



infrastructure
matters

Women in Infrastructure

Sharing best practice to
accelerate gender diversity



Help shape the **future**
of the **infrastructure**
industry



FOREWORD

Infrastructure is central to our daily lives. It provides services used by the entire population, and therefore must reflect and serve a diverse society. At Infrastructure Matters (IM), we believe it is essential for industry to embed diversity and inclusion in every stage of infrastructure design and delivery, to shape a better future for all.

Our Women in Infrastructure initiative was born following the launch of our December 2022 Transforming Infrastructure Delivery report which featured a keynote speech from Heidi Alexander, Transport for London Board Member, former Deputy Mayor for Transport, and a former London MP. Heidi spoke with great passion about her experiences in the infrastructure world and the need to attract more women into the sector. We were inspired by Heidi's speech which reflected our own observations over the years, and identified a pressing need to speak to industry leaders – both men and women – to see what we could do to fast-track progress towards gender diversity.

While we recognise there is a need to address the lack of wider diversity across the sector, our early conversations with industry leaders led us to the conclusion that to make an immediate impact, a focused approach was needed. Having worked across numerous major infrastructure projects with various consultant teams, IM was uniquely placed to bring partners and industry leaders together to set out tangible next steps and practical solutions to accelerate gender inclusivity.

We began with a series of informal coffee meetings in which industry leaders shared their ideas, experiences, and other suggested contacts to help shape our approach. It quickly became apparent that, although significant challenges remain, there are a range of great initiatives taking place within organisations that had previously not been shared more broadly. We subsequently worked hand in hand with partners to produce best practice case studies and held an in-depth roundtable discussion to explore what the most prevalent challenges are, and what gender diversity practices are working.

This report is a culmination of leading voices and research in the infrastructure sector. It seeks to showcase best practice in the industry and is intended to empower organisations to consider different programmes or approaches that could be implemented to drive change.

We encourage you to draw upon the learnings and practical solutions within this report to propel your organisation and our industry towards achieving gender diversity, because diversity of thought always leads to better outcomes.



Sarah Alexander
Director
Infrastructure Matters

THE VOICES OF THIS REPORT

This report wouldn't have been possible without the invaluable contributions and insights from the organisations listed on the right. We have been working closely with these partners to capture best practice and innovative solutions to gender diversity. However, this is only the start. By International Women's Day 2024, our aspiration is to broaden the conversation and engage with a wider group of organisations, diving into their ambitious plans for a diverse workforce.

AECOM

amazon

 **ARCADIS**

ARUP

ATKINS
Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

COSTAIN

COWI

HS2

ice
Institution of Civil Engineers

Jacobs

**JOHN
HOLLAND**

Meridiam
for people and the planet

M M
MOTT
MACDONALD

 **nawic**
the national association
of women in construction

**NATIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMISSION**
Better infrastructure for all

 **national
highways**
Lower Thames
Crossing

snowyhydro

 **Thames
Estuary**


Tideway

 **TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

 **Turner & Townsend**


**THE BARTLETT
SCHOOL OF SUSTAINABLE
CONSTRUCTION**

 **wes**
women's engineering society

 **WOMEN
IN TRANSPORT**

wsp

OVERVIEW

The infrastructure sector and major projects within it offer exciting work experiences and career defining opportunities. However, the representation of women in the sector remains significantly low, with only 22% occupying junior roles, 13% in mid-level positions, 9% in senior roles and a mere 2% holding CEO roles globally¹. We need collective action to attract more women into the sector and foster an environment that retains and uplifts female colleagues and empowers their career progression.

While career pathways into infrastructure are varied, it is without question that our journey to greater gender diversity starts with education. We need to break down outdated perceptions by teaching students about the breadth of roles available – and the qualifications required for successful entry – to help them envisage a profession within the infrastructure sector.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are core subjects for our rapidly evolving sector. The mindset developed through STEM learning is essential in tackling real-world problems faced within the design and delivery of major infrastructure projects. Despite a recent increase in the number of female higher education students pursuing STEM degrees, they still represent a minority, comprising only 35% of the total STEM student population in the UK².

Our journey towards greater gender diversity continues with industry and EDI specialists are striving for integrated equality, diversity and inclusion strategies to drive change from the top down, and bottom up. Some solutions are simple. For example, if we know that women are more likely to screen themselves out of opportunities at the application stage for not meeting all requirements listed on a job description, we should change the language and tone to be more inclusive and encouraging.

Leading voices in the industry have pointed to progress being made through the introduction of flexible working patterns. Most notably, accommodating job sharing, allowing adequate carers leave and understanding and cooperating with childcare hours i.e., school pickup/drop off. Others have recognised successes following a change to recruitment, including by adding unconscious bias training to the process and ensuring that everyone involved has completed an inclusion programme.

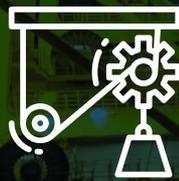
Cutting across different organisations and bringing together women from across the infrastructure sector are groups such as Women in Transport and the Women's Engineering Society. These professional networks are providing women with incredible support, guidance and resources to propel their careers. We do not want to duplicate this work, but work collaboratively with these groups and the wider industry to share best practice and valuable resources.

The leaders we've spoken to in developing this report have demonstrated their passion for gender diversity by embracing the issue and reflecting on what they can be doing better. We've had the privilege of hearing first-hand how they've improved their policies and practices that shape recruitment and workplace inclusivity, and have been introduced to the resources and support frameworks that are available through specific representative groups.

Through industry case studies and supporting resources, this report presents a range of best practice examples which show the current challenges faced in areas such as education, recruitment and workplace culture, and successful solutions that have overcome them.

