

# Women into Construction

A Social Return on Investment  
Evaluation of Women into  
Construction's Partnership  
with The Hill Group





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## INTRODUCTION

Just over 16% of the entire workforce in the UK construction industry is represented by women, and in trade roles, that reduces to less than 1%.

The construction industry faces an uncertain future in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit but CITB scenarios show a recovery in UK construction output and a growth of 4.4%, requiring an additional 217,000 workers by 2025\*. Infrastructure and housing growth are expected to be key drivers for recovery but with a tight labour market across the UK, contractors are struggling to attract talent to their business. In order to weather the storm and build resilient businesses for the future, companies need to widen the talent pool, bring new skills and diversity into their businesses. By encouraging a wider

range of people into the industry – and welcoming them when they get here – the industry will benefit from better solutions, more collaborative teams, and stronger businesses.

Hill and Women into Construction worked together to break down barriers and open-up opportunities – offering a programme of support for women in Cambridgeshire. This report explores the impact and social return on investment from the innovative project.

\*[https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn\\_outlook\\_2021\\_2025.pdf](https://www.citb.co.uk/documents/research/csn_outlook_2021_2025.pdf)

## ABOUT US



### About Women into Construction

Women into Construction (WiC) provides advice and guidance, training, work placements and jobs, to women interested in entering the construction industry, whilst meeting the needs of contractors and stakeholders to address the skills shortages in construction and create a more diverse workforce.



### About The Hill Group

The Hill Group is a leading construction company, operating across the UK, carrying out a diverse range of developments, including joint venture projects, private sales development, as well as affordable new homes for housing associations and local authorities.



### About Envoy Partnership

Envoy Partnership is a social value and impact management consultancy, supporting clients to measure, demonstrate and enhance their social, economic, and environmental impact delivering SROI and social value analysis, and impact management support.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2019, WiC and Hill agreed to a joint partnership project where a WiC project manager would be seconded to Hill for a period of 18 months. Due to its success, the project was extended in November 2020 until May 2022. The following social return on invest report measures the social impact for two of the three years of the partnership.

The project's activities can be summarised into four key strategies:

1. To raise the awareness of careers in construction through events and talks to showcase the range of jobs, promote the sector, and dispel the myth of gender-segregated roles.
2. To engage, inform, and deliver advice to local women to enable them to make informed career choices and develop individual action plans to access employment in the construction sector.
3. To deliver flexible pre-employment support for women, including a mix of employability support, job-specific construction training, relevant work placements, and 1-1 and group peer mentoring to produce site and work-ready candidates.
4. To support Hill and their supply chain to recruit women into sustainable employment in construction.

Envoy Partnership were commissioned to conduct a Social Return on Investment evaluation of this partnership programme.

Thank you to both Hill and WiC for helping me to gain work experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the practical element of Site Management. Not only has the placement given me an understanding of the different jobs, it has also given me a future pathway that I'd like to pursue.

*Lauren, now Trainee Site Manager at Hill following her successful WiC work experience placement*





## SUMMARY

This study involved a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the Women into Construction – Hill partnership. The results found that a total of £600,000 of Social Value was generated for a range of stakeholders. This indicates significant impact created through the programme. This value represents outcomes such as increased earnings, when the programme supports women into jobs in a relatively well-paid sector, along with significant positive impacts on participants' wellbeing and future careers. It also includes outcomes for the UK State, including increased taxes and reduced benefit spend.

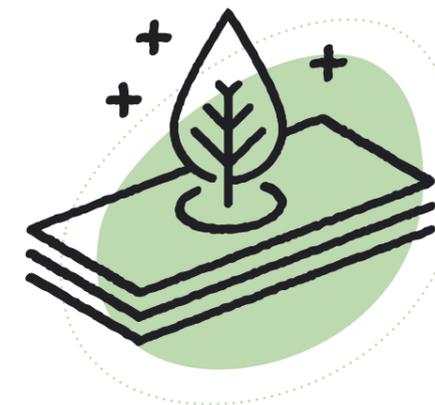
**I often see the women at open days who are showing an interest at the presentations... and then see the successful women who have carried out the placement and have been offered a job at Hill. I find that quite satisfying, seeing the whole process go through.**

*Hill Employee discussing the WiC Project*

Compared to the initial investment, this represents a Social Return on Investment Ratio of 3.5-4: 1. This means that for every £1 invested, this project generated £3.50-£4.00 of Social Value.

Through their facilitation of this project, Hill also benefitted as an organisation. They were able to save on recruitment costs, access new skilled labour from the WiC cohort, and improve employee engagement through the company initiative.

