



Spotlight on...

equality, diversity and inclusion

CONSIDERATE CONSTRUCTORS SCHEME

Case Study: Women into Construction and Hill Partnerships Gender Diversity

PROJECT AIMS

To improve gender diversity in Cambridgeshire's Construction workforce.

The WiC Cambridgeshire programme aims to promote construction and the various roles available to women, many of whom have not considered a career in construction before due to the lack of role models, careers advice and parental encouragement of the sector to girls historically. The programme aims to support the recruitment, retention and progression of women within construction in Cambridgeshire. The project also aims to test a new way of working for WiC – namely the secondment of a project manager to an individual employer to set-up an operation in a new region.

With this dedicated resource in place, partnered with Hill's strong positive influence on its supply chain and local competitors as a leading homebuilder in the area, the potential to create real impactful change was high.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To raise the awareness of careers in construction through events and talks to showcase the range of jobs, promote the sector and dispel the myth of gender-segregated roles.
2. To engage, inform and deliver advice to local women to enable them to make informed career choices and develop individual action plans to access employment in the construction sector.

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PROCESS OF DELIVERY



ORIGIN OF PARTNERSHIP

Having seen WiC's work in other regions, Hill reached out to see what resources were needed for WiC to be able to support women in Cambridgeshire, a growth area for Hill. With the goal of diversifying their own workforce, supporting their supply chain to employ more women and to create a resource for the entire local industry to utilise, Hill sponsored the Cambridgeshire Project Manager – Shelley Lawrence, to set-up, launch and run the WiC programme in Cambridgeshire. With initial backing from the CITB to match training and work placement expenses, the programme was launched in October 2019 at Hill's Athena Sales and Marketing Suite.

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RESILIENCE

Five months into the Cambridgeshire programme Covid-19 hit. WiC reacted quickly to change delivery from in-person to a remote offering, moving live events to online Facebook Lives to continue engagement. WiC worked with training providers to continue offering online training and built a remote mentoring programme to continue connecting women to the industry whilst on-site work placements were unavailable due to restrictions. The programme also offered group Zoom sessions on CV and LinkedIn advice and used a closed Facebook group to encourage peer to peer interaction.

Adapting the programme was rapid and purposeful and not only allowed continued engagement with the women already registered, the change in delivery continued to attract new registrations during this period of uncertainty. This is thanks to the strong referral partnerships that had already been formed and a resourceful use of online solutions to attract, engage and support women.

OUTCOMES

The 18-month programme exceeded targets set by the CITB, Hill and WiC for a pilot programme in a new region. Hundreds of women were reached via school events, Facebook Lives and in-person events.

- **75 women were provided with one to one advice and guidance**
- **41 women registered for further support**
- **27 women went onto construction related training**
- **13 work placements or remote mentoring matches were arranged**
- **11 women went into employment**

The successful project also won the award for “Best Training or Recruitment Initiative” for Hill at the 2020 Housebuilder awards.

INTERNAL TRAINING

WiC worked with Hill to create tailored online Diversity and Inclusion training which is now being rolled out as mandatory training to all Hill staff of almost 700 people. This highlights Hill’s commitment to not only encourage more diversity into their industry, but to also create a culture that is inclusive.

SUCCESS STORIES

The programme has practically demonstrated the need for better pathways and opportunities for career changers, as highlighted by the following success stories.

SIOBHANN - TRAINEE SITE MANAGER

After attending a WiC information event, Siobhann registered onto the programme to gain further support. With her CSCS card already in place and prior administration experience, Siobhann expressed an interest in wanting to be more hands-on within a site environment and to build a career in the industry.

We were determined to find an opportunity that would value Siobhann’s existing site experience, her enthusiasm, willingness to learn and positive attitude so that she could transition from site admin to site management, but most trainee programmes were aimed at those coming out of A-Level education or at graduates, which proved to be barriers of entry for Siobhann.

Hill decided to interview Siobhann, and she was offered a unique opportunity to join Hill as a Trainee Site Manager outside of their existing Management Trainee Programme. This pathway gives value to Siobhann’s prior experience, breaks down past barriers of entry and allows her to progress from site administration to site management with professional training, in full-time employment.

Siobhann started her role on Monday 5th October on Hill’s Ironworks site in the centre of Cambridge with the Cambridge Investment Partnership team. She will be working five days a week whilst completing her NVQ in Construction Management via NHBC assessment and evidence-based assignments.

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EMMA - SLINGER/SIGNALLER

Emma was working as a teacher but decided to change careers during lockdown to move away from online learning delivery and the restraints of working continuously on a laptop to be outdoors and more active. Emma wanted to pursue construction as she felt it was an industry that would prevail during these times of uncertainty, offering stability, longevity and roles that were more practical and varied.

Emma contacted Women into Construction via our website and was introduced to Shelley Lawrence, having already booked herself onto her training to gain her CSCS card. Shelley worked with Emma to create a tailored personal statement to start approaching employers and gave further advice and guidance. Upon completing her CSCS training, Emma decided to put herself through her Slinger/Signaller qualification, of which she passed in December 2020.

MOVING FORWARD

Due to the success of the initial programme, Hill have extended their partnership with Women into Construction for an additional 18-month period with Shelley Lawrence remaining as Project Manager.

Tom Hill, Hill Group's Regional and Main Board Director said:



I have been so impressed with the success of our Women into Construction programme as well as the calibre of candidates we have been able to help into the industry. Construction has historically been very male-dominated and I'm proud Hill is strengthening its commitment to initiatives that move us towards a more gender-equal workforce. It is proven that greater equality in the workplace leads to increases in productivity and innovation, and for Hill, our involvement in Women into Construction is central to addressing the growing skills shortage.



Kath Moore, Managing Director, Women into Construction said:



We're extremely proud of our partnership with Hill Group UK. Hill's support has enabled WiC to work in an entirely new region, opening up opportunities for women we were before unable to reach. We look forward to continuing this successful partnership and thank Hill for their leadership and commitment to diversifying their workforce."

