Great people, great teams

The Strategic Business Plan published in February 2018 quite rightly shines a light on the importance of great people and great teams. This people vision underpins Network Rail and the transformation that is ongoing, to enable devolution to separate route businesses. From this our People Strategy is also developing and will set the agenda for Network Rail to be one of Britain’s best employers.

**Did you know - Apprentices?**
- Network Rail enrolled 814 apprentices, including:
  - 145 female apprentice starts (18%).
  - 80 BAME apprentices (10%).
- We have beaten our ambitious forecast (of c. 600 starts over the year), and have plans to increase apprentice starts in 2018/19, expanding to a broader range of higher / degree level programmes.
- We offer a range of apprenticeships across apprenticeship levels 2 to 7, and types of programme (e.g. engineering, administration, finance, cyber security, project management, construction, surveying, property management, customer service).

Our apprenticeship programme has won the National Transport Awards’ Apprenticeship Champion of the Year Award, recognising our commitment to investing in the future talent that we need to build a better railway for a better Britain.

**Did you know - Graduates?**
- 153 graduate starts at Network Rail.
- We have 11 different graduate schemes available.
- We are working closely with those on the schemes to further develop these graduates through placements, qualifications, skills training.

Aligned to this we are working hard to support the skills agenda and developing strategic workforce planning to further develop our people. We are engaging with university technical colleagues up and down the country and one of our senior managers is chairing the Government’s Transport & Logistics route for technical education. Work is also ongoing to lead the development of a number of apprenticeships via ‘trailblazer standards’ and we can often be seen supporting events like The Big Bang Exhibition.

Our work with the Armed Forces has also been publicly recognised by the Ministry of Defence’s prestigious badge of honour. The Gold Employer Recognition scheme award was presented to Network Rail for outstanding support to the Armed Forces community.

**Did you know - Diversity & Inclusion?**
This year we have set about developing the 20by20 project, to increase our number of female employees from the current 16% to 20% by 2020.

Each route business and functional area has a 20by20 lead and an action plan describing the necessary activities to achieve our ambition, some example activities are: hosting open days for women; introducing women’s welfare packs; encouraging girls and young women to continue studying STEM subjects; promoting female role models in our job.
adverts and through social media; understanding why women leave or stay in Network Rail. These activities delivered across the routes and business functions and supported by our centres of expertise, will improve gender diversity and contribute to reducing the gender pay gap over time.

Mark Carne CBE also raised the profile of the 20by20 project by announcing a commitment to improve welfare facilities trackside and in depots by 2019, an initiative which benefits everyone.

**Gender pay gap reporting**
In December 2017, ahead of the UK government deadline, we published the details of our gender pay gap. Our 2017 pay gap is 11%. This is substantially lower than the average UK pay gap of 18.1% and we are proud of the progress we have made to date. But we are determined to reduce it further.

**Other initiatives**
We know that unconscious bias can be an issue in recruitment which is why we are trialling anonymous or ‘name-blind’ shortlisting to eliminate any chance of bias. We have rolled out ‘inclusive leadership training’ for all hiring managers which includes a focus on unconscious bias, in the hope of tackling gender and diversity bias.

We have also developed a menopause project, sponsored by Graham Hopkins MD ST&E, producing a guide for women and line managers to support them through this time that is rarely spoken about, but can cause an immense impact.

Our property function also developed a very supportive ‘returners’ programme to encourage surveyors back to the workplace after a period of absence, which has received a great take up.

This year we have also maintained the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark, Silver Banding for Race and Gender Diversity Benchmarks, which has given us a fantastic stepping stone for the future into 2018/19.

We take proactive action to make sure the policies relating to our people are compliant and supportive. We also extend this to policies that have a people impact that are owned by other parts of the organisation, for example the ethics policy.

Our future vision is to create a more productive workforce and for Network Rail to be a more desirable place to work. Future initiatives such as digital signalling and intelligent infrastructure will continue to broaden the diversity of skills required to make a “better railway for a better Britain”.

**Our disability policy**
Network Rail has a policy of not discriminating against potential and current employees due to their age, disability, employment status, gender, health, marital status, sexual preference, membership or non-membership of a trade union, nationality, race, religion, social class or other non-job-relevant personal characteristics.

Reasonable adjustments will, where possible, be made to support new employees with a disability and those returning to work after injury or from a period of illness.

Network Rail offers training and development opportunities to staff to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills to help us deliver for our customers, and also to help our people achieve their full potential.

**Employee engagement**
Each year Network Rail runs a series of business briefings, aimed at updating internal colleagues on what’s happening across the business, and providing opportunities for staff to raise questions directly to senior management. Business briefings are held at 11 locations around the country to allow as many employees as possible to attend. Approximately 6,000 employees attend the briefings each year, and material from those briefings is made available on the company’s intranet for those who cannot attend.

Our intranet is updated daily with news from around the business, as well as information on the major industry and political events that impact Network Rail, and weekly round-up emails are circulated to the whole business. Our monthly internal magazine, Network, is also available to read in hard copy or via our intranet.

In September 2017 Network Rail carried out its periodic employee engagement survey. Over 21,000 employees completed the survey, an increase of 5 percentage points on previous participation levels. Teams are now working to address this feedback from employees.