

Women in Rail

Adeline Ginn



How to drive positive EDI changes

Adeline Ginn MBE, Founder and Chair of Women in Rail, Group Strategy and Legal Director at CPMS Group explains how the crisis offers an opportunity to drive positive EDI changes in the industry

The pandemic has severely affected the business landscape. Large and small companies had to cease trading, employees had to adapt to new working patterns, employers had to review their management styles and whole industries had to revisit their strategic priorities and investments. The crisis has also had – and continues to have – a disproportionate effect on women, ethnic minorities, working parents and young employees.

The WR Team has done tremendous work in 2020 to support people in UK rail, as demonstrated in our End of Year Newsletter (see WR website – News). We are planning many more national and regional initiatives this year to continue to support the rail workforce, including employers, and encourage organisations to renew their EDI efforts in these difficult times.

We started the year by launching our 2021 Mentoring Programme from a renewed virtual platform. The essence of mentoring is a human connection and retaining that relationship in times of crisis is crucial to help navigate increased stress due to the global pandemic but also to eradicate any feelings of isolation that may result from remote working.

The core focus of the programme during lockdown is keeping the mentoring network engaged, help mentors and mentees stay connected with colleagues and retain a sense of community whilst at the same time continuing to share knowledge and access the personal and career development benefits that comes from learning from each other.

In January, we also reached out to the 140 companies who have signed the joint WR/RIA EDI Charter, outlining the steps they may take to support their pledges and promote EDI within their own workforce. We set-up an EDI Working Group comprising young professionals in rail, including graduates, apprentices, mid and senior managers, from a cross-section of companies in our industry.

The Working Group represents the upcoming generation of rail workers and also the diversity we are thriving to create in the sector. It will help guide initiatives to create a fairer, more inclusive and diverse rail industry by making suggestions, sharing ideas and best practice, and help define the next steps in our industry's EDI journey.

In the last few weeks, we have also encouraged companies to reach out to school and offer unused or old laptops and tablets

to support children learning from home and have raised awareness to existing rail support initiatives such as the RBF Grant Scheme.

We have welcomed new regional Chairs: Ruth Busby and Samyutha Bala, co-Chairs of WR South and Christine Fernandez, new Chair of WR Wales. We met virtually to discuss initiatives to support, but also provide light relief, to our members in the coming months. Our commitment and dedication continue to be huge and relentless.

Albert Einstein said 'In the midst of every crisis, lies a great opportunity'. Let's learn the lessons from the last few months and, in the 'new normal', find ways to better support each other and our communities, encourage positive behaviours and help create a more equal, diverse and inclusive industry for many years to come.

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.