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# Gender Diversity

In the Top 150 Transport &  
Infrastructure Leadership Teams  
2023

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# Introduction

In the government's Hampton-Alexander Review in 2021, the FTSE 350 met the target for a third of board positions to be filled by women by the end of 2020. A new target of 40% was set to be met by December 2025. Great news is that this target was achieved three years ahead of schedule.

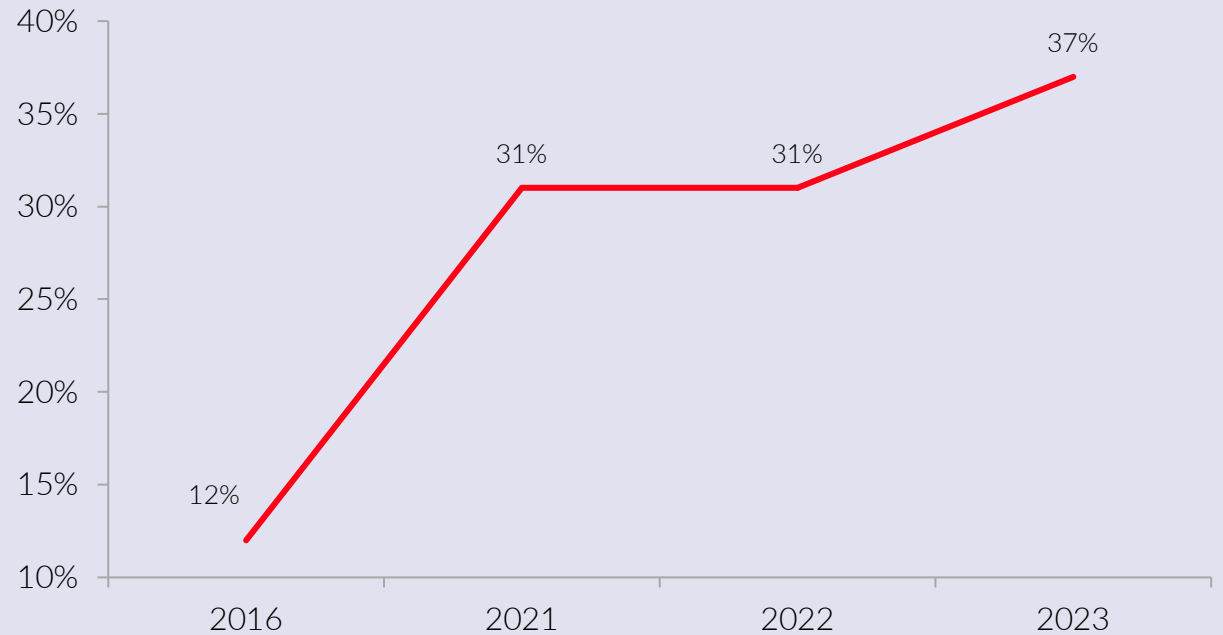
Over the last decade, progress has been steadily made. In 2011, 152 of FTSE 350 Boards had no women. In 2023, there are no All-Male Boards in the FTSE 350, and just one company is "One & Done" with only one women on its board.

Since the initial target was announced in 2016 by the Hampton-Alexander Review, we have published five reports, highlighting how the transport and infrastructure sectors are faring when it comes to gender diversity amongst executive teams.



**IN 2023, 37% OF T&I COMPANIES HAVE FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN AT LEAST A THIRD OF THEIR EXECUTIVE ROLES. THIS HAS RISEN BY 6% SINCE 2022.**

T&I Companies who have met the 33.3% target



# Findings for 2023

19

T&I companies have  
50% or more female  
Directors

In the top 150 UK Transport & Infrastructure companies, there were 19 companies who had 50% or more female Directors. This is an improvement on last year's 12.

37%

of T&I companies  
have met the 33.3%  
target

When it comes to hitting the 33.3% target, transport and infrastructure has steadily improved year on year. In 2023, the percentage of companies where women made up a third of executive teams rose from 31% to 37%.

