

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter

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

### Welcome Pack

Thank you for signing up to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter (the EDI Charter), a new industry initiative jointly led by Women in Rail (WR) and the Railway Industry Association (RIA).

The EDI Charter reflects the commitment of the UK railway sector to work together to build a more balanced, fair and high performing industry and to champion equality, diversity and inclusion across in our sector.

By signing up to the EDI Charter, signatory companies publicly recognise that an inclusive workforce is good for business: it brings diversity of thought, innovation, a positive workforce culture, improved customer relationships, whilst at the same time supporting social mobility and increasing economic opportunity in all regions of the UK.

The object of the EDI Charter is to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the rail workforce and to make sure everyone working in our industry feels included and supported in their personal and professional development and growth. The scope of the EDI Charter is therefore not limited to increasing female representation within the UK rail sector but covers people of all backgrounds including (and by no means limited to) race, ethnicity, religion, gender, socio economic background, and any form of disability.

This Signatory Pack contains information which you may (at your discretion) wish to use to implement your EDI Charter pledges. They are merely guidelines and are by no means mandatory. Each signatory company is free to implement whatever measure it deems necessary or appropriate to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within its workforce.

As an EDI Charter signatory company, you are now part of the EDI Charter community. As such, you will be invited to share success stories and best practice, the most inspirational and impactful of which will be featured in an End of Year Report to be issued by WR and RIA.

We hope you find this EDI Charter Welcome Pack helpful. Should you have any question or comment in connection with the Charter, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@edicharter.co.uk](mailto:info@edicharter.co.uk).



# 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.



## Equality Diversity and Inclusion explained

### What is EDI?

Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace involves ensuring there are policies and initiatives in place to support all employees, regardless of their diverse identities and backgrounds, thus ensuring that everyone is, at all times, respected, treated fairly and made to feel welcome and an integral part of the wider team.

More precisely:

**Equality** means ensuring everyone has the same rights and opportunities within a team, group or workplace.

**Diversity** refers to people of all backgrounds including (and by no means limited to) age, disability, race, religious belief, sex, gender but also socio-economic backgrounds in society and neurodiversity.<sup>1</sup>

**Inclusion** means welcoming, encouraging and supporting all people and ensuring that no individual is made to feel that they must conform in order to fit in or succeed within the workplace and the company.

### Why is EDI important?

Equality, diversity and inclusion is about fairness. It is also about better decision making and economic performance. Equality, diversity and inclusion are also increasingly important to rail clients and investors.

Studies have shown that organisations which have access to the skills, knowledge and insight of people from all parts of our society and promote an inclusive culture perform better because employees feel valued, are more motivated, engaged, more productive and have higher levels of psychological wellbeing and resilience.

Similarly, research has shown that:

- diverse teams are more innovative, they bring multiple perspective to bear on problems and therefore boosts the odds of more creative solutions.
- a diverse workforce can help to inform the development of new or enhanced products or services, open new market opportunities, improve market share and broaden an organisation's customer base.
- gender diverse companies outperform less gender-diverse companies by 48% and companies with ethnic and cultural diversity outperform their non-diverse rivals by 36 % in terms of profitability.
- businesses run by culturally diverse leadership teams were more likely to develop new products than those with homogeneous leadership.

However, globally, "68% of leaders feel they create empowering environments...but just 36% of employees agree."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Neurodiversity refers to sociability, learning, attention, mood and other mental functions.

<sup>2</sup> Culture of Equality in the Workplace, Accenture, March 2020.



## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics, whether such discrimination is direct, indirect, harassment or victimisation.

The Act requires employers to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity amongst employees and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes (among other things) ensuring compliance with equal pay legislation and that everyone has the right to equal access to employment, training and development based solely on merit.

A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and improving social value is becoming increasingly important to Government and stakeholders and in procurement processes. It is the right thing to do and creates positive change in our industry, leading to more sustainable business and greater social value in the community.

## The EDI Charter pledges and guidance notes

### The EDI Charter Pledges

By signing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion EDI Charter, each signatory companies 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 in Women in Rail’s annual report, progress to be demonstrated on RIA, Women in Rail, and signatory companies’ websites.
- Providing opportunities for training and education of staff 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.

