



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging



Introduction

Our company, established in 2006 by renewable energy specialists Lucy Aitchison, Jonathan Bates, Michael Holmes, and Rolf Oldach, has evolved over the years. With Rolf leaving in 2018 and Lucy's sudden death in 2023, the company is led by Jonathan Bates as the Managing Director and Founder, along with Michael Holmes as the Installations Director and Founder, supported by Claire Brennan, Finance Director and Jenny Palfreyman, Engineering Director.

Photon Energy is one of the UK's leading independent installers of solar PV and battery storage systems, known for our technical expertise and engineering excellence. We specialise in the design, supply, installation, and maintenance of solar PV and battery storage systems. Our installations cover new-build residential properties, commercial and industrial buildings, public sector facilities, schools and universities, as well as agricultural buildings.

To date, we have installed over 100MW of roof-mounted PV systems across the country. Our extensive experience includes installing solar PV systems at sites where uninterrupted operation is critical.

With our headquarters in Reading and offices in Poole, Dartford, and Huddersfield, we have a strong presence throughout the UK.

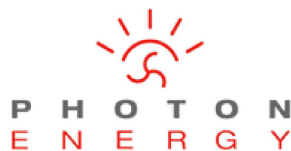


Claire Brennan

Lucy Aitchison, Jonathan Bates, Michael Holmes and Rolf Oldach



Jenny Palfreyman



Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

At Photon Energy, our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is evident, even within our small team of 60 employees (as of February 2025). Over half of our highest-paid team members, including board members and senior engineers, are women. Notably, one of Photon Energy's first-ever graduate employees, Jenny, has advanced to the position of Engineering Director. Our Housing Manager and Head of Commercial Sales are also women.

We believe in providing equal opportunities for everyone and fostering an inclusive work environment. Photon Energy offers the remarkable opportunity to work remotely from various locations around the globe. Recognising the importance of being close to family and loved ones, we value the freedom and flexibility that remote work provides. By embracing this approach, we empower our employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance whilst also delivering exceptional results.

Understanding the challenges of balancing work and family life, we strive to accommodate employees with children. As a family-friendly company, we offer flexible working hours not only to parents but to all our team members. Our goal is to create an environment that caters to everyone's needs, fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where all beliefs and preferences are respected and celebrated.

We celebrate the richness that comes from embracing diverse cultures and backgrounds, including those from China, Czechia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, and the UK. Belonging is at the heart of our efforts. We strive to create a workplace where every employee feels valued, respected, and an integral part of the team. We believe that when employees feel a sense of belonging, they are more engaged, motivated, and productive. Our initiatives are designed to ensure that everyone at Photon Energy feels connected and supported, regardless of their background.

Our team includes two mental health first aiders to support staff with mental health issues. We have recently implemented procedures to address fatigue, underscoring our commitment to staff well-being. Additionally, we are proud to offer paid internships for engineering students during their summer break from university.

Each of our employees plays a crucial role in our company, bringing unique value regardless of their gender. We do not consider gender or ethnicity in our interview process. Our commitment is to hire the most exceptional individuals, irrespective of their background. We focus on valuing every employee based on their qualifications and skills, rather than their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion.

Jonathan Bates, MD of Photon Energy said:

"What still amazes me is that there are still so few women in the industry and I still struggle to understand why other companies seem to neglect 50% of the population when they are recruiting!"

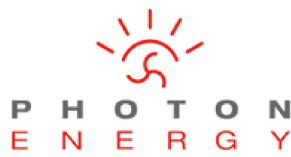
Lucy's Legacy

Lucy, who suddenly passed away in 2023, was a true pioneer in the UK solar industry. An electrical engineer and a Member of the Institute of Engineering Technology, she co-founded and directed Photon Energy while being a dedicated environmentalist. Throughout her career, especially during her 17 years at Photon Energy, Lucy tirelessly worked to improve the quality of services offered by the company. Her actions were always guided by a strong sense of decency and fairness.

Although she was not the public face of Photon Energy, Lucy ensured that the company reflected her values and dedication. As a key member of the Board, she championed gender equality, achieving a remarkable milestone where three out of five Board Members were women, and half of the engineering team were women—an impressive feat in a male-dominated industry. Lucy led by example, earning respect through her conduct in the tough construction sector.

Over the years, many female engineers joined Photon Energy, and Lucy supported them with training and opportunities for career growth, promotion, and progression within the business. She was committed to fairness and equality, encouraging all staff at Photon to realise their full potential. Lucy's influence on our company and the overall industry remains a powerful inspiration to us all, even in her absence.