11%

of CEOs in T&I  
companies are  
female

In this years' FTSE 350, only 6% of companies had a female CEO. In this area, the top 150 UK transport and infrastructure companies are ahead of the wider UK market with 11% of CEOs being women. Although it is disappointing to see that this figure has decreased since last year's report. In 2022, 13% of CEOs in transport and infrastructure companies were female.

4% of companies in the FTSE 350 have no female Directors on their executive teams. In the transport and infrastructure sector, this number has increased to 13%, up from 10% last year.

	2023		2022
	Top 150 T&I Companies	FTSE 350	Top 150 T&I Companies
Female CEO	11%	6%	13%
Companies with no Female Directors	13%	4%	10%
33.3%+ Female Directors	37%	52%	31%

13%

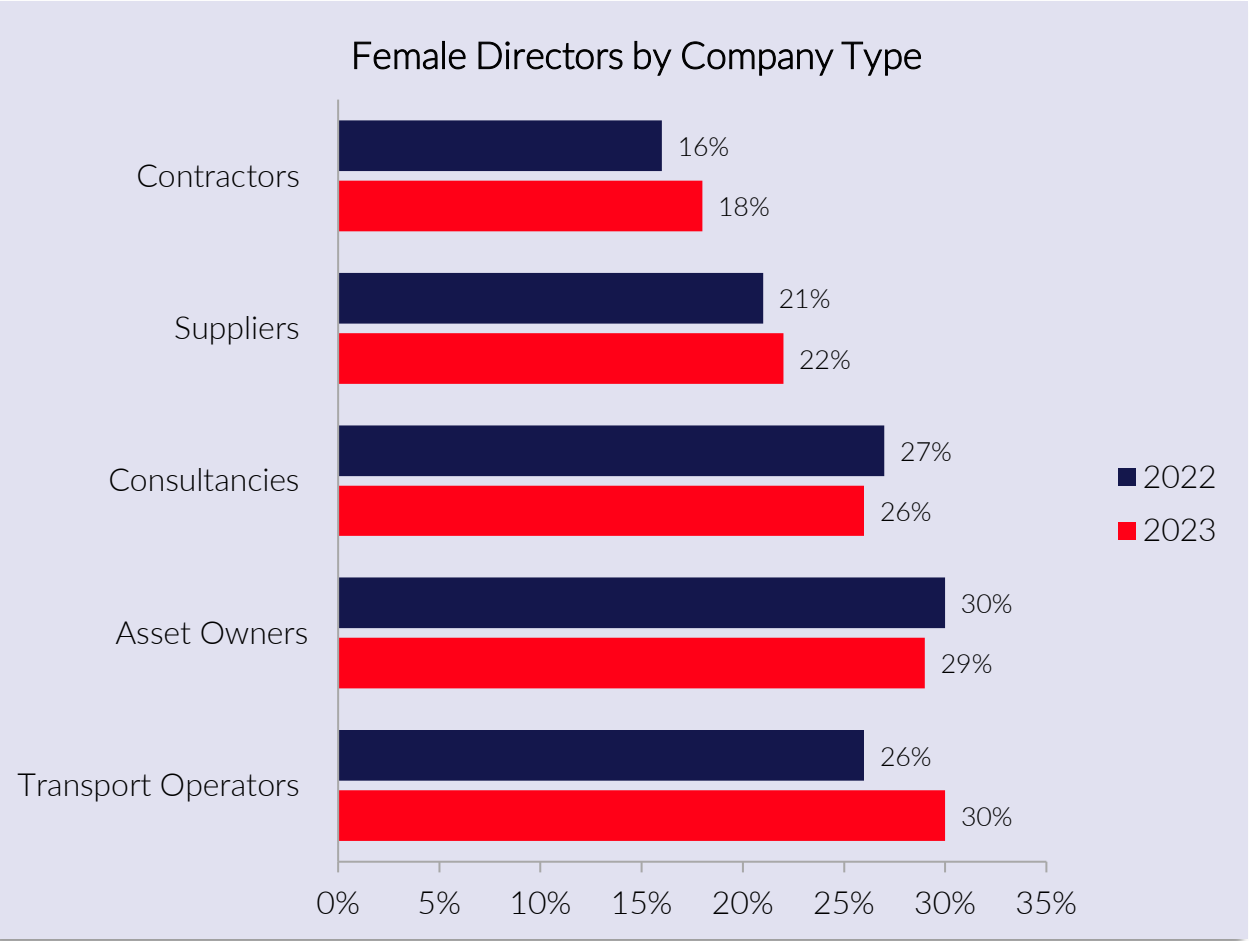
OF TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANIES DO  
NOT HAVE ANY FEMALE LEADERS



