

PLACE FOR ALL

EQUALITY

DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

“ My journey in
the highways
industry. ”

Amy Derby, Highways Inspector



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Sharing personal stories and perspectives to foster inclusivity in the workplace

In recognition of LGBT+ History month, and in partnership with Colas, ADEPT is launching a series of posts on equality, diversity and inclusion, bringing personal stories, perspectives and experiences to life.

We don't always stop and think about the different ways our colleagues experience their working lives. Recognising those differences and providing a welcoming and inclusive culture, one that provides opportunities and goes beyond policy into everyday practice, must be at the heart of our workplace environments.

There is plenty of research to show how organisations benefit from having diverse voices at the heart of our teams. Reflecting the communities we serve is vital if we are to understand how the impacts of our decisions will affect different groups.

There are real world consequences to a lack of representation. Crash test dummies based on the average male body are used to test vehicle safety, with the first female dummy only developed in Sweden in 2022. A 2011 study from the University of Virginia, found that women are 47% more likely to be seriously injured in a car crash.

As well as leading to better decision making and innovation, greater inclusivity has also been shown to improve staff retention. Local authorities across the country are struggling to recruit and retain skilled employees as well as attract young people. Being proud of our values and communicating them effectively, making our workplaces respectful of different experiences and cultures can only strengthen us and the wider sectors we operate in.

We can only attract people if they know what we do, what we can offer and how they will be accepted, supported and valued. To do that, we also need to understand how they experience working for us.

Although it is changing, place services are an area where the more traditional sectors of highways, planning and waste have led to a poorer gender balance and a less diverse workforce. We need to get the message out that our careers are interesting and rewarding, and that our workplaces are accepting and supportive, but to do that we need to reach beyond how we have always done things.

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Not only that, when we talk about the preventative role of place, we mean how we contribute to delivering better outcomes for people across public health, adult social care and children’s services. If we don’t understand the experiences of our communities, how can we create effective policies, shape new approaches, design successful schemes or deliver impactful services that really do make a difference?

That’s why we have created this campaign with Colas, who have been working hard on their own diversity strategy. We know we are not going to reach all the people we want to work for us, but we can reach you - the team leaders, managers and directors who are part of making a that difference.

It’s also why we thought we’d make this campaign a bit different and introduce you to a wide range of people working in local government, or for Colas, who have been happy to share their personal experiences.

We all miss out when we recruit only from one pool of talent or when projects are poorly designed or decisions constrained by how we have always done things. We’d like to thank everyone who has contributed their stories to this campaign, and we hope they give you plenty of food for thought.

With Colas, ADEPT has also been working on a series of tools and resources to help local authorities who are struggling with recruitment and staff retention across the sector. Find out more here: www.adeptnet.org.uk/workforce.