

# Our road to inclusion gathers pace

**Public sector equality duty annual progress report  
April 2018 - March 2019**



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## Building inclusion into our work



### **Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive**

Being inclusive is the fair and just way to operate, and is vital to sustain a viable business environment and society. This is particularly important for the strategic road network as it contributes to society by helping people get to work, to stay in touch with family and friends, and to access vital services such as healthcare and education. By providing easy access to transport and related services, we help to build a stronger, fairer economy. We are delivering the largest investment in our strategic road network in a generation with a focus on safety, delivery and customers. But we must also do this in a way that is inclusive for those who travel on our roads, live near them, maintain them and keep them flowing.

Every single person working at Highways England, as well as in our supply chain, has equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) responsibilities. That is why I have taken the opportunity to promote inclusion and I encourage others to do so in their everyday work and wherever opportunities arise. We must have conversations with our diverse range of customers, our staff, our partners, and listen to their different needs and use individual and collective influence to shape what we deliver.

This report provides a flavour of some of the ways we have already delivered, and will deliver inclusive services in the future. It highlights the importance and need for individuals to take personal responsibility for inclusiveness to make a positive social difference through all that we do. Over the last few years I have witnessed increasing energy and involvement in promoting equality and inclusion. This will accelerate in Highways England as we deliver the government's second Road Investment Strategy.

## Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives

### Our overarching Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) objective

Highways England will embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into all areas of our business, driving real changes in how we work with our customers and communities, our supply chain and our employees.

Each of our three supporting objectives are led by a senior champion who oversees a working group responsible for delivering specific activities.

Our customers and communities	Our Supply chain	Our employees
<p><b>Led by Mel Clarke</b> - Customer Service Director</p> <p><b>Ambition</b> To put people at the heart of what we do by understanding and considering different needs of customers and communities in delivering services.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> We will achieve this by consulting with our customers and neighbouring communities to ensure we understand and consider their diverse needs.</p>	<p><b>Led by Malcolm Dare</b> - Executive Director Procurement &amp; Commercial</p> <p><b>Ambition</b> To lead improvements of how all parts of society view and experience the highways sector.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> By 2020 all our key suppliers will have improved their StART scores by 15%. (StART is an assessment and alignment tool used by Highways England for some high-value contracts. It outlines EDI expectations, and how performance is measured where decisions impact on customer and communities. It also sets out expectations for creating a diverse workforce).</p>	<p><b>Led by San Johal</b> - Executive Director of Human Resources (succeeded by Nick Merry in Spring 2019)</p> <p><b>Ambition</b> To become a high performing organisation with an engaged, modernised and innovative workforce.</p> <p><b>Objective</b> We will create a more diverse workforce that is managed, developed and led in an inclusive manner.</p>

**This report provides examples from April 2018 to March 2019 demonstrating how we are working towards achieving our objectives.**

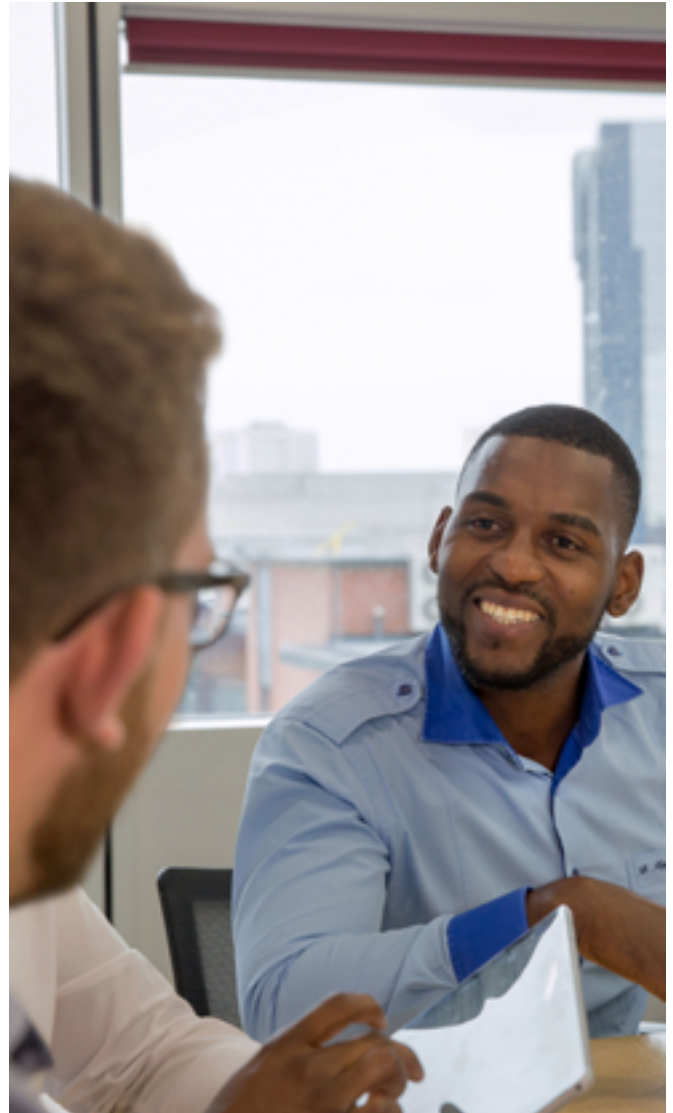
## **Our EDI Executive Sub-group reflect on our journey**

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Executive Sub-group reviews performance and sets the direction for improving how we deliver against our public sector equality duty. Our senior champions reflect on our journey to date.

