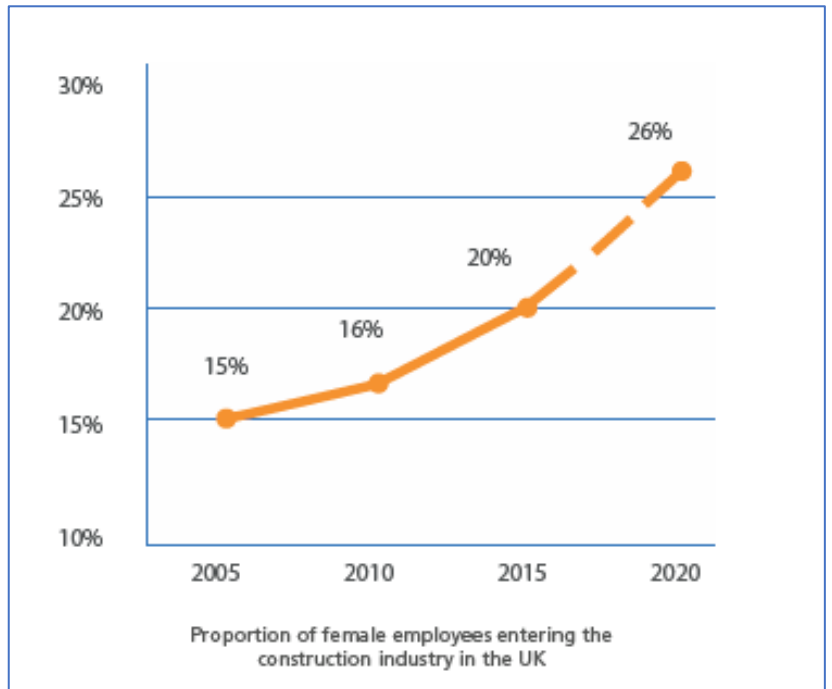


'Spotlight on...' women in construction

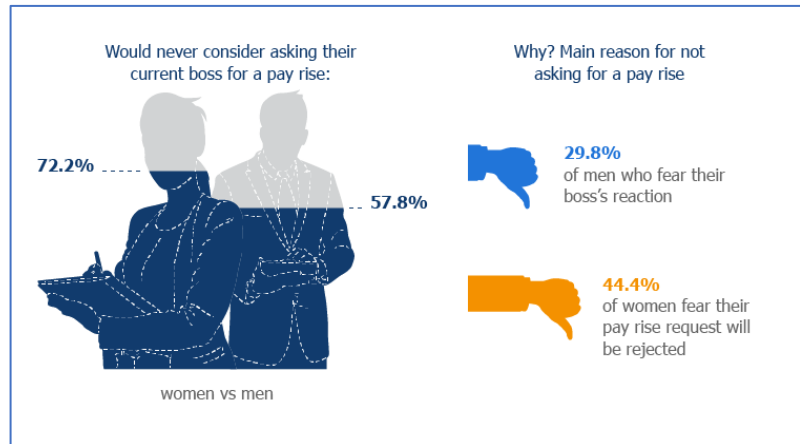
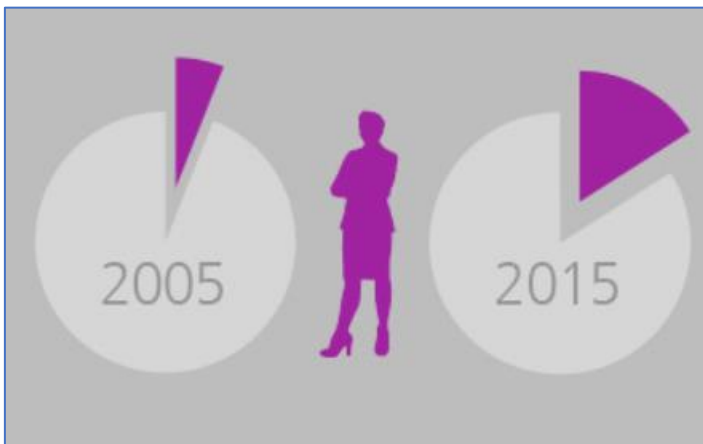
women in construction     **76%** would recommend construction     **£39,000** average salary for women in construction     **26%** working in construction by 2020     **architect** most common job title

UK latest reports reveal that women are expected to make up a quarter (26%) of the UK's construction workforce by 2020. Although companies are doing more to encourage women to join the industry, 41% of women still believe men are paid more.

