



Training in Action

Construction Case Studies 3





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Introduction

Skills are a key driver of growth, performance and prosperity and even more important now as the construction industry is finally experiencing shoots of growth after several tough years in economic decline. Our aim is to develop a qualified and competent workforce within the NI construction industry and to help encourage and support training to ensure the right skills in the right place at the right time.

Well trained employees are safer, better skilled, work faster and make fewer mistakes. Investing in long term approach to training will save time in the future as trained staff will be able to take on more responsibility – leaving you more time to think about your business

As a leading Sector Skills Council and Industry Training Board, CITB NI understands the needs of employers and works to ensure a safe, professional and fully qualified workforce.

We provide advice, guidance and grant aid for training to help improve construction businesses.

Training is not only important it is essential for further growth in the industry and even during hard economic times employers are to be commended for continuing to invest in developing their workforce to support their immediate business needs.

This booklet will focus on training in action highlighting employers in construction from an organisational point of view as well as illustrating case studies on personal construction career paths.

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Sustainable Skills Training in Action





William Moffitt

William Moffitt has been working in construction for over 30 years and is currently Director of Moffitt & Robinson Construction Limited. William was successful in gaining a place on Building Skills for Sustainable Construction, a two week training programme in Biberach, Germany focusing on sustainable construction methods, renewable energy and environmental standards.



The 'Building Skills for Sustainable Construction' project was organised by CITB NI and funded by the European Commission's Leonardo programme which is managed by Ecorys in the UK. The programme was delivered by KOMZET (a German Centre of Vocational Excellence in Timber Construction and Finishings).

Speaking about the training William said, "I was made aware of the programme through the Federation of Master Builders and thought it would help me develop new skills to further advance my knowledge and interest in energy efficient buildings."

As part of the training participants had to undertake language and cultural training to help prepare for training in Germany.

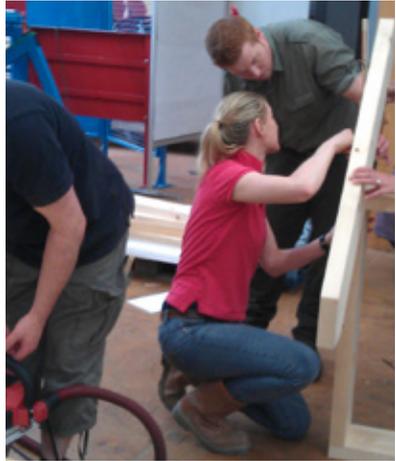
The two week programme combined theory and practical learning with site visits. William said, "The classroom training was very good and interesting, and the workshop activities were brilliant and gave me lots of ideas. It was good to go on to sites and get an understanding of the training in real life settings."

"Germany is one of the world's greenest economies and their construction is something we can be envious of. The German building industry is flourishing at this time and we certainly could learn a lot more from their structure and culture. I am already applying what I have learned and we are currently building a low energy extension to a local hotel, building a carbon neutral build for a local council and are midway through our 2nd passive house. We also currently have a placement student who is able to learn from the experience in the hope to help further with career plans. I have also spoken to local suppliers who are now looking at Passive House standard materials."



Sarah learns about Sustainable Construction in Germany

Sarah Warnock is a project architect for Belfast based White Ink Architects, who specialise in design architecture and project management for both public and private sector clients. Sarah is responsible for the design, technical development, specification and day-to-day management of building projects during both the design and construction stages. Sarah was successful in gaining a place on 'Building Skills for Sustainable Construction', a two week training programme for 15 local construction workers in Biberach, Germany focusing on sustainable construction methods, renewable energy and environmental standards.



The 'Building Skills for Sustainable Construction' project was organised by CITB NI and funded by the European Commission's Leonardo programme which is managed by Ecorys in the UK. The programme was delivered by KOMZET (a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Timber Construction and Finishings).

Speaking about the training Sarah said, "I was made aware of this training opportunity via the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) and felt it would help me gain more experience and further my knowledge in practical sustainable building methods. As I have a passion for sustainability and believe that sustainable design is key to the future growth of the construction industry, I definitely felt this was the right training opportunity for me."