Redefining Engineering: Breaking Stereotypes, Shaping Futures

While there have been some advances, women remain significantly underrepresented in the fields of engineering and technology. Currently, they constitute only 16.5% of the engineering workforce, a stark contrast to their 47.7% representation in the overall workforce (source: EngineeringUK). This disparity highlights the ongoing challenges and barriers women face in entering and thriving in these traditionally male-dominated sectors. Efforts to bridge this gap are important, not only for achieving gender equality but also for fostering diverse perspectives and innovation within the industry. Encouraging more women to pursue careers in engineering and technology through targeted initiatives, mentorship programs, and supportive workplace policies can help create a more inclusive and dynamic workforce.

At Photon, we are proud to be a great example of this commitment. And while we strongly support women in engineering and technology, we equally value every member of our team, regardless of gender. Our incredible men and women work together, contributing to our collective success.

We invite you to meet some of our team members and experience the diverse and inclusive environment we cultivate.



Left to right:

Eva Tejedor-Alonso - Housing Manager, Sara Abdel Ahad - Project Engineer, Jenny Palfreyman - Engineering Director, Claire Brennan - Finance Director

Eva Tejedor-Alonso, Housing Manager

Eva has been an integral part of our team since 2017 and has played a key role in overseeing some of our largest projects. She started as a project engineer after gaining three years of experience in the industry. Initially, she was part of the Quoting Team, then moved to the Commercial Team, and finally landed in the Housing Team as Team Manager. Her hard work, dedication, and expertise have not gone unnoticed. With a Master's degree in Renewable Energy and a specialisation in Solar PV, Eva is a true asset to our team. She is also a member of the IET and is working towards Chartered Engineer status.

"Since joining Photon Energy, I've experienced a respectful work environment where employee value is important. Their commitment to providing remote work flexibility, both at home and abroad, distinguishes them from other companies."

Sara Abdel Ahad, Project Engineer

Sara joined Photon Energy as a Graduate Engineer in 2021 and quickly progressed to become an Assistant Project Engineer after her first year. She is now one of our many talented Project Engineers, committed to delivering new build and retrofit commercial Solar PV installations. Sara was shortlisted for the Young Energy Professional Award at the Solar & Storage Live Awards in 2024. We believe she deserves to be recognised for her work and impressive progression over her time working for us. Although, she didn't win, she is a great example for existing and new engineers joining Photon Energy.

"One of the greatest benefits of working at Photon is the flexibility it gives its employees. Photon allows people with family abroad to work remotely for a few weeks during the year, so I have been able to work from Dubai and Jordan which increases my productivity and motivation. They are also flexible with working hours based on the time zones of different countries which is really helpful."

Jenny Palfreyman, Engineering Director

Jenny was one of Photon Energy's first graduate employees, she joined the company in 2008. And now, as the head of our engineering team, Jenny leads our engineering team made up of electrical/mechanical engineers and project managers to design and deliver our projects. Her extensive knowledge and proficiency in renewable energy systems enable her to guide her team effectively.

"When I joined Photon I had come straight from my degree in mechanical engineering where I was one of four women out of a class of over 100 students. When I had completed my masters degree and joined Photon it was not lost of me that in the team of 5 that I found myself in, I was one of two women, the other being Lucy. I quickly came to take working in this environment for granted. Lucy modelled raising a young family, running a business, designing and delivering projects to me; she showed me that women have as much place in the engineering world as men. Over the years as the company grew we have had a mixed team of men and women and in all honesty the idea of inequality has never crossed my mind. My career has progressed and I have received promotions and have now taken the batten from Lucy and am running the engineering team. I hope that the environment she created, in supporting, mentoring and encouraging all of our engineers is something that I can continue to foster in our team."

Claire Brennan, Finance Director

Claire joined Photon Energy in 2014 after gaining experience in various industries, where she contributed to the growth of finance teams and systems during periods of business expansion. She has continued this work at Photon Energy and, in recent years, has become the Finance Director, overseeing all financial activities. Claire is also part of Photon Energy's Board.

"At Photon Energy, we have a really diverse team, which makes our work environment dynamic and flexible. Everyone gets to contribute to our success in their own unique way. We support professional growth through on-the-job training and study leave for external courses. Plus, we encourage hybrid working whenever we can. In my experience, when you invest in your employees, they become more loyal and committed to the company's growth and success."