## £600,000 GENERATED SOCIAL VALUE FOR SOCIETY



*This project generated £600,000 of Social Value for society.*

## £4 SOCIAL RETURN FOR EVERY £1 INVESTED



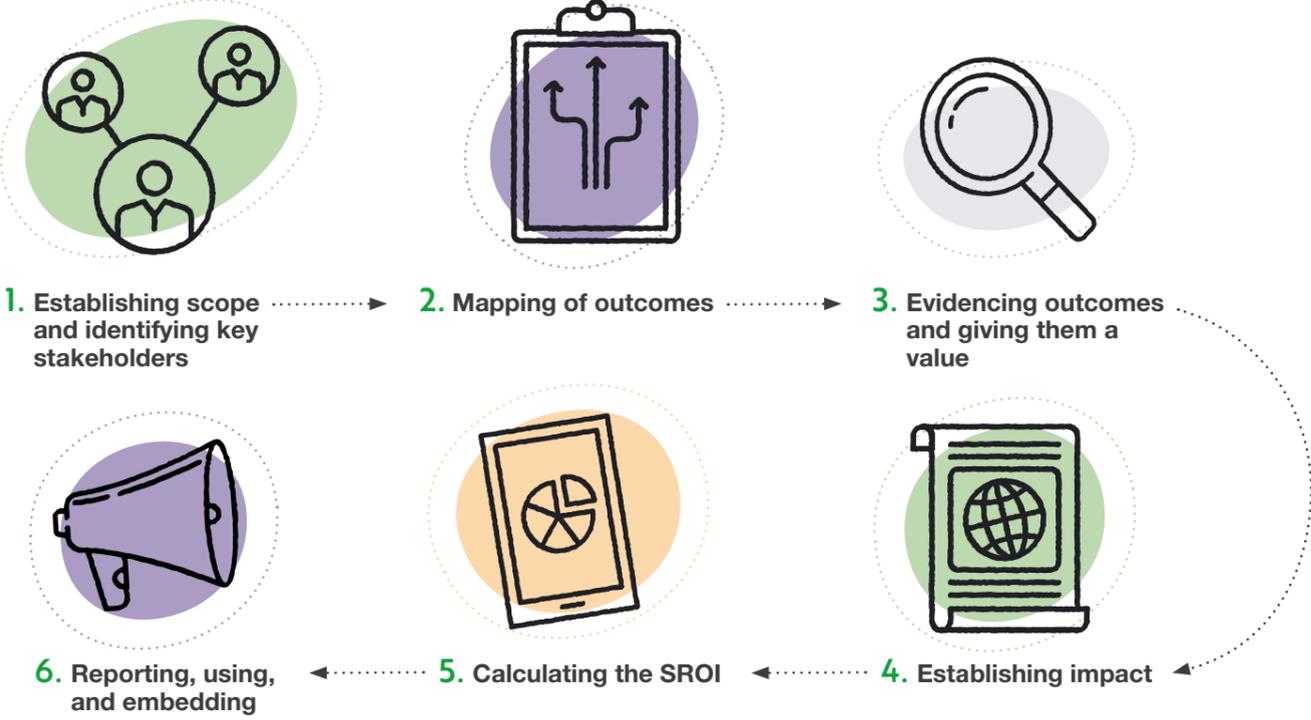
*For every £1 invested in this project, the social return was approximately £3.50-£4.00*

### ABOUT SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT METHODOLOGY

Social Return on Investment is a type of cost-benefit analysis that quantifies and values social and environmental as well as economic benefits. The methodology followed in this report directly draws on the UK Cabinet Office's Guide to Social Return on Investment. The SROI approach is derived from a set of core principles that underpin the methodology. These are:

