

Public sector equality duty objectives (2016-2020) and annual progress report



Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives and Annual Report

Introduction from David Poole Executive Director and Executive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Leader

'April 2015 was an important landmark for our organisation as we made the transition to becoming a publicly owned company - Highways England - from previously being part of the Civil Service as the Highways Agency. For me, with a personal and business interest in equality, diversity and inclusion the transition also presented an opportunity to become more ambitious in our approach to creating a more diverse, and diversity aware workforce. With greater autonomy I believe we can grasp the business imperative and use our influence and increased expenditure to make the most of a diverse talent pool right across the transport, maintenance and construction sectors. Fundamentally we serve the public and critical to this is ensuring that we genuinely listen and respond to the different voices from the communities and customers that we serve.

This commitment is highlighted in our refreshed overarching objective:

“Highways England will embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into all areas of our business, driving real change in how we work with our customers & communities, our supply chain and our employees.”

This document also provides a review of what we have done to deliver our public sector equality duty (PSED) over the first year since transition to the new company. It also focuses on what we intend to do as Highways England by introducing our 3 objectives concerning customers and communities, our supply chain and employment. These evolved in 2015 and will run through to 2020 and are fully supported by our Board.'

The transition from our previous objectives to a more ambitious agenda

Towards the end of 2014 those directly involved in delivering our equality objectives met to provide a robust appraisal of progress and prepare new objectives for Highways England. Although steady progress was being made, there was agreement to increase, expand and embed equality, diversity

and inclusion activities into all aspects of our business and in the work our supply chain partners do on our behalf. The table below sets out our new PSED objectives and their key components.

Public sector equality duty objectives from 2016 – 2020 and how they will be achieved

“Highways England will embed the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into all areas of our business, driving real change in how we work with our customers & communities, our supply chain and our employees.”

Customers and Communities



Led by Melanie Clarke
Interim Director of Customers Operations

Ambition	Demonstrably putting people at the heart of what we do and how we do it by understanding and considering the different needs of customers and communities in delivering services.
Objective	By consulting with our customers and neighbouring communities we will ensure we consider their diverse needs when we make decisions and demonstrate a lasting commitment to the customers and communities we serve.
To be achieved by:	We will take active measures to identify, listen to and understand the customers and communities our schemes, work and services impact upon, and will ensure their needs are reflected in delivery plans that will be monitored over a five year period.
	We will develop new products and an accessibility strategy to embed consideration of customer and community needs into relevant processes so inclusion becomes business as usual.
	We will build on mutually beneficial relationships by working collaboratively with local authorities, our supply chain, customers, communities and other stakeholders to share best practice, research and ideas.
	We will expand staff and supply chain capability and the confidence of those delivering front line services by providing targeted training and advice.

Supply Chain



Led by David Poole
Commercial and Procurement Director

Ambition

Lead the improvement of how all parts of society view and experience the highways sector.

Objective

By 2020, all our key suppliers will have improved their strategic alignment review tool (StART) scores for inclusion by 15%

To be achieved by

We will invest in initiatives that help us and our supply chain become more effective at:

- attracting and recruiting new people into the sector
- creating working cultures that allow everyone to perform to their potential.

We will set clear, consistent, stretching equality, diversity and inclusion requirements for our supply chain that drive the right behaviours and monitor progress to ensure they become standard day-to-day practice.

We will work in partnership with our supply chain to identify and deliver a new cross-sector initiative every year, which will have a lasting impact.

We will work in partnership with professional bodies and other major infrastructure clients to:-

- learn from each other, share research and best practice
- take opportunities to work across sector and industry to drive our ambition/objectives.

Employment



Led by San Johal
Director of Human Resources

Ambition

To become a high performing organisation with an engaged, modernised and innovative workforce.

Objective

We will create a more diverse workforce that is managed, developed and led in an inclusive manner. We will create an environment which holds leaders accountable for better business performance achieved by harnessing the strength of a diverse and inclusive organisation.

To be achieved by:

Developing better-defined career paths showing how all talent can progress in the organisation, recognising and removing barriers.

Cultivating staff networks to learn from the experiences of our employees and acting on issues identified.

Develop confident and accountable leaders who will be open and courageous in challenging the status quo and any bias in the workplace, and ensure employees are fairly treated based on individual merit.

