Network Rail launches national IT competition to highlight careers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic candidates

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A competition has been launched by Network Rail which will showcase IT careers in the organisation, and across the rail sector, to young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

The rail network owner and manager hopes it will encourage more young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to consider a career in IT, STEM areas more widely, and in the rail industry. It says all of these are currently under-represented by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. At Network Rail, just under 10% (9.38%) of employees are from such backgrounds.

Network Rail is working to increase the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees and create a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Its Race Matters initiative set a target to reach 13% by the end of the current Control Period in 2024, with a particular focus on leadership positions.

The IT competition challenges young people to use their creative and technical skills to invent something new or innovative. They will be asked to think about how their idea would be used, what its purpose would

be, who would use it, how to make it safe and secure, and how technology would bring it to life.

Prizes on offer include IT equipment, including brand new Windows 10 laptops, work experience days, and mentoring from IT professionals. One overall winner will be invited to apply with a recommendation for Network Rail's IT Apprenticeship scheme. It says no places on the scheme can be guaranteed, but they will receive support from a mentor throughout the application process.

Network Rail's enterprise architect, Maureen Parris, said: "We know that people from minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented in our business, and in STEM fields such as IT. We hope this competition will encourage more young people from those backgrounds to consider IT in the railway as an exciting and worthwhile career.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing the submissions, and I'm sure we'll get lots of creative and innovative ideas."

To enter, candidates must be between 16-18 years of age. In partnership with their school or college, candidates should email their submission to DiverseIT@networkrail.co.uk. All entries must include name, email address, postal address (including postcode), and telephone number.

Full terms and conditions can be found on the Network Rail website.

Image credit: supplied by Network Rail