References

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- 7) www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/WIWI/pwc-women-in-work-index-2022.pdf



In 2010, just over 1 in 10 (10.5%) of those working in engineering roles were women. By 2021, this rose to 16.5%.³

A study in 2018 reported that 46.4% of girls aged 11-14 considered a career in engineering, compared to 70.3% of boys. By the time they reached 16-18 years old, the percentage of girls considering engineering dropped to 25.4%, compared to 51.9% of boys.⁴

Diversity in senior management teams is correlated with approx. 30% higher future profit margins.⁵

Gender diversity improves productivity, market value and revenue when diversity is 'normatively' accepted within the company.⁶

The transition to net zero is likely to worsen the overall employment position of women relative to men across the 33 Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development countries included in PwC's Women in Work index.⁷

In the construction sector, men can expect to get nearly 6 times more of the newly created jobs than women.⁷



Parity, Awareness, Recruitment, Retention & Returners Programme (PARRR)

Arcadis is the world's leading company delivering sustainable design, engineering, digital and consultancy solutions for natural and built assets. Our 2021–2023 strategy is centred on maximising our impact by providing focus, global scale and a strengthened sustainable and digital offering to our clients and the communities where we operate.

Demonstrating Best Practice Solutions

The Arcadis PARRR Programme focuses on Gender Equity through the key workstreams of Parity, Awareness, Recruitment, Retention & Returners, each with an Executive Sponsor. It aims to increase representation of women, reducing gender pay gaps and ultimately achieving gender equity.

Our **Women in Mobility** Workstream has been created to help understand why there is a disproportionate lack of women in infrastructure. We recognise everyone has a part to play so this Workstream has ensured every leader within the Mobility business has committed to a personal action they are measured against.

Parity, Awareness, Recruitment, Retention & Returners		ARCADIS
Our Executive Sponsored Workstreams:		
	Executive Sponsor Mac Alghita	Overall accountability for delivery of PARRR Programme & workstream activities Workstream Leads Bryony Goldsmith
Recruitment & Retention	Client Engagement Leigh Jones	• Promotion of gender initiatives to increase brand, coordinated bid responses • Partner with selected clients to build a collaborative DEIB agenda Kate McLoughlin
Awareness, Recruitment, Retention & Parity	Women in Mobility Irum Malik	• Creating a network to support, nurture, develop and grow Women in Mobility • Link in with Client network for guest speakers Alex Bowley & Molly Scott
Awareness & Retention	Allyship Tim Walder	• Create a network of Allies in Mobility • Training and communications to impact behaviours and raise awareness Dan McVey
Recruitment	Recruitment Mark Crellin	• Diversify focused Senior Headhunting / Recruitment Programme • Early year recruitment through Graduates, Apprentices and Interns Ed Guerra
Recruitment & Retention	STEM Programme Emma Dickson	• Creation of a STEM Ambassador network across Mobility • Alignment of interventions and activities with Early Years Laura Macdonald
Retention & Returners	Retention Darren Cook	• Mentoring, growthday conversations, talent management, development programmes, returners, DEIB People policies Emily Clarkson

Our Mobility leaders have already committed to a personal action:

“ I will hold our leaders accountable for the pledges they have made, through quarterly updates on progress ”
Irum Malik

“ I will improve on gender diversity ratios in my team, setting targets, and I will take a new fresh look to recruitment and retention and focus on female colleagues – this will be done by having existing female colleagues taking a leading role in recruitment and interviews ”
Shakir Khaja

“ I will mentor more women ... and promote gender initiatives to increase brand and look to partner with key clients to build a collaborative DEIB agenda ”
Leigh Jones

The **Women in Mobility** network has been focusing on barriers women face within the industry. Feedback has been turned into a series of anonymous videos produced by the **Allyship** Workstream, read by male allies, designed to educate us all about behaviours and actions that can impact others. These videos are being rolled out alongside a structured Allyship Training programme.

Our **Client Engagement** Workstream is focusing on how we can work with Key Clients – Network Rail, HS2, National Highways, TfL – the wider industry and suppliers to foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for us all. We are developing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Client Engagement Toolkit, looking beyond gender to neurodiversity, ethnicity, and disability.

Our **Recruitment** Workstream is focusing on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging training and guidance for our hiring managers, ensuring a balanced interview panel and balanced candidate pool for external hires.

Our **Retention** Workstream is focusing on mentoring and reverse mentoring, proactive succession and talent management, alongside focusing on building confidence through role modelling, awards and leadership / development programmes.

We have also set up a **Mobility STEM Ambassador Network** that comes together regularly to share knowledge and showcase best practice examples, promoting the use of our UK&I Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) day, creating a wealth of resources to support diverse STEM engagement with the next generation of talent.

What were the results?

Our data shows an increase in gender balance, but more importantly we are seeing positive shifts in our culture and behaviours. We have increased involvement within our most senior leaders, bringing this issue unequivocally and consistently into the spotlight.

We have further built our community of allies and the activities this group are undertaking have accelerated a culture of understanding and empathy. We are also seeing greater connectivity in our global business on this issue, which is leading to best practice sharing and impact at a greater scale. Ultimately, we are on the journey to better outcomes because our people are telling us this.

What does the future look like?

Gender has been the primary focus of the PARRR Programme to date, but this is just the beginning. Our intersectional approach is expanding the focus rapidly across all aspects of diversity including ethnicity, age, faith, neurodiversity, disability and LGBTQIA+; with a clear goal of 'equity for all'.

We also recognise the need for industry change for the benefit of everybody. Statistics on mental health in the sector are one lens through which we see a clear need for progress. Men also require more flexible working arrangements to enable them to fulfil care commitments. In essence, a more flexible, inclusive, and diverse industry is good for everybody.

Recommendations for other organisations

We recognise that no one organisation has the perfect solution, and it is vital we learn from each other. Our three main takeaways so far are:

- Making senior leadership visible in the workstream accelerates momentum;
- Creating a culture of allyship drives empathy and focuses on behaviours;
- Honest self-reflection through open engagement is the best place to start for developing the strategy and associated workstreams.

CASE STUDY



How can Cultural Behavioural Management (CBM) be used to create psychologically safe and inclusive workplaces and promote active allyship?

Encouraging an inclusive environment through employee behaviours

Costain helps to improve people's lives by creating connected, sustainable infrastructure that enables people and the planet to thrive. We shape, create and deliver pioneering solutions that transform the performance of the infrastructure ecosystem across the UK's energy, water, transportation and defence markets.

Creating a psychologically safe workplace

"Psychological safety" is defined as: "the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking."

- Amy Edmondson, 1999

Costain has led the concept of psychological safety within Safety, Health and Environment, despite not calling it by that name. We changed the dialogue to encourage employees to speak up when unsure, to stop unsafe works, and report hazard observations after making the area safe again.

We now want to lead similar changes from an inclusion perspective. We want employees to:

- Raise non-inclusive behaviours (in the same way they would raise a safety hazard observation)
- Call out people behaving non-inclusively (in the same way they would stop works if something was unsafe)
- Not engage in non-inclusive behaviours (in the same way that they would not engage in unsafe behaviour).

How will we achieve this?

Costain is applying Cultural Behavioural Management (CBM) to create a culture where people are encouraged to speak freely, without fear and to encourage the inclusive behaviours outlined earlier.

CBM is about creating an environment through behavioural science to modify or influence behaviours. Behaviours can be influenced by antecedents (prompts for behaviour) and consequences (outcomes during or after the behaviour).

Consequences are four times more effective than antecedents and can be classified as one of each of the following pairs:

- **Reinforcing or Punishing (R/P):** The performer of the behaviour experiences a consequence which is favourable or unfavourable
- **Immediate or Later (I/L):** The person experiences the consequence immediately at the time of the behaviour, or they experience it later
- **Definite or Uncertain (D/U):** The person is definite that the consequence occurs at the time of the behaviour, or they are uncertain that it will occur.

Reinforcing, Immediate and Definite (RID) consequences are the strongest consequences to encourage or maintain a behaviour.

Punishing, Immediate and Definite (PID) consequences are the strongest consequences to encourage stopping a behaviour.

Addressing non-inclusive behaviour through allyship

An Ally is defined as *“someone who supports people who are in a minority group or who are discriminated against, even though they do not belong to that group themselves.”*

Costain’s Pillars of Allyship– listening, supporting, calling out– highlight three behaviours demonstrated by “Active Allies”, which are key to creating a psychologically safe workplace.

The three Pillars of Allyship are built on a foundation of continuous learning, such that Allies create a space where people can learn and make mistakes.

There are three interactions that Active Allies can undertake to address non-inclusive behaviour:

- 1. Calling out the discrimination at the time**
- 2. Addressing the offender later**
- 3. Supporting the victim receiving the non-inclusive behaviour**

N.B. The victim also has the ability to speak for themselves, whilst appreciating that they may experience a greater emotional load in doing so.

By creating a culture and environment where Allies are encouraged to call out non-inclusive behaviour, we aim to change the consequence of an Ally speaking up from “Later” and “Uncertain” to “Immediate” and “Definite”, as a Punishing, Immediate and Definite consequence discourages offenders from repeating the behaviour.

How can we create a safe space for allies?

Allies may not feel comfortable calling out non-inclusive behaviour based on perceived consequences, such as the offender becoming aggressive towards the Ally, not knowing if the victim wants them to intervene, or if they believe that they will not be supported by others.

We can therefore encourage Ally behaviour through two means:

1. Positive reinforcing consequences

- Actively praise people for inclusive behaviour
- Hold an EDI value moment in meetings to highlight individuals’ inclusive behaviours
- Give employees an objective about allyship, such that it is linked to their performance and financial recognition
- Demonstrate that any concerns raised about inclusion have been addressed by providing “you said, we did” feedback.

2. Visible antecedents

- Create safe spaces to discuss EDI topics where people can learn and make mistakes
- Agree a Code of Conduct which outlines behavioural expectations
- Make Allies visible through posters, lanyards and presentations.

Leaders should:

- Openly self-identify as Allies and call out non-inclusive behaviours
- Make clear that non-inclusive behaviour is not tolerated
- Not reward individuals who achieve project goals through aggressive behaviour.

Next steps: Over the next year, Costain will be applying behavioural science principles to encourage inclusive behaviours by working with Leadership and Active Allies to embed consequence as part of our culture and create an inclusive environment in the workplace.

COWI

Diverse Management Team led COWI to Record Success

COWI in the UK is a Medium-sized consultancy specialising in infrastructure and renewable energy, with nearly 600 engineering specialists, working across an international portfolio.

Gender imbalance in the UK's civil engineering sector isn't new. But times are changing, and leading UK based consultancy COWI, puts the diversity theory into practice with record-breaking results.

Women in leadership

In early 2020, COWI in the UK made a significant change to the diversity of its senior team. Through a detailed restructure, two unique women were promoted, based on merit, into leadership roles – Eva MacInnes, Vice President Operations, and Joanna Bonnett, Vice President for Technical Oversight. They were made jointly responsible for the operation of the business. With the existing senior team recognising that change and diversity of thought makes business sense, the result was a refreshed business culture. The shift in the senior team's approach was supported and normalised, with senior male allies aplenty.

With more diverse thought leadership, the business started to change. An improved internal structure, streamlined processes and changes to policies were driven forward at pace. Examples included:

- A refreshed flexible working policy to attract and retain those with caring responsibilities and a new mum also demonstrated that part-time leadership roles can work.
- A new promotions policy was adopted, removing unconscious bias from decision makers and incorporating inclusive behaviours as key requirements.

- Changes were made not only to maternity but also paternity policies, thus recognising the important role fathers play in the home.
- An improved, diverse, approach to recruitment through the use of language, diverse panels and advertising in new places was deployed to reach those from diverse communities and backgrounds.
- Open conversations around the menopause, IVF, neurodiversity, disabilities and much more enabled the business to become aware of potential barriers to the wellbeing and development of the team and allowed better support and barrier removal to take place.
- Changes to business processes were also adopted, with a renewed focus on quality, project performance and contract management.

Outcomes

Since the change in the leadership team, COWI in the UK has reported record growth, turnover and profit figures. Turnover has increased by around 30% year on year, with a 46% (and growing) increase in team size, whilst profit margins have doubled over the same period. Despite the pandemic and a change in pace of the engineering recruitment market, engagement surveys show the team are still highly engaged. This is echoed by our customers who responded with a Net Promoter Score of 100 for Q4 in 2022. Our projects are more gender balanced, with our role on the Lower Thames Crossing project for National Highways split 60% women to 40% men. Our 2023 graduate recruitment is also almost 50/50 male/female based on the approach of the best person for the job.



Challenges

Of course, to have achieved such a high performing business was no easy feat and in the creation of this ever-improving diverse team we faced many challenges. Despite committees and communities of diverse groups improving the business and therefore engagement and retention, we are aware there will likely still be some negative views that will need time and education to change. As an industry we still face the challenge of attracting more females and those from other minority groups into the sector. The government's Gender Pay Gap reporting doesn't provide comfort to females and may even be seen as a deterrent and is a risk to the retention of women in the sector. The crude calculation method does not take account of the skillset, level or experience of each team member, and is driven by the number of men/women in a business. In an industry with few women, most organisations will show a less than favourable result. Despite clear communication on this to the team, it is likely not enough and would require a government review of the calculation method to provide more meaningful results.

Next steps

So, what does the future hold for COWI? We very much believe that if we can crack the gender code, other diversity-related challenges will be easier to resolve. We have set ourselves a target of having 40% of our senior team being female across the wider international COWI group by 2030. In addition, we see huge benefit in adopting focus groups and creating bespoke development plans for female high performers and for those in minority groups who may face unique barriers. The final missing piece of our plan is to provide more education to the evolving leadership team, and with the support of leading behavioural psychologists, we feel confident that our diversity success will continue and would encourage other organisations to benefit from our learning and diversify their team.

Jacobs

TogetherBeyond Approach

Jacobs solves the world's most critical problems for thriving cities, resilient environments, mission-critical outcomes, operational advancement, scientific discovery and cutting-edge manufacturing, turning abstract ideas into realities that transform the world for good. With a talent force of approximately 60,000 globally and 10,000 in the UK, we provide a full spectrum of professional services including consulting, technical, scientific and project delivery for the government and private sector.

At Jacobs, we live by four core values that drive our success: **'We do things right. We challenge the accepted. We aim higher. We live inclusion.'** At Jacobs, inclusion is a non-negotiable expectation that is embedded into every part of our company and powers our company promise: 'Challenging today. Reinventing tomorrow.'

We understand the value that having an inclusive, diverse talent pool brings to an organisation: innovation, attraction and a sense of belonging.

We call our approach **TogetherBeyondSM**. It results in a workplace where our differences are accepted, celebrated and harnessed to bring the innovative, extraordinary solutions clients demand from us. For us, this means creating a culture where inclusion is about tangible action that drives meaningful, measurable change in our company and the communities we serve.

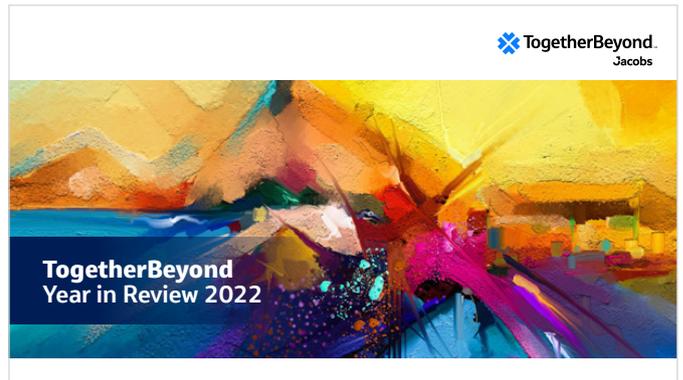
In 2022, we set a 40:40:20 gender balance aspirational goal (40% female, 40% male and 20% any gender) that emphasises support and professional development for women. We also extended this commitment in our new, industry-

leading Sustainability-Linked Bond Framework, where the interest rates payable on the bonds are tied to Jacobs' commitment to increase gender diversity in leadership positions. In 2020, we also launched our Action Plan for Advancing Justice & Equality.

These commitments are driven from the top. Our Senior Leadership Team sign a Leadership Commitment Statement annually and all People Leaders have at least one related objective as part of their annual performance priorities, with remuneration increases tied to promoting and living inclusion daily. Inclusion is also part of our quarterly CEO Leadership Roundtable sessions and Business Reviews. All Business Units have cascaded annual goals which are scientifically modelled to be stretching and realistic. The message is clear: our inclusion and diversity (I&D) performance is just as important as our financial performance.

We conduct periodic culture pulse surveys which include detailed I&D questions and responses are analysed by I&D metrics. We have also used the Global Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Benchmark to review our performance and have carried out focus groups.

All colleagues are required to complete Conscious Inclusion and Ally & Advocate training, and inclusion is embedded in leadership and management training programmes. We also provide 'just-in-time' learning and checkpoints at key points throughout our people processes, such as pay and promotion equity reviews, to ensure they deliver fair, inclusive and equitable outcomes.



We have transformed every stage of our talent acquisition process, including working with partners to ensure we reach a wider candidate base, including STEM returners and ambassador programmes; ensuring our adverts are inclusive and actively promoting flexibility; rolling out inclusive hiring training, and creating focused hiring teams to maximise conversion rates; and using inclusive interview templates and diverse interview panels.

Our top-down commitment is amplified by a huge grassroots-level drive. We have eight Jacobs Employee Networks (including our Women's Network) with a unique network membership of nearly 18,000 people. We take great pride in creating an environment that enables people to thrive, including flexible working, a Bridge the Gap programme for returning-to-work parents that offers structured workshops, manager toolkits, coaching and awareness campaigns, and a framework built to support employees at every life stage, including menopause.

We're delivering bespoke programmes to accelerate the progression of female talent – particularly from diverse backgrounds – into executive leadership, such as Black LeadHERship and Women Empowering and Supporting Each Other (WISE).

Results

Jacobs is among *The Times* Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality 2023 and ranked No. 6 in Stonewall's UK Workplace Equality Index Top 100 Employers for LGBTQIA+ People, earning Stonewall's Gold Award, ranking No.1 in Construction, Engineering and Property. Within the UK business, female representation is increasing (1.1% uplift last year), and our gender pay gap is decreasing (1.7% reduction last reporting cycle) year-on-year. The average gender pay gap has reduced for a fourth consecutive year (down from 26% in 2017 to 18.1% in 2022) alongside a reduction in our ethnicity gap since we started to report in 2020 (down from 10.3% in 2020 to 9.7% in 2022).

Globally, our Executive Leadership Team has a gender balance percentage of 44% female, our Senior Leadership Team 32% female and our Board of Directors 27% female. We have met our goal to materially increase diverse and disadvantaged suppliers in our supply chain, now at 40% compared to an industry average goal of 20%.

We have also scaled up our approach to mentoring – it's now available to all colleagues via our learning platform. The introduction of Agile Careers and Career Partners is supporting talent mobility and progression – especially among women – as 61% of the colleagues supported to make a professional move were female.

Please visit the
TogetherBeyond Year in Review 2022



CASE STUDY



Tideway is the company behind London's new 'super sewer' – a 25-km long tunnel that will deliver long-term environmental benefit and clean up the River Thames by intercepting millions of tonnes of sewage overflows. With women making up around 15 per cent of the construction workforce (nine per cent when the project first started), Tideway wanted to proactively address this imbalance to benefit the project and leave a longer-term legacy.

CEO Andy Mitchell set the tone with a statement of intent that included an ambitious target to achieve 'gender parity' for the 450-person strong organisation.

Tideway has since established several initiatives, all intended to hone an inclusive culture for everyone and one which would help to attract and, crucially, retain women.

Culture and retention

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Roll out of specially designed PPE for women, including maternity PPE and PPE for women who observe the hijab and burka.
- **Welfare facilities** – Provision of equal and high-quality facilities for everyone.
- **Expert partnerships** – E.g., supported Women into Construction's (WIC) 'Moving on Up' Programme to increase the number of women working in construction and address the gender pay gap.
- **Flexible working policies** – Provision of daily 'time-away' for wellbeing, five days volunteering leave and carers leave (available to everyone but recognising women are more likely to have caring responsibilities).
- **Bespoke development and mentoring** – Structured consideration of women in succession planning, mentoring and reverse mentoring.

- **Women's health** – Signatory to the Menopause Workplace Pledge with work underway to review internal guidance on menstruation, menstrual health, and menopause at work.

Education

- **Discussion guides and education resources** – Tools to steer open team conversations about inclusion issues and a dedicated space on the intranet for support resources, i.e., on menopause.
- **Multi-media** – Providing a range of options for people to learn or get involved, including podcasts, lunch and learn sessions and through the company's weekly newsletter, Tideway Talk.
- **Network groups** – Executive sponsorship of network groups under Tideway's 'Encompass' umbrella to offer support, promote awareness and educate the wider business. The networks have also been effective in fostering allyship.
- **STEM** – Engagement with more than 98,000 young people; with some programmes setting specific targets around engagement with young women and girls. An independent assessment found that the STEM programme has delivered £8m of social value.

Recruitment and reporting

- **Targeted recruitment** – Identification of recruitment sites that have higher women and minority audiences, redacted CVs to reduce risks of unconscious bias.
- **Returners' programme** – Tideway was the first company outside the banking sector to establish a Returners' Programme, offering 12-week paid work placements in a range of roles. Whilst not exclusively for women, the programme was designed to support people who had taken time out of the workforce. It offered bespoke support, flexibility and a new network for people looking to develop their careers. It also offered Tideway access to a strong new talent pool.



- **Reporting** – Despite falling below the legal requirement to do so, Tideway reports on gender and ethnicity pay gaps. The gender parity target is also a core performance indicator, tracked quarterly through the performance management system.

Outcomes

The approach to gender inclusivity is set in a wider context of providing an inclusive culture for everyone, recognising intersectionality, and showing respect for every individual. **Julie Thornton**, Tideway’s HR Director commented: *“We are proud of what we have achieved so far not just for Tideway but for inspiring the next generation. Our approach has been about fostering an inclusive culture for everyone and being a company where people want to stay and can thrive.”*

Select outcomes and testimonials are included below.

- **2023 engagement survey** – More than 94% of staff agreed they are treated with respect as an individual (a four per cent improvement on the previous year and against an industry norm of 79% – as of 2019).
- **Industry recognition** – In 2019 Tideway was named WIC’s ‘Most Engaged Client’. WIC’s Tideway supported Moving on Up Programme engaged more than 300 women with 41 completing placements and 37 securing jobs. In 2018, Tideway was listed as one of the Times Top 50 Employers for Women.

- **Returners programme** – Tideway offered three rounds of placements with 12 women eventually placed in permanent roles. Rachel Tomkins became a full-time Change Manager after her returner placement in 2016 and is now Tideway’s Head of Assurance, Security and Facilities. **Rachel** said: *“I served as a Royal Engineer in the British Army before spending nine years at home raising three boys. I was convinced that with my background, restarting my career once they were all at school, would not be an issue, but when I started looking for roles it was clear that CV gaps are generally not viewed favourably. It was so refreshing to find that Tideway were offering a returnship programme where experience gained whilst on a career break was truly valued and appreciated. The support to return to full-time work and balance family life has been fantastic and I hope other companies follow suit when it comes to recruiting in the future.”*
- **Progress on gender parity** – Today 36% of our people are women with two years left on the programme.

Recommendations

- Set a clear intent from the top with concrete actions to back it up.
- Be aspirational with clear and ambitious targets.
- Appreciate that it is a continuous process, be proactive with learnings and keep an open mind to trying new things.

CASE STUDY



Increasing gender diversity

The Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction (BSSC) at UCL is a world-class construction school leading on evidence-based research to address some of the most pressing challenges for sustainable construction. At the BSSC, we advocate for a sustainable future for the construction industry, which includes proactively addressing gender diversity in construction programmes across the higher education sector in the UK. One key challenge facing the UK construction industry is the need for a sustainable skills pipeline. Tackling gender diversity in construction and engineering degrees is central to this, as data showed that only 18% of students identified as female (HESA, 2019). This impacts the future pipeline of talent in the construction industry.

Increasing gender diversity

The BSSC's approach to increasing gender diversity is threefold: 1) developing an inclusive curriculum; 2) targeting the recruitment gap, particularly at the postgraduate level; and 3) conducting impactful research that tackles some of the persistent challenges related to the inclusive design of the places we live, work, socialise and move through.

Project 1: Through our innovative 'inclusive curriculum health check', we aim to improve the experience, skills, and attainment of all students by ensuring that they can participate fully and achieve at equal rates, regardless of background. We encourage all our academics to diversify their case examples, reflect on who they invite as guest speakers, include global and diverse case studies, and provide diverse role models. In this way, we actively challenge the perception that construction-related programmes are not as inclusive as they could be.

Project 2: We aim to increase gender diversity among our students, particularly at the postgraduate level. Data shows that a postgraduate qualification is useful in many engineering roles, particularly at the senior level. At the BSSC, we have launched a new MBA programme in Major Infrastructure Delivery to offer mid-career professionals who wish to move into leadership roles the opportunity to gain the requisite skills. In 2023, we created two scholarships for women: the BSSC Scholarship and the Julia Prescott Scholarship. This led to an increase in applications both overall and from women. For organisations that partner with us, the programme has drawn attention to the importance of positive action. Coupled with the mentorship opportunities offered to MBA students by our advisory board members, our approach has the potential to make a positive difference.

Project 3: At the BSSC, our world-leading research transforms the development and delivery of infrastructure futures to offer more equitable opportunities for living, working, socialising, and moving around in the built environment. Our research has a demonstrable impact both in the UK and internationally, transforming our understanding of how to account for different genders' specific experiences and challenges in their everyday reliance on infrastructure. With international partners and local communities, our academics develop innovative approaches to reduce the intersectional burdens women have traditionally been at the forefront of, diversifying voices in planning, design decisions and project delivery to address safety, discrimination, and exclusion issues.



Why did this solution work well?

UCL was the first British university to admit women on fully equal terms to men and is committed to positive action for and with students and staff to remove barriers to more equitable futures. In 2023, UCL reaffirmed its commitment to the aims and principles of Athena Swan under the [Transformed Athena Swan Charter](#), joining a global community with a shared goal of addressing gender inequalities and embedding inclusive cultures. Our institutional commitment to gender equality translates into organisational processes, procedures, and how we approach our world-leading research. Our integrated approach is important because it targets some of the key barriers associated with societal beliefs, culture, and public perception about pathways into construction leadership that may affect the aspirations of students.

What does the future look like?

At the BSSC, we plan to leverage our partnerships with industry, professional associations, and institutions to jointly innovate in developing inclusive educational programmes, target under-representation in student cohort composition, and collaborate to enhance gender diversity in progression, including opportunities for mentorship and sponsorship.

In the future, the BSSC has the ambition to increase the number of scholarships for women across its different programmes of study and to make a positive difference through inclusive curriculum development. With a scholarship scheme, we would like to create a group of diverse leaders who can be change agents in the industry.

Recommendations

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) play a key role in developing the future skilled workforce for industry. Thus, initiatives around diversity will need to start with HEIs and will require collaboration with industry centred around curriculum development to address skills gaps and positive action for diversity to address EDI challenges. HEIs have the unique opportunity to co-create pathways for gender diversity in the construction industry through inclusive curriculum design, providing exposure to role models and collaboration with committed industry partners.

References
• Women's Engineering Society (2023) Statistics of women in engineering in the UK. Accessed online: <https://www.wes.org.uk/about/what-we-do/resources/statistics/>
• HESA. (2019). Student record 2018/19 - data collection schedule | HESA. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18051/timescales>

CASE STUDIES

AECOM | Inclusive Leadership campaign

AECOM has successfully delivered an Inclusive Leadership campaign for their top 250 leaders. This campaign was part of a wider piece to increase leadership's capability around Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) and contributed to AECOM achieving their first ever ED&I accreditation, building confidence both internally and externally. AECOM heavily invested in their leaders to allow them the time and space to develop ED&I as a key skill.

Bespoke training

Key to successful delivery of the campaign was a collaborative approach whereby AECOM worked alongside ED&I Consultancy, the Clear Company, to design a two-day training session which was delivered to 250 leaders across Europe. Creating a safe space where leaders felt comfortable and could be vulnerable, the session made use of:

- Break out groups, which helped to ensure a diverse mix of leaders across the region of Europe and India
- A range of case studies based on real life scenarios, coupled with data and evidence to appeal to the audience
- A self-assessment questionnaire which was completed before the training session and again afterwards to measure progress.

Inclusive Leadership Goals and reverse mentoring

To build upon the training undertaken, AECOM introduced:

- New Inclusive Leadership Goals where each leader was asked to commit to an ED&I goal, which is tracked by their ED&I SteerCo
- The introduction of senior ED&I ambassadors across business lines and geographies to ensure local accountability for delivery
- Reverse mentoring, where leaders are mentored over a nine-month period, by employees from diverse backgrounds and under-represented groups to learn about the organisation from a different perspective and identify actions to make AECOM more inclusive.

amazon | Amazon Term-Time Contracts

Amazon has launched an innovative new contract that offers parents, grandparents and guardians of school-age children the choice to work term-time only.

The new contracts guarantee time off for the six-week summer break, as well as the two-week Easter and Christmas holiday periods, without affecting the comprehensive range of benefits they receive, including private medical insurance and life assurance.