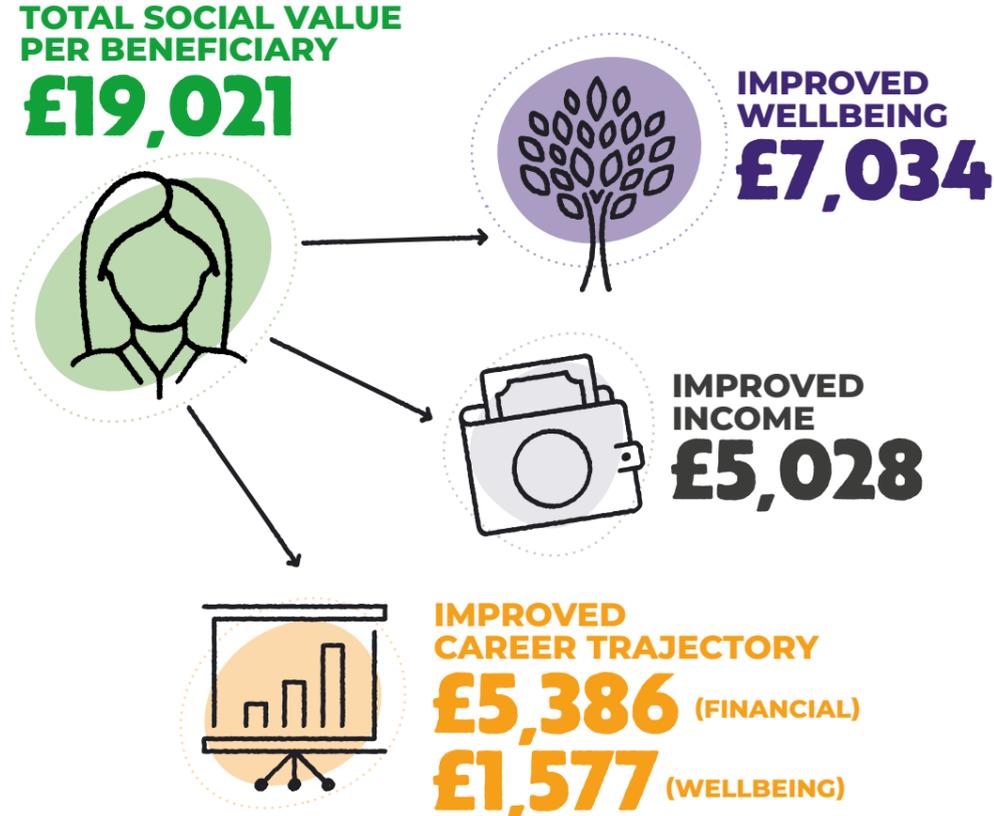
- 1. Involve Stakeholders
- 2. Understand what changes
- 3. Value what matters
- 4. Only include what is material
- 5. Do not overclaim
- 6. Be Transparent
- 7. Verify the results
- 8. Be Responsive

SROI proceeds via six distinct stages, as defined in the guide. It is a mixed methodology approach, relying on both qualitative research (particularly in stage 2 below) and quantitative research (particularly in stages 3 and 4 below):



In this study, 23 stakeholders were engaged for qualitative interviews, and 21 stakeholders completed a quantitative survey. Details of the research are in the appendix.

The graphic below illustrates an example of the different social value components that make up the total social value generated for a single women for this project. This value and make up will change depending on the particular individual outcomes the woman has experienced.





## PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Social Return on Investment analysis looks at the activities that have been completed and then maps out the theory of change for beneficiaries – identifying what changes for them because of those activities. Women into Construction supported women through the following activities:

- **Awareness and engagement activities:** Information sessions and schools activities designed to inform women about careers in construction.

- **Information advice and guidance:** Group and 1-1 sessions with WiC PM to support women with their career objectives and employability skills.

- **Construction Training:** WiC supported women to access and complete job specific construction qualifications training with local training providers.

- **Work Placements:** WiC organised and supported women to completed physical work experience placements and taster days. During Covid, WiC created an innovative virtual work experience programme with Hill (See case study).

- **Mentoring:** 1-2-1 mentoring with a member of WiC or Hill employee to improve professional confidence and increase connections within the sector.

- **Diversity and Inclusion Training:** Supporting Hill Staff to foster an inclusive culture within the company

## OUTPUTS

**719** RECEIVED DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TRAINING

*719 Hill staff members received Diversity & Inclusion training*

**53** WOMEN RECEIVED TRAINING

**25** REMOTE MENTORING PARTNERSHIPS

**190** WOMEN ENGAGED

*Over 190 women engaged with 89 registered for further support*

**28** WOMEN COMPLETED WORK PLACEMENTS

**22** WOMEN GAINED EMPLOYMENT OR AN APPRENTICESHIP IN CONSTRUCTION

## INNOVATIVE DELIVERY – VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE

During Covid-19 restrictions, practical on-site work experience placements weren't viable, so the project adapted and WiC worked with Hill's Cambridge Investment Partnership team to produce a week of virtual work experience designed to;

- Build confidence
- Increase knowledge of the housebuilding process
- Increase knowledge of job roles available in the industry and what they entail

In April 2021 sixteen WiC participants joined Hill for a week of interactive workshops, activities and presentations on Zoom that explored commercial, technical and production roles in construction. This included a welcome from Hill's Regional Director, a virtual site tour around the CIP Timberworks project and virtual site induction.

Across the week, the women enjoyed participating in live meetings, completing interactive activities and Q&A sessions and with the commercial, technical and production teams from Hill. Activities included an individual design challenge, subcontractor quote comparison task and a programme of works group exercise. WiC provided employment support through interactive CV, LinkedIn, personal statement, online interview, and reflection exercises. Participants completed the week with mock online interviews with the Hill Team.

Participants reported an increase in confidence and industry knowledge having undertaken the experience. They attributed this to the support they received from WiC and Hill, plus the

peer-to-peer support across the week. With participants commenting;

**“ I thoroughly recommend this programme for anyone who is interested in the construction industry, the course is really informative, and the instructors supported us all the way through. ”**

**“ I couldn't recommend this programme highly enough. It's opened my eyes to a whole new world of opportunities, and it's given me the confidence and insight I needed to realise my passion. Thank you! ”**

**“ The virtual work experience provided by WiC was impeccably organised and delivered and very well supported by team Hill. ”**



**Kaith**  
at Hill

## CASE STUDY

Kaith registered with the Cambridgeshire Women into Construction (WiC) programme after attending a WiC online information session. Having completed her Construction Management Degree, she wanted to gain some vital on-site work experience to help enhance her applications and to gain further industry insight.

WiC worked with Hill's Major Projects team to arrange a work experience placement on one of their central Cambridge sites and met with the Project Manager, Richard Dunmore and Kaith on her first day. WiC covered Kaith's fuel costs to and from the placement so she could gain experience with no cost to her.

On the placement, Kaith spent two weeks shadowing the production team. During her time, Kaith was involved in site inductions, snagging, conflict resolution and quality checks. Kaith particularly enjoyed seeing the progress of the programme whilst on-site. Talking about her experience, Kaith said,

**“ I really enjoyed my time working with the team in Cambridge. They were quite welcoming from the first day and taught me so much. I could not have wished for a better start in the industry. ”**

**“ It was fantastic to have Kaith with the production team for her work experience, and the WiC programme is fantastic to help promote the industry to a wider audience. Kaith was involved with the normal day-to-day items for our site team, working with them on inductions, quality assurance, health and safety and more. ”**

**Kaith fitted in with the site team brilliantly and was very engaging with the work she was set. This is a great programme for any woman who would like to join the construction industry, and Kaith is a good example to follow. ”**

