



## Spotlight on...

equality, diversity and inclusion

CONSIDERATE  
CONSTRUCTORS  
SCHEME

# Case Study: Willmott Dixon

## Jeny Shrestha - Design Coordinator

### WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?

The management and delivery of design information in accordance with the agreed design programme and deliverable schedule in both pre-construction & construction stages; appointment of design consultants; chairing design team meetings; ensuring design compliance with relevant legislation and technical requirements and assisting in tenders.

### WHEN DID YOU GO ON MATERNITY LEAVE AND HOW LONG WERE YOU OUT OF THE BUSINESS FOR?

I went on maternity leave in November 2019 and took a year off.

### HOW HAS WILLMOTT DIXON SUPPORTED YOU DURING YOUR PREGNANCY?

During my pregnancy I got great support from my colleagues, line manager and the People team. They were very empathetic & accommodating to my needs: mostly physical rather than emotional (as I was lucky enough to experience a happy pregnancy overall). A lot of the support was simple gestures like providing me with back support and a footrest at the office; helping me with occasional heavy file/ register liftings for meetings and generous offerings of hot beverages. They are simple things but were really comforting and much appreciated.

I had frequent catch ups with the H&S teams. I was advised to stop visiting sites for my own safety in the later stages of my pregnancy. I missed going to site but the wider team really kept me in the loop and made sure I didn't feel 'left out'.

Willmott Dixon has a really sociable team, so I had a lovely baby shower which was really thoughtful and sweet. It was great that work celebrated my pregnancy and saw it as a positive life experience.



The agile working system that was already in place pre-covid was really beneficial, especially on days when I had bad morning sickness, or I needed to attend mid-wife/hospital appointments.

### HOW DID WILLMOTT DIXON STAY IN CONTACT WITH YOU DURING MATERNITY LEAVE?

The 'Keeping in touch' days throughout my maternity leave really helped me to continue to feel part of the team. I had days with my line manager and the People manager. The days with my line manager supported me from a technical perspective helping me to catch up on how the design team were doing, meet new team members, find out more about new projects and the general business. The time with our People manager were more of a general catch up on my well-being and my plans for returning to work.

I still felt very much part of the wider team and continued to attend events like the Christmas party and our all team meetings.

## **HOW HAVE YOU FOUND RETURNING TO WORK? COVID HAS THROWN A HUGE LIGHT ON OUR ABILITY TO WORK FROM DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, HOW HAS THIS SUPPORTED YOU IN WORKING FLEXIBLY?**

Returning to work during a Global pandemic felt very strange because so much about the business and how it operated on a day to day basis had changed in response to COVID 19.

I decided to return to work on a part time basis and this was well received by Willmott Dixon. Flexible working was already in place at Willmott Dixon before COVID but the big change is that we now, like many businesses, have far more virtual meetings. From my perspective these are helpful and reduce the amount of travel I do.

Again, the support I have had from my line manager and the wider team has been exceptional. I was really given the time, during my first couple of weeks, to settle back into the routine of being a working mum, I was given the opportunity to catch up with colleagues and understand the project I was going to be working on. I wasn't thrown in the deep end but was instead allowed to settle back in and find my flow; I really feel that made the process much easier for me.

There are a lot of emotions running through your head when you return to work after a prolonged period, be it for maternity leave, illness, or another circumstance. The support and empathy received from my colleagues really supported my transition back.

Willmott Dixon offer enhanced maternity and paternity packages that go beyond statutory requirements and have 'Family Matters' resources and user friendly policies to support new parents. There is a Manager's Guide to Maternity; a toolkit designed to support women before, during and after maternity leave, and a Returners Toolkit and Inclusive Working Environment Guidance helps managers ensure a successful transition back to work for women after maternity leave.