

The Business Case for addressing the gender imbalance in Construction



Introduction - the current situation

Less than 15% of the entire workforce in the UK construction industry is represented by women, and when you look at the representation for trade roles, that reduces to less than 1%.

The construction industry faces an uncertain future in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit but CITB scenarios show a recovery in UK construction output and a growth of 5.4%, requiring an additional 258,000 workers by 2025¹. Infrastructure and housing growth are expected to be key drivers for recovery.

In the short term, however construction companies are likely to see a drop in recruitment of new workers, apprentices and a focus on retention and retraining of existing staff.

In order to weather the storm and build resilient businesses for the future, companies need to widen the talent pool, bring new skills and diversity into their businesses. By encouraging a wider range of people into the industry – and welcoming them when they get here – the industry will benefit from better solutions, more collaborative teams, and stronger businesses. And we here at WiC are dedicated to working with you to make that happen.

Now, more than ever, construction as an industry needs support more Women into Construction and help them add value to your business.

Commercial benefits for more women working in construction

Driving innovation

A diverse workforce is an innovative workforce. Diversity—from gender diversity to culture, age, and race—has been shown to foster creativity and innovation. Men and women will inevitably have different experiences and backgrounds, which shape their approach to business. Challenging each other and collaborating with people who think differently can breed creativity and promote the innovative ideas that push organisations forward.

Greater profitability

The most gender-diverse companies are 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability².

Increase in women in leadership

Diversity and inclusivity matter – at every level. Companies with the most ethnically/culturally diverse boards worldwide are 43% more likely to experience higher profits³. Not only do more women in senior roles create commercial benefits, the increased visibility of successful women positively affects aspirations and awareness to future female talent as they become role models.

Improves staff wellbeing

Currently, the construction workforce is in a mental health crisis. According to figures from the Office of National Statistics, the suicide rate for male labourers is three times higher than the average male suicide rate for the UK. Also, 20% of all cases of ill

¹ https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn_outlook_2021_2025.pdf

² https://www.mckinsey.com/-/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx

³ https://www.mckinsey.com/-/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx

health in the sector are due to work-related stress, depression and anxiety. As a consequence, over 400,000 workdays are lost each year. More diverse workforces benefit from improved, open communication and collaboration. Discussing mental health openly will be encouraged through a diverse culture with better communication.

A wider economic benefit

A study conducted by the World Economic Forum found that closing the gender gap could increase GDP by an average of 35%. While 80% of this effect comes from adding workers to the labour force, 20% is directly due to increased productivity from gender diversity. Research found in situations with a narrowing gender gap, the contribution to growth from improved efficiency is overstated. And a higher GDP can have a major impact on the construction industry and your company. It will lead to a larger overall economy, increased spending, more building. It leads to fiscal stabilisation and higher living standards for citizens, your employees, which will ultimately increase morale amongst your workforce.

Commercial benefits for working with WiC

By working with WiC, your business will benefit from;

Increased tenders won, leading to business growth and enhanced reputation

By evidencing the impact of our partnership in your development proposals and investment partnership plans, you will be able to demonstrate your commitment and achievements that contribute to your client's social and economic impact goals. Through the development of bespoke employability programmes for new partnerships and tender opportunities, we can demonstrate innovation and impact. This will increase your scores for CSR and Social value questions and directly contribute to your business growth objectives. The work with WiC will also provide evidence for how you comply with;

- 2010 Equality Act
- 2012 Social Value Act
- Section 106 requirements
- Considerate Contractors Schemes

Increased recruitment of female employees including apprentices

WiC takes a targeted approach to raising awareness and challenging preconceptions about careers in construction engaging with school students, parents, teachers and local referral partners (such as Job Centre Plus). This increases the volume of suitable applicants to you and your supply chain's recruitment campaigns without the cost of an internal dedicated resource. Working with WiC gives you access to our established network with a focus on increasing awareness and aspirations of roles in construction to girls and women specifically. Members also report an increase in applications from women when using our 'Positive about Women into Construction' logo on job adverts.

Increased diversity, retention, and wellbeing in employees; reduction in Gender Pay Gap

When recruited via a WiC programme, newly recruited female employees will continue to be supported by WiC and empowered to identify progression pathways within the company and sector. Peer group and 1-1 support will improve wellbeing and job satisfaction; creating a group of high-profile role models within your company to support your diversity and inclusion strategy. An increased number of total women across the workforce, including in more senior positions will contribute to an improvement in your mean and median Gender Pay Gap statistics.

PR

We work with our members and partners to highlight best practice and successes across the industry through our network of over 150 construction stakeholders and our social media platforms. We share



case studies and hold industry events to showcase our partners D&I work to the industry. This exposure has led to our partners winning industry awards – such as Hill winning the “Best Recruitment or Training Initiative” at the 2020 Housebuilder Awards for their partnership in Cambridgeshire with Women into Construction.

