

Report finds HS2 project champions inclusivity

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HS2 has published its annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report which finds the company is continuing to challenge its national supply chain, and the wider rail engineering and construction sectors, to champion inclusivity.

Across the supply chain, HS2's performance continues to beat industry averages for the number of female and BAME employees working on the project, with the supply chain achieving 28% and 18% respectively.

With all three phases of the project now live, and HS2's journey north beginning, challenge and opportunity come in equal measure. HS2 Ltd has set itself high standards, leading the way in the performance it expects from the 2,500 UK-based businesses engaged in its supply chain. Whilst just shy of the internal targets it set itself, HS2 Ltd's own performance saw its female workforce reach 37% [40%], whilst the number of BAME employees peaked at 22%* [23%].

Natalie Penrose, Head of Legacy at HS2 said: "HS2's construction is gathering pace by the day, and we now have a 25,000-strong workforce spread across more than 350 sites. HS2's scale brings the reality of our challenge to life, given the white male dominance that has gripped the rail and civil engineering sectors for many years.

“But every challenge brings opportunity, and I’m proud of the huge waves we are making to address national skills shortages, the threat of an ageing workforce in engineering and in attracting more women and BAME candidates into employment on the project.”

At the heart of HS2’s drive for change is the growing network of employees who challenge the organisation to achieve excellence. With a collective membership of over 1,650 across eight bespoke networking groups, staff are empowered to share their experiences and expertise on a range of initiatives from gender balance, the inclusion of ethnic minority staff, challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and promoting disability awareness.

Engaging employees in the strategy, policy and decision making processes had driven positive change and key achievements during 2021/2022. On International Disabled People’s Day in December, HS2 launched its accessibility policy and digital accessibility hub, which seek to address the changing needs of disabled employees in the workplace and ensure that staff recognise the adjustments they can make to support their colleagues and the wider workforce.

Learning from others remains a key focus for HS2 in the years ahead and we are proud of the partnerships we are forming with schools, specialist employment support services and charitable groups along the line of route to help us achieve best practice. Our work with SEND schools and specialist schools for the deaf helps us to understand the design changes we can implement to make our stations and trains accessible for all, as we strive to ensure that we build a railway that reflects the diverse needs of the communities it will serve.

For more information about HS2’s commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, read the full report [here](#).

*It is discretionary as to whether staff choose to disclose their ethnicity and/or disability status.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd