



**News Release**

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**Fit out company Morris and Spottiswood introduces ‘pregnancy-friendly’ scheme to attract more women into its fit out and maintenance business**

Juggling home-life and work can be tricky but, according to a survey, with one in ten women saying they’ve been afraid to tell their boss they are pregnant, it’s no wonder mums-to-be often find pregnancy and work don’t mix.

But women who work for Warrington-based fit out specialist, Morris and Spottiswood, are safe in the knowledge that their employer will not cast a stern look when they hear the news. The company is part of the ground-breaking Tommy’s Pregnancy Accreditation Programme, which means Morris and Spottiswood is committed to ensuring pregnant employees are given every opportunity to have a happy, healthy and productive pregnancy at work. Since its launch in 1999, the programme, which is supported by the Equal Opportunities Commission, Department of Trade and Industry and Health and Safety Executive, has reached well in excess of 400,000 working women.

And Joanne Davison, Morris and Spottiswood IT project manager, knows just how important it is to have such a supportive employer. She is expecting her first baby in March and says the company has done everything possible to make her working day stress-free and comfortable.

“I feel great having been able to work for the majority of my pregnancy, but I’ve only been able to do this because the company has given me so much support,” she says. “As soon as I said I was pregnant I received the Tommy’s information pack, which was a great help because it told me what I was entitled to,” explains Joanne. “I was given a health and safety audit in my work area and as a result was given a special maternity chair, which I’ve been adjusting as I’ve grown bigger and bigger. Usually my job involves travelling between our offices in Warrington, Glasgow and Edinburgh, but as my pregnancy has progressed I’ve been able to stay in Warrington and have been using our video

conferencing facilities instead, which has taken a lot of pressure off me. I've also been able to change my hours slightly to avoid driving in the morning and evening rush hours."

Joanne adds: "When people think about the construction industry they usually think of men and to an extent our company is male dominated, but I think the Tommy's Programme will encourage more women to come and work for us. It's a great industry to be in and women are very welcome."

As a member of the Tommy's programme, Morris and Spottiswood is committed to supporting their staff through their pregnancy by providing all mums-to-be with:

- a non-smoking working environment
- a suitable resting place for breaks
- the opportunity for time off to attend antenatal appointments
- individually tailored risk assessments
- a copy of Tommy's guide to a working pregnancy for themselves and their managers, which covers all aspects of working pregnancy from rights and responsibilities, healthy eating and topics such as work-life balance and managing stress.

Morris and Spottiswood also offers flexible hours for working mums and three months full pay for maternity leave, as per their maternity leave policy.

"Construction is one of the UK's biggest industries but it is still male dominated, and we need to do more to attract talented people – men and women – into the business," says Chris Saxton, Morris and Spottiswood's chief executive officer (CEO). "I believe initiatives such as the Tommy's scheme are ways in which as an employer, we can make our business more attractive to women. It's a good working practice for the company because it ensures we have the best possible workforce to deliver the top-quality service our clients expect. The Tommy's Programme ensures we look after our mums-to-be so that they are able to work productively and comfortably throughout their pregnancy."

**Ends**

**Photos:**

Joanne Davison 1 – Joanne Davison sitting comfortably at her desk.

Joanne Davison 2 – Joanne Davison reads Tommy's guide to a working pregnancy.

**Editor's note:** *Morris and Spottiswood is a leading provider of fit out and maintenance services to the retail, banking, commercial, education and healthcare sectors across North West England and Scotland. Established in 1925, the company is Britain's third largest shopfitter. Morris and Spottiswood is also a leading regional provider of new build, refurbishment and maintenance services to the social housing sector. The company has a growing portfolio of social housing projects arising from partnering agreements with local housing organisations throughout Scotland.*

*Survey of 1,100 mums-to-be by Tommy's, the baby charity and Johnson's Baby in October 2006.*

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