*Richard Dunmore,  
Project Manager for Hill*

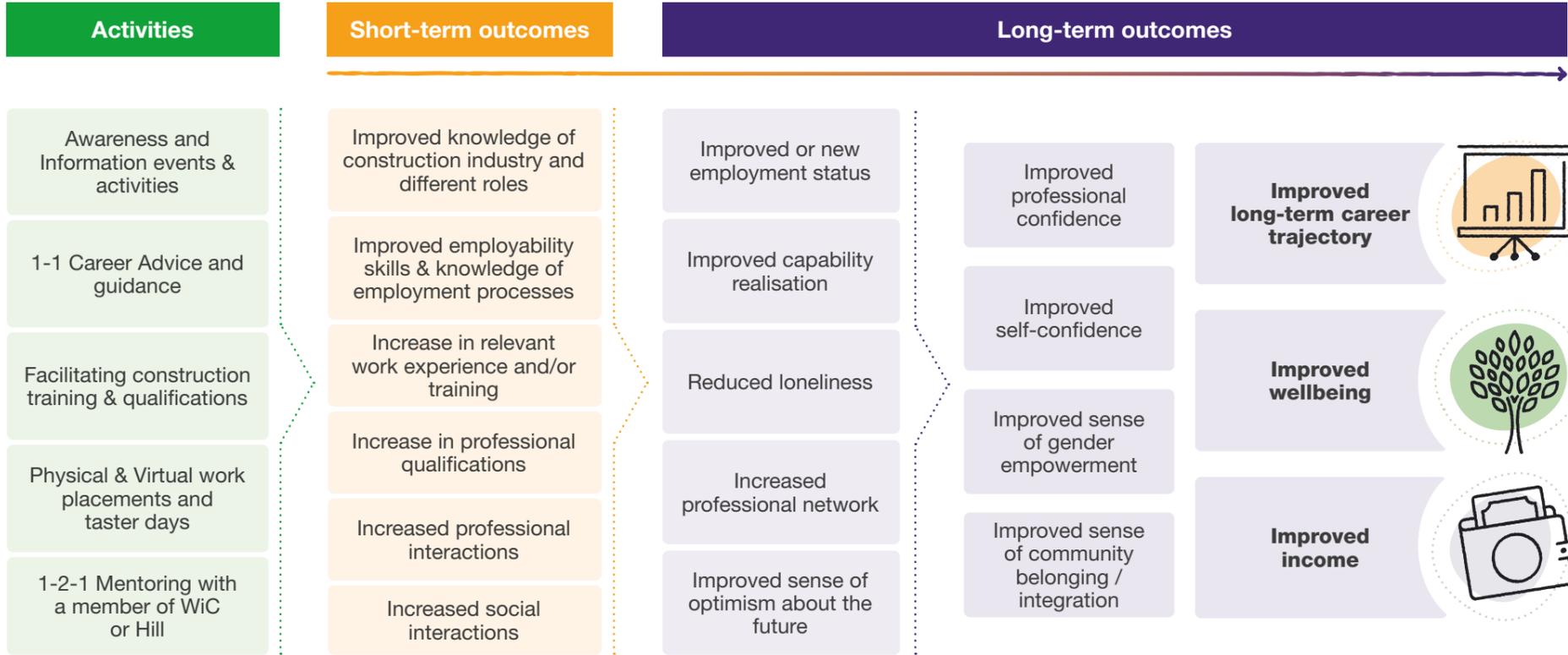


**Tori Shepherd**  
Assistant Technical Coordinator

# THEORY OF CHANGE FOR WOMEN

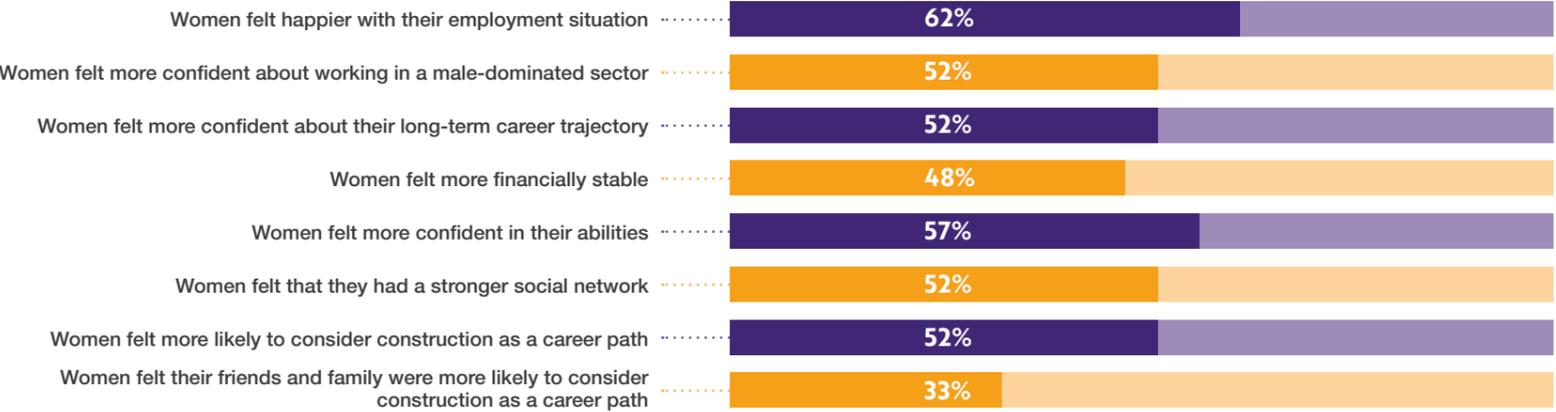
The following diagram shows the Theory of Change for women participating in the programme – highlighting the short and long term outcomes they experienced.

## Women into Construction Theory of Change

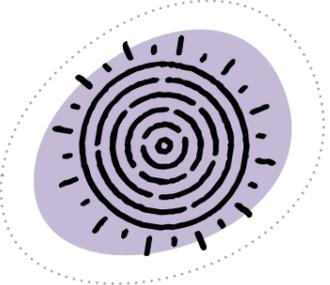


# WHAT CHANGED FOR WOMEN?

When asked to reflect on the impact the WiC Programme has on their career, the beneficiaries revealed the following findings:



When asked to reflect on the impact the WiC Programme has on their Wellbeing,

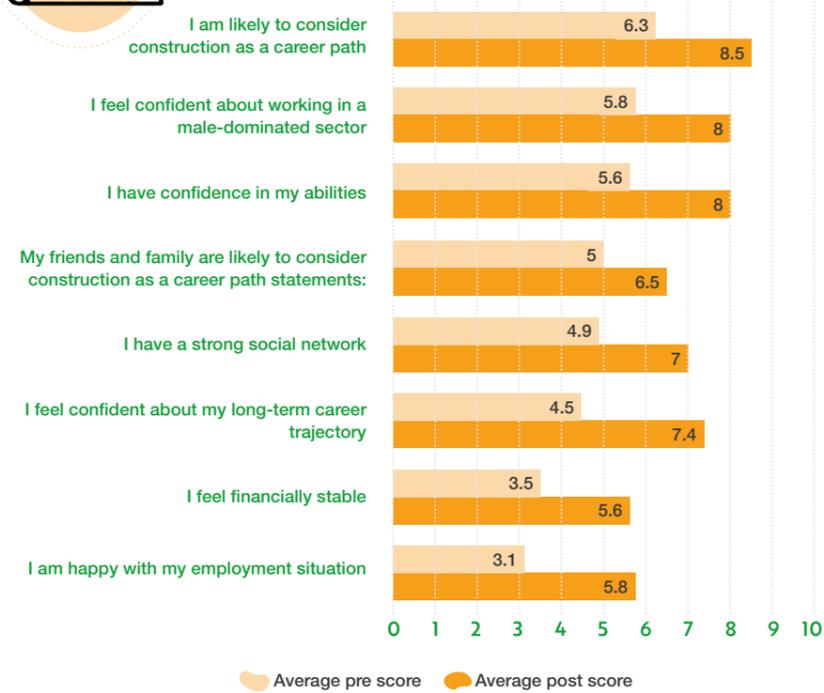


## RESULTS

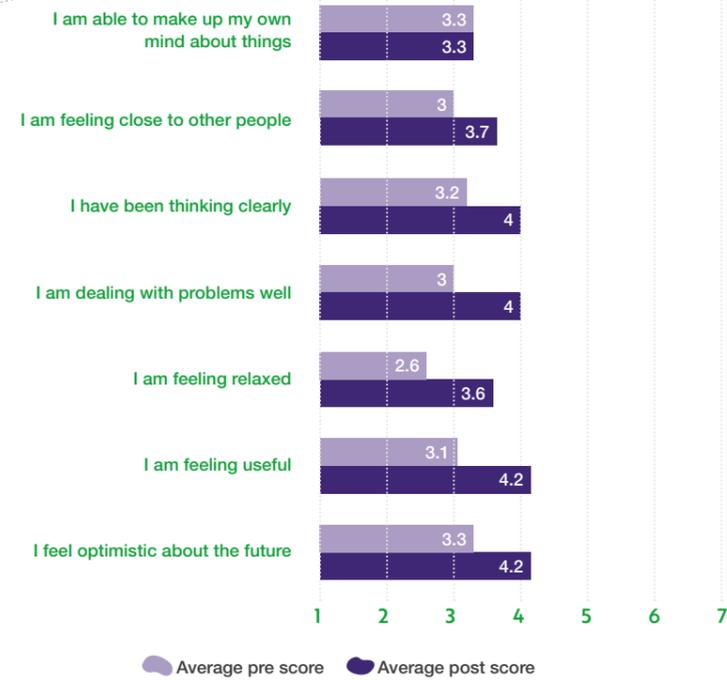
The graphs below illustrate participants' responses in the survey to questions about how they felt before and after the programme.



### Career Outcomes



### Wellbeing Outcomes



\*Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS) © NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2008, all rights reserved.

## MEASURING AND VALUING OUTCOMES

In order to avoid double counting, only the 'final outcomes', (as shown on the Theory of Change) were given a monetary value. These were measured and valued as follows:

### Improved income

Improved income is measured in the survey: participants are asked about whether their employment status and income has changed. Data on the level of increase has been taken from participants' salary data (collected by Women into Construction) and data on average construction industry salaries by job position.

### Improved wellbeing

Well-being is measured using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS). Participants were asked about their wellbeing before joining the programme, and their wellbeing now, and the difference between the two was calculated. Wellbeing was given a monetary value using a healthcare economics approach. This involved the use of cost-effectiveness approaches used within health and social care, especially

the use of Quality Adjusted life Years (QALYs). A discussion of these approaches can be found here.

### Improved long-term career trajectory

Participants improved long-term career trajectory is projected based on their change in employment status, and confidence about their future career. Participants improved long-term career trajectory has two likely benefits for them: improved future earnings, and improved future well-being; these were valued as described above.

To ensure the scale of these outcomes was measured accurately, the study used data from the survey to collect information on the different trajectories that women experience through the programme. A total of eight pathways were identified, of which six lead to significant positive benefits for participants. Each were then weighted according to how many women experienced that pathway. See appendix for the six pathway groupings and an example of how the social value was calculated.



## OUTCOMES FOR HILL

Hill also derived benefits from this partnership, which can be categorised into two groups: Social benefits to the employees of the organisation, and organisational benefits to the company as a whole.

### Social Benefits

#### 1. Improved Work Culture

Through increased Diversity and Including training and by facilitating the programme, Hill employees noticed an improved work culture and felt the company was going further to diversify recruitment.

#### 2. Improved Employee Engagement and Sense of Loyalty to the Company

By engaging in the programme, Hill employees expressed increased pride and loyalty to the company due to their alignment with the social mission.

