NetworkRail

Everyone Belongs

Equity, diversity and inclusion strategy

2024–2029

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Everyone Belongs

A warm welcome

Everyone Belongs sets out our direction for our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy for the next five years. This strategy puts our colleagues at the centre of the change – empowering our people to bring their whole selves to work, everyday.

Throughout the past five years, we have made progress to becoming a more diverse workplace. Since 2019, we have seen a 20 per cent increase in the number of women in management and leadership roles, and there has also been a 20 per cent increase in the number of black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues in our business.

We've also rolled out resources to support colleagues in having conversations on areas such as neurodiversity, baby loss and fertility, cultural celebrations and on being a carer.

Of course, while progress is great – I am the first to accept that Network Rail has some distance to go before our makeup truly reflects the communities which we serve. Becoming a more inclusive workplace is good for business and our communities. It will fuel greater empathy of what our passengers and customers need and make us better at attracting and retaining talent.

Rail has an exciting future. Our industry is growing and, as the greenest form of mass public transport, our people will play a critical role in a future decarbonised society. Our EDI strategy is one part of signalling how we'll bring colleagues on that future journey. Showcasing the steps we'll take to empower everyone to reach their full potential as we collectively work to make a simpler, better and greener railway for Britain.

**Andrew Haines,
Chief Executive**

Introduction

Britain's railway is key to the success of the UK economy, connecting people across the country to jobs, goods, leisure and markets. Our plan for a simpler, better, greener railway puts us on the side of passengers and freight, and focuses on leading the way in the industry, being a dependable partner and a company people are proud to work for.

We are a public sector arm's length body of the Department for Transport (DfT). We own, run, maintain and develop the railway infrastructure in England, Scotland and Wales, which includes 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges, tunnels and viaducts and thousands of signals, level crossings and stations.

We manage 20 of the country's largest stations, while all the rest – over 2,500 – are run by train operating companies. We work in five regions across the country, with those regions running over 14 routes. These are supported by network-wide functions like Route Services, Communications and Group HR, multiskilled business units which can make decisions in the interests of customers at a local level.

At Network Rail, **our purpose** is to connect people and goods with where they need to be. We can't achieve this without the outstanding efforts of our people and teams.

In order for us to build a simpler, better, greener railway we need the right culture. This requires everyone to be committed to the same attitudes and behaviours and reflect these in all that we do.

Introduction

Having diverse, inclusive teams supports a safer, more reliable railway and better service delivery, by bringing together talent, different perspectives and ideas including views which are representative of our communities.

Our EDI vision connects like a puzzle piece with our wider vision and values. We will become a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organisation – where we support our colleagues with what they need in order to thrive and attract and retain the best people to help us run a safe, accessible railway for everyone.

EDI isn't just about Network Rail, but the wider industry and how we play part in society. We continually support growth and progress, both in our industry and beyond. We do this by working with our people and industry partners to challenge less inclusive mindsets and shift from target-driven EDI activities to **consciously inclusive** behaviour. This fits perfectly with where we're going, as well as our other goals, and will deliver our vision in a way that is continuous.

Our values are the glue that bind us together as an organisation, guiding how we act, and the choices we make. Our four values support our EDI vision, and these will help us on the journey to creating a place where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Our values

Empowered to ACT
We're empowered to do the right thing for those who use the rail network. It's about removing barriers and ensuring that we have what we need to be able to act, when and where it's required.

Always Safe
Safety is not negotiable. With clear accountabilities we must challenge ourselves and our colleagues every time we witness unsafe behaviour.

Care about people
Respect, kindness and empathy are all part of treating others the way we wish to be treated. It's simply about asking ourselves 'how can we better care for the passengers that we serve every day?'.

Teamwork is key
It's about mutual support, no matter what. We pull together as one rail industry, with the needs of passengers and freight users at the heart of what we do.

Progress overview

As we look towards the next five years with our new EDI focus areas, let's reflect on some of our achievements since we launched our 2019 Everyone Matters strategy.

Our bold targets painted a clear picture of what success would look like. Since then, we've been on the side of passengers and freight users, seen as efficient, dependable and a company people are proud to work for.

We also faced unprecedented challenges with the global pandemic which affected recruitment – having a lasting impact on our diversity targets. The move to hybrid working led to reduced passenger numbers and income, and the cost-of-living crisis compounded this.

Initiatives

Training and awareness

Education is a key piece of the EDI puzzle, and in Control Period 6 (CP6) 2019-2024 we started EDI-specific investment in training and upskilling across our workforce, including management and leadership training.

Bespoke talent programmes and mentoring schemes such as Activate your Potential and Realise your Potential for underrepresented groups have been introduced, giving colleagues tailored training to help nurture their career with Network Rail and the industry.

We've also worked on educating and offering guidance for managers and support for our people, which has built a better work environment. Examples include:
- Returners programmes
- Increased support for carers
- Guidance on how to support anyone fasting during Ramadan
- Guides on baby loss and fertility treatment
- Guides and resources on menopause
- Work to understand social economic backgrounds and progression training
- Allies help spread understanding of inclusion throughout the organisation, using a toolkit created by our Cultural Fusion network
- Neurodiversity awareness.

Demonstrating inclusion with performance management

To help sow the seeds of cultural change, we introduced EDI performance objectives during our previous strategy. Inclusive performance objectives were introduced in March 2023, and these have been adopted by our Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

and will be introduced through the organisation in Control Period 7 (CP7) 2024-2029. Our ELT performance plans now include an objective to "actively role model equity, diversity, and inclusivity through leadership with a zero tolerance to non-inclusive behaviours".

"I have gained the confidence to put myself forward for roles and opportunities that align with my aspirations.

The programme also helped me gain a network of support that has helped me find opportunities as well as support me through my career journey"

Network Rail colleague

Initiatives

Engagement

Your Voice and our other surveys are an important tool for our people to tell us how they are feeling. This is closely linked with inclusion.

We're proud of our progress to make our working environment more inclusive for our people and passengers. While we've become a more diverse organisation, we know we have more to do to build a truly inclusive workplace. Inclusion is not a one-and-done – it's an ongoing evolution of everything we do for our people. But our progress on inclusion has not always kept pace with where it should be, which means we haven't yet realised the full benefits that we know increasing diversity can bring.

We are now focusing harder on inclusion and equity to benefit all our people, our industry and our passengers. Equity is about creating a level playing field for everyone, regardless of backgrounds and circumstances. It helps our people to have access to the same opportunities and resources so they can thrive at work. By focusing on equity, we all receive what we need to achieve the same as anyone else.

It's everyone's responsibility to fulfil and achieve this – and our small personal inputs add up collectively to a huge positive change – fulfilling our vision of an organisation where everyone belongs.

Pay gap reporting

We continue to publish our gender pay gap and focus on making progress in this area. We now also voluntarily publish ethnicity and disability pay gap reports to improve in these areas too. This has been industry leading and shows our commitment to being open about our successes and challenges, and our drive to close the gaps overtime.

View our pay gap reports online:
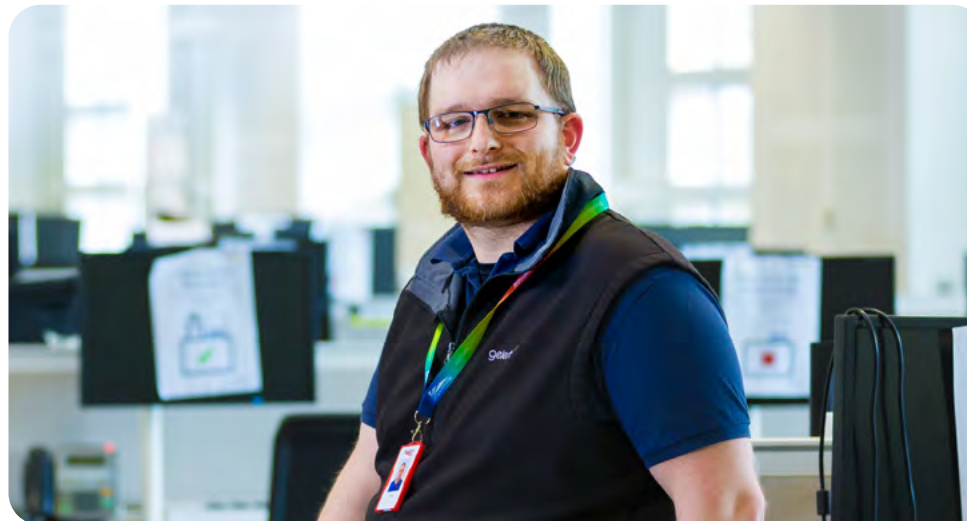
Progress in numbers

Despite times being tough, we continued our journey to be more open, diverse and inclusive. We started to help everyone understand the concept of systemic inclusion[2], and set the groundwork to create it.