### **Peter Mumford, Executive Director of Major Projects and Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Executive Sub-group:**

“When I reflect on the progress that has been made since our 2015 objectives were set, I believe there is much to be proud of, both at Highways England and across our supply chain. What strikes me most is the genuine desire for change, creating greater understanding of the value that EDI brings to delivering our imperatives.

“It is clear however that much work remains to be done. As a sector we must be relentless in our drive towards delivering a truly inclusive environment that brings about the benefits of EDI to our organisations and the people who work in them.”



**Mel Clarke, Customer Service Director, Operations:**

“Our aim has always been to get better at listening to the diverse views of our customers and the communities around our network. Early on our priorities were about getting processes, tools and guidance in place and improving our capability to facilitate this approach. What we are seeing as a result is greater confidence and enthusiasm around this subject, people considering EDI as business as usual, and obtaining examples that demonstrate how the recommended approaches are being used to deliver good outcomes for our customers.”

**Malcolm Dare, Executive Director of Commercial and Procurement:**

“Having joined the company in early 2019, I am very pleased to see Highways England and our suppliers developing capability, visibility and commitment to EDI, including the willingness to share approaches and good practice, so that as a sector we become more inclusive and accessible.

“We have become more demanding in our EDI expectations through our supplier contracts and performance measures. With £25.3 billion proposed to deliver the next Road Investment Strategy - indicative of the confidence government has in our joint capability to deliver ambitious, cost-effective and socially responsible schemes - this is the right approach.

“However, we are not complacent about our ability to make further progress as challenges remain significant. This growth in infrastructure investment is creating a demand for additional workers in an environment where there are already skills shortages which will get worse if we do not enhance the attractiveness of the

industry, increase productivity via a variety of means and attract a far more diverse workforce of all ages. We collectively must create working environments that are more equal, diverse and inclusive so that people from a wider talent pool are able to take up opportunities that allow them to develop and perform to their full potential.

“If we do not do this how will we have the workforce required to deliver the infrastructure, economic and social benefits required by the government? We are fully committed to working with our industry partners to deliver the necessary change.”

**San Johal, Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development:**

“A lot of effort has been put into outreach work and targeted initiatives to address under-representation as part of long-term planning. In the past couple of years, we have built collaborative relationships with external organisations including the armed forces to bring talented individuals into our organisation.

“We have also encouraged and experienced the expansion of networks for our people to empower them to help shape policy through their different views and diverse experiences. We are continuing to focus on culture change which aims at delivering inclusive working practices fit for the modern working environment.”

## Our customer and communities work this year focused on:

- delivering better outcomes for our customers and communities
- methods to gain a wider insight on inclusion
- demonstrating what inclusive customer service means across our business.

### Delivering better outcomes for our customers and communities

Throughout the first road investment period we've worked hard to develop guidance, processes and tools which give us, and our supply chain, the capability to deliver long-lasting outcomes for the customers and communities we serve. We have embedded equality, diversity and inclusion into our procurement, engagement and decision-making processes so that the impacts of our services and schemes on our customers are always considered. We are continuing to make sure that we, and our partners, deliver accessible infrastructure while considering the wider ways we can help the communities we work alongside. The following examples provide a snapshot of some of the ways we have been listening to, and working in tandem with, our customers and the communities who rely on our roads.

#### The M5 Oldbury Viaduct renewal scheme

Highways England is working in partnership with our supplier BMV to renew the M5 Oldbury Viaduct. This is the largest concrete repair project ever carried out in the UK, as well as currently being the largest scaffolding project in Europe. The 11 metre high elevated section of road cuts through the mixed industrial and residential area of Sandwell, home to approximately 320,000 residents and many thousands of businesses.

One of our priorities is to encourage economic opportunities in this area, utilising local skills and leaving a lasting positive legacy for the region. As well as a host of outreach initiatives, the scheme project team is working with national homelessness charity, CRISIS, employing 12 homeless people as operatives on the scheme.

With such a large scheme impacting on so many people, we're working hard to minimise disruption and develop a good understanding of the local community and their diverse needs. Gurdwara Amrit Parchar Dharmik Diwan is a Sikh place of worship next to the M5 on the Birmingham Road. In consideration of increased traffic to the Gurdwara during religious events and celebrations, our project team worked with the community to arrange closures outside of peak times. We also erected bespoke Punjabi signage, providing important information for those travelling to the Gurdwara.

Our approach to inclusive working has earned recognition across the construction sector. The M5 Oldbury Viaduct renewal scheme has been awarded 'Diversity and Inclusion Initiative of the Year' by the Construction News Talent Awards, and a Highways England supplier recognition award for 'Building Capability and Capacity'. The scheme has also been recognised by the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS), an independent organisation dedicated to improving public perception of the construction industry. The scheme is ranked in the top 5% of UK construction sites by the CCS, and has been nominated for a 2019 National Site Award.



## The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon

This £1.5 billion improvement scheme includes a major new bypass to the south of Huntingdon and upgrades to 21 miles of the A14. Once completed, it will boost the local and national economy and cut up to 20 minutes off journeys along this route. The work we do today on nationally important infrastructure projects will have far-reaching effects for generations to come. So when we're designing roads to meet the needs of the people who'll use them, we also consider the needs of our neighbours and communities.