Latest forecasts reveal construction output is set to increase. This rise is very encouraging but it also raises the risk of a potential skills gap. To keep up with demand, the industry needs another million workers by 2020. Women are expected to make up a quarter of the workforce by 2020 and will likely be instrumental in plugging this growing gap.



Many construction companies have realised the value of skilled female workers and are actively recruiting and supporting women. But to continue this change and create equality, businesses must address the issues women face in the workplace such as flexibility and any lingering discrimination, supporting women in their roles, offering flexibility, equal pay and exciting promotional prospects. Increasing free childcare from 15 to 30 hours a week will also help encourage more women to return to the industry and celebrate success in what is still a very male-dominated industry.



Almost half of women in construction (49%) currently describe their employer as “very” or “extremely” supportive of women in the industry. However, a third of workers believe men in construction get more respect than women when promoted and the number of women reporting discrimination in the workplace has actually increased. Main reported problems include - being the subject of inappropriate comments or behavior from male colleagues, tendency to exclude women from male conversations or social events, offered a less important role, passed over for promotion.



Ballymore is encouraging women to join the industry by providing fair career opportunities and respectful work environment.

Our Ballymore staff at London City Island Project include 48no people in the Management Team, 8 of them women. On site there are an additional 10 female operatives. Employed at all levels, they are an excellent asset and help the team with their extensive abilities and skills. By working in pairs or more (not isolated) they feel more confident and can make a change in the structural factor.





The physical environment of the construction sector has been identified as a barrier to the smooth career progression of women in construction. Although the office based environment is often viewed as female friendly, the formal structural factors within the site based environment should be changed to make it more female-friendly.

The culture of the industry partially contributes to the physical environment and facilities provided on site. Changing culture is not easy and is unlikely to be a quick process. Mere change in the physical structural factors will not address all cultural problems, as culture includes, among other things, the way of talking and the way of behaving. However, by changing physical structural factors, the industry can become more receptive to women. This could be achieved by the following:

- Provide separate facilities for women on site, including toilets and changing rooms
- Provide uniforms designed for women; men's clothing is often an inappropriate size and uncomfortable for women to wear
- Monitor the attitudes and behaviours of co-workers towards female professionals
- Allocate more than one woman for site based jobs, because when women are not isolated they can make a change in the structural factors



If you have any worries related to your work place and prefer to discuss them with female member of the staff, please do not hesitate to contact Ballymore's appointed person.

**Mira Markova**

Document Controller – Phase 2

**Female advisor**

Located in Ballymore Project Office  
or Call 0203 9109088



The site provides separate facilities for female operatives – changing rooms, showers, rest rooms etc. We have a “open door” policy and talk to our female staff on a daily basis.

Specially designated “female advisor” is available to meet and help women, if an issue occurs.

We have anti-bullying and harassment policy in place and are ready to issue yellow/red cards to anyone, who shows disrespect. The subject is included in our site inductions and toolbox talks. Inappropriate language is not tolerated on site.

Changing culture is not easy and is unlikely to be quick process. However significant progress has been made in the last decade in encouraging women into the industry with the majority of women reporting that their employer actively encourages female recruitment.

We've done a survey with our female workforce and asked them about their experience within the industry. Here is what they said:

**Cara Chernanko (Shell & Core Manager - Ballymore):**



**1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?**

*I was aware of careers in the construction industry from a young age, because my brother worked as a civil engineer. However, sibling rivalry was not the only deciding factor. I quickly realised that there was a shortage of woman working in the industry, and the challenge to help breakdown these barriers coupled with the fast paced, high pressured nature of the job was enough temptation to take up a career in construction.*

**2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?**

*Unfortunately, I started my graduate career with a line manager, who believed that construction was a 'man's world'. I left that particular job and since then my experience in the industry has been extremely positive. Until the gender statistics start to equalise, I believe this attitude will not cease to exist.*

**3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?**

*I have 4 years' experience in construction and have not come across any noticeable changes.*

**4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?**

*My company supports me in the same way that it supports my male counterparts, which I agree with.*

