

# More women in engineering 'an absolute necessity' for future of transport

- government calls on more women to consider career in engineering, helping to deliver major transport infrastructure projects like HS2 and Heathrow expansion
- follows meeting of senior women in transport this week to explore barriers facing women in sector, from perceptions of 'men in hard hats' to parent policies
- female engineers needed to meet growing skills demands in transport industry, with over 340,000 extra workers needed in the sector by 2033

The government has today (23 June 2019) called on women of all ages to consider a career in engineering, making clear the transport industry must diversify to meet growing skills demands.

With women currently representing only 12% of the engineering workforce and 18% of the transport sector workforce, hiring more women is essential for the delivery of major transport infrastructure projects like HS2 and Heathrow expansion.

It is estimated that by 2033, there will be a combined shortfall of around 341,000 jobs in the sector.

The call follows the convening of a roundtable on women in transport this week by the Department for Transport's Permanent Secretary Bernadette Kelly, attended by senior female leaders in the sector. Representatives from the Royal Academy of Engineering, Ford, Heathrow Airport, Network Rail, the Women in Maritime Taskforce, and Virgin Atlantic were present.

Key points of discussion included unconscious bias, challenging perceptions, and parent policies.

To coincide with [International Women in Engineering Day](#) today, the government is also celebrating the success of the [Year of Engineering](#) campaign in increasing the awareness of opportunities in engineering. The campaign delivered an estimated 5.1 million experiences of engineering for young people in 2018 – far exceeding the one million target.

Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport, Bernadette Kelly, said:

We want to challenge traditional perceptions of engineering to ensure our transport industry has the skills it needs for the future.

This isn't just the right thing to do, it's necessary for engineering and transport to thrive. We simply need more engineers and people in the industry as investment grows. Currently, we're

not making use of a huge section of society and that can't continue.

Building on progress and productive conversations with industry, I hope to help women across the country and of all ages see there are amazing careers in transport – from building site to boardroom.

HS2 minister Nusrat Ghani said:

In this country, we build roads, rail track, we expand airports, and we need engineers from all corners of the country to help us deliver our ambitions. Engineers are also at the heart of developing greener and more accessible transport, using innovation to design a better world that works for everyone.

The engineering and transport worlds have been too male for too long. A more diverse workforce will not only mean more opportunities for women, but will help the industry reach its potential.

Dr Hayaatun Sillem, CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said:

It was a pleasure to take part in this roundtable. I'm delighted to see the Department for Transport working to support and encourage people from all backgrounds to pursue careers in engineering, particularly women and people from BAME backgrounds.

From creativity to innovation, motivation, talent retention, health and safety and competitiveness, the evidence base is clear and growing regarding the benefits of diverse teams. The Royal Academy of Engineering is working closely with partners across the profession to ensure that the future engineering workforce truly reflects the society it serves.

Danielle Flynn, Standards and Controls Engineering Apprentice at Jaguar Land Rover, said:

I was one of the young girls in school who thought an Engineer was a mechanic – a man fixing a car. How little did I know? Engineering opens so many pathways from software development to project management on fast movement projects. It is exciting and not one day is the same. I am into my fourth year of working at Jaguar Land Rover and I am learning more day by day.

To all the younger women thinking of a career in transport industries, do not be put off! I cannot tell you how glad I am that I decided on this route and I would recommend it to everyone.

Together we can work together for a better future for women!

The roundtable also discussed progress and successes being made in this area in the transport industry, from Network Rail collecting gender data, to the work groups such as [HS2 Ltd](#) providing women with opportunities to get work experience in the industry.

This success is further bolstered by forthcoming research carried out by [EngineeringUK](#), which will show that the desirability of engineering as a career among the core audience of 7 to 11 year-olds has been boosted by 35% among those aware of the government's Year of Engineering campaign.

The government is continuing to give young people from different backgrounds inspiring experiences of engineering through the legacy campaign 'Engineering: Take a Closer Look'.