

TBB Delegation – London – Report

By Leah Peters

Thursday June 9th

Best Practices

On June 9, Tradeswomen Building Bridges presented four Case Studies of successful regional strategies in Canada and the United States where the percent of women in the trades is now equal to or greater than 10%. The four regional programs shared five critical strategies which were named as [The Game Changers](#). This event is intended to share strategies and success with UK construction industry stakeholders and give them an opportunity for discussion and reflection on what might be useful for improving gender diversity in their area of work. To watch the event recording:

https://www.facebook.com/transnationaltradeswomendelegations/videos/?ref=page_internal

Workshop objectives

- Share our experiences and strategies from North American that have resulted in at least 10% women in the trades in our four regions.
- Leave participants with connections and new ideas to build standing partnerships that are committed to the same kind of progress in your organizations and regions.

The introduction to the case studies, including historical and economic context, was presented by TBB Research Director Susan Moir. Her slides are available for download here:

<https://tradeswomenbuild.files.wordpress.com/2022/06/increasing-women-in-the-construction-trades-the-big-picture.pdf>

The four Case Studies are:

ANEW from Seattle Washington on “*How Policy and Collaboration is Changing the Face of Construction in Seattle WA.*” The presenters are:

- Karen Dove, Executive Director, ANEW
- Denise Nicole’ Franklin, Director of Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

ANEW's presentation and resources are available here: <https://tradeswomenbuild.org/best-practices-case-study-1-anew-from-seattle-washington-on-how-policy-and-collaboration-is-changing-the-face-of-construction-in-seattle-wa/>

Canada's [Office to Advance Women Apprentices](#) on "***Balance to Build: A Canadian model for inclusion and retention of women in the construction trades.***" The presenters are:

- Karen Walsh, Executive Director
- Maggie Budden, Red Seal Ironworker/Project Coordinator

The Office to Advance Women Apprentices' presentation and resource are available here: <https://tradeswomenbuild.org/best-practices-case-study-2-canadas-office-to-advance-women-apprentices-on-balance-to-build-a-canadian-model-for-inclusion-and-retention-of-women-in-the-construction-trades/>

Building Pathways Massachusetts on "***If You Can See It, You Can Be It: Pipelines for Women Into the Trades.***" Presenters are:

- Mary Vogel, Executive Director
- Amy Courtney, Pipeline Navigator

A video of Building Pathways' presentation and a copy of the slides, along with additional resource are available here: <https://tradeswomenbuild.org/best-practices-case-study-3-building-pathways-massachusetts-on-if-you-can-see-it-you-can-be-it-pipelines-for-women-into-the-trades/>

Oregon Metro and Oregon Tradeswomen on "***No time to wait: How government and women's organizations can advance successful construction careers for diverse workers.***" Presenters are:

- Tiffany Thompson, Director of Workforce Equity and Technical Assistance, Oregon Tradeswomen
- Nickeia Hunter, Culture Change Liaison, Oregon Tradeswomen
- Raahi Reddy, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Metro Regional Government

Oregon Metro and Oregon Tradeswomen's presentation and resources are available here: <https://tradeswomenbuild.org/best-practices-case-study-4-oregon-metro-and-oregon-tradeswomen-on-no-time-to-wait-how-government-and-womens-organizations-can-advance-successful-construction-careers-for-div/>





Game Changers for Increasing Women in the Construction Trades

A Model that Works When We DO Them All!

Collaboration: Build ongoing relationships of the committed; identify conveners; include all stakeholders from community and training, to labor and contractors, to public and private construction owners.

- Regional multi-stakeholder groups, meeting regularly, can lead in the development and evaluation of strategies for increasing women's access to training and jobs.
- Permanent workforce monitoring committees can learn and promote best practices for increasing women's participation in training and employment.

Count, count, count: Identify where and what to count; create baselines and continuously monitor progress; make data publicly accessible; set HIGH organizational targets, project targets and regional targets and use HOURS as the unit of measurement!

- Tracking data tracks accountability.
- Targets are floors, not ceilings.
- Focus on high impact, poor performing contractors.

Integrate supply and demand: Create continuous and seamless pathways between the women and Black and minority ethnic groups who want these jobs and the jobs that need these workers.

- Establish active partnerships between outreach and training resources (supply) and upcoming construction projects with diversity targets (demand).

Center Tradeswomen: Develop outreach targeted specifically to women; create pathways for retention and advancement; make tradeswomen visible; include working tradeswomen in all public and private events where construction workers are represented.

- Partner with tradeswomen on creating safe and respectful worksites.
- Support autonomous tradeswomen's organizations.

Lead from Where You Are: All stakeholders have a role. Stay in your lane and train your staff and members in diversity, inclusivity and equity goals and practices.

- Training programs: Target, recruit and retain women. Ensure equitable training.
- Unions: Recruit women members. Ensure equitable treatment and job access. Support advancement and leadership.
- Employers: Hire and retain women. Build safe and respectful worksites. Track your diversity progress and history. Provide advancement and leadership.
- Government, especially those entities and agencies that oversee public construction: Set and enforce mandated targets and engage all stakeholders in monitoring and compliance.

Developed in collaboration with Building Pathways Massachusetts, ANEW Seattle, the Office to Advance Women Apprentices Canada, Oregon Tradeswomen and Metro Oregon.



Friday June 10

London Tour/ Welcome Reception

On Friday morning I went around London on a stop and go bus to check out the city. The buildings and architecture were truly amazing and there was construction at every corner you looked. I have never seen so many cranes in one spot before.







In London I found everyone dressed very sharp. Seeing all the different outfits was another great part of the trip. Almost every outfit was paired with sneakers though as most people used public transport and walked around. This Father daughter duo was one of my favorites.



