

Diversity

In UK Energy Company Leadership Teams
2025

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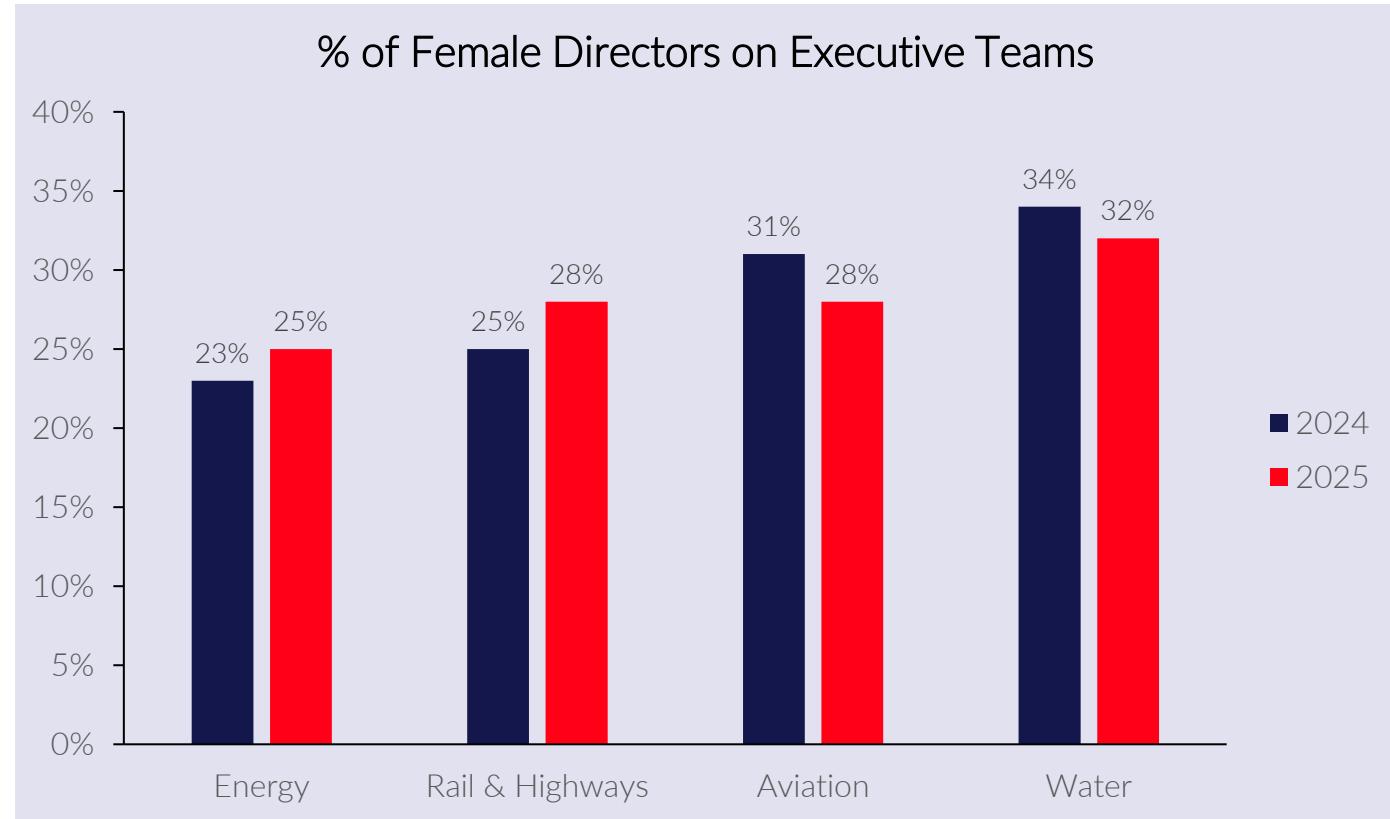


Introduction

For the past seven years, we have tracked the progress of female representation at the executive level across the Infrastructure sector, including energy, and have seen gradual but meaningful improvement.

In 2016, 25% of Infrastructure companies had no women in their executive leadership teams – today, that figure has dropped to just 11%. Within this broader trend, the energy sector presents a nuanced picture. While it has the lowest overall percentage of female directors in executive directorships, it is on par with the wider Infrastructure industry in the proportion of companies with women holding at least a third of executive roles.