The contracts, aimed at better supporting family needs, were successfully trialed at three sites following employee feedback, and are now being phased in for employees across all of Amazon's fulfilment centres – the places where Amazon stores, picks and packs items for sale. They will be rolled out to sort centres and delivery stations across the UK later this year.

Amazon also announced a new flexible part-time contract for a minimum of 80 hours a month which lets employees pick and mix the shifts which suit their needs; part-day or full-day, day or night, weekday or weekend. The contract will support people who are unable to find work due to family or other commitments that require flexibility, helping them to return to the workplace. As with all roles at Amazon, a current employee could refer a friend or family member to this option, which could also provide similar flexibility to a partner at home.





Memorandum of Understanding

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) has joined institutes across the built environment in committing to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive sector.

In signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) it has promised better collaboration across a number of areas with the following institutes:

- The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- The Landscape Institute
- The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- The Royal Planning Institute (RTPI).

As part of the MoU, the institutes have agreed minimum standards and competencies in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Together, the institutes represent over 350,000 people in the sector.

The organisations have identified three key areas of work:

- Standardise member data collection
- Improve understanding of the transition from education into employment
- Set and support EDI competencies for the sector.



Women in Leadership Programme

In April 2023, Australia's leading renewable energy company and retailer, Snowy Hydro, launched **Rise: Women in Leadership Programme**, to champion and develop their talented women leaders.

The 10-month programme is being delivered in partnership with leadership specialist organisation, McCarthy Mentoring. Designed to help strengthen leadership capability in a complex environment, it will develop and accelerate senior women across the business.

The programme aims to bring senior women together to:

- Build self-awareness
- Engage in one-on-one mentoring with carefully chosen executives
- Attend skills-based group workshops
- Gain access to executive leaders through 'Fireside Chats'
- Be challenged and empowered to effectively lead themselves and others
- Improve leadership by providing leadership assessments and development resources
- Encourage "enforcing the time and space" necessary to focus on development.

It will be delivered in a mixed virtual and in-person format, giving each participant the opportunity to test ideas, strengthen skills, build relationships and think strategically.

Outcomes

Participants have already reported that "it's been really great to have a cohort of females at similar levels come together to connect with" and that they have developed "a much better understanding of the Snowy business". Over 75% of participants strongly agreed that the programme has resulted in them feeling motivated in their own professional development and more connected to other leaders.



Infrastructure and the need for better diversity

Rachel Skinner is a leader in the infrastructure sector, featuring as one of the Daily Telegraph's Top 50 Influential Women in Engineering in 2016 and both the Best Woman Civil Engineer and the Most Distinguished Winner at the European Women in Construction and Engineering Awards in 2017.

In 2005, she helped set up the Women in Transport (formerly Women's Transportation Seminar) network in London and is now one of its Patrons. In 2020, Rachel became the youngest ever president of the Institution of Civil Engineers and was appointed CBE for services to infrastructure in 2022. She is also passionate about encouraging schoolgirls to take up STEM subjects.

In this thought piece, she provides her perspective on industry diversity.

Women in infrastructure. Women in engineering. Women in the built environment. Women in construction. Women in transport. Women in energy. Women in.....

"Not this topic again - surely?"

This subject will keep on coming around until we figure out how to make real change. So far we've done great things but somehow the outcomes for industry diversity aren't shifting and the issues remain.

"Convince me. Why does it matter?"

It matters because in infrastructure, diverse teams deliver differently. And by differently, we mean better.

"What do you mean? Better for my employer? My business? Prove it."

There's more than a decade of evidence proving diversity is good for business. A more diverse industry, business or team – not just in gender, but across the true range of physical, neurological and social characteristics – is better for decision-making, innovation, profitability and impact, and is all-round better for society.

The reasons are simple; diverse teams see more perspectives and so identify a wider range of risks and opportunities.

"I work in infrastructure. Why is this relevant?"

The people involved in shaping our environments add more value if they understand the needs of real people who will actually use – and therefore benefit from – a particular investment or change.

"But I'm good at empathy. I can put myself in the shoes of others."

It's no good thinking you can put yourself fully in the position of multiple others. I know how it feels to be me. You know how it feels to be you. Everyone's viewpoint is valid, but unless multiple views are represented, a conversation will miss major issues, let alone subtle distinctions, options and opportunities.

"My team doesn't look diverse but we're really diverse thinkers."

If you are surrounded by people of a similar appearance, with similar backgrounds, career paths and technical knowledge, your joint thoughts cannot represent the genuine diversity of needs, opinions and wants in communities. Even those blessed with fantastic levels of empathy cannot truly experience the shoes worn by others.

CASE STUDY

With a serious lack of gender balance, it is no surprise that some project teams are all male. Team members with a more diverse viewpoint often find their views are not heard or acted upon. This holds us back.

“That isn’t an issue in the real world. It’s certainly never happened to me”. Or worse “Stop being such a woke snowflake”.

The fact you have not experienced something does not make others’ experiences less real or important.

The crime here isn’t anyone’s failure to experience a specific issue related to infrastructure. It’s when we dismiss an issue because it doesn’t match our experience, or when we don’t recognise the need to engage a wider diversity of people. Who knows what social, environmental or economic value is lost when these issues remain invisible?

The key is to recognise these issues are hard to change but to act anyway, putting energy and new ideas into finding solutions. This means two things: first, for more people to recognise that a lack of diversity is a serious problem and second, to help more people see the value in helping to address this, for communities of infrastructure professionals and for society at large.

Unless and until this happens, our infrastructure and investments will always fall short of their potential value, which in turn limits their use and/or revenues, their potential to improve social equity, to reduce carbon, to build resilience, to change behaviours and more.

This is why industry diversity must stay high on the agenda and why it really does matter.