# Company Type

When we look at the breakdown of female Directors by company type, we can see that diversity levels have stayed relatively consistent compared to last year. The largest increase of female Directors has been at transport operators, with a 4% increase since 2022. As with the last year's results, contractors are lagging other company types.

	Gender Diversity by Company Type	
	Total number of Directors	Total number of female Directors
Contractors	284	50
Suppliers	63	14
Consultancies	217	56
Asset Owners & Public Agencies	382	112
Transport Operators	282	85



ONLY 1 MAJOR CONTRACTOR (SKANSKA) HAS A FEMALE CEO



# Function

72% of HR Directors in the top 150 UK transport and infrastructure companies are women. Compared to support functions, the proportion of women in core business functions, such as Operations, Capital Projects, Commercial and Engineering, is typically much lower.

The number of women in these core business functions are particularly significant for improving diversity because most CEOs are promoted from within them. Positively we are seeing an increase year on year, this year the distribution of female Directors within core operations functions was 23% up from 21% last year.

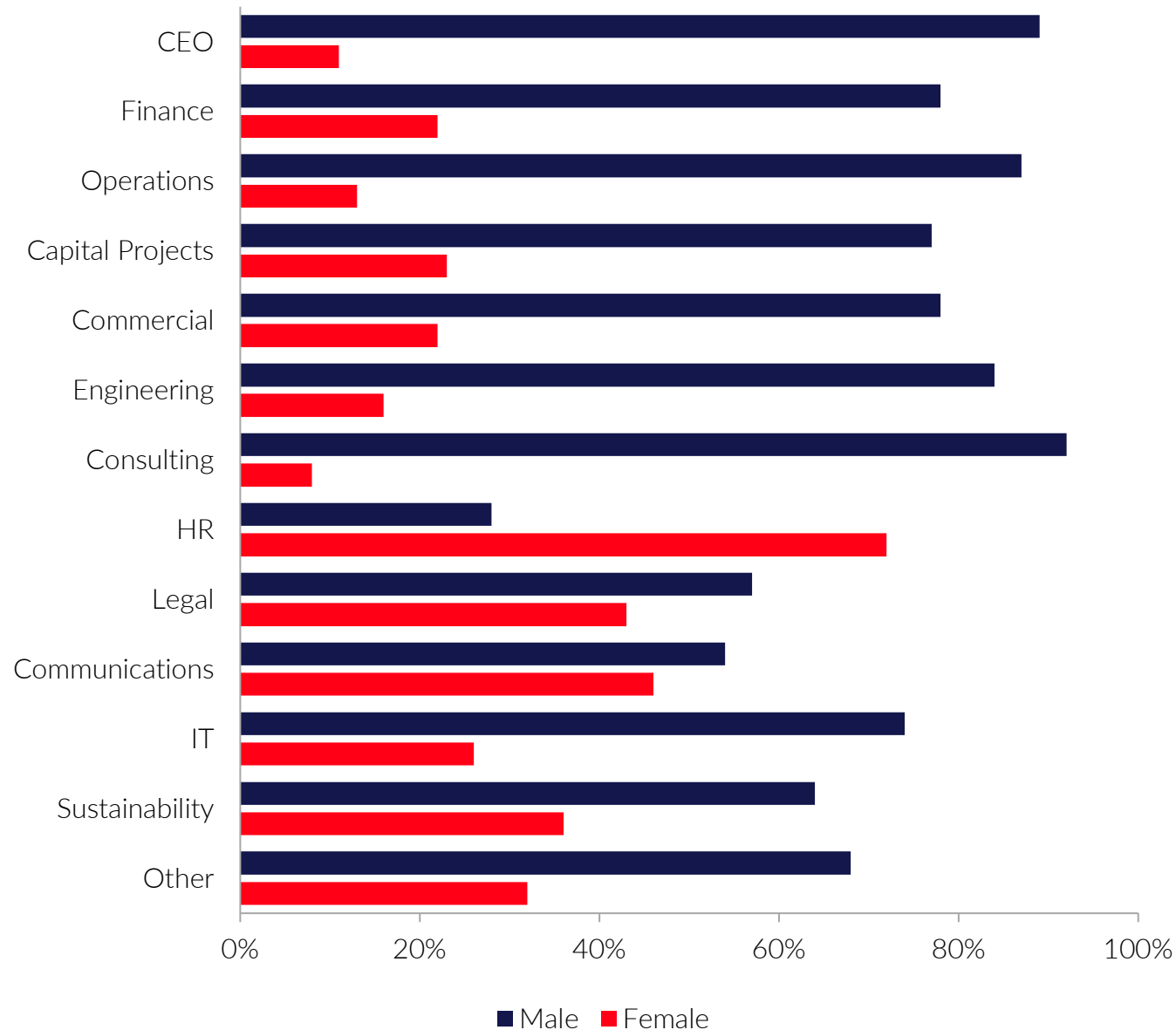
We are also seeing that several companies are promoting female HR leaders into Deputy Managing Director roles, which is a huge step forward for succession planning and helping great female leaders gain the operational experience required to run a business.