This sector-specific report focuses on the largest energy infrastructure companies (referred to as the Top Energy Companies) a subset of 26 energy asset owners identified in our main 2025 Diversity Report, which examines the Top 200 UK Infrastructure companies. We also assess the performance of contractors and consultancies operating in the energy sector, distinguishing between these groups as we analyse the data. Most importantly, we highlight key areas for improvement and offer practical, expert-driven solutions to foster continued progress.



In 2025, 38% of energy companies have female representation in at least a third of their executive roles.

This is compared to 38% in the wider Infrastructure industry.

Findings for 2025

38%

of energy companies
have met the 33.3%
target

15%

of energy companies
have 50% or more
female Directors

15%

of CEOs in energy
companies are
female

In 2016, the government's Hampton-Alexander Review set gender diversity targets for FTSE 350 companies to achieve between 2016 and 2020, including the goal of having at least one-third of board positions filled by women. By 2021, this target was met, prompting the Review to set a more ambitious goal: by the end of 2025, 40% of board positions in FTSE 350 companies should be held by women.

Among the Top UK Energy Companies, 38% have met the initial target of having at least a third of executive team positions filled by women. However, only 23% have reached the new 40% benchmark.

Encouragingly, 15% of energy companies now have boards where women make up at least half of the directors. Additionally, the sector has seen notable progress in female leadership – 15% of energy asset owners now have female CEOs, compared to just 9% in the broader infrastructure sectors.

While progress is evident, these figures highlight the ongoing need for industry-wide commitment to gender diversity at the executive level.

2025

	Energy Companies	Top 200 Infrastructure Companies
Female CEO	15%	9%
Companies with no Female Directors	12%	11%
40% Female Directors	23%	20%

12%

OF THE TOP UK ENERGY COMPANIES DO NOT HAVE ANY
FEMALE EXECUTIVE LEADERS



Functional Split

In UK energy companies, gender diversity varies significantly by function, with women being underrepresented in most areas. However, our data shows that HR is predominantly female, with women making up 70% of the workforce, while Communications is the only function with an equal gender split.

In core operational functions (Operations, Capital Projects, Commercial, and Engineering), the proportion of women in executive roles is typically much lower. The energy sector demonstrates a similar trend to other infrastructure sectors; there are typically more women in corporate support function roles. In the wider Infrastructure industry, 69% of Directors within the HR function are women.

