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Blog article for the Equality Commission by Paula Logue, HR Manager, Translink

Initiatives to improve female representation in STEM

Translink is determined to promote a workplace that embeds Equality of Opportunity, enabling a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. We have adopted a comprehensive approach to addressing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), driven by our passion to go beyond statutory reporting and monitoring obligations. We recognise that for our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to work it needs to have a dedicated focus that extends across each department in the organisation.

Encouraging females to consider a career in STEM is not a unique challenge to Translink but one that has our considered attention. Statistics showing that only 26% of graduates in core STEM subjects are female and only 8% of engineering apprenticeships started are by women*, indicates where the poor representation in STEM careers begins.

Translink has taken a number of proactive steps to encourage more women into the diverse range of roles within the company, including bus drivers and engineers. Our award-winning Female Have-a-Go Days, providing the opportunity to meet female bus drivers, inspectors and managers and 'have a go' at driving a bus, challenge the perceptions of who can do these roles. We have also seen an increase in the female application rate as a result.

In recognition that encouraging females into STEM roles is an industry wide challenge, we recently partnered with Women In Wheels and Transport Training Services in the delivery of a 'Women Driving Change' event; this gave about 100 women the opportunity to meet people in the transport industry and be inspired to consider it as a career. The positive feedback from this event has been encouraging and we believe that by working together to showcase the variety of STEM roles women succeed in, and by profiling this across a range of media platforms, the impact will be wide reaching.

As well as encouraging females to consider working in our sector, we want to focus on the experience of the females within our organisation. We have an established 'Women in Translink' employee network that has members from across each division in the organisation. The main aims of this group are to encourage and support each other and to increase the visibility of women in the workplace. The group drives activity around key celebratory events such as International Women's Day that sees

us profiling some of our exceptional talent and showcasing the important roles our female employees do. The network is also encouraged to provide feedback on work practices to allow the organisation to respond to the needs of employees.

Translink acknowledges that we are on a journey and are genuinely committed to exploring new ways to make a difference, building on previous success so as to see a year-on-year increase in activity and change. We are looking forward to exploring our work at the STEM event and discussing with attendees our future thoughts and ideas.

To find out more on how Translink approaches EDI please take a look at our dedicated webpage: [Equality Diversity and Inclusion \(translink.co.uk\)](https://translink.co.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion)

* statistics collated by WISE group ([Statistics - WISE \(wisecampaign.org.uk\)](https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk))