

CONTRACTOR CASE STUDY

Female Vehicle Technician Takes the Freelance Route to Support Studying: Kerry's Story

Historically, the UK had the lowest percentage of women engineers working in Europe, but it is not that the industry didn't welcome females into these roles; girls were just not inspired into STEM subjects early on in their education. Also, many females were put off from choosing a career in the automotive industry, in part due to a lack of confidence in a predominantly male environment. Today however, these figures are changing.

Female mechanics now account for 10% of the workforce, with the number working in the UK rising by 125% since 2011. The gathering pace of female equality in recent years may have helped the rising intake of females into the motor trade, along with female mechanic awareness campaigns, but the growth of work life flexibility could also be a key factor in this increase.

With the expectation that by 2020 almost half of the entire population will be self employed, freelancing is widely growing across all industries. In particular, 'temp-teching' is rapidly gaining popularity within the automotive industry, particularly as garages up and down the country are quickly realising that they could face a large financial hit if they have an un-manned MOT station, and are willing to take on temporary, highly skilled workers without committing to costly overheads.

Blazing the 'temp tech' trail for female mechanics is Kerry. Working as a temporary MOT tester/technician with Autotech Recruit, she has enjoyed an eclectic career and is now studying at university to become an architect. Temp-teching at Autotech Recruit has enabled her to support herself, and she is never short of work. *"I know once the semester ends that I can call my consultant at Autotech Recruit and be in work within a couple of days. I love the flexibility that temp-teching brings. If I need just two days, they'll find it."*

Burton-on-Trent based Kerry began her career in a pub, but a lifelong love of tinkering with cars led her down the vehicle technician route and she became a manager with Kwik Fit. *"I was always working on other people's cars so decided to make a career out of it."* However, when an opportunity to study to become an architect, her dream career, Kerry took the plunge. *"While studying, I get the best of both worlds. I am working towards my ambitions but continuing working within an industry I also love. I manage my own time and have been fortunate to take on roles for longer periods of time. Over the summer, for instance, I was placed within Honda in Derby for three months - the entire length of time I was away from uni!"*

"I could take the odd day here and there if I need to. There is certainly a lot of work out there, but I like the consistency of going to the same place. Also, it can be slightly daunting to walk into a male dominated environment, but I wouldn't say I am treated differently, and I am always made to feel welcome."