Friday Evening, we had a welcome reception at the University of Westminster. They made us feel very welcome and expressed how happy they were for us to collaborate with them with Women in Construction and Green Building. We got to hear speeches and meet the Community Plan For Holloway team



Susan Moir is the heart of TBB and has been doing research on Women in Construction for a long time. While on the trip she announced her retirement and the passing of the torch over the rest of the TBB planners. Here are some words from Susan:

A year in the planning. Forty tradeswomen from North America and Europe are in London for the 2022 [Tradeswomen Building Bridges](#) Delegation and international conference. I have had the absolute best career! Opportunities I never expected. Thanks and love to so many wonderful friends and colleagues but first to [Harneen Chernow](#) who believed in me before I believed in myself.❤️





Susan's work:

[Searching: ScholarWorks at UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/)

“There have been multiple studies, including one we’ve done and one in British Columbia, that document the reason women aren’t in the trades is because this industry and other industries suffer from institutional gender discrimination,” Moir said. “So, the real question is how can women get in the trades and we’ve done a lot of work in breaking that down and figuring out the best practices to get them in the trades.”

Saturday June 11

Islington tour/ Holloway Prison

To start out our day we had a Heritage walk around the Islington Burrow. It was very interesting to hear about their housing in the area and how the 'right to buy' changed things and caused a shortage of affordable housing in the burrows.





Our group had the honor of being the final public tour of the Holloway Women's Prison. This was such an honor to learn about the history of human rights and political agitation that occurred here such as the Suffragettes and Irish Republicans. Holloway prison was opened in 1852 as a mixed-sex prison, but due to growing demand for space for female prisoners, particularly due to the closure of Newgate, it became female-only in 1903.



We had different groups that were walked through the entire prison by a worker from Peabody the company that is going to be doing the demo on the project and rebuild into a housing center along with a women's center. The prison has been closed since 2016 and use to provide services to women that the community greatly needed. To hear from one of the inmates how many women would on purpose get themselves put into the prison as it was a place of refuge from their lives was heartbreaking to hear.

TBB was partnered with Community Plan for Holloway on this trip. [Community Plan For Holloway – Ensuring the community's interests are at the heart of redeveloping the former Holloway Prison, in Islington, London \(plan4holloway.org\)](https://www.plan4holloway.org)

There is a goal to be able to achieve 30% female apprentice workers on the rebuild. With the UK only having roughly 1 – 2% female trade workers this goal will be very hard for them to meet. When I asked the tour guide what will happen if these targets are not met, he answered stating that there will be monetary ways to make up for it. It did not sound as though it was going to be a huge priority to try to accomplish and they already had a backup plan to get out of it. The hope was us bringing them best practices from North America and helping CPFH making a movement in the area will help them achieve greater numbers.





I have always joked that security dogs on a job site would be the best defense against controlling a job for security. They had dog handlers on site and let me go look at their guard dogs. The dogs were not very friendly but were still a highlight of the tour for me.





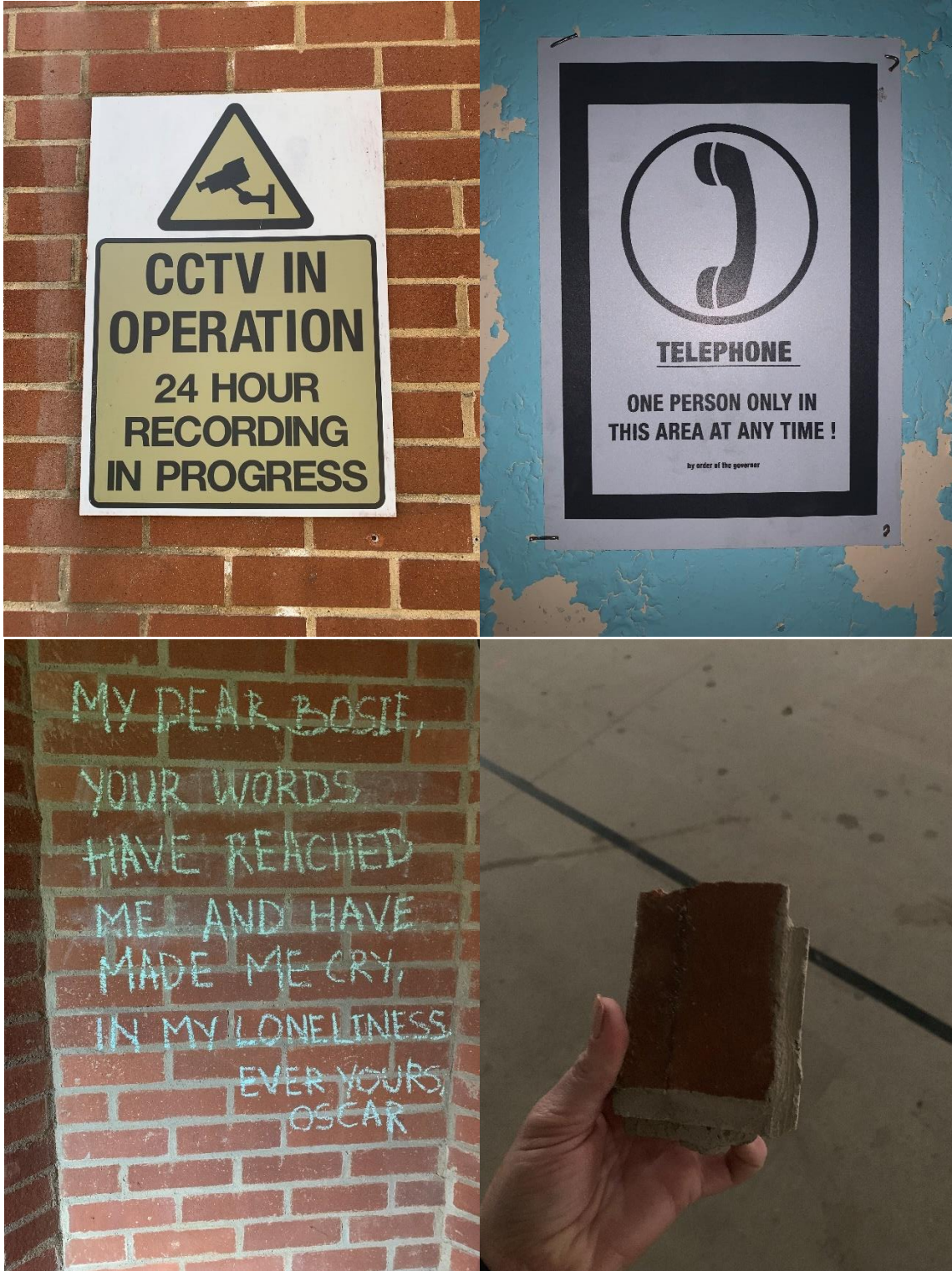
The artwork on the walls of the prison really stood out to me. This prison was life changing to so many that stayed here and gave the opportunity for those suffering from abuse a chance to get away and heal. The fact that their only place to turn was a prison is a saddening thought. With the new women's prison being so far away from London is going to have a effect on so many who will no longer be able to visit their family with a simple bus right in the city.





