

News story: Women at the Coal Authority

Lisa Pinney MBE – became the first female Chief Executive of the Coal Authority in June, 2018.

Lisa Pinney has always been passionate about making a difference.

Formerly the youngest female Executive Manager at the Environment Agency, she is proud to be the first female Chief Executive at the Coal Authority in its 24 year history.

“It will be great to get to the point where we don’t have to talk about “firsts” anymore, but in the meantime it’s important to be a visible role model for future generations. I am hugely supportive of International Women’s Day and I am pleased to see more and more women being employed here at the Coal Authority.

“We need the very best people to tackle the complex challenges across the environment, engineering and planning sectors and we can only attract them if we can offer everyone a great place to work.

“Together we make a huge difference to the public and the environment and I’ve always been passionate about making a difference. I studied Environmental Science at university because it felt practical and relevant and I have never regretted that. I’ve been fortunate in the opportunities I’ve had – but I also believe in stepping forwards and showing how you can help. I think that being a problem solver has been core to my career to date and has got me into rooms where I can learn from others and have the confidence to contribute to the outcome.

“This has been true not only in my core work, but also in how things work and what type of organisation we need to be to make a difference. I founded the first diversity network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff at the Environment Agency and helped to support the start-up of many others including the Women’s Network. I am delighted to see these groups, as well as many others, such as a Women in STEM group, now being established at the Coal Authority.”

Marie Platts – Service Delivery and Quality Manager for internal ICT systems – has been at the Coal Authority since its inception in October 1994, but has only been in her latest role for the last couple of years.

“The main purpose of my job is to manage the testing capability, software and service support of our internally developed systems/services and to act as product specialist for our corporate reports service. The role and responsibilities I have now is a far cry from when I first started with the organisation back in 1994. I joined the authority as an Administrative Officer at a time when women undertook the administrative roles and men were

the managers making the majority of the decisions.

“Over the years with the on-going support and encouragement from various managers together with a lot of hard work and dedication to my various roles, I have managed to move up the organisation chart to where I am now. The authority has also been very supportive, meaning that I have never felt the desire to look for outside employment. I have always felt and continue to feel challenged and valued.”

Zoe Rose-Higgins – Senior Engineer within the Engineering Department has been with the Coal Authority for nearly 4 years. She provides support to a number of teams across the Coal Authority.

Senior engineer Zoe Rose-Higgins provides support to a number of teams across the Coal Authority.

“My degree in General Engineering and 13 years of experience provides me with a breadth of knowledge to be able to work across a wide area of disciplines. My work protects the environment in different ways. The work with our Public Safety and Subsidence Team has an immediate effect on both the public and the environment; my work with our Environment Team affects a much wider area and our work with Development Team affects future living and working environments. No two projects are the same which keeps me challenged and interested.”

Katie Shorrocks – DEFRA Contracts Manager – manages the operating contracts the Coal Authority has in place with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for treating water from disused metal mines across the country.

Katie Shorrocks helps to treat water from disused metal mines across the country.

“I have a degree in Chemistry, a PhD in Environmental Chemistry and nearly 20 years of experience in the water and environment sector. My role, which ultimately helps to protect the environment by reducing the heavy metals load going into streams and rivers, requires an appreciation of chemistry, a large dose of tenacity to resolve issues that arise, as well as the ability to manage and build relationships with people to get things done. What I like best about my role is that you never know what might land in your ‘inbox’ from one day to the next.”

Alice Mellor – Geochemist – working as part of the Technical Team.

Geochemist Alice Mellor works as part of the technical team.

“My role is to help make sure that our mine water treatment schemes are improving the environment by removing contaminants from the water. This involves tasks such as assessing how well our 75 mine water treatment schemes are performing, advising our Projects Team on the design of new mine water treatment schemes and reviewing chemistry data from mine water discharges.

“I really enjoy the problem solving part of my job, using water chemistry

data to diagnose problems on our schemes and to propose solutions. I also get involved in research and development projects and I'm currently managing two projects with a university which are looking at metal mine water treatment."

Anne Coleman – Head of Procurement – has worked at the authority for over 24 years as well 10 years within the mining industry prior to that.

Head of procurement Anne Coleman has worked at the authority for more than 24 years.

"I was astonished to get the role in the first place, as I was up against male candidates and I am also astonished to still be here, as originally the organisation was anticipated to be only needed for just three years.

"Although I have always delivered a contracts or procurement role, the role and the team has changed. Initially I was on my own, but then the team slowly grew to support the organisation. My progression from a Contracts Officer to Procurement Manager and now Head of Department has been enabled by working with supportive colleagues in an organisation which invests in its people.

"My current role is to ensure that the team deliver contracts that support the delivery of the business, whether for operations or the wider organisation whilst maintaining a positive contribution to communities through achieving good value.

"I am coming to the end of my six months of being part of the Executive Leadership Team, which has given me a valuable insight and a wider visibility of activities being managed by the organisation. I would encourage you to apply and make the most of opportunities like this as they arise."