

# Wates launches programme to bring more women into construction

3 years ago



To celebrate its [125th anniversary year](#), Wates Group today has announced a new programme to bring 125 women into the construction industry by 2025, accelerating ambitions to improve gender balance within the sector.

The company, one of the UK's leading family-owned construction, residential development, and property services businesses, announces the programme to mark [International Women's Day](#). It will work in partnership with [Women into Construction \(WiC\)](#) to provide training and employment opportunities for women at all stages of their career.

With less than 15% of the UK construction workforce represented by women – a figure that reduces to 1% for trade roles Wates and WiC will deliver four employment schemes over a two-year period, each targeting a different area of the business. As well as supporting women into a variety of site-based roles, from project manager to surveyor, it will engage with managers and employees from across the Group to ensure an inclusive environment for all, including female colleagues.

## The programme, which will welcome its first cohort in July this year, aims to:

- Raise awareness providing information and advice to encourage women to consider careers in construction and the built environment.
- Open opportunities – offering tailored training to provide women with the right skills to access job opportunities in construction, as well as work experience to challenge perceptions of careers within the industry.
- Widen industry talent pools increasing the number of women applying for and working in construction, including apprenticeships, on-site and office-based roles.

The partnership with WiC will see 60 women enrolled into work placements across the business, with a target to recruit at least 50% on a permanent basis. Wates will also work with other partners like STEM Returners and [Young Women's Trust](#) to ensure pathways into construction are open and available to a wider pool of women in different life stages.

This programme is the next key step in Wates' commitment to improving the gender balance of its workforce across all levels. In 2020, it announced a complete overhaul of its family friendly policies, including enhanced paternity/partner leave and increased maternity leave, to enable a greater sharing of responsibilities at work and home, and develop a workforce with a more inclusive mindset. In 2021 the Group introduced [Flexible Working principles](#), as well as an inclusion learning programme available to all colleagues.

Nikunj Upadhyay, Inclusion and Diversity Director at Wates Group, said: "With less than 15% of the construction workforce being female, it is critical that we create pathways that encourage more women to explore the opportunities available within our industry. Given the growing talent needs of the industry to meet the country's building requirements, it is a great time to explore a career in construction. From an industry perspective, there is no time to wait, we must take action to actively attract all available talent. By doing so, we will not only create opportunities for individuals, but we will also benefit from greater diversity of talent, skills and experience to ensure our businesses have a long-term future."

Kath Moore MBE, Managing Director at WiC, said: "We are delighted to be working with Wates who have set an impressive goal of engaging with 125 women to mark their 125 years in service. WiC wholeheartedly supports the goals of Wates' diversity and inclusion strategy, particularly their aims to attract and hire from a wider, more diverse talent pool and to offer fair and equal opportunities to all."

If you are interested in getting involved with the programme, please contact [Steph Sheppard](#) at Women into Construction.

*Image credit: Wates*