

# Alison Welford

Electrical Estimator, Imtech Engineering Services North

## Can you tell us a little bit about your job and your career journey?

I currently work as an electrical estimator for a building services engineering company within the construction industry.

I completed a five-year modern apprenticeship which consisted of two years split time between site and college. I then spent three years on site working towards completing log books as evidence of experience gained on site before qualification. I then worked on site as a fully qualified JIB Approved Electrician before moving up the career ladder into an office based role as an estimator.

## What did you want to be when you grew up and why? Who inspired you?

I wanted to be an electrical engineer when I grew up. I decided that an apprenticeship was a great way of earning whilst learning and I really did change my mind about where I wanted to end up in my career path.

## How long have you been volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

About 18 months.

## What events and activities have you taken part in?

I have taken part in group presentations, hands-on practical experiments, speed mentoring and 'What's my Line?' events. Each one is different, and I love the variety.

## What difference did you want to make for yourself and young people through volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

There is a huge skills shortage in construction because less and less young people want to embark upon construction apprenticeships. I want to let them know what great prospects there can be and the possible routes up the career ladder that are available to become a very successful and professional person by starting their path at the bottom and learning a trade. It's also important for me to help bridge the gender gap in construction and to inspire more young women to enter the industry.

## What has been the best part about volunteering?

The reaction I get from the students is brilliant, I love that I am getting a chance to influence where they may eventually end up in a career.

## What has been the strangest/funniest/best question you've been asked?

- I have been asked what colour my favourite screwdriver is (it's red and yellow).
- I was also asked if I was a head teacher at a 'What's my Line?' event.

## Describe Inspiring the Future in five words

Genuinely carving a new future.

## What have you learnt from volunteering with Inspiring the Future about yourself and about young people?

I have gained so much confidence with talking in front of people. I have learnt that young people are the harshest of audiences but the questions they ask are insightful and interesting.

## How have you benefited from volunteering with Inspiring the Future? Please give examples to skills, knowledge and behaviour.

Through volunteering I have become part of a working group with my employer to help to encourage more people to volunteer to inspire the future generations and encourage more young people to come work within the construction industry.

## Who or what inspires you today and what is the reason?

I am inspired by all of the people who give their time to volunteer with young people, in any format. Young people today are all into technology and sometimes just need to see that there are other careers which they may not even think about. Without all of the volunteers sharing their stories they may just follow the same paths as their friends. Without an influx of young people the construction industry we will struggle to fill all of the vacancies in the future.

## What's the one message you feel is important to share with the young people you speak to?

Be yourselves, don't be afraid to follow your own path, don't just follow the herd, tread your own path and carve out a career which will make you happy.

## What would you say to other volunteers thinking of volunteering with Inspiring the Future?

You will feel an enormous sense of achievement when one of the children says they want to follow your path. Being a role model to a young person is one of the best feelings ever. You will not regret volunteering.

## What difference do you think you've made to the lives of young people who you spoke with?

I hope that I have challenged the young people's perception of gender specific jobs. It's not all men in construction and it's such a great industry for anyone to work in. I would like to think that I have inspired at least one young person to come into construction.

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Being a role model to a young person  
is one of the best feelings ever.**