



'Spotlight on...' equality, diversity and inclusion

Improving Gender Balance in Recruitment

Costain is recognised as one of the UK's leading smart infrastructure solutions companies. Our purpose is to improve people's lives by deploying technology-based engineering solutions to meet urgent national needs across the UK's energy, water and transportation infrastructures. At the heart of our purpose are great people and as a responsible business - our goal is to make Costain a safe and great place to work where our people thrive and can be at their best every day.

We have taken significant proactive action in recent years to address the lack of diversity and inherent poor culture of inclusion in our industry. This case study demonstrates the progress that we have made in transforming our culture and challenging industry norms that has led to our inclusion in the Times Top 50 Employers for Women for the last three consecutive years.

Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy was developed to help Costain reflect the communities that it serves and enhance our inclusive culture, embracing diverse thinking.

The EDI strategy links to our wider corporate objectives and is embedded into all business activities. We strive to attract, develop and retain the very best people to work for and alongside us, recruited and developed by merit. Our goal is to have a workforce that is representative of society. In meeting our goal, we will be accessible, diverse, inclusive and better able to deliver smarter solutions meeting the needs of our customers.

We are committed to closing our gender pay gap and creating a truly diverse team, and have seen encouraging progress in addressing our gender balance in recent years:

- Our senior female population has grown from 12% to 22% over the last four years
- Over 50% of our graduate intake are female.
- Women make up 24% of our employee population, increasing by 2% in the past two years.

Whilst our progress is positive, we know that there is still more to do to close our gender pay gap, which has reduced to 24.25% (median).

Attraction

Inspiring individuals to join /return to our industry is a focus area of our EDI strategy. We have a youth engagement programme that has reached over 35,000 young people in the past two years, promoting science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects in schools. We have also provided over 1100 days of work experience in the past two years. These interventions are crucial to help us to showcase what the industry has to offer and will in the long-term help us to build a more diverse team.

Mentoring is an important interaction and we have sponsored female employees to take part in a 'Big Sister' mentoring programme led by the social enterprise, Girls Out Loud. The mentors benefit from the relationship too, improving morale and supporting continuous professional development.

Case Study: Costain



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We partner with Princes Trust to facilitate 'Get into Construction' programmes that offer a potential route to employment for disadvantaged young people and the chance to learn transferable skills.

Recruitment

We are committed to ensuring fair and equal opportunity to those wishing to apply, interview and progress at Costain. We made positive changes to our recruitment processes to help increase the diversity mix of our workforce.

In line with feedback from our existing female graduates and our Women's Network we started advertising our graduate opportunities via Debut, the graduate recruitment app, instead of only via traditional channels. We promoted this with our feeder universities and have seen a significant increase in the number of graduate applications received.

We also increased the number of feeder universities that we have relationships with, selecting institutions with more diverse student populations.

With attendance figures at graduate recruitment fairs falling, we now host our own career events. This has been very effective - our events are always over-subscribed. To help us increase the number of female applicants we also run female-only events which have been extremely successful and, applicants tell us, a significant factor in their decision to apply.

In recognition of the benefits a diverse workforce can bring, especially with differing perspectives and skills, we have also:

- Removed grade requirements from our applications
- Opened the programme to non-traditional degree subjects to improve the pool for talent
- De-personalised cv's to prevent potential unconscious biases in hiring managers

Despite the high number of applications received annually we contact all female graduates, including those unsuccessful, to share feedback. This is important as a high percentage of people leave the industry at a young age - unhelpful to an already limited talent pool.

For senior experienced hires and experienced hires, we aim to have a minimum of two females on each short-list. 40% of 'key hires' (roles of strategic importance) in the last 2 years were filled by women. The gender balance on our PLC board has increased over the last 4 years from 20% to 43%, exceeding the 33% target set by the Hampton Alexander Review.



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Case Study: Youth Engagement programme delivers a record breaking gender split in early years recruitment

Industry calculations estimate that "the annual shortfall of engineers and technicians has increased by 25% to 69,000" (Engineering UK, 2017), this presents an opportunity for the industry to attract diverse talent to help address this gap.

Our EDI strategy targets improvements to our graduate and apprentice recruitment to ensure that the process is inclusive and additional effort is made to engage minority groups including women. We have a significant youth engagement programme aimed at encouraging young women to pursue a career in STEM.

Interventions include:

Interventions	Impact
STEM school engagement programmes across the UK with focus on female STEM ambassadors as active role models.	<p>Every year, our target is to engage 15,000 young people through our STEM school engagement programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">35,000 young people engaged in science, technology, engineering and maths activities in the last two years.
Partnered with the online career's platform U-Explore, creating an interactive careers world that provides careers advice to 13-19 year-olds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">U-Explore survey data shows young women's attitude to our job roles have improved, with a 14% increase in likes across all profiled rolesThe U-Explore data also demonstrates that the percentage of students [aged 13-19 years-old] who say they have experienced an 'Employer Encounter', claim it has helped them to decide what they would like to do in the future. 51% for careers events, 44% for employer visits, 61% for work experience and 32% for enterprise days.
Host our own careers events including female only sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Our most recent event was over- subscribed by 30%60 young people attended our 'Future Female Talent' event in London. Of those attending, 30% applied for graduate positions and 44% of those that applied were successful.
Introduced de-personalised CV's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In recent years 53% of our graduate recruits were female [compared to 10% in 2016] and 30% BAME [compared to 14% in 2016].

Summary

Our statistics demonstrate that we have driven significant change with regards to inspiring women into our industry.

Our leaders have committed to continue investment, ensuring that our early years recruitment remains balanced now and in the future, consistent with the equally significant efforts for senior recruitment and attraction.