

International Women's Day 2026: Fire, Water and the Women Who Keep Buildings Safe

3 months ago



Most people move through buildings without a second thought. Behind that confidence are specialists working quietly, methodically and expertly to make sure it's warranted. Two of those specialists work for PTSG – and between them, they cover two of the most critical risk disciplines in the built environment.

Tracy Gregory has spent 34 years in fire safety. Katrina Shipman has spent seven in water hygiene and Legionella risk assessment. Neither followed a conventional path into their field. Both will tell you, without much fanfare, that what they do matters – not because of regulations or paperwork, but because real people are affected when things go wrong.

Tracy now heads [PTSG's](#) Fire Consultancy team, which she helped establish to address a gap she had noticed across three decades in the industry: fire risk assessments that prioritise documentation over genuine safety outcomes. “We recognised a need for truly independent, expert-led assessments that prioritise people’s safety over paperwork,” she explains.

Her conviction comes from experience. In 2005, a fire broke out in her own office. Tracy was the one who put it out – but what struck her was what happened around her. “What happened around me was not what it should have been,” she recalls. The incident reinforced something she already believed: that fire safety, done properly, is never abstract. It has real consequences for real people.

It's a sentiment Katrina Shipman would recognise immediately. As a Legionella risk assessor with PTSG's Water Treatment division, she has spent years visiting buildings whose occupants have no idea how close

they are, in some cases, to a serious health risk. “You’d be surprised how many people still don’t think Legionella exists,” she says. “People still associate it with cooling towers and high-risk sites. But that’s not the reality.”

Katrina’s route into the industry was nothing “extraordinary” she explained. She left school at 17, had children young and moved between jobs without a clear direction. It was her father – who worked for a water hygiene company doing schematic drawings – who suggested she try something similar. She did, and spent the next decade drawing water systems before curiosity about what those systems actually meant in practice drew her towards becoming a water technician.

Seven years later, she is exactly where that curiosity led her and is now a risk assessor. “When you’re on-site doing temperature monitoring, you start wondering what’s behind everything,” she says. “I needed to do something a little more than just taking temperatures.”

She joined PTSG in 2025 and speaks positively about the difference in culture: the structured processes, the health and safety checks, the sense that everyone is working towards a collective goal.

Both women operate in industries that remain largely male-dominated. Tracy was frequently the only woman in the room at industry events when she started out. Katrina, assessing sites across the Midlands and beyond, notes that female technicians are still rare enough that seeing a female plumber on site recently felt genuinely notable.

Neither dwells on it. What both return to, instead, is the work itself and what it means to do it well. Tracy talks about an assessor identifying that a care home’s evacuation procedure relied on lifts during emergencies: the kind of finding that no standardised checklist would surface, and that could have been catastrophic. Katrina talks about the rare occasions when she has left a site feeling genuinely concerned and stayed until something was done about it.

These are not stories about paperwork. They are stories about professional judgement, accumulated experience and a commitment to outcomes that goes beyond the minimum required. Compliance, in that sense, is not a bureaucratic exercise. It is an act of care.

As part of International Women’s Day, PTSG is celebrating the essential work of women across the business – from senior leaders to the frontline specialists who make buildings safer every day. To find out more about careers at PTSG, visit careers.ptsg.co.uk



Tracy Gregory is General Manager of PTSG’s Fire Consultancy division. Katrina Shipman is a Legionella risk assessor within PTSG’s Water Treatment division.