

Offshore Wind Industry Sector Deal- Tidal Transit shows the way

When the government launched its UK Offshore Wind Industry Sector Deal in April 2019, it stated that one of its objectives is to increase the percentage of females working in the industry from 16% to at least 33% by 2030.

“This would seem to be directed at encouraging women into engineering, which is an excellent objective. But it is important to realise that it is not just about inspiring them to train in this field,” said Leo Hambro, Commercial Director of Tidal Transit Limited.

“There are many other career options, including those in the marine industries, vital to the construction and operation of offshore wind farms. Tidal Transit has been working with offshore wind farm developers and operators transferring technicians to various sites since 2011 and is proud to employ one of the few female skippers in the industry.”

Amy Gibson, who is a skipper on *Eden Rose*, one of Tidal Transit’s offshore wind farm crew transfer vessels, has no regrets about her decision 7 years ago to leave a 9-5 routine to take on the challenge of a marine career in the offshore wind industry.



Amy's story

I was 28, working as a sales representative, and looking for a career opportunity that would let me work outdoors. Tidal Transit had just taken delivery of their second crew transfer vessel [CTV] and was recruiting for crew. It was a real leap of faith for both me and company; I had no experience or relevant qualifications and didn't even know if I

would suffer from sea sickness! However, after undergoing the required ENG1 Medical and completing the STCW Basic Safety Training, it was arranged for me to spend a day on Eden Rose which was working in the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm field. I was hooked, and very shortly afterwards began my career in the young offshore wind industry as a deck-hand on Eden Rose's sister ship, Ginny Louise.

I spent a year on the deck working with some very experienced crew members, who endured my endless questioning with great patience, while training me to do the job. During this time I became interested in navigation and theory, which I found I was good at. This encouraged me to start training for my RYA Yachtmaster qualification, involving practical and theory courses with examinations to be passed, which I gained in my second year at sea.

In order to be a Master of a CTV working in UK offshore wind farms, an MCA Master 200gt qualification is required. This involves taking a number of individual courses, for which I attended maritime training centres including Warsash Maritime Academy and Lowestoft College, prior to an oral examination by an MCA Master Mariner.

After gaining my MCA Master 200gt, I then undertook a six month training period being shadowed by another Master, by which time I was ready to take command of one of Tidal Transit's fleet of CTVs.

"Amy is a role model for any female considering a maritime career," commented Leo Hambro. "All of us at Tidal Transit are very proud of her achievements - and she can now skipper any vessel less than 200 gross tonnes anywhere around the world."

Amy is keen to encourage females to consider marine career opportunities, saying:

"If you are currently a student, then this is the ideal time to start working toward your goal. However, if like I was, you're doing a job that doesn't really inspire you, give it a go! It's an exciting and fast growing industry with so many opportunities; you can't possibly get bored!"

“Tidal Transit has always been very supportive and helped me every step of the way. I’ve had opportunities to learn, progress and travel that I would never have dreamed to be possible.”

Currently Amy is a Skipper of Tidal Transit’s *Eden Rose* CTV which is working on the Westernmost Rough Offshore Wind Farm off the Holderness coast in Yorkshire.

Amy’s working day

My working days usually begin in the same way – I print off the manifest and check the weather forecast while the crew carry out their engine checks. I then start the engines and carry out my own checks on the bridge and wait for the wind farm technicians to board.



The transit to the wind farm takes about an hour, and on arrival there I have to dock the CTV as gently as possible with the turbine; this can be quite challenging in rough seas and needs a light touch. The technicians then transfer to the turbines with any tools and

equipment they need for the day’s work.

While waiting at sea for the technicians to finish, my crew of two completes drills, training or routine maintenance before picking the technicians up and returning them safely to port. We have to complete end-of-day checks and prepare the vessel for sailing again the following day, because although we have a fantastic shore-based engineering team, the crew and I are responsible for the day-to-day running and maintenance of all equipment and engineering on board.

Working at sea with its frequent changes comes with its own challenges, and I find no two days are the same in this job. Not only do we carry out our daily tasks, we have on occasions been called on to make long distance deliveries,

work on offshore masts, carry out surveys, respond to distress calls, take part in drills with Coastguard helicopters, tow in stranded yachts, help search for lost divers and assist broken down vessels.

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