### Organisational Benefits

#### 1. Improved Social Value Proposition

This programme complements Hill's wider approach to Social Value, and their relationship with WiC allows them to communicate their impact further, particularly in bids for tenders which require demonstration of Social Value.

#### 2. Savings in Recruitment Costs

Hill has saved resources on internal and/or external recruitment costs by having direct access to the WiC cohort.

#### 3. Opportunities for Professional Development

Hill employees have been given the opportunity to take on new roles related to the Women into Construction partnership, develop their training and leaderships skills through talks and workshops with the WiC cohort.

#### 4. Access to Wider Talent Pool of Skilled Labour

Hill has been able to source labour from a new pool of talent, which they may have not otherwise been able to access as easily.

When I got in touch with Shelley from WiC she was very helpful and supportive, she was incredibly encouraging and would always make sure I had all the necessary help and guidance required to meet my goals.

I had never heard of WiC before talking to a friend who works for Hill, but the amount of support I have received is beyond what I expected. This has been a journey that I wouldn't have been able to achieve without the help from WiC, especially Shelley.

*Ellen, Site Assistant on Hill's new Hill Academy Programme to up-skill to Site Manager and achieve a Level 4 NVQ*



## CASE STUDY

### Alisha at Hill



Alisha registered with the Cambridgeshire WiC programme in April 2021 having researched opportunities in the industry and discovered Hill's partnership with WiC.

Alisha firstly undertook her Level 1 Health and Safety certificate and then completed her CSCS test to gain her CSCS card. Whilst doing so, she also took part in the virtual work experience week that was held with Hill's Cambridge Investment Partnership team. The virtual experience gave Alisha further knowledge and insight into commercial, technical and production roles – of which she decided to explore technical and production further.

WiC then worked with Ryan Harris, Hill's Regional Director for their Western Region to secure a work placement at Hill for Alisha where

she could shadow both technical and production roles at a site closer to her home in Oxford.

Alisha worked alongside Hill's Senior Technical Co-ordinator, Narinder Jheeta for the first week, working out of both Hill's new Abingdon office and their Littlemore site. Alisha learnt about build stages, how to understand and review drawings and took part in meetings. Narinder commented,

**“Alisha proved herself to be a very enthusiastic, bright and knowledge seeking young woman. It was a pleasure to supervise her for the week that she was with the Technical Team. I can certainly see potential and would look forward to her applying to potential future vacancies with us at Hill. ”**

For her second week of experience, Alisha worked with the production team under the supervision of Senior Site Manager, Tom Ranns. Alisha learnt about the specific duties of a site manager, taking part in quality assurance checks and learning about the importance of health and safety and how to put together a programme of works. Tom commented,

**“It was a great privilege to have Alisha with us on site for a week. She brought great enthusiasm with her which hopefully she will take with her into her career in construction. I wish her all the success in the future.”**

This experience was truly wonderful, and I enjoyed every second of it. Going into this placement, I had doubts and worries entering the construction industry being a woman, however the Hill Team were so welcoming and took their time to show me the ins and outs of the construction industry which I will never forget.

*Alisha, Work experience placement with Hill*





## CALCULATING THE FINAL SROI

After measuring and valuing the relevant outcomes, the total value of the project was calculated. The attribution, deadweight and displacement of each outcome was considered to improve accuracy (See example pathway in appendix), and a discount rate of 3.5% was applied to value accrued in the future, as recommended by the HM Treasure Guidance in the Green Book.

A central component of the SROI methodology is valuing both monetary and non-monetary inputs, to account for everything an organisation has invested in a project. Non-monetary inputs generally include volunteer time or in-kind good and services.

The total investment into this project, including all of the above, was **£156,298**. Since the total value generated was **c. £600,000k** this represents a SROI ratio of **c. £3.50-£4.00**.

Breaking down the total value:

- 75% of the total value was experienced by the women. This means that across the cohort of all the women who took part in this programme, the total amount of social and economic value experienced by the group is approximately £450,000.
- Around one quarter (24%) of the total value is created for the State – through an increase in taxes revenue, and reduction in spend on benefits
- In addition to this, Hill Group experienced resource savings of approximately £6,000, along with wider organisational benefits that are not part of the SROI calculations.

**£4 SOCIAL RETURN FOR EVERY £1 INVESTED**



## DISCUSSION

The central motivation of this partnership project for Hill, was to use their resources in supporting more women into the wider construction industry. Whilst some of the additional short-term benefits are possible to capture already, some of the longer-term benefits of increasing the number of women in the construction industry are outside the scope of this analysis.

One of the key recommendations from the WiC programme has been the introduction of new employment pathways for women into Hill. Previously, Hill generally only offered entry-level roles for students and graduates. This meant that for women who are changing careers (non-recent graduates) on the WiC programme and who are looking for entry level roles, there were few options at Hill.

