

News

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International Women's Day: Lisa Foy, Graduate Site Manager at Morgan Sindall Construction

To celebrate International Women's day we're highlighting the female pioneers at Morgan Sindall Construction in the North who are challenging the stereotypes and assumptions often associated with the construction sector.

Our £46 million Arts & Humanities building at Manchester Metropolitan University project is a good place to start as our team includes a female graduate site manager, senior building services manager, an estimator, assistant design manager and a quantity surveyor (QS).

We spoke to graduate site manager Lisa Foy, 23, about her career journey and views on the gender gap in construction.

Lisa's interest in working in construction was first sparked when she overheard a talk on a relevant degree course.

"A few of my family members work in construction, but I'd never really considered it as a career path," said Lisa. "I had no idea that you could go to university to do a construction degree. I always thought you got into that line of work through apprenticeships or trade jobs."

By happy accident, Lisa overheard a talk at an open day at the University of Loughborough on Construction Engineering Management.

"It was the first time I became aware that universities offer courses like this. It connected real world opportunities with major companies in the market, and opened my mind to the endless roles the industry has to offer."

Lisa approached Morgan Sindall Construction during her degree and was accepted onto the company's undergraduate sponsorship programme.

"The sponsorship meant I could concentrate fulltime on my studies. I spent my first summer with them on work experience and then completed a placement year. The onsite experience and support was invaluable, and made a huge difference to the quality of work I produced.

"I was also working on a number of sites alongside inspirational female role models. Project managers, Qs, sustainability managers and a building services manager, all of whom eradicated any worry I had that a career in construction could involve a glass ceiling. I therefore finished my degree and have been with Morgan Sindall Construction ever since."

University was also when Lisa became aware of the gender imbalance in the industry.

"On my course, only three of the 36 participants were female. I could understand it, I myself having not initially considered going into construction, but numbers like this highlight the need to increase awareness of the options available.

"These options must be fed into schools when people are choosing their next steps. We also need to eliminate preconceived ideas that working in construction means a dirty, dangerous and predominately male environment. It's this expectation that results in young women not considering

job roles in a rapidly growing industry.”

Lisa believes these steps will encourage women to consider careers in construction, aid in rebalancing the sector and help solve the increasing skills shortage the industry is facing.

“I’ve personally never experienced any barriers to my future progress. My job is incredibly rewarding and it’s amazing that you can look out the window and see the tangible evidence of what you’ve achieved that day.

“I work with an amazing team and we’ve got a great mix of people across every department. We have a female senior building services manager, an estimator, assistant design manager and a QS. Just as importantly my male colleagues have created a strong support system and I’ve never been made to feel anything other than an equal. The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #BalanceForBetter, and this is definitely an ethos we believe in at Morgan Sindall Construction.

“You can work in construction and never use a spade, likewise you can work on a building site and never sit at a desk. Construction is all about versatility. We need to showcase the successful careers, innovative contributions and infinite benefits that will come by achieving an industry with equal opportunities for all.”

To find out more about this year’s International Women’s Day, please visit <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>.