**Rationale for more female Service and Maintenance of Building Services Engineers**

Over the past twenty years we have delivered a very successful apprenticeship programme to the Building Services Engineering sector, sometimes referred to as the Facilities Management sector, and whilst we have, and have had, very successful female apprentices, the proportion of them to their male counterparts seems somewhat significantly imbalanced. (*It should be noted that we have a highly motivated and excellent cohort of male apprentices, however opportunities are being missed to have a more diverse workforce with a range of skills that may serve better the clients that require such skills*)\_

The need for this apprenticeship arose from the demands of employers to remove or minimise demarcation issues, which resulted in many instances in more than one engineer being required to attend some technical response that conceivably could have been dealt with by a single, but perhaps better trained engineer, saving cost to both the engineer’s employer and the client they were serving.

Another significant reason for this apprenticeship was to address the service, maintenance and repairs that would require to be addressed following the installation of building services engineering systems. The types of systems this relates to are Heating Systems, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning systems, Ventilation systems, Plumbing systems, Gas and Oil appliances and installations and Electrical systems. The apprenticeship also deals with many other aspects, such as health and safety, customer care, fault diagnostic techniques etc.

The types of environments that these activities may take place in are Schools, Colleges, Universities, Hospitals, Care homes, Banks, Commercial office developments, Factories, Police stations, Fire stations, Ambulance stations, High street retail outlets, to name but some.

The purpose of undertaking these functions created many benefits, extending the longevity of systems and components, the safety of the systems, healthier and better climate controls which serves to reduce absence rates, efficiency savings, greater environmental protection, using less fuel and emitting less harmful gases to the atmosphere.

**Why would this engineering apprenticeship route be appropriate to females?**

Notwithstanding perhaps the most obvious attraction, that it is a well-paid profession, there are a number of reasons which make females very suited to this pathway.

* There are many client representatives that who themselves are female and who would feel more at ease discussing issue with female engineers
* Females, based on past experiences, are very diligent and meticulous regarding preparation and submission of client reports
* Most of the environments in which these activities take place are internal and involve works on already installed plant or equipment, so excessive lifting or exposure to excessive cold and wet extremes are rare
* Face to face customer care requirements have again been historically dealt with by female engineers to a very high standard
* Logical and methodical approaches to fault diagnostic situations are dealt with very well by female engineers
* Female engineers have been proven to be reliable and dependable and work well within teams
* Female apprentices have been very successful in attaining awards for levels of excellence, i.e. Apprentices of the year

**In Conclusion**

The above is not in any way shape or format designed to remove and replace male engineers with female, but to identify that there are vocational pathways with opportunities to provide the industry with a much more balanced and skilled workforce than may already exist.

We, at Glasgow Kelvin College, would like to propose a visit to the college for females from our school’s liaisons who might express an interest in perhaps being an engineer in the Building Services Engineering sector, or gain more information on this pathway.

To remove any fear of not being able to ask the right question, or from feeling daunted in doing so, it is our intent to introduce the course to the visiting persons, but thereafter to leave all the visiting personnel with some of our current/past female apprentices and to allow them to ask questions and to gain information in a relaxed environment that might maximise their ability to gain as much information as possible from talking to those on the programme.