

News Release

Wednesday, 8 March 2017

BT, ERICSSON, O2 AND VODAFONE AGREE TO EXPAND MENTORING SCHEME TO PROMOTE STEM CAREERS TO SCHOOLGIRLS ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BT, Ericsson, O2 and Vodafone have agreed to expand a mentoring scheme launched to encourage schoolgirls to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers.

Women's networks from each of the four major companies launched a pilot scheme last year based in London to work in partnership with Girls Talk London, an organisation which aims to empower women to learn from others in senior roles in business.

The scheme was a big success and resulted in 18 of the girls graduating at a ceremony at Kings College London in 2016. Now all four companies have reiterated their commitment to the scheme in London, with BT launching an expansion in Birmingham.

The expansion of the scheme, known as 'Step into STEM,' is being celebrated tonight, Wednesday, 8 March, at an event at the BT Tower on International Women's Day.

Schools who have students on the programme include: King's Maths School, UCL Academy, Heathcote School, Woodford County High, City Academy Hackney and Highbury Fields School.

Over the past month, there have been 100 applications, which have been reviewed by Girls Talk London who also conducted interviews and an assessment centre with the candidates.

32 school pupils have been selected and matched with a mentor from each of the businesses involved. The girls will receive one session a month with their mentor up until October, as well as a full week of work experience in July.

The scheme was initially a pilot, but now all four companies have big ambitions for the programme, and the hope is that it will be rolled out to other locations across the UK through further collaboration.

Ivelina Koleva, head of global cyber security commercial bids at BT, said: “Launching an expansion of the ‘Step into STEM’ programme speaks volumes of the drive and commitment of the Gender equality networks of BT, Ericsson, Vodafone and O2. There are so many STEM career opportunities for women to pursue and we are excited about the role we can play in continuing to inspire and support female school leavers who may be considering such a career. This year we’re also piloting the scheme in Birmingham and we’re very keen to turn it into another success story.”

Jeni Mundy, Vodafone Group enterprise product management director, said: “A career in STEM can be hugely rewarding and stimulating, so we are proud to be part of this scheme to both inform and encourage more girls to aim for roles in this sector. This year we will be providing eight mentors for girls in London to offer help and advice to shape their future career in the technology field. We believe we should be many, not few.”

Federica Mills, head of sourcing UK and chairwoman of the UK Women Network at Ericsson, said: “I am proud to lead the Step into STEM Mentoring Programme for Ericsson for the second consecutive year and to have the opportunity to once again offer mentorship and guidance to more young women at such an important stage of their lives. This is a brilliant and concrete example of Ericsson’s commitment to addressing the gender imbalance and attracting female talent in the ICT industry. Working together, we will have more young women pursuing studies in STEM subjects and considering careers in ICT.”

Brendan O’Reilly, chief network officer at O2, said: “2016’s step into STEM programme was hugely successful and we’re looking forward to building on that success again this year. As digital technology becomes ever more important in today’s society, the opportunities for a career in STEM will only increase.”

Ends

Notes to editors

About BT

BT's purpose is to use the power of communications to make a better world. It is one of the world's leading providers of communications services and solutions, serving customers in 180 countries. Its principal activities include the provision of networked IT services globally; local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband, TV and internet products and services; and converged fixed-mobile products and services. BT consists of six customer-facing lines of business: Consumer, EE, Business and Public Sector, Global Services, Wholesale and Ventures, and Openreach.

For the year ended 31 March 2016¹, BT Group's reported revenue was £19,012m with reported profit before taxation of £2,907m.

British Telecommunications plc (BT) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BT Group plc and encompasses virtually all businesses and assets of the BT Group. BT Group plc is listed on stock exchanges in London and New York.

¹The results for the period have been revised to reflect the outcome of the investigation into our Italian business. Detail of which is set out in our third quarter results announcement published on 27 January 2017. This financial information is unaudited.

For more information, visit www.btplc.com

About Ericsson

Ericsson is the driving force behind the Networked Society - a world leader in communications technology and services. Our long-term relationships with every major telecom operator in the world allow people, business and society to fulfill their potential and create a more sustainable future.

Our services, software and infrastructure - especially in mobility, broadband and the cloud - are enabling the telecom industry and other sectors to do better business, increase efficiency, improve the user experience and capture new opportunities.

With approximately 115,000 professionals and customers in 180 countries, we combine global scale with technology and services leadership. We support networks that connect more than 2.5 billion subscribers. Forty percent of the world's mobile traffic is carried over Ericsson networks. And our investments in research and development ensure that our solutions - and our customers - stay in front.

Founded in 1876, Ericsson has its headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. Net sales in 2015 were SEK 246.9 billion (USD 29.4 billion). Ericsson is listed on NASDAQ OMX stock exchange in Stockholm and the NASDAQ in New York.

About Vodafone Group

Vodafone is one of the world's largest telecommunications companies and provides a range of services including voice, messaging, data and fixed communications. Vodafone has mobile operations in 26 countries, partners with mobile networks in 52 more, and fixed broadband operations in 17 markets. As of 30 September 2016, Vodafone had 470 million mobile customers and 14 million fixed broadband customers. For more information, please visit: www.vodafone.com.

About O2

O2 is the commercial brand of Telefónica UK Limited and is a leading digital communications company with the highest customer satisfaction for any mobile provider [according to Ofcom](#). With over 25 million customers, O2 runs 2G, 3G and 4G networks across the UK, as well as operating O2 Wifi and owning half of Tesco Mobile. O2 has over 450 retail stores and sponsors The O2, O2 Academy venues and the England rugby team. Read more about O2 at www.o2.co.uk/news.

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About Girls Talk London

Girls Talk London is a social enterprise that connects young girls and women with FTSE 100 businesses and senior leaders to help them access careers in male dominated sectors and to develop the skills and confidence to succeed into Leadership roles