This area was the maternity center where women who were pregnant were allowed to keep their children up to 8 months old.

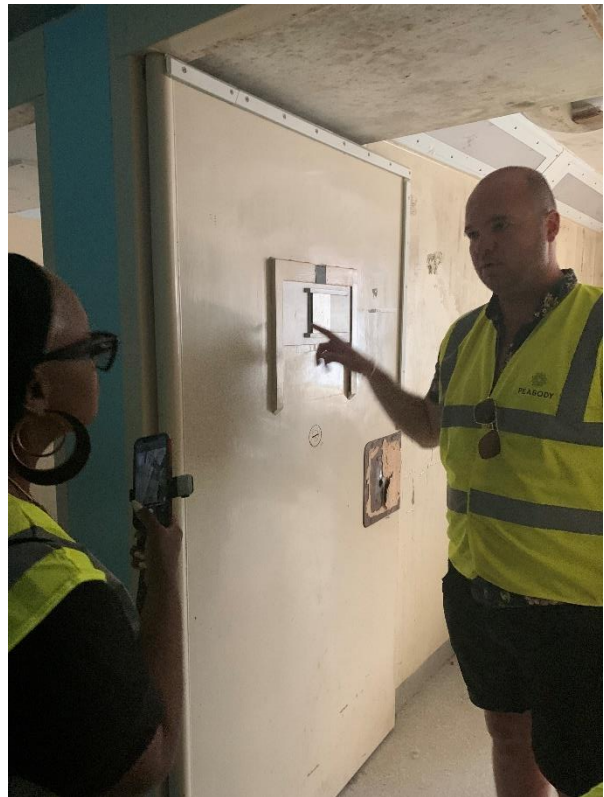




We were told we could take anything from the prison if we could remove it. I took a piece of a brick to always remember the history that is there and the experience of being able to walk through it all.



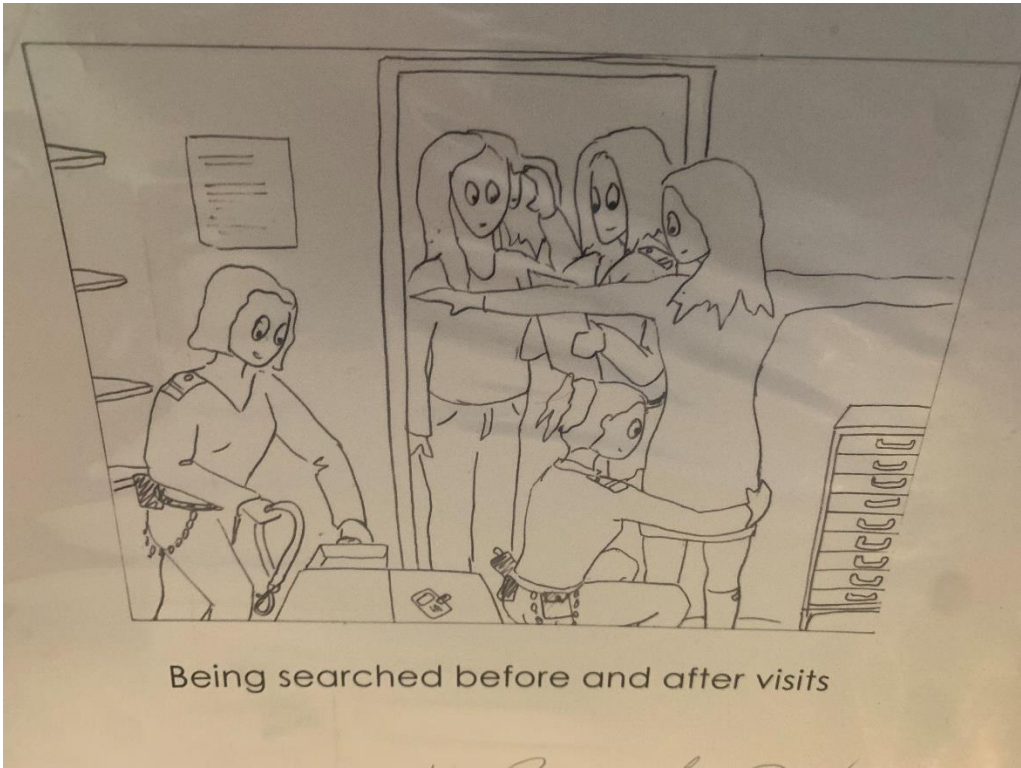
We were shown the holes on the front of the prison cell doors. These were used for if there was a fire in the cell, they would attach a fire house to it and pump in water to put the fire out. All without taking the person out of the cell first.