### How we're working with the community

- In October 2016 we opened a new Highways Academy in Huntingdon. The academy will train 129 apprentices and graduates during the A14 upgrade work. Courses in road construction and maintenance training enable the students to contribute to delivering the A14, as well as other road projects across the country.
- We set up food collection points at four sites along the A14 scheme in support of a local charity, Godmanchester Foodbank. The foodbank helps vulnerable people in the local community assisting over 240 adults and children with food parcels every month. Within a week we collected over 200 parcels of essential food items to donate to the charity. Our staff also worked as volunteers at the foodbank warehouse, helping to weigh, sort and store the donated food.
- By delivering a donation of office furniture (previously used at one of our temporary sites) our A14 project team helped East Anglia Children's Hospice to save around £4,000.
- We installed new fencing, and designed and built an environmental sensory area, at Offord Primary School.
- The A14 was our first road scheme to join the Armed Forces Covenant. This covenant commits to working with the armed forces,

helping ex-servicemen, women and spouses into work at the end of, or during their active duty.

- We were able to assist a local resident, who uses an electric wheelchair, to access a friend's home for social visits. Members of our A14 team designed, built and installed an access ramp to help these friends stay connected.

### Our M3 junction 9 improvement scheme - using Future Ready techniques

Our supply chain partner WSP worked with us to deliver an improvement project on the M3 junction 9. To understand the social impact of the scheme on the local community, we used an approach called Future Ready.

This approach considers the demographics and social aspects connected to road design such as:

- an ageing population
- a rise in personal loneliness linked to the increase of one-person households
- health and wellbeing access to exercise
- the rise of online connectivity/shopping combined with the decline of traditional social places (such as high streets) resulting in communities becoming less active and socially integrated.

The Future Ready approach considers ways to future-proof road design to account for these potential circumstances and behaviours. We used varied methods of communication, including 3D visuals, to discuss the design of the scheme with the local community. As a result of their feedback we improved access to local shopping amenities for those using mobility scooters, as well as improved access to cycle routes and footpaths in the area.

The scheme design also makes it easier for road users to get to nearby areas of natural beauty such as the South Downs National Park, supporting our long-term social ambitions for a healthy and integrated society.

### **Our volunteering programme-**

**Helps our people take up to three days of paid leave each year to work as a volunteer in schools or disadvantaged communities**

### **Outreach**

We support schools through outreach work. Ellen Harrison, a regional chair of our Women in Leadership network, visited the Batley Girls' High School careers event with some colleagues.

“We had a fantastic day with 110 pupils building bridges out of spaghetti and playdough. It was great fun helping them explore their ideas: the properties of different materials, and discovering what shapes make strong structures. We finished off with a competition to determine which bridge was the strongest. We were seriously impressed with their creativity, willingness to try different things and the brilliant structures they created. We hopefully inspired some of the students to consider a future in our industry.”



Pictured above: pupils having a fun day creating bridges in a creative workshop.

### **Joining forces to clean up the park**

We joined forces with Keir, Walsall Council and Friends of Pleck Park (a local community group) to clear litter and vegetation in a neglected park next to a stretch of the M6. The park had become a hotspot for debris and discarded litter, prompting our volunteers to step in and help.

Councillor Louise Harrison (Walsall Council) Portfolio Holder for Clean and Green (waste policy) said: “I would like to thank these wonderful volunteers, who put in two days of hard graft to benefit the users of Pleck Park. They’ve done an amazing job. Our parks and greenspaces are the ‘green lungs’ of our neighbourhoods - they belong to us all.”

### **Supporting adults with disabilities**

The Leonard Cheshire charity provides support to adults with disabilities in residential homes, supported living environments and day centres. Oaklands, one of their residential homes, is set in six acres of garden in Garstang.

In September, a team that included partners from our supply chain, took part in a volunteering day at Oaklands. The group cleared overgrown shrubs from a pathway exposing a long-buried rockery.

Amy Williams, our Regional Change Lead for the North West said: “I only have a small garden at home and wasn’t expecting to enjoy this as much as I did. It was great to be able to see our achievements at the end of the day and we were privileged to be shown some of the work the charity does for adults with disabilities.”

## Finding accessible solutions for communities

### Romsey Bridge project

During the M27 Romsey Road bridge replacement scheme we needed to close sections of the road over a weekend to demolish parts of the bridge. Aware of the disruption that this could cause the local community, our project team provided taxi access for residents to shops and amenities during the closure, and worked tirelessly to reopen the road 16 hours ahead of schedule. As part of this improvement scheme we have also provided a ramp at the exit of a local footpath and built-in better access and visibility features at local road crossing points.

### M6 team and charity working together

During an improvement project on the M6 our team worked with the Cheshire Talking Newspaper Association, a charity for the blind and visually impaired. The charity helped us to provide scheme updates to their members via recordings which they distributed to over 300 people across the borough.

## The methods we are using to gain wider insight on inclusion

### A new collaborative forum on mobility and disability

In December 2018, we established a new National Mobility and Disabled Road Users Forum as a way of getting better insights into the needs of those with accessibility requirements. The forum includes representatives from the Joint Committee on Mobility for Disabled People, Disabled Motoring, IAM RoadSmart, Driving Mobility, Transport Focus and the Department for Transport. The forum meets biannually, with ad hoc 'task and finish' groups set up to take forward specific activities. Activities include

communication campaigns to address issues which concern road users with disabilities. This work will develop throughout 2019 and beyond.

### We are evolving the ways we listen and respond to our customers by:

- strengthening our capabilities to understand what people are thinking about us
- making sure the ways customers interact with us feel real and meaningful to them.

In 2018 we introduced more engagement tools to help us understand what our customers need, benchmark our performance and help us deliver great customer service.

### Community insight mapping

Commonplace is an online community insight mapping tool which we are using to enable people to comment on road schemes near them. Participation is easy, enabling comments to be submitted at any time, and making information quick and simple to share. Following successful trials the wider roll-out of this tool is scheduled to involve a number of schemes in 2019.

### The community benchmarking checklist

We are trialling a community benchmarking checklist across our schemes to gauge the effectiveness of our engagement with communities. This allows us to measure how well project teams are engaging with different groups of people within communities near road schemes.

