

## **Alstom teams up with Avanti West Coast and Angel Trains to ‘InspiHer’ for International Women’s Day**

- **Alstom, Avanti West Coast and Angel Trains showcase potential career opportunities to young women during interactive day on and off the rails**
- **Twenty-five Alstom’s UK sites hosted female students from local schools on International Women’s Day**

**8 March 2024** – Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has teamed up with rail operator Avanti West Coast and rolling stock company Angel Trains to showcase the diverse range of roles and careers available to young women in the rail industry.

Held on International Women’s Day (Friday 8 March) 20 pupils between the ages of 11 and 13 from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent travelled from the Staffordshire city with Avanti West Coast to Stockport, where they went to visit Alstom’s Longsight depot. Known as the Manchester Traincare Centre, the facility can accommodate almost 300 rail vehicles at one time – making it one of the biggest of its kind in the UK – and employs almost 300 members of staff.

The visit was part of Alstom’s wider national initiative for International Women’s Day – InspiHer – which saw 25 of its UK sites open its doors to female students in Years 7 and 8, with the aim of inspiring them to pursue a career in rail or science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

Constructed in 1842 by the Manchester and Birmingham Railway, the Manchester Traincare Centre is used to maintain Avanti West Coast’s Class 390 Pendolino fleet – built by Alstom and widely regarded as the country’s hardest working trains. Twelve sets arrive at Alstom’s facility each evening to undergo maintenance before being released the following morning, with a further two sets being stabled there for periodic maintenance exams or heavy overhaul.

During the visit pupils were able to design and build a model using a 3D scanner, operate a Lean-Lift to find hidden items and experience maintenance work taking place on a Pendolino – the same type of train the pupils had travelled between Stoke-on-Trent and Stockport on. Both Avanti West Coast services the pupils travelled on as part of the event were driven by women, furthering showcasing the potential career options available to females in rail.

“It has been truly inspiring to spend the day with students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent, who impressed us with their curiosity, enthusiasm and potential. Witnessing their engagement with various aspects of the rail industry and seeing their passion for learning about STEM careers reaffirms the importance of initiatives like InspiHer in nurturing the next generation of diverse talent,” said Linda Dennis, Information Systems and Technology Business Partner UK and Ireland at Alstom during the International Women’s Day event.

She added: “We know that there’s still work to be done in breaking down the stereotype that the rail sector is predominantly a career for men. However, my experience has shown me that talent knows no

gender and the contributions of women in the rail sector are invaluable. Together, we must continue to challenge outdated perceptions and create a more inclusive industry for all.”

### **InspiHer**

From Brighton to Manchester, Alstom’s wider female-only insight day – InspiHer – included a series of interactive sessions and activities at 25 of its sites, which provided students from 26 schools with a deeper understanding of the company’s female-friendly culture, career opportunities and industry trends. Senior females from Alstom were involved at all participating sites, sharing their personal experiences, advice and practical support for students considering their professional and career journeys.

For example, pupils from The Bemrose School, Da Vinci Academy, Derby Moor Spencer Academy and St Andrew’s Academy were given a tour of Alstom’s Derby Litchurch Lane Works – the only UK facility that designs, engineers, builds and tests trains for domestic and export markets.

As part of their visit, the pupils were introduced to four female members of staff before engaging in a ‘Guess Who?’ -style activity which challenged them to determine who works in which role; production, engineering, project management and procurement. The students then completed a design and build activity, where they each took on one of these roles, before they experienced a ride on a factory-fresh Aventura train along Litchurch Lane’s unique test track.

“I grew up across the road from the site and had no idea what was really happening there until I visited the site as an adult with a group of pupils in my previous role as a Design and Technology teacher. When I realised that trains were being designed, engineered, built and tested here in Derby, I knew that I wanted to be part of that process and applied for a graduate role at Alstom. It is great to be able to showcase what we do to the next generation of women. My advice to the pupils who came to our InspiHer event was simply to go for it! No two days are ever the same in rail,” said Amy Ogden, Creative Designer at Alstom in Derby.

Amy is currently working as part of the team that are designing and building Britain’s new high-speed train for HS2 in a joint venture with Hitachi Rail. Amy is helping develop the interior design of the 54-strong fleet of British-built bullet trains, overseeing their finishes, form and functionality – something she describes as a “once-in-a-career project”.

### **Angel Trains**

Meanwhile, back at Longsight, Angel Trains engineers led an interactive virtual reality (VR) activity, where students could immerse themselves in the role of a train driver, navigating their way out of a station from within the cab of a Class 333 train.

“It was fantastic to celebrate International Women’s Day by getting to interact with enthusiastic students as they learnt about different careers and technology in rail, and as they shared their experiences of travelling on a Pendolino,” said Aamina Shah, Systems Engineer at Angel Trains.

## **Avanti West Coast**

Co-op Academy pupils enjoyed learning about female rail pioneers on the train journey itself and also spent time shadowing two female Avanti West Coast Station Managers, who oversee Stoke-on-Trent and Stockport railway stations respectively.

“Days like today are all about inspiring the next generation of railway workers, whilst at the same time continuing to challenge the stereotype around gender bias. I’m incredibly proud to say I work for the railway. As an industry we’ve made great strides in recent years. But there’s more that needs to be done to encourage more women to actively pursue a career on the railway,” said Laura Warwick, Station Manager for Avanti West Coast at Stoke-on-Trent.

She added: “Hopefully today will have given these school pupils a bit of feel for just some of the roles and opportunities open to them.”

Avanti West Coast supported the event through its [Feel Good Field Trips](#) initiative, which gives pupils aged between four and 18 the chance to travel up and down the West Coast Main Line for hands-on learning, fun and culturally diverse days out.

Historically, Alstom, Avanti West Coast and Angel Trains have worked in close collaboration with one another. They are currently completing the UK’s largest ever train refurbishment project; a £127 million upgrade of the 56-strong Pendolino electric fleet at Alstom’s Widnes depot.

## **Inclusive**

Alstom is committed to being a fully inclusive organisation and is working hard to address biases – conscious or unconscious – to create a fairer and more equitable workplace for women and those with protected characteristics.

In 2017, Alstom launched its biannual equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) census to identify improvement areas in the UK. From the findings, the company developed and delivered the Alstom8 workshops to raise awareness and give practical advice on how to successfully drive inclusivity in the workplace. Alongside this, its four ‘Voices of’ groups – Women, Pride+, Cultural Diversity and Disability – help to share lived experiences; challenge groupthink in its strategy and policies; have oversight of relevant key performance indicators (KPIs); and act as ambassadors.

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Alstom**

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With 37 locations and 6,000 employees, Alstom is the UK and Ireland's leading supplier of new trains and train services, and a leading signalling and rail infrastructure provider. Alstom have built, or are building, just under 40 per cent of the UK mainline train fleet; as well as the entire fleets in service with London Underground and Dublin Luas. Half of all UK rail journeys are made on an Alstom train, while its portfolio of smart products is the widest on the market.

For more information, please visit [www.alstom.com](http://www.alstom.com).

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