

Enhancing professional development through Women in Rail's repowered mentoring programme

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About the author: Shona Clive is the Chair for Women in Rail Scotland and is Head of Marketing and Communications at Babcock International. Women in Rail was created to improve gender balance, diversity and inclusion in the UK rail industry. For more information visit <http://womeninrail.org/>

The repowered Women in Rail Mentoring Programme was launched at the end of January 2019 and I was delighted to be selected as one of just 100 mentees for this year's intake.

Diversity is now a business agenda item across the rail sector, but it is no longer merely about ensuring gender diversity is achieved, but diversity in its broadest form, from age, ethnicity, disability, gender, right the way through to ensuring individuals with the right skill-set are employed.

For the rail sector, it is vitally important that we continue to ensure there is a balance of females in senior management roles. Over recent years there has been a positive shift in ensuring gender-balance, but it's something that as an industry we need to work hard to address. The Women in Rail cross-industry Mentoring Programme, powered by Moving Ahead, is a fantastic opportunity for continued professional development and to ensure mentees gain the necessary confidence and skills to enable them to strive in their roles.

Having worked in the industry for over twenty-years, in signing up to be part of the programme I was keen to further my own development – to be challenged, pushed outside my comfort zone and to look at things through a new perspective. Through my work with Women in Rail Scotland, I also wanted to be an ambassador for the initiative, and having a passion for learning, it was really important for me to experience the programme at first-hand.

Throughout my career I have always been fortunate to have been supported by great mentors, some of whom have been outside the rail industry. I believe that you can only benefit from people who challenge your thinking and I'm incredibly lucky to have benefitted from the mentorship of Mandy Haeburn-Little (Scottish Business Resilience Centre) and Jenny Copeland (author of Drive-Through Success) over the years, and I can't wait to begin my mentoring journey through Women in Rail with Network Rail Scotland's Karen Gribben.

The Women in Rail Mentoring Programme, which for 2019 is powered by Moving Ahead, has some amazing resources available for those involved with the initiative. It follows a very clear structure, allowing you to follow your success, track your achievements and know what your end goal is, which is hugely important to ensure we proactively continue to drive change and build on our successes – both on a personal and professional level, but also across the whole rail family.