

Under-representation in green careers

Analysis to support Workforce Integration Network Skills Academies

Introduction

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has commissioned research on workforce diversity and inclusion research in the Green Economy, Creative and Cultural Industries, Digital & Tech, Health and Social Care and Hospitality. This is intended to support the London recovery programme and the mission to help Londoners into Good Work. The findings will inform the development of the Mayor's sector skills academies and Workforce Integration Network (WIN) employer toolkits, along with wider skills and employment policy.

This output reports on the evidence review, which is developing a source evidence report for each of the selected sectors, covering baseline information as well as messages from the existing evidence on diversity and inclusion challenges, and strategies in place to address these. This will build towards a fuller understanding of the barriers and opportunities for underrepresented groups in general and the issues Londoners face, as well as strategies that academy hubs could set in place related to getting in and getting on in work in these sectors. The source information for each sector will be summarised within final reporting. The information collated here can help shape the focus of the planned stakeholder consultations.

Approach

The approach to the review uses three stages:

- Collating GLA and London intelligence on each of the key sectors at baseline
- Searching for research and insights on under-representation and strategies to address this from relevant sectoral and equalities bodies
- Providing draft content to inform final reporting.

This source reports covers green careers.

Green careers: summary

The green sector is rapidly evolving and (much like the digital sector), cuts across many industries and skills. It is estimated that the green economy accounted for around £42bn of sales in the financial year 2020/21, with the majority from green finance (£14bn), power (£13bn) and homes and buildings (£9bn). Green jobs are predicted to grow significantly in the short and medium term, and their focus on high level skills, more productive, stable and better-paid work could drive more inclusive growth and tackle inequalities. In London, the transport & storage, agriculture and construction sectors are predicted to undergo the most dramatic changes to meet the net-zero target by 2030. The combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the withdrawal from the European Union have led to significant challenges, although the construction sector has to date been able to quickly recover.

Sub-sector(s) of focus and suggested key occupations

Following on from GLA City Intelligence analysis, this paper uses construction as a proxy for the green economy. The construction industry in Greater London has a similar variation in structure when compared to the UK view, with commercial having a larger share, whereas industrial has a smaller share. However, infrastructure, housing and commercial are all important sources of new work, while repair and maintenance accounts for almost a third of all construction work in Greater London. There are more than 800 engineering and construction industry occupations, with management and professional comprising the largest proportion of these. Other broad occupational categories are engineers, technicians, support staff, craftspeople, semi-skilled, supervisors, and scientists. In Greater London, the strongest recruitment requirements are in non-construction professional, technical, IT, and other office-based staff, senior, executive, and business process managers, and other construction process managers.

Key diversity intersections

In common with STEM industries more broadly, green and construction jobs are typically predominantly undertaken by men. The workforce is ageing, and some of the selected jobs do not attract young entrants with obstacles on the employer side seen to be a lack of the necessary skills and attributes to be productive. The poor representation of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds makes it less attractive to these groups as a career of choice. There is very little readily available evidence on progression and underrepresented groups in the construction industry. However, it is clear that women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are still underrepresented in nearly all occupations in the sector. There are challenges around equality of pay and progression, diversity in leadership as well as a lack of diverse role models for new entrants to aspire to.

Evidence source report: Green

Defining the sector

The green sector is rapidly evolving and (much like the digital sector), cuts across many sectors and skills. Recent work by the GLA has conceptualised the green sector to comprise the following:

- Low Carbon – Additional energy sources, alternative fuel vehicles, alternative fuels, building technologies, carbon capture and storage, carbon finance, energy management, nuclear power (GLA Environment team, 2020, cited in GLA, 2020b)
- Environmental – Air pollution, contaminated land reclamation and remediation, environmental consultancy and related services, environmental monitoring instrumentation and analysis, marine pollution control, noise and vibration control, recovery and recycling, waste management, water and waste water treatment (GLA Environment team, 2020, cited in GLA, 2020b).
- Renewable Energy – Wind, geothermal, photovoltaic, biomass, hydro, renewable consultancy, wave and tidal (GLA Environment team, 2020, cited in GLA, 2020b).
- Enhancing green spaces and resilience: urban greening, sustainable drainage systems, parks management, horticulture, arboriculture, ecology (LGA, 2020b)
- Designing, building and maintaining active travel infrastructure (LGA, 2020b).

A forthcoming study (Edgar et al, forthcoming) estimates there to be some 234,300 green jobs in the capital in 2020, representing 4.4 per cent of total employment in London. According to this study, there are three sectors which represent more than eight in ten (82 per cent) of total London green jobs. These are:

- Green finance (50,700), representing 22 per cent of total green jobs in London.
- Homes and buildings (58,200), representing 25 per cent of total green jobs in London.
- Power (82,900), representing 35 per cent of total green jobs in London.

The green economy therefore has substantial value to the London economy. It is estimated that the green economy accounted for around £42bn of sales in the financial year 2020/21, with the majority from Green Finance (£14bn), Power (£13bn) and Homes and Buildings (£9bn) (Edgar et al, forthcoming).

A working definition for this review

The wide range of occupational and skill areas in the list above, plus the emergent nature of the green sector as a whole, present considerable challenges for a rapid evidence review. The approach taken in much of the literature on the topic is to first select the

sectors of interest, and then either take jobs in this sector to be "green", or to review the jobs within those sectors for further grouping. The former approach is the simplest (in terms of setting a definition), as there is no specific definition used beyond "jobs in sector X" (ONS, 2021).

Following on from the GLA (2021b) City Intelligence analysis, this paper uses construction as a proxy for the green economy. Evidence on energy and utilities, and evidence which discusses the green sector more broadly has also been included where readily available.

UK context

Construction Industry

A recent survey by the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB, 2021) reported 800 ECI occupations, with management and professional comprising the largest proportion of these. Other broad occupational categories were (from largest to smallest group): engineers, technicians, support staff, craftspeople, semi-skilled, supervisors, and scientists.

Based on the forecast for workforce demand growth and supply-side movements, the average annual recruitment requirement (ARR) is estimated at 43,350 for the 2021 to 2025 period. This means that the industry will need to increase current levels of recruitment to attract an extra 216,800 workers over the next five years to meet projected demand. In absolute terms, the highest ARR for construction-specific occupations are for wood trades and interior fit-out (5,480 per year), other construction professionals and technical staff (5,150), construction managers (3,600) and electrical installation trades and (3,400). There will also be a demand for non-construction, office-based professional, technical and IT support staff (7,850) (CITB, 2021).

