

Working together to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce

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There is a real passion for change around equality, diversity and inclusion. That is the message from Rachel Fullard, the chair of the EDI Charter working group, as the organisation releases its first annual report.

Launched in November 2020 by the Railway Industry Association (RIA) and Women in Rail (WR), the EDI Charter for Rail now boasts almost 200 signatories across the UK rail industry, including [railbusinessdaily.com](https://www.railbusinessdaily.com).

“It has been extremely gratifying to see how many companies have signed up to the EDI Charter so far,” said Rachel, who works full-time as a data analyst for the Rail Delivery Group.

“The annual report is a chance for us to demonstrate the actions we have all taken to make the rail industry a more representative and welcoming place, not only for our employees, but customers and passengers too.”

The report sets out examples of good practice and celebrates the very best work carried out by Charter

signatories over the last year, featuring submissions from the Department for Transport, Network Rail, Siemens Mobility and Atkins.

“We believe the rail industry has a duty to reflect the communities it serves, in terms of diversity and representation of marginalised groups,” added Rachel.

“Our role as working group is to assist charter signatories on this journey, and to champion the importance of fostering an inclusive environment for all.”

Several workshops have been held so far on accessibility, inclusion in leadership, and social mobility; as well as the hugely successful informal Coffee Roulette, which involved workers from signatory companies pairing up to discuss equality, diversity and inclusion and to share best practice.

“Being a part of the group, and now as its chair, is a great honour and something I am immensely proud of,” she said. “Having achieved what we have in such a short time only bodes well for the future, and I hope that the work we are doing is creating a positive and lasting change.

“The 2022-23 working group cohort is now in place, and planning is already well underway. I can’t wait to announce our plans for the second half of 2022 and continue to deliver this positive work for our signatories.

“As rail moves towards a time of more and more change, it’s ever more important that we come together to learn and share our expertise to help create a bigger and better industry.”

Every Charter signatory commits to inclusive practices, such as:

- Appointing a member of the senior leadership team as an ‘EDI Champion’;
- Agreeing an action plan, monitoring and reporting on progress made;
- Providing opportunities for training and education for employees, supporting the progression of diverse individuals

into senior roles to improve diverse representation at senior and executive level;

- Creating a culture which fosters inclusion and providing space for all employees to talk openly, including at industry events and in meetings; and
- Making recruitment and progression processes accessible to all, to attract, retain and develop people of all backgrounds, ages, genders and identities.

Rachel said: “I have been a member of the group since its foundation and my participation has been encouraged and supported by my employer RDG.

“I joined the group because I am passionate about making the industry more inclusive, but from a personal

perspective I wanted to ensure the voices of LGBTQ+ people were heard.

“As someone who is nonbinary, I know that it can be hard to feel like you ‘fit in’ to large institutions and industries – my aim, as part of the group, is to make sure the railway becomes, and continues to be, a place where people feel free and able to be themselves, and to see themselves represented in positions of power and leadership.”

RIA and WR continue to welcome new signatories to the charter – if your organisation would be interested in signing up, please contact info@edicharter.co.uk.