

Background

Kier is the UK's leading highways service provider, working with a wide range of partners from key central organisations like Highways England though to a wider range of local authorities, who are collectively responsible for the roads we travel on. For over 90 years Kier has helped clients to deliver a wide range of road, bridge and tunnel projects, and have handled everything from planning, programme and delivery of major schemes to routine maintenance and operations. Kier focuses on research and collaboration with stakeholders to find innovative solutions which will improve our roads and make a positive impact on local communities.

Why Address Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR)?

In the annual employee engagement survey that took place in 2017, Kier Highways were surprised to see that more than 1 in 10 of their workforce (11.6%) did not feel comfortable disclosing their disability status with the business. Interestingly, they noticed that colleagues were comfortable sharing other pieces sensitive information including sexuality and religion, but not around disability. This highlighted the fact that as an employer, Kier Highways needed to be intentional in how they engaged their workforce on the topic of disability and started to create open dialogue.

Impact & Benefit Realised

Using the data from the 2017 survey, Kier Highways used that to benchmark the disability data for the business and then give themselves new targets around disclosure and engagement. Kier Highways undertook a series of campaigns across the business to spotlight role models, demystify disability in the workplace, and create an environment where colleagues could receive support. Alongside the campaign, the business made the decision to re-survey the workforce to see if there were incremental increases in disclosure rates as a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the campaigns. By the end of 2018, the number of colleagues who selected the 'prefer not to say' option in response to the disability question fell to 3.73%.

Inclusion week

During an awareness week, in January 2018 they communicated information across the business to explain what disabilities are and provide daily case studies and profiles of people within the business with disabilities. This helped to raise the profile of a full range of disabilities and gave people examples they could relate to. These packs included:

1. Toolbox Talk & Contract Pack
2. ED&I Data Questionnaire
3. Posters and Case Studies
4. 5 Minute Health Check
5. Equally Yours Quiz

Communications

To ensure that all colleagues were being positively impacted by the campaigns both in the offices and on site, there was a concerted effort to raise the awareness of the initiatives across all contracts. The Hampshire business had a great relationship with 'Ways into work' and through the campaign, the profile of the various partners was raised, and the pockets of good practice was shared. Supported learning internships was also profiled to encourage other projects to take on interns who have various needs and disabilities.

Examples of the materials provided

Kier Highways Inclusion Week – 22 to 26 January 2018

It's not what you can't... it's what you CAN!



1 in 6 workers is dealing with a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression or stress.

Living with a mental health problem can often have an impact on day to day life, making things that others might not think about a bit more difficult.

To find out more about helping yourself and others overcome the stresses of everyday life, visit: www.mind.org.uk



Highways

Kier Highways Inclusion Week – 22 to 26 January 2018

Supported Learning Internships Northamptonshire Highways

Background

Three Northampton College students secured Supported Learning Internships with Northamptonshire Highways giving them the chance to experience the world of work while continuing their studies. One of these students is **Waqar Khalid**.



A little bit about Waqar, in his own words...

"My name is Waqar Khalid and I'm 21 years old.

"I am a student from Northampton College. I need help in certain areas such as lifting certain things up. I have poor vision in my left eye, I would prefer it if people would stand on my right side.

"I am a very chatty and talkative person, I like to make new friends, I interact really well with others good at acting upon things, and also good at making people laugh. I'm very helpful and very easy going. I like to see myself as a really determined person and I'm quite confident in everything I do. I'm a really hard worker and always try to give it my all no matter what.

"The reason I chose to do my Internship at Kier was because I feel it will be beneficial for me in the future, and also because I've always wanted to work somewhere business based, and to hopefully get good computer skills and good talking on the phone skills out of it. Also making sure I get the best of experiences from it with my time at Kier and even possibly get a job out of it."

Contract:

Northamptonshire Highways

Location:

Northamptonshire Highways, One Angel Square, Northampton

Role in Kier:

Supported Learning Intern

Additional information:

Waqar currently works in the planning teams within the Passenger services department. He currently undertakes administrative work for home to school transport and is working on a customer satisfaction project.



Highways

Disability forum


To take things one step further, Kier Highways set up a forum and invited feedback from colleagues with disabilities with a view to gaining their perspective on how they engage with the business. A chat room was set up that allowed colleagues to test the internal processes and systems and provide feedback through the lens of their disability. For example, colleagues were invited to go through the recruitment process and work their way through applying for a job, or a change in workplace provision, and fed back on the inclusivity of the process. This was also supported by the EDI action group and corresponding EDI sponsors.

Disability Confident journey

In response to the positive changes taking place across the business, Kier Highways then went on the Disability Confident journey to give current employees the confidence that not is issues around disability something that Kier Highways take seriously, but a journey they are continually committed to. Having progress from the level of being 'committed' to being accredited as an 'employer' to being the first construction company as Kier Highways to reach the level of 'leader'.

As a Highways workforce, what do we need to be thinking about?

Disabilities



Its simple.... Fairness, Inclusion & respect (FIR)!

What is FIR?


Encouraging a culture where everyone is treated fairly . Its establishing and maintaining a safe and productive workplace. Everyone is an unique and different Individual. Each possessing their own personality, background, appearance and abilities.

Videos –

How Fairness, Inclusion and Respect can be promoted in the workplace- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgrAWRB9iv0>

The meaning of FIR - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vumwPJZhrVw>

Language- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abxmdUzEUJo&feature=youtu.be>



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Leadership

All across the business, various executive and senior level leaders support all FIR related initiatives. An Executive Director supports inclusion across the business, and each inclusion related working group has executive sponsorship including disability working group. The executive sponsor regularly attends the working groups meetings so he can hear directly from the group, champion change and remove any blockers they may face.

Investment

Time

The biggest investment has been in terms of time to plan and execute all the initiatives. This has included the time required to rewrite policies, changes to systems and invest in other aspects of the cultural shift. There has been also a need to invest time in fine tuning process as the decision was made to remove disability status from the recruitment system to reduce bias, however this also meant that hiring managers no longer had visibility and could not help to put reasonable adjustments in place prior to interview.

Finance

There was a direct financial investment to provide training so that managers could learn more about reasonable adjustments and other areas to support colleagues with disabilities. In the journey towards the Disability Confident Leaders accreditation, there was a cost for the third-party verification required as part of that process.

Moving Forward:

The first step in the journey was to understand the scope of the problem around disability declaration, then to put support in place. Kier Highways are committed to:

1. Raising awareness around disability.
2. Increasing the disability disclosure rate and better understand the nature of the disabilities within the business to continually support colleagues. The data shows that following the increase in disclosure rates, there was an increase in disclosures around mental health and invisible disabilities, which will be an area of focus.
3. Highlighting where people can go for health-related support and communicating that clearly. Part of this will include profiling the internal Wellbeing Health Platform. The September 2018 employee engagement survey showed that whilst only 15% of workforce had used it, 40% were not even aware that it existed.

4. Focusing on a culture of celebrating what people can do rather than what they may not be able to do – strengths based focus so that disability is not a stigma.
5. Better understand workforce data as a way to future proofing against any future requirements around disability pay gap reporting.
6. Produce and publish 6 videos around mental health to raise awareness industry wide

Tips

‘In order to start the journey, you need to know where you are. You need to understand your employees and get some honest dialogue. Whatever the journey, ensure that your leaders are with you and supporting you to remove the barriers that stop you getting to where you need to go.’

– **David Short, Communications Manager**