

**Date & Time:** Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025 | 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

**Location:** Virtual Teams meeting

**Attendees:** Belinda Blake (National Highways), Paul Aldridge (WJ Group), Rebecca Young (HS2), Shelley Caton (BAM UK&I), Stephen Cole (CITB), Lorna Brown-Owens (Network Rail) & Peter Ball (VGC Group).

**School Staff:** Dana James-Edwards (Chair), Ian Heptonstall, Sara Gouveia, Saira Khan & Nezer Vondee.

**Apologies:** Sarina Mitchell (Network Rail), Nabeelah Uddin (TfL), Ella Anderson (Mace Group) & Christina Scant (Core Highways).

## ACTIONS:

- **Action 343:** FIR team to engage Build UK, Constructionline, and relevant SME-focused industry bodies to support promotion of the Inclusive Recruitment for SMEs module.
- **Action 344:** Steering Group members to identify and nominate eligible SMEs for inclusion in Inclusive Recruitment case studies (video and text-based formats).
- **Action 345:** FIR team to coordinate Steering Group interview scheduling with Steering Group members that volunteered.
- **Action 346:** FIR team to circulate a promotional slide highlighting new Inspiring Change Conference & Awards categories for Steering Group members to distribute across their networks.
- **Action 347:** Establish a dedicated working group to enhance the FIR Ambassador Journey. FIR team to coordinate setup and extend invitation to Steering Group members who volunteered.
- **Action 348:** Steering Group members to assist in identifying potential site operatives to be featured in the Black Hats module series (filming scheduled for late June to early July).
- **Action 349:** FIR Team to circulate a brief poll to confirm current Steering Group views on the potential introduction of a rotating chair for future meetings.
- **Action 350:** FIR Team to reissue the calendar invite for the 26th of November meeting, reflecting the updated three-hour duration.
- **Action 351:** FIR Team to refine the Black Hats app based on Steering Group feedback, including exploring alternatives to QR code registration and improving usability across diverse site environments.
- **Action 352:** Steering Group to assess the feasibility and potential value of integrating Metimur into FIR impact measurement, with consideration for scalability and accessibility for SMEs.

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Dana welcomed attendees, noted apologies and outlined the meeting format and agenda.

## 2. Thanks & Acknowledgements

Dana thanked Steering Group members for their dedication and for successfully achieving specific tasks set between the last meeting to date. A special thanks went out to these members of the group for their helpful contributions:

- **SME Conference:** Belinda & Sarina for delivering high-quality contributions.
- **AGM Video:** Christina for representing FIR with excellence.

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- **Language Data for App:** Peter & Stephen for researching and identifying the best languages for the app.
- **Metimur Engagement:** Shelley for introducing us to Metimur.
- **Inspiring Change Awards Feedback:** Thanks to Belinda, Christina, Shelley, and Paul.
- **FIR Ambassador Journey:** Acknowledgement to Paul for raising issue found.

### 3. Updates & Asks

#### CITB Contract: Numbers Update

The current CITB contract exceeds targets across these key metrics:

- 2,238 unique companies trained (1,155 above target).
- 1,585 SME/Micro companies trained (831 above target).
- 16,713 training interventions delivered (8,697 above target).

#### SME Conference Update

The SME Conference was a success. There were 350 registrations and 140 attendees, which is great as the expected drop-off rate is 50% on average. There was great feedback from attendees.

#### Upcoming Events

Please take note of the following upcoming events and share these with your networks:

- [Diversity Survey 2025: How to Report your Organisation's Diversity Data Webinar | 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 | 12:00-13:00](#)
- [Trans-Forming an Industry: Building Trans Inclusion in Construction Webinar | 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 | 13:00-14:00](#)
- [Trust Matters Virtual Conference | 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 | 10:00-12:00](#)
- [Becoming a FIR Ambassador Workshop | 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 | 9:30-13:00](#)
- [Inspiring Change Conference & Awards | 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 | 10:00-16:00](#)
- [Diversity Survey 2025: How to Report your Organisation's Diversity Data Webinar | 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 | 11:00-12:00](#)
- [AI and Inclusion: Promise or Problem? Webinar | 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 2025 | 12:00-13:00](#)

#### Diversity Survey Benchmarking Report

The [Diversity Survey](#) is now open as of 18<sup>th</sup> of May. Steering Group members are encouraged to share this within their networks. The Diversity Benchmarking Conference has been scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2026 and will take place in London. To support accurate data submissions, webinar sessions providing guidance to organisations willing to submit will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> June, and 17<sup>th</sup> July as listed above.