Recognise performance which encourages positive behaviours, promotes inclusive ways of working and embraces differences.

Progress made during the transitional period 2015 – 2016

To understand, consider and respond to the different needs of customers and communities when we deliver our services we have:

- Developed, piloted and refined an easy-to-use and self-contained process to help decision makers consider the needs of different groups at key stages of a project or scheme. This is an analytical tool that uses demographic, social, population and economic information on a case-by-case basis to identify where accessibility and inclusion efforts should be focused for the greatest benefits to communities. This will be utilised from April 2016.
- Developed an accessibility strategy which will ensure we consider, design and deliver an accessible, inclusive and integrated network that enables connectivity for all users and communities.
- Delivered an awareness event for the Castle Street scheme in Hull. This involved bringing together people from the local community with disabilities with designers, consultants, project managers, Hull County Council's Accessibility Manager, an external accessibility advisor and our in-house equality personnel. We arranged this event because despite following procedures we were still not getting our communications quite right with the accessibility groups in Hull. It was clear that we needed to engage better and genuinely establish the issues and accessibility concerns and have better dialogue with the Hull Accessibility and Inclusion Group. The event provided many insights and enabled everyone involved to gain a deeper understanding of accessibility and how design elements can impact on people. It helped us and our supply chain partners to consider ways to best meet those needs. Most importantly, evaluation confirmed that those involved were pleased with the outcomes, and our design consultants and projects managers have since adopted similar approaches for other projects. Some publicity is being prepared to encourage others to use the same methods to engage better with community contacts as co-partners.
- Entered into discussions with **Transport Focus** who became the consumer watchdog in April 2015 on behalf of all users of Highways England's roads, including freight companies, cyclists, pedestrians, horse-riders, vehicle users and motorcyclists. They give us evidence-based advice on what road users actually want. They conduct a significant research programme every year, which includes the diversity perspective. From April 2016 Transport Focus will run the national road users' satisfaction survey to understand how satisfied people are who use our road network.

This survey will be replaced in due course by one that will involve many more road users giving us more robust information about protected groups' satisfaction with our services.

- Launched the customer panel on 7 December 2015. This panel will eventually have 2000 members and will be broadly representative of users of the strategic road network. To achieve this, road users – upon joining the panel – will be asked to complete an introductory survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI that records demographic information to identify any groups

that are under-represented. This feedback can be captured in ways to suit the needs of the individual. Ipsos MORI have access to sign language interpreters who can conduct one-to-one interviews, and a wide range of language interpreters who are able to capture feedback from customers who do not speak English as a first language. When conducting focus groups, or any customer facing research, the company will ensure that the venue to be used is fully compliant with equality legislation and make appropriate reasonable adjustments to ensure inclusive participation.

To improve how all parts of society view and experience the highways sector we have:

- Produced and piloted a collaborative performance framework that focuses on the performance of our supply chain in terms of their employment practices and providing inclusive services to customers and communities. Although our supply chain were already making good headway, following their feedback we set more challenging targets to measure performance.
- Developed an 'e-learning' package in tandem with **EW Group** (who specialise in designing tailored diversity and inclusion training material) to expand the capability of our managers in charge of contracts and performance. This incorporates case studies and best practice.
- Promoted three organisations for our consulting and contracting partners to refer to in benchmarking and accelerating their equality, diversity and inclusion progress:
 - **Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)** provides a **framework** (Be Fair) that is particularly relevant for companies wanting a construction-specific framework and support in improving construction site and sub-contractor performance.
 - **The Clear Company** provides a **framework** (Clear Assured) that is particularly relevant for professional organisations wanting to invest time developing their employment practice to a deeper level of inclusion in relation to disabled people.
 - **National Centre for Diversity** provides a **framework** (Investors in Diversity) that is particularly relevant for organisations wanting to understand and access best diversity practice from other sectors.

While it is not mandatory that our supplies refer to these organisations we are encouraging them to consider using 1 or more. Some are making good progress against 'Investors in Diversity' and 'Be Fair' assessment criteria whilst others have gone through audits provided by the Clear Company.