And as the FTSE Women Leader's review 2023 states:

“ The aim of the Review has always been a simple yet important one – to improve the representation of all women in all leadership positions. The dominance of women in the Human Resource Director role and as Company Secretary is welcomed, as are their voices at the top table.



Gender Split by Function



# Function

23%

of Female Directors are leading Core Business Functions

22%

of Finance Directors are Women

13%

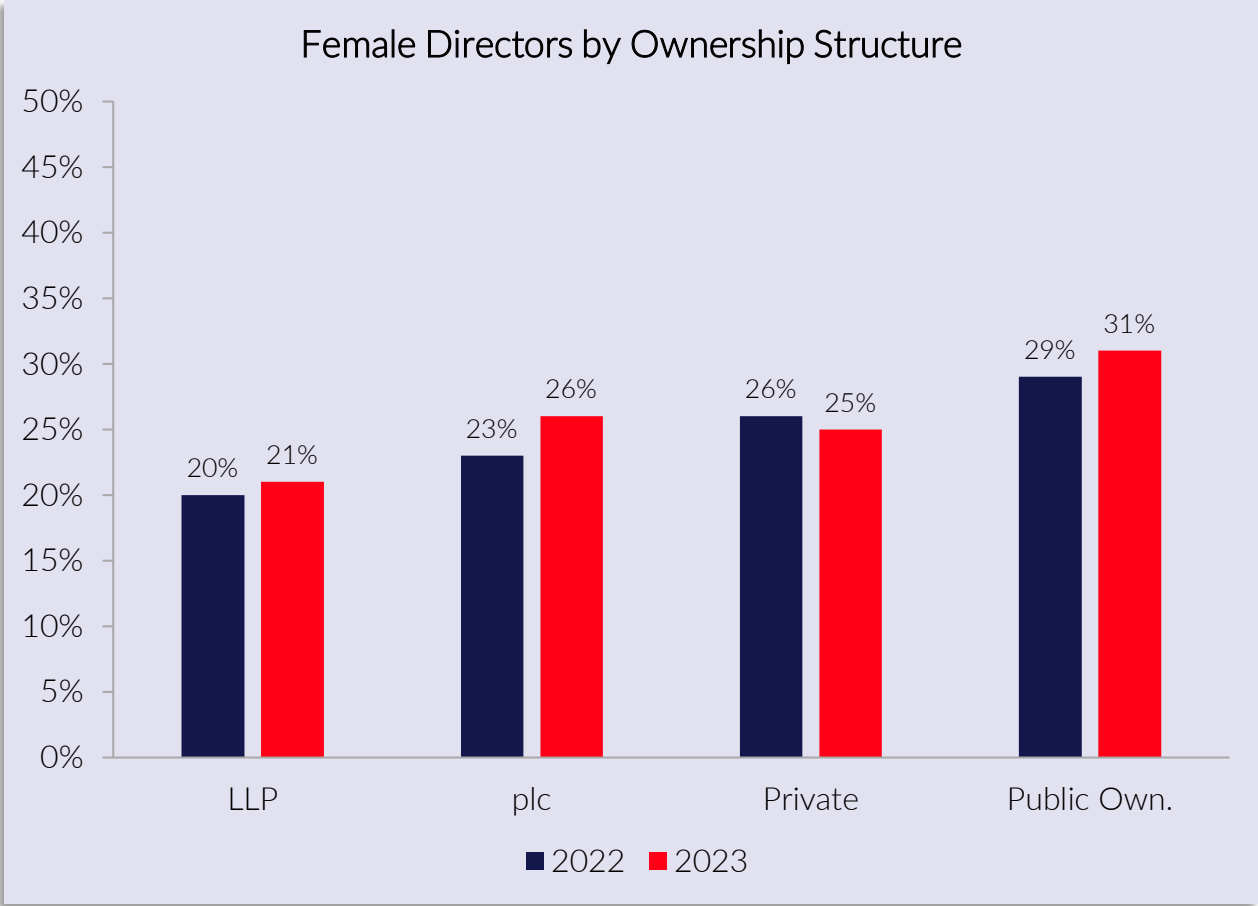
of Operations Directors are Women

\*Within consultancies we have classed all leaders of major divisions as Consulting for this functional comparison.

	Female Directors on Executive Teams by Function				
	Asset Owners	Consultancies*	Contractors	Suppliers	Transport Operators
CEO	19%	8%	3%	30%	8%
Finance	22%	28%	16%	40%	18%
Operations	20%	*	5%	9%	17%
Projects	19%	*	0%	0%	40%
Commercial	31%	*	0%	0%	30%
Engineering	11%	*	14%	0%	23%
Consulting*	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%
HR	70%	75%	63%	33%	86%
Legal	48%	55%	40%	50%	13%
Communications	29%	71%	75%	50%	40%
IT	28%	25%	43%	0%	14%
Sustainability	50%	75%	14%	0%	0%
Other Support	37%	30%	13%	0%	45%

# Ownership Structure

Public sector companies are still coming out on top when it comes to promoting women into executive positions with 31% female representation on their executive teams. For LLP's and PLC's, we can see a small change in the right direction, but unfortunately Private Limited companies have dropped slightly to 25%.



PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANIES HAVE THE HIGHEST % OF FEMALE DIRECTORS



# How can we increase diversity?

Companies across Transport & Infrastructure are implementing some innovative and fresh approaches to improving diversity within businesses. One thing that has been noticeable over the past year is the shift from increasing diversity stats to improving inclusion and embedding diversity as a culture.

We spoke with Katie Hulland, UK Surface Mobility Sector Lead for Turner & Townsend and past President of Women in Transport, and Kathryn Greenwood, Head of Resourcing and New Talent for Severn Trent Water to understand their perspectives on how the industry is doing.



## Diversity as a Strategy

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Companies that are really making strides with diversity and inclusion are the ones that are driving it right from leadership level. The most successful businesses have set themselves very clear diversity strategies, route maps, targets and very much want to embrace diversity at the heart and inclusion at the heart of what they're doing.

Katie Hulland, Turner & Townsend

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Using Hull Trains as an example, who have been recognised nationally for their commitment to diversity, set themselves very clear objectives. They can now boast a 50/50 gender split across its executive board and 48% of its total workforce is female. By taking a strategic, top-down approach to diversity, Hull Trains can see real, tangible results.

“

Having diversity targets creates a symbolic message throughout the organisation that this is a key metric and is really important to us.

