

ScotRail partners with new children's book to break down gender stereotypes

November 24, 2022



ScotRail has partnered with train and freight operating companies across the UK to help promote a new children's book celebrating diversity and inclusion in the rail industry.

The train operator has come together with a number of other rail companies, including, Freightliner, GB Railfreight, West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway, DB Cargo UK Ltd, MTR Elizabeth line, Arriva, Southeastern Railway, Great Western Railway and C2C to support independent book publisher, Butterfly Books, in the production of a children's book which looks to address misconceptions about careers that can start from the earliest ages.

Released on 8 November, *My Mummy is a Train Driver* aims to break down gender stereotypes in the rail industry. It is the ninth instalment in a series of children's books that promote diversity and inclusion, and tackle gender biases across a variety of industries – from plumbing and nursing to engineering and firefighting.

The railway has traditionally seen an older, white, male dominated workforce, something which ScotRail, and the wider industry, has been working to change.



Jane Ross, ScotRail Driver, Inverness.

Karen Wallace, ScotRail equality, diversity and inclusion manager, said: "It's no secret that the railway industry has historically been very male-dominated, but we're working hard to change that.

"That's why books like 'My Mummy is a Train Driver' are so important, because they help inspire young children and break down those traditional gender stereotypes.

"The railway has a place for everyone, and by engaging in early careers activities and initiatives, it will help us recruit and retain the next generation of our railway family."

Over the past few years, ScotRail has been involved in a number of initiatives which aim to break down stereotypes and attract more women, disabled people, and members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community into the rail industry, including:

- Using graduate, apprentice, and intern programmes to attract more women into the business.
- Promoting the role of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) jobs, through school visits.
- Continuing to monitor pay to ensure there is no bias towards either gender during recruitment or throughout employment with ScotRail.
- Regularly reviewing HR policies and processes to ensure that people have the opportunity to work in a way that works best for them, their career aspirations, and their home life.
- Signing commitment to the Business in the Community Race at Work Equality Charter and the Women in Rail Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Charter.

This has resulted in ScotRail almost doubling the number of female train drivers it employs over the past five years, from 51 in 2017 to 96 in 2022. This increase means ScotRail employs more female train drivers than ever before.

The number of female conductors employed has also risen during the same period, from 120 in 2017 to 166 in 2022 – an increase of 37 per cent.

Despite the rise in female train drivers and conductors, only 22 per cent of ScotRail's 5,082 employees are female, proving the need for more to be done to encourage women to consider a career in the rail industry.

As part of its support for the book launch, ScotRail has planned visits to a number of Scottish primary schools. During the visits, some of the operator's female train drivers will chat to pupils about the role of a train driver with the aim of inspiring more young children to consider a future career in rail, and to showcase the welcoming and inclusive work environment the rail industry continues to foster.

Kerrine Bryan, Co-Author and Founder of Butterfly Books, said: "As an engineer by profession, I've worked in a sector that has long given the impression that it's a dirty, manually difficult, career almost exclusively for white males. In reality, there are many roles within engineering and working on sites is just a tiny element of that.

"The rail sector faces similar misconceptions when, in reality, the industry has done much to improve diversity and inclusion through various initiatives.

"Today, there are many roles that women assume within the industry, including train drivers, and this deserves recognition and support."