#### FIR Culture Survey

The 2025 FIR Culture Survey has now closed. We received 990 responses and although this is less responses than last year, the overall quality of responses are much higher compared to last year. Thanks were extended to all participants who contributed by sharing their experiences. It was noted that the full report will be published during National Inclusion Week in September 2025. Key findings from the survey will also be presented at the Inspiring Change Conference & Awards through a dedicated session, offering further opportunity to share insights and support sector-wide learning.

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## Inclusive Recruitment for SMEs

An update was provided on engagement with the [Inclusive Recruitment for SMEs](#) module, which remains significantly below target. The current contract target is 400 completions. To date, there have been 13 completions out of a target of 154 for this stage. It was noted that this module has a more complex qualification process, with several steps required before a completion is officially recorded. A call to action is in place to increase completions. Steering Group members were asked to support efforts to boost engagement and identify opportunities to reach SMEs, particularly those planning to recruit within the next 12 months. During the discussion, Steering Group members suggested the following organisations as potential avenues for outreach:

- [SME Alliance](#)
- [Federation of Small Businesses \(FSB\)](#)
- [On The Tools – Connecting Construction](#)
- [Federation of Master Builders](#)

It was also proposed that [Build UK](#) and [Constructionline](#) be approached to help promote the module, as their supplier qualification process includes questions on recruitment, potentially providing access to a broader supplier base.

## Case Studies: Inclusive Recruitment for SMEs

We are seeking SMEs to participate in 17 case studies based on their engagement with the Inclusive Recruitment for SMEs module, including 5 video-based and 13 text-based case studies. To be eligible, SMEs must have fewer than 250 employees and must have completed the 45-minute e-learning module.

## Recruitment of New Steering Group Members

An update was provided on the ongoing Steering Group recruitment process. A total of 19 applications have been received. After careful assessment, 13 met the criteria to a high standard and were shortlisted for interviews. Planning is underway for the next stage, with interviews to be conducted with support from current Steering Group members. Shelley, Peter, Rebecca, Lorna, Ella and Belinda have volunteered to support this and will be involved in recruitment. The scheduling of interviews will consider the availability of panel members.

## Inspiring Change Conference & Awards

The [Inspiring Change Conference & Awards](#) will take place on **Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 (10:00-16:00)**. Dana provided an overview of the [agenda](#) for the day, highlighting key sessions and speakers. A company called 'Becoming' will deliver two sessions, with the pre-lunch session focussing on the current state of FIR/EDI across the sector. The post-lunch session will explore strategies for FIR professionals to strengthen and sustain themselves in the current climate. In addition, a best practice panel will be featured, comprising of professionals from sectors outside of construction, offering cross-industry insights and perspectives.

The following new award categories have been announced for this year's Awards:

- **TfL** - FIR Ambassador of the Year Award
- **HS2** - FIR Inspiration Award
- **National Highways** - FIR Innovator Award
- **Network Rail** - SME of the Year Award

In addition, the FIR & Diversity Tool teams will select winners for the following categories:

- FIR Learner of the Year Award
- FIR Lifetime Achievement Award

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- Diversity Data Benchmarking Survey – Most Improved Award
- Diversity Data Benchmarking Survey – Data Quality Award

### FIR Ambassador Journey & Working Group

An update was shared on the [FIR Ambassador Journey](#), highlighting that only 3 individuals have achieved Gold FIR Ambassador status out of over 1,000 ambassadors. Paul expressed concern over this, along with pointing out potential barriers and challenges within the ambassador journey. In response, a working group will be formed to explore the underlying issues and identify improvements to better support ambassadors through their progression. To support this initiative, Shelley, Paul, and Rebecca volunteered to be involved in the working group.

