

HS2 outline plans to improve equality, diversity and inclusion

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HS2 Ltd has revealed details of its equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work, and targets in the coming year.

Among the areas of focus in the current financial year are to improve the gender balance of the HS2 workforce to 40% female (currently 31%) and improve the BAME representation to 21% (currently 19%).

Other priorities highlighted includes:

- Further reducing the pay gap.
- Carrying out BAME and disability pay gap analysis.
- Achieving Platinum status in all four Clear Assured categories.
- Improving the number of Tier 1 Contractors that have achieved externally verified EDI standards.
- Support contractors to embed inclusive health and safety practices on-site.

The report says that positive progress was made in the last financial year towards the goals set out in the EDI Strategy and Skilled for Success People Strategy.

It says: “Our approach to EDI continues to raise standards across the Project and the wider industry. This has been a year of significant successes, but change and challenges lie ahead, as construction activity increases, and the railway makes the jump from design to construction.”

Gender

Of the 1,609 core staff at HS2 Ltd, women represent 31% of the senior leadership, 33% of the executive team, 29% of director roles and 24% of head of function roles.

Activities to improve gender balance includes:

- expanding its reverse mentoring programme from a pilot with 40 participants to a complete programme with 122 participants.
- featuring a variety of case studies on its public facing careers page, where potential applicants can find out more about what it's like to work at HS2 Ltd from real employees;
- implementing actions arising from an equality analysis of its performance, talent management and succession planning processes; and
- helping the HS2 Ltd Gender Balance Network to deliver a variety of events accessible to its staff and supply chain partners.

Ethnicity

BAME representation decreases with seniority, but has improved this year at Director and Head of Function level.

At Director level, 7% of core staff are BAME, compared to 0% last year, at Head of Function level, the percentage has increased from 6% to 9%.

Among the range of steps towards increasing the number of BAME applicants, apprentices and staff this year, including:

- working with the supply chain to attend recruitment events targeted at ethnic minorities, to encourage young talent into the infrastructure sector;
- sending members of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Skills, Education and Employment teams to attend two half-day sharing skills events with members of our supply chain (the Costain Skanska Joint Venture, the Align Joint Venture, Mace Dragados, Balfour Beatty Vinci and Systra);
- expanding the blind auditioning recruitment model; and
- working with diversity job boards such as VERCIDA to make its commitment to EDI more visible to under-represented groups.

During 2020/21, HS2 Ltd will carry out and publish an ethnicity pay gap analysis and create an action plan based on it.

Disability

One in 50 of core staff meet the Equality Act's definition of declared disability, which is essentially unchanged since last year.

The report says that HS2 Ltd has worked closely with Clear Talents, one of its suppliers, to improve its adjustments management system. The system records request for equipment and support related to health and safety, wellbeing, mental wellbeing and disability.

Since implementing the improvements, HS2 has fulfilled 680 adjustment requests. The system has about 1,860 active users.

Click [here](#) for the full report.

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