

## The Manchester College & Procure Plus/WaMT

# Paid Placement Project

**The Manchester College (TMC) and Woman and Manual Trades (WaMT) are both committed to supporting more women into construction as a career choice. This year TMC have seen a marked increase in the number of women enrolling on construction courses in a variety of trades including carpentry, plumbing and painting and decorating.**

Gaining a college place is a great first step, but women can sometimes benefit from additional support to help them overcome a few barriers that can still exist for women working in the construction sector. To address some of these barriers TMC and WaMT have designed a paid placement project. The paid placement project offers women enrolled on construction courses at TMC an opportunity to gain paid work experience on a construction site. This will increase the likelihood of them realising their ambition of becoming a qualified tradesperson.

### The paid placement project aims to:

- Provide paid employment with one of the Procure Plus framework construction contractors
- Enable students to work in construction on the weekdays that they are not attending college
- Ensure students are being paid minimum wage for their age or above
- Provide students with the opportunity to work alongside a tradesperson in the discipline of their chosen trade
- Guarantee consideration for a further contract as an apprentice or improver with a Procure Plus contractor on completion of their college course

TMC advertised the opportunity with the women currently completing construction courses and 9 of those women expressed an interest. After more in-depth discussions about the opportunity, 6 women felt that they wanted to be considered and interviews were arranged across several interested contractors. The feedback from the contractors was excellent and 4 women have been given placements and have started on site. They have all progressed and 3 have now been offered full-time employment and training contracts with the same contractors. The 4th woman has secured a position with another contractor that can offer the scope of work she wishes to pursue.

**Sure Maintenance** (part of Sure Group) have taken on 2 of the women Matilda and Vanessa who are both completing a Level 2 Diploma in Plumbing. They were initially interviewed by Pat Colman, Managing Director, and Victoria Abbott from Sure Maintenance's HR Department. Both Pat and Victoria had no hesitation in offering the women placements. They were very impressed with both women and felt they could add value to their business. Matilda and Vanessa will both be working on sites in Manchester for Procure Plus clients.

Pat Colman commented "Sure Maintenance have always been supportive of employing women into the male dominated gas industry. We currently have 8 female apprentices and engineers,



Matilda Jones

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which as a percentage, is one of the largest in our industry. This opportunity to work with WaMT and The Manchester College was a very positive experience. I interviewed Matilda and Vanessa along with our HR team and I was instantly impressed with their passion to become gas engineers. Both have expressed a real desire to complete their gas qualifications and extend their training into renewable technologies. Both Matilda and Vanessa have a really bright future at Sure Maintenance and we are delighted to have them on board."

Matilda added **"Not only have I been offered an opportunity of a paid placement, but Sure Group are also offering me an apprenticeship even though I'm relocating to Birmingham. I am delighted with my opportunity and intend to make the most of it"**

**Emanuel Whittaker** currently employs Martina who is completing a level 2 carpentry and joinery diploma. She will be working alongside an experienced joiner on behalf of a local social housing provider in Manchester, on a kitchens and bathrooms replacement programme. Martina was interviewed by John Gallagher, Managing Director and Lee Bradbury, Health, Safety & Environment Manager who is also responsible for apprenticeships and training for Emanuel Whittaker. They both felt that Martina demonstrated the drive and determination to succeed. Ideally Martina was looking for a more varied joinery role, and she has been able to use the opportunity, experience and the growth in her personal confidence that she gained with EW to secure an alternative contract with an employer that can offer her the broader scope of work that she was looking for.

John Gallagher commented, "We have



Martina Meggiorin

always supported and encouraged women into our teams, we have a female site manager who joined us as an apprentice. I think Martina has a lot of potential, she worked well with our team and I hope she settles in well in her new position and develops her career".

**Jackson & Jackson and Sons Limited** interviewed Carrie and were very impressed with her skills and knowledge. Carrie is a level 2 carpentry and joinery student who has been placed with a qualified tradesperson on one of the Procure Plus sites.

Carrie is really enjoying the work experience she is gaining. Michael Burnside, Operations Manager at Jackson & Jackson interviewed Carrie and was most impressed by her maturity and the knowledge she had gained and will be taking a keen interest in her development.

Michael commented, "I was very impressed by Carrie. She will fit in with the team and bring a lot to the business. We will encourage and help her to develop, and I hope she

becomes an ambassador to encourage more women to join Jackson & Jackson."

Carrie added **"This is a fantastic opportunity, I'm really enjoying working with the team at Jackson & Jackson. I can't thank WaMT and The Manchester College enough for securing this opportunity for me."**

Chris Wright, Assistant Principal at The Manchester College is delighted by the success of the women and very optimistic about working with WaMT in the future. He commented, **"There are still barriers for women wanting to train and develop a career in construction, these paid placements are an excellent opportunity for both the women and the contractors. I hope that we can do more of the same for the next cohort of diploma students."**