

WISE call for action to ensure we are ready use

Our Skills to Build Our Future



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WISE Chief Executive

The nature of work and the skills we need are transforming at tremendous speed. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and smart devices will take over routine jobs that people previously held. Job roles will reflect this, with different skill sets needed and valued.

We need to ensure that women are involved in the technological transformation of the world around us, and yet fewer than two in ten of IT Professionals in the UK are women; this has serious implications for women, for business and for society:

Women

should be getting their fair share of the top future jobs, most of which will be linked to technology. If we get more women into engineering and technology, the gender pay gap should start to close, as these jobs tend to be higher paid.

Businesses

will find the people they need if they draw from a wider cross section of the population. They can enjoy the wide range of business benefits associated with a diverse workforce, including client and market opportunities.

Society

will thrive through the contributions women make – identifying and prioritising the problems to work on, and finding better solutions to energy, transport, food production and the other big challenges we all face.

That's why the theme for WISE this year is **Our Skills, Our Future**. It is imperative to get more women into STEM so that as the world around us changes, it changes to benefit all of society. These are **Our Skills**, and it's **Our Future**. Let's build it together.

We take a holistic approach to gender balance in STEM, from classroom to boardroom – so sustainable change must address all stages. It's not just up to education providers, employers or the government to be responsible for building a system which helps more girls and women to realise their potential in STEM – **we must all take ownership**, because we all have a contribution to make.

It's not enough to just talk about this; **we need concrete action to make it happen**. We call for change on three fronts.

1. Together we can co-ordinate our outreach programmes to ensure girls are excited and inspired by the possibilities of STEM in study and as a career. This is why we are announcing a STEM Accord collaboration between WISE, ERA Foundation, STEM Learning and the Smallpeice Trust, and this is why we are targeting 200,000 girls with our *My Skills My Life* programme.

CALL TO ACTION

Join up your outreach programmes, and join us so that your outreach activities contribute to effective, equitable provision reaching young people and their families across the UK.



2. Together we can ensure that women have the opportunities to retrain or return to STEM careers at all stages of their careers.

CALL TO ACTION

Government and employers should enable women at all ages to access life-long learning opportunities to retrain and re-skill in STEM, including providing easy to access routes into work such as taster days, internship, returnships and training.



3. Together we can make sustainable change to improve gender balance in science, technology and engineering. Strategic targets show visible commitment to change. Our industry-led *Ten Steps* programme helps employers create inclusive cultures that support women in STEM, with programmes led by the board and directors being personally accountable for their diversity and inclusion performance.

CALL TO ACTION *All organisations, from the classroom to the boardroom, to set a target for the percentage of girls and women in STEM and to share your data with us to monitor progress towards gender balance.*



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