



Stagecoach London

Let's talk equality, diversity and inclusion

WHO WE ARE

Stagecoach London employs over 4,000 people and operates over 1,200 vehicles from bus garages in east & southeast London. Not only are we a highly successful business, we're also an integral part of the communities which we serve, connecting people through the operation of many millions of route miles on behalf of Transport for London (TfL) every year across the Greater London area.

Our people are at the heart of our business, most of them our frontline heroes – our bus drivers and engineers who, by working together keep the people of London moving. The safety, health and wellbeing of our diverse workforce is a priority, we encourage an open culture and support our people to be themselves at work.

Our vision is to help people lead more sustainable lives, harnessing new and greener technology, whilst protecting our people and customers and supporting our local communities with our charitable partnerships.

OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES

We saw an opportunity for our people managers and supervisors to gain a better understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion whilst providing a safe space for open conversations to take place. Raising awareness of the benefits to individuals and our business of a diverse workforce, and to reflect on the experiences of colleagues was a key focus. Additionally appropriate workplace language was a key objective as our controllers communicate remotely via a radio system and we have had instances where some of our people have been misgendered.

Whilst we already have an established employee equality network in our London business, Stagecoach Group networks have now been launched UK wide for our people. The opportunity to promote these and share the benefits of these was also a key element. Whilst the initial thoughts around who would be in scope to participate in this learning were our people managers and supervisors, we also felt there were other key influencers and therefore we included our resourcing and training team, our bus garage support teams, and members of our 'Everyone Equal' employee network. Additionally, we have a responsibility to ensure our people receive regular refresher equality training so they understand changes, and how it affects us all, in work and life.

With the ever-increasing use and reliance on social media communication channels, it is important our people understand their responsibilities; how we can all challenge inappropriate comments and behaviours in a positive and proactive way, including 'banter' and its negative impact on our culture.

Our frontline drivers will soon be participating in an equality workshop as part of their CPC licence requirements, so the EDI conversation is embedded in all areas of our business. The overarching aim is for our people to feel and see they are part of an inclusive environment and that we encourage and welcome diversity with all the benefits it brings. With 313 people in scope, our aim was to deliver this workshop within 3 months, bearing in mind a high percentage of those to be invited work shifts over a 24-hour period and 7 days a week.

APPROACH

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the government guidance on working from home if possible and our own business requirements, we felt that an online training module was our preferred approach – although the collateral we have developed can quite easily be adapted for face-to-face delivery.

Working with an external training provider, we participated in scoping sessions with some of our key stakeholders to ensure our key messages and required outcomes were in the forefront of our material and delivery approach. Our in-house trainers worked with the external trainer to ensure that our delivery was consistent and organic in adapting to the needs of the participants.

Due to the online delivery method, it was vital the sessions were engaging for the people participating. Our preferred cohort number was eight so that all participants could fully engage with the trainer and each other, sharing thoughts and ideas. The case study scenarios used were ‘real’ stories from some of our people. It was important for those people who were sharing their experiences to be involved, so that they were comfortable with the content and how we positioned their stories.

Our Senior Leadership Team attended the initial pilot workshop, so that we could evidence senior buy in right from the start. We also included a video message from our Regional Director during the workshop introduction, as he outlines his thoughts and commitment to ensuring we can all be ourselves in the workplace. Workshop evaluation feedback and surveys at one and three months after the delivery are in place to gauge the impact of this learning.

Additionally, we continue to use our employee communications platform to share our EDI messages, update on the work of our employee networks and our ‘inclusion and belonging’ calendar. Our recognised trade union also supports our workshop.

RESULTS

Currently 87% of those in scope have participated in the learning workshop – we are on track to complete within the next 4 weeks, so will meet our 3-month delivery target.

A snapshot of our evaluation currently shows that in response to the following question the percentage that strongly agree/agree was:

- 89% - My understanding of EDI has improved through attending the workshop
- 85% - The workshop was relevant to my needs
- 94% - The trainer kept me interested throughout the session
- 97% - Questions were encouraged by the trainer
- 96% - The trainer communicated in a clear and engaging way

Additionally, the most common responses to two additional questions were:

How can we support your further with your commitment to EDI?

- Refresher workshops
- No further support at this time

What can we do to improve future workshops?

- Face to face sessions

It is interesting to note that the preferred style of delivery is still face-to-face. Upon exploring this further with the workshop participants, it is generally felt that face to face generates better conversations and engagement.

Individual pledges from the participants were also collated at the end of each workshop and we intend to use the themes from these to reflect and review on our learning – the workshop was a ‘safe space’ so the themes will be anonymised and used to help shape our EDI plan going forward.

A couple of example pledges from attendees reflect our positive feedback:

“I always thought it was polite to be gender specific and use gender pronouns. I now understand the importance of inclusion for everyone”

“The course reminded me of the importance of empathy, inclusion and feeling wanted, as well as the pitfalls of social media and the language I use at work. As a supervisor my action plan is to incorporate all I have learnt into my day-to-day work”.

A poster campaign, which complements the workshop, will ensure we continue to promote positivity around the EDI conversation, including non-gender specific language and pronouns. The posters will help to remind our people on the workplace culture we want to promote and support – this will help to aid the conversation once the workshop for our front-line drivers commences.

Our London ‘Everyone Equal’ employee network has seen additional members join and following an additional workshop module, for our network members, on ‘running a successful network’ we have an action plan in place to steer out EDI agenda forward.

We will also have a further opportunity to gauge the impact of this learning through our employee engagement survey.

CONCLUSION

The overall feedback so far from all participants has been extremely positive and encouraging; this can be evidenced in our evaluation.

The workshop session around language and behaviour has really encouraged debate and sharing of experiences, which has been beneficial to our peoples’ learning and understanding. The individual pledges from participants lean towards people self-reflecting by looking at their own language and understanding the wider benefits of an inclusive workforce.

Our team of controllers, who supervise our front-line people remotely via a radio communication system, have found our simple non-gender specific language suggestions beneficial in their everyday communication as they feel empowered in knowing the preferred language and words to use.

Jamie-Lee Thornton one of our ‘everyone equal’ network members, who shared her story during our workshop is the lead of the wider Stagecoach LGBTQ network and will also be working with Transport for London in shaping the content for the planned pan-London EDI workshop. Jamie-Lee said recently:

“Since joining Stagecoach 2 years ago I feel so much more included and part of the Stagecoach story as our visible commitment, especially from our senior leaders to our networks and support of events like Pride are really making our business culture a place where we can all be ourselves and this is such a welcome outcome”.

The conversation around equality, diversity and inclusion is an everyday one and many of our people now feel they have a better knowledge and tools to promote a positive and inclusive workplace culture. This is crucial to our continued business success, including making us an employer of choice for people thinking of joining us and retaining and engaging with those with us already.

Should you require further information about this workshop or our work, please contact:

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