With the government looking to implement a programme of growth to Build Back Better¹, construction will be pivotal in achieving a range of aims. Delivering the investments in infrastructure to upgrade rail, road and broadband networks, along with the new build and retrofit work that will support the built environment's contribution to the UK's accelerating the transition to Net Zero carbon emissions, requires a skilled construction workforce. Likewise, strong demand in the private housing sector with increasing emphasis on using modern methods of construction to help achieve home building ambitions, will also drive demand for a suitably skilled workforce (CITB, 2021).

A majority of companies declare they are prepared for the potential implications of Brexit, there are concerns surrounding the supply chain in particular, signalling an element of uncertainty (ECITB, 2021).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth-html>

Impact of Covid-19

In May/June 2020 the industry experienced a sharp recession with record falls in construction output following the introduction of the first national lockdown in response to Covid-19. The general view at the time was that output could take a few years to recover. However, the second half of 2020 saw output levels quickly pick up as construction businesses adapted to social distance working practices, with government providing direct support to businesses and the job-retention/income support schemes reducing potential job losses. These factors, combined with the successful rollout of the UK's vaccination programme, have helped the construction industry to be more resilient to subsequent lockdowns, allowing it to maintain levels of work into the early part of 2021 (CITB, 2021).

In 2021 the ECI workforce as a whole has decreased by 15.25 per cent when compared to 2019, and is expected to recover to 102.4 per cent of the 2019 figure by 2023 (ECITB, 2021). The impact of Covid-19 has been felt across the ECI to varying degrees. Large companies were significantly more impacted than SMEs. The expected increase in the ECI workforce from large companies in 2023 is not enough to recover pre-Covid levels. The stark impact of the pandemic when it hit in March 2020 has now been mitigated and industry appears to have reacted well in 2021. Nevertheless, 69 per cent of respondents made use of furlough, 30 per cent have experienced delays and downturns in work, 29 per cent have made redundancies and 26 per cent have seen a decrease in turnover. Whilst these figures are linked to Covid-19, but no causal link was found in the analysis (ECITB, 2021).

Skills issues

Construction needs to attract talented people and make it easy for them to join, particularly people from other industries who want to take advantage of opportunities. Equally, it is crucial that the industry retains its existing skills. These challenges have been made more acute following Brexit (CITB, 2021).

The UK construction industry is experiencing a significant skills shortage, especially with specialist technical skills such as bricklaying and carpentry. This is exacerbated by an ageing workforce and a lack of new entrants to the sector and the potential loss of skilled foreign workers post-Brexit. Employers also complain of a lack of work-readiness among those qualified recruits who do enter the sector, while simultaneously rejecting many work-ready applicants due to a lack of practical experience (CITB, 2020).

The fragmented structure of the construction sector does not facilitate effective communication between employers, educators and training providers, and there is no universal approach to preparing potential recruits to enter the industry. Different training initiatives in the construction sector therefore vary hugely in their curriculum, funding and overall quality. Due to the varying quality of external training programmes, employers are more likely to rely on apprenticeships as their main training method, despite the higher costs and limited scalability of such an individualised approach. In addition, an overreliance on outdated informal recruitment methods also restricts construction employers' access to a vast pool of potential recruits (CITB, 2020).

External perceptions of the construction industry also make it difficult to attract new talent to the sector. The lack of representation for women and ethnic minorities within the UK construction industry can be off-putting for potential recruits from these underrepresented demographics, while many jobseekers are discouraged from entering the sector due to unsociable work hours, low job security due to short-term contracts, and a lack of clear opportunities for progression. While such preconceptions are not necessarily accurate and may primarily be borne from a lack of understanding of the sector, they still act as significant barriers to the recruitment needed to address the impending skills gap highlighted above (CITB, 2020).

Energy and utilities industry

Analysis of the energy and utilities industry challenges in meeting net zero carbon combined with the constrained skilled labour market and changes to the skills and education system, has identified three critical workforce and skills issues that need to be addressed over the next five years:

- Constricted labour market and evolution of jobs
- Workforce diversity, inclusion and attraction
- Targeted training and retraining to meet market demand
(EU Skills, 2020).

The first two priorities of the new skill strategy concern sector attractiveness, recruitment and workforce diversity which:

1. Reflects the population that the sector workforce serves
2. Inspires the next generation to a career within the energy and utilities sector
(EU Skills, 2020).

Workforce trends

The largest demographic profile for workers in construction is White, middle-aged, non-disabled and male – and though this homogeneity of the workforce is not exclusive to this sector, neither is it a new revelation (Jarvis, 2020). The composition of the energy and utilities industry is similar.

Obstacles to getting in

Construction industry

A census survey by the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB, 2021) revealed that women, ethnic minorities and younger people are underrepresented in the workforce:

Gender

- Just 14 per cent of the engineering and construction industry (ECI) workforce are women; more than four fifths (86 per cent) are men, compared to the UK population of 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively (ECITB, 2021).

While CIC (2015) research showed that there had been a 1 per cent increase in the number of female professionals in the construction workforce between 2009 and 2015, in 2021 the contrast between men and women employed in the ECI remains incredibly stark. Research conducted by Pye Tait on behalf of the ECITB in 2018/9 demonstrated a gender split of 87.5 per cent male and 12.5 per cent female, and so the last two years have seen no real improvement. Furthermore, the majority of women in the ECI appear to work in office based and in support staff roles such as HR and finance (ECITB, 2021).

Whilst some sectors are actively working to attract more women, and there is a continuous national drive to recruit more women to STEM and engineering roles, these efforts do not seem to deliver results in the ECI. This is especially true in the technical and craft roles, which are predominantly occupied by men. In addition to cultural and societal norms and personal biases encouraged from childhood there do also appear to be barriers within industry that need to be addressed (ECITB, 2021).

Ethnicity

- 96 per cent of ECI workers are White, compared to 87 per cent of the UK population.
- 2 per cent are Asian, compared to 7 per cent of the UK population
- 0.6 per cent are Black, compared to 3 per cent of the population
- The remainder are other from other, mixed or multiple ethnic groups; again these workers are greatly underrepresented in the ECI compared to the UK population (ECITB, 2021).

It is important to note that ethnicity data was received from less than 20 per cent of the UK-based census return, highlighting the huge amount of work that is still required to raise the issue of diversity and underrepresentation in the engineering and construction industry, and the importance of data collection in bringing focus to action (ECITB, 2021).

