



Speaker Biographies

Unpacking Intersectionality: A Masterclass

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Karima Khandker - Head of Skills and Emerging Talent, Thames Water

Karima has worked in the world of recruitment, training and apprenticeships for over 20 years and has extensive experience of the retail, hospitality, aviation, logistics and construction sector. In the last 15 years, Karima has worked on Employability and Apprenticeship programmes implementing several change programmes to enable businesses to lead the way on employment and skills.

Karima has a passion to deliver business benefits through people, allowing everyone, regardless of background, the opportunity of employment and career development. Karima has experience of working with government contracts and securing access funding. Working at strategic level and engaging key stakeholders in a collaborative way and working in large-scale projects, such as Heathrow Terminal 5, Terminal 2, and the third runway.

More recently Karima led the development of a Skills Strategy for Thames Water to deliver its ambition and ensure that the business has a diverse and inclusive pipeline of skills required for today and the future. This agenda ensures benefits of growth influence communities and colleagues across the business. Karima leads a team focussed on driving change within the provision of education, employment and skills across all boroughs, forming strategic partnerships and collaborative approaches with stakeholders including education, community, supply chain and skill providers.

Karima aims to make a real change on socio-economic diversity, social inclusion, in-work poverty, by creating partnerships and collaborations that will create a fair society for all, drive economic prosperity, support social value and positively impact social mobility.

Sarah Maskell MBE FCMI RAF - Dep Director Diversity and Inclusion Reform, Home Office

Having joined the Royal Air Force aged 20 as an alternative to University I served for over 19 years' as a Commissioned Officer before leaving the RAF as a Wing Commander in 2018. During my time in the military I enjoyed many opportunities to learn, travel, collaborate and lead in a variety of countries and working alongside colleagues from a host of nations and backgrounds. I took part in many Adventurous Training Expeditions ranging from downhill mountain biking, snowboarding, bobsleighbing, even training to become a SCUBA diving instructor and taking new students under the waves with me.

As a Personnel specialist I was responsible for people and critical outcomes from my earliest posting; deployed administration and repatriation of our fallen service personnel in Iraq, leading on the reception support to the emergency evacuation of over 5000 British subjects from Lebanon with Red Cross and other NGO were leadership highlights. As a programme manager for a major infrastructure project I was able to physically see the results of my role, working with external contractors and agents to achieve a new Command HQ building which

ironically, I went on to work in for my final years in the Service. My last tours in uniform were as a policy specialist, changing the RAF Equality and Diversity space from a reactive platform from which to police activity, to a more inclusion focussed Diversity & Inclusion model which embraced different experiences and backgrounds, using different perspectives and frame of reference to support the defence outcomes rather than as a separate private life.

During these final 6 years in uniform I was privileged to be invited to represent the RAF, Armed Forces and even the United Kingdom across many platforms to discuss our approach or aspirations for greater inclusion. These engagements include travel to the US to discuss the role of Transgender personnel in Military service with US officials, representing the UK at the NATO Gender Perspectives Committee held in Brussels to bring together all NATO nations around the integration of women into military service and delivery of Women, Peace and Security protections for women and children. These are my proudest achievements but there are many more which I would be happy to talk more about.

Since leaving the military I enjoyed 18 months delivering as the Relationship Manager in the Global Diversity & Inclusion team at HSBC before joining the Home Office to lead on the Departments commitment to Diversity & Inclusion Reform.

My Home Office role is pivotal in changing the reputation of the Department from one shared during the Windrush scandal to the one its staff aspire it to be. With a responsibility for 35,000 staff but impacting millions of service users and community members every day I am proud to work with a diverse and representative team delivering strategic and tactical interventions.

I look forward to speaking with you.