We can then make sure that these insights help us to build better relationships with people who may be impacted by our work.



### Roadworks communications toolkit

We've produced a roadworks communications toolkit to enhance how we communicate and engage with our customers when we improve or maintain the road. The toolkit includes:

- guidance for project teams delivering road schemes on how to improve engagement with customers and stakeholders
- guidance on how to identify third sector and representative groups, and users with protected characteristics, who may be impacted by the scheme.

### Community satisfaction survey

During 2018 we ran a community satisfaction survey capturing feedback from 11,000 people. The feedback from this survey will be used to plan our work with communities in mind. Significant steps were built-in to ensure that the survey was accessible for all, including:

- cognitive testing of the questionnaire to ensure usability and clear understanding of the questions and purpose
- a facility to increase the font size on screen
- a contact email address included in the postcard and online survey for further help, if required (for example assistance with completion and alternative formats)
- colour coding used for those with visual impairments and dyslexia

- user testing of the questionnaire by equalities groups, including the Royal National Institute of Blind People, Age UK and Dyslexia Action.

## How we demonstrate what customer service means across our business

### Customer Service Week

During October 2018, as part of National Customer Service Week, we asked our people to think about the 'us' in customer. An inclusive working environment, where we all help each other, results in better relationships, better communication, and delivering better customer experiences.

### Activities included:

- an insight session on improving customer service delivered by Transport Focus
- 'join me' sessions where colleagues spent time in our Customer Contact Centre, hearing directly from our customers
- 'what's your driving style?' workshops to raise awareness about personal driving styles and the impact on other drivers
- sharing 'behind the road' stories about the work we do to keep the country connected.

We showcased some of these stories on social media, reaching 89,652 viewers across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

During the week, teams also channelled their positive experiences of customer service into helping the diverse customers and communities who are impacted by our work. Rhian Sharp, East Midlands Customer and Communications manager, explains why it was important to get involved this year: "Knowing that National Customer Service Week was on the horizon, we wanted to do something that would directly benefit the local community. It didn't take us long to learn about some of the things that concerned

people and identify an opportunity at a subway near to our network. The safety of using this subway was worrying a large number of people, including the young, the elderly, parents with children, cyclists and nearby residents. We also heard concerns from people working night shifts in the nearby hospital who rely on this route to get to and from work.

“To fix this problem we worked collaboratively with our supply chain partners and the local councillor. We improved the lighting and gave the walls of two subways a lick of anti-graffiti paint. This has created light, bright well-maintained spaces which members of the community say they now feel safe using.

“This volunteering experience highlighted to me that sometimes it’s not just our work on the big schemes that make a difference. By listening to local people we can often do little things that make a practical difference to everyday life and accessibility.”



## Our work with our supply chain this year focused on:

- increasing visible commitment
- developing sector EDI capability in tandem with our suppliers
- measuring success.

### Increasing visible commitment - chief executive officer event

Commitment starts from the top. Our Chief Executive Jim O’Sullivan invited a core group of 13 chief executives and managing directors from our biggest spending suppliers to an event. The event focused on the case for change; where we are now and what needs to be done to drive change. The session provided an opportunity to discuss current inclusion activity across the sector and the aspirations of leaders in attendance. It was acknowledged that more could be done to collectively drive change, especially in relation to increasing visible commitment.

As a follow up to the event, participants were asked to share an update on their EDI actions and progress. This prompted attendees to review, compare and benchmark their own actions and approaches on EDI, collaborating on initiatives and the use of data and analytics to develop and support strategies.

### Supplier Diversity Forum event

The Supplier Diversity Forum (SDF) was formed in 2010, and has delivered an extensive programme of activity to accelerate the pace of change in the sector. This year the Forum hosted an event at Birmingham’s International Convention Centre during National Inclusion Week. The theme was ‘valuing people at work’ and focused on growing inclusive working environments and cultures at project level.

### **The event welcomed over 130 attendees from across our projects supply chain and provided a platform for:**

- practical ideas and tools for growing an inclusive culture using examples from across our projects
- inspiration from the action and commitment of the speakers and knowledge share sessions
- opportunities to network, share and learn.

Delegates heard examples from colleagues on the M5, A14 schemes and operational delivery east region on how, by working together, we can shape and influence a more inclusive work culture.

Nick Marr, a leadership coach talked about his experience of the Metropolitan Police journey. Briony Wickenden from the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) shared the Supply Chain Sustainability School Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) toolkit.

Feedback from suppliers who attended the event was extremely positive. Delegates told us they felt inspired to make a change within their own businesses; share what they had learned and challenge current practice.

The engagement group has continued to widen the reach of the SDF through development of masterclasses, extending the invitation list to the annual event to include project teams, and the use of a LinkedIn group. This has increased the awareness and engagement levels across our supplier businesses.

### **Developing sector EDI capability in tandem with our suppliers**

#### **Supplier Diversity Forum research**

The results of the SDF research project looking at why people are not attracted to, or retained by the sector was shared across the forum. They revealed there is a lack of understanding of what the highways industry does and what career choices are offered. The SDF is now identifying actions from this research to take forward including more co-ordinated outreach and recruitment activities and how the impact of these can be measured.

#### **The SDF group is developing an EDI threshold for members to gauge the effectiveness of their inclusion activity relating to employment, customer service and community engagement focusing on:**

- visible and confident leadership on EDI
- key elements of the business case for EDI
- attracting and recruiting diverse talent good practice
- flexible working approaches.