Age

- The majority of the ECI workforce sits at mid-career level (48 per cent are between 30-40 years old).
- Age continues to be an issue in the industry with 38 per cent of the workforce over 50 years old and only 14 per cent under the age of 29.
- It is estimated that just under 3 per cent of the ECI workforce are EU nationals, and just under 2 per cent are from other countries.
- More than half (53 per cent) of respondents reported facing difficulties hiring employees. In practice the ECI struggles to fill vacancies to the equivalent of 2.5 per cent of the workforce (ECITB, 2021).

The low number of new entrants and early career workers is a concern; only 14 per cent of the workforce is under 30, while 38 per cent is over 50 years old. This highlights a clear tilt towards the older end of the spectrum, with almost 40 per cent of the workforce

nearing retirement age. Not enough younger people are coming into the industry to replace them (ECITB, 2021)

The (ECITB, 2021) study found that there was sometimes a reluctance to hire younger people for several reasons. These included not finding the 'right' candidate, young people not having satisfactory levels of English and maths, and the attitudes and behaviours of young people not being aligned to company values, hence there appears to be a disconnect of expectations on both sides. The level of support required to develop the next generation may be greater than some employers expect or are able or prepared to give.

Energy and utilities

Energy & Utilities Skills Partnership (EUSP) diversity and analysis (EUSkills, 2021) reveals that between the period 2016-2019, in the energy and utilities sector (gas, power, water and waste industries, as well as the sector's supply chain):

- Women are severely underrepresented, at 18.3 per cent compared to 47.3 per cent of women in the UK's workforce as a whole.
- People from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background are underrepresented. The proportion has risen from 2.2 per cent to 6.9 per cent, but this is still some distance from the UK average of 11.4 per cent.
- Disabled workers in the rose from 3.6 per cent to 15.2 per cent, reaching very close to the UK average of 15.7 per cent.
- The sector aims to attract people aged between 16-24, although there was a slight 2.1 per cent decrease to 8.4 per cent versus a UK average of 11.4 per cent..
- People aged 60 and over increased in the sector to 8.9 per cent, just behind the UK average of 10.4 per cent indicating good retention of talent.

London focus

London is one of the most inequitable places in the UK, with huge inequalities in pay, qualifications, health, and outcomes such as poverty and deprivation. The predicted changes through the shift to green sectors provides an opportunity to turn those around. With the right skills provision, and support both for those needing to transition from non-green jobs and those not currently in work, the green sectors could provide higher-skilled, more productive, stable and better-paid work and drive inclusive growth (Edgar et al, forthcoming).

Compared with other sectors, there is less data at present on the diversity of London's green workforce². However, key issues are:

² The 'green sector' is relatively new. Sample sizes for different occupations can be limited and, given it is a dynamic sector, new occupations missed. If the construction sector is taken as an example of a sector with a

- The energy sector has an ageing workforce in which women are underrepresented (GLA, 2021)
- Men are overrepresented in high-emitting industries that will need to undergo significant change to meet the net-zero target by either 2030 or 2050. (GLA, 2021)
- In addition, many of the sub-sectors predicted to add jobs in the next few years are within already male-dominated construction-related fields (GLA, 2021).

Table 1: Construction sector (as a green sector proxy) – compared to London as a whole

Getting in – under-represented groups:	Getting on - groups underrepresented at managerial level:
Ethnicity: Asian, Black Gender: Women NS-SEC: High social class Qualification level: degree level or above Nationality: British national, UK born	Ethnicity: Asian, Black Gender: Women NS-SEC: High social class Qualification level: degree level or above Nationality: British national

Source: GLA (2021b & c)

Obstacles to getting on

Construction

There is very little readily available evidence on progression and underrepresented groups in the construction industry. However, it is clear that women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are still underrepresented in nearly all occupations in the construction and built environment sector. There are challenges around equality of pay and progression, diversity in leadership as well as a lack of diverse role models for new entrants to aspire to (CLC, 2021). A Women in Construction report (2018) found that there was an £11,000 gap between earnings by men and women working in similar roles in construction.

According to research from Business in the Community, just 3.4 per cent of all construction managers in the UK are from ethnic minorities. In contrast, based on the most recent census data, 14 per cent of the population comes from ethnic minority groups (Construction Manager, 2020).

In recent qualitative research into ethnic minorities in the UK construction industry (Aboagye-Nimo et al, 2020) underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in leadership roles was widely acknowledged. More importantly covert discrimination was fundamental to

growing proportion of green jobs, GLA analysis indicates a similar age profile to London overall, underrepresentation of BAME and female Londoners and a lower proportion of workers with at least a degree. Construction has a higher proportion of people working as self-employed and who are non-British nationals.

most barriers faced by ethnic minorities in the industry. The level of discrimination was identified to be implicit and as such there are no obvious trails to be identified except accounts of individuals closely linked to the issues at hand. There were also indirect barriers created for industry professionals through formal organisational policies. It was identified that the drive for a more diverse workforce and ethnic minority empowerment would significantly benefit both management and employees. More importantly, this will open up the talent pool for professional roles in the industry. Overall, productivity and job satisfaction will directly and indirectly be improved if these sought-after progressive changes can be properly implemented.

A recent study by recruitment analytics specialist Hays discovered that of those Black people who managed to break into the construction sector, more than three quarters (78 per cent) claimed they had experienced career restrictions due to their race or other demographic factors such as sexuality and age. Whether this is down to structural prejudice or unconscious bias, it highlights the challenge of discrimination in the hiring and promotion process that must be addressed (Jarvis, 2020).

Energy and utilities

The Energy and Utilities Skills Partnership has provided some data on women in various occupations in the sector.

- Total sector workforce – women account for 18.3 per cent, compared to 47.3 per cent in the UK workforce.
- Managers, directors and senior officials – women account for 15.8 per cent, compared to 35.7 per cent in the UK workforce.
- Professional occupations – women account for 21.0 per cent, compared to 50.1 per cent in the UK workforce.
- Administrative and secretarial professions – women account for 74.6, compared to 75.7 per cent in the UK workforce.
- Skilled trades occupations – women account for 1.8 per cent, compared to 10.2 per cent in the UK workforce.
- Process, plant and machine operatives – women account for 3.6 per cent, compared to 12.3 per cent in the UK workforce.

In 2020 Energy & Utility Skills Partnership undertook the sector's first Inclusion Measurement Framework where key results showed that only 29 per cent of leadership roles are held by women and only 4 per cent of leaders identified as being from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background³.

