

Collaboration Takes Centre Stage in Early Careers Development

March 19, 2026



A cross-industry event led by early careers professionals at Gardiner & Theobald and Transport for London has reinforced a simple but often overlooked truth: capability is built as much through connection as it is through training.

Bringing together voices from across the profession, the session explored how AI, inclusion and evolving career pathways are reshaping the expectations placed on emerging talent. Yet the underlying message was consistent; technical change may define the future of projects, but people will still determine outcomes.

From a project management perspective, the emphasis on collaboration is well placed. Early careers professionals are entering environments where delivery depends on navigating complexity, working across disciplines and building influence quickly. Events like this accelerate that process, offering exposure to real-world perspectives that no framework or qualification can fully replicate.

The discussion around AI also reflected a maturing view. Rather than positioning technology as a replacement, the focus was on how it complements human capability; improving efficiency while increasing the need for judgement, communication and leadership. For those at the start of their careers, that balance will define long-term success.

Equally, the focus on equality, diversity and inclusion signals a shift from policy to practice. Diverse teams are not simply a social objective; they are a delivery advantage, bringing broader thinking and better decision-making into complex projects.

Perhaps most telling was the emphasis on relationships. As Amanda Warner noted, the value of a single

connection should not be underestimated. In project environments where success relies on alignment and trust, networks are not peripheral; they are foundational.

For organisations, the takeaway is clear. Investing in early careers is not just about structured development programmes; it is about creating environments where people can connect, learn and build confidence across the profession. The return is not immediate, but it is lasting; stronger pipelines, better collaboration, and ultimately, more effective project delivery.