

## MILTON KEYNES BUSINESS

# Girls urged to reach for the stars with a career in science and tech

A major campaign to get young people from Milton Keynes interested in a career in science and technology will launch on social media next month.

MK Innovates aims to inspire city youngsters – particularly schoolgirls – to consider a future in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths).

The sector is facing a recruitment crisis, with thousands of unfilled vacancies in highly paid roles in the automotive and aerospace industries.

The MK Innovates initiative – created by Women's Leaders UK – will also appeal to graduates, adult career changers and first jobbers. It will feature a host of exciting interviews, competitions, science tasks, puzzles and investigations.

Businesses, colleges and universities in Milton Keynes and the surrounding region will upload content to their own social media platforms but unify the presentations using the hashtags #MKInnovates, #InnovatingForThe-



Future and #BSW21 (British Science Week).

Taking place from March 8-12, MK Innovates will also highlight the types of organisations and jobs that already exist in Milton Keynes, and encourage youngsters to study STEM subjects at school, college and university.

The event is an online prelude to the annual MK STEM Festival in Middleton Hall, which has been put back until October 8-9 due to Covid.

It has the backing of firms including Niftylift, City Fibre, Anglian Water and Starship – which developed the world famous delivery robots.

MK Innovates chairman Elizabeth Sheldon said: "Industry is crying out for more

engineers and scientists, particularly women. There are not enough girls in the sector and we want to help change that by highlighting the exciting opportunities to them from the ages of eight to 18.

"A career in science and technology can be exhilarating, and well rewarded.

"Our online event will showcase the businesses and education establishments in Milton Keynes that are at the cutting edge of technology and are helping to shape our futures.

"We would love people to share details of the event on their social media and spread the word – let's create a real buzz around Milton Keynes."

Jason Ford, news editor at The Engineer, said: "Engineers will use their collective expertise to address the world's most profound challenges – from decarbonisation and climate change to vehicle electrification and automation.

"The Engineer's 2019 survey found the average salary across all the engineering



Milton Keynes is fast gaining a reputation for innovation, like the world famous Starship delivery robots

sectors came in at between £44,000 and £59,000.

"There is also a recognised skills gap, so salaries will be at a premium for those who do the 'hard yards' and qualify as

an engineer, either through an apprenticeship or the university route. Engineering skills are interchangeable and can be taken overseas. An aerodynamicist can quite easily move

from designing rotor blades for wind turbines to working in automotive or aerospace.

"The world is your oyster if you pursue STEM subjects and make a career from them."

## Female apprentices giving their futures a lift



'Creative' Demi York loves being an apprentice at Niftylift

Demi York, 21, joined Niftylift – the renowned 'cherry picker' manufacturer based in Milton Keynes – as an apprentice after leaving Denbigh School in Bletchley.

She has worked in production, quality, development and hydraulics, and is currently learning fault diagnostics.

She says: "I have always been a creative person and I like to draw, build and learn new things. But there is so much more to it than that.

"Don't let the fact that there are fewer women stop you. Do what you love."

Read more about Demi at <http://bit.ly/LetsHearItForTheGirls>



Evie Charles was hooked after doing work experience at Niftylift

Evie Charles, 22, also joined Niftylift's apprenticeship scheme after studying at Radcliffe School, Wolverton, and Denbigh Sixth Form.

She says: "I spoke to some Niftylift apprentices at my school's career morning in Year 13 and shortly afterwards undertook a week's work experience, which I loved!

"I preferred the idea of getting an engineering qualification while gaining on-the-job experience. STEM is great if you like problem solving, designing and thinking creatively, and working in a team."

Read more about Evie at <http://bit.ly/LetsHearItForTheGirls>



Dr Julie Mills of Women Leaders

## High level backing for STEM initiative

MK Innovates is being supported by some of the city's biggest institutions.

Dr Julie Mills, chair of Women's Leaders UK and chief executive of Milton Keynes College, said: "WLUK is passionate about promoting careers in STEM to girls and women in particular.

"Creativity and problem solving are at the heart of MK Innovates and develop-

ing an online programme to engage young people is very exciting.

"The past year has seen unprecedented technological growth, and nobody could have predicted the changes coming our way.

"This new world calls for digital innovators, and MK Innovates will play its part in inspiring the next generation."

Professor Lynette Ryals, pro-vice chancellor at Cranfield University and CEO of MK:U, said: "MK is leading the UK in embracing new technology.

"That's why MK:U – the proposed new university in Milton Keynes – will focus on digital and STEM subjects.

"Working with MK College, with schools and with the Institute of Technology, we plan

to make Milton Keynes a top destination for STEM.

"MK Innovates plays a vital part, enthusing people of all ages about STEM careers and about the benefits that new technologies can bring to our lives."

Milton Keynes Council is also putting its weight behind MK Innovates.

Geoff Snelson, director of strategy and futures, said:

"The new strategy for 2050 highlights how knowledge-intensive businesses such as finance, digital and technology will drive our future economy.

"This in turn will require a talented workforce with skills in STEM disciplines and creative thinking.

"MK Innovates is a great example of how the city can work together to achieve this."