³ <https://www.euskills.co.uk/2021/08/09/sector-wide-participation-needed-for-new-diversity-and-inclusion-benchmarking-study/>

London focus

As shown in Table 1 above, the following are under-represented among managers in the construction sector, compared with London workers overall: people from Asian and Black ethnic groups, women, people from higher social classes, and those with degrees

Green sector workforce trends in London

London's low carbon sector is varied and innovative and has grown significantly over the last 10 years. London's five largest sub-sectors in the LCEGS taxonomy by sales in 2017/18 account for 69 per cent of the London total sales and are made up of:

- Carbon finance (£12.77bn)
- Wind (£4.14bn) (including control systems development and manufacture, drive train development, manufacture and systems integration and consulting houses)
- Geothermal (£4.06bn) (including head office functions, systems and design and international consultancy)
- Building technologies (£3.28bn) (including head office functions, building systems design and consultancy and building systems providers and installers)
- Alternative fuels (£3.07bn) (including R&D functions, alternative fuel providers and process implementation accounting) (GLA, 2020b).

London's transport & storage, agriculture and construction sectors are predicted to undergo the most dramatic changes to meet the net-zero target by 2030. Ensuring current workers in these sectors can retrain within or into other roles will be important (GLA, 2021a).

The construction industry in Greater London has a similar variation in structure when compared to the UK view, with commercial having a larger share, whereas industrial has a smaller share. However, infrastructure, housing and commercial are all important sources of new work, while repair and maintenance accounts for almost a third of all construction work in Greater London (CITB, 2021b).

Opportunities for growth

The Mayor's zero carbon 2030 target, and the UK's priorities for its presidency of COP26 will create new green jobs of the future, further increasing the demand for green skills across a range of occupations and services. These include construction of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, retrofitting of buildings for energy efficiency and to adapt them to the changing climate and more extreme weather, low-carbon heating technology, solar PV installation and construction of active travel infrastructure (GLA, 2021a).

In the short term, jobs will be created in the low carbon and active travel infrastructure sub-sectors, through addressing these themes. Many of these sub-sectors involve electrical and/or construction-related skills (GLA, 2021a).

Greater London is projected to have the strongest regional growth rate averaging 4.8 per cent over the five-year forecast, which is above the UK forecast of 4.4 per cent. Infrastructure (6.9 per cent) and private housing (6.7 per cent) are expected to have the fastest sector growth and we forecast for this region's construction output to achieve its pre-Covid-19 levels by 2022. Forecasts predict that 17,250 new workers will be required (CITB, 2021b).

The following occupations have some of the strongest recruitment requirement levels in Greater London:

- Non-construction professional, technical, IT, and other office-based staff
- Senior, executive, and business process managers
- Other construction process managers (CITB, 2021b).

A number of projects are already underway across boroughs and skills providers to develop new, short courses in elements of the retrofit process (eg External Wall Installation for entry-level employees). These are initiatives providing an opportunity for the GLA to emulate, adapt and/or collaborate on. There is also the potential to join-up with the Mayor's Construction Academy as many of the skills required for the retrofit process crossover into construction (GLA, 2020b).

Skills issues

- Across many low-carbon and environmental industries, skills in project management and communication are increasingly in demand, as well as digital skills such as software development (GLA, 2021a; GLA, 2020b).
- The major skills gaps highlighted by employers, training providers and boroughs were in the installation of air- and ground-source heat pumps and external wall insulation, both key aspects of the energy-efficient retrofit process⁴ (GLA, 2020b).
- Other skills needs include developing new forms of cladding, dry-lining thermal quality, fenestration, and manufacturing. In many cases, traditional construction skills training provides transferrable skills to enable operatives to work in these sectors (GLA, 2020b).

Training issues

- Although future demand for green skills is certain, new training provision is limited at present (GLA, 2021a).
- High technology-based building works require additional training and upskilling (GLA, 2020b).

⁴ Barnet and Southgate College have recently introduced an EWI course through a Sector-Based Work Academy (SBWA) in partnership with an employer. Short, conversion courses and Continuing Professional Development programmes (CPD) were also emphasised as important by stakeholders in this area.

- Apprenticeships are a particular area of growth in the energy-efficient construction sector (GLA, 2020b).
- In the construction industry there is a lack of visible work experience opportunities and lack of knowledge about how to get experience (IFF, 2017).
- To attract more young people, the construction industry will need to seem more aspirational and future-focused, using different messages for trades vs. professional roles will be important. (CITB, 2019a).

Initiatives to tackle under-representation

In 2011, an EHRC report (EHRC, 2011) summarised the benefits of implementing good equality and diversity practice in the construction industry:

- Efficiency savings through improved staff retention
- A wider pool of talent available to the Industry from under-represented groups
- A more diverse supply chain with better support for small business
- Improved on-site working relationships based on respect for everyone's differences.

Diversity standards and commitments

Construction

There have been a number of commitments made by construction industry organisations with regard to improving diversity in the industry.

In its latest census survey report (ECTIB, 2021), The **Engineering and Construction Industry Training Board encourages all ECI companies to undergo diversity and inclusion training** and to audit their internal policies to ensure they meet the needs of and are attractive to women.

“Industry must collectively recognise that focussing on inclusion is highly beneficial, and must start to collect the necessary data to support action in this area. The ECITB Census also demonstrated that there is a huge data gap in the type of demographic data that is collected in the majority of companies, particularly regarding ethnicity, and also a lack of data that can be easily cross-referenced, for instance demographics with occupation or location. A better understanding of this data will allow for more targeted interventions that can be tailored to the specific needs of a sector or location.” (ECITB, 2021)

ECITB also asserts that more research is urgently needed to understand why young people are not entering the ECI workforce. Exploring attitudes towards the ECI, its occupations, workplace culture and behaviours, would potentially touch upon some of the issues (ECTIB, 2021).

The **Construction Leadership Council is developing proposals to introduce a common set of equality, diversity and inclusion metrics for the sector.** The intention

of the proposal – which the CLC committed to as part of its Skills Plan earlier in 2021 – is to ensure companies have access to better information about the makeup of the workforce, helping to shape efforts to ensure that construction reflects the communities it works in across the UK.

The development of an industry standard approach will also help streamline data collection for businesses, meaning that they are only asked to gather this information once, and can make much better use of it by being able to benchmark themselves against their peers. The consultation launched in August 2021 and closed on 7 September 2021. Businesses of all sizes and types were asked to respond. Responses will help shape development of the system for EDI measuring and monitoring, which is planned for introduction by the end of 2022 (CLC, 2021b).

