



Spotlight on...

equality, diversity and inclusion

**CONSIDERATE
CONSTRUCTORS
SCHEME**

Case Study: Costain

Implementing a Religion, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage Network

Costain established its Religion, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage Network (REACH) in June 2019. The network is one of six employee networks in Costain which focus on supporting, educating and connecting our employees on the matters of religion, ethnicity and culture. REACH has been essential in highlighting the challenges faced by non-white colleagues and being part of the solution in tackling these head on.

The REACH network is led by a volunteer Chair and steering group and is supported by a senior sponsor. The steering group is divided into workstreams such as Events, Communications, Data and Results, Secretarial activities, Site Engagement and Mentoring and Learning. Both the Chair and the senior sponsor form part of the Inclusion Board, which consists of all the employee network Chairs, their senior sponsors and the Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. The Inclusion Board includes three Executive Board members and is responsible for determining inclusive practice throughout the organisation and attaining Board approval.

The REACH network has been extremely proactive in educating employees around the business about religious and cultural celebrations. They have often worked alongside the other networks to host events which were intersectional by nature, such as the Chinese New Year Lunch and Learn, with the Parenting and Carers Network, where we all learned about the traditions behind the event and made origami dragons together.

The murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 were a real turning point for our business in realising the need for further support for our non-white colleagues. It raised the conversation about race whilst highlighting the concerns which some of our white colleagues had addressing ethnicity and colour. It developed a united front of wanting to understand and be better.

As part of Costain's commitment to continuous improvement, we hold an annual membership with Business in the Community (BITC), with a core focus on "race". We had previously retained a membership with a core focus on gender, however we identified that we needed to do more to build support around ethnicity. In conjunction with our REACH Network, our BITC Race Advisor held a number of "Let's Talk About Race" sessions with different areas of the business. These sessions have continued to happen in 2021 and developed the fluency of senior leadership teams in talking about ethnicity and created a safe space to ask questions they may not have felt able to previously ask.

Based on the information and feedback captured from these sessions, the REACH Network formulated five proposals to take to Costain's Inclusion Board. These were shared with the REACH Network members (and those that attended the initial Costain Let's Talk About Race session) in a survey to review, rate and comment on to ensure full buy-in from the community the Network represents. The proposals covered topics such as: allowing the network to audit available training modules, participating in the recruitment and promotion processes, a REACH specific objective to increase diversity at all business levels for sector directors and members of the executive board, and participating in the formulation of the company's engagement survey. The proposals were generally accepted by the Inclusion Board and consequently have formed part of the Network's strategy.

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Furthermore, the REACH Network launched an internal reverse mentoring scheme, where members of the network were paired up with senior leaders to bring perspective of ethnicity to business decision making. This has been hugely successful with the number of senior leaders oversubscribed. As a result of its success, the scheme will be extended to the other networks for its next cohort of leaders. Costain became a signatory to the 2020 BITC Race at Work Charter through which Costain has pledged to undertake the following actions:

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
<p>STEM school engagement programmes across the UK with focus on female STEM ambassadors as active role models.</p>	<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.
<p>Partnered with the online career’s platform U-Explore, creating an interactive careers world that provides careers advice to 13-19 year-olds.</p>	<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 roles • The 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.
<p>Host our own careers events including female only sessions</p>	<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.
<p>Introduced de-personalised CV’s</p>	<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.