### Black Hats Project Update

The final languages selected for the project are Bulgarian, Romanian, Polish, Lithuanian, and Punjabi. These were selected using data from CITB, translation requests for the CSCS exam, and industry feedback. The app aims to feature audio by native speakers, with subtitles and transcripts, tailored to a reading age of approximately 11. A total of 11 topics have been scripted (11 out of 13) and app development is currently in progress. Support from the Steering Group is needed to help identify and engage suitable site operatives' volunteers for participation. The volunteers will be needed for filming and will need to feature their voices and faces. The shoots will take place at various Skills Centre locations (Build East, Edgware, West London) from late June to early July.

### Approved FIR Flyers

The need for a clear distribution plan for FIR flyers was discussed. Paul suggested we create a Toolbox Talk to support this as an effective way to generate interest and distribute the flyers. Rebecca offered to reach out to her network to identify potential supporters. Stephen highlighted ongoing work with [On The Tools](#) under the [Connecting Construction](#) initiative as a possible distribution route. Shelley noted that materials could be shared on a request basis via the School, and the group discussed how best to raise awareness. Lorna suggested digital distribution could be more effective for larger organisations, potentially via intranets and internal comms campaigns. Stephen recommended engaging federations such as [HBF](#) and using the multipliers list; [The Skills Hub](#) (Skyline – Chris Oldham) was also mentioned. Belinda suggested involving federations such as [FSB](#) and [SME Alliance](#), it was agreed that further support could be sought from these groups.

### Rotating Chair

The group revisited the previous consideration of introducing a rotating chair for FIR Steering Group meetings, an idea that had initially been discussed prior to Dana's appointment. While there was limited enthusiasm for the concept, a short poll will be circulated to gather current views and confirm whether there is interest in pursuing this approach.

### In-Person Steering Group Meeting

There was a poll, and the group discussed options for the upcoming in-person meeting (26<sup>th</sup> November), with the winning choice being a three-hour session with lunch to allow for additional agenda items beyond the core meeting. This session is expected to coincide with the onboarding of new Steering Group members, making it a valuable opportunity for introductions and engagement. Additionally, it was announced that the in-person meeting will serve as a moment to formally say goodbye to Paul, who will be retiring and stepping down from the Steering Group at the end of the year.

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## 4. Information Sessions

### A. The Black Hats Project App Preview

Tyler Webb Harding, Director at [StrategiQ](#), presented a detailed walkthrough of the prototype for the Black Hats project app. The app is designed to offer site workers a streamlined onboarding experience in just a few steps. Upon launching, users select their preferred language (from five pre-defined ones), then either scan a site-specific QR code or manually input their work details to proceed. The app features a dashboard where site operatives can see their progress in the FIR modules, access their profile, and track awards and achievements. Learning modules consist of a video and a quiz and a badge-based reward system is built in to reinforce completion. Significant discussion followed on the relevance of location tracking and site information. Paul raised concerns over the practicality of using QR codes in dynamic work environments (e.g., highways or mobile crews), suggesting the option to link users by direct employer instead.

It was agreed that more nuanced thinking was required on how to handle location and contractor details. Belinda, Shelly, Paul and Stephen also discussed realistic use cases, like completing registration during health and safety inductions and the staged release of content, with two modules launching every two weeks post app release in September. Feedback from Steering Group will inform further iterations before full deployment.

### Metimur

Kate Sturgess and Alex Henderson presented [Metimur](#), an online tool developed to measure return on investment in inclusion. Metimur is a platform that offers real-time, data-driven insights into an organisation's culture and the impact of its inclusive practices. The tool benchmarks performance across 20 cultural focus areas using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, with support from AI analytics and human oversight.

The tool is designed to support organisations of various sizes, with standard offering priced at £15,000 per year. This raised concern from Paul and Stephen and sparked discussion around accessibility, particularly for SMEs. Kate and Alex acknowledged that while the full audit may not be appropriate for very small organisations, there is potential to develop lighter or modular versions focusing on select areas most relevant to SMEs. Questions from the group explored benchmarking methods, compatibility with construction sector data, and integration with current FIR activities. There was interest in how Metimur could help measure the effectiveness of the FIR Ambassadors programme.

## 5. Upcoming Meetings

- Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025 from 11:00 to 13:00.
- Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025 from 9:30 to 11:30 (in person meeting with an amended invite to be circulated after results from the poll).

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