### Guidance notes

Below are examples of behaviour and commitment which, as signatory company, you may (in your absolute discretion), elect to implement to work towards a more diverse and inclusive environment. These are merely indicative as the EDI Charter recognises the diversity of the rail sector and that organisations will have different starting points. For instance, many organisations already have EDI policies and are involved in EDI initiatives. The EDI Charter is not intended to replace or conflict with these but to complement them. It also represents a public commitment to good practices that is specific to the rail sector.

As a signatory company, you should therefore set your own expectations and implement the right strategy for your own organisation, including any targets as appropriate.

- *Appointing a member of the senior leadership team as an “EDI Champion”.*

Signatory companies are encouraged to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within their own workforce. This can be achieved by adopting a systematic, business-led approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and implementing positive changes at all levels within their organisation so as to create a diverse workforce and embed fairness and an inclusive culture.

This starts with the appointment of a Board-level EDI Champion.

The EDI Champion will ideally be 1 member of your executive (the board) or the senior executive team.

The role of the EDI Champion will be to lead – in conjunction with the organisation’s executive team and business leaders – the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with the company’s EDI action plan. The EDI Champion will be responsible and accountable to the Board on progress.

- *Agreeing an action plan and monitoring progress made.*

Signatory companies are encouraged to adopt a positive approach to diversity and work towards ensuring a commitment to equality and diversity is embedded at the deepest and highest levels of organisations, thus creating an expectation of inclusion at all grades and roles.

This can start by making an assessment of your organisation’s current equality, diversity and inclusion culture (for instance, through a confidential employee survey), highlighting the positive culture or initiatives you may already have in place to promote a culture of inclusion as well as any areas for improvement. It will also help you identify and understand any barriers to attraction, progression and retention.

From this assessment, a strategy - the EDI action plan - can be drawn up. It should set out your company’s equality, diversity and inclusion vision and mission and encourage or include initiatives that openly recognises and celebrates diversity in the workforce. Where possible – and of course depending on the size of the organisation - your EDI action plan could include ideas about how the organisation can encourage all members from every background of its workforce progress into more senior roles, including at executive and mid-tier level.

The EDI Charter also encourages signatory companies to report on progress annually, internally, on their company’s website, at RIA’s annual AGM, and in Women in Rail’s annual report.

RIA and WR will also invite signatory companies to share their success stories, including best practices, so these - and your company - can be showcased in the joint RIA/WR End of Year EDI Charter Report.

Reporting publicly on progress will help support the transparency and accountability needed to drive positive change within your company and our industry.

- *Providing opportunities for training and education of staff to help tackle unconscious bias and negative behaviours within workforces.*

Signatory companies are encouraged to make sure that all employees, from leaders to new starters, are engaged with the importance of having an inclusive working environment and understand the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion.

This involves being ready to consider sensitive topics around cultural norms, openly encourage and celebrate differences of opinion and promote positive behaviours.

It also involves the promotion of inclusive leadership and peer-to-peer relationships through offering unconscious bias training for employees and educating staff on the need to encourage and support open and honest dialogue and feedback and a supportive response to any concerns. Many companies choose to have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination.

Please bear in mind that not “everything should be the same for everyone” and the extent to which women and ethnic minorities are more likely to face bias or abuse within the workforce than the dominant majority.<sup>4</sup>

- *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.*

At the core of an inclusive culture is a company’s ability to foster a sense of community and belonging in which all employees feel that - in addition to taking a professional approach in their work – they can also be themselves and play an integral part in the company’s life and progress.

Signatory companies are invited to encourage and listen to the ideas developed by employees to foster the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda within their organisations and create a culture that gives leaders and managers accountability for strengthening diversity and ensuring every employee is given a platform to express themselves and thrive.

This can be achieved by including in the EDI action plans initiatives that recognise and celebrate your workforce’s different styles, skills and background, including internal diversity-themed webinars and discussion forums, launching an EDI Newsletter or encouraging employees to become diversity allies.

- *Making recruitment and progression processes accessible and attractive to all, to attract, retain and develop people of all backgrounds, ages, genders and identities.*

Within the action plan, there are a number of initiatives signatory companies can opt to take, to encourage diverse individuals to apply for positions within the organisation.

Where appropriate, this could include using diverse recruitment firms, inclusive language when advertising positions, adopting blind CVs, or ensuring diverse interview panels.

Signatory companies also need to ensure workplaces are accessible for disabled individuals (whether their disabilities are visible or not), provide support for employees with differing needs, and ensure all of their employees ensure staff handbooks include guidance in statutory areas such as flexible working, parental leave, return to work days after maternity leave, and religious requirements. Of course, in all of these areas, these will need to be reasonably balanced with the needs of the business.