Rachel Skinner CBE
Executive Director,
Responsible Business
(ESG) and Govt
Relations at WSP

Increasing representation through inclusive recruitment

Approach: To address the skills gap and widen our pool of candidates, in 2022 WSP refreshed its approach to recruitment. We revisited our recruitment advertisements, simplifying content, gender de-coding language and including information that will directly resonate with our audience. Our new templates save our hiring managers time, as they provide clear direction of how to advertise their role, and provide consistency in messaging across all areas of our business that are hiring.

In addition, we partner with organisations that have a strong commitment to women in the workplace. We have increased our presence with Where Women Work, a digital platform that showcases female talent from prime organisations. It enables candidates to find out how we value and support our women employees and enables them to hear from our colleagues about their role, what they do and how they are supported by WSP.

The result: Compared to 2021, in 2022 we saw a 20% increase in female applicants, 14% increase in offers and 6% increase in accepted offers.

An additional benefit is that we now see more candidates come direct to us for recruitment opportunities, which gives our recruitment team more time to focus on proactive targeted recruitment.

As a Disability Confident Leader we also guarantee interviews for disabled applicants that meet our minimum criteria.

Next steps: Looking ahead, to further eliminate barriers across the recruitment lifecycle for under-represented applicants, we have procured Clear Company’s Clear Learning package which spans the recruitment lifecycle. From 2023, all hiring managers are required to complete the modules before interviewing.



WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE GROUP RESOURCES

We could not have written this report without acknowledging the incredible efforts of our women's representative groups. Women from across the sector have taken proactive measures to create supportive spaces and advocate for best practice across the industry. These groups offer valuable resources to enhance recruitment and retention across industry as well as networking opportunities to counteract the feelings of solitude that lack of diversity and bias often illicit.

Although there are a number of remarkable groups making significant contributions in this area, we would like to acknowledge the exceptional work and resources provided by the Women's Engineering Society and Women in Transport who we've been engaging closely with.



Women in Transport

Women in Transport is a UK, nonprofit membership network with a mission to support the professional development of women working in transport. It represents all women working in transport and works hard to tell their stories across its platforms including a podcast.

Open to everyone, all members benefit from events, networking, and volunteering opportunities. Women members also benefit from the Advance mentoring and the Lead leadership development programmes.

Women in Transport has been Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Women in Transport since 2016 and established the Women in Transport D&I Bus Group in 2019. The Inclusive Employment Journey was launched by the group in 2022, in partnership with the Confederation of Passenger Transport to provide an open platform to share best practice.

In July 2023, the Women in Transport Equity Index will launch in partnership with WORK180 to provide cross sectoral benchmarking data and identify best practice across transport on gender diversity.

www.womenintransport.com



Women's Engineering Society

The Women's Engineering Society (WES) is a membership organisation founded in 1919. Its mission is to support women in engineering to fulfil their potential and to support the engineering industry to be inclusive.

WES supports women in engineering at all stages of their career with skills and professional development through webinars, mentoring and highlighting opportunities on the WES Jobs Board.

WES works with businesses and institutions to attract and retain women in engineering by providing access to a network of talent for recruitment and raising business profiles through EDI collaboration.

WES takes an active role in shaping the engineering gender diversity debate in industry and with government via The Woman Engineer journal, collaborating in EDI research, and developing campaigns to build a diverse engineering community.

The flagship WES campaign, International Women in Engineering Day (INWED), is held on 23 June each year. INWED raises the profile of women in engineering and focuses attention on the wide range of career opportunities in the industry. In conjunction with INWED, WES also organises the Top 50 Women in Engineering (WE50) awards to celebrate women engineers who have demonstrated exceptional technical skills and also supported other women in engineering as well as promoting sustainability.

www.wes.org.uk / www.inwed.org.uk

THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS

This report wouldn't have been possible without the organisations and leading voices who have generously given up their time to join the conversation and contribute to the development of best practice case studies. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this report, and supported our Women in Infrastructure work so far.

This is only the start. Moving forward, we hope to hear from a wider range of organisations from within the industry,

to learn about their ambitions for greater gender diversity. We extend an open invitation to reach out and share your experiences with us.

We encourage everyone reading this report to draw upon the learnings and practical solutions. Together, we have the power to drive meaningful change. By the time International Women's Day arrives next year, our aspiration is to witness and acknowledge the progress that has been made.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Sarah Alexander
Director

Sarah is a stakeholder engagement and communications specialist with more than 14 years' experience in infrastructure and corporate communications. She has worked on some of the UK and Australia's largest infrastructure projects, including National Highways' Lower Thames Crossing, and the Metro Tunnel Project in Melbourne.

Sarah's experience includes developing and implementing communications and engagement strategies for major projects, focusing on building advocacy with influential stakeholders, notably with MPs and business stakeholders for the Lower Thames Crossing Project. Prior to moving to the UK, Sarah worked at the Department of Transport in Victoria, Australia, where she developed communications strategies for new transport projects and worked closely with the Minister for Transport.



Bronte Clark
Account Director

Bronte is a highly skilled specialist in stakeholder engagement with diverse experience in the successful delivery of major infrastructure projects for both the private and public sectors. Using her expertise and experience, Bronte has been leading business advocacy for National Highways' Lower Thames Crossing Project, garnering key support resulting in a successful submission and acceptance of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the examination stage.

Prior to joining Infrastructure Matters, Bronte worked on a major tunnelling project in Melbourne where she gained extensive knowledge in building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and community members in particularly sensitive areas.

ABOUT INFRASTRUCTURE MATTERS

Infrastructure Matters is a **consulting business** that provides strategic advice and support to projects in the infrastructure, energy and property sectors. Our team of trusted advisers develop strategies that help to unlock projects across the UK.

We play a defining role in transformational projects and deliver great outcomes by:

- ✓ Engaging key stakeholders to build advocacy for projects
- ✓ Navigating complex environments and bringing clarity to political challenges
- ✓ Working with our clients to find smart solutions and make the complex simple
- ✓ Anticipating and managing stakeholder risks
- ✓ Putting relationships at the heart of everything we do



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Contact



enquiries@infrastructure-matters.co.uk



0203 576 1413



infrastructure-matters.co.uk

