# UK Power Networks highlights six women driving innovation and diversity in energy engineering



In celebration of International Women in Engineering Day, UK Power Networks has spotlighted six remarkable women engineers who serve as trailblazers in the energy sector, advocating for the empowerment of women in STEM careers. The company, responsible for overseeing the electricity infrastructure across London, the South East, and East of England, highlighted professionals whose work ensures the continuous delivery of power to millions. These women—Samantha Burchell, Emma Christensen, Hilal Ozdemir, Georgia Edwards, Nene Yamasaki, and Claire Sheridan—are not only excelling in their respective roles but also actively encouraging and inspiring a new generation of female engineers.

Samantha Burchell, based in Crawley and Brighton, has risen through the ranks from back-office roles to managing field operations for the electricity network. Notably recognised among the UK’s Top 50 Women in Engineering, she led a critical response when a significant sinkhole appeared in Godstone, Surrey, causing major disruption. The sinkhole, resulting from a burst water main and compounded by the area's sandy geology and former quarry use, necessitated the evacuation of approximately 30 buildings and was declared a major emergency by local authorities. Burchell's leadership highlights the demanding and dynamic challenges faced in maintaining the network’s resilience. She emphasises the rewards of perseverance and dedication in engineering, urging women to embrace the opportunities the profession offers.

Emma Christensen, hailing from Suffolk, made history as the first female 132,000-volt control engineer at UK Power Networks and now holds the unique position as the UK’s only female emergency planning manager in the sector. Her role involves vigilant monitoring of weather conditions and potential risks that could impact the vast power grid. Balancing her high-stakes work and motherhood, she advocates for authenticity and flexibility, acknowledging the personal adjustments needed for success in demanding STEM careers.

Nene Yamasaki, who immigrated to the UK from Japan at 15, leads UK Power Networks’ AI and digital projects. A Cambridge-educated chemical engineer, she developed an innovative app that has identified over 200 damaged cables, saving the company more than £10 million and significantly reducing power outage durations. Her leadership of a predominantly female team reflects a progressive shift within the traditionally male-dominated utilities sector. A company director praises her unique perspective and fearless communication style, which have driven tangible improvements in network operations.

Georgia Edwards, originally from New Zealand, contributes to the UK’s green energy transition by expanding the market for energy flexibility. Her efforts have helped integrate flexibility solutions into Net Zero strategies for local councils and community groups, securing contracts amounting to 44MW—powering the equivalent of 142,000 homes for an hour. Her manager underscores the importance of creativity, collaboration, and determination in addressing the complexities of the energy transition, qualities Edwards exemplifies.

Hilal Ozdemir is actively involved in fostering diversity within engineering through her management of collaborations with universities and advocacy for women in STEM via initiatives like We Power. Her research and engagement with academic institutions help create more inclusive environments, encouraging future female engineers to enter and thrive in the field.

Claire Sheridan, an electrical engineer from Derry, oversees major infrastructure projects in London with a portfolio surpassing £600 million. Starting as the sole woman in her team a decade ago, she now works alongside an increasing number of female engineers. Sheridan stresses that women's success in engineering should be recognised for merit and the valuable perspectives they bring, not merely as a diversity exercise.

Dr Laura Norton, head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the Institution of Engineering and Technology, highlights the importance of creating inclusive cultures within engineering to unlock the full potential of all professionals. She stresses that diversity drives the creativity and innovation essential for technical progress and societal benefit.

UK Power Networks, managing over 189,000 km of combined overhead and underground networks, illustrates through these women’s achievements the evolving face of engineering—one committed not just to technical excellence but also to fostering inclusivity and sustainability in a sector at the heart of societal infrastructure.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go), [[4]](https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team), [[5]](https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team), [[6]](https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team), [[7]](https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go), [[2]](https://apnews.com/article/a94cf70b6e8110fe4a1204a738e60400), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/large-sinkhole-appears-english-village-forces-evacuations-2025-02-19/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://industrialnews.co.uk/women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=women-declare-engineering-is-the-way-to-go> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://apnews.com/article/a94cf70b6e8110fe4a1204a738e60400> - A significant sinkhole caused by a burst water main opened up on Godstone High Street in Surrey County, England, leading to the evacuation of approximately 30 buildings. The incident was declared a major emergency, with concerns about potential ruptures to gas pipes and water supply outages. Structural experts assessed the area for safety and potential further damage. The local geology, including sand and former sand quarry land use, was linked to the sinkhole's formation. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/a94cf70b6e8110fe4a1204a738e60400?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/large-sinkhole-appears-english-village-forces-evacuations-2025-02-19/> - A large sinkhole appeared in Godstone, a southern English village, swallowing up at least one garden and forcing authorities to evacuate residents from around 30 homes. The development of the sinkhole, which appeared on Monday and had grown to at least 20 metres on Tuesday, was declared a major incident by local agencies. The evacuated properties were built about three years ago, on the site of a former sand quarry ... ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/large-sinkhole-appears-english-village-forces-evacuations-2025-02-19/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team> - UK Power Networks is led by a team of experienced professionals dedicated to delivering reliable electricity services across London, the South East, and East of England. The executive team includes individuals with diverse backgrounds in engineering, operations, and customer service, all committed to maintaining and upgrading the electricity distribution network.
5. <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team> - UK Power Networks' executive team comprises professionals with extensive experience in the energy sector, focusing on delivering reliable electricity services across London, the South East, and East of England. The team is dedicated to maintaining and upgrading the electricity distribution network to meet the evolving needs of customers.
6. <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/information/our-people/our-executive-team> - UK Power Networks' executive team is committed to delivering reliable electricity services across London, the South East, and East of England. The team includes professionals with diverse backgrounds in engineering, operations, and customer service, all dedicated to maintaining and upgrading the electricity distribution network.
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