Support to use your influence

Being diverse within your own business is one thing. Being on the forefront of creating a more diverse industry is something else entirely – WiC are here to help you – sub contractors, main contractors, councils, housing associations we work with everyone in the supply chain to open up more opportunities for women.

By embedding diversity into your supply chain and demanding it of all your suppliers and representatives – your business goes one step further.

You can require diversity and inclusivity measures to be reflected in procurement, establishing an expectation from all tenders, and do your bit to encourage more widespread progress.



Work with WiC

Membership

SILVER	GOLD	PLATINUM
Cost: £800 per annum per Company	Cost: £1,500 per annum per Company	Cost: £3,500 per annum per Company
Use of our 'Positive about Women into Construction' logo	All the benefits of Silver plus;	All the benefits of Silver and Gold plus;
Link on our website endorsing your support for WIC as a Member	10% discount on our interactive diversity training, which can be tailored to your company (remote or in person delivery)	One free Diversity Training Course per annum and 15% discount on additional courses thereafter
Link from our Job Opportunities page to your website for your current job vacancies	Priority Access to Special Events	Publicity and Case Studies – creation of two relevant documents for PR and publicity use in your business
Opportunity to speak at a WiC information event or take part in a WiC Job Shop	On-line promotion of your 'live' social media content via WIC watch party	Access to a WIC representative to speak at one internal or external event
10% Discount when successfully referring new members		Opportunity for a current cohort of WIC women to attend a visit to one of your sites
Invitation to WiC's Annual Event		Guest appearance on WIC Facebook live
WiC Bi-Annual Bulletin update		

Services

	BESPOKE SHORT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME	SECONDED WIC PROJECT MANAGER	STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAMME	SUBCONTRACTED ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME
What?	1-month programme for potential female recruits. Includes careers information, advice and guidance, construction related training, site-based work placements, and brokerage into employment.	WIC expert embedded into your organisation. The seconded project manager will support your diversity programmes on site, whilst benefitting from central WIC team expertise and support.	WIC mentor and support programme for Further Education or Undergraduate students studying construction courses. Includes mentoring, work placements and support to access employment.	Set-up, management and delivery of an agreed programme of support to help meet S106 or diversity targets for a construction site or wider programme.
Who For?	Construction industry clients, Contractors, Developers	Construction industry clients, Contractors, Developers	Apprenticeship Providers, Further Education Colleges, Universities	Construction industry clients, Contractors, Developers
Locations	Birmingham & West Midlands, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Greater London	UK-Wide	Birmingham & West Midlands, Essex, Greater London	Birmingham & West Midlands, Essex, Greater London
What We Deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontractor engagement • Women supported through careers advice, work placements • Women gaining employment or apprenticeships • Women achieving sustained employment and progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke programme tailored to your company requirements • Subcontractor engagement • Women supported through careers advice, work placements • Women gaining employment or apprenticeships • Women achieving sustained employment and progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for recruitment of women to construction courses • Female students supported through mentoring and careers advice and work placements • Employer engagement – of client, Tier 1 and supply chain companies • Female students gaining employment or progressing to further studies in construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer engagement – of client, Tier 1 and supply chain companies • Women supported through careers advice, work placements • Women gaining employment or apprenticeships • Women achieving sustained employment and progression
Benefits to Your Organisation	Kickstarts subcontractor engagement and increases numbers of women employed on your programme or contract. Provides positive PR and case studies to support a wider diversity drive for your programme or contract.	Demonstrable commitment to increasing diversity in your organisation. Low risk, fixed cost for your organisation. Direct benefit from WIC's UK-wide expertise to your organisation.	Improved retention, engagement and attainment of female students on construction courses. Improved progression to employment for female graduates.	Increased engagement with lead developer, Tier 1 and supply chain to increase diversity on site and meet contractual requirements. Reduced cost and administration to recruit and train female candidates for the contract or programme. Improved retention and progression of female candidates, through work placements into long-term sustainable employment.
Cost	From £22,014 (+ VAT) to support 40 women over a four-week programme – price depends on exact client requirements.	From £50,000 (+VAT) per annum for a full-time Project Manager seconded into your organisation. We also offer part-time secondments, with exact price dependant on the package of support agreed.	From £50,000 (+VAT) per annum to support 50 female students, including up to 20 work placements, and the job-specific training needed to access employment. Exact price depends on package of support agreed.	Price dependent upon programme scope and outputs required. We have a strong track record in project development and will work with you to agree a price that offers value for money against deliverables.

Contact

To work with Women into Construction further, please contact info@women-into-construction.org