The RICS Inclusive Employer Quality Mark – in June 2015 the RICS launched a new initiative to encourage employers to adopt six principles to make their workforce inclusive and competitive. The RICS had been working across the sector to learn best practice from the growing number of industry-led initiatives as well as learning from how other professions are tackling the diversity challenge. The RICS concluded that simply improving recruitment will not be sufficient to develop a diverse profession – the culture of the workplace needs to change so that the new recruits will be welcomed and will see strong career prospects regardless of race, gender or background. The RICS Inclusive Employers Quality Mark asks employers to adopt and continually improve against six principles:

- Leadership and Vision – commitment to increasing the diversity of the workforce
- Recruitment – engage and attract new people to the industry from under-represented groups; best practice recruitment methods
- Staff development – training/promotion policies that offer equal opportunities for career progression
- Staff retention – flexible working arrangements/adaptive working practices
- Staff engagement – an inclusive culture where all staff engage with developing, delivering, monitoring and assessing the diversity and inclusivity policies
- Continuous improvement – continually refreshing and renewing the firm’s commitment to being the best employer; sharing and learning from best practice across the industry.

Accompanying each principle are multiple ‘proof points’, against which signatories will be required to assess – on a bi-annual basis – the actions they are taking and the outcomes to date. RICS use the assessment to document the outcomes and trends for the profession as a whole (CIC, 2015).

Case study: Tideway East – increasing BAME diversity started with better data.

Achieving a greater understanding of the ethnic composition of its workforce was the first step towards improving diversity at Tideway East, the consortium delivering the £600 million eastern section of London’s 25 km super sewer. The joint venture formed by Costain, Vinci Construction

Grands Projets and Bachy Soletanche introduced digital induction and recruitment systems to boost the data it held, before launching a programme of interventions.

After this initial phase, all job opportunities were highlighted in local East London boroughs in the first instance, ensuring an early opportunity for candidates from these ethnically diverse communities to come forward.

The Construction Industry Training Board funded a pre-employment programme where 25 promising candidates were given a four-week training course in basic skills and employability. Nine of these joined the overall project with three going to Tideway East.

Meanwhile the Tideway East team has looked beyond the construction industry to see how it can help increase the diversity of the workforce as a whole. It runs a partnership with London Youth Rowing called Breaking Barriers, and almost three-quarters of participants have come from BAME backgrounds.

(Construction News, 2019)

Energy and Utilities

Following publication of the Energy and Utilities Skills Partnership snapshot statistics of the energy and utilities sector, CBE Energy & Utility Skills Chief Executive said:

“The energy and utilities sector is committed to action on diversity and inclusion, working together to share best practice and build on the great work already in progress. Energy and utilities companies are at the forefront of delivering the 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution to achieve net zero carbon targets in 2050. There is clearly more to do, and we are committed to attracting, recruiting, and developing a diverse workforce to fill the green jobs being created with truly inclusive teams.”⁵

The following commitments have been documented by EUSkills (2020):

Sector Inclusion Commitment – A key priority of the Energy & Utilities Workforce Renewal and Skills Strategy: 2020 is attracting and recruiting more diverse talent into the sector; more women, more people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, more people with disabilities and more young people.

Facing this challenge, CEOs from the sector’s leading businesses have committed to proactively change these statistics and make their businesses more attractive and available to under-represented talent. Leveraging its collective impact, the partnership is committed to working across all industries within our sector to recruit and attract a workforce that mirrors and speaks to the communities it serves. Through its work, the Energy & Utilities Skills Partnership is highlighting the great work already being done by the sector as well as continuing to drive change through its ongoing commitment to inclusive attraction, recruitment, and development of its workforce. The Inclusion

⁵ <https://www.euskills.co.uk/2021/05/06/new-snapshot-released-of-skills-and-diversity-data-in-the-energy-and-utilities-sect/>

Commitment launched in February 2019 and there are now more than 50 signatories.⁶ These employers and stakeholders have agreed to work collaboratively to attract, recruit and retain more diverse talent to the sector, guided by the following five principles:

- Work collaboratively as a sector to drive change, challenging ourselves to do things differently, by sharing best practice and delivering sector priorities.
- Focus on inclusion in its entirety, however our sector history requires targeted sector action to start by increasing gender, BAME and disability workforce representation.
- Measure and be transparent about progress in our individual organisations and as a sector.
- Ensure we create the culture we need to attract the workforce of tomorrow.
- Be inclusive in the way we attract, recruit and develop our people.

The social media reach of this commitment extends beyond 2.7 million views (EUSkills, 2020).

Commitment to becoming a disability confident sector with Thames Water achieving Disability Confident Leader status (EUSkills, 2020).

Establishment of sector partnerships including Remploy, The Equal Group and Women's Utilities Network, enabling sharing of expertise and best practice (EUSkills, 2020).

Development of a sector wide Inclusion Measurement Framework building on the Royal Academy for Engineering work in this area (EUSkills, 2020). The Inclusion Measurement Framework 2021⁷ aims to provide clear evidence of where the sector, and individual employers, can take action to move diversity and inclusion forward. The Framework, backed by Energy & Utility Skills, will measure inclusion across the themes of Leadership, Attraction and Recruitment, Retention and Progression. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current diversity and inclusion picture in the energy and utilities sector to help participants understand how and where improvements should be made. [Participation is open to all organisations in the sector and is free of charge.](#)

Getting in

Construction industry – best practice

A CITB (2020) report on employment pathways into the construction industry for underrepresented groups identified a number of best practice responses:

- Build strong relationships between employers, training providers, recruiters and educators

⁶ <https://www.euskills.co.uk/the-sectors-inclusion-commitment/>

⁷ <https://www.euskills.co.uk/2020/09/21/the-energy-utilities-sector-introduces-best-practice-framework-to-improve-diversity-inclusion-measurement/>

- A balance between technical skills and formal industry qualifications is critical
- Ensure consistent emphasis on positive job outcomes.

To support underrepresented groups in particular:

- Individual and structural barriers to employment need to be acknowledged and addressed.
- Pathway design should combine outcome-focused technical skill development with personal growth outcomes.
- Training programmes must provide learners with technical skills training and formal qualifications.
- Programmes should place a consistent emphasis on positive employment outcomes.
- Employer and jobseeker buy-in is essential to the recruitment of learners from underrepresented groups.
- Recruitment campaigns and training initiatives need to be tailored to the needs of underrepresented groups.
- Jobseekers must be provided with appropriate, holistic support to address and overcome employment barriers.
- Practical work experience and outcome-focused soft skills training increases the likelihood of positive short-term job outcomes.
- Relationship-building between training between learners and training providers is essential.