"Climatically, the Baden-Württemberg region of Germany we visited is rather different to Northern Ireland, meaning their buildings have to cope with greater extremes of temperature and snowfall but less wind and rain. It also means they have an abundance of high quality, strong timber at their disposal locally. However, the general principles and theory that they apply to their building physics and detailing is far more inclusive. It was this 'back-to-basics' look at building design that struck me most and has prompted me to challenge our 'traditional' methods of building in Northern Ireland."

"The majority of the course was very practical and many of the technical lectures will help me in the planning, design and detailing of future building projects that I am involved in. Since returning from the course, I have been overseeing the completion of several buildings that were already on site and I have found myself viewing these current projects in a different way. I hope to fully employ my new knowledge in the future design projects that I undertake. White Ink have an established method of sharing key information from various training opportunities undertaken and I have uploaded all relevant material from the training course and technical details from the practical workshop sessions to the company intranet."



Andrew is constructing a sustainable future

Andrew Nicholson is Director of Killeel firm A&HNicholson Ltd, a local construction company who offer a range of services including new builds, loft conversions and extensions. His job role involves planning and tender work, monitoring social sustainability and health and safety management.



Andrew has always had an interest in sustainability methods and as this is a growing area of construction he wanted to gain a greater understanding of how buildings are constructed and refurbished into low energy buildings that use modern construction technologies with the proper sustainable materials selection.

It was this interest and building background that encouraged him to apply for a place on the 'Building Skills for Sustainable Construction' programme organised by CITB NI and funded by the European Commission's Leonardo programme which is managed by Ecorys in the UK. The programme was delivered by KOMZET (a Centre of Vocational Excellence in Timber Construction and Finishings) and involved two weeks training in Biberach, Germany focusing on sustainable construction methods, renewable energy and environmental standards.

Speaking about the training Andrew said, "It was a great training programme that incorporates traditional training methods with practical elements. The classroom and workshop activities are well balanced and can let someone share their practical experience in an open environment with other participants. Language training certainly was helpful it helped with some cultural issues and also learning simple everyday phrases that any person would use in a courteous manner."

Speaking about the German construction industry Andrew said, "German construction promotes high standards of efficiency by using practical solutions using proper material selection and by combining these with new modern methods of construction.

Germany is trying to reduce energy consumption by integrating new low energy construction systems in buildings i.e. less energy usage for the consumer. The German culture regarding housing is somewhat different to what we are used to in Northern Ireland, houses are built for long term living and people do not tend to move very often. They therefore see the benefits of energy efficient methods over longer periods of time.”

Since returning from Germany Andrew has been working hard to encourage clients to assess their designs regarding low energy construction whilst trying to be realistic about what is practical and realistic in the environment in which we live. Andrew is also completing his MSC dissertation which focuses on ‘Client issues and expectations of low energy domestic new builds’ and feels the ‘Building Skills for Sustainable Construction’ programme has given him a further insight into this area and the impact that it can have.



Building Skills for the Heritage Sector





Heritage Skills helps Conor scale to international heights

CITB NI secured over £480,100 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) through its 'Skills for the Future' programme to deliver the 'Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI' project.



'The Sustaining Traditional Building Skills in NI' project has provided opportunities for 18 general and specialist craftspeople to work with 10 experienced heritage contractors to develop their knowledge, skills and expertise of traditional building skills through work-based placements of 12 months duration and gain a NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Heritage Skills Construction in their occupational area.

Bursaries were awarded in the 8 occupational areas including, thatching, stonemasonry, conservation metalwork and blacksmithing.

Conor Scullion, an NVQ Level 3 qualified Bricklayer from Lurgan, Co Armagh was awarded the bursary in Stonemasonry with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. Conor was based in Derry/Londonderry working on the City's Walls, one of the city's main tourist attractions. Everyday Conor travelled from Lurgan to Derry/Londonderry, a 140 mile round trip to undertake his placement which showed his tremendous commitment to the bursary placement at his own expense and on 'A' class roads.

Conor obtained an NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Heritage Skills (Construction) - Mason but due to the downturn in the construction industry in Northern Ireland, on completion of his placement, and after many attempts to get work, Conor left Northern Ireland in April 2013 and went to Christchurch in search of work. Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island of New Zealand which had been devastated by a number of earthquakes in 2010 and 2011.