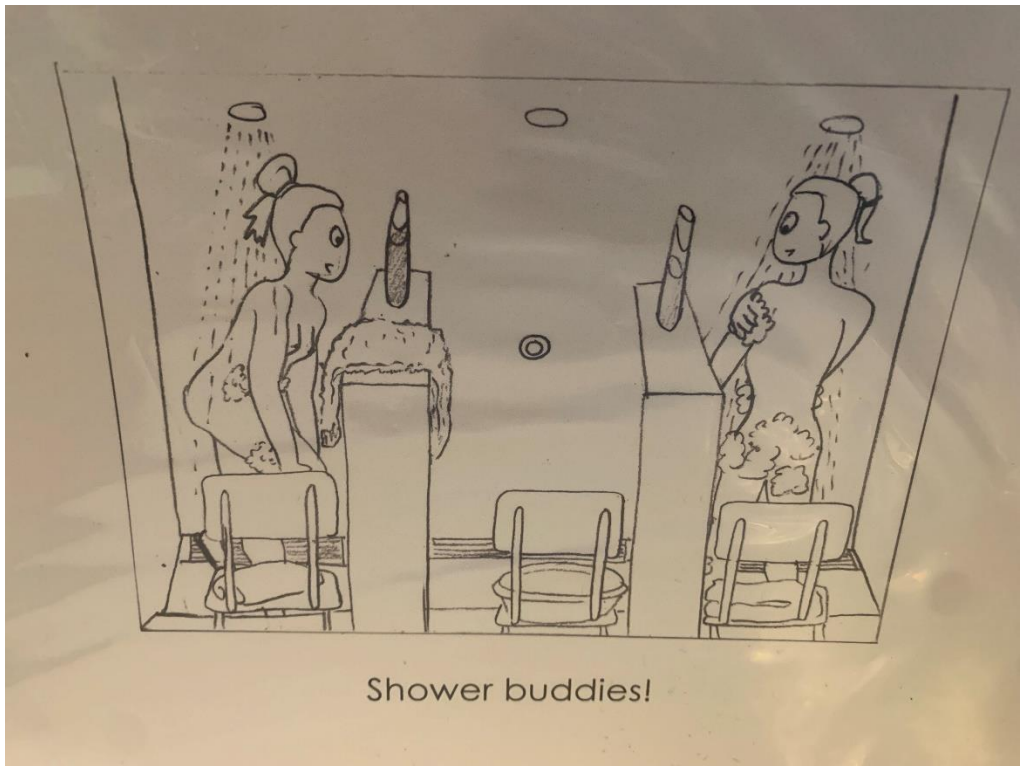
After the prison tour we went to a church for snacks and presentations. I stated after the tour how much I would have liked to hear from one of the inmates that went there. At the church we had the privilege of hearing two past inmates speak about their experiences and how important the prison was to them and how it changed their life around.







A former inmate is an artist who now turns here experiences into artwork.



Sunday June 12

Picnic in the Park

Sunday was a Picnic in Caledonian Park that was advertised for locals to come by and meet us, ask questions and listen to some of our stories. The Mayor of Islington attended along with other members of Parliament to speak about the importance of women in construction and the opportunities that the Holloway Prison Project represent for the community. Colleges were present to offer information to anyone who was interested in Apprenticeships.

Walking around London with a large group of women with hardhats on our heads or attached to our backpacks was a sight that London was not used to. We got stopped while walking around with them on us and raised the question of who we were and what we were doing. There was a saying on the delegation "If you can see it, you can be it". We all said we were taking this saying home to live as we can all relate so strongly to it. Most of us didn't have that opportunity to see it before we did it and want to change that for others. Seeing truly is believing.





Picture of the 4 Canadians on the delegation.



Picture of me with a UK female plumber who now is a project manager who runs multimillion dollar jobs.



Monday June 13

Islington Council Day

On Monday we split into groups and went on tours throughout London. The first stop was the Islington Council Joinery Workshop where we got to meet two women trades workers that work there. One has completed her apprenticeship and the other was just starting. Their apprenticeship programs are very different in the UK. One thing that stood out the most to me is that they would go to school once a week and work the rest of the week. I really like this method as it allows continual learning and support as you work your way through your levels.







Later that evening we went to Town hall for supper and speeches. It was so great to see how welcomed we were everywhere we went in London. We got to meet such a variety of people on this trip and learn so much.

Hearing some of the speeches from the different delegates over this trip was empowering. Trades has changed the life for so many that came out. Some were in jail, stripping or in abusive relationships and becoming a tradeswoman helped them get out of those things and create a successful career and support themselves and their families.