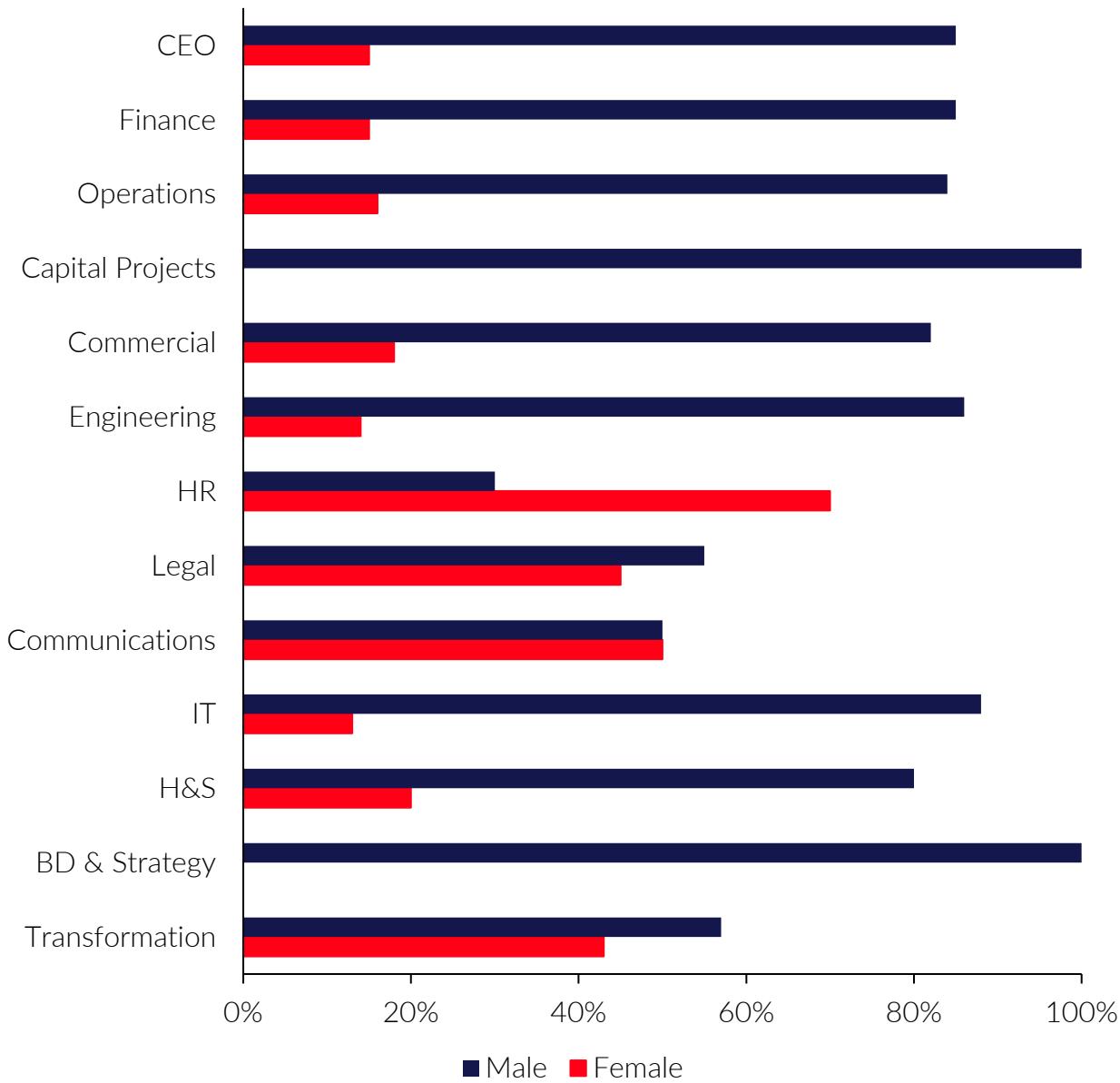
At the time the research was conducted there wasn't a single female Capital Projects or BD & Strategy Director on the executive team of any of the energy companies.*

However, diversity in any executive leadership is important. As the FTSE Women's Leader's Review 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. **”**

N.B. Functions have been assigned based on job titles. We recognise roles may span multiple areas, but they have been categorised accordingly for consistency in reporting.

Gender Split by Function

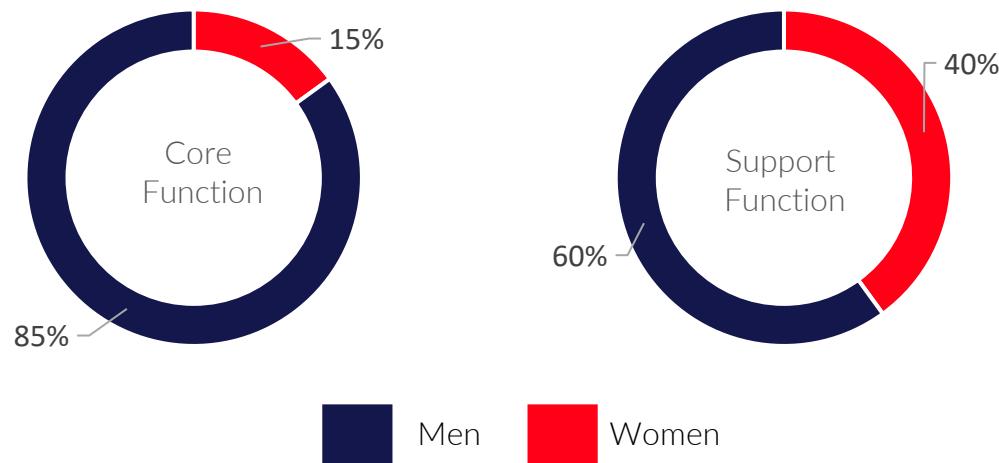


Functional Split



15% of female Directors in energy companies are leading core operational functions.

