms of diversity, celebrating our members' faith and cultures and awareness initiatives such as International Women's Day, International Men's Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, National Coming Out Day, National Inclusion Week and of course Black History Month.

Similarly, we adapted our flagship event, The Big Rail Diversity Challenge, to a hugely successful remote morning Teams session which saw 100 participants go head-to-head in various challenges.

We celebrated the winners of the WR Awards 2020 through a digital supplement which received excellent feedback and are looking forward to welcoming them on stage, next year, for a well-deserved round of applause.

We openly supported the Claps for Our Carers campaign, Wellbeing Live, Rail to Refuge, Rail Aid and ended the year launching, jointly with RIA, an EDI Charter, encouraging all companies in our industry to work collaboratively together to improve EDI throughout all grades and roles within the UK rail sector.

It has been a difficult year for everyone and the dedication of the WR team to support our members has again been exemplary.

To find out more about Women in Rail visit our website wr@womeninrail.org or register to receive news from your local regional group at www.womeninrail.org/contact-us.