

Mayor of London launches scheme to get pupils interested in infrastructure jobs

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The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has today launched a primary school outreach programme that will showcase potential career paths in the infrastructure and construction sectors to pupils across London.

In partnership with the London Infrastructure Group (LIG) and the Mayor's Workforce Integration Network (WIN), the programme will see diverse role models, including those from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, women, disabled and LGBTQ+ professionals visiting schools and inspiring young students to pursue careers in the infrastructure and construction sectors.

With the support of a large network of companies committed to diversity and inclusion, including electricity network operator SSEN, the programme will target 30 schools and 1,800 pupils from underrepresented groups, particularly young Black boys.

It comes following a [Mayoral report](#) into diversity and inclusion in the infrastructure sector that revealed women, LGBTQ+, Deaf/disabled and BAME communities experience systemic barriers to accessing and continuing in education. These barriers begin at a young age and have a knock-on impact on recruitment and career progression. It also found careers advice at school often fails to highlight opportunities in the sector, with parents also unaware of potential career pathways for their children.

The programme will help pupils, teachers and parents to better understand the world of construction and infrastructure, the range of jobs available, and the link between learning and work. It will also challenge stereotypes and broaden horizons for pupils, showing that, whatever their background, they can access the amazing range of opportunities the sectors have to offer. Research shows exposure to the sectors from an early age is key to future careers.

The outreach work will also show employers how to better collaborate with primary schools, building ongoing relationships, which will help to develop a future talent pipeline for green jobs.

The programme is delivering on Sadiq's pledge to build a better London for everyone and one of four

ambitious pledges set out by the Mayor and his London Infrastructure Group, to change mindsets and tackle barriers to employing and retaining diverse talent in the sector from across London's population.

London is one of the most diverse cities in the world. Infrastructure and construction are some of its biggest sectors, employing a significant proportion of London's workforce. The primary schools outreach programme aims to tackle the fact that some groups remain underrepresented in these sectors.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "It shouldn't be the case that two of our largest sectors are failing to reflect the diversity of our city. The reality is that many young, talented and ambitious Londoners from a range of under-represented backgrounds are not aware of the opportunities in our thriving infrastructure and construction sectors. This programme aims to change that, with role models from underrepresented groups showcasing to primary-age Londoners the breadth and quality of career pathways open to them.

"No Londoner should be left behind as we recover from the pandemic. A person's life chances should never be limited by their family's background or the colour of their skin. This new initiative will give infrastructure and construction employers better insight into the role they can play to address inequalities, improve diversity and create industry-wide change."

Katy Hampshire, Director of Operations and Programmes at the Education and Employers charity said: "Our proven track-record of delivering activities in primary schools, supported by our recent research, shows starting early with career-related learning is key to social mobility and helps challenge stereotypes that form at an early age.

"We are delighted to be working with the GLA, London employers and primary schools to inspire children to consider a broader range of future jobs; see how core subjects link to the wider world; and to think about building a more sustainable, equitable and green London of the future."

Eliane Algaard, Director of Customer Operations, SSEN Distribution said: "We're delighted to be involved in this important initiative which aligns closely with our STEM strategy. As part of the sector critical to national and local decarbonisation ambitions, I firmly believe it is our role to help inspire future generations in the part they can play in achieving net zero and ensure this opportunity is exciting, innovative and available to all.

"Our teams are looking forward to collaborating with partners across the programme and, most of all, working with these young minds to help power change."