We have made strides in the diversity of our workforce at all levels. Having greater diversity across our managers helps us to make more inclusive decisions, provides role models to our new colleagues, and helps us reduce our pay gaps over time.

As well as recruitment targets, we changed our exit survey in 2023 to better understand people's voluntary reasons for leaving, particularly where inclusion comes into the decision.

Gender diversity:

17.4% 2019 — **18.5% INCREASE** → 20.62% 2024

Women in management and leadership roles:

27.11% 2019 — **20.4% INCREASE** → 32.64% 2024

Colleagues sharing their sexual orientation data:

16.2% 2019 — **93.4% INCREASE** → 31.33% 2024

Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues:

8.56% 2019 — **20.2% INCREASE** → 10.29% 2024

Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues in management and leadership roles:

10.53% 2019 — **15.9% INCREASE** → 12.21% 2024

Colleagues sharing their disability data:

45.1% 2019 — **69.6% INCREASE** → 76.49% 2024

2: Systemic inclusion [SI] refers to the intentional and comprehensive integration of inclusive processes, policies and practices within [and across] all levels and/or aspects of an organisation. SI goes beyond individual acts of inclusion and aims to embed inclusive ways of working into all fundamental systems that govern an organisation, these include interactions in support of; recruitment, retention, leadership development, data production and governance itself.

Benchmarking our progress

It's not just progress against our own targets where we measure success – we also have independent reviews, benchmarking accreditations and awards. The following were all received during the course of our Everyone Matters strategy:

Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality for four years' running (2021 to 2024).

Race Equality Matters 2022 Bronze, and 2024 Silver Trailblazer awards for work on our Race Project.

White Ribbon accredited employer, engaging with men and boys to end violence against women and girls.

Accredited as a Disability Confident Leader.

Reaching Exemplary Employer status in 2024 and placed within the top 10 in the Investing in Ethnicity Maturity Matrix.

Recognised as a Carers UK Carer Confident employer, reaching Level 1 in 2020, and Level 2 in 2024.

2023 Stonewall Silver Employer (second year in a row) and an LGBTQ+ Top 100 Employer in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

Entered the Social Mobility Index for the first time in 2023.

We became a Menopause Workplace Pledge signatory in 2023, committing to better and more consistent support for colleagues.

Collaborating with our networks

Our EDI team, employee networks, regional and functional EDI leads, and trade unions have played a huge role in our progress to date, working across our business and with various internal and external stakeholders. This includes working with independent bodies to raise awareness and bring about change at network-wide and at local levels within regions and routes.

Our networks include over 6,800 members, who support our colleagues to share their experiences. This helps us learn and improve, challenging us and the industry to be more inclusive of everyone. Our networks have brought industry leading activities, and several colleagues have been recognised nationally for their important work and its impact on our industry.

Archway
Promoting LGBT+ inclusion
part of our employee networks

1,400 members

2024	10 years of Archway Anniversary Conference
2023	Stonewall Silver Employer – two years in a row
	Listed as an LGBTQ+ Top 100 Employer in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
	Shortlisted for Outstanding LGBTQ+ Network of the Year in the British Diversity Awards
2022	Our film and campaign Do I Offend You? shortlisted in the British LGBT+ awards

Armed Forces
Bringing our Armed Forces community together
part of our employee networks

500 members

2023	Armed Forces network created
2022	Network Rail reaccredited Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award by the Ministry of Defence

CanDo
Supporting disability confidence
part of our employee networks

1,300 members

2023	TLC Lions Human awards for Best Employee Resource Group – Highly Commended
2020	Activities contributed to Disability Confident Leader Accreditation

Care
Supporting carers in the workforce
part of our employee networks

550 members

2024	Carer Confident: Accomplished Level 2 accreditation
2022	Carer Confident: Active Level 1 accreditation
	Introduced Carers Passport and discussion tool

Collaborating with our networks

Our legion of over 2,400 EDI champions continue to make a key difference to inclusion – role modelling inclusive behaviours and supporting colleagues. They can be found across the business, with a rainbow lanyard and armband in our signal boxes, depots, offices, and executive teams.

Trade unions have been a critical ally to our inclusion journey, by helping us reach their members through their network of equality representatives. We have worked together on training, policy awareness, and upskilling events, and this will continue into CP7.

Note: Numbers of members correct as of February 2024

Cultural Fusion
Bringing together black, Asian and minority ethnic employees and allies
part of our employee networks

1,000 members

2024	10 years of Cultural Fusion Conference
2022	Activities contributed towards 'Exemplary Employer' in the Investing in Ethnicity Maturity Matrix
2020	Company-wide safety 'stand down' on race equality – also shared across the industry

Family Focus
Supporting relationship matters
part of our employee networks

700 members

| 2023 | Supporting baby loss awareness week and supporting introduction of miscarriage leave Introduced parental leave survey |
| 2021 | Created after the struggles families experienced during the pandemic |

Inspire
Promoting gender equality
part of our employee networks

2,500 members

2024	Membership growth to 2,500 members 10 years of Inspire Anniversary Conference
2024	Activities contributed towards the 'Times Top 50 Employers for Gender Equality' benchmark
2023	
2022	
2021	

Multi-Faith
Connecting faith and belief
part of our employee networks

450 members

| 2024 | 10 years of Multi-Faith Anniversary Conference, "The Resilience of Faith" |

Our regions

Our regions support the routes, bringing our people closer to our passengers and the communities we serve, with a focus on operations to help us improve train performance.

They have been instrumental in bringing our EDI work to life. Some key highlights are below, and you can read more about our regions' EDI achievements in the appendix to this document.

- Wales and Western has created inclusive recruitment checklists and support to improve representation across the regions, including the highest female representation in frontline and management roles in operations and maintenance.

- North West & Central led a campaign to improve the diversity of our signallers across key managed stations including Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly.

- Scotland was the first region to roll out free sanitary products, enhancing employee experience.

- Southern piloted a blind auditioning programme and diverse interview panels to ensure fair and equitable hiring practices.

- Eastern established an EDI programme plan focusing on reasonable adjustments to support all colleagues and enhance employee experience.