After 3 months of doing bricklaying and always knowing where his passion lay, an opportunity opened at the Arts Centre, Christchurch who were recruiting heritage specialists to complete the biggest restoration and conservation project ongoing in the world today with an overall cost of £300 million for completion in 2020.

Conor said, "It is a great opportunity to put my heritage skills to good use on such a high profile site. It is also a pleasure to be working alongside such talented craftsmen and everyone is so helpful inside and outside of work."

Conor has now set up a small business based in Christchurch, specialising in all aspects of brick, block and stone structures from modern day to heritage buildings.



Jonathan Black

I left school in June 1996 and started an NVQ Level 2 in Wood Occupations as I had a passion for carpentry and joinery.

On completion of my Level 2 I decided to remain in training and commenced a Level 3 which I successfully completed in 1999. Whilst working towards my Level 3 I worked for a local Building Contractor and during this time I worked on Churches and rectories. Most of the work carried out was maintenance but in 2003 we started into a complete restoration of a former rectory. Windows were repaired and new floors installed. I was involved in restoring the panelling on sash windows and the reproduction of a glass screen, which was made from over 100 different hand worked pieces. I really enjoyed the restoration process and realised I was very passionate about this area of work.



When I heard about the Heritage Lottery Funded 'Heritage Specialist Apprenticeship Programme in Wood Occupations' in July 2014 and always retaining an interest in restoring old buildings, I decided to apply and was offered a bursary placement consisting of 11 months on site training with an experienced heritage contractor and a 4 week off-the-job training programme, delivered at CITB NI.

The aims of the programme are to equip a group of experienced Carpenters and Joiners with the skills and knowledge to be able to repair, restore and save our built heritage and to pass on these skills to a new generation of Carpenters and Joiners.

We commenced in September 2014 with two weeks practical off-the-job training. The off-the-job training was delivered by Martin Dixon and Alan Creasey, both very experienced heritage carpenters and joiners from the Traditional Building Skills Training Company, a Hereford based organisation. On the first day we were tasked to produce stools. This was to get us working together as a team and to get to know each other. Over the next few days we were instructed in the techniques and skills in green oak post and beam construction.

Post and beam construction dates from medieval time. The test structure was designed to teach us the different beams and posts, their names, their position, how to lay them out, cut and work the joints, shape each piece of the structure and erect the structure safely.

It was strange to me to work from layout lines, than from the face of the timber as that's what I am used to but I enjoyed the challenge of working in a different way. The layout lines are used as the timber was not perfectly straight as in medieval times the oak was hand cut, split, hewn using a hand axe. Each beam was laid level and the joint shoulder lines marked using a plumb bob.

The windows were intersecting lancet design. We hand cut and fitted each piece to match an existing window that we were producing, using the same joints and techniques that made up the original one.

After this training finished I spent the following six weeks on placement with Millar Woodcraft Specialist Joinery Limited, putting the theory in practice.

On the next session of the off-the-job training we learned about breathability, use of lime, insect and rot attack and how to prevent attack, minimum intervention/maximum retention during repairs, how to identify, sharpen, maintain and use hand tools and the effects of using modern materials on existing structures.

At the end of the 12 month training programme I will have gained an NVQ Level 3 in Heritage (Construction) – Wood Occupations. I want to use my experience gained as a stepping stone into furthering my education on heritage skills, maybe progressing onto becoming an NVQ assessor or teaching my knowledge and skills to the next generation of Carpenters and Joiners.



Peter Sloan



I started to serve my apprenticeship as a carpenter in 1993 and since then I have gained many experiences and knowledge along the way. In 2006 I found myself co director of a successful joinery company with three employees and two apprentices.

Like most other tradesmen the “Big Crash” of 2008 brought the building trade and many businesses to a virtual standstill.

Newly married with my first child on the way my working future was uncertain at best. It was only when I was no longer working every day that I realised how much I loved my job and the true passion I had of the craft of wood.

Working with wood is a passion of mine. Wood is a product of nature, it has a purpose and whether you are putting on a roof with rough cut timber, making gothic arched windows, carving something from a solid piece of timber, or turning a piece on a lathe there is a sense of fulfilment and pride as you are leaving your mark on the world. A lot has happened in the seven years since 2008 and I had to reinvent myself whilst staying true to my one passion.

