

Leveraging surveying skills within housing provider, Orbit Group

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Sava graduate, Senior Retrofit Building Surveyor and Retrofit Coordinator, Orbit Group



Tell us a bit about you...

My background is in property management and I'm currently employed by leading housing provider, Orbit Group, where I work as a Senior Retrofit Building Surveyor.

What made you realise it was time to develop your property surveying skills?

I was in asset management before moving into retrofit, so day-to-day I was looking at our portfolio, managing property maintenance projects and talking about structural defects.

I realised that to really excel in such technical roles, you need that knowledge of building pathology and how properties work. Being able to pick up risks and defects - your average person won't spot them unless they know what they're looking for.

Now, in my current role leading on our retrofit projects, that knowledge and skillset is invaluable.

Why did you choose to undertake the Sava diploma?

I didn't have a degree, so I couldn't go down what some might consider the traditional route with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

As a provider of degree-equivalent vocational qualifications, Sava gave me a route in that I otherwise wouldn't have had. I needed to gain a strong understanding of building pathology and Sava delivered with training focused specifically on residential property.

How did you find the learning experience with Sava?

I completed the course pre-Covid and had a great experience with my course mates and the tutors. The style and context of the course was perfect for me. I wanted to know buildings inside out and really get stuck into their make up, and that's what I got. On reflection, now that I'm working in retrofit, it would be great to see more information on retrofit brought into the programme.

What was the highlight of the course for you?

The practical, on-site learning was a real highlight and especially helpful for people like me who benefit from being more hands-on. Nothing beats going into a property and putting your knowledge into practise.

On a more general note, I found the whole technical aspect of the course very interesting. The tutors were great at delivering this information and making it engaging. Everything I've learned has made my job much easier and enabled me to inform and develop my team.

How well has the course prepared you for your current role?

It was a fantastic way to solidify and build on my existing knowledge. We deal with properties of different ages and construction types, so understanding how to treat different buildings has been incredibly helpful.

What is the proudest moment of your career so far?

Completing the course and building my knowledge has vastly improved my confidence. There is still such a stigma about women in construction and

technical roles, so being able to challenge my peers constructively, based on facts, is very satisfying.

What advice would you give to others like you who are looking to develop their property surveying skills?

If you're going into a technical role, you need to have the knowledge. It's not something that can be learned with a week of training; understanding how condition reports and condition ratings come together is an in-depth process.

I've now built some of my learnings into our stock condition surveys because we need to know how our stock is performing.



Everything I've learned has made my job much easier and enabled me to inform and develop my team.



What impact has it had on your organisation to have a fully trained, in-house surveyor?

One - it's saved us the cost of going to an external agency or consultants. Two - I've shared my technical knowledge with my team, letting them shadow me to gain a better understanding of the bricks and mortar. Three - we're able to make informed fact-based decisions.

Would you recommend the Sava diploma to others?

I would and I have done for our Area Inspectors. It's a great pathway to RICS membership, which is the North Star!

Discover Sava's surveying diploma