Scotland

North West & Central

Eastern

Wales and Western

Southern
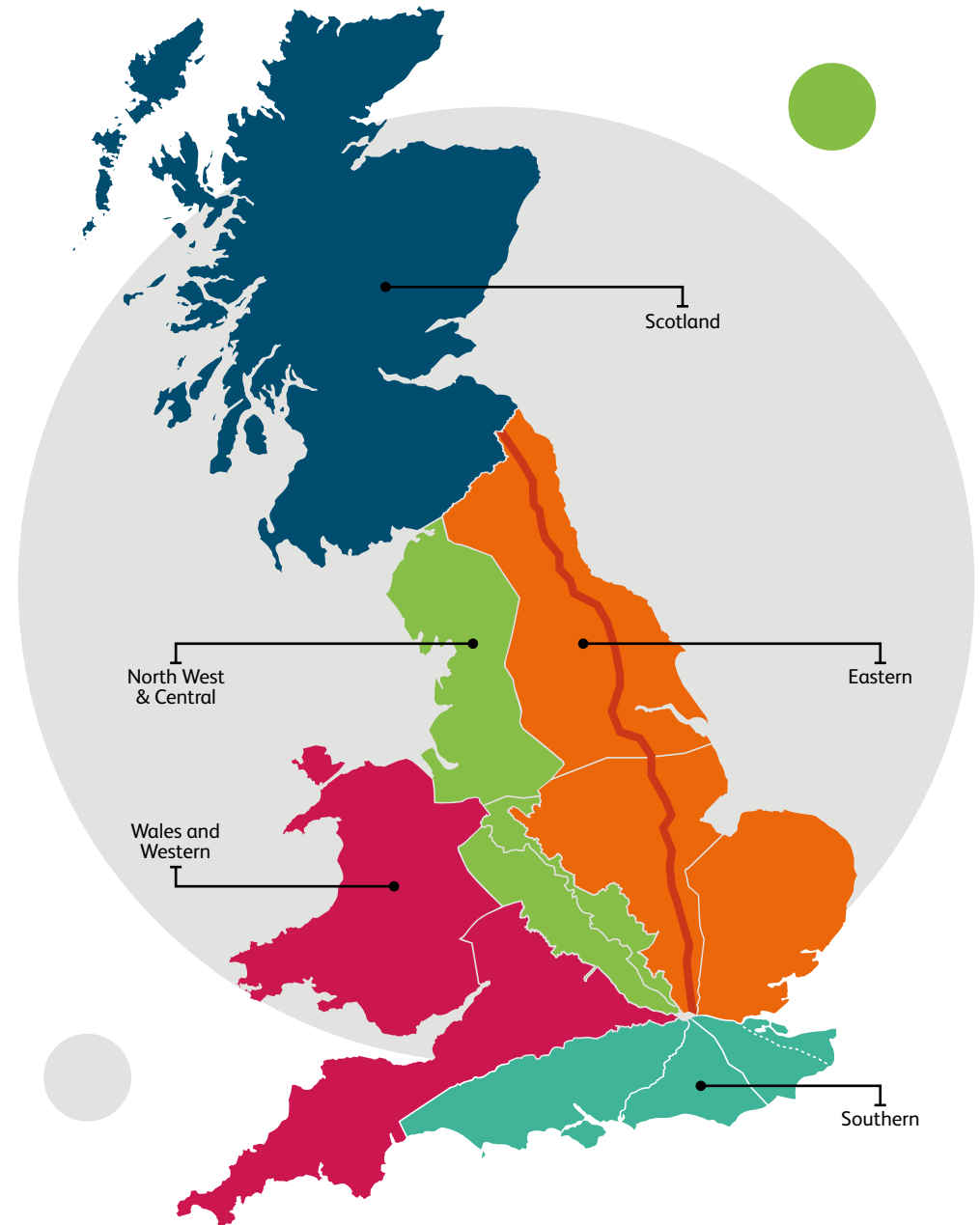
Our functions

Our structure has five regions and 15 routes supported by Route Services, and five network-wide functions: System Operator, Technical Authority, HR, Communications, and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) directorate (which includes Finance, Property, Legal and Rail Investment Centre of Excellence (RICoE)).

The functions have also played a pivotal role in bringing our EDI work to life. Some key highlights are below, and you can read more about our regions' EDI achievements in the appendix of this document.

- Route Services focused on inclusive recruitment practices including diverse interview panels and anonymised CVs.

- Technical Authority achieved 64 percent of senior level colleagues completing Inclusive Leadership training against their local target of 50 percent.

- CFO launched the EDI reciprocal mentoring programme and supported participants – championing the EDI agenda.

- Communications worked with external partners on listening groups, and with the national communications team to understand how our people feel.

- Our resourcing team within HR created inclusive recruitment training where thousands of managers and anyone leading recruitment attended to enable them to recruit to their team.

- System Operator championed to increase knowledge of menopause in the workplace. This included lunch and learn awareness sessions, a menopause toolkit to build awareness for line managers and colleagues and a one-day Inclusive Leadership course.

Understanding our EDI challenges

The forward steps we made in our previous strategy are a reminder that meaningful progress can be hard to achieve and easy to lose without the right focus and commitment. We can always do better.

In readiness for CP7, we undertook a thorough review to understand our current EDI landscape across all the Regions and Functions, by asking people what we are doing well and where we can do better.

It was designed to understand the EDI challenges that our people really care about and use this to inform our decision-making.

The outcomes of this review showed that we had accomplished many of the goals set out for CP6, but still had work to do in some areas – particularly in reaching numerical targets such as disabled, LGBT+, and black, Asian, and minority ethnic employees in leadership.

Additionally, we conducted a survey measuring employees' experiences of inclusive and exclusive behaviours.

This showed that Network Rail was in line with or above the public sector average in areas such as psychological safety in teams, psychological safety with leaders, and subtle acts of exclusion (these are the constant and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned people they interact with).

Although this is encouraging news we continue to strive to improve in these areas to allow all our employees to bring their whole selves to work in a positive working environment.

The biggest factor influencing perceptions of inclusion was experiences of subtle acts of exclusion, psychological safety with leaders, and psychological safety with teams.

This means in order to improve employee inclusion, we need to continue to focus our efforts on increasing psychological safety within teams and with leaders, and reinforce inclusion with fairness and consistency assured through our systems, policies and practice.

This will lead to environments where people feel safe to be themselves, which leads to a greater sense of belonging.

January 2024 / Key: ■ Network Rail Overall ■ Private Sector Average ■ Public Sector Average
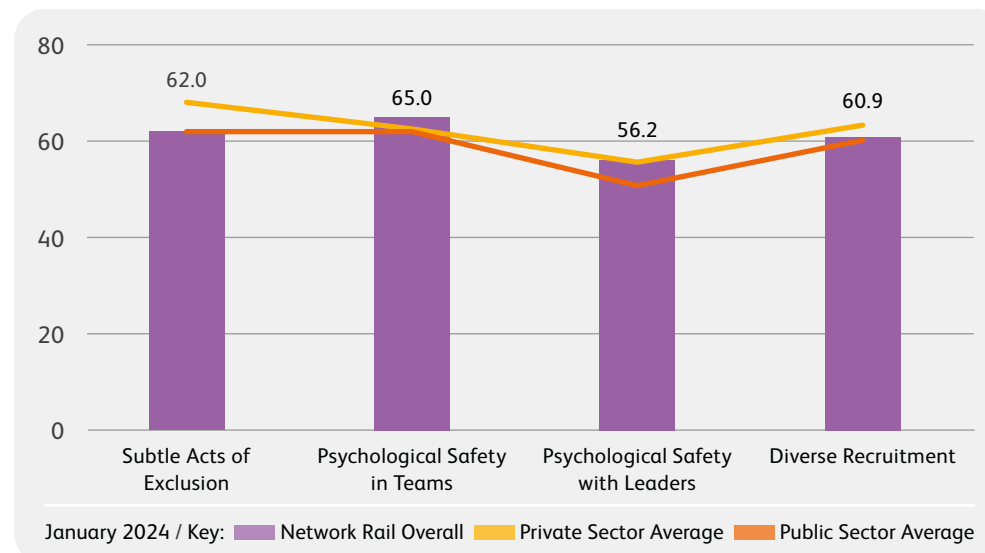
Our next phase: Everyone Belongs

Collectively, people are powerful. Our people are at the heart of making this strategy successful, and more importantly, making Network Rail a leader in inclusion.

Everyone Belongs is designed to take the knowledge we have all built and the insights we have gained during the previous strategy to create an environment where everyone – regardless of who they are, feel they belong within Network Rail.

Everyone Belongs

We have chosen **Everyone Belongs** as our EDI strategic vision as it recognises that we are all responsible and builds on the progress we have made throughout CP6. Our actions and behaviours have the power to create positive change. Through targeted actions, we can make a real difference. As a result, this will affect thousands of people, from our colleagues to our customers, passengers and local communities.

Achieving a truly inclusive environment will take effort from all of us, as we bring in new ways of leading and working at all levels of Network Rail, from our executive leadership team to our frontline workers – bringing everyone together for this collective purpose.

Our People Strategy sets out Network Rail's next steps to becoming a highly respected, high performing, service-led organisation, with a more inclusive workplace that enables an engaged and skilled workforce to provide great value to our customers. An organisation that understands and serves the public successfully by reflecting it. This includes four objectives, with EDI being the thread that runs through each.

Everyone Belongs

Our People Strategy Objectives

Enable a great employee experience through an engaging, safe, and inclusive culture: A culture that encourages collaboration and a sense of belonging, one where everyone feels valued, safe and able to realise their potential.

Right people, right place, right time: Our people are fundamental to the successful delivery of business objectives, and depend on us having the right capability deployed to the right work at the appropriate time. This means having a talented, appropriately trained, diverse workforce.

Great leadership: Our future success is dependent on how we develop, empower and enable our leaders. We need to provide the right structure and environment for them to thrive and enable them to create high performing teams.

Better work: We will deliver better outcomes for our people and our passengers by taking a whole-system and highly collaborative approach to delivering continuous improvement. This will result in better work in a modern and flexible organisation that is safe, high performing, efficient and sustainable.

Everyone Belongs

A key priority for HR for the next five years is our employee experience. We are focused on creating an engaging, safe and inclusive culture. A culture that encourages collaboration and a sense of belonging; where everyone feels valued, safe and able to realise their potential. Our **Everyone Belongs** strategy plays a significant part in this.

Under our previous strategy, we made significant progress to become more diverse and inclusive. **Everyone Belongs** continues that progress while creating an environment that is equitable too – where everyone is given the right environment to thrive.

Inclusion isn't a goal – it's a commitment. This is why we're continuing our work in this area, and accelerating turning our 'awareness into action', to remove the barriers faced by our people, our partners and our passengers, so we can run a better railway. And as inclusion evolves, what we do will evolve with it.

