

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON INTERVIEW –
VALERIE TODD DIRECTOR OF EQUALITY AND INCLUSION FOR TFL**

• **Have your past positions involved work around the issue of diversity?**

Yes. All of my past positions have involved diversity. It is my belief that you can't separate diversity from everyday work, whatever job you are in – it is all encompassing.

I have been involved in a number of projects that involve diversity. These include running special programmes for people belonging to our target groups, learning programmes, mentor programmes and organising conferences. My work on diversity has also included working with trade unions, where we focused on what they hope to achieve when it comes to diversity.

• **Why did you decide to join TfL as Director of Equality and Inclusion?**

I had been working as a Director of Business Services at TfL when the position of Director of Equality and Inclusion came up. I was attracted to the role because of the challenge of removing discrimination. I also see the position as a very positive one – I feel that I can make a difference to the lives of people in London.

• **Why has recruiting a diverse workforce become so important?**

Recruiting a diverse workforce hasn't *become* important, it has always been important. Diversity has been on the agenda since the 1970s with the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and the Race Relations Act (1976). Diversity is increasingly being seen as something that not only makes business sense but, as something that is the right thing to do.

A diverse workforce means that the service that TfL offers can be tailored to match those that live in the community. Who better to provide a service to the community than those that live there?

• **In your CV you mention TfL's equality and inclusion aspirations – can you tell me some more about these.**

TfL has four equality and inclusion aspirations:

- 1) Prosperous City – A city's transport system contributes greatly to its wealth. The benefits of that wealth should be open to all. This can be achieved by ensuring that people can easily get around London.
- 2) City for the people – London has long been seen as a city with many no-go areas. TfL aims to make people feel safer and more secure when travelling round the City.
- 3) Accessible City – Not only should London's transport system be fast and efficient, it should also be accessible for all, no matter what the ability of a person.
- 4) Fair City – The idea of the Fair City is to show tolerance and abolish all forms of discrimination where neighbourhoods and communities have a say in their futures. TfL is a tolerant organisation that strives to abolish discrimination and achieve equality through the concept of a 'Fair City'.

- **What are the benefits of employing a diverse workforce?**

Employing a diverse workforce allows TfL to achieve its equality and inclusion aspirations (outlined above). By employing people that are committed to TfL's aspirations and understanding the issues that surround diversity, we can provide a better service. By tapping into the diversity of London we employ a workforce that understands diversity better than anyone else.

- **What are your main objectives for the next 12 months?**

Our main aim is to create a diverse workforce. We are aware that we are still under-representative of certain groups such as female train drivers. We aim to rectify this by promoting jobs and careers to under-represented groups.

- **Do you actively choose to work with suppliers who have a diversity policy in place?**

We only work with suppliers who share our diversity vision and values which totaljobs.com certainly does. We chose to work with totaljobs.com because they are actively encouraging diversity in the workplace, and are positive as to the benefits that a diverse policy can bring.

- **What do you see as your main challenges over the next 12 months?**

There are still many archaic perceptions about who should work in what jobs, which we need to challenge. There is no reason why disabled people can't do jobs at any level in an organisation. Organisations can make adjustments to accommodate all workers. We need to break down the barriers preventing true workforce diversity.

- **What advice would you give to other companies wanting to employ a diverse workforce?**

For companies that are not sure how to go about achieving a diverse workforce I suggest that they contact an organisation that has already made in-roads into their diversity policy, to discuss benefits and any problems encountered. We are a member of the Greater London Authority Group and work alongside other members including the Metropolitan Police and London Development Agency to develop our work on diversity.

Companies should not be timid about what they can achieve – they should embrace diversity to the full. Companies can also make sure that their suppliers foster diversity in the workplace which will have a knock-on effect in their company. As I said before diversity is not just something that is the right thing to do, it is also something that makes good business sense.

- **What advice would you give to jobseekers wanting to work for a company with a diverse workforce?**

Jobseekers should target companies and recruiters that actively promote diversity. They should contact the company's HR department to find out if the company's policies on equality and diversity match their own. They can then make a decision of whether that is the type of company they would like to work for.

- **Can you tell me about TfL's efforts in making London's transport accessible for all?**

Accessibility is a key issue for TfL. TfL is currently working on an Interchange Programme to make transfers between services safer, quicker, more convenient and secure. But making London's transport fully accessible for everyone is a progressive strategy. TfL has a five-year plan that will take London into 2010 and involve £10 billion of investment in London's transport. Changes include more underground stations being fitted with lifts, pavements will be altered to reduce the number of stations that have steps between street and platform, and a 100 per cent accessible bus fleet by the end of 2005.