Distribution of Director's Across Core Operational Functions and Support Functions



Female Directors by Function

	Energy	Water	Rail & Highways	Aviation
CEO	15%	29%	11%	11%
Finance	15%	6%	21%	44%
Operations	16%	14%	29%	10%
Capital Projects	0%	17%	13%	50%
Commercial	18%	0%	67%	33%
Engineering	14%	60%	23%	0%
HR	70%	100%	80%	50%
Legal	45%	50%	72%	67%
Communications	50%	100%	10%	25%
IT	13%	0%	23%	0%
Health & Safety	20%	0%	25%	0%
BD & Strategy	0%	43%	29%	0%
Transformation	43%	43%	26%	0%
Sustainability	0%	0%	30%	0%

Comparison to the Supply Chain

Only 6% of CEOs in Contractor companies are women, compared to 15% in Energy Companies.

Transformation has one of the highest female leadership representations in Consultancies (75%), compared to 43% in Energy Companies, and is significantly higher than in Contractors or Manufacturers.

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

** We have classed leaders of Capital Projects as Operations for this functional comparison

Female Directors on Executive Teams by Function and Company Type

	Energy Companies	Consultancies*	Contractors	Manufacturers
CEO	15%	9%	6%	13%
Finance	15%	23%	22%	25
Operations**	16%	*	6%	3%
Commercial	18%	*	16%	13%
Engineering	14%	*	13%	17%
Consulting*	n/a	21%	n/a	n/a
HR	70%	64%	61%	60%
Legal	45%	50%	20%	36%
Communications	50%	75%	71%	25%
IT	13%	17%	50%	0%
BD & Strategy	0%	39%	25%	6%
Transformation	43%	75%	29%	20%

What are energy companies doing to #AccelerateAction?

On this year's International Women's Day, the theme Accelerate Action called for a renewed focus on addressing the systemic barriers and biases that impact women both personally and professionally. According to the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of progress, gender parity is still decades away, with full equality not expected until 2158 – five generations from now. This underscores the need for immediate, sustained action.

A key player in this effort is POWERful Women, an initiative launched in 2014 with the aim of creating a more gender-balanced, diverse, and inclusive UK energy sector. By working with business leaders, D&I experts, the Government, and regulators, POWERful Women is helping to accelerate change and ensure women are well-represented in the energy transition.

“ The under-representation of women really matters given the challenges of a successful, fair and affordable energy transition. We need concrete action now to appoint and retain talented women: address bias in recruitment and create a culture of inclusion, where women's needs are heard on policies like flexible working and professional development. And men need to be brought on the journey too, as allies and caregivers - equal parental leave could be a gamechanger!

Katie Jackson, Chair of POWERful Women

”



The initiative advocates for greater gender diversity in the sector, focusing on increasing opportunities for women to advance and lead in energy. Through strategic partnerships and industry collaboration, POWERful Women works to create a more inclusive environment where talent from all backgrounds can thrive.

As we consider the need to Accelerate Action, organisations like POWERful Women are playing a critical role in driving meaningful change. Their efforts help to pave the way for a more balanced and equitable future for the energy sector, one where women have equal opportunities to lead and shape the industry.

Case Study

National Grid

POWERful Women has celebrated National Grid as a leader in gender diversity, being one of the few companies in the energy sector to achieve gender parity at the executive level. Their success is not the result of a single initiative but rather a comprehensive, long-term strategy that integrates gender equity into every stage of a woman's career.

Their approach includes setting workforce and leadership targets, implementing flexible working policies, and enhancing family benefits to support women's career progression.

Key initiatives include:

- Leadership commitment to gender equity, driven by the CEO and Chief People Officer
- Targets for female representation across the whole workforce, management, and early talent programmes
- Inclusion efforts such as mentorship programmes, networking opportunities, and employee resource groups
- Workplace policies focused on flexible working, equitable family provisions, and improving conditions for women in operational roles

Despite progress, National Grid recognise that challenges remain, including workplace culture issues, microaggressions, and managerial uncertainty around DEI. National Grid continues to focus on leadership accountability and structural changes to address these gaps.



Case Study

Sizewell C

Sizewell C is committed to transforming the nuclear industry by fostering a more inclusive workforce, with a strong focus on female leadership. Julia Pyke, Joint Managing Director, is championing diversity and inclusion initiatives to reshape workplace culture and leadership representation. Under her guidance, Sizewell C is proving that diverse leadership strengthens teams and drives success.

