

# Northern conductor nominated for young asian achievement award

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A conductor from Leeds has been named as a role model for young asian women.

Zahida Sultana, 24, has worked as a conductor for **Northern** since July 2020 – has been shortlisted in the Yorkshire Asian Young Achiever Awards – a scheme which celebrates people who have overcome deprivation and disadvantage or have broken down traditional barriers to progress.

Zahida, who has been nominated in the public sector category of the awards, said she wants to represent young asian women – and encourage more to join the rail industry.

She said: “I was aware the railway was driving more women to join but I had never seen a Hijab-wearing asian female in the conductor role. I was motivated to change this and represent all young asian females in this sector.

“Upon joining Northern I was greatly welcomed and was not made to feel out of place at all. In fact, during my initial training I fell pregnant with my firstborn.

At this point I was very nervous and concerned for my job security. However, Northern helped me through every step of the way, not only was I informed about the amazing maternity benefits at Northern, I was also treated with great fairness throughout my whole pregnancy and the nine months after too.

After this I was able to resume my training as normal and managed to qualify as a fully competent train conductor. Through my own positive experiences of the railway, I would highly encourage women of any ethnic background or religion to come join us."

Tony Baxter, regional director for Northern, said: "Zahida is a real asset to Northern, making a difference to our colleagues and customers through her amazing attitude every single day. Her contribution in so many ways across the business is worthy of recognition and I wish her all the best of luck for the awards night."

Zahida will find out if she is the winner in her category at the awards ceremony on Friday 11th November.

Northern is the second largest train operator in the country, with nearly 2,000 services a day to more than 500 stations across the North of England.

*Photo credit: Northern*