

## News story: Dstl tackles tech skills shortage

A pilot work placement scheme to encourage talented science and technology (S&T) experts to return to work has been hailed a huge success by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl).

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Dstl has been running a 12-week STEM returners programme aimed at giving experienced science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) professionals the confidence to step back in to their careers after taking time away.

Those involved have been working on challenging projects; in areas including cyber, information systems and defence and security analysis. Placements were also provided with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), which finds and funds innovative projects from a £800 million Defence Innovation fund.

Helen Christie, one of Dstl's Talent Acquisition and Planning Advisers, said:

The skill set attracted has been excellent. It's been brilliant to be able to help people who thought their technical expertise might never be used again in a workplace environment. Dstl is committed to a flexible supportive workplace so that people of all backgrounds and situations can succeed here and contribute to providing world-leading science and technology. The success of the 2018 STEM returners programme is definitely something we will be building on and therefore hope to run a similar programme next year. We are also encouraged by the positive experience expressed by each returner and we now hope that those involved will have the confidence to apply for a permanent role at Dstl.

STEM Returner, Tom Shuttleworth, has been working in the Physical Science Group within Dstl's Platform Systems Division, said:

After taking voluntary redundancy from my previous employment I was considering early retirement, however for various reasons and boredom, it became apparent I needed to have a level of stimulation back. When I was offered a place on the STEM returners open day at

Dstl, I jumped at the chance and was delighted when I was offered a placement. My role has been varied and challenging and involved producing a vital guidance document on the management of restricted materials. It's been a fantastic experience and I would definitely recommend this kind of programme to others who have been out the work place for some time.

Ann Stanhope secured a place as a STEM Returner in the Support Services team with DASA, said:

I left a career in the semiconductor industry 20 years ago and wanted to get back in touch with technology. Working with DASA has been a very positive experience – I've learnt a lot about how the organisation works, carrying out a variety of tasks, some harder than others. The STEM Returners programme is very well run and dedicated to finding opportunities for people with different backgrounds.

STEM Returner Giles Moore and been working in Dstl's Strategic Systems Group, and said:

My team leader gave me time to explore the organisation's systems, build new relationships and come up with ideas of how I could contribute. I also had the opportunity to present my thoughts to the team halfway through my placement. I thought the best way to contribute was to work on knowledge and graph development because subject matter experts are always too busy to work on that sort of thing, and I think it's important. It's been a great experience.

Dstl is also leading the [STEM Futures consortium](#) and actively supports the STEM Returners programme, with both organisations having an overall intent to develop talent and enhance the S&T workforce.

Natalie Desty, Founder of STEM Returners said:

It has been a real pleasure to work with Dstl on this programme. Right from the outset Dstl recognised the huge value that returners had to offer and provided fantastic support and training to ensure their success. Returners find the barriers to return often insurmountable through standard recruitment channels, Dstl's open minded, flexible and inclusive approach has successfully restarted careers and brought back valuable lost skills to the industry.

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## News story: UK Marks 70th Anniversary of UN Declaration of Human Rights

Minister for Human Rights Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon hosted a panel discussion to mark the 70th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

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On the 70th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights the Minister for Human Rights Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, hosted a panel discussion with Human Rights Defenders Dina Meza and Wanjeri Nderu, alongside Kate Allen, Director of Amnesty International UK. The meeting focussed on Human Rights Defenders who stand up for the rights of all persecuted communities around the world.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the UK supported over 240 Human Rights Defenders, training them in self-protection and collective protection strategies and providing legal assistance for their cases.

Britain is a global defender of human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democratic values, and has championed campaigns to end modern slavery and human trafficking, to prevent sexual violence in conflict, and to ensure at least 12 years of quality education for girls.

It was also announced that the UK will co-chair the Equal Rights Coalition in partnership with Argentina from June 2019.

Minster for Human Rights, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, said:

It is a modern tragedy that there are people in same-sex relationships around the world who are discriminated against, persecuted, and tortured because of their gender, faith, creed or sexual orientation.

Britain will continue to defend human rights, stand up for our values, and for the rights of communities who suffer around the world.

## Notes to Editors

- The UK's co-chairmanship will begin in June 2019 and last for two years.
- The Equal Rights Coalition includes the United Kingdom, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United States of America, Uruguay in working toward a vision of equality regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Further information

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## [Press release: Employment Minister welcomes new UK employment record](#)

Wage growth has outstripped inflation for the ninth month in a row and the UK employment level is at an all-time high.