

Sector backs diversity drive

■ Property comes together in support of Open Plan campaign launched last week

Twitter reaction to #pwopenplan

@andrewjteacher

@mrmikephillips couldn't be more right. Property's idea of diversity is 1 woman on the board & ties off on Friday #pwopenplan

@HeatherSmithCom

Bravo to @mrmikephillips and @PWNews their diversity campaign #PWopenplan is in full swing - sad one is even needed TBH

@QueenieKeane

#pwopenplan @mrmikephillips diversity much wider issue than simply getting women into the industry

@NickBasra

@PropertyWeek Great to see a constructive open debate on

increasing diversity in the property sector, long overdue. #pwopenplan

@WiPUK:

Well done @PropertyWeek for launching Open Plan today. @WiPUK with you all the way! #pwopenplan

@CraigHughesPwC

@PropertyWeek Tone from the top, educate, role model. Embed deeply in culture, decision making and process. Talent thrives when you let it.

@Bluelaurelinv

@PropertyWeek probably a good start would be to take on school leavers from inner cities who aren't academic and give them apprenticeships

@LandAid

New diversity campaign from @PropertyWeek: Open Plan. How can

we get more disadvantaged young people into sector? #pwopenplan #bigchallenge

@grahamparkerr

Impressed by @PropertyWeek #pwopenplan campaign on diversity. Good to see a trade mag challenge its audience

@bas_snapple:

20th-century world of real estate getting its long needed wake-up call. Let's get behind the diversity campaign @PropertyWeek #pwopenplan

@JLLupstream:

Increasing diversity doesn't mean positive discrimination but changing root problem #pwopenplan

@rogerbow

Congratulations to @PropertyWeek

for #pwopenplan @chainbow fully on board & ahead of the targets & manifesto - let's spread the word

@amanda_clack:

At #PwC we of course have key leading females in our real estate team at all levels @CraigHughesPwC #pwopenplan

@joannaaverley

Great to see @PWNews diversity campaign starts today #PWopenplan - very fitting on the day I chaired an all-female panel

Send your views on our Open Plan campaign and manifesto to open.plan@propertyweek.com
Tweet us using #pwopenplan or See also propertyweek.com/openplan



FEEDBACK Responses to our Open Plan campaign and manifesto

Students must be encouraged to consider property careers

Sir, I am not a stereotypical chartered surveyor, far from it. I fell into the profession by accident and found myself as one of only a handful of state-educated 18-year-olds on a four-year estate management course in London in the mid-1980s. I was the first member of my family to go to university. I always felt like a square peg in a round hole and that continued through the start of my professional career. I have stayed in the property industry but developed a career in academia and professional education as well. The issue of diversity in the industry, therefore, has always been an important one for me.

This diversity issue has been bubbling under the surface of the industry for a while, and it is clear from all the great initiatives that are already in place and being planned, from apprenticeships to mentoring, that it is being taken seriously.

However, the key impediment to progress is the

lack of understanding in schools about property careers, which means that students from a wide

range of backgrounds are not being encouraged to pursue a career in the sector. What we lack is a pan-industry approach, pulling all these individual strands together in a co-ordinated way. I am not suggesting that we stifle the creativity that can come from tackling the problems in different ways, rather that we need to work together to share best practice, identify the range of routes into the industry, seek to develop initiatives to fill any gaps and then communicate one clear message to young people. If those of us in the market do not know what is going on, what hope do 16-year-olds have of getting a foot in the door?

Amanda Keane

The *Property Week* Open Plan campaign is a great start to an important journey.

Amanda Keane
Executive director, Urban Land Institute UK



What hope do 16-year-olds have of getting a foot in the door?

Refreshingly honest

Sir, firstly I would just like to say how refreshing it is to read an article like yours in *Property Week*.

I think you have really hit the nail on the head with regard to making the profession more acceptable to people from different backgrounds – not just those who are private-schooled, white and middle-class.

As an openly gay surveyor who went to a comprehensive school, I have had some raised eyebrows over my background.

Name and address supplied

A rise up the ranks

Sir, I am really pleased that *Property Week* is promoting its manifesto on diversity.

I am Sri Lankan in origin and grew up in Liverpool. I

I am Sri Lankan in origin [...] and now a director at England's third-largest local authority

Nalin Seneviratne

started my career in the construction industry – a tough one back in the 1980s. However, I ultimately became a shareholder and board director at Midas Construction and then went on to be responsible for property and economic development at Plymouth City Council.

I am now a director at England's third-largest local authority, and am keen to be on your panel.

Nalin Seneviratne
Director of capital and major projects, Sheffield City Council

Mentoring by female role models vital

DTZ's Curzon Group is leading the way in tackling gender inequality. **Mark Wilding** reports

More women than ever are in employment. A near-zero pay gap has been achieved between men and women under 40 who work full time. And more women are sitting on boards of directors than at any time before. These are the findings of the Women's Business Council's *One Year On* report, which last week provided an update on the council's work to improve gender equality in the workplace.

If opportunities and remuneration for women are improving in the world of business overall, how is the property sector faring in the gender equality stakes? "Ten years ago you could have cleared a room in a few seconds by saying you wanted to talk about women in property," says Sandi Rhys Jones (below), head of the Women in Property mentoring scheme. Now she says the conversation has moved on – from why gender equality is important to how it should be achieved. But, she adds: "There are still quite a few who say it but don't really mean it."

Pay equality is one area where there is still work to do. As the *One Year On* report notes, the pay gap between men and women at the start of their careers tends to be narrow. In property (as with many other sectors), this rises dramatically once employees reach a certain age.

The *Property Week Salary Survey*, published in February, found that while the gender pay gap is narrowing, men are still paid an average of 25.5% more than their female counterparts. The gap between male and female employees aged 23-26 was £896 a year, but rose to £11,816 for those aged above 56.

"There is a very marked discrepancy between male and female salaries once you get beyond 35," says Rhys Jones. "Earlier on in your career it's more transparent. Starting salaries for graduates are usually open. It's not only easier to get the same pay but it's easier to know what that should be. As you progress through your career, it becomes more



difficult to identify salaries and easier to get away with unfair payment practices. There is a lot of work to do to make equal pay for equal work a reality."

On the topic of women's promotion prospects and access to the top levels of the industry, Rhys Jones adds: "The vast majority of women who have become presidents of professional institutions are women who run their own businesses. There are very interesting questions to be asked about what employers and businesses are doing to recognise their rising stars. That is one of the challenges that hasn't properly been addressed."

Rhys Jones oversees a mentoring scheme that provides advice to women at any stage of their property careers. This gives women access to role models – a key recommendation made in the *One Year On* report. However, Rhys Jones would like to see support given by employers, which could help them reach positions of influence.

According to the *One Year On* report, forward-thinking companies should look at setting up in-house mentoring and sponsorship schemes, as well as

ensuring that there are positive role models for women. Gender-friendly policies such as flexible working are also encouraged.

DTZ is one property firm pursuing this type of programme. A year ago it launched the Curzon Group, an initiative aimed at improving all forms of equality across the business. Its core focus so far has been gender and the goal is to make *The Times'* list of Top 100 Employers for Women by 2015. Elspeth Burrage, head of group events at DTZ and chairwoman of

Women in Property (left), says: "We have taken great leaps forward over the past year. I'm really quite encouraged."

Burrage says workshops have been held for senior directors aimed at tackling 'unconscious bias' and that the firm has sought to identify greater opportunities for flexible working. It also sponsors the Women in Property student awards, and has this year offered placements to four female students.

It is hoped that DTZ's approach could spur others to follow suit. Burrage says "there's been a lot of talk in the property industry about gender equality but perhaps not a lot of application. We got together and decided we really needed to do something." ■



Open Plan @

PropertyWeek.com

Email open.plan@propertyweek.com
 Tweet with the hashtag #wpopenplan
 Find us on Facebook and LinkedIn