Programmes to attract and retain diverse talent into construction

Pathways into Construction – Building Pathways has been providing support to underrepresented groups of people for the construction industry since its launch in July 2019, under the CITB's Pathways into Construction commission.⁸

The programme targeted 5 distinct cohorts (veterans, women, Construction and Built Environment (CBE) Diploma students, long term unemployed and NEETs). It was delivered mainly across the three South London boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark with a plan to expand nationally. Its specific objectives were:

- To provide excellent pre-employment support to individuals from underrepresented groups that helps prepare and connect them to relevant career and work outcomes
- To facilitate and support individuals' access to industry-led careers information and advice, skills training, coaching and mentoring, pre-employment support, work experience placements and employment opportunities

⁸ <https://buildingpathways.org.uk/pathways-into-construction/>

Pathways into Construction was suspended as a CITB funded programme in May 2020, with final termination in November 2020. Nonetheless the programme achieved the following outcomes:

- Established a growing network of over 38 Tier 1 and SMEs construction contractors and developers operating across London, including Wates, Sir Robert McAlpine, Kier, Reliable Contractors, VGC group, AE Elkins and others
- Identified 38 industry professionals of which 16 participated in online mentoring training delivered by Building Pathways
- Engaged 52 beneficiaries from across south London, organising and delivering 11 community-based construction information events. Of those who have registered, 58 have completed job specific training, 246 have received 121 IAG (Career Information, Advice, Guidance) and employability support, 20 participated in work experience placements and 6 so far have gained permanent employment or started an apprenticeship
- Collaborated with a range of independent training providers, FE colleges, job brokerage schemes and local JCPs to provide our target groups access to employer-led career advice and guidance services, career information events, employability support, work placements and jobs
- Established our identity as a ‘connector’ organisation that understands and addresses the needs of businesses and providers across different sectors to help them achieve their strategic objectives and goals
- Helped mobilise and support referral partners and employers to fulfil their objectives towards promoting construction careers and enhancing progression pathways in the UK construction industry
- Achieved over £730,000 of Social Value (as measured by National TOMS)

The operating model was rapidly changed to a virtual service during the Covid-19 pandemic offering induction, IAG, mentor training, mentoring and job specific training (accredited and unaccredited) to beneficiaries and employers.

Building pathways case study: A&E Elkins Ltd, with Women into Construction and DWP

“We had three students; Electrician, Painter and Decorator and Plumber. All three men were keen to work, polite and punctual on a daily basis. We had positive feedback from the Trade Supervisors they were working with and the Voids and Maintenance Manager was very pleased with both their interest in learning and the quality of work the students carried out. Building Pathways clearly work very hard to build relationships with colleges and local employers and they have made the process very easy on us. I look forward to continuing to work with them to provide more opportunities to local people.”

(Continuous Improvement Coordinator, A&E Elkins Ltd)

Building pathways case study: Lambeth College

“Building Pathways have helped the students at Lambeth College to gain occupational insight and make informed choices about their skills needs through inspiring projects and placements!”

(Employer Engagement Manager, Lambeth College)

Lewisham Construction Hub – Funded by Lewisham Council and the Mayor of London, the Lewisham Construction Hub⁹ is a partnership between the Council, Lewisham Southwark College, Building Pathways and the BE Group, and brings together expertise to help residents find jobs, training, apprenticeships and work experience in the construction industry. The hub also provides support and advice to local businesses, employers and developers in order that they can fully benefit from the expected £2 million of investment in the area.

STEM Ambassadors¹⁰ – STEM subjects are brought to life by over 30,000 volunteers, available across the UK, all free of charge. Inspiring communicators and relatable role models, they are here to help now, by connecting online. Aspirations are raised, careers illuminated and learning supported.

- For entrants – A single, focussed programme to build understanding of construction careers.
- For employers – Increasing awareness amongst new entrants and their influencers to attract the next generation to the sector as a career of choice. The more we join, the greater our reach to the next generation.
- (CLC, 2021)

Go Construct¹¹

- For entrants – A single place for accurate and timely careers advice and guidance.
- For employers – Increasing awareness amongst new entrants. It is hoped that with industry-wide collaborate and use, it can become the place for construction careers information and signposting.
- (CLC, 2021)

Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) Programme

- For entrants and workers – Helping to create an industry people want to join and remain a part of.
- For employers – This provides a common toolset for increasing understanding of the business benefits of Fairness, Inclusion and Respect, as well as how to embed effective working practices within organisations and their supply chains. It is hoped that

⁹ <http://www.lewishamconstructionhub.co.uk>

¹⁰ <https://www.stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors>

¹¹ <https://www.goconstruct.org>

with industry-wide support, this in turn will lead to an industry better equipped to attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels.

(CLC, 2021)

CLC Case study: Recruiting and retaining and diverse workforce

Ardmore, a privately owned building contractor, believe that it is essential to recruit from the communities they are working in, especially when that is in the middle of a housing estate – giving back by employing the people most affected by their work.

Eilish Kwai, Employment Skills Manager, visits colleges and careers fairs to talk to people about construction and the opportunities for apprentices and graduates with Ardmore Group. If people are interested, she tells them “if you are serious, email me” and if they do, she finds them a work experience placement. If they work hard and have the right attitude she finds them a role and supports them.

This approach has brought fresh new talent into Ardmore and as a result, its diversity profile is significantly more diverse than industry averages. Its profile is younger, more female and more BAME. This is achieved by:

- Accessible recruitment processes
- Local recruitment
- Outreach to colleges and job fair
- Four-week work placements
- A culture of mentoring.

Ardmore believe that the business benefits too, as their inclusive and collaborative culture refreshes the knowledge and skills of their mentors and retains valuable talent (CLC, 2021).

UK Construction Week led a role model campaign in 2019 which sought to provide a platform for people across the industry, particularly those from under-represented groups, to share their success stories and discuss the challenges they have faced. Since then, application for roles in construction has increased four-fold, proving that having a relevant role model is enough to encourage someone to apply for a position in the industry that otherwise might not (Jarvis, 2019).

Case Study: Construction T Level at Suffolk new College

Suffolk New College made a decision to be involved in the first wave of T Levels as the college believed that the 80/20 model of classroom to workplace was a great model and brilliant opportunity for students. It was very involved in the planning of the T Level, working closely with the Awarding Body in relation to the technical content, with employers for the industry work placements and finally with other colleges who are offering the same T Level.

Suffolk new College students have been enjoying the challenge of the qualification and have started virtual work experience with Morgan Sindall, where they are able to practise their design skills which will help with their employer set project at the end of the year.

