

Women in Rail Conference marks end of 10th anniversary celebrations

March 2, 2023



Women in Rail (WR) marked the end of its 10th anniversary celebrations with its annual Conference on Thursday 2nd March 2023.

The hybrid event, hosted by London law firm Stephenson Harwood, brought together 120 in-person attendees and a virtual audience of almost 100. Tickets had sold out within 48 hours of their release.

The conference started with a fun and enlightening EDI-related icebreaker hosted by Lucy Dyer, an Apprentice Civil Engineer at SLC Rail and member of Women in Rail West Midlands Committee.

Adeline Ginn MBE, who founded the charity in 2012, was keynote speaker at the conference. She shared WR's remarkable journey and achievements to date, highlighting the passion and dedication of the WR team of volunteers who, for the last 10 years, has been working relentlessly to drive long lasting changes within the UK railway industry.

Other speakers included Alexandra Batey, HS2 Ltd Phase 2b Development Director, Lydia Fairman, Head of Capability and Skills Development for Network Rail and Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT),

Rachel Fullard, Rail Delivery Group National Rail Service Analyst, and Chair of WR RIA EDI Charter Working Group, Mark Johnson, Southeastern Engineering and Major Programmes Director, Leon Lloyd, Director of Centrum Solutions and former England international rugby player, Nia Mellor, Detective Chief Inspector in the British Transport Police, Mandeep Singh, D/Gauge Marketing Manager and Vice-Chair, WR RIA EDI Charter Working Group and Fi Westcough, Atkins Consultant (Strategic Rail) and National Chair YRP.

Presentations included the work carried out by Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) to attract new talent into rail, the link between fostering EDI and high performing teams, the British Transport Police's support of White Ribbon, the UK's leading charity engaging with men and boys to end violence against women and girls, and the future of apprenticeships and Young Rail Professionals (YRP).

"In line with our 10-year anniversary celebrations, the conference reflected on WR's journey so far and addressed the significant progress in EDI in UK rail, with a particular focus on how organisations and individuals across the sector have implemented EDI as a key business imperative and the benefits this has realised," said Shona Clive, WR Vice-Chair.

"Our speakers provided valuable insight into the industry's thoughts on what the next decade will bring in terms of EDI activity and how we can all contribute in collectively making change happen across the industry and that allyship will play a central role.

"While much has been achieved, there is still more to be done, and we are now looking to the next decade and where we, as an organisation, can add most value and give best support."

A lively panel discussion considered a variety of EDI talking points, with a focus on the importance of allyship. Speakers included Shane Andrews MBE, Network Rail Project Manager and Chair of Archway, Network Rail LGBTQI+ network, Jess Bates, Atkins Network Rail Client Account Director and Atkins Global EDI Lead, Laura Donnelly, West Midlands Trains Head of Sales and Marketing and Chair of Engender, West Midlands Trains group dedicated to gender-related topics, Odis Palmer, GBRTT EDI Project Manager, I&D Manager at GWR and Co-Chair of Rail Unites for Inclusion.



Attendees had the opportunity to network during lunch and refreshment breaks. The conference was sponsored by CAF Rail UK, Egis Transport Solutions, Morson Group, Alstom Transport UK Limited, Great Western Railways and Porterbrook.

“We would like to thank the conference’s corporate sponsors and the team at Nimble Media Ltd for supporting and delivering what was a hugely successful and well-attended event,” added Shona.

Photo credit: Women in Rail