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BCS GROUP CARING FOR FEMALE WORKFORCE IN CONSTRUCTION



In what is believed to be a UK first, a new range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) tailored to support religious diversity within the construction workforce has been launched by BCS Group.

It forms part of a broader collection of new workwear designed specifically for women who, according to a recent parliamentary report, now make up around 14 percent of the sector's workforce. The new range also includes a line of maternity clothing, developed by Leo Workwear and supported fully by Walsall-based BCS Group.

The clothing has been launched following extensive input and testing at BCS Group and field trials across parent company Barhale's team.

The new, high-quality safety wear includes culturally-appropriate tunics made to allow women of all religions to feel comfortable at work and maternity wear designed to reflect the physiological changes women undergo during pregnancy. Through ongoing health and safety risk assessments and by ensuring the provision of the correct PPE, construction companies can ensure that women are not being discriminated against and can continue their duties throughout pregnancy.

Across the ladieswear range, the clothes offer a different cut from standard PPE. While ensuring the most comfortable fit, they also feature revised detailing – including alternative pocket and reflective material placement – to reflect body form and to maximise utility and safety. Other notable differences include a narrow cut to trousers and smaller length and width fittings for safety footwear.

Kirstie Fish, Head of Signs & Supplies at BCS Group, explained that the decision to launch the new range follows the growth of women within the construction workforce.

“According to a recent Women into Construction report, there are now almost 300,000¹ women working in construction”, she said. “As this number rises, construction companies have a duty of care to provide for women in their employ, and this includes providing the correct safety equipment such as PPE.



“A 2016 survey by the TUC showed that 57% of respondent women found that their PPE sometimes hampered their work. As the report pointed out, this is hardly surprising given that most PPE is based on the sizes and characteristics of male populations from the US and Europe.

“We have always seen ourselves at the forefront of encouraging diversity. The new range of maternity and culturally-appropriate PPE shows how seriously BCS Group takes its commitment and is part of a wider programme within the group to reduce the gender gap in construction. As a sector we want to attract more women and this can only help.”

BCS Group’s new clothing has been fully risk-assessed and caters to the modified work roles of those who are pregnant and those who have cultural requirements in their apparel.

To find out more about the work BCS Group is doing, visit www.bcsgroup.co.uk

¹ CHANGING THE FACE OF CONSTRUCTION: SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT ANALYSIS FOR WOMEN INTO CONSTRUCTION OCTOBER 2018