- Expanded membership of our supplier diversity forum. This forum now has 50 members including contractors and consultants with sub-contractors now interested in joining. A rich and varied speaker programme is designed to stimulate debate and has included:
 - **Insights into attracting under-represented groups into the industry** – Head of entry level talent at the BBC
 - **The current position of highways and transportation and tools to make progress** – The CEO of CIHT
 - **‘Go Construct’ Changing perceptions of the industry to attract in a new wave of talent** – Strategic Partnerships Director CITB
 - **Highways England’s emerging accessibility and integration strategy** – Atkins and Mott MacDonald as lead consultant partners.
 - **London 2012 – The business case for diversity and inclusion** – Learning for leaders strategy lead – inclusive leadership KPMG, formally head of Diversity and Inclusion LOCOG.
- Worked in partnership with volunteer suppliers to deliver a key leadership event supporting National Women in Engineering Day. 100 senior leaders attended from across the sector to learn and discuss how to attract, retain and enable mid-career women in the sector. Intelligence was shared by **Business in the Community on their Project 28-40** work, **Thames Tideway** on their returner programme and **Women in Science and Engineering** on the reality of making flexible working work.
- Worked as members of the **Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA)/Supply school** steering group to develop, launch and promote free materials for the whole sector to use on site to generate awareness of fairness, inclusion and respect. This consists of 2 e-learning packages, 4 topics for further discussion and a database. We contributed to promoting this material and hosted a specific event in our Birmingham office during November 2015.
- Collaborated with the **Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT)** to support sector-wide research and the development, launch and promotion of ‘Routes to Diversity’, a package of material for our sector. Our good practice and that of our suppliers has been published as a case study within the material.
- Supported CITB in its development of ‘GO CONSTRUCT’, a free one-stop web-based resource for people interested in finding out more about careers in construction, for businesses looking to recruit new talent into the industry and for educators/parents who want to know more about opportunities. Its aim is to change perceptions on who can follow a career in the sector and what to expect. Attracting people who may not have seen construction as a career option is important and it in this area that we and our suppliers have been lending our support.

Recognising Success

We run an annual sector award scheme to recognise and showcase best practice. This includes a category which judges outstanding performance in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion. This year the event took place at the Institute of Engineering and Technology in Birmingham.

Each year, we seek to highlight practice that is making a significant, sustainable and meaningful contribution in genuinely changing the face and culture of the sector. In 2015, two key themes emerged:

- The value of having diversity and inclusion strategies that are an integral part of business development
- The need to proactively engage and support the supply chain to better understand and deliver on the value of diverse workforces and inclusive working practices.

This years' winner was **Skanska** who demonstrated:

- A clear diversity and inclusion vision which drives how they operate
- Active involvement by their senior leaders to develop, sponsor and deliver their diversity and inclusion strategy
- Implementation of a range of initiatives to raise awareness and promote an inclusive culture across a breadth of Highways England projects
- Consistent tracking of the impact of initiatives at corporate and project level
- Genuine commitment at sector level to drive and support change in relation to diversity and inclusion.



Issy Maxwell and Karen Bryant (Skanska) receiving the award from Colin Matthews

A special achievement award was awarded to

Kier Strategic Highways / First Military who:

- Hired a specialist recruitment company to source talent from ex-military labour pools
- Recruited highly trained people into new roles to the advantage of both the company and the individual
- Looked beyond disability to recognise talent and potential within part of the labour market that they had previously not explored
- Shared their experience and approach with their supply chain, some of whom are now engaging with the same recruitment company to source heavy goods vehicle drivers and traffic management operatives.



Wayne Sparling (Kier), Kevin Cotterell (Kier), Rob Dance (Kier) and Nick Lyons (First-Military) accepting the special award.



Nicky Ensert and David Poole (Highways England) accepting the Most Influential Persons award from the National Centre for Diversity

Other awards and nominations

- Highways England (David Poole and Nicky Ensert) – received an award for the ‘most influential persons of the year’ and employees from Kier Highways Ltd and Interserve were shortlisted for the equality, diversity and inclusion lead of the year, by the National Centre for Diversity.
- Mouchel – ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) International Awards - Winners for best action to promote diversity for women in IT.
- Skanska – finalist for ‘Best Diversity and Inclusion Initiative’ category of CIPD’s People Management Awards 2015.
- Mott MacDonald – shortlisted in the 2016 Management Consultancies Association (MCA) awards social and environment category for their work on developing the equality, diversity and inclusion tool.
- Graham Construction and Balfour Beatty both won CECA’s workplace award for inspiring change.

