

The Deborah Rowland Scholarship announces recipients at the IWFM awards 2024

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The Deborah Rowland Scholarship, a scholarship fund dedicated to finding and supporting new talent in the FM industry, announced its first two recipients at the IWFM awards on Monday 14th October.

TJ Robinson served in the British Armed Forces for over 10 years, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. There she obtained her HGV and drove fuel tankers and maintained trailers. She will use the scholarship opportunities to apply her logistical and technical skills in a new industry.

Paige Watts entered the FM industry in 2023 after looking for a career that would intrigue her on a daily basis and provide continued opportunities to learn and develop. In her support services officer role at BUUK she works directly with facilities teams on both hard and soft services, as well as working within safety, health, environment, and quality frameworks.

TJ and Paige will receive mentoring and coaching throughout the scheme, while producing quarterly reports to track their growth along the scholarship.

Deborah Rowland founded the scholarship in partnership with the IWFM after being diagnosed with advanced cancer. With more than 30 years of FM industry experience in senior roles across the private and public sector, she is passionate about ensuring that the future of FM is supplied by ambitious and invigorating talent.

TJ Robinson, recipient of the scholarship, said: "This scholarship will allow me to utilise my many

transferable skills and get me onto the first rung of my civilian career ladder. My time in the Armed Forces has equipped me with in-depth practical experience and FM feels like the perfect fit for the next stage of my career. I'm incredibly grateful to Deborah Rowland and the scholarship for this opportunity."

Paige Watts, recipient of the scholarship, said: "I thoroughly enjoy my new career in FM and it's an honour to receive this award. I love the unpredictability of FM, and how no two days are the same. Since starting my current role, I've taken the initiative to learn about HVAC, EV charging, fire testing, electrical services, water services, catering and washrooms. I know this only scratches the surface, so I'm excited to see where this scholarship will take me."

Deborah Rowland, director of public sector affairs at Sodexo and founder of the scholarship, said: "I started the scholarship to allow those with barriers to mainstream FM training to get the leg up in the industry they rightly deserve. We could not have asked for two more worthy recipients of our scholarship. Both Paige and TJ demonstrate passion for FM, which will no doubt drive the industry forward. My only ask is that individuals and organisations continue to support new talent within the FM industry for years to come."

The scholarship will open again in 2025. If you'd like to donate to the scholarship, whether as an organisation or as an individual, please click the link below.

<https://donate.justgiving.com/charity/i-w-f-m/donation-amount>