

HS2 signs up to improve employment outcomes for BAME workers

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HS2 has shown its commitment to racial equality by signing up to Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter, an initiative designed to improve employment outcomes for black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees in the UK.

With HS2 set to support 30,000 jobs at peak construction, the project is well-placed to play a leading role in embedding the principles of the Charter, which builds on the work of the 2017 McGregor-Smith Review, 'Race in the workplace', which found that people from BAME backgrounds were still underemployed, underpromoted and under-represented at senior levels.

HS2's public commitment to delivering on the Charter's five key principles is driven from the top, with HS2 Ltd non-executive board member Judith Hackitt, appointed as Board Diversity Champion to scrutinise HS2's equality, diversity and inclusion performance.

In signing the Charter, HS2 has set a clear commitment to:

- Appointing an Executive Sponsor for race
- Capturing data and publicising progress
- Ensuring zero tolerance of harassment and bullying
- Making equality in the workplace the responsibility of all leaders and managers
- Taking action that supports ethnic minority career progression

Non-executive director, Judith Hackitt said: “We have an amazing opportunity here to set the standards across the UK’s construction and rail engineering sectors.

“HS2’s supply chain will extend out to thousands of British businesses over the next decade, so this is a genuine opportunity for us to play a leading role in the implementation of measures that truly ensure BAME employees are fairly represented and have equality of opportunity to thrive in the workplace.”

The signing of the Charter coincides with the announcement that HS2’s head of equality, diversity and inclusion, Mark Lomas, has been recognised in *People Management’s Top 20 Power List*, which champions individuals across the country who have made the greatest impact on diversity and inclusion on the ground, whether through academic work, campaigning activities or speaking engagements.

Mark was recognised alongside public figures, including Sir Lenny Henry, for his commitment to driving forward the EDI agenda. He has spearheaded several initiatives at HS2 Ltd and across its supply chain, which have been pivotal to the business’ success in addressing the underrepresentation of minority groups working in construction.

Mark Lomas, HS2’s head of equality diversity and inclusion said: “We’ve worked hard at HS2 to embed inclusive practices into everything we do and it’s an honour to be recognised for that.

“There is always more that businesses can do, and we’re committed to further developing our approach to ensure that HS2 is a workplace that attracts, invests and champions opportunities for BAME employees.”

With main construction works on Britain’s new low carbon high speed railway set to start this summer, HS2 Ltd is currently recruiting for hundreds of roles across a broad range of disciplines and is actively encouraging applications from BAME communities. For more information or to visit www.hs2.org.uk/hs2-and-you/

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd