



## Volunteers' experiences

*“Volunteering has many benefits . . . what I value most are the excellent relationships I have been able to form with other volunteers.”*

## A view from a volunteer: Helena Ingram



**Helena is a Fellow of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA), and leads on people development strategy for Willis Towers Watson’s Retirement GB business line. Helena volunteers on the mentoring workstream for the IFoA’s Diversity Advisory Group (DAG), with responsibility for the launch of the IFoA’s actuarial mentoring programme, known as Project AMP.**

### The experience of a volunteer based in the Midlands

“Prior to volunteering for the IFoA, I co-chaired the Willis Towers Watson Women & Supporters Inclusion Network. I found this role hugely rewarding and was looking for an opportunity to extend my work on diversity and inclusion to a wider demographic. Volunteering for the DAG was a natural next step.

I was lucky with the timing of my decision to volunteer: Pension Insurance Corporation (PIC) was looking to work with the IFoA on diversity initiatives, and I had already connected with the specialist learning, development and transitioning consultancy Moving Ahead through my previous diversity role. We introduced the two organisations and quickly found that they could work well together. We were soon on the road to designing, launching and delivering a top-quality mentoring programme, which addressed key research from the IFoA: that ‘non-retiring female actuaries leave the profession some 13 years ahead of their male peers.’

#### Project AMP

Project AMP matches 100 senior male and female mentors with recently and nearly-qualified female actuaries in cross-functional and inter-disciplinary posts. The first cohort of mentors and mentees started their nine-month mentoring partnership on 6 November 2017, at a launch event hosted at Staple Inn, London. Some of the biggest employers of actuaries in the UK have joined the programme, and it was both rewarding and sometimes challenging to establish these relationships and convert them to sign-ups. We will be monitoring the progress of the programme over the next few months, and looking at how we can build on this foundation for future years – there is scope to widen out the definition of diversity beyond gender, and we are keen to harness the well-established benefits of diversity – not only for the profession, but also for the individual and for employers.

#### Location, location, location

While my role has involved attending meetings and events in London, much of the work can be completed effectively by remote access solutions like Skype and email from my desk in the Midlands, and when I do need to travel I can generally do this



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efficiently by arranging other meetings around my DAG-related commitments. Volunteering has many benefits. I have been able to apply the skills I use in my day-to-day work to new scenarios and consequently to refine those skills. I've also learnt new approaches to solving familiar problems. However, what I value most are the excellent relationships I have been able to form with other volunteers, with actuaries working for other employers, and with colleagues in the wider professional world."



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To get involved in volunteering for the IFoA visit:  
[www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo](http://www.actuaries.org.uk/get-involved/volunteering-ifo)