#### **Fairness, inclusion and respect sessions**

This year, together with the Supply Chain Sustainability School, we ran sessions on Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) with the aim of developing capability and understanding across our business and our supply chain. The sessions were delivered to colleagues in some of our Asset Delivery teams who directly manage the maintenance, renewal and improvement schemes on our road network. 17 Highways England colleagues and 64 participants from 39 supplier companies increased their knowledge of and understanding of why EDI is essential to our operational success. Many individuals involved have gone on to train as FIR ambassadors.

**Following on from last year's Strategic Alignment Assessments (StART) we identified the following common areas of risk across our supply chain:**

- no EDI plan or strategy
- no measurement or monitoring
- lack of visible commitment and leadership of EDI
- limited evidence of community activity or engagement
- limited evidence of involvement of own supply chain in EDI activities.

Suppliers performing well in these areas were asked to run masterclasses so that others could learn from their approaches. We are now scheduling sessions for 2019.

### Masterclass themes and providers

**Arcadis and Balfour Beatty** - Increasing visible commitment and leadership.

**Skanska and Mott MacDonald** - How to embed EDI into the core of your business.

### Attendees and outcomes

Over 80 suppliers attended the sessions and reported that they found them beneficial for networking, understanding what 'good' looks like and being given practical take-aways. Several suppliers have reported they are already embedding what they learned in their businesses.

The collaborative performance framework is a monitoring tool we use to ensure suppliers are delivering our projects as set out in their contracts. 'Peer to peer' sessions were organised for our operations and asset delivery suppliers to understand how we can better measure their EDI performance. This resulted in us simplifying the EDI performance metric so that measures are proportionate to the contract and, or company. The expectation is that more suppliers will feel able to contribute to the delivery of EDI actions in a way that is meaningful across our projects.

## Measuring success

### Benchmarking activity

Since 2011 we have asked our suppliers to provide baseline workforce data for staff working on Highways England contracts (and previous contracts). In addition to data about age, gender, disability and ethnicity, this year we added religion, belief and sexual orientation data as categories.

### Outcomes this year include:

- an increase in the number of invited participants
- the highest number of responding companies since the survey started - 44 companies and the highest survey population of 58,399
- the total sample size has increased by 10% from last year.

### Data was shared between suppliers to:

- enable individual organisations to compare their workforce profiles with peers
- promote discussion on shared equality issues, their causes and solutions
- identify trends needing further investigation or targeted activity to address issues
- adopt best practice, develop diverse workforces and build inclusive cultures.

Our suppliers report that this work has continued to drive a better understanding of their own organisation's market position. In many cases, it has directly improved their ability to make lasting change; using the results to share messages and rich sector data with their own business teams. The benchmarking subgroup drove this year's activity and sourced and collated case studies from companies that have either increased their data collection and usage or could identify actions that have impacted on the diversity of their workforce. Following requests from our supply chain, we are collaborating with Network Rail, Transport for London and HS2 next year to align our benchmarking activity and to play back our findings collectively to our supply chains.

### **Collaborative performance framework case studies**

Our collaborative performance framework is the primary tool we use to monitor how well suppliers delivering our projects are meeting the requirements detailed in their contracts. Performance related to EDI is rated with a score of between two and ten. This year, 89% of projects are routinely scoring above six, representing good performance.

We have also identified and gathered examples of good practice that are now shared across our supply chain and a number are referenced throughout this report.

Kier directly manages maintenance, renewal and improvement schemes on our road network in the south east of England (Area 3). They set up their own EDI group within the Area 3 supplier community to actively promote equality and diversity. Doing this as a community has allowed them to promote topics as a collective, increasing the amount of people reached and the impact it has upon those companies.

Members undertook a self-assessment of their EDI policy and an employee demographic survey. This produced useful data and understanding of areas for improvement which has contributed to the development of an EDI action plan. The group is now evolving to provide a safe and confidential community environment where issues and good practice can be shared.

Ian Fogarty of Maurer UK says: "Getting involved in the EDI group with Kier has opened our eyes to the true scope of what EDI covers. It has helped us look at our own policies from a different perspective, rather than just what we must do legally. Sharing information and getting ideas of what others do has also helped us to implement new things within our own business, for example we recently got all our staff to carry out unconscious bias training - which was a real eye opener for us all and got a lot of my colleagues talking, which we see as a real benefit."

### **Suppliers delivering the M5 Oldbury Viaduct scheme have proactively engaged with local organisations to:**

- employ local apprentices
- source people from a diverse pool of talent
- employ disabled and long-term unemployed people.

The scheme partnered with Sandwell College, Job Centre Plus, Think Sandwell, ex-forces agencies, The Princes Trust and Women into Construction. They developed a bespoke marketing campaign aimed at reaching the widest pool of people.

The team held meetings with organisations, such as local disabled charity Ideal for All, Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations and Think Sandwell to identify individuals



looking for work and assisted subcontractors with their own apprentice schemes. As a result of the collaboration, the team has been able to offer work placements to people with learning difficulties and increase the diversity of their apprentice scheme with a mix of 38% non-white British and 25% female apprentices.

## Recruiting for success

Through our supply chain capacity and capability strategy, we identified inclusive recruitment as a core theme to attract talent from a wider and more diverse talent pool. Twelve months on from the initial research, which involved more than 127 of our extended supply chain, we asked them to share what the effects had been. 69% reported a positive business impact, citing outcomes such as:

- changes to their policies and practices
- diversity among hiring teams and interview panels
- increased engagement and 'buy-in' from senior leadership
- better understanding of the importance of inclusive recruitment.

We have increased our capability in recruiting inclusively. Our focus now will be to look at the impact this activity has on the changing demographic of our workforce.