I worked as Head of Maintenance at a nursing home for two years and trained and worked as a tree surgeon for three years.....time had flown and the family at home had followed suit! My wife and I are proud parents of three children, Erin 7, Jude 5 & Rory 4.

The UK economy it seemed wasn't to be my only challenge as our two wonderful boys were both diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). This was another learning challenge within our home and one my wife and I took on with vigour.

In 2012 I took a difficult but necessary decision to be at home with the children to help support their needs until they were at school age. It was a tough transition but a natural one and one I'm very proud to say I chose. With the children settled into school it was time to look for a new challenge and opportunity.

When I saw an advertisement in the paper looking for experienced joiners to train in a programme gaining an NVQ Level 3 Qualification in Heritage Skills in Wood Occupations it seemed a perfect opportunity. An opportunity for me to get back into work all whilst doing a job I was passionate about.

Northern Ireland has over 8000 listed buildings all worth conserving for future generations to see, and I saw this as a very exciting opportunity to be a part of that.

I applied and was fortunate to be accepted into the programme as a bursary trainee funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

My training consisted of a placement with the NIEA with four weeks off the job training at CITB NI at Nutts Corner Training Centre.

Part of that four weeks training was working alongside eleven other bursary trainee on the programme to construct the Oak Framed Building that sits at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum today.

The second part was theory based looking at Architectural styles and time periods, natural building materials and an in depth study of roofing harking back to my school days using Trigonometry. I think I paid more attention second time around, seeing maths in practice gives it much more meaning!

Our tuition has been second to none and our first bite at true Heritage Carpentry was amazing. For the first project we constructed a magnificent oak framed building which is now on display at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra. We used traditional techniques and locally sourced green oak timber. Using our knowledge of plumb bobs, ink lines and callipers, roofing squares and levels with great precision we started to make the building take shape. All of this precision was of paramount importance to ensure a solid and true base from which the building would rise.

Joints were all cut by hand with the use of dovetails, mortise and tenons and various housing joints. No nails, screws or glue were used only wooden dowels were driven in to hold the building together. The hipped roof was all hand cut using Red Cedar, Jack rafters were hand cut and fixed and three intersecting Lancet Arch windows were handmade by the group using geometry with traditional methods of construction.

None of us can predict the future but as one the eleven bursary trainees we are the first in Northern Ireland to have a NVQ Level 3 Qualification in Heritage Skills (Construction) Wood Occupations.

It is a proud moment coming to Cultra to see something that my hand has had a part of building, something I helped to craft which is there now for all the public to enjoy, something that might just become a little piece of history itself. Knowing I was part of that is something very special indeed.

Improving Business and Management





Local Construction Managers benefits from new innovative Business Improvement Programme

CITB NI together with the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) have delivered an innovative Pilot Programme for Construction Managers to improve management skills, gain a valuable qualification and help implement good business practice all at minimum cost.

This Business Improvement Programme is part of CITB NI Tier 2 grant initiatives and brought together local construction business owners and managers who wanted to implement good practice techniques resulting in improved business performance. 24 participants completed this programme which will allowed them to achieve an NVQ Level 5 in Leadership and evidence towards Investors in People (IIP) accreditation. The programme ran for 8 months and covered topics such as business and succession planning, learning and development, managing projects, managing customers and recruitment, selection and induction of staff.

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB NI said, “Skills and training are the central core of our business, we understand the importance of training at all levels and the positive affects it can have both internally and externally. We also appreciate that due to the economic downturn, training has not always been at the top of the business agenda. This pilot Business Improvement Programme shows how industry partners and Government can work together effectively for the benefit of local business managers and owners to excel in management techniques for the good of their organisation and the overall construction industry.”

On completion of the project Minister for Employment and Learning, Dr Stephen Farry said: “My Department is committed to raising the skills of Northern Ireland’s workforce and by funding programmes such as Customised Training through our Skills Solutions Service we are boosting those skills and helping to make employers more competitive. Strong leadership and management skills are vital to improving the performance of local businesses and to achieving sustained economic growth. I congratulate those who have taken time to focus on management and leadership issues both on an individual and business level and achieved this award.”