**5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?**

*Yes, I would recommend the industry to other women. In fact, I actively encourage young girls in a local secondary school to choose a career in construction. The consensus tends to lean towards fear and a misunderstanding of the industry and I want this to change.*



**Alice Sommerville (Site Manager – Ballymore):**

*1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?*

*I've always had an interest in construction from a young age. As a kid, I used to walk by construction sites and stop and look in, fascinated by the work being done. I love being hands on, solving problems and engaging with people. Working in this industry lets me do that every day.*

*2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?*

*I feel like I've been reasonably lucky with my experiences in construction so far. I've had managers that have supported me and pushed me to grow and become more confident in my role.*

*3/ How long have you been working in the industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?*

*I've worked in construction for 3 years. The changes I've experienced have been on the technical side, bringing construction up to speed with the ever-changing and improving technology.*

*4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?*

*Yes, I am supported equally to my male colleagues*

*5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?*

*I would recommend the construction industry to women who don't mind getting stuck in and love the opportunity to solve problems. Having the right personality for the job is key, regardless of gender. I think it is important for this industry to continue bringing in women, as it adds a new fresh look to an industry that has been mostly male for so long.*



**Delores Clarke (Aftercare Manager - Ballymore):**

**1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?**

*I applied to get on a course for women (introduction to carpentry & Joinery) which lasted 6 months. This was run by Southwark Council. I was one of the lucky ones to be accepted. I was always completing DIY projects around the house as a teenager so this was the next step for me. I completed the course and was given a tool kit that I still use today.*

**2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?**

*I trained as a Carpenter/Joiner with Lewisham Council for two years and obtained my City and Guilds certificate. The work experience was really good. I worked on refurbishing old properties, repair & maintenance (tenanted properties) and 6 months work experience in the joinery workshop making doors and windows for properties within the Borough of Lewisham. Working in the joinery workshop was very challenging. The men working in the workshop told us too our faces that we were taking jobs from young lads, and they could not see why we were given the opportunity to train in various positions within the industry. At the time Lewisham had taken on 12 women covering various trades (Plumbing, Carpentry & Joinery, Plastering, Electrical, Painting & Decorating).*

*I also had a few tenant's turn me away from their properties because they wanted a man to do the job. I did not mind because that meant an early finish for me 😊*

*Most people are very supportive and happy to see women in construction.*

**3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?**

*I have covered various roles within the Housing & Construction over the past 24 years.*

**4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?**

*It is difficult for me to answer this question. I have only been here for a year, and I am on a temporary contract. I am not expecting any training unless it is essential.*

**5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?**

*I would recommend women to the industry*



**Michelle Nicholls (Office Manager- Ballymore):**

*1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?*

*It was not a choice, but more what was available. I was looking for office work and it happen to be in construction.*

*2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?*

*I did not have any problems, when I started. It's friendly and respectful environment.*

*3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?*

*I work in construction 24 years now. I find it much more technical, modernized now. Also, the female staff has increased.*

*4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?*

*Yes, my company provides respectful and friendly Environment, understand my needs and supports me.*

*5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?*

*Yes, definitely. I couldn't go back to work in office again.*





**Natalie Morris (MEP Technical Manager - Ballymore):**

**1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?**

*From a young age, I had a lot of exposure to the construction industry visiting a variety of sites with my father who is a chartered building services engineer. This piqued my interest in construction, specifically M&E services, and so it seemed inevitable that I would one day end up working in it. Building services accounts for a significant proportion of the world's energy consumption with this being a key area for my passion since there is significant scope for energy conservation through the use of sustainable energy sources and efficient system design.*

**2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?**

*Unfortunately, yes and the experience has played a significant part in my career and career choices since, choosing to spend the earlier part of my career working for consultancies once I had graduated from university, in order to maintain a controlled distance from the site environment.*

**3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?**

*I have been working in the construction industry for 14 years and have noticed many positive changes including the increasing number of women entering into the industry and a spreading acceptance that construction is no longer a 'man's world' but alone these are not sufficient to change many of the still deeply imbedded attitudes that surface from time to time. The marginalisation of women in many sectors of the construction industry still exists and needs addressing.*

**4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?**

*Ballymore is a friendly and down to earth company to work for and a person's gender does not factor in the day to day, we are all treated equally.*