A truly inclusive environment takes effort from us all, and it touches us all too. As individuals, we must act because we can all make a difference.

We know that when people feel included, they are empowered to do their best and safest work. Inclusion will make Network Rail a better place to work and, as a result, the work we do will be even better.

**Pauline Holroyd,
Group Human Resources
Director**

Pauline Holroyd

"A truly inclusive environment will take effort from all of us and lead to better performance"

An accessible railway for the future

Everyone Belongs puts our people at the centre of the change – encouraging and empowering everyone to be a part of ongoing progress. It brings to life our vision of becoming a more equitable, diverse and inclusive organisation, nurturing and using the individuality, skills and expertise of all our people, and attracting the best talent to help us run a safe, accessible railway for everyone.

Inclusion like this is key to the success of our business. That's why we will:
- Focus on delivering our cultural change aspiration, creating an environment where **Everyone Belongs**
- Drive this via the development of our national framework of five strategic themes (see page 20)
- Enable regions and functions to continue to enhance plans that are right for their business, aligned to the national framework.

Getting this right will lead to the transformation outcomes outlined for our business, including:
- Reputation as an instinctive industry leader – elevating the standard for our industry and beyond
- Recognition as an employer of choice
- Improved ability to attract and retain great talent
- Creation of a truly inclusive culture where everyone can be their authentic self, feel they belong and deliver their best performance
- Improved ability to deliver our services to all, improving customer experience.

Our five strategic themes

Our five strategic themes and goals support the progress we need to make to achieve the level of inclusion and equity that **Everyone Belongs** proposes, and the benefits that this will bring.

We developed the themes from:
- reviewing the progress, we have made so far
- understanding the longer-term goals of Network Rail, and
- using expert insights to pick out the key targets that will make the difference.

They are designed to support the four Strategic People Objectives and related workstreams:
- Enable a great employee experience through an engaging, safe, and inclusive culture
- Right people, right place, right time
- Great leadership
- Better work.

The aim for Network Rail is to be an organisation where everyone is involved in making sure inclusion and equity is in everything we do – in our policies, practices, interactions and our ways of working.

Strategic theme 1

Elevate industry leadership

Shifting from our current healthy reputation, to trailblazing and setting higher standards and expectations for our industry (and beyond) and as an employer of choice:

- We are recognised as collaborators and partners in driving delivery of our strategy, for example, through our EDI partnership with trade unions

- We use our position as industry leaders to transform the railway sector in EDI, for example, through demonstrating best practice via industry groups and external comms channels

- We share our passion for continuous improvement, for example, sharing our experiences of enabling systemic inclusion across industries.

- We continuously challenge ourselves to drive higher standards, hold ourselves to account and learn from others, for example, by creating external shadow board.

Our five strategic themes

Strategic theme 2

Embed accountability and responsibility for EDI

Shifting from EDI objectives that are mostly voluntary to clearly defined expectations (aligned to roles) in both the "what" and the "how" on EDI for every employee:

- Leadership at all levels (national, regional and functional) makes it easy to understand how EDI fits within the way they work, and makes sure their business plans align

- Progress on EDI is tracked and covered in all business performance discussions with leaders and actions taken forward, for example, business reviews, QBR, 1:1s, town halls

- All employees, whatever their role and at every level, are clear on their individual responsibility for creating an inclusive, psychologically safe workplace and the actions they will take. This includes performance objectives forming part of performance management reviews, 1:1s, bystander intervention, building effective working relationships and acting on feedback

- The consequences of not delivering or acting upon their EDI responsibilities are clear and applied, for example, through employee experience and engagement, zero tolerance to bullying and harassment.

Strategic theme 3

Build inclusive capability at all levels

Moving from an awareness of EDI to automatic inclusive behaviours being encouraged and valued, regardless of role or level:

- EDI is embedded into every learning intervention and is tailored to the subject, role and level of the audience – including through alternative learning methods such as e-learning and multi-year learning plans to deepen knowledge and skillsets

- Create a 'community of practice', where our people from early careers to senior leaders can come together to collaborate, learn, use internal data and industry knowledge to influence our EDI delivery plans

- Everyone at Network Rail knows how they can make a difference to inclusion, and how EDI is relevant to their role, for example through induction training, making inclusive choices throughout their time at Network Rail

- Everyone is clear on how they turn learning into action, for example, through clear action-planning, post-learning nudges, pulse surveys and learning transfer evaluation.

Our five strategic themes

Strategic theme 4

Enable systemic inclusion

This is where we move EDI up in our list of priorities – from being an afterthought, to an automatic consideration at the forefront of all we do:

- Everyone understands what 'systemic inclusion' means to Network Rail, how it fits within the way we work, and how to deliver this in every role and function. This includes through targeted and transparent communications, awareness sessions and toolkits

- Our practices and processes, including our ways of working, are designed with everyone in mind and focused on earning back the trust of our employees. We create the habit of thinking about the person, not just the process, from the start; communications and engagement strategies are accessible and reach all colleagues

- Our people speak up and challenge practices and processes that do not serve our people or our passengers – for example safety briefings, project teams, policy development, team meetings and bystander intervention.

Strategic theme 5

Adopt an evidence-led approach

Using data and insights to help us make decisions. We'll move from being target-driven (such as recruitment and representation), to using this insight as evidence to back up our progress:

- We will use data to be more inclusive and influence our decisions in areas such as recruitment, promotion, retention, engagement and exits

- Our people know that we promote, use and check-in on their feedback to inform ongoing changes through employee survey responses, trade union views, EDI diagnostics and more

- We'll keep reviewing our decisions, actions and communications and their impact by learning what works. This will be done in a meaningful way via people decisions, post-project reviews, EDI related passenger feedback and You Said - We Did updates.

Everyone has a part to play

To help bring this strategy to life, everyone has a part to play as we continue to create a place of belonging (this is not an exhaustive list):

Trade union equality reps

- Collaborate with the EDI team to support delivery of strategy.
- Act as a critical friend through support and challenge.
- Provide communication channels to union members on EDI topics, reaching colleagues we are unable to.

Leadership

- Lead by example and champion behaviours through inclusive leadership that influences and promotes a positive inclusive culture across all functions, regions and routes.
- Take a human-centred approach to leadership that focuses on keeping people at the centre of organisational priorities and strategy.

HR team

- Partner with the business to ensure fair processes and people policies, support inclusive environments for all colleagues and role model inclusive behaviours.
- Coach managers to ensure they are aware of the commitment to EDI, and support our people to help them work in an open, inclusive and diverse organisation.

Managers

- Create an open and inclusive environment to help people thrive in their roles, while challenging behaviour or decisions that aren't inclusive.
- Act as role models by embedding EDI practices into everything you do – both your decisions and actions.
- Drive a learning culture in your team to improve engagement with EDI.

Employees

- Demonstrate inclusive and respectful behaviours at all times.
- Commit to learning EDI knowledge in a human-centric way and challenge poor behaviours respectfully to help us deliver a safe, accessible railway for everyone.

EDI national team

- Lead and set the national framework and strategy for EDI and provide guidance and assurance to the business by partnering with regional and local EDI leads, EDI champions, the employee networks and trade union equality representatives.

EDI leads

- Lead the way in shaping and delivery of local EDI action plans which align to the national strategy.

EDI champions

- Act as role models for inclusivity in the business, by sign-posting colleagues to support, challenge non-inclusive behaviours where they see them in the workplace and challenge us to be more ambitious.

Employee networks

- Act as role models and continue to create a more open and inclusive organisation.
- Provide support to their members and feedback on policies and practices, and raise awareness of challenges in the wider workforce.

Local focus for local requirements

Our new EDI strategy is a national framework to ensure the success of our EDI vision and mission. Although it's important that we are all striving for the same goal, we are also aware that the areas of focus – and the way in which this will be delivered – will be different across our regions and functions.

Devolution took place during the previous strategy, and we will support the regions to create their own specific plans that are right for their business and align to the national framework during this strategy. This enables us to also nurture its future leaders who think nationally and act locally.

The regions have analysed data and listened to employees' views to pick out the issues that are important to their business, speaking with their employees and making sure their employees' voices are heard while putting together their own plans.

