



Work in progress

14 Jul 2021

Hinkley Point C is Britain's first new nuclear power station in thirty years. The site is creating thousands of jobs and is pivotal to Britain's target of achieving Net Zero in the fight against climate change. Tom Hoyles caught up with two GMB reps on the site, Amy Mainwaring and Sophie Hellings, along with the Regional Organiser Matt Roberts, to discuss how GMB is pushing the Equality agenda to the fore on the vast HPC Project.

TH: So first of all, tell us a bit about what you do on the Project?

AM: I'm Amy, I'm from South Wales, and I am a Traffic Marshal with Bylor which is currently the largest employer here. I'm specifically based on platform K10.

SH: I'm Sophie, I'm in Heat Sink 1 and I work as an Engineer's Assistant. For anyone who saw the recent BBC2 documentary about HPC, I work in the deepest excavation on the site, in the area near the entrance to the tunnels that you saw on episode one.

“ Don't miss episode one of 'Building Britain's Biggest Nuclear Power Station' this Wednesday!

This four-part series provides behind-the-scenes access, following the people who are working to meet



“ the challenge of building Hinkley Point C.

Wednesday 2 June

9pm

BBC Two [pic.twitter.com/TOZcaGuXjc](https://www.pic.twitter.com/TOZcaGuXjc)

— Hinkley Point C (@hinkleypointc) May 31, 2021

TH: Yes, we recommend anyone who hasn't seen the documentary to check that out on BBC iPlayer. Can I ask what brought you both into the industry?

AM: I heard about the amount of jobs available here and I knew someone already here.

I just feel that the positives of working in construction as a women far outweigh the negatives and I would recommend it to any women to look at construction jobs.

I'm interested in the Health & Safety side, and I want to develop my skills as a GMB rep and get trained and qualified in Health & Safety. There are so many opportunities here and it's a long term Project. I'm really enjoying being a GMB rep and the GMB training.





Sophie is an engineering apprentice

SH: Working in construction is fantastic, and although some days can be a challenge it is a worthwhile industry to get into. There's a good career path for me here. I wanted to be a GMB rep to help further my understanding and skills.

I feel that being a GMB rep is a vital role at HPC and it's also an exciting role with lots of opportunities. One of the opportunities from doing this has definitely been the Women in Construction agenda and the importance of women on this Project.

TH: I wanted to ask about that. Matt, tell us about why GMB wanted to get involved in this programme?

MR: Well Tom, GMB aren't just involved in HPC Women in Construction, I'm pleased to tell you that thanks to people like Amy and Sophie we are actually leading on it - not just for the

trade unions, but in many ways they are driving the agenda across the whole Project.

Women are significantly underrepresented in the industry, and as you've heard from Amy and Sophie, there is no reason why women can't have enjoyable and fulfilling jobs here and achieve their potential just as much as men.

Our GMB National Officer for Construction, Charlotte Childs, has been co-ordinating all of this, and it's still early days but we want to make progress.



Amy is a traffic marshal from South Wales

TH: What's your hopes for what can be achieved?

MR: I think there is an acknowledgement from many of the employers, but not all, that a lot more should be done.

The problem is twofold – firstly, they don't really know what to do about it, bearing in mind you are talking about Director-level managers who are a few steps removed from the site and mostly male themselves, and secondly, where they do take action, it's so much easier for them to do stuff with the white collar jobs to get their stats up, whilst the blue collar is still ignored.

Women can and should work in more blue collar roles here too, so we need to work hard to make ensure that women take up these roles.



What Charlotte and our women reps are doing is telling the employers from a blue collar perspective exactly what actions can be made to make this site the best it can be for women workers as an attractive career path.

They'll be able to hold management to account through the programme, monitor the progress and work with them to achieve results. So yes, my hopes are high for this, due to the practical way in which GMB are leading the programme

“ Join @GMB_union in celebrating #INWED2021 by taking part in our women in construction/engineering conference. If you're a woman in engineering/construction use the link below to register for our event and receive more info!
<https://t.co/A1t5b1uTkw> pic.twitter.com/6Vo7ReGpCV

— Charlotte Childs (@charlottecGMB) June 9, 2021

You can watch Building Britain's Biggest Nuclear Power Station on BBC Iplayer until Friday 6 August