### Our employment work this year focused on:

- attracting and retaining diverse talent
- developing inclusive leaders
- cultivating staff networks.

### Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce

Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce that is representative of society is important.



This report contains a few examples of outreach projects and initiatives that are being taken to improve representation.

Our gender pay gap 2019 report is based on a snapshot of data for 5 April 2018. It showed that our median gender pay gap was 9.6%, an increase from the -1.4% we reported in 2018. Our pay gap remains substantially lower than the current UK pay gap of 17.9%, according to the Office for National Statistics' latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

### Our workforce is currently made up as follows:

**34.9%** of our employees are female

**9.7%** of employees are of black, Asian and minority ethnic

**3.62%** of our employees have declared that they have a disability

**2.21%** have given their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual or self described

Our monitoring activity will continue as new activities have an opportunity to advance and enable us to benchmark progress. Our collective workforce monitoring will be part of the evidence used for setting our refreshed objectives for 2020 and beyond.

The following approaches describe what we have been doing to create an inclusive working environment that values the diversity of our workforce.

### Mental health

On World Mental Health Day (10 October) our Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan and Executive Director of HR San Johal re-signed our employer pledge for Time to Change, five years after we first joined the campaign. This reaffirms our commitment to supporting people who experience mental health problems.



Above: Jim O'Sullivan, San Johal, Sarah Restall of Time to Change and Andy Brellisford one of our Mental Health Champions.

### This year we ran several initiatives as part of the Time for Change campaign, including:

- increasing the number of mental health first aiders from 40 in 2017 to 165
- all mental health first aiders are now identifiable via their yellow lanyards
- we're maintaining confidential regional logs to record the types of issues identified and how support is being provided
- in June 2018 we held a conference for 70 mental health first aiders to build capability. It involved speakers from the Samaritans and Time to Change
- a 'Go First' training session to encourage first aiders to make approaches to people if they have a concern, and not just wait to be approached
- launching PAM Life - a holistic wellbeing service which offers support on mental health and wellbeing.

Andy Brellisford works in project management and is one of our mental health first aiders. He took the role after suffering depression himself and he wanted his experience to help others and end the stigma of mental illness in the workplace.

As a former traffic officer, he has attended a number of horrible incidents on the motorway and after four years in his role he suffered from a severe bout of depression.

As Andy explains: "I underwent cognitive behaviour therapy and from that I realised I'd suffered from depression since I was a child, but I hadn't recognised the symptoms. Looking back now I can see I was full of despair, had physical pain and was struggling to communicate with people. I was displaying traits that weren't normal for me."

His managers supported him giving him time off work to recover and helping him retrain to work in the control room rather than going back on the roads. However, he was still suffering from depression at times and said: "Some of the incidents in the control room would leave me in tears. Even though I had undergone therapy I knew I needed to do something else. That's when I started hypnotherapy. Rather than asking me about my depression the hypnotist wanted to know three good things that had happened to me that week. She then explained how the brain works and it started to make sense for me. After eight sessions I was only focusing on the positive. This proved to be the turning point."

It was then Andy began championing mental health. He now raises awareness about mental health problems at events across the business and makes sure there is a wellbeing element at every meeting he attends. He reiterates that he is there for people who might need help: "Sometimes people will tap me on the shoulder and ask me to speak to one of their colleagues to make sure they are okay. It's about making small interventions and being kind to people."

## Silver Award - Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

We have been awarded a silver award by the Ministry of Defence as part of their recognition scheme for employers supporting the armed forces. Robert Jaffier who is an asset and resource manager in operations and a Royal Naval Reservist Lieutenant Commander nominated us for the award.



The award was presented to Robert Jaffier and Ron Calderwood-Duncan, Head of Engagement and Culture Change by Air Vice Marshal (Retired) Aroop Mozumder CB, Honorary Air Commodore for No. 605 (County of Warwick) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force on Friday 2nd November at the National Memorial Arboretum.

### Since we signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2017 we have continued to support the armed forces community, by:

- employing and supporting reservists and veterans and providing reservists with up to 10 days paid special leave to attend training
- celebrating Armed Forces Day. This year we shared stories from two ex-military employees explaining what Armed Forces Day means to them
- launching our ex-military recruitment programme in 2018 to attract and support veterans to find new careers with us. The programme included an insight day in June for service leavers to find out more about us and the roles we can offer

- offering ex-military new starters a 'buddy'; someone who has experienced making the transition from military life to working for us.

**Nick Medicott is a project manager who applied through our ex-military programme after attending our insight day in June 2018 and started with us in November. Nick said:**

“The insight day gave me the opportunity to see at first-hand what the business had to offer service leavers and hear some stories from current veteran employees. It helped build networks and understand the values that would help veterans cross-match their own skillset to roles within Highways England. At the interview stage it was very reassuring that the two interviewers acknowledged my armed forces career and stated they were looking to see what skills would fit the business; in particular the new ways of working in Asset Delivery. My experience in MoD procurement was extremely useful.

“Since joining the team I have been given every piece of support a new employee could ask for: time to settle in and gain new skills, meet key stakeholders to the projects, scope to ask questions and plan for career development.

“My first two months have been extremely enjoyable meeting a very diverse workforce and I am now fully embedded, delivering benefits to the team and Highways England.”

**Care Leaver Covenant**

In October 2018 we signed the Care Leaver Covenant, which requires supporting organisations to provide support to individuals aged between 16 to 25 who are leaving care. Insight shows that they are disadvantaged when they leave education, seek employment and try to live independently, and that:

- care leavers are three times more likely to be out of work than their peers

- more than 1 in 4 young care leavers have 'sofa surfed'
- 14% have slept rough.