The company's dual leadership model, led by Julia Pyke and Nigel Cann, showcases how diverse leadership styles can complement one another. While Nigel brings a wealth of construction experience, Julia's expertise in finance offers a fresh perspective, demonstrating that leadership success is not limited to one path or background.

A key pillar of Sizewell C's approach is the active support and development of women in non-traditional roles. Julia shared the story of a team member who was given the chance to lead a function despite not fitting the traditional leadership profile. Instead of being left to navigate the challenges alone, the company offered comprehensive support to ensure her success:

- Executive coaching to develop leadership capabilities.
- Access to a network of technical experts and mentors for guidance.
- Strong organisational backing to ensure she felt confident, supported, and valued in her new role.

This structured support system allowed her not just to take on the leadership role, but to thrive, highlighting Sizewell C's commitment to sustainable leadership diversity. As Julia puts it:

“True culture change means backing women to take on new challenges, even if they don't fit the typical mould. It's about giving them the chance, surrounding them with support, and standing up for their success”

Julia Pyke, Joint Managing Director

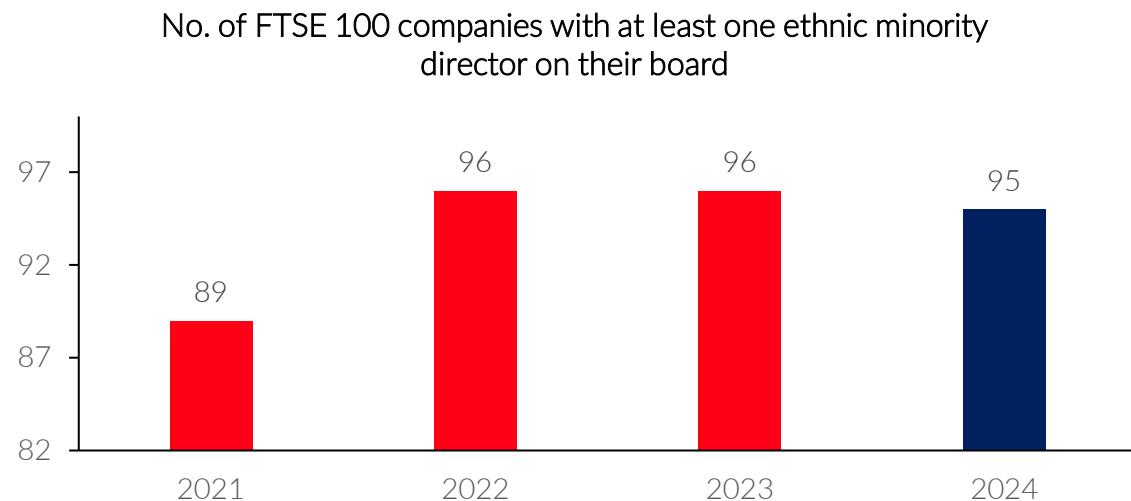
While Sizewell C is supportive of flexible work arrangements, Julia stressed the need for balance. Remote work is accepted but says building relationships and culture often requires face-to-face interaction. She cautioned that women who work exclusively from home risk missing out on networking opportunities, which could inadvertently pigeonhole them into support roles rather than leadership ones.

To address these challenges, Sizewell C is exploring comprehensive support measures like local childcare provisions for site workers, on-site healthcare, and dental services. These initiatives not only enhance employee wellbeing but also extend benefits to the wider community.

Ethnic Diversity

A lot of work needs to be done to drive parity for ethnic minority Directors. The 2025 Parker Review states that three years have passed since their deadline for FTSE 100 companies to have one ethnic minority Director on their board and this target has unfortunately still not been met. In 2021, 89 of 100 companies met the target; in 2022 and 2023, 96 did. By the end of December 2024, 95 companies had at least one ethnic minority Director.

The Parker Review set a deadline for the 31st of December 2024 to receive data on the FTSE 250's ethnic diversity. As of then, 204 of the 236 companies that responded met this goal. This marks a significant increase from 54 in 2020, 149 in 2022, and 175 in 2023. Over the past two years, the percentage of FTSE 250 companies meeting the target has risen from 60% to 82%, a 22-percentage point increase.



Across the entire UK Infrastructure sector, a lot of work is needed to increase ethnic diversity across executive teams. Despite the 2021 Census showing that 19.3% of the UK's working-age population identifies as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, the industry remains largely homogenous.