"I think the industry placement is going to really help me when looking at my next steps. It is a brilliant qualification and I'm enjoying being able to put theory into practice." (Construction T Level student)

(CLC, 2021)

Programmes to attract women into construction

Women into Construction¹² is an independent not-for-profit organisation that promotes gender equality in construction. The organisation provides bespoke support to women wishing to work in the construction industry, and assist contractors to recruit highly motivated, trained women, through five work areas:

- Personalised advice and guidance on training and opportunities available in construction and related industries.
- Access to free construction-related training including Construction Site Safety Plus training and CSCS card.
- Industry work placements with expenses for travel, lunch, childcare and PPE paid.
- Ongoing mentoring and support through training, work placements, into employment and beyond.
- Brokerage into jobs in the construction industry, and continued support once in employment.

The Journeys into Construction website area¹³ provides pen portrait examples of women who have entered a range of construction careers including quantity surveyor, assistant site manager, site placement, labourer, carpenter, commercial manager and document controller.

Current programmes include¹⁴:

Women into Construction with Willmott Dixon

Sponsored by Willmott Dixon, this 6 week programme is aimed at unemployed women wanting to work in trade and site based roles and includes:

- Work placements with key Willmott Dixon works partners Briggs Amasco, Deep Contractors, Foundation Development Limited, Interior Partnerships, Kane Group, Rossbro and Blade Flooring.
- Employability training at Capital City College including CV building and Interview skills
- Level 1 H&S qualification and CSCS training – your passport to working in construction

¹² <https://www.women-into-construction.org>

¹³ <https://www.women-into-construction.org/journeys-into-construction/>

¹⁴ <https://www.women-into-construction.org/programmes/>

- 1-1 advice and guidance on careers in construction
- Support for job applications for roles as varied as bricklaying, painting and decorating, health and safety and project management.

Women into Construction with West London College

This programme is open to unemployed women and includes support with childcare. It includes:

- A two-week work placement
- Support for employment into the industry
- Writing a winning CV
- Interview skills and techniques.

It also offers opportunities to:

- Complete L1 H&S qualification and CSCS training – your passport to working in construction
- Complete NCFE Certificate Level 1 in Employability Skills.

Women in Trades – Derby, Edinburgh, Huntingdon, Leeds, Milton Keynes and Preston

Women into Construction are working with Ixion and Places for People to offer a 7-week “Women in Trades” programme.

This programme is for women aged 18+ living in Derby, Edinburgh, Huntingdon, Leeds, Milton Keynes and Preston. It includes:

- Remote/online initial training
- Work experience placement of 70 hours with Places for People maintenance and repair team
- Qualifications in construction and, if required, English and maths
- Opportunity to progress into an Apprenticeship
- Q&A sessions with Women Industry Speakers
- Toolkit on completion

WiC Employment Programme – Cambridgeshire

Women into Construction is working in Cambridgeshire, in partnership with **Hill Group UK**, to offer women looking for a role in construction the following support:

- 1-2-1 advice and guidance
- CSCS training
- Virtual and in-person work placements
- Remote mentoring

- CV, application and interview advice
- Employment brokerage.

WiC Employment Programme – West Midlands

An employment programme to support women in the West Midlands who are looking to explore the construction industry. It offers:

- CSCS training
- Mentoring support with participating employers
- Virtual work placements
- Employment brokerage.

Women into Home Building Careers – Home Builders Federation (HBF) Skills Partnership partnered with Women into Construction¹⁵ to design and develop specific routes for women to progress into technical skill-shortage roles such as site/assistant site managers, quantity surveyors, and technical coordinators and managers. The pathway included:

- Understanding the home building sector – both off-site and on-site work.
- Developing transition skills such as confidence building and peer mentoring
- CV writing and practicing interview skills.
- Health and safety training.
- A Construction Skills Certification Scheme.
- Two weeks' work experience with a home builder, culminating with a guaranteed interview.
- Ongoing mentoring into employment and 6 months post-training.

HBF Skills Partnership also worked with home builders to look at how they can reduce barriers for women to work in the industry, such as offering a female-friendly working environment and flexible working arrangements.

Energy and utilities

Energy & Utilities Jobs is a collaboration of 26 energy and utility industry's key employers. It aims to attract and inspire new people, bringing new skills, ideas and ways of thinking, to engage with the sector's employers, through a range of New Entrant, Apprenticeship and Graduate routes. It aims include helping to extend the sector's reach to underrepresented groups. In 2019, women represented 48 per cent of all visits to website in 2019, and 28 per cent of applications came via a BAME initiative (EUSkills, 2020).

¹⁵ <https://www.hbf.co.uk/policy/home-building-skills-partnership/career-attraction/pathways-construction/women-home-building/>

Young Professional programme – Youth Employment UK, joined with Energy & Utility Skills to encourage more young people into the energy and utilities sector and helping it to become more youth friendly. Inspiring more young people into roles or training provision in the sector to get ‘work-ready’ by developing additional skills through the Young Professional programme (EUSkills, 2020).

Energy & Utility Skills also has partnerships and collaboration with the **Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), Duke of Edinburgh’s Awards (DofE), Engineering UK, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), and the Collab Group** to amplify the sector message to encourage young people to the sector and gain STEM skills (EUSkills, 2020).

Getting on

- There are far fewer initiatives to support underrepresented groups progress within the construction industry. No initiatives to support underrepresented groups to progress within the energy and utilities industry were found in the evidence identified for this rapid review.

Construction industry –supporting diverse workforce talent

Construction Talent Retention Scheme (CTRS) – The CTRS supports the whole construction industry and plays an important role in attracting new talent into the sector. In addition, as a collaborative platform that is free for all businesses and candidates to use, it serves to unite the construction sector in its collective aim to recruit and retain the best talent.

- For workers – A place to find new opportunities or find support in your current role.
- For employers – It is hoped that with industry-wide support, this can become the clear and easily accessible place to find opportunities and promote talent. It provides a central site for opportunities of redeployment for workers already in construction, as well as to upskill and reskill people from other sectors.

(CLC, 2021)

CTRS Case Study: Kier Group – Building a Strong Pool of Talent for Construction

Recognising the critical importance of retaining a buoyant pool of talent across the construction industry, Kier Group was one of the first companies to join the Construction Talent Retention Scheme (CTRS) shortly after its launch in July 2020. Supported by powerful technology, the CTRS enhances the range of recruitment tools that Kier uses to fill a large number of vacancies every year.

Since joining the scheme, Kier has advertised vacancies via the portal and received almost 100 applications for roles as diverse as quantity surveyors to site managers and planners. With the portal’s direct interface to Kier’s own recruitment software, it is easy to both upload jobs and to process applications.

