

Network Rail listed in Times Top 50 Employers for Women

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Network Rail has today been named as one of the top 50 employers for women in Britain.

The landmark achievement is recognition of the progress the organisation has made to improve diversity and become a more inclusive employer in what is traditionally, and remains, a predominantly male industry.

Loraine Martins OBE, director of diversity and inclusion at Network Rail, said: “We are incredibly proud to have been named in this list. It is a reflection of the huge amount of work that has gone in to making Network Rail a more inclusive employer and a better place to work for all. We have made great progress, but we know there is more we can do – and more we will do – to make sure women thrive in our business.

“We know the benefits of having a diverse workforce, and we want to reflect the diversity of the people we that we serve. Having the right people in place is vital in helping us to deliver the safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable railway passengers deserve, especially as we build back from the Covid-19 pandemic and demand for rail begins to recover.”

Through the *Gender Matters* programme, Network Rail has taken a number of steps to improve gender diversity over recent years, including:

- Setting an ambitious target to achieve a 26 per cent female workforce by the end of 2024 (having increased the proportion from 14.2 per cent in 2014 to 18.9 per cent by the end of 2020).
- Making a conscious effort to attract, recruit and retain more women in the business at all levels, including apprentices. For example, by using gender neutral job descriptions, targeting universities with a higher proportion of female engineering students, and engaging with these students via skills sessions, employer events and career fairs.
- Progressing female employees into more senior roles. Over 100 women have now participated in the *Women in Leadership* programme to support their career development.
- A change in approach to flexible working and agile working by improving family-friendly approaches, including being more open to job share arrangements.
- Continuing to publish and focus on the gender pay gap, introducing a parental buddying scheme, and providing resources for different life stages, including a menopause project.
- Improving welfare facilities for women, including toilets, shower facilities, drying rooms, sanitary products. New mobile welfare units were shortlisted for an innovation award at the recent Rail News Awards.
- Launching the *Working Forward* pledge – a commitment to making Network Rail the best workplace it can be for pregnant women and new parents.

Amanda Mackenzie OBE, Chief Executive at Business in the Community, which publishes the list in partnership with the Times, said: “We look forward to the day when commitment to gender equality is the norm, not the exception. Until then, I hope more employers take note of Network Rail’s ambition on gender equality.”

Charlotte Woodworth, Gender Equality Director at Business in the Community, said: “COVID-19 has shone a light on how far we have to go on gender equality: women have been disproportionately affected by lockdown.

“We congratulate the many employers who have maintained their efforts towards gender equality at this time, often introducing innovative policies to support their workforce during this period. This year’s application process was the most competitive one we have seen in five years. Employers like Network Rail haven’t forgotten women at work and they are committed to making gender inequality a thing of the past.”

The 2021 *Top 50 Employers for Women* was published on 29 April.

- The *Times Top 50 Employers for Women* is the UK’s most well-established listing of employers leading the way on workplace gender equality. It celebrates outstanding progress and examples of best practice, impact, innovation and individual achievement.
- The supplement is published in partnership with Business in the Community – which was set up over 40 years ago by HRH The Prince of Wales to champion responsible business.

Photo credit: Network Rail