

Challenges: Gender Equality Challenge



The ethos of FIR has always been central to how Mobile VMS interacts internally with employees and externally with clients, stakeholders and the public.

However, being a SME can pose challenges when it comes to the implementation of FIR across an organisation. Resources can often be overstretched. The team identified

individuals who could undertake the FIR Ambassador training provided free of charge through the Supply Chain Sustainability School. This presented Mobile VMS a fantastic opportunity to gain greater understanding of their obligations, both as an employer and as a supplier within the Highways Construction Sector.

Gender equality was firmly embedded within Mobile VMS' organisation, with their female colleagues already accounting for 50% of the senior management team. However, they were mindful of a key element, Menopause awareness, didn't exist. Menopause affects every woman and up to 80% of women during their working life. Men are also affected by male menopause, which tends to happen later in life. Mobile VMS knew they needed to foster greater understanding and support for their colleagues and turned to the Supply Chain Sustainability School for ideas on how to start the process, using the vast array of online resources available.

Impact:

Mobile VMS wanted to actively support and champion the female members of their organisation, in line with their commitment to gender equality. The FIR programme sparked an idea to encourage greater understanding and support around Menopause for all employees.

Part of their quest to raise awareness internally included the production of a dedicated menopause policy, toolbox talks for all staff, and signposting useful resources. Further to this, the organisation supported team members with elements like communication around menopause symptoms, making reasonable adjustments for staff affected and offering increased flexibility within the workplace. Understanding menopause enabled greater understanding and tolerance across the organisation for both men and women.

Fact box



Company

Mobile VMS Ltd.

No of employees

17

HQ

Newry, Northern Ireland

Website

www.mobilevms.co.uk

Main contact

Michelle Curran – Commercial Lead

Services

Provision of variable message signs, traffic sensing, asset management equipment and software. Also providing digital integrations with roadside hardware and third-party data for the provision of critical road condition information e.g., journey time, queue detection, incident management and work's egress advance warning solutions.

About

MOBILE VMS provide safer, smarter digital solutions for the Highways Industry, focusing on innovation, safety and the customer.

Their variable message signs and traffic sensing products integrate seamlessly via JamLogic control software, to provide intelligent roadside communications and vital road condition information.

This also led to the introduction of a supplementary 'walk and talk' policy to enable better stress management for all employees. This included offering mobile phone compatible ear buds to employees who could take calls and have meetings whilst out walking in the great outdoors. This was part of Mobile VMS' commitment to boost mental health and wellbeing within the organisation and an extension of both their menopause and wellbeing policies.

The resources and tools provided by the School, such as e-learning programmes, toolbox talks and resource library, enabled Mobile VMS to adopt similar education/communication styles which permitted improvements in staff engagement and improved learning journeys.

Value gained:

Both membership of the School and undertaking of the FIR Ambassador scheme led Mobile VMS to closely examine their obligations and actively scrutinize the level of support required for their staff. The FIR training and awareness provided on issues such as gender equality, allowed them to identify their lack of a clear and supportive menopause initiative internally. Aligning the company with FIR, only strengthened their determination to ensure a comprehensive menopause policy existed alongside associated support and awareness for all staff. Access to School resources and discussion considered two main strands that relate to perimenopause and menopause in both the equality Act 2010 (protects workers against discriminating because of their sex, a disability, and their age), and the Health & Safety at Work 1974 (must, where reasonably practical, ensure health, safety and welfare at work).

Mobile VMS are proud of the initiatives and support that they have undertaken to foster a sense of inclusion, and it is in this context that one of their colleagues has taken a step further and offered to raise awareness of this important topic at a Supply Chain Sustainability School webinar later in the year. Mobile VMS hope this topic will be openly discussed, understood and embraced in order to support their colleague's industry wide and promote greater tolerance for both men and women.