

# LONDON'S FIRST DEDICATED GREEN PLANT TRAINING ACADEMY OPENS TO HELP ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGE



03/06/25

- The Green Plant Academy is the first in London, using the latest technology to reduce plant emissions and help address the climate emergency
- Construction vehicles such as excavators and rollers – zero emission at the tailpipe – will be used to train the next generation of construction workers
- The pioneering new facility was developed by Places for London, the Skills Centre, the Earls Court Development Company and industry partners

London's only dedicated training facility for construction vehicles has opened in Earls Court, providing a gateway to high-quality and well-paid careers for Londoners while helping employers to meet growing demand for workers with green skills.

Opening its doors for the first time during London Climate Action Week, the new Green Plant Academy marks an ambitious industry partnership between Places for London (Transport for London's wholly owned property company), The Skills Centre and the Earls Court Development Company (ECDC) in collaboration with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Sunbelt Rentals, JCB, L Lynch, the National Open College Network (NOCN) and FM Conway.

The UK construction industry is facing a significant skills shortage, which the new Academy's focus on sustainable practices will help to address. According to CITB, an additional 251,500 construction workers will be needed by 2028 to meet expected levels of work. With plans for thousands of new homes across London, 50 per cent of which will be affordable, Places for London has identified a specific need for 6,200 plant operatives across the capital by 2027.

The Academy has been designed to specialise in training on zero-emission equipment, providing career development while also helping the construction industry further transition to cleaner ways of working and ultimately address the climate emergency. It will support emerging green technologies and low-carbon machinery, as well as highlighting best practice across the industry, to help learners and employers prepare for a more sustainable construction sector.

The Academy will provide a whole host of new skills, qualifications and job

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“This is a major step forward in equipping west Londoners with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the green construction economy, a key part of our delivery strategy.”

**Rebekah Paczek,**

Director of Public Affairs, Social  
Impact & Community Relations

ECDC

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opportunities for Londoners – particularly among communities in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and the City of Westminster.

Learners will receive fully-funded, industry-recognised training supported by CITB and delivered in partnership with NOCN. This will also help drive progress on the recently published London Growth Plan, which aims to revamp the adult education system with an Inclusive Talent Strategy that will help employers fill skills gaps and unlock new career paths for Londoners.

The Academy, within the Skills Centre, is housed on the site of the masterplan for Earls Court which will see the construction of thousands of homes, retail, cultural spaces and more – connecting three Tube stations and bringing new life to this part of west London.

**Laura Miller, Construction Skills Manager at Places for London, said:** “We’re delighted to extend our construction skills delivery at Earls Court to establish London’s first construction plant training academy. This industry-leading site will help us train the next generation of operatives who will help build the homes, offices and more that London needs to keep growing. By working with our partners, and focusing on sustainable ways of working, we are building new opportunities for local people and helping transform lives and the industry.”

**Jon Howlin, CEO at The Skills Centre, said:** “At The Skills Centre we’re proud to be launching London’s first dedicated green plant training academy, as part of our construction skills centre right here at Earls Court. This builds on our proven track record of delivering life-changing training and employment opportunities for local people. By working closely with developers, employers and industry leaders, we’re helping to shape a greener, more inclusive future for construction right across the capital.”

**Rebekah Paczek, Director of Public Affairs, Social Impact & Community Relations at ECDC, said:** “To bring forward our ambitious masterplan which will deliver 4,000 homes and 12,000 jobs, we will need thousands of skilled construction workers over the lifetime of the project. With a focus on sustainable

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**Laura Miller**

Construction Skills Manager

Places for London

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construction, we celebrate the launch of the Green Plant Academy at Earls Court, in partnership with Places for London and The Skills Centre. This is a major step forward in equipping west Londoners with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the green construction economy, a key part of our delivery strategy."

**Howard Dawber, Deputy Mayor of London for Business and Growth, said:** "I'm delighted to see this pioneering new academy not only providing skills and career opportunities for Londoners but also supporting the green transition of an industry that would otherwise have a major carbon footprint. During London Climate Action Week we've been celebrating our progress but also discussing the scale of the challenge we face, and this new facility will be a real asset as we continue working to create a greener and more prosperous London for everyone."

To find out about courses running at The Green Plant Academy at the Earls Court Skills Centre, go to: <https://theskillscentre.co.uk/locations/earls-court>



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**Laura Miller**

CEO

The Skills Centre



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**Dan Bates, Executive Director, Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, said:**

“Esmé Church led a remarkable life as a brilliant actor and director, a champion of regional theatre and theatre for young audiences, and a pioneer in theatre education.

Her time in Bradford and the establishment of the Northern Theatre School alongside Bradford Civic Playhouse created new opportunities for northern actors, voices and stories. Marking this during Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture is a fitting moment to celebrate her part in Bradford’s artistic story and her legacy in the theatre world.”

**Megan Wilson, Company Director, Purple Stage Theatres (operators of the Bradford Playhouse) said:** “Esmé Church was a powerhouse in early 20th-century theatre, and her influence still echoes across stage and screen today. It’s brilliant to see her passion recognised – I hope it inspires a push for more women in leadership across the arts.”

**Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw, Bradford Council’s Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Planning and Transport, said:** “This plaque will ensure Esmé Church is celebrated not only in our district but also further afield and her amazing legacy couldn’t be more relevant during our year as UK City of Culture.

“I’m also delighted Bradford is receiving it’s second national blue plaque, after Daphne Steele in Ilkley, who was the first Black matron in the NHS and the first national blue plaque to be unveiled in the country.

“It means Bradford will be the first place in the country outside of London to get two national blue plaques and is especially fitting as it builds on our ‘Pioneering Bradford Lasses’ campaign, which has seen numerous streets across the district named after our pioneering women who did so much to shape Bradford and the whole country.”

**Si Cunningham, Chair of Bradford Civic Society, said:** “It’s thrilling to see yet more national recognition for Bradford’s pioneering, creative heritage. Esmé Church is an incredibly deserving recipient of a national blue plaque -- which perfectly complements the city’s own growing blue plaque scheme. I hope this beautiful plaque, and Esmé’s fascinating story, inspires a new generation of creative Bradfordians to do great things for their city.”

#### **Funding Acknowledgement**

We give special thanks to Ancestry, Delancey and The Earls Court Development Company for their generous support of Historic England’s National Blue Plaque

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