To become a high performing organisation with an engaged, modernised and innovative workforce

Our transition to a government owned company in April 2015 dominated our internal teams' workload in ensuring the transition went smoothly and our staff were properly informed and consulted. Since then we have focused on understanding what is required from our people agenda in order for the newly formed organisation to deliver on its objectives. One of the key ways in which Highways England is going to be able to deliver what we have been tasked with, is through the recruitment, retention and development of a diverse workforce that brings a wealth of talent and experience to the work that we do. To that end, here are some of the ways in which we have been beginning that journey with more to do in subsequent years.

We have:

- Created a People Strategy based on our strategic business plan which sets out our people commitments from April 2015 onwards. The four components are accountable leadership, reward for performance, customer focused delivery and capable employees, all of which focus on and support employee engagement, wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion. The strategy is the beginning of our 'back to basics' approach in relation to people management and development within Highways England.
- Revised and introduced new employment policies connected with the accountable leadership component of our People Strategy. These apply a trust based approach between staff, teams and their line managers. A key example of this is our new approach to flexible working. This aims to move away from the traditional system of flexitime which relies on staff recording their working hours and quantification of time, to an approach where an individual and their manager can agree a balance between personal and business need as to preferred working pattern and the flexibility that provides for optimum performance.
- Launched the Highways England employee value proposition. This has allowed us for the first time to communicate directly with potential employees regarding what it is like to work here, and we have taken the opportunity to profile a number of our existing employees, tell their stories and provide insight into their diverse backgrounds from which they have come and how they have progressed.
- Created a number of human resource functions 'in house' for the first time, such as recruitment. We have been able to do this and recruit differently as we are no longer part of the Civil Service. This has enabled a different approach to recruitment, while remaining in line with Civil Service principles. For example, we have simplified the method by which people can apply in the first instance for a position, making the initial application process less 'daunting'.
- Established and promoted the leading women group as a forum for women to network, share knowledge, and support each other with business challenges. The meetings are accessible to all Highways England employees. The group met three times during 2015 and included learning sessions on leadership with contributions from female leaders from a range of organisations such as the Royal Mail, White Stuff Ltd and the Department of Communities and Local Government. They shared their experiences and learning of progressing to senior positions in organisations.

- Supported Highways England colleagues to run a cross-sector West Midlands network 'Women in Transport' and deliver a programme of events throughout the year. Two of our executive directors spoke at events as part of the leadership initiative developed in partnership with CIHT West Midlands.
- Organised further events linked to our mental health working group which was established in 2013 to better support staff and help line managers in the consideration of any adjustments that may be needed.

On an ongoing basis employment statistics are gathered and analysed. Annex A provides a summary of employment statistics covering 2010 – 2015.

Achievements include:

- delivering a mental health awareness course to help managers' build their understanding and capability in order to help staff who experience mental health illness. The course has now been attended by over 325 managers in the organisation.
- appointing two mental health employee champions to help drive change on mental health at all levels of the organisation.
- organising 'Time to Talk' across all our locations to raise awareness and encourage people to take 5 minutes to have a conversation about mental health.
- gaining recognition as one of sixty members of the Time to Change alumni group of employers sharing good practice.
- sharing our experiences as an organisation in partnership with trade union colleagues at a Trade Union Congress event with delegates from across the public, private and non-profit sectors.



Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan, Stephen Dauncey Mental health champion and Chief Financial Officer and mental health staff networking group re-signing the 'Time to Change' pledge in November 2015.

Recognising Success

Apprentices

During the year we ran successful apprenticeship and graduate programmes. 30 apprentices and 16 graduates joined, resulting in a more diverse range of age groups working in the organisation.

For our apprenticeship scheme we won the Regional Best Large Newcomer of the Year and we won the National Highly Commended award in the Newcomer Large Employer category. We were also included in the prestigious Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer list.



