

# Press release: Dstl – Supporting International Women in Engineering Day 2017

Across the UK women make up less than 10% of the engineering workforce. The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is bucking this national trend, with more than double that figure of female engineers and scientists.

Dstl is proud to be supporting this year's International Women in Engineering Day (INWED). We want to encourage more girls and women into the engineering sector, to help address the skills gap in the sector and to open the door to rewarding careers.

Professor Penelope Endersby, the Head of Dstl's Cyber and Information Systems Division said:

At Dstl, female engineers are making a huge contribution to the UK's security and many are highly-qualified and respected leaders in their fields. We would like to see many more women studying STEM subjects at school, college and university.

I can't stress enough to girls considering a STEM career the infinitely varied and fantastically rewarding roles that this opens to them to make the world a better place.

Alison, a Principal Consultant in Dstl's Air Project Management Delivery team, Platform Systems Division, commented:

When I was at school, I loved maths and physics. My family worked at what was then the Royal Aircraft Establishment in Farnborough, and from an early age I would become immersed in the Air Show. After school, I was sponsored by the Ministry of Defence to train as an engineer at university. I then joined the RAF and did 18 years' service. In that time, I became a flight navigation officer on the Hercules aircraft and was one of the first women to take up that role.

Now a project manager at Dstl, my engineering background is crucial for understanding the technical aspects of the projects I run. An exciting piece of work recently involved SKEETER – a tiny unmanned air system inspired by a dragonfly, which could revolutionise intelligence gathering in complex urban environments.

To girls considering a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), I would say it's not all lab coats and overalls! Exciting opportunities to work on real-world applications are everywhere. Technology surrounds us and is driving the way we live – you can bring a different perspective and make a difference.

Verity, a Mechanical Engineering Apprentice, added:

I've always been interested in how things work from a very young age. I could always be found taking things apart in order to put them back together again, and would often help my dad work on his various cars, bikes and engines. I loved hands-on tasks and engineering seemed like an ideal career choice for me. After leaving school, I was keen to move away from home and start earning a living. Starting an engineering apprenticeship with Dstl allowed me to gain my independence while working towards a fulfilling career and qualifications. Since being at Dstl, I have been able to work on some really interesting projects, including manufacturing components in the workshop and working on ideas and designs for initial steps in manufacturing processes. The experience at Dstl has also helped me develop as a person, especially my communication and organisational skills.

[Engineers at Dstl](#) work in a wide range of engineering disciplines including mechanical, electrical, materials and software. Each day they are working on a range of high profile and exciting engineering projects including the Queen Elizabeth class of carriers, the F-35 Lightning II, unmanned aerial vehicles, ballistic protection and cyber security.

Each year Dstl recruits around 80 graduate engineers and 18 engineering apprentices. We also offer 150 student placements. Details of our engineering opportunities can be found on our [Facebook page](#) or on the [Civil Service job site](#).

Dstl uses cutting edge science and technology to counter threats, existing and new, to UK Armed Forces and British citizens. In 2015 we were proud to do that in many ways, including being at the heart of UK's contribution to tackling Ebola in Sierra Leone; providing life-saving protection for our soldiers, sailors and aircrew on operations around the globe; defending critical systems from cyber-attack; and supporting the fight against terrorism at home and overseas. We do that through the application of a diverse range of specialist scientific and engineering skills, working in close partnership with a wide network of partners and suppliers in industry and universities.