

Network Rail calls on more women to join the rail industry and inspire future generations

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Network Rail launches recruitment campaign to inspire more women to join the rail industry.

The targeted campaign is aiming to fill roles across Network Rail's Southern region – which includes south London, Kent, Sussex and parts of the South West – that have a disproportionately low percentage of female colleagues.

Women remain significantly under-represented in roles such as signallers and maintenance operatives where they average 11% and 2% of the workforce respectively. This compares to 10% and 1% in the same roles nationally across Network Rail.

This year's campaign, which focuses on embracing fairness and levelling the playing field, features female colleagues from across the Southern region who are currently working in those roles to inspire other women to join the historically male-dominated industry.

Across a number of Network Rail's busiest stations in the Southern region including London Waterloo and London Victoria, the campaign is being publicised through posters which contain pictures of female

colleagues working in under-represented roles. A number of case studies and features on these colleagues have also been published on the Network Rail website to highlight to potential candidates what it's like for women to work in these roles.

Jordanna Mills, 22, from Ashford in Kent, is a senior technical officer who works as part of the maintenance team and is one of the many women working at Network Rail contributing to an inclusive organisation.

Jordanna said: "My team primarily investigates any faults on the railway that need fixing. Once a fault is reported, it's up to my team to survey, design and implement a repair scheme using either a tamper or stone blower machine. We play a vital role in making sure the railway remains safe, reliable, and efficient for everyone.

"I absolutely love the maintenance side of my job as I'm fully involved in improving our track conditions at each stage. I also enjoy the variety of the job. I work closely with the teams out on track maintaining the railway, and with various engineers solving larger problems. It gives me the tools and experience I need to progress my career.

"I would recommend anyone to take the plunge and apply for a role within maintenance at Network Rail. It's the most rewarding job I've ever had. I am extremely passionate about promoting women and young people in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. I'm also keen to promote non-conventional routes into further education including apprenticeships. All these things weren't talked about when I was at school."

Alison Badrock, 47, from Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex, plays an integral part in the running of the railway as a signaller, which is a critical safety role that is responsible for operating the signals – the railway's traffic lights – and helping keep trains running across the rail network and people moving safely.

When Alison started on the railway 11 years ago, she was a single parent and relied heavily on family members and after school clubs which is why the shift work worked for her.

Without our signallers, the railway simply could not function. It's a big responsibility but it's also a huge opportunity to do meaningful work – everyday.

Alison commented: "I always thought the railway was more of a 'man's world' and when I asked my dad if it was something I could do, he encouraged me to pursue it.

"I was working as a private carer and was a single mum and felt a little stuck in my job. I had completed my personal track safety and worked with my dad for two years as a contractor on the tracks then my brother who is a signaller encouraged me to apply for a signalling job.

"I like the technical side of my job and how the day to day running can change at a moment's notice from delays to failures. It amazes me that I still learn new things within the role.

"Since I started at Network Rail 11 years ago, the railway is a completely different place and there are so many women now in senior positions. We even have a regional managing director, who is now a woman. I

genuinely couldn't have imagined that a decade ago."

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's managing director for Southern region, said: "We're really pleased to see the rollout of this new recruitment campaign.

"Network Rail aims to recruit from the widest possible pool of talent and tries to appoint the very best people for the job and we're aware that in certain roles there is an imbalance in diversity.

"It's important for us to create an inclusive environment, increasing the diversity of our colleagues which in turn attracts more talent into the industry. We must cater for everyone, not only by embracing diversity but also embracing diverse views which will make us better at what we do."

Photo credit: Network Rail