John McBride

John McBride is a Company Director for Co. Down based McBride Contractors, established over 45 years ago and which specialises in the areas of property development, specialist stonemasonry and landscaping for both domestic and commercial contracts.

John plays a very hands on role within business and is involved in areas of future planning, finances and managing the day to day running of contracts and subcontractors.

John recently completed a Pilot NVQ Level 5 Diploma in Management Programme provided through a joint CITB NI, Federation of Master Builders and Department for Employment and Learning initiative aimed at Senior Managers within the construction sector.

The Programme brought together local construction business owners and managers who wanted to implement good practice techniques resulting in improved business performance and included a number of 1 day business improvement workshops (on areas such as planning, leadership and project management) that linked to the NVQ, delivered over a shorter time frame than other similar programmes. Speaking of the business benefits from doing the Pilot Management Programme, John said 'We are now more structured and are better at planning ahead. The Programme has helped communications within the business and has also helped with new business ideas'.

For himself as an individual, John feels that he is now a more competent manager overall and added that 'the programme has inspired more confidence and given reassurance in what I am doing. It has also made me a bit more of a global thinker and has taken me out of a dark place educationally and has made me more ambitious in that regard. The shorter-time frame of the Programme really worked for me and I would recommend this type of programme to anyone in a management position'.

John is now considering undertaking a Level 7 Management qualification to further develop himself and is continuing efforts to make the business more structured and forward thinking whilst also exploring and developing new business ideas.

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB NI said, "Skills and training are the central core of all businesses, the importance of training at all levels and the positive affects it can have both internally and externally can't be underestimated. This pilot Programme is an excellent example of industry partners and Government working together effectively for the benefit of local business managers and owners to excel in management techniques for the good of their organisation and the overall construction industry."



Training Initiatives for the local Construction Industry





Working with Asbestos

UKATA Category 'B' (Work with Non-Licensed Asbestos Materials) Training & Certification Course

As an Industry Training Board and Sector Skills Council, CITB NI has the remit of encouraging training across the range of occupations within the Northern Ireland construction industry. The economic climate and the overall downturn in industry activity have meant a change in way people train and think about training. This has been reflected in the tiered grant system implemented by CITB NI to address the budget available and to make their support more effective and relevant to construction employers.

Tier 3 Grant is designed to help deliver industry needs where training is not viable or available in Northern Ireland. Training needs will be identified through research and development along with industry feedback.

A training need was identified through contact with members of NI Demolition Association (NIDA) who raised the introduction of the Asbestos (NI) Regulations 2012 as a major impact area, not just for the demolition businesses but any contractor who works with or comes across asbestos in the provision of their services.

It was therefore proposed to provide training and certification of a nationally recognised competence scheme for businesses who will contend with asbestos within their sphere of operations. The aim of the training was not only to improve health and safety and develop new skills for participants and organisations that attend but also help increase profitability and widen the range of services that the businesses could provide.

184 participants undertook the course over 4 separate days and were awarded the UKATA Accredited Non Licenced Asbestos Removal Training Certificate of Competence and Achievement plus an identification card.

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive, CITB NI said, "Working with asbestos is now more defined within the legislation and therefore increase opportunities to tender for work that others may be unable to consider due to staff competence and registration as an approved contractor. This project has met the needs of occupational competence and is in-line with the requirements of the recently introduced legislation. We are delighted that we reacted to a gap in the training market which facilitated the needs of the industry."



Qualifying the Existing Workforce: McKinney Plant & Safety

McKinney Plant & Safety is one of the 10 Assessment centres that was involved in the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project and have been in operation for 8 years, specialising in plant operator training and assessment courses as well as offering a full range of health and safety services. The company were successful in qualifying the most participants which included both the first and 500th candidate in the programme.



The Qualifying the Existing Workforce project funded by the Department for Employment and Learning was undertaken in partnership with CITB NI and the Joint Council for Building and Civil Engineering Industry. The project aimed to provide NVQ Level 2 qualifications to existing construction workers using a number of assessment centres.

Hazel Irwin, Centre Manager at McKinney Plant & Safety said, “We were pleased to be involved in this project and are delighted that it has been so successful. This project will help enhance and build on the skills that already exist in the local construction industry. It will also help employers gain contracts through tender opportunities where these qualifications are becoming more of a requirement.”