**5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?**

*I would hesitate before recommending the industry to other women, although it is a vibrant and progressive industry to work in there are still certain challenges that women face and as such best suited to women (and men) with particular personalities.*





**Ruphina Choe (Design Manager – Ballymore):**

**1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?**

*I went to study architecture at university because I was always interested in the built environment surrounding us and how people's behaviors, daily routines and life journey is affected by it. I have only recently switched my role from an architectural design consultant to a construction design manager working at site office. As an architect, I spent most of times sitting in front of the computer designing buildings separated from the buildings/site I was designing and*

*suddenly it didn't feel right. I wanted see the buildings being built hands on rather than being removed from the process.*

**2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?**

*I remember it was a huge challenge when I first attended site meetings and site visits as a graduate architect, more than 10 years ago. I was inexperienced, young and a female. I had felt that if I were a male graduate architect, then the construction team would have understood it as a lack of experience whenever I was not able to answer to queries on site. However, I had felt that being female seem to be the principle reason why I could not respond certain technical queries on site, rather than the lack of experience at the time. It was frustrating to see the discrimination between how the male and female graduates were being treated in the construction industry. I had to work really hard to prove myself otherwise.*

**3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?**

*I have been working in the Construction Industry for 15 years now. I have seen a huge growth in the female staff population and hence a big difference in how female professionals are being perceived in the industry.*

**4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?**

*It has only been 2 months since I joined Ballymore and so far, the company and everyone who works here have been very supportive and welcoming. Also, a noticeable growth of the female staff in the Construction Industry helps.*

**5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?**

*I would recommend the industry to women and men who have the right personalities – i.e. resilient, flexible and not easily intimidated. I don't think the gender is not an issue to be considered, but the right personality to work in the construction industry should be considered more importantly.*



**Mira Markova (Design & Pre-construction assistant/ Document Controller – Ballymore):**

**1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?**

*It was not a choice, I was working as a cleaner's supervisor on site before starting my current role. It was the only job I could find, when I first came in UK 9 years ago. I had a "business administration" degree from my country, but no one wanted to give me a chance. I had to work very hard to get where I am now, wanted to prove myself. Looking back, I can tell I've learned so much from this experience and my work was recognised and rewarded at the end.*

**2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?**

*It is tough working in Construction, not only for women, but for men too. It is hard work every day, no matter the weather, the conditions etc. Working on the actual site is so much different than just working in the office. The interaction with the male workforce is constant. I had difficulties in the beginning working on site, but they were coming more from the operatives, not from the management team. The company was very supportive and provided respectful environment. I think that we should never forget that the people working in Construction are coming from so many different backgrounds, and managing their behavior or changing their understandings could be so difficult and it will take long time.*

**3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?**

*I am working in Construction 9 years now and I am positive that the time has changed and women are more accepted and respected these days, thanks to the hard work of the Companies. I look back now and I feel grateful for my journey – I had to start from the bottom and I've experienced for myself the typical problems that women could have working on site. On the other side, I've also experienced that if you do your job properly, you will be noticed and rewarded for your hard work, no matter what your background or sex is. At the end of the day every job could be difficult. But if we give fair start to everyone, it only depends from themselves what they can achieve and how much they want it.*

**4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?**

*Yes totally, I have never felt left aside and my work has always been noticed and rewarded, not only in a material way, but also morally. As a mum to be, I can thank my Company for all the flexibility and comfort they provide – environmentally and also reassuringly that my maternity leave won't affect my future career.*

**5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?**

*Yes, I would. If you are confident and believe in yourself, no one is going to be able to disrespect you.*



**Marta Klekowska (Project administrator – MadiganGill):**

*1/ Why did you decide to work in construction?*

*Strong desire to change working environment, try my own strength in the new working field.*

*2/ Did you have any problems/difficulties at the beginning of your career journey?*

*No, I did not have any difficulties in the beginning.*

*3/ How long have you been working in the Industry and has it changed since you started? If so, how?*

*I have been working in the industry not too long, one month.*

*4/ Does your company support you in any way as a female worker?*

*Yes, my company does support me by understanding my needs, respecting and helping me to achieve my goals, develop my skills.*

*5/ Would you recommend the industry to other women? If so, why?*

*Yes, I would recommend working in the industry to other women.*