Kathryn Greenwood, Severn Trent Water

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“ Organisations that have embedded it really well are client-side organisations who have really embraced it and then they've pushed it down through the supply chain.

Katie Hulland, Turner & Townsend

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Part of Network Rail's bidding criteria is that they expect to see applications from companies with high levels of diversity. The supply chain are being scored on how well they are performing with regards to diversity. This is forcing companies to view diversity as a business-critical success factor rather than just paying lip service to it.



## Inclusion

Strategy is a great starting point, but for targets to be met, companies need to embrace diversity and create a cultural shift. There are few companies left who don't recognise that increasing diversity is the right thing to do, and that it is good for business.

“ You can do all the work you want to do on diversity and trying to introduce people to your organisation, but it won't stick unless you've got a truly inclusive environment.”

Kathryn Greenwood, Severn Trent Water

”

Severn Trent's executive teams are reverse mentored by different individuals across the organisation, from different protected characteristics. This gives leaders a much more rounded understanding of different people's experiences and fills in those blind spots that they had before. The mentors are rotated every couple of years to provide a variety of perspectives.

“ Companies now need to go through their processes with a fine-tooth comb and push them, test them, kick the tyres on them, get different thoughts and inputs on them as to whether they could be exclusive.

Katie Hulland, Turner & Townsend.

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Employee networks are something that both Severn Trent and Turner & Townsend are doing very well and seeing great results from.

Employee groups provide support and community for one another, and a voice to share ideas or reforms that could make the business a better and more inclusive place. However, feedback from employee groups must be heard. There must be clear communication channels with leadership so that initiatives are introduced, or very clear justification is given as to why it can't happen.

“

If you're going to have any kind of employee network it must be invested in, and it must be supported by the leadership.

Katie Hulland, Turner & Townsend

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Each group within Severn Trent meets with the executive board annually to present ideas, and FTSE board members regularly attend the groups to meet them and hear what they have to say.

As a result of these groups, Turner & Townsend have implemented many different policies including recently creating a buddy system for women on maternity leave.

## Data

Decisions are made based on data. To get strategies, policies, targets signed off it is important to use the data available.

Surveys are a great way of understanding how inclusion is really being felt within the organisation. Policy makers may feel that they are doing all the right things, but employee perception may vary. Data received from employee feedback can be used to support additional training or support.

“

We have an employee survey, which I think is really important and it's done on quite a regular basis and that gives us feedback on people's experience of inclusion. So, we know if there are hotspot areas that we can target.

Kathryn Greenwood, Severn Trent

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Data also feeds into Severn Trent's core targets. As a geographical business they try and mirror local demographics when setting goals. Using census and ONS data they are able to set targets that are aligned to their local population.

## What does the future look like?

“

There's an opportunity for more joined up working. We're all out investing energy in what we can do to change diversity for the future, there's an opportunity for the sector to join up more in doing so.

Kathryn Greenwood, Severn Trent

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“

What we need to do is start to view diversity as a change programme now. It is going to now come down to every single business, effectively checking over every single process, decision point and interaction and saying right, we're going to do this differently.”

Katie Hullah, Turner & Townsend

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Huge thanks to Katie and Kathryn for their valuable insights into diversity and inclusion across Transport & Infrastructure.