Initially we provided work experience placements during February-May 2019 consisting of two weeks for four care leavers. The individuals undertook general office and administrative duties, but most importantly had access to mentors for guidance and support. We now plan to extend activity across the business. In addition, twelve of our teams responded to an appeal to put together home starter kits for care leavers to help make their first place of independent living a home.

**Returners programme**

During 2018 we launched our second returners programme seeing six returners joining us in September to fill middle and senior manager roles. The programme provides individuals who have had a career break of two or more years with the opportunity to come back into the workplace and start to build their career again.

**What the programme offers:**

- the programme lasts for six months with the potential for individuals to find employment with us at the end
- in addition to line manager support, they receive a buddy who is a previous returner and a mentor
- additional coaching is provided by Women Returners Ltd
- returners have three touchpoint days where they get together to liaise with senior colleagues from different business areas in addition to offering development sessions

In 2017 we ran our first programme with 14 individuals who all stayed with us at the end of the programme.

## Developing an inclusive culture - performance and recognition

Our employee recognition scheme, High 5, was launched in October 2017 to encourage inclusion and wider recognition for our people. The scheme links performance to our values, behaviours, and business imperatives. It is an inclusive process that enables any colleague to formally recognise another person. They don't have to be in the same team or the same part of the organisation, and once submitted the nominations are displayed for everyone to see. Monitoring revealed that 11 percent of recognitions were given to and from colleagues in different parts of the organisation and 28,900 recognitions were made in this first year of operation far exceeding expectations. Teamwork was the most recognised value demonstrated by recipients.

## Talent management toolkit

At Highways England our focus is to enable people with valuable skills and behaviours to reach their potential and get into leadership and advanced specialist positions. As well as supporting individuals, this will help us meet our current and future business needs. To help achieve this we launched a talent management and succession planning approach initially for middle managers and specialists in senior leadership roles. By aligning to our performance process, line managers now have conversations about an individual's performance, potential and development plan simultaneously.

## Career pathways

It is important that individuals take control of their own development while also gaining access to the tools to support them in reaching their full potential. Our new interactive career pathways tool assists our people to plan their progression more effectively based on their

skills, strengths and preferences. It helps them identify targeted areas for development providing formal and informal methods of learning so that they are in the best possible position to apply for a role. Within the tool, employees can assess themselves against the competencies required for particular roles and search for current vacancies.

## Developing inclusive leaders

### Our Management Development Programme

We have continued the roll out of our Management Development Programme (MDP) which provides managers with practical training to support our values and drive high performance in an inclusive, respectful and engaging way. In addition, we have MDP ambassadors from the programme who help us embed MDP learning into all areas of our business. So far:

- 1,644 people managers have attended the MDP, which now forms part of corporate induction
- we have 209 MDP ambassadors
- we've launched MDP connect IT sessions to help explain how our core activities and values align - this has reached 5791 people across our organisation

Tim Reardon who is a director in our legal division and one of our MDP ambassadors said: "I feel closer to the organisation being part of MDP; much closer to my team, much closer to my colleagues on the executive team and everybody in the organisation. I think what the MDP has done is given a purpose and lifted the lid on the organisation.

"I hope that I listen better and take more account of what other people are telling me, and I hope that I'm bringing more of myself to the office.

I think it's very important that we give ourselves as much as we can to what we do in the office and not to separate us so much from our home life and work life. If we can bring our whole selves to the office I think that helps. Everyone has a huge amount to contribute and it's about unlocking the potential everyone has that can enable them to do a good job. I think this course is helping us to do that as it is encouraging us to have these conversations to get to know each other better."

## Cultivating staff networks

By developing/supporting a number of networks for colleagues, we are able to learn from different experiences. The networks help support a collective appreciation of diversity and inclusion and in many cases, we use the networks to critique our policy changes. We have used our internal communication channels to provide powerful articles on suicide awareness, cancer and fertility issues which encourages conversations about self-care and wellbeing.

We regularly publish articles and blogs to raise awareness of the networks, inclusion events and to provide personal insights into the issues that impact people with protected characteristics. Highways England's internal magazine has also included powerful articles on topics such as disability and LGBT+ issues as well as celebrating diversity through national and international events such as Black History Month.

### Our staff networks are as follows:

- Access for All - for people with a disability or with an interest in disability issues - with national and regional groups
- Leading Women - with national and regional groups
- LGBT+
- Menopause and Hormone group
- Armed Forces and Veterans group

- black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Network
- Carers network.

In February 2019 Peter Allen Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications, and sponsor of our LGBT+ Network spoke at an event hosted by Arup called 'The Journey to LGBT+ Inclusion in Transport'. Peter talked about the progression of our network and the importance of people being able to bring their whole self to work.



Highways England employees taking part in the Birmingham Pride event.

## Cross-business activities that are making a difference



### 2018 - Year of Engineering activities

The Year of Engineering presented a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the huge contribution that engineering makes to our country and to encourage a diverse range of young people to join the profession. The campaign provided fun and innovative ways to bring engineering to life and reach young people including under-represented groups by showing the positive and exciting ways our sector makes real improvements to people's lives.

- we were involved in 167 activities
- we promoted engineering to over 10,000 young people
- of these almost 50% were either female or from an ethnic minority background.

Members of our executive team visited Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick to engage in 'big conversations' to talk about career aspirations and how to address the challenges faced.



San Johal, our outgoing Executive Director of HR said: "It was an absolute pleasure to spend the day with so many bright young people. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to them about options available to them for careers in engineering and how an organisation like ours has exciting opportunities to offer in their area. I especially enjoyed chatting with young women of ethnic minorities not too dissimilar to my own, and how traditional expectations and norms often act as a barrier to realising their own true career aspirations."

