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PRESS RELEASE

40th Company signs up to Equality Commission STEM Charter

On International Women's Day the Equality Commission is delighted to announce Thales UK as the 40th signatory of its STEM Charter. The signing by Thales highlights its commitment to encourage more women to take up scientific and technical jobs in its workforce.



Dr Evelyn Collins CBE Chief Executive of the Equality Commission, said: "The

Commission is delighted that Thales UK based in Northern Ireland has officially signed up to our STEM Charter. I congratulate the senior management of the company for their initiative in seeking to recruit and retain more women in this field.

"The persistent under-representation of women in scientific and technical jobs across Northern Ireland is certainly a gender equality issue, but it is also an issue that is likely to have a negative impact on Northern Ireland's future economic growth and prosperity. We have to address both these issues as a society and through the commitment and action of individual companies.

The Commission can offer practical support and guidance to STEM employers across Northern Ireland, and we encourage them all to sign up to the Charter. It is not an accreditation or a box-ticking exercise. It makes a commitment to take measures to attract more women to apply for jobs within the STEM sector. The business case for firms employing more women is already proven and, for the women themselves, STEM posts offer the prospect of satisfying and rewarding careers."

"We look forward to working with Thales in the future through our STEM networks and to continue to promote examples of best practice that can be adopted by other employers, to create a more diverse STEM workforce throughout Northern Ireland," concluded Dr Collins.

Philip McBride, General Manager, Thales UK commented: “We are delighted to sign the STEM Charter and are committed to delivering equality in the workplace. Attracting and retaining a more diverse workforce will maximise innovation creativity and competitiveness. We have a STEM strategy and programme of engagement with local schools, colleges, and universities that aims to educate and encourage girls and young women to choose STEM subjects that can lead to exciting and rewarding career options.”

Notes to Editor

- Link to Thales [case study](#) with female Systems Engineer Lesley Torbet.
- For more details about the STEM initiative and to view a copy of the STEM Charter please see our [website](#).
- The Equality Commission can advise employers and training providers on appropriate and lawful positive action, the Sex Discrimination Order allows some positive action measures. For example they may provide encouragement or special training for one sex to take up work in areas where they are under-represented.

Photo caption: (l-r) Equality Commission Chief Executive Dr Evelyn Collins CBE with Thales STEM Ambassador Lesley Torbet and Thales Managing Director Philip McBride