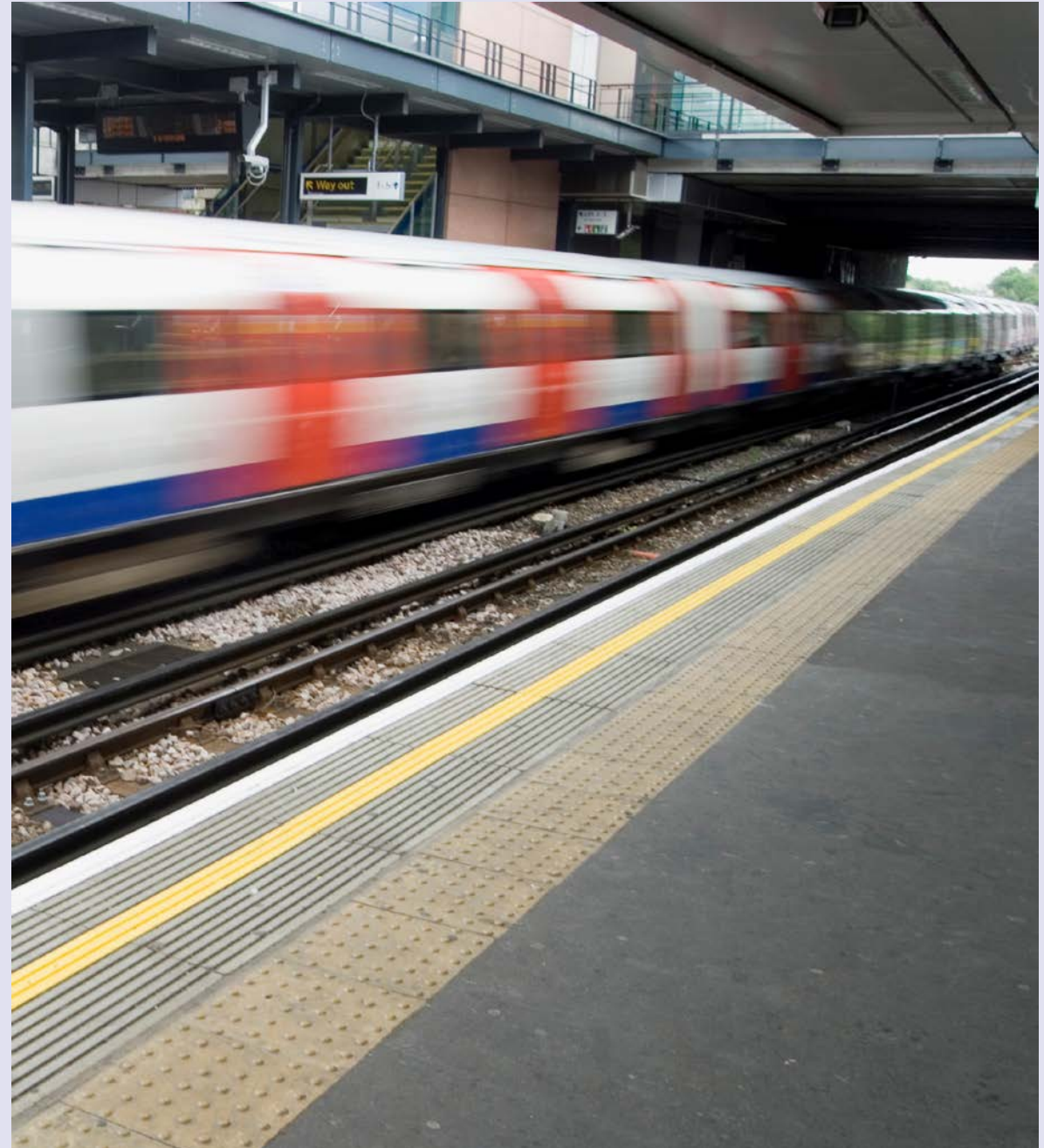
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# Methodology

We compiled a list of the top 150 UK transport & infrastructure companies by selecting the largest UK businesses in each of the different types of company including consultant, contractor, operator, infrastructure asset owner, public sector agency and supplier. We ensured each sector of infrastructure was well represented including rail, aviation, roads, water, and energy. We identified the senior executive team of each business within the UK as of July 2023.

Where we have discussed the statistics of the CEO role, this has been the CEO or the nearest equivalent in the most senior executive leadership position, i.e., for an LLP it has been the overall Senior Managing Partner.

For the purposes of this report a core business leadership role in the executive team has been a direct report to the CEO who manages one of the core divisions or functions of the business. In a contractor or asset owner, this would include a Chief Operating Officer, Chief Projects Officer, Group Commercial Director, or Group Engineering Director, in a consultant this would include a Divisional Managing Director and equivalent reporting to the CEO.



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# Authors



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