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CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD NI

LAUNCH WOMEN PLANT OPERATOR SCHEME

CITB NI have launched their all female plant operator training pilot scheme with an open day at their headquarters in Crumlin Co. Antrim.

The scheme will fully fund the training of 10 female plant operators and equip them with the relevant CSR plant operator site cards along with other recognised qualifications including those in Health & Safety, First Aid, COSHH, Manual Handling and Noise & Dust - all relevant to plant operation which will leave the participants 'job ready' to gain employment within the construction sector.

Statistics throughout recent years confirmed that competent qualified plant operators were scarce on the ground. CITBNI recognised that there was a high level of interest from females who were willing to get involved in the sector and decided to pilot and fund this scheme in a bid to address the shortage.

The scheme has been organised and brought to the forefront by Rachel McKeeman, Director of Industry Training and her team at CITBNI who were all heavily involved throughout the open day.

CITBNI have appointed McKinney Safety Centre Ltd from Strabane to deliver the training scheme. They offer a wide range of health and safety courses, primarily focussing on plant operations, cranes and lifting, and offering various card schemes such as CSR, CPCS & NPORS to their customers throughout the whole of Ireland and into the UK.

Commented Linda McKinney: "It was great to be involved in the process; the open day



was the ideal opportunity for all in attendance to operate a wide range of machines. The pilot scheme itself developed by Rachel and her team at CITBNI is a fantastic opportunity for women to become competent operators and gain the required skills and qualifications to be in a position to operate on site.

"We had a wide range of our training machines at the open day, all JCB. We have

used JCB for a number of years and are extremely pleased with the machines and service we get from Dennison JCB who also had their big new 26 metre JCB Roto telescopic at the event. Dennison's have always been an advocate of operators skills training and have themselves invested heavily in women who operate successfully throughout their operation."





Demonstrating at the open day was Georgina Williams who is the UK training manager for JCB backhoe excavators. Prior to this role Georgina was part of the dancing digger team and was also a test operator across a wide range of JCB machines, making her a perfect ambassador for what women can achieve.

Quite a number of employers were also in attendance hoping to attract the women when qualified. One such company was Taranto Ltd, piling and ground engineering specialists based in Tandragee, Co. Armagh, who also invests heavily in female plant operators who are successfully working on sites across Ireland and the UK. Company Director David McCartney spoke at the event



about the opportunities available and just what is achievable for females in the industry. The training scheme itself begins in April and ends early July for the initial 10 operators. However, due to the interest

created and numbers attending the open day, CITBNI hopes to be in a position to run further similar schemes in the future and would encourage any female interested to get in touch to register their interest.