The school said: "We loved discovering the projects that Highways England work on, and that it's not all about the roads we drive on."

### All seven of our regional control centres held open days.

For the first time we opened the doors to our regional control centres and invited families to come and find out about what we do, and how we manage the strategic road network.



Regional control centre employee taking part in a family open day event.

Over the course of the summer nearly 1000 members of the public visited seven control centres. Parents were encouraged to bring their children along to find out how a motorway is run from the control room, to meeting the traffic officers and project teams who carry out the engineering schemes. At our north east regional control centre visitors had a chance to look around a traffic officer vehicle, view the impact protection vehicles that protect the workforce and get a closer look of some of the portable signs as well as talk to some of our road safety partners and look around cars and motorbikes which are involved in road safety work.

Operations Manager Kim Taylor said: “We wanted to open the doors of the regional control centre and give people a real insight into the type of work we are involved in and what goes on behind the scenes to keep our roads running.”

### Highways UK

This flagship industry event took place during November 2018 at the NEC in Birmingham. We collaborated with 15 of our suppliers and 40 volunteers to give young people the opportunity to see what we do, the range of jobs on offer, and the difference we make to people’s lives. They had the opportunity to build Robocones (robotic cones), see Building Information Modelling - (BIM) in action, virtual reality, augmented reality and face recognition technology, and see the science behind concrete retaining walls as well as being able to use an excavator simulator.

Our own graduates and apprentices acted as group hosts, to further encourage students only a few years younger than themselves. The visit concluded with a structured discussion hour with our senior leaders called ‘big conversations’.

- 4,500 people attended
- 188 exhibitors were involved
- 700 people attended our CEOs speech in the main auditorium
- 75 Students participated from four schools across Birmingham and the Black Country
- Year of Engineering ran from January to December 2018, and in this period volunteering totalled 1,609 hours.

Liam Fletcher, Head of Design and Engineering from Shirelands Collegiate Academy said: “The event from our perspective was a fantastic success, not a single student came home without being inspired in one way or another, and I hope the event gave your stakeholders opportunities to understand the types of students we teach across the local schools.”

Andrew Dowding, Managing Director for Highways UK said: “It was a very positive addition to the show in every respect and without hesitation we would love you to do it again next year.”

### EDI training material

A new e-learning module, Highways England Equality Impact Assessment was launched this year for our employees. The module is aimed at those who are introducing or changing a policy, practice or guidance, organising an event, changing facilities or developing engagement approaches when delivering schemes or projects. It complements new guidance that we have produced. Colleagues have responded very positively to the new material and training. In addition, each directorate has their own EDI advocate to help raise awareness and provide advice. New guidance in the form of a compendium has been used for them to help build their skills.



As part of a Disability in Construction pilot, a group of suppliers were asked to create a document to help contractors consider the social impact on our communities and customers during construction work. In particular, to check that people with protected characteristics are not disproportionately affected. The new guidance was created by colleagues from Costain, Morgan Sindall, Balfour Beatty, BDV Recovery and Skanska in conjunction with various interested parties including Ian Streets (accessibility consultant), Hull Access Improvement Group, Rights and Equality Sandwell and West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre. The guidance has been used following its launch this spring.



## Look ahead



### **Peter Mumford Executive Director of Major Projects and Chair of the EDI Executive Sub-group**

Towards the end of 2019 we will decide what our refreshed and new objectives will be for the following five years. This will involve hearing from a diverse range of stakeholders to help us focus on what they and we think are the priorities. I also believe that we must increase the pace of change and therefore make quicker progress towards our goals over the next period, especially in areas where our sector is falling behind others.

I am confident that with the impetus that I see building year-on-year, we will focus on activities that deliver even better outcomes for our diverse customer base and staff as quickly as possible. So that we can drive momentum and realise the better outcomes we want, we will be publishing the details of our EDI objectives in 2020, and working with our supply chain and colleagues to ensure ongoing commitment to delivering a range of activities over the next period.

<b>Glossary</b>	
<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>AD</b>	Asset Delivery
<b>BAME</b>	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
<b>BIM</b>	Building Information Modelling
<b>CCS</b>	Considerate Constructors Scheme
<b>CECA</b>	Civil Engineering Contractors Association
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CPF</b>	Collaborative Performance Framework (internal monitoring tool to text supply chain performance).
<b>CRISIS</b>	National charity helping young people out of homelessness.
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>EDI</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
<b>FIR</b>	Fairness, Inclusion and Respect
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HS2</b>	High Speed 2 - Railway project
<b>IAM</b>	Institute of Advanced Motoring
<b>LGBT+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and and other sexual orientations and gender identities
<b>MDP</b>	Management Development Programme
<b>MOD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>NMDRF</b>	National Mobility and Disabled Road User Forum
<b>PAM Life</b>	Internal Highways England wellbeing and support facility
<b>PSED</b>	Public Sector Equality Duty
<b>RCC</b>	Regional Control Centre(s)
<b>RNIB</b>	Royal National Institute for the Blind
<b>RIS</b>	Road Investment Strategy. The £15 billion funding allocated to Highways England includes £11.4 billion relating to the first five-year Road Investment Strategy (2015-20). The remaining funding has been committed to the first year of the next road period (2020-25).
<b>SDF</b>	Supplier Diversity Forum
<b>SRN</b>	Strategic road network - the roads that Highways England manages.
<b>StART</b>	Strategic assessment and alignment tool (used for certain high-level contracts)
<b>Transport Focus (TF)</b>	The Independent watchdog responsible for gathering the views of SRN users and using these to shape policy and decision-making.
<b>TfL</b>	Transport for London

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