

Minister celebrates International Women's Day and National Apprenticeship Week with female engineers of the future

Recently published statistics show that just 5.8% of apprentices who started an engineering course last year (2016-17) were female and even fewer – just 2.9% – began an apprenticeship in construction.

The Minister spoke as she visited Wylfa Newydd on Anglesey where she met second year apprentices Nia James and Sophie Wright who are currently on Horizon's Technical Apprenticeship Scheme. This week is also National Apprenticeship Week.

Originally from Dolgellau, Nia moved to Bangor at the age of 16 to undertake her apprenticeship.

She said:

"I have a passion for engineering and finally being able to put this passion into use has been amazing. I'm enjoying learning new skills and getting to know new people. Moving away from home at 16 wasn't easy but I was willing to do for this opportunity to work and train in such an interesting and fast moving environment.

"Doing an apprenticeship means I am earning while I learn and I'm gaining experience and skills in a field that will bring opportunities for years to come. For me, it is an exciting time. I'll get to see the power station through all the stages of development and will get to work there when it opens."

Sophie, who grew up on Anglesey, studied chemistry, physics and maths in sixth form before joining Wylfa's Apprenticeship programme.

She said:

"I have always had an interest in these subjects since I was a child and this led me to engineering as I could learn how things work. When I heard that Horizon Nuclear Power was aiming to build a Nuclear Power Station close to where I live I jumped at the chance to apply for an apprenticeship as I could carry on my dream of becoming an engineer while still be able to live on Anglesey.

"My dream once I finish my apprenticeship is to become a control room operator because that's the job that keeps the lights on. I'd

recommend it to any young women who enjoy a practical, hands-on career.”

The Minister said:

“Nia and Sophie are both excellent examples of young women forging rewarding and interesting careers for themselves through studying STEM subjects and undertaking apprenticeships. They are both embarking on careers in a highly skilled and technical environment with lots to offer in terms of progression, variety of work and job security.

“Unfortunately, however, they are a rare breed and this is something I am eager to address. There are no reasons why a woman should not actively pursue a career in the STEM field and apprenticeships are an excellent way of doing this. Encouraging girls and young women to study STEM subjects is vitally important if we are to ensure that employers can find employees with the skills they need for their businesses to thrive and that women have the same career options available to them as men. I hope Nia and Sophie’s experiences will inspire other young women to undertake apprenticeships or higher education in STEM subjects.”

The Apprenticeship Programme is funded by the Welsh Government with support from the European Social Fund.

[“We must listen and learn from survivors of abuse” – Julie James](#)

Based in Bangor, the Centre has received more than £173,000 of Welsh Government investment to buy and renovate their new building, and the Leader of the House will tour the building and speak to members of staff there.

Julie James said:

“International Women’s Day is a chance to celebrate the impact of women in all fields of life, but also to talk more about how to tackle sexual violence and supporting survivors.

“This centre offers a vital service, which is why the Welsh Government has invested in the facilities here in Bangor.

“We are committed to ensuring that the voices of survivors of

violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual abuse are heard, and that they inform and shape our work.

“We are developing a National Survivor Engagement Framework, which will outline the ways in which survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence will influence our work and advocate for themselves to educate their peers, communities and colleagues on their experiences.

“I want to encourage survivors to give their views and work with us to develop this; it is absolutely crucial that their voices influence this work.”

Yasmin Khan, one of the Welsh Government’s National Adviser Violence against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, said:

“Survivors of abuse must be front and centre of the work Welsh Government is doing to end violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. I have had the privilege of meeting a survivor who has contributed to this framework recently and we have so much to learn from those who have lived through this type of abuse.

“It is imperative we learn lessons and use this information to shape future provision and identify unmet needs. Our commitment is to listen and learn from survivors; the National Framework is highlighting the very issues we must address for those who have suffered and those at risk of harm.”

Lisa-Marie, a survivor of abuse said:

“I have worked with the Welsh Government over the past year on several projects. It is crucial that those with lived experience of abuse are able to advise on what work is needed. Nobody is in a better position to speak about abuse than those who have lived through it. It is paramount that our voices are not only heard but listened to”.

The consultation document and survey are available on the Live Fear Free website.

Lesley Griffiths visits Holyhead Marina to see Storm Emma damage

During the visit, the Cabinet Secretary will meet representatives from the Marina, the Harbour Authority and NRW to hear about the clean up operation underway.

Over 80 vessels were damaged and booms have been put in place to contain the diesel and debris to the perimeter of the dock.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Cabinet Secretary said:

“The images of the damage to Holyhead Marina were shocking and my thoughts are with all the businesses and individuals affected. That is why I wanted to visit the site today to see first hand the damage caused and the impact on the local community and environment.

“The Marina, supported by the Harbour Authority and NRW, is working hard to assess the damage caused by the storms and undertake the clean up operation and I am being kept updated on the situation.

“The damage has undoubtedly caused distress and has financial implications. We would encourage those affected, if they have not already done so, to get in touch with their insurers.”

Planning granted for Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute on Deeside

With work to appoint a Contractor already underway, the granting of planning permission means that construction of the building can begin shortly. The Welsh Government hopes that the Institute’s first facility will open in summer 2019.

It is predicted that the AMRI programme, which will be geared to increasing Wales’ productivity, commercialisation, innovation and skills development, could increase Welsh GVA by as much as £4bn over 20 years.

The Institute will have a strong focus on advanced manufacturing sectors including aerospace, automotive, nuclear and food and will deliver game-

changing support to key manufacturing companies as well as multi-sector supply chain companies and the broader SMEs economy.

The AMRI is expected to drive a thriving competitive industry base which in turn will act as a catalyst for growth and jobs across the supply chain in Deeside, North Wales, the Northern Powerhouse and further afield.

The Economy Secretary said:

“I am delighted that planning permission has now been granted for the Broughton site of our new Advanced Manufacturing Research Institute. This means that work can continue at pace on a project which will maximize economic opportunities in the region and has the potential to increase Wales’ GVA by as much as £4bn over 20 years.

“In order to compete globally, Wales must remain competitive. As set out in our Economic Action Plan this means adapting to modern techniques and understanding the potential opportunities offered by collaboration and changes in economy such as the fourth industrial revolution.

“The new institute will have these aims at its very heart. I am genuinely excited by the impact it could have on our economy and look forward to work progressing well and to the institute opening hopefully in summer 2019.”

Airbus have been confirmed as the first member to access the Broughton site.

Airbus Senior Vice President Paul McKinlay, Head of Broughton Plant, said:

“The approval is fantastic news not only for Airbus and aerospace but other industries such as automotive.

“The Institute will give a huge boost to the competitiveness of the advanced manufacturing supply chain in Wales and I am delighted Airbus is part of this exciting journey from the very start.

“I’m looking forward to seeing new technologies and techniques being developed under the AMRI roof and the major benefits they will bring.”

Welsh Government funding supports 35 steel jobs in Newport

The £100,000 investment from Welsh Government funding will also be used to assist BRC, who are part of the Celsa Group of companies, to purchase new machinery and improve its factory layout so that productivity levels at the Newport plant can be increased.

BRC is a major supplier to the UK construction industry having provided materials for major projects such as Crossrail, Sky Garden London, Mersey Link and the Aberdeen bypass.

It is also the UK's largest supplier of steel reinforcement and associated products for concrete, and typically uses 98% recycled steel produced at its associated steelmaking plant in Cardiff. Additionally BRC specialises in the manufacture of rebar carpet reinforcements and steel fabric mesh.

BRC will be investing over £1m in this project and agreeing a new long term lease with its landlord at its Corporation Road premises. The company will also be acquiring bespoke shear and bending equipment to enhance production efficiencies which will help them ensure a long term future in Newport.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

Supporting Wales' steel industry through what is a difficult and challenging time remains a key Welsh Government priority.

I am pleased that our £100,000 investment is helping BRC to drive up its productivity and create and protect around 35 jobs at its Newport site. In December I launched our Economic Action Plan which focuses on spreading the fruits of economic growth to communities right across Wales and I am hopeful that our investment will help secure a successful future for BRC in Newport.

Mr John Collins, Managing Director of BRC commented:

This investment will help consolidate BRC's position as the pre-eminent reinforcing fabricator in the UK with an unrivalled capability of supplying all the major infrastructure projects. This is a demonstration of our close collaboration with Welsh Government and has been made possible through the dedicated support of our workforce and the Community Union.

We share a joint objective of promoting local responsible sourcing and the circular economy. It means that we really can make in the UK to build the UK. With many customers wanting a supply chain which supports UK manufacturing and gives low carbon, recycled

reinforcing steels, we are in a unique position to guarantee our source of supply. This equipment means we can supply even more in the years to come.

Community Union representative Steve McCool commented:

This announcement represents the excellent work being carried out by the workforce and management to establish the Newport site as significant and strategic facility in the Celsa supply chain. Community members at the site have worked hard with the local management to secure this investment.