Other means to promote attraction and retention might be to give employees access to internal and external mentoring programmes, and have clear, well thought out, personal development plans, highlighting the available career path.

Companies with a headcount over 250 employees already publish pay information, in line with Government requirements and anonymised as appropriate, and are open and transparent about pay, thus ensuring any gender and ethnicity pay gaps are acknowledged and addressed.

You may also set up executive sponsored diversity employee network groups and ensure there is a standing agenda item at each executive committee meeting to discuss the progress of the equality,

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<sup>4</sup> The words “woman”, “women” and “female”, when used, span the nine protected characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexual orientation, as well as broader behavioural and background diversity, such as thinking and personality types, socio-economic background and life experience and include women who are transitioning and non-binary people.



diversity and inclusion agenda across the organisation.

### Measuring success

The above are examples of actions that, as a signatory company, you may want to implement to promote equality, diversity and an inclusive culture. These are merely indicative, and progress will vary depending on your organisation's resources and starting points.

Measures of success can include:

- Qualitative and/or quantitative evidence of a diversity of individuals with applying for positions, both internally and externally.
- Evidence that diversity throughout the organisation reflects the local community.
- Higher employee engagement and retention scores and company wellbeing.



## Next steps

WR and RIA will continue to encourage a culture of fairness and inclusion and an environment of diversity and equality across the industry. This will continue to build on the WR Cross-Company Mentoring Programme and involve, among other things, the creation of an EDI Charter Community (Trailblazers), an EDI Charter Working Group and the issue of an End of Year Report showcasing signatory companies' success stories and best practice.

### EDI Charter Community

WR and RIA will set up a signatory companies' database and mailing list, including details of each organisation's EDI Champion and EDI network "Trailblazers".

This database will be used for all EDI Charter correspondence going forward, including the sharing of information, resources, guidance notes, presentations, training material and events which may help signatory companies create a more equal, diverse and inclusive workplace (some of which will be shared and organised by the EDI Working Group).

### EDI Charter Working Group

WR and RIA have established an EDI Charter Group comprising up to 10 people from different backgrounds, ages, genders and identities and representing various grades, roles and companies within the UK rail industry.

These are:

- Farah Sajwani, Graduate, Collaborative Project Management Services (CPMS)
- Sep Semsarzadeh, Head of Operations, Colas Rail
- Mohanad Ismail, Young Rail Professionals
- Natalie Leister, Passenger Services Area Manager, Southeastern Railway
- Nina Fairfowl, Corporate Communications Manager, Keltbray
- Rachel Fullard, Service Analyst, Rail Delivery Group
- Rob Doolan, Scheme Project Manager, Network Rail
- Thevani Ravindran, Transport Engagement Lead, Atkins
- Tom Flannery, Team Leader, Rail Systems, SNC Lavalin
- Toyin Davies, Rolling Stock and Programme Delivery - HS2

The role of the EDI Charter Group will be to drive of the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda within the UK rail industry, in line with the objectives of the EDI Charter. It will liaise with the EDI Champions to encourage collaboration between signatory companies and more broadly the sharing of best practice and success stories. It will circulate information, news and details of resources and initiatives (for instance, through quarterly Newsletters, posts, blogs, opinion pieces, events) which are relevant to the progression of the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda in UK rail and thus help use the EDI Charter to build the railway for the future.

The EDI Charter Working Group will be politically neutral and will define its own vision and mission.

WR and RIA will be sitting as Facilitator on the EDI Working Group, supporting its members achieve their objectives.



## End of Year EDI Charter Report

The aim of the EDI Charter is to encourage signatory companies to take pro-active steps to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within their organisation and consequently the UK rail sector.

We accept that not all signatory companies will be able to make the same commitments and that the time and resources available to each signatory company will vary significantly. However, we will encourage all participating organisations to be open about their progress.

Early in 2021, both WR and RIA, will reach out to each signatory company to ask if they would like to provide details of any best practice, case studies and success stories they are proud of and which they would like to share with the EDI Charter Community for the benefit of all.

WR, RIA and the EDI Charter Working Group will review and select the most inspirational stories and showcase them in an End of Year Report which will be made available industry wide.



### Signatory Companies

Thank you again for signing up to the EDI Charter.

We look forward to working together with you – as one EDI Charter Community – to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK railway industry and build a better future for all.