Tuesday June 14

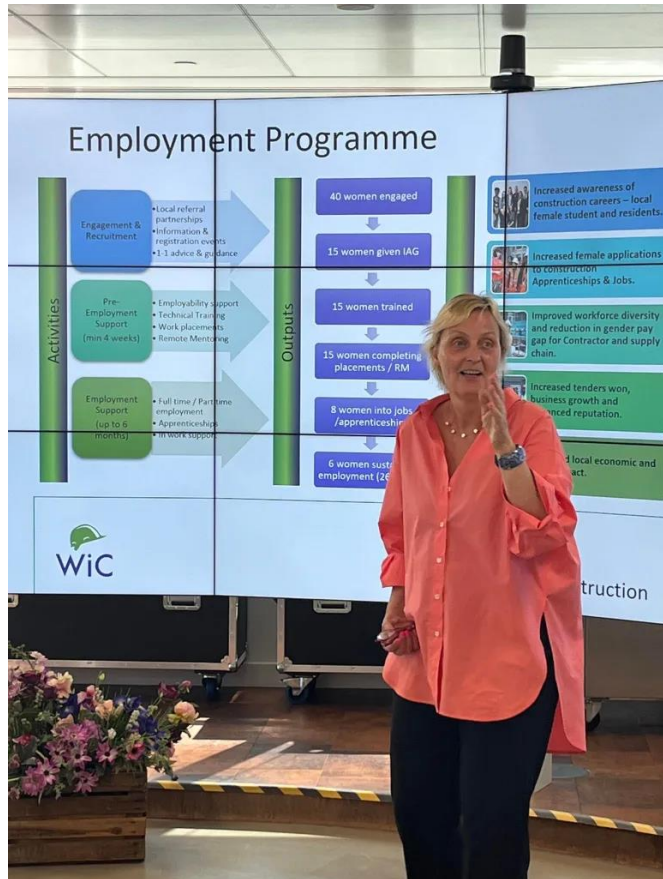
Thames Tideway and WIC Research Forum

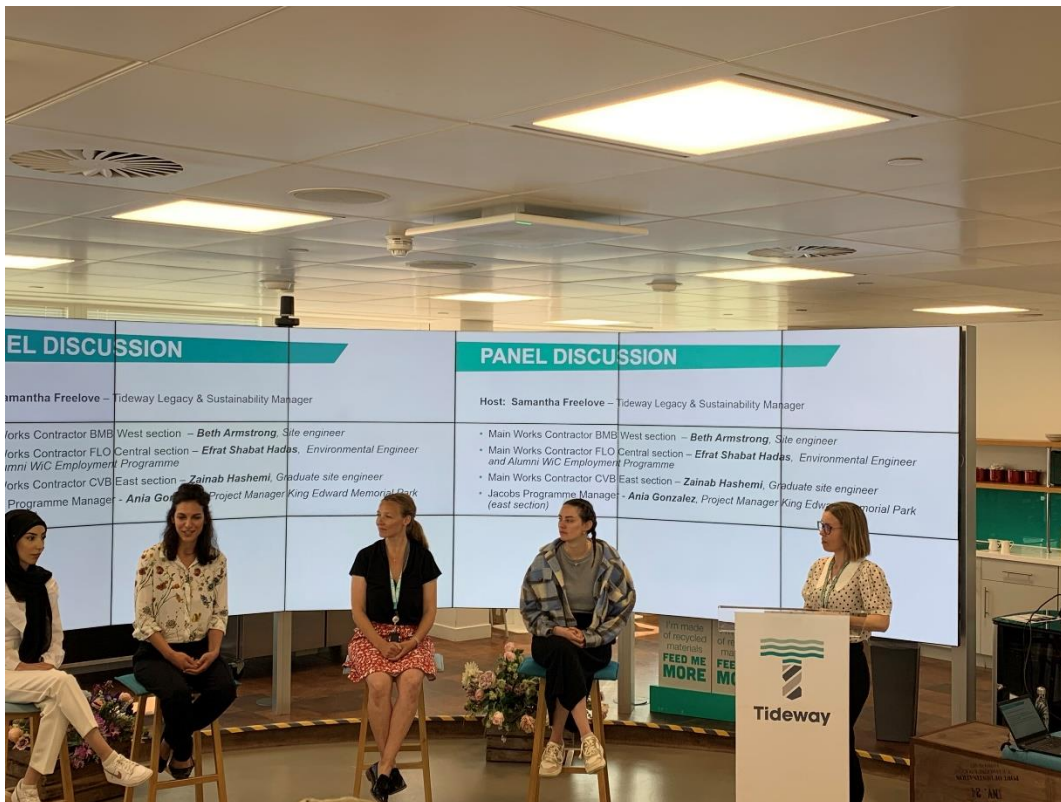
We were hosted at Tideway's office for some presentations and panel discussions on Tuesday. We heard from CEO Andy Mitchell on workplace culture change and gender diversity. It was great to hear him talk about their PPE that is made for everyone. They have specialized PPE for maternity and religious. Their Maternity in London allowed women to go back 1 -2 times a month to keep up with their project team. When they start back at work, they also have the option to work just 2-3 days on site and work from home. This however mainly applies to the office side of construction which was where women tended to be pushed more into than the trade side. London's local group of Women into Construction also joined us to talk about the work they do recruiting women into the construction industry. It was interesting to find out later that for a contractor to use WIC to find women for their projects a large fee would have to be paid to WIC to do this.





Above – Talking to some London Chippies (Chippy is a term for Carpenter)





We spent the next part of the day at a research forum hosted by the University of Westminster.



Wednesday June 15

Site Tours

On June 15 we split into different groups and got to visit different sites throughout the city. This was something everyone was very excited for as we had at this point seen so much construction everywhere and wanted to be able to view it up close.

My group went to Canary Wharf which is a company name but also the name of the area their buildings and developments are in. Their main building that we started in is the third tallest building in the UK with 64 floors. They currently have 7 major projects on going with their largest being a 7.2 billion dollar complex. When we walked into the main building, we had to take off our PPE and do a thermal scan. The City of London is the 1st for financial trade in Europe with Canary Wharf being the second biggest.



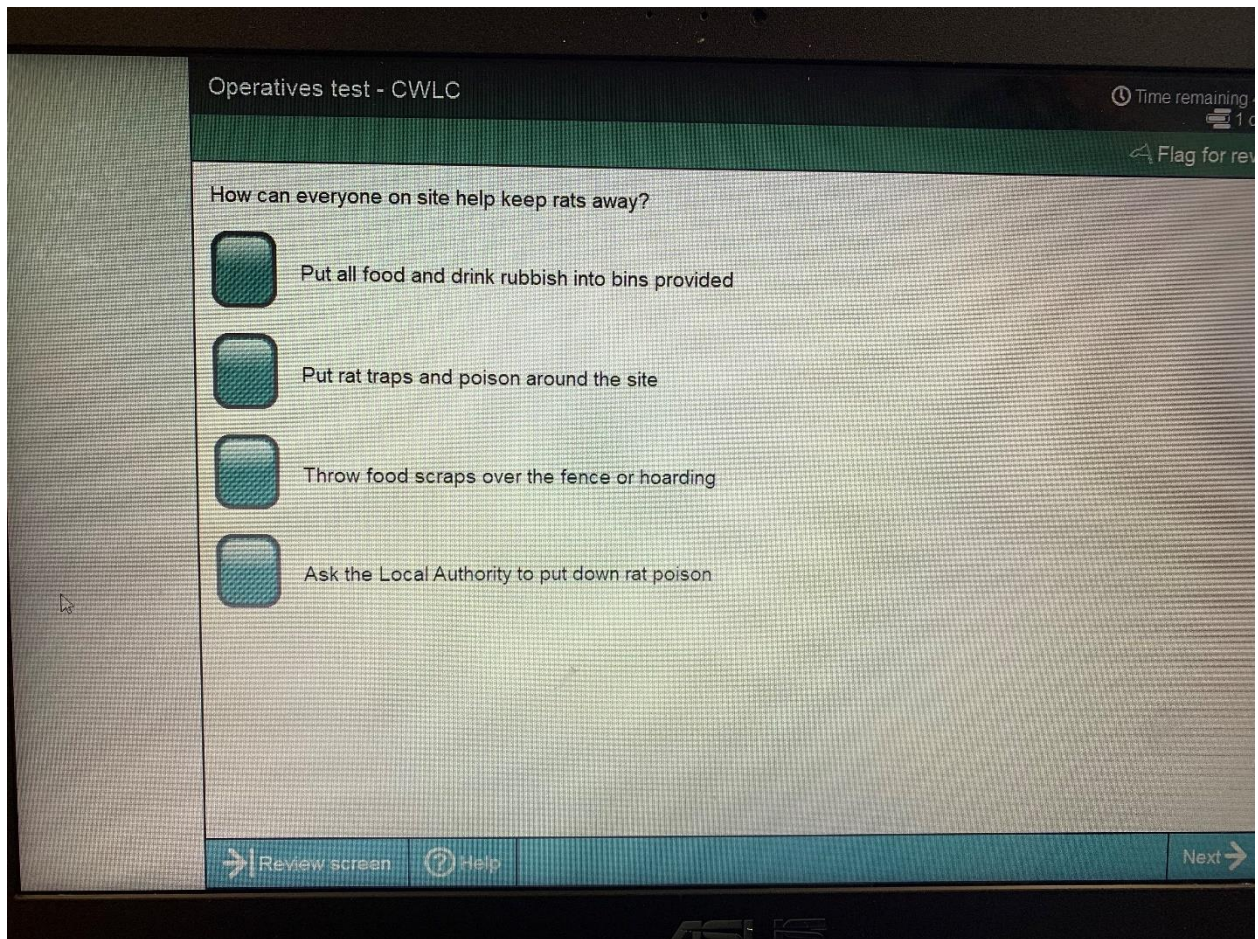
Me and Cindy Frank – Retired American Carpenter who also worked her way up in her career to Site Superintendent. It was so great to be able to collaborate with her and get advice.



