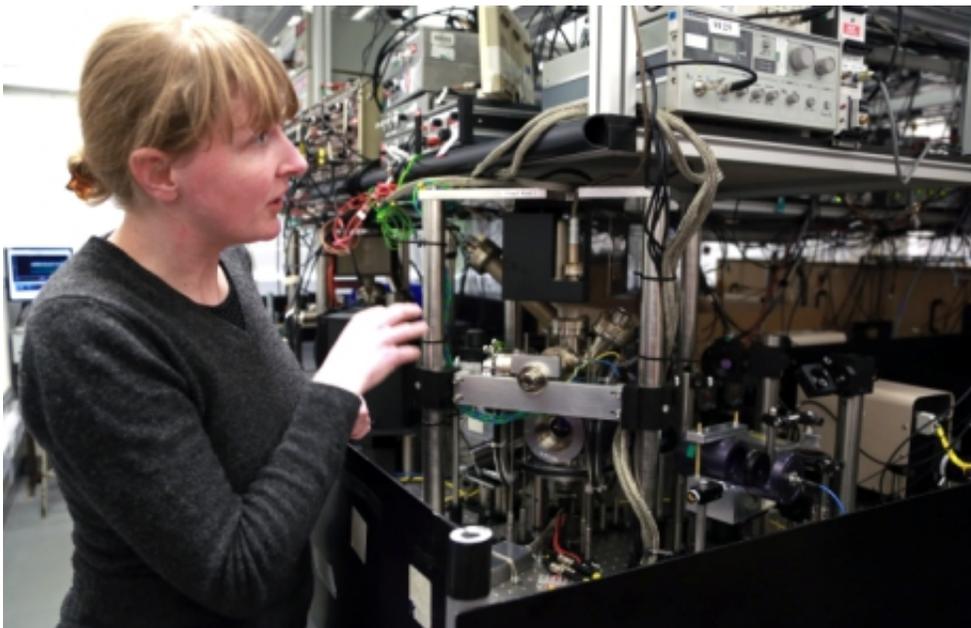


Government urged to improve female representation in science

June 21 2013



A [new report](#) published today, Thursday 20 June 2013, from MPs on the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee, urges the Government to "take concerted action to improve female representation in science, technology, engineering and maths."

The report, which makes regular reference to evidence submitted by the Institute of [Physics](#) (IOP), is accompanied by an introduction from Adrian Bailey MP, Chair of the BIS Committee that ran the inquiry on

['Women in the Workplace'](#) which has led to this report.

He writes, "At the heart of the matter is need for cultural change. Without this we address symptoms rather than causes. The early influences children are exposed to are crucial in informing them about career opportunities."

His sentiments echo those of Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, past-president of IOP, [astronomer](#) at the University of Oxford and Chair of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's inquiry into [Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics \(STEM\)](#), who provided oral evidence to the inquiry.

During the inquiry, Professor Dame Bell Burnell stressed the role of culture in [career choices](#), "Local cultural influences dominate. This is not biology; this is not women's brains. This is the culture in the country of what is considered appropriate for women in that country to do."

As well as recognising the role of culture, the report commends [IOP's Project Juno](#), a scheme designed to recognise and reward university physics departments that can demonstrate they have taken action to address under-representation of women, and reports the success that the Stimulating Physics Network has had in increasing the number of girls choosing to study physics at A-level.

Professor Paul Hardaker, Chief Executive of IOP, said, "I'm delighted that the Select Committee has recognised our programme of work at the Institute of Physics, but there is much more to do.

"STEM-related careers offer exciting opportunities for both men and women, but the proportion of [women](#) at present is far below what we would hope for. The situation has to change.

"The Institute of Physics is strongly committed to changing this and we very much hope that Government will join us and take on board the recommendations from this well considered report."

You can find [IOP's written evidence here](#).

Provided by Institute of Physics

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