Measuring ethnic diversity relies on employees voluntarily sharing their race or ethnicity, which impacts data accuracy and comparisons. Companies like E.ON and Centrica have provided valuable insights into their efforts to improve ethnic diversity.

E.ON publishes its ethnicity pay gap to increase transparency and accountability. It also tracks representation across different levels, as well as hiring and promotion rates, to measure progress. Their data shows that 27% of employees come from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Over the last year, their senior executive representation, has improved from 11% to 16%.

Celebrating Inclusivity

Many companies in the energy sector are making great strides to support their diverse workforce. Companies across the infrastructure sector are making efforts to deliver diversity and inclusion. Here are some examples of positive change in the industry.

E.ON promotes diversity through its range of employee networks, supporting groups like neurodivergent individuals, working families, and the LGBTQ+ community. Policies on flexible working and equal parental leave cater to working parents and caregivers, and their *Fast Forward* network focuses on women's leadership development to address gender pay gaps. Their embRace network fosters cultural awareness, and the *Neurodiversity Network* creates a supportive environment for neurodivergent employees. E.ON also became a supporting member of FidAR – in initiative for more women on supervisory boards – in January 2025.

Centrica aims to reflect the full diversity of its communities by 2030 through its *People & Planet Plan*, with targets like 48% female representation in leadership, 20% disability, and 3% LGBTQ+. Their Positive Action Plans include a significant focus on hiring apprentices from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, support networks like the *Women-in-Field* programme and leadership mentoring initiatives help retain diverse talent and support long-term career growth.

Cadent Gas is driving diversity by setting gender and ethnicity targets in leadership and field roles. They offer 12 months fully paid maternity and adoption leave, plus four weeks paid paternity leave. Diverse interview panels and ED&I job interview questions ensure inclusive hiring. Their 'Future Leaders' programme supports ethnic minority and female talent, while an ED&I lens in succession planning challenges bias. Cadent Gas also prioritises anti-racism, fostering an equitable workplace where all employees can thrive and better represent the communities they serve.

SSE's Inclusion and Diversity Strategy focuses on four key areas building on its IN, ON, UP initiatives that have run since 2014. These areas are Ambition; Education and Development; Inclusive Processes; and Employee Voice. SSE's strategy embeds diversity in leadership and supports social mobility. Leaders champion inclusion through sponsorship, reverse mentoring, and accountability. Policies include refreshed diversity training, expanded senior leadership ethnic minority targets, and the Social Mobility Pledge. SSE also supports LGBTQ+ communities via sponsorships and partnership.



Methodology

We compiled a list of the top 26 energy companies and identified the senior executive team of each business within the UK as of January 2025.

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.

For the purposes of this report a Core Operational leadership role in the executive team has been a direct report to the CEO who leads either Operations, Engineering, Commercial or Capital Projects.

A special thank you to Julia Pyke (Sizewell C) and POWERful Women for their invaluable insights.

You can find out more about POWERful Women at <https://powerfulwomen.org.uk/>.



Get in touch

Newsom Consulting is an executive search firm that focuses on critical infrastructure and the built environment including, Rail, Aviation & Maritime, Highways, Utilities, Energy, Defence and Buildings sectors. Since we were founded in 2010, our team has successfully placed over 600 experienced industry executives – from executive leadership to senior management and leading technical experts.

Our clients include many of the leading infrastructure asset owners and major projects, contractors, public sector bodies, manufacturers, consultancies, and technology suppliers.

We are dedicated to fostering diversity within the industry and continually strive to enhance diversity in the senior teams of our clients. In the past two years, 33% of our placements have been either gender or ethnically diverse, and we remain committed to increasing the diversity of the industries we operate in.

For additional ideas on how to secure your next senior leaders get in touch. We look forward to talking with you soon.



Jim Newsom
Managing Director

T +44 (0) 203 026 3871

M +44 (0) 7590 478 088

E jn@newsomconsulting.co.uk

Author



Ellen Dennis

Research and Operations Consultant. Ellen is responsible for mapping the market and identifying candidates within the relevant talent pools. She is also responsible for creating and developing our marketing content. Ellen graduated from Kings College London with a Master of Arts in Contemporary Literature, Culture and Theory.



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