



19 Oct 2015

National Grid Chief Executive Steve Holliday has reinforced the company's commitment to an inclusive and diverse workforce by signing the government's Disability Confident Pledge.

Steve met Justin Tomlinson the Minister for Disabled People and vowed to shatter stereotypes and help young people with learning disabilities achieve paid employment. The company has recently significantly expanded its EmployAbility - Let's Work Together programme and now has four schemes operating across the UK providing opportunities for many students.

The project, which launched in 2013, sees the company partnering with special schools and colleges to provide internships to those with additional learning needs as well as encouraging other businesses to do the same. The scheme has been successful with 70 per cent of interns going on to secure paid employment compared with a national average of just 7 per cent.



Steve Holliday said: "We are delighted to be here today to sign the Disability Confident Pledge and show our commitment to providing opportunities for those who often have a challenge starting their careers. We are all different. It is important that we are able to celebrate those differences and create opportunities for individuals and teams to work together. "Our EmployAbility scheme started in 2013 and it is already changing lives. This year we have expanded this programme again and provide opportunities for 24 interns a year. We know first-hand the difference these schemes can make to individuals and teams. We are hoping that other businesses will recognise the benefits to them and their employees and offer opportunities within their companies."

EmployAbility intern George Barnes also attended the signing along with five fellow students. George, who recently graduated from the programme in Warwick, said: "The EmployAbility programme has helped me realise my ambition of getting paid employment. My worries about getting a job have been put to rest and the future looks brighter thanks to this programme."

The Disability Confident campaign was launched by the Prime Minister in July 2013 to challenge perceptions, engage employers and promote good practice. Since then the number of disabled people in work has increased by 350,000 to 3.2 million.

Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Disabled People, said: "At a time when there is a near-record number of vacancies in the economy employers need to think outside the box and try new approaches to recruit the best candidates for their business. "National Grid has recognised the wealth of talent among disabled people and are reaping the rewards. Their EmployAbility programme is helping them to employ highly skilled people with a range of backgrounds and experiences, benefiting National Grid. "Other employers should look to replicate National Grid's EmployAbility programme to ensure they don't miss out."

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Notes for editors

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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