At a national level we will continually partner with our employee networks and EDI leads and will encourage all regions to do the same, to make sure their plans are the most suitable for their local requirements.
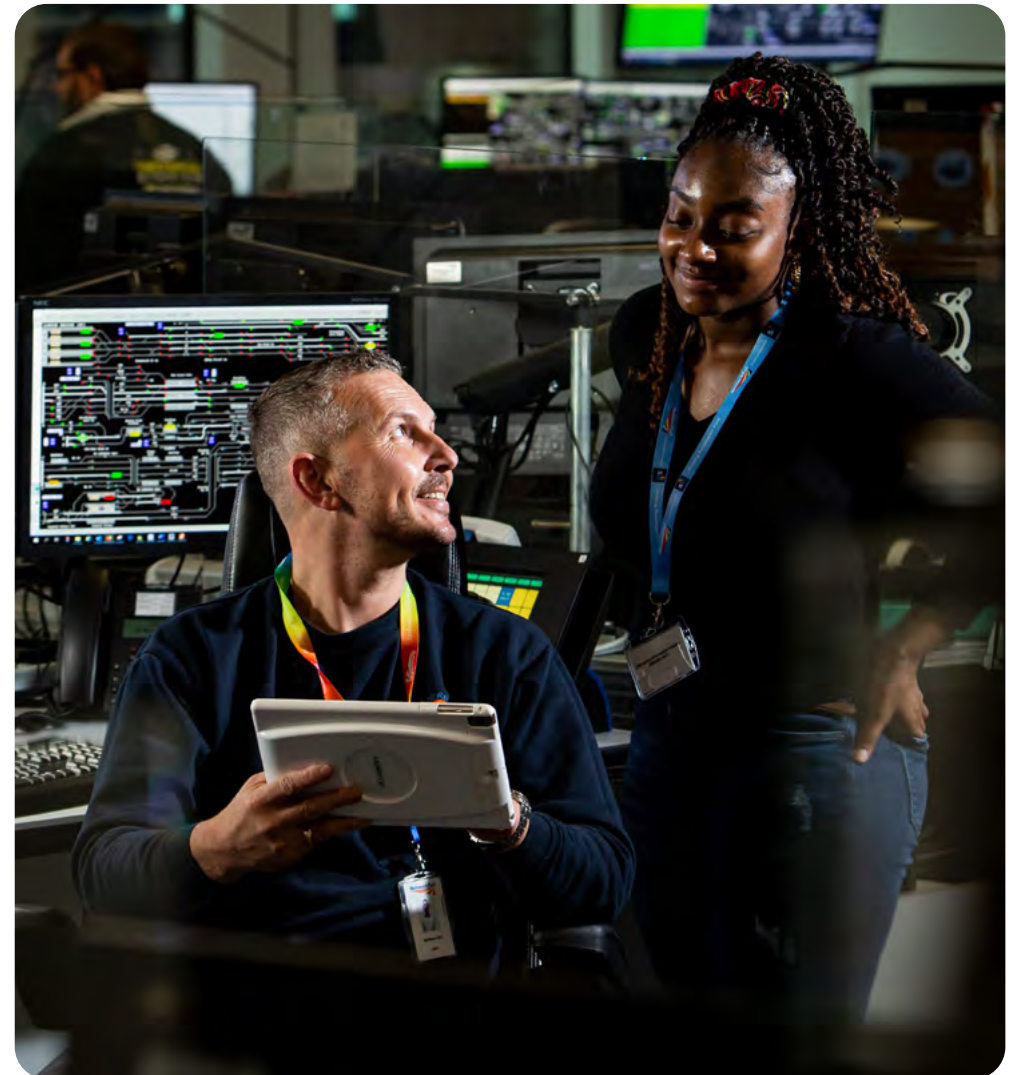
Industry and community leadership

We take our role of leading the industry on EDI seriously. Throughout our new strategy we will continue our focus and involvement with industry partners to support ongoing progress.

We will also continue to improve society as a whole. Our EDI plan will do this by addressing inequalities which affect our communities.

We are continuing to embed a customer service mindset across our business to support this vision. As we look ahead, we're focused on building on this vision and working even more closely with train operators to support the vision of a simpler, better, greener railway for everyone in Britain.

Measuring success

How we measure success of our strategy is key. We are used to tracking progress, this will not change as we enter CP7.

Over the next five years we will focus on a number of measurements to track how our colleagues are feeling as we continue to be recognised as a leader in EDI and work towards creating an environment where everyone can feel part of Network Rail.

As our regional teams deliver EDI plans in their local areas, we will continue working together to understand the impact of local initiatives and activities that respond to the five themes from our national strategy.

Staying on track

How we measure success

The ways we will track and monitor to being an inclusive culture includes:

- Improve engagement scores for all our people, to measure the sentiment of inclusion and belonging
- Increase retention of our colleagues
- Increase EDI learning and training completion rates
- Increase our take up of EDI leadership and line manager training to help everyone become EDI confident
- Increase promotions of our diverse talent
- More colleagues sharing diversity data

- Increase the diversity of our overall workforce
- Increase in diversity of our leadership
- Reduction in grievances and tribunals
- Reduction in pay gaps
- Increase in positive external feedback on EDI, such as Glassdoor
- Increase employee network membership and champions volunteers
- Independent benchmarking measures
- Exit and entrance surveys.

What success looks like

What successful culture change looks like:

- A human-centred model that treats employees as valued individuals who are respected, empowered, and trusted
- Systemic inclusion into all we do
- A greater sense of belonging for everyone at Network Rail
- Continually building trust by doing what we say we will do time and time again.

Achieving our goals will enable us to embed EDI at Network Rail, bringing systemic inclusion to life. To get there, **Everyone Belongs** is key, and involves looking at not only what we do but how we do it across Network Rail.

Commitment to this strategy will help drive a high performing, service-led organisation that provides great customer value.

Achieving all our outcomes won't be easy but the benefits for our people and passengers will be felt far and wide, for an even safer, better railway for everyone.

Looking ahead

CP7 key deliverables

Key drivers

Role:
Run a safe, reliable and efficient railway, serving our customers and communities.

Vision:
Simpler, better, greener.

- Enable a great employee experience through an engaging, safe, and inclusive culture
- Right people, right place, right time
- Great leadership
- Better work.

We aim to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organisation, harnessing the skills and expertise of all our people and attracting the best talent to help us deliver a safe, accessible railway for everyone. We will continue to progress to achieve greater impact – leading to a place where everyone belongs.

Strategic themes

Elevate industry leadership:
Role modelling higher standards and expectations for our industry (and beyond) and as an employer of choice.

Embed accountability and responsibility for EDI:
Clearly defined expectations (aligned to roles) in both the 'what' and the 'how' on EDI for every employee.

Build inclusive capability at all levels:
Inclusive behaviours being a core organisational and cultural strength, regardless of role or level.

Enable systemic inclusion:
Automatic consideration within our practices and processes, intentionally embedded and at the forefront of all we do.

Adopt an evidence led approach:
Proactively and consistently taking informed decisions and actions for continuous improvement from the insights available.

Desired outcomes

- **Everyone feels a sense of belonging** and psychological safety.
- **Solidify our reputation as an instinctive industry leader** – elevating the standard of our industry and beyond.
- Recognition as an **employer of choice**.
- Improved ability to **attract and retain great talent**.
- Creation of a **truly inclusive culture where everyone can be their authentic self**, feel they belong and deliver their best performance.
- Improved ability to **deliver our services to all**, improving customer experience.
- **Everyone is responsible** for embedding inclusion systemically in everything we do.
- Creation of **local plans** that are right for their business and aligned to the national framework.

Measures

- Improve engagement scores for all our people to measure the sentiment of inclusion and belonging.
- More people sharing diversity data.
- Increase our take up of EDI leadership and line manager training to help everyone become EDI confident.
- Attract more people into Network Rail.
- Increase retention of our colleagues.
- Increase promotions of our diverse talent.
- Increase the diversity of our overall workforce.
- Increase in diversity of our leadership.
- Reduction in grievances and tribunals related to inclusion.
- Reduction in pay gaps.
- Increase in positive external feedback on EDI such as Glassdoor.
- Increase EDI learning and training completion rates.
- Increase employee network membership and champions volunteers
- Independent benchmarking measures.
- Exit and entrance surveys.

Realising our outcomes

We have a clear path ahead to ensuring that we work inclusively for all.

Inclusion is not a goal, it's a journey – we all know that. So CP7 is crucial in taking the knowledge that we have learned across the last control period, and applying it to the next five years. The effect that this can have on all of us is significant. We also know that inclusion is an evolving principle – extra measures we take today could be taken for granted tomorrow, so it's important that we all make sure we're turning our awareness into action, and putting inclusion at the heart of everything we do.

"Striving for a more inclusive organisation isn't just the right thing to do – it's our only way forward"

Inclusion and belonging can look very different to different people – some may be happy just to be in the conversation, where others may want to be a leading voice in it. Belonging is as personal and individual as each of us. Ensuring everyone is happy with where they are on that scale is the bit that matters.