At the time of this research, discussions were taking place about changing this approach so that more entry-level roles were offered to career changers (nonrecent graduates). From the perspective of the women participating in the Hill and WiC programme, the likely impact of this would be the following:

1. The project would likely generate **more social value**, as the number of women finding new jobs in construction will increase, which is a key component of the total social value generated.
2. Hill will experience a further reduction in recruitment costs, and hence **more economic value**.
3. Hill will experience **further social value as a company**, as the emerging themes identified by Hill employees strengthen.

Overall, this programme has demonstrated that significant Social value has been generated for the Women, Hill and the State. Further development of the Partnership will aim to increase this value and ensure that the long term impacts for the women supported are realised.



### APPENDIX

**Qualitative Research Summary**

Stakeholder	Methodolgy	Stakeholders Engaged
Women into Construction Beneficiaries (All subgroups)	1 x semi-structured focus group (12 participants) conducted face-to-face in a hotel meeting room in Cambridgeshire 3 x individual interviews, online	13 (c. 20% of total participants)
Hill Management / Board	Semi structured individual interview, online	1
Hill Cambridgeshire Office Employees	Semi structured focus group, conducted face-to-face, in the Hill Cambridgeshire office	6
Hill On-Site Construction Employees	Semi structured individual interview, conducted face-to-face, on a Hill construction site in Cambridgeshire	1
Women into Construction training partner	Semi structured individual interview, online	1
Women into Construction referral partner	Semi-structured individual interview, online	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

Stakeholder	Methodolgy	Stakeholders Engaged
Women into Construction Beneficiaries (All subgroups)	Online survey with a collection of questions asking about outcomes pre and post WiC support.	<b>21</b>

**Example Pathway Valuation for One Year: Group 1 Pathway**

Stakeholder	Outcome name	Total stakeholders affected	Pre measurement	Post measurement	Deadweight proportion	Displacement proportion	Attribution proportion	Impact created	Total attributable value per year
Group 1: Women whose career development has been supported within construction - improved job	Improved long-term career trajectory [financial]	6	-	1	0.63	0.1	0.5	1.0	£6,400
	Improved long-term career trajectory [wellbeing]	6	-	1.6	0.63	0.1	0.5	0.0	£1,900
	Improved income (short-term)	6	-	1.0	0.5	0.1	0.5	1.4	£10,200
	Improved wellbeing (short-term)	6	19.5	26.1	0	0.0	0.5	0.7	£14,200

**Example SROI Calculation: Group 2 Pathway**

Social Value	=	Total stakeholders affected	x	Amount of change	x	(1 - Deadweight)	x	(1 - Displacement)	x	Attribution	x	Financial Proxy	x	1 ÷ (1 + discount rate) ^ Year	=		
Group 2: Improved wellbeing	Year 1	=	12	x	(25.4 – 18.8) ÷ (35 - 7)	x	100%	x	100%	x	75%	x	£10,560	x	1 ÷ (1+0.035)^1	=	£21,600
	Year 2	=	12	x	(25.4 – 18.8) ÷ (35 - 7)	x	100%	x	100%	x	75% x 2 ÷ 3	x	£10,560	x	1 ÷ (1+0.035)^2	=	£13,900
	Year 3	=	12	x	(25.4 – 18.8) ÷ (35 - 7)	x	100%	x	100%	x	75% x 1 ÷ 3	x	£10,560	x	1 ÷ (1+0.035)^3	=	£6,700
All years															=	<b>£42,300</b>	

### GROUPING PATHWAYS

Pathway Groups for Women – the beneficiaries were grouped in order to accurately measure the outcomes they experienced:

<b>Group 1</b>	Women whose career development has been supported within construction, leading to an improved job. Often participants had moved from an administration or entry level job, to a more senior one, with support from their mentor.
<b>Group 2</b>	Women whose career development has been supported within construction, leading to gaining a job. These women were previously unemployed, and with the support from WiC, gained a job within the construction industry, despite having little prior experience.
<b>Group 3</b>	Women whose career development has been supported outside of construction. These women gained many transferrable skills from the programme and have used them to find a better job – but not in the construction industry.
<b>Group 4</b>	Women who gained a job outside of construction, but saw little change in their career direction, so did not necessarily get a better job in the short term.
<b>Group 5</b>	Women who are optimistic about changes in the future due to WiC. These women were still in the process of applying for jobs but anticipated positive future outcomes.
<b>Group 6</b>	Women whose career confidence has improved. These women did not find a new job, but feel significantly more confident within their current job, and/or in their ability to progress their career.



# Women into Construction

[www.women-into-construction.org](http://www.women-into-construction.org)

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