Viewing of to scale model replications of the buildings in the area.



The View from their building was breathtaking. London is in the process of trying to become a 15 minute city – that you can find any amenities withing 15 minutes of where you live.

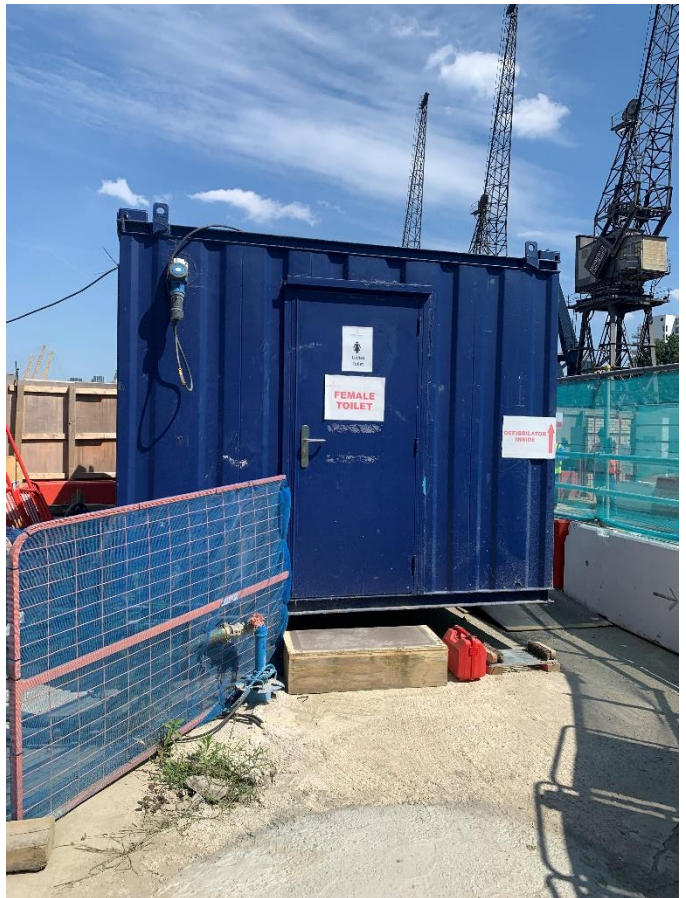


We continued to a site office where we got to meet a female safety rep who walked us through their policies and processes. I found the Health and Safety in the UK to be much stronger than in North America. Their online orientations are done from home to save time on the jobsite before you arrive. They call their orientation an induction and it takes around 30 -60 minutes to complete the online 50 questions. When you come to site you get your site specific information you are then given a sticker for your hardhat that shows you have completed your induction. This sticker has a QR code on it for you to scan at any time to report any near misses or issues you find on the jobsite to report. This allows the team to take immediate action in issues compared to when they had a suggestion drop box that would be looked at sometimes only at the end of the day. They are not allowed other stickers on their hard hat and the one for the induction has special adhesive that does not degrade the shell of the hardhat. They were shocked at how our hard hats had stickers all over them. They take fall protection above and beyond and even have tethers that are used for their cell phones.

Women entered the workforce in large numbers during the Second World War, like these painters helping to build new homes for armament workers at an unidentified Ministry of Supply site.



We did not see any females on site walking around but there were multiple female toilets located throughout the site clearly marked and labeled. – Roughly 500 workers on site.



Our tour guide





Since he was one of the health and safety reps on the job he stopped this operator to make sure his seat belt was done up. The machine has a light on the top that indicated if the belt is clipped in, but he said at times people will clip it in behind them. There was a clear language barrier in the exchange which as we found out later in the trip is a large issue in the UK construction. They said there should be 1 interpreter or every 3 workers with a language barrier. This would usually be their supervisor.