Staff receiving the Regional Best Large Newcomer of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards

Our vision for the next 5 years is to have a multi-award winning talent programme that will help us achieve the government ambition of more apprentices within the workforce by 2020. Early talent will provide our future leaders, so we are looking to invest in top calibre candidates.

Community apprentices

We have also partnered with **Envision**, a youth social action charity in Birmingham, to work with a local school on our community apprentice programme. This partnership sees members of staff from Highways England acting as corporate coaches for 17-18 year olds from a partner school. Our aim is to provide subsequent work experience and internship opportunities for this group.



Community Apprenticeships Award

Annex A

PSED Objectives and Annual Report 2016. – Employment Statistics 2010 – 2015

Chart 1

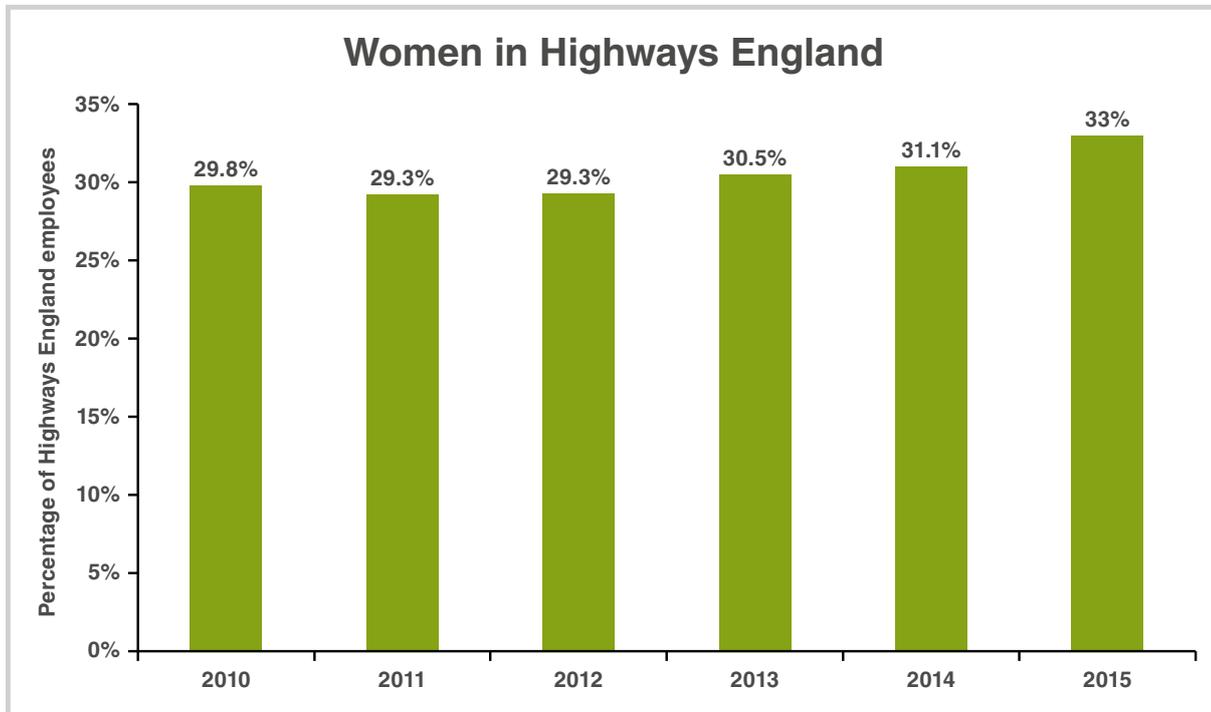


Chart 2

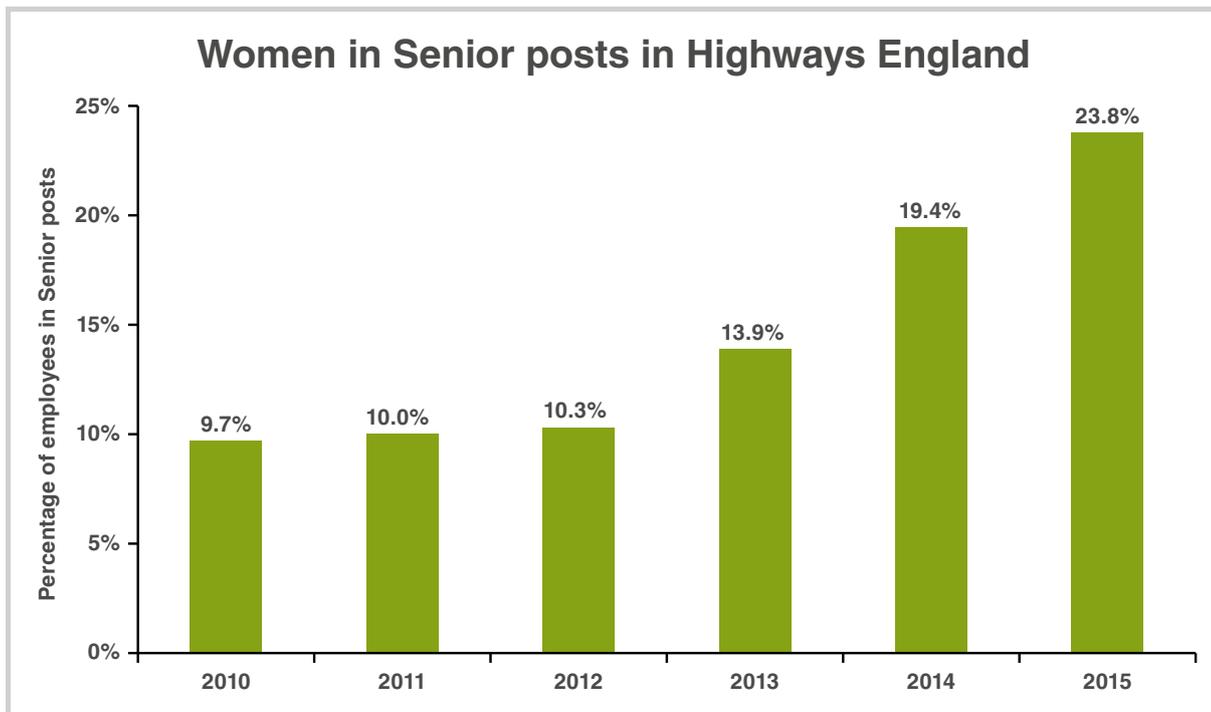


Chart 3

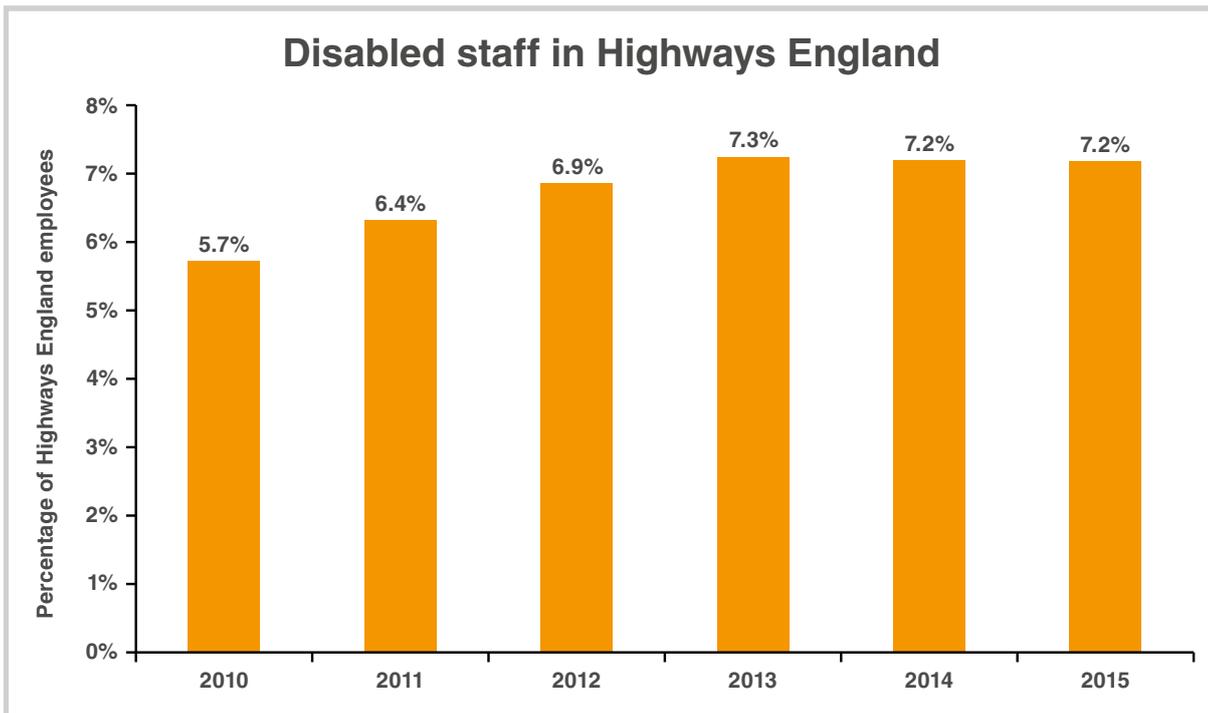
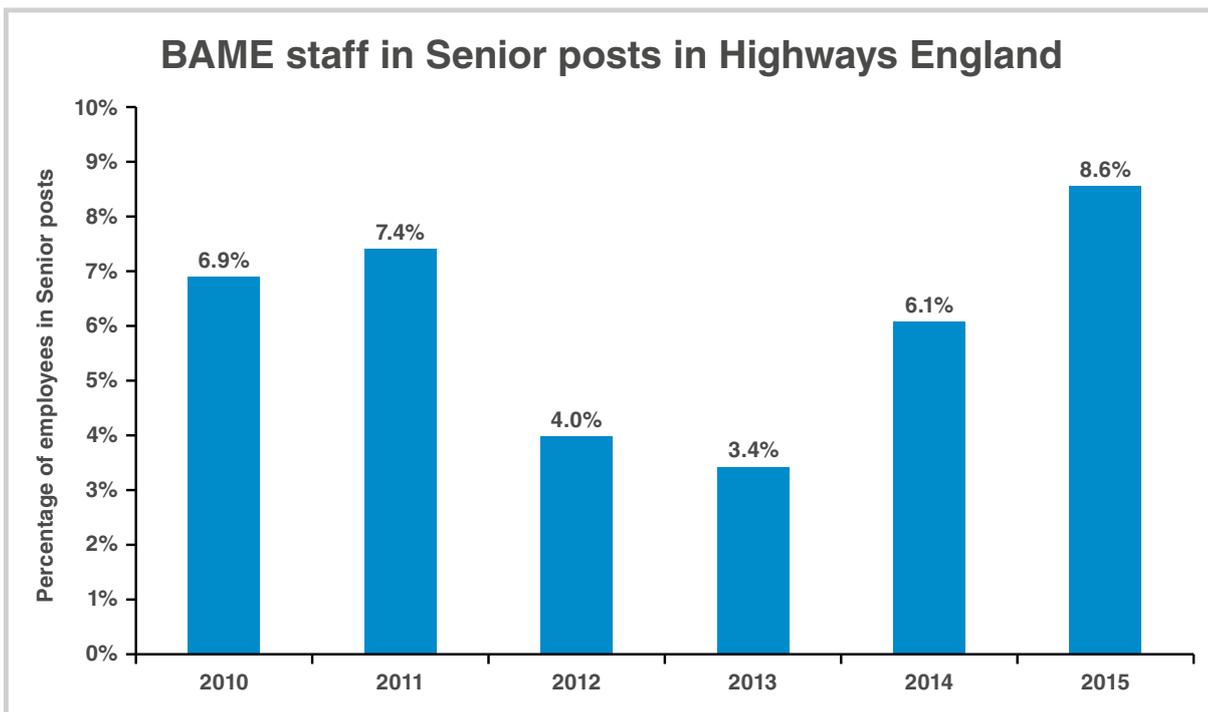


Chart 4



Observations:

1. Increase from 29.8% to 33.0% in women in the organisation from 2010 to 2015. Positive progression in each of past four years (chart 1).
2. Women in senior posts (formerly SCS grades) more than doubled from 2010 to 2015 (percentage and number of women). Greater progress made in past three years (chart 2).
3. Increase in disabled staff in the organisation to 2013, but then plateaued (chart 3).
4. BAME staff in senior posts increased compared to 2010, but not straight line progress (chart 4).

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