Striving for a more inclusive organisation isn't just the right thing to do – it's our only way forward. It will enable us to all work together, and make Network Rail a better place to work. It won't just benefit a few, either – it'll benefit colleagues, customers, communities. There isn't one person at Network Rail who won't feel the effects of equity, diversity and inclusion done right.

Embedding EDI will set the foundations for future generations; it doesn't have to be perfect, you just need to start somewhere. Welcome to the Network Rail where **Everyone Belongs**.

Navleen Kalra

**Navleen Kalra,
Director People, Transformation
and EDI (National
and Eastern)**

Appendix

Appendix: Our regions

The regions support the routes, bringing our people closer to our passengers and the communities we serve, with a focus on operations to help us improve train performance.

They have been instrumental in bringing our EDI work to life. The following pages feature some of the highlights...

Scotland

North West & Central

Eastern

Wales and Western

Southern
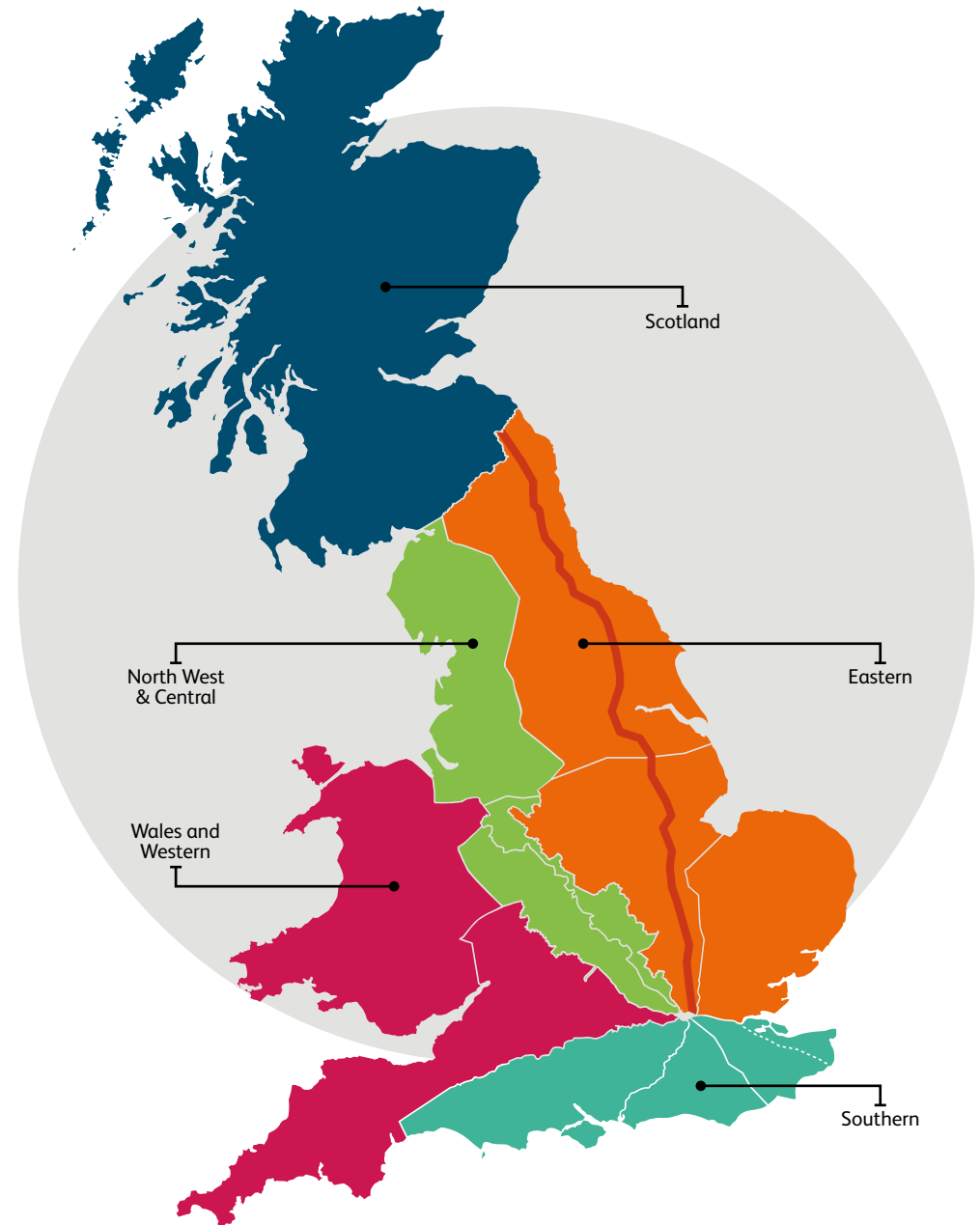
Appendix: Wales and Western

Regional highlights:

- Created Everyone Matters board to extend the work of the Everyone Matters strategy in the region with a member of ELT sponsoring each of our workstreams (including race, gender, LGBT+ and disability).

- Created the Welsh language working group supporting our compliance with the Welsh Language Commissioner and the first translations for the Your Voice survey, signage and job adverts.

- Inclusive recruitment checklists, support packs and a campaign resulted in improved representation in the region – including the highest female representation in frontline and management roles in operations and maintenance.

- EDI module added to the Great Empowered Manager programme (the regions' onboarding, induction and upskilling programme for line managers) emphasising its importance.

London Paddington

Reading

Bristol Temple Meads
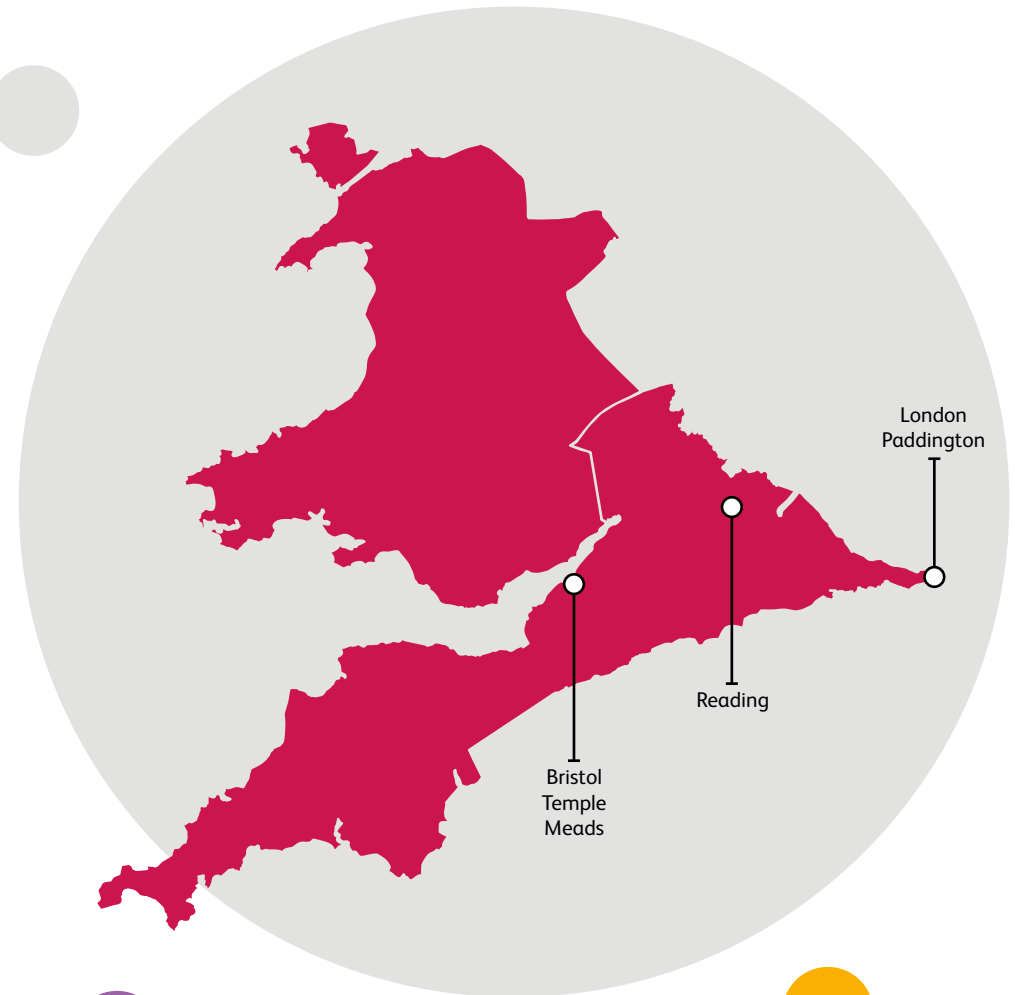
Appendix: North West & Central

Regional highlights:

- Led on a campaign to improve the diversity of our signallers by sharing targeted advertising on various job boards and across our managed stations, including Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly, and London Euston. Held sessions with hiring managers to help embed EDI into their approach resulting in more female and black, Asian or minority ethnic applicants.

