

My name is Sarah Kinsella and I am currently the Customer Services Manager Technical for McCarthy and Stone in the Southern and South West regions. I started as an apprentice electrician in 2005, gaining all my electrical qualifications. During my time on the tools, I helped establish a renewable energy company and was involved in some innovative sustainable energy installations. In 2013 I progressed into a Buildings Manager role with McCarthy and Stone. My current role includes managing the hard services and organising the remedial works for any defects within newer McCarthy and Stone properties, which are retirement living developments. I have also recently become a Licentiate Member of CIBSE.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEER AND WHAT PATH DID YOU TAKE TO ACHIEVE THIS?

To be honest I never set out to become a “building services engineer”; I was happily undertaking various training which I didn’t realise at the time encompassed building services, I was just enjoying the learning I was undertaking which complimented my electrical training.

In my previous role as Buildings Manager I became more familiar with the term and the role of CIBSE. As part of my job I get to meet homeowners and one had a big influence on my career. He was involved with the CIOB (Chartered Institute of Building), and was always advocating the benefits of being a member of a professional institute. It was with his encouragement that I set on the path to become a member of CIBSE.

WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

I really enjoy my role as it crosses between occupied buildings and those currently being constructed.

It means I can give constructive feedback to the design teams, so that problems we are currently experiencing in occupied buildings can hopefully be designed out of future projects. I also enjoy the varied nature of my role and the range of knowledge that I need to maintain. If you are questioning subcontractors and their work you need to have full confidence in your facts and understanding, it keeps me on my toes.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DATE?

I got sponsored by Women in Science and Technology to complete a City and Guilds award in Installation and Testing of Photovoltaic Systems at the Centre of Alternative Technology, Wales. I got 100% in the exam and got the highest pass mark ever recorded on the course. They have since changed the course so nobody is ever going to beat this!

Last year I won the regional pride award for McCarthy and Stone and the national employee award for Excellence. It was a real honour to have received these awards as it was through nomination from my colleagues.

WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEER?

Go for it, you will never be bored in this field of employment, and with technology changes it never stays still so the learning aspect just continues, which I love. I would recommend the apprentice route for anyone leaving school. I really enjoyed my apprenticeship and although it was electrical, it gave me a good grounding in so many qualities required to be a good building services engineer. By

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WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE BENEFITS OF CIBSE MEMBERSHIP? AND WHY?

To be part of a global team of professionals who share the same interest and goals. I have valued the access to the knowledge portal and the guides available to members. I am looking forward to attending more CPD events in the future.



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WHY DID YOU BECOME LCIBSE ENGTECH?

I joined CIBSE for 2 main reasons, firstly I wanted to get a recognised benchmark for all the knowledge I have gained over my career to date. Secondly, by being part of an institution which encourages continual progression, it helps me grow and not get complacent in my learning and development.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS TO BECOME LCIBSE AND WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS CONSIDERING THIS GRADE?

I found the application process quite enjoyable. The process of completing the application and discussing it with my sponsor made me reflect over my career to date and my important achievements. Discussion with my sponsor made me appreciate that I had actually made more of an impact than I had given myself credit for on projects, which I considered I had only been involved with in a small way. It then made me formulate constructive career goals, which I hadn't really taken time to do before.



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BUILDING SERVICES IS GREAT BECAUSE....?

There is never a dull day at work! I love that technology is changing rapidly and by adopting these advancements, especially within older buildings, we will hopefully make buildings more sustainable in their operation and as a result the environment of the future better for the next generation. ■