

News story: Female engineers play a vital role in Britain's transport industry

Transport Minister John Hayes met with female engineers at Waterloo Station to mark International Women in Engineering Day and to discuss their vital role in Britain's transport industry.

The minister met 7 engineers working across a number of Network Rail projects to find out about their work and their experiences in the industry.

Today (23 June 2017) is International Women in Engineering Day, which aims to raise the profile of women in engineering around the world and focus attention on the exciting career opportunities available to women in the industry.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

At a time when we need more skills to make our transport infrastructure the best in the world, just 12% of people in the UK engineering industry are women. This is unacceptable and means we are missing so much talent and so much potential in this crucial field.

So to meet women who are so enthusiastic about their careers in the transport industry is as inspiring as it is meaningful. Female engineers can and will play a vital role as we deliver unprecedented investment in transport infrastructure over the coming years.

I am determined to draw on female talent in the transport sector because it is right to attract the best and brightest people. We need more high calibre women to join, and I encourage young women to rise to this challenge; to choose an exciting career in engineering. They will build Britain's future.

Charlotte Cove, Engineer at Network Rail said:

I got into engineering because my dad encouraged me. I went to an all girl's school and didn't have much support when it came to considering the right GCSE and A level choices to become an engineer – I was very lucky to have my dad and his engineering contacts.

I know that there is a perception among girls that engineers get dirty and wield spanners and screwdrivers all day – that's not what

I do, I'm more likely to have a pen and calculator in my hand.

I would strongly recommend engineering as a profession to all girls, simply because it's such a fulfilling career; it's stable, well-paid and you get so much respect from your colleagues. It fulfils your creative side as well.

The minister discussed the upcoming Year of Engineering campaign, which begins next year and will showcase the breadth of careers available to young people in engineering, as well as highlight the government's focus on encouraging more girls to become engineers.

The Network Rail engineers spoke with the minister about their paths into the transport sector; including what inspired them to pursue careers in engineering and their experiences at school and university. They advocated the diverse range of work, and the daily opportunities to be creative and problem-solve. They also discussed what could be done across the sector to encourage more women to pursue engineering roles, such as increasing liaison with schools to raise the profile of engineering with girls at a young age.