Barry Neilson, Chief Executive CITB NI said, “Well done to all who were involved in the successful delivery of the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project. We are delighted to have built upon this success and have completed the next phase of the programme which means 1600 candidates have been qualified to NVQ Level 2.”



Barry benefits from Upskilling Scheme



Co Armagh man Barry Fegan has successfully achieved NVQ Level 2 in piling rig operations as part of the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project which aims to qualify 1000 currently unqualified, experienced, employed workers.

The project is a partnership with CITB NI, the Joint Council for the Building & Civil Engineering Industry NI and Department for Employment and Learning.

Barry has been employed as a piling rig attendant with Bullivant Tarranto, the UK and Ireland's foremost concrete and piling company for over 6 years but did not hold any formal qualifications in this area of work.

Since Barry has completed this qualification it has been a major stepping stone to a competence card which allows him to operate on sites that he previously would not have been able to work on. The qualification and card prove to contractors that Barry has the relevant skills and experience to carry out his role successfully

Barry said, "I was delighted to achieve my qualification especially as it is an area I have been working on for a number of years. The assessor was experienced in this field and had a down to earth approach to the qualification. He explained the assessment process clearly and followed up with a series of site visits. I would recommend the 'Qualifying the Existing Workforce' programme to anyone because the knowledge of the job helps gain the qualification."

Niall Woods, Operations Director, Bullivant Tarranto said, "We believe in investing in our people and to date have qualified over 48 of our staff through the Qualifying the Existing Workforce project. Barry is a prime example of someone who had the experience but not the qualification and the project helped him get qualified and give him the confidence to progress even further within the company. We found the project was easily administered alongside the assessment centres with effective end results. We hope that we can further succeed in our sector with a stronger qualified workforce."

Bullivant Taranto plan to progress Barry through to NVQ 3 Level 3 in the future where he could be in a position to use his skills and qualifications to be in a supervisory role for the company.

Women in Construction





Lorraine setting Health and Safety Standards for local safety,

Health, Environment & Quality
(SHEQ) Manager:
“No two days are the same”



Lorraine Yarr has been working in the construction industry for 10 years.

She holds a number of NEBOSH qualifications (Occupational Health and Safety, Environmental Management) as well as an ILM Leadership & Management qualification and an IAM Certificate and Diploma Administrative Management. She is also a qualified First Aider. Lorraine works as a SHEQ Manager for JH Turkington & Sons Ltd and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the health and safety system and documentation within the company, as well as acting as the central point of contact in relation to health and safety for Statutory Agencies. Lorraine also deals with all aspects of Quality and Environmental management, and the associated standards such as ISO9001, ISO14001 and OHSAS18001.

Lorraine says, “The job involves getting out onto the construction sites and inspecting projects at every stage, along with time in the office ensuring that the paperwork side of things is kept up to date. Good record keeping is really essential. The role is really varied and every day is different. I have worked on several interesting projects over the years both in Northern Ireland and in Dublin. I’m currently working on a Tesco Development in Armagh, a Cinema complex in Craigavon, and a student accommodation project in Belfast City Centre next to St Anne’s Cathedral. So it’s a busy and demanding role which I really enjoy.”

Lorraine feels the construction industry is a fantastic place for women to work given that there are so many different careers available in the industry from manual trades through to design and office based roles. “The industry is very accepting of women and it is becoming more common to see women on construction sites. I feel that women have just as much to give the industry as their male counterparts.

This needs to continue so that we can help cement women into the industry and encourage more women to pursue a construction career. The construction industry is a great place to work, with no two days being exactly the same. You can physically see the results of your hard work as the projects progress and it's great to stand there at the end of the project looking at the final result, knowing that you played a role in it. You also have the opportunity to meet such a wide range of people through your job, learning from their knowledge and experience and hopefully giving something back too."

For more information on our Women in Construction Network log on to [http://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers/Women-in-Construction-\(1\).aspx](http://www.citbni.org.uk/Careers/Women-in-Construction-(1).aspx)





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CITB NI is a partner in ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the UK construction industry, and is increasing employer engagement in training, providing labour market insights on future skills needs and developing standards and qualifications for the sector. For more details on CITB NI visit: citbni.org.uk