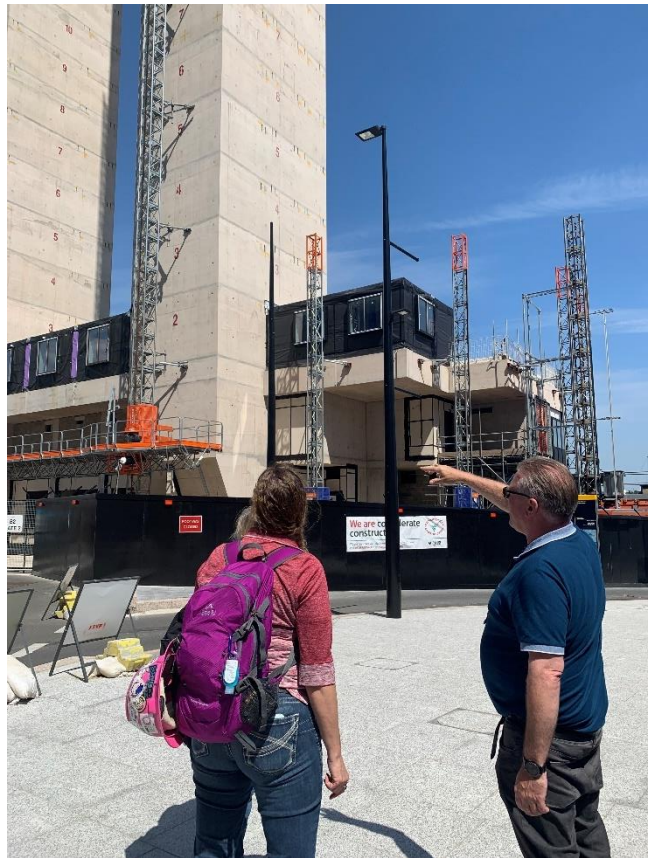


We had the chance to speak to a group of Women that work on Canary Warf projects. There were only two trades workers in the group, but it was still great to see such a turnout. They ended the meeting stating that they were going to start a Women's committee to help support each other.





These gloves are designed for office staff while on site to be able to use their phones. You cannot cut a glove up but if it's made from the manufacturer this way it is deemed acceptable.







Canary Wharf uses their pallets from their jobsites and creates flower boxes in front of the site.



Canary Wharf's site office is located on the water. The Highest paid trade in London is a tugboat driver!



Later the same day we got a private tour of the arsenal soccer stadium.





Thursday June 16

**West London College/ Research center for Neuroscience and Dementia/
Parliament**

On Thursday we started the day off going to West London College and learning about their apprenticeship program. Talking to some of their students it was interesting to learn that when you're under 21 years of age the wage is not standardized and can be very low.





Their Hero Wall was great to see a such a great practice to learn from.



After that we went for a site tour of the University College of London's Research Centre for Neuroscience and Dementia. They had presentations they held for us and then took us to the rooftop to view the site and talk about it. I really enjoyed talking to the Site Superintendent of the job and learning about his story and how he wants to make a change in construction based on his own struggles getting in and how he was badly treated.



The had two females in the presentation speak for us. They were both pushed into the office side of things and when asked why that was it was stated it was easier for women for Maternity leave. Rather than loose females on site on the tools to having children they would try to push them more into the office side as there was more flexibility in these roles.



That evening we all got dressed up and went to Parliament. We had all been looking forward to this evening although we did not know exactly what was in store for us and were confused that we were being split into two separate groups for the evening.



Me and the other Canadian UBC Carpenter Barbara James.



Above: All the carpenters from the delegation

Below: The 4 Canadian sisters from the delegation





There was a Nigerian delegation going on at the same time. I tried to snap a picture of this guy's outfit while going through security and they made sure I deleted the photo. And deleted the deleted photo. After getting through I asked if he would take a picture with me which he did gladly.

Getting a picture with the guards before going through security.



After getting inside we split into two separate groups. Roughly 30 in one that would go speak to Parliament and 10 in another that would take a quick tour and leave. I found out later that CIOB told TBB they were only allowed so many spots and that they would fill the rest. Those of us in the tour group were clearly upset to have had dressed up and traveled the distance across London for a short tour and one of the ladies told someone in the larger group their feelings in passing. The larger group decided to unite and refuse to go to the reception unless every delegation member was allowed to join. Parliament ended up allowing the two groups to combine and join the speeches. The entire process was saddening to me at how much politics will always be a part of everything and can so easily tear groups apart. It was great to see the solidarity in this group standing up and uniting as one however that should never have to had happened in the first place. To have to pick and chose who is going to speeches was unfair for the leaders and I can't imagine how stressful it must have been for them.





Susan Moir spoke at Parliament and told them exactly what her thoughts were on how the UK was doing on Women in Construction. The video can be found in the video file.

Me and the President of CIOB





Friday & Saturday June 17 & 18

Networking Days

We met at the Unite Union Hall for speeches and to meet with some of the local Trades Women from around the UK. This was a highlight for me and something I had been looking into.







On Saturday after a morning of discussion the rest of the group went off to a union Rally. With this not being something of great interest (350 000 people marching in close quarters) to me I went with one of the other delegates and two of the London ladies to a pub to learn more about their work there. There was a vote on what to do and while I was the only one to speak publicly that we should spend time with the Local trades' ladies instead of a rally they decided to go to a private vote. 6 votes were not to go to the rally and the rest were to go. I found spending time with these two ladies on the two days after the networking I learnt more about the London construction than the entire time there. We keep a group chat going with the four of us and continue to encourage and support each other.

Sunday June 19th

Wrap up

After 10 full days of events with early mornings and late evenings I slept in finally and went in the afternoon to the wrap up session with the delegation. We handed out cards and stickers to each other and discussed our time in London. There were very few issues on this trip with it being such a large group and so many moving pieces.

This Trip changed my life, coming home and finding out there was a house fire in my home a few days before I got back. Had I been sleeping in my bedroom the firefighters told me I would likely be dead. Everything in life happens for a reason and while I was saddened coming home how much it ended up costing me to go to London even with some sponsorship there is no price tag that can be put on being alive. This trip changed so many of our lives, out of the 40 delegates I know roughly 8 at least that got the same tattoo to remember the trip. (I can't say I did as I have yet to even get my first tattoo 😊)

