

Just 3% of 'blue collar' construction workers are women – GMB study



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Just 3% of 'blue collar' construction workers are women, a GMB study shows.



The union's analysis of ONS data shows overall women make up a mere 13% of the construction workforce – with just 3.6% in 'blue collar' roles.

	Female workers (n)	All employees (n)	% female
White collar	130,983	677,289	19.3
Blue collar	46,390	1,286,451	3.6
Mixed	94,994	146,711	64.7
Other	8,580	21,090	40.7
Total	280,947	2,131,541	13.2

GMB analysis of ONS Labour Force Survey data

GMB reveals the figures as leading women activists in the sector meet to mark International Women in Engineering Day – sharing harrowing tales of discrimination that occur even at the interview stage.

Rigid, non-family friendly organisation of work at site level is a massive barrier to women joining the construction industry.

“ A tremendous amount of work is needed to level the playing field for women in construction. The whole industry must work to end the disgraceful environment women are subjected to on the shop floor.

Charlotte Childs, GMB National Officer

A pilot scheme sponsored by Build UK has trialled flexible working on construction sites – the results were increased productivity, improved wellbeing of the workforce and proved it can be done.

GMB Union is committed to being at the forefront of those discussions with employers to ensure that our members get a better deal for their hard work.



A **previous GMB study** showed at the current rate of growth gender equality in the construction industry will take nearly 200 years.

Charlotte Childs, GMB National Officer for Construction and Engineering, said:

"A tremendous amount of work is needed to level the playing field for women in construction.

"Events this week have highlighted the systematic misogyny and discrimination women face in the industry.

"Nearly a third of construction workers **are over the age of 50** – in the next 10 to 15 years half a million workers will leave the industry.



"Women will be vital to plug that gap and the only way this will be done is with a huge shift in culture.

"GMB women have come together to devise a strategy that demands more from our employers – from period dignity, to ensuring women have the right PPE as well confronting discriminative and misogynistic behaviour.

"The whole industry must work to end the disgraceful environment women are subjected to on the shop floor."

Press office

07958 156846

press.office@gmb.org.uk

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info@gmb.org.uk