Kier have found the CTRS to be a vital platform in attracting new talent. The Group believes that availability of skills will be increasingly important to the sector, in adapting to challenges including COVID-19 and Brexit over the coming months, and ensuring that talent is retained within the industry will be critical to delivery (CLC, 2021)

The **Supply Chain Sustainability School** is a world class collaboration between 108 clients, contractors and the CITB who fund the School and together develop and deliver free training that equips their suppliers with the skills to enable a more sustainable built environment.

Whilst 2020 has brought challenges, the School's online learning platform has continued to engage with industry to deliver a high quality, compelling and agile training programme. Since April the School has doubled the amount of learning it has delivered:

- 286 virtual training sessions have taken place
- 6,700+ learners, 62 per cent from SMEs, have attended learning to support the key priorities of the "Skills for a Modernised Industry" challenge – notably, Fairness, Inclusion and Respect, digital, offsite and carbon reduction
- Access to the learning resource library has doubled with over 5,500 e-learning downloads and 12,000 resources accessed.

The School has been agile and moved all its training to a virtual face to face model. These are not your usual webinars but interactive and engaging training sessions that create a virtual classroom and instructor led group work. The School has reacted to emerging priorities such as wellbeing and productivity issues created by COVID and has also supported our industry to tackle wider societal issues such as diversity and the climate emergency.

The School Partners work together to provide clear and consistent training to industry in a series of special interest groups that align to the key priorities of the CLC for example FIR Programme, the People Matter Charter, Climate Action Group, and Offsite for Everyone. (CLC, 2021)

TESP Experienced Worker Assessment – The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership's (TESP) Experienced Worker Assessment (EWA) enables individuals with at least 5 years' relevant experience to achieve fully-qualified electrician status through an assessment process aligned to the apprenticeship benchmark. The process typically takes 3–18 months and includes:

- A self-assessment 'Skills Scan', to confirm suitability and identify knowledge or skills gap
- Validation of evidence with a training provider and agreement of an individual assessment plan, recognising prior knowledge/experience
- On-site assessment of knowledge and performance
- Completion of the 'AM2E' assessment, which mirrors the apprenticeship End Point Assessment.

The EWA upgrades an earlier JIB scheme which, over five years, saw around 3,000 individuals assessed to the industry standard. Further EWA arrangements are currently in development for other electrotechnical occupations, including panel building, network infrastructure, building controls and fire, emergency and security systems (CLC, 2021)

Case study: blu-3 – diversity core values

Diversity forms an integral part of blu-3's core values, to make not just the business, but the industry, more inclusive. Diversity initiatives include awareness training sessions, equal opportunity policies and positive in-business minority group role models. Senior-level KPI's report monthly on diversity statistics to ensure the organisation is acutely aware of diversity across our workforce.

They offer coaching and awareness sessions to address subconscious bias, and as a multinational employer, are proud of their diversity. There is still work to be done, and blu-3 will continue to support training and education into enhancing diversity-focused initiatives and actions (Jarvis, 2020).

Case study: Make Architects – encouraging diversity

Make is an employee-owned Architecture practice, which means every employee receives a profit share. There is no job hierarchy or job titles; every employee is known as a partner. Make encourages diversity through a belief that having a diverse practice brings value to employees, working environment and clients.

A diverse workforce culturally and socially broadens the ability to find the right solutions on projects. This fundamentally improves the service offered to clients, and exposes employees to a variety of working styles, personalities and approaches.

The aim is to create a communication-rich environment that fosters honesty, mutual respect, openness and a can-do attitude among employees, thereby empowering and motivating them to work to a consistently high standard. They do this through a range of approaches including:

- Training and development opportunities for all employees.
- Flexible working policy
- Flat hierarchy
- Enhanced maternity and paternity policy
- Profit share

(CIC, 2015)

Supporting women to progress in the construction industry

The BRE Women's Network was launched on International Women's Day in March 2013 with a mission to inspire women to join and remain in the construction and property sectors by showcasing the positive contribution that so many are making across the sector.

Founding staff volunteers wanted to provide BRE's diverse portfolio of 600+ built environment professionals with access to networking and professional development events locally (at head office in Watford) as an alternative to London (where these type of activities are usually held). From the outset members decided to hold events that appeal to both men and women so that everybody is aware of the challenge of the underrepresentation of women in the construction and property industry and STEM fields.

In its first year, the Network held four events: Inspire, Involve, Learn and Lead; each building on the previous event and open to the wider industry. These events were fully subscribed and attended by 240 people. Speakers represented men and women from a range of companies including: WSP, Carillion, Carbon Disclosure Project, Atkins, and Jacobs. Two of these events were workshop training sessions provided by external coaches. Feedback from participants was very positive and inspired BRE staff to continue coordinating events for the following year:

“My career would have suffered had I not turned up today. It's what I have needed to give myself a kick-start for a while”

“It made me think about my personal lessons and experiences and how I can channel these in a positive way.”

Other events have included webinars and coffee mornings (for BRE staff). The network of volunteers planning these activities continues to grow and further events are being planned (CIC, 2015).

The Women Returners Programme helps professional women re-launch their careers and support organisations offering paid assignments to those who have been out of the workforce for two years or more. In 2015, **Thames Tideway Tunnel** in partnership with a pioneering initiative called Women Returners became the first organisation outside the financial sector to launch a 'returnship' programme, aimed at helping professionals back into work after a career break. All seven professionals who took part were offered positions with Thames Tideway Tunnel after they completed the programme, which included opportunities in business planning, legal, stakeholder engagement, operations management, asset management and financial modelling. **Encompass was set up to understand the barriers for minority groups within the project** and develop a clear strategy to address these. The group organises quarterly events which are open to all staff. The initial focus has been on gender diversity, however, there are also groups in place to look at disability and BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) (CIC, 2015).

Founded in 2012 **Women in Planning** is an informal network for women who work in town, urban and spatial planning or related professions. The network is completely run through online and social media tools including WordPress, Eventbrite, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. It is run on a volunteer basis by a group of practicing planners. The network welcomes all involved in the profession whether private, public sector, academics, third sector or students, professional institution member or not and regardless of position at work, or length of time in the profession. It aims to empower women to be confident professionals in planning by:

- Fostering personal development

- Creating networking opportunities which allow for sharing of experience and knowledge
- Nurturing professional and personal relationships
- Supporting professional development by presenting different career paths in and outside of planning
- Identifying inspirational role models
- Increasing the profile of women working in planning.

Membership is gained simply by joining the LinkedIn Group which (in 2015) had over 778 members (CIC, 2015).

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