- Held All Aboard Roadshows spotlighting non-inclusive behaviours across the region and igniting conversation about what needs to be done to tackle and eradicate these behaviours. This led to the development of two key programmes focused on leadership behaviour and providing the tools they need to manage their teams, challenge non-inclusive behaviours and drive cultural change.

- Partnered with our organisation-wide gender equality network Inspire, to hold educational events, conferences and career development days in the region. In 2023, 12 events were attended by 600+ regional colleagues. These activities help to make North West & Central a safer and supportive place to work by growing awareness, challenging mindsets and supporting colleagues.

Manchester Piccadilly

Liverpool Lime Street

Birmingham New Street

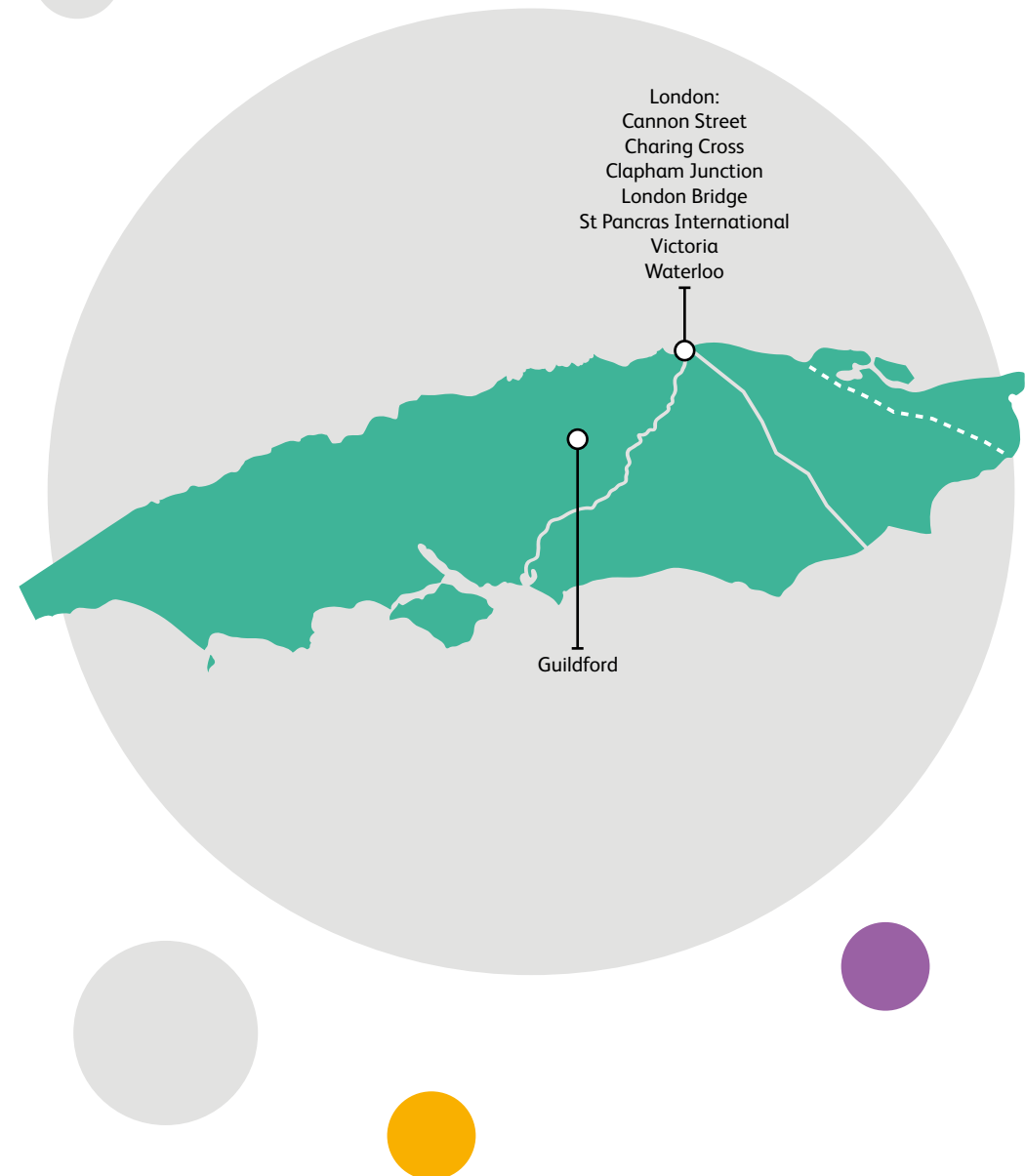London Euston

Appendix: Scotland

Regional highlights:

- First region to introduce free sanitary products.

- Strong partnership with the Nil By Mouth anti-sectarianism charity, to address challenges in the workplace. This has included night shifts, engagement with trade unions, wellbeing days, case advisory and more.

- Research with Oxera in 2023, to demonstrate clear link between diversity, engagement and safety, supporting our focus of work.

- First ever Census for Scotland, to understand workforce better and take a data driven approach to EDI initiatives, with a positive frontline response.

- 2023 produced our most diverse graduate intake with a 60/40 percent split for gender and ethnicity.

- A newly established EDI steering group to ensure collaboration, intersectionality and reduce duplication of ideas.

Edinburgh Waverley

Glasgow Central

Appendix: Southern

Regional highlights:

- Launched two impactful positive action campaigns in the region. Following a campaign to target female recruitment, results since January 2023 showed 40 percent of new starters in signalling were female. Received more than 500 responses as part of a diversity referral scheme. These successful initiatives have since been adopted in other regions.

- The first region to commit to the Mental Health Charter, providing training and trauma support for all line managers and aligning the health and wellbeing team with psychological and physical safety.

- Piloted a blind auditioning programme and diverse interview panels, with the view to rollout across the entire region in CP7 to ensure fair and equitable hiring practices.

- Collaborated with and listened to local employee networks to feed into EDI plans. Partnered with colleagues from the region who chair the Cultural Fusion and Armed Forces networks, offering leadership, support and mentorship.

- Collaborated with local employee networks in celebrating key awareness days and cultural festivals. (For example, Windrush Day, International Women's Day).

- Led a campaign to protect frontline staff from increasing abuse incidents, which included distributing anti-abuse badges across all stations in the region.

- Made great strides in relation to EDI with thought leadership, insight and data driven initiatives. This included the first ever Supplier Race Conference, articles in industry publications and interviews with inspirational change makers.

London:
Cannon Street
Charing Cross
Clapham Junction
London Bridge
St Pancras International
Victoria
Waterloo

Guildford

Appendix: Eastern

Regional highlights:

- Established an EDI programme plan focusing on reasonable adjustments, driving improvements for the workplace, non-inclusive behaviours and improving recruitment processes, later introducing communication and engagement as an additional workstream.

- Continue to focus on reasonable adjustments cases resulting in a reduction in case numbers by 75 percent.

- Conducted an audit of female facilities and multi-faith rooms across all maintenance and depot units (MDUs) and operations locations to ensure all occupied worksites have adequate and inclusive facilities.

- Developing an accommodation strategy with standards of compliance with a focus on overall employee wellbeing.

- 95 percent of Eastern colleagues have received the bullying & harassment briefing.

- We have grown our community of 400 EDI Champions.

- Ran cohorts of Network Rail's Activate Your Potential career development programme – tailored toward empowering colleagues from minority groups.

Leeds

London:
King's Cross
Liverpool Street
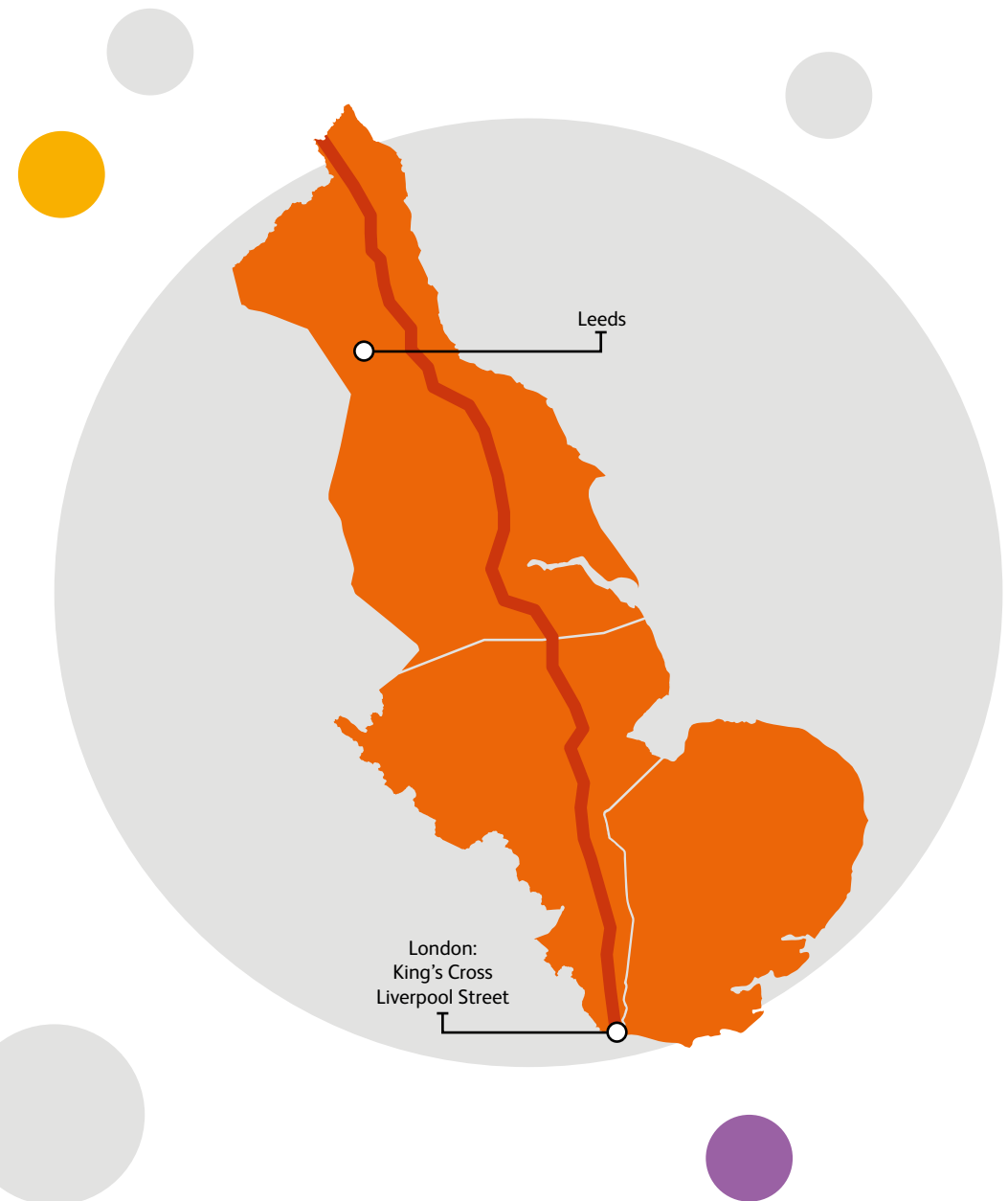
Appendix: Our functions

Route Services

- Extensive EDI champion networks supported by a EDI Change Group that shares best practice.

- Strengthened leadership and accountability of EDI.

- Director EDI objectives where directors participate in several sessions annually.

- Increased participation Women in Rail, Women in Leadership and Activate Potential programmes to reflect business needs.

- Improved diverse recruitment with mandatory EDI presentation for bands 1&2 recruitment, diverse interview panels, anonymised CVs, increased advertising channels and improved use of language and imagery in job adverts.

- Senior Leader Group embed EDI training into strategy meetings.

- A focus on inclusive recruitment practices.

Technical Authority

- Achieved 64 percent of our Bands 1-4 to attend Inclusive Leadership training against our local target of 50 percent.

- Created a local support group for carers within TA.

- Recruited local EDI Ambassadors (Champions ++) to help drive our TA action plan.

- Introduced EDI sessions with subject matter experts coming to team meetings.

- Increased visibility and training for Diversity Impact Assessments to increase the number of trained assessors.

- Software for notetaking being trialled.

- Captions for e-learning reinstated for mandatory training.

- 'EDI moments' at all team meetings.

CFO

- Launched the EDI reciprocal mentoring programme and support participants.

- Created CFO Champions EDI Working group and refreshed the membership.

- Conducted CFO EDI Survey.

- Engagement day with Goresbrook School & Bath University to promote Network Rail as a diverse employer.

- Set up and promoted CFO EDI Sharepoint site enabling access to resources in one place.

- Created and rolled out a recruitment checklist with good practice, signposting of tools and guidance to support diversity in recruitment.

Appendix: Our functions

Comms

- Promoted EDI survey with national communications team.

- Worked with external partners on listening groups with the national communications team.

- EDI Champions on the National Communications SharePoint platform.

HR

- Our resourcing team created inclusive recruitment training where thousands of managers and anyone leading recruitment attended. This helps identify and tackle bias and provides guides on ensuring fairness and inclusion throughout the recruitment process.

- Our talent and resourcing team have developed bespoke courses to empower and support colleagues from minority groups on race, gender, disability and sexual orientation. Hundreds of colleagues have now attended these programmes which have included training modules and mentoring opportunities with leaders as positive steps to move forward in their careers with Network Rail.

System Operator

- Led extensive work in the last five years to increase knowledge on menopause. This included awareness sessions with key colleagues including senior leaders, supporting the launch of new PPE designed with the menopause in mind, a menopause toolkit to build awareness for line managers and colleagues including a one-day inclusive leaders course.

- EDI working group implemented a mentoring scheme within System Operator providing senior leaders an opportunity to improve understanding of diversity and giving colleagues the opportunity to learn from senior leaders. This has enhanced professional development, promoted shared lived experiences, and improved key skills including listening and open mindedness.

- EDI working group created and implemented an inclusive recruitment checklist for hiring managers to support them in making the candidate journey more inclusive and free of bias.

- EDI working group supported returners to work following sickness and maternity leave with resources and content to support colleagues, teams, and managers to enhance their employee experience.

- In 2023, as a pledge to support older workers, we subscribed to the 55 Redefined initiative. As a result, job adverts are posted on jobsites, attracting more experience into the workforce. This initiative was also rolled out by HR and has been adapted by all the central functions.

Appendix: Terminology

Ally:
An ally is a person who supports and advocates for individuals in marginalised communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community.

Belonging:
Refers to everyone being treated and feeling like a full member of a larger community or workplace where they can thrive.

Carer:
A carer is anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, mental health problem, or addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

Disabled/disabled person:
Refers to someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means it has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months.

Disability:
Organisations of disabled people make a distinction between the medical condition, which is usually referred to as an impairment, and being disabled by physical/sensory and attitudinal barriers which result in discrimination. This is called the social model.

Diversity v inclusion v belonging:
Diversity typically means proportionate representation across all dimensions of human difference. Inclusion means that everyone is included, visible, heard and considered. Belonging means that everyone is treated and feels like a full member of a larger community, workplace where they can thrive.

Equity:
Refers to fair treatment for all while striving to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers.

Ethnicity:
A shared cultural identity based on a mix of factors like ancestry, language, religion, traditions, and social customs. It's about the group a person feels they belong to, or are perceived to belong to, due to these shared characteristics.

Faith, religion or belief:
Includes all religions and lack of religion, in other words individuals are protected if they follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Inclusion:
Creating environments in which anyone is welcomed, respected, supported, and valued so they can fully participate.

Appendix: Terminology

Intersectionality:
People for whom the overlap of various social identities (or protected characteristics), such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to increased interconnected discrimination and therefore experience the greatest exclusion and disadvantage. For example, a disabled, black lesbian may experience combined disablism, racism, sexism and homophobia.

Positive action:
A range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages, for instance in employment opportunities, that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.

Protected characteristics:
These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Psychological safety:
On an individual level, this is "feeling able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990). On a team level, psychological safety is a "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (Edmondson, 1999).

Race:
Refers to the protected characteristic of race, and to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality, including citizenship or their ethnic or national origins.

Reasonable adjustment:
Where a disabled person is at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled, there is a duty to take reasonable steps to remove that disadvantage by (i) changing provisions, criteria or practices, (ii) altering, removing or providing a reasonable alternative means of avoiding physical features and (iii) providing auxiliary aids. This is called a reasonable adjustment.

Subtle acts of exclusion/ microaggressions:
A subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a member of a marginalised group, especially a racial minority, that is often unintentionally offensive or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype.

Everyone
Belongs

NetworkRail