

Balfour Beatty Becomes First In The Construction Sector To Support Disability Confident Campaign

Wednesday 19 March, 2014

Balfour Beatty's UK and Ireland construction business has become the first in its sector to give its support to the Department for Work and Pensions' Disability Confident campaign.

Through the Disability Confident campaign, the government is working with employers to remove barriers, increase understanding and ensure that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

The support reflects a commitment from Balfour Beatty to become more accessible for disabled people and increase understanding and support for employees and potential employees who have a disability so they do not feel isolated or disadvantaged.

As part of Balfour Beatty's commitment to the aspirations of Disability Confident, the company will develop an employee training initiative to help employees understand unconscious bias, the subconscious preferences people can have for certain types of people, and how overcoming or understanding unconscious bias can help build a more inclusive culture. This material will then be shared with the company's supply chain and across the construction sector.

Balfour Beatty Construction Services UK Chief Executive Officer, Nicholas Pollard said: "1.3 million people within the disabled population want to work and we want to access the widest possible skills and talent. To achieve our full potential as a business we need to make sure we have open-minded and inclusive leadership that embraces the opportunities a diverse workforce offers.

"By challenging our unconscious bias we will also support our existing employees, some of whom are working with challenges such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. We want a culture that encourages people to seek the support or flexibility they need to fulfil their potential because ultimately this will benefit our business."

Minister of State for Disabled People Rt Hon. Mike Penning said: "We are trying to break down barriers across the board via the Disability Confident campaign and demonstrate to employers that by overlooking disabled people they are potentially missing out on a huge talent pool that could bring enormous business and social benefits to their organisation.

"I am delighted that Balfour Beatty has agreed to work with us on this. They are a huge player in the construction industry and I am convinced they will have a positive effect in shaping a sector that is inclusive for all."

Balfour Beatty is rolling out its unconscious bias training in 2014 to its 9,000 plus UK construction employee base.

The company is driving a number of diversity initiatives across its UK business and supply chain: This month, Balfour Beatty and Parsons Brinckerhoff's UK businesses became members of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme [www.stonewall.org.uk], Britain's leading employers' forum on sexual orientation and the largest non-governmental intervention of its kind in the world which helps businesses develop inclusive workplace cultures.

Also in March, a new Parent to Parent mentoring scheme was rolled out to encourage employees entering parenthood to access trained mentors within the business who are parents themselves and can provide support, advice and encouragement.

Earlier this year Balfour Beatty became a signatory to the 5% club [www.5percentclub.org.uk], an industry initiative which reflects a commitment to 5% of its UK workforce being graduates, apprentices or sponsored students in five years' time.

Also this year, Balfour Beatty became a signatory for The Business Exchange, [www.greatbusinessexchange.co.uk], a collaboration between Government and Enterprise Nation to encourage increased opportunities between big business and SMEs.

- Ends -

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Images:

Balfour Beatty Construction Services UK Chief Executive Officer, Nicholas Pollard
Disability Confident campaign logo

Notes to Editors:

The purpose of the Disability Confident campaign is to help increase employer confidence in recruiting and retaining disabled people as part of a diverse workforce, and to provide opportunities for employers and organisations to share learning and good practice.

The Disability Confident campaign was launched at the Disability Employment Conference in July 2013 and includes a series of regional events designed to engage employers and build on the growing number of supporters who are pledging to think differently about disability.

Disability Confident is a campaign to highlight the great work that employers are already doing and encourage other employers to join.

Balfour Beatty's UK and Ireland construction business (www.balfourbeattycsuk.com) is a leading integrator of complex, sophisticated and innovative projects that improve the UK's and Ireland's national infrastructure and an experienced provider of local and regional projects that help build lasting communities.

We offer a broad range of capabilities in construction, civil engineering and mechanical & electrical engineering services.

With offices throughout the UK and Ireland, we deliver a locally-focused service with the support of our national network of expertise and resources.

Balfour Beatty's UK and Ireland construction business employs over 9,000 people.

Balfour Beatty (www.balfourbeatty.com) is an international infrastructure group that delivers world class services essential to the development, creation and care of infrastructure assets; from finance and development, through design and project management to construction and maintenance.

Our businesses draw on more than 100 years of experience to deliver the highest levels of quality, safety and technical expertise to our clients principally in the UK and the USA, with developing businesses in Australia, Canada, the Middle East, South Africa and South East Asia.

With proven expertise in delivering infrastructure critical to support communities and society today and in the future, our key market sectors focus on infrastructure - transportation (roads, rail and aviation), power and energy, water and complex buildings (both commercial and social).

Balfour Beatty employs 40,000 people around the world.

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Disability Confident

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