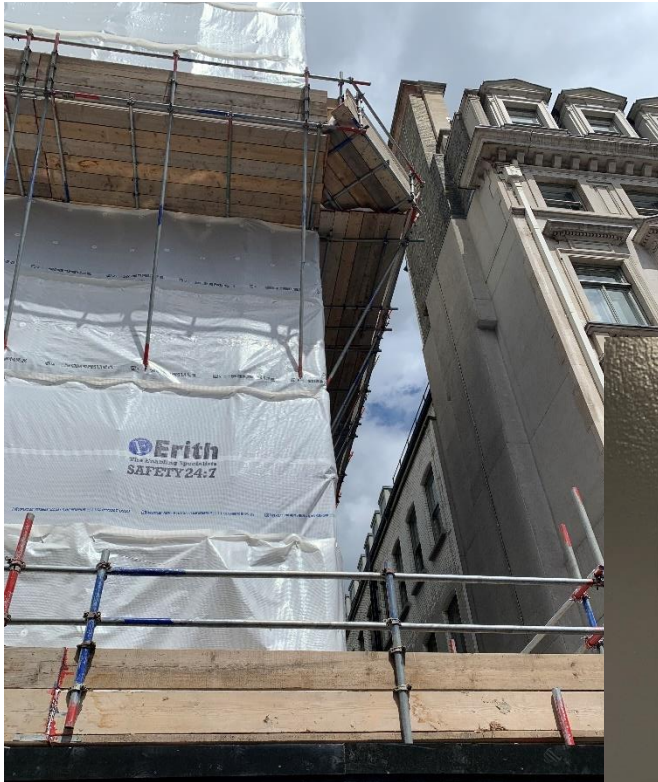


Monday June 20


Last Day

On my last day in London, I had the day to myself. I walked around checking out the town and went to some vintage stores. Three things that really stood out to me about the Construction there was pool noodles for everything safety, how nice all their construction hoardings looked from local artists painting them and how well their safety was done. Most tall buildings were fully wrapped to prevent anything falling onto the public.





Feeling stressed, anxious, under pressure, or a bit down?



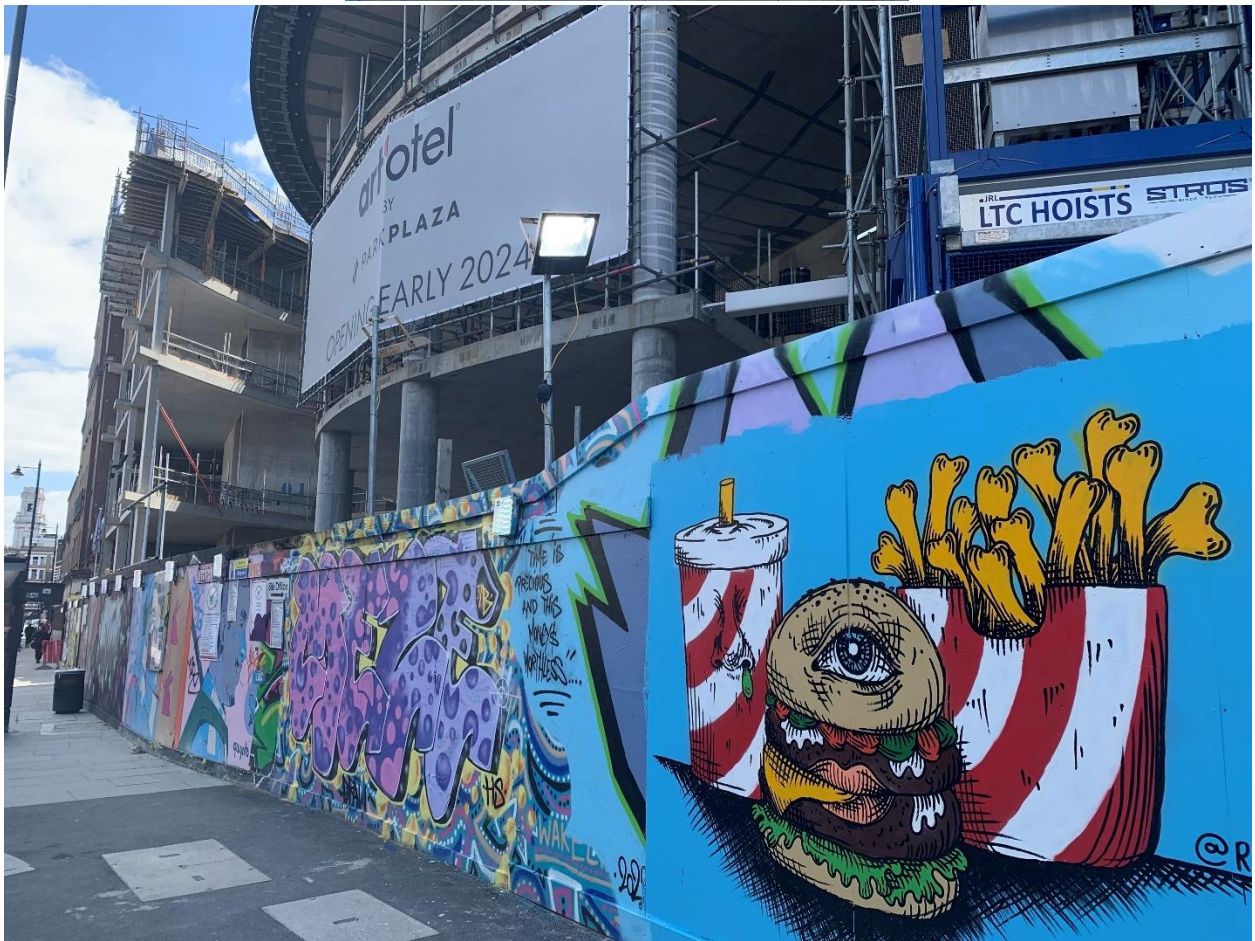
You can talk to someone confidentially on either of the below phone lines:

EAP (Employees Assistance Programme) – free to you and your family members. Lines open 24/7
Freephone: 0800 243 4588

Able Futures – free for anyone in work
0800 321 3137 (8am to 10.30pm, Monday to Friday)

This service also offers up to 9 sessions of counselling for free

Both of these phone lines are confidential



My favorite building to see in London was on a tour and it is designed and now used by an architecture firm. It uses limestone columns from piling that holds up the entire structure of the building. That along with the glass walkways and plant hanging wall made it stunning. I was saddened to know that showing pictures of it later to a female bricklayer she told me how horrible it was to have the vines going up it for the stone. I knew of this for stucco and on houses, but I didn't realize even these large limestone columns could be affected by this.



