

Alstom engineer awarded in the UK for her leadership in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives within the rail industry

- Charlotte Briers receives Verena Winifred Holmes Award from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers
- Accolade recognises her exceptional leadership in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the rail industry

22 November 2024 – Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, is delighted to announce that Charlotte Briers, Rolling Stock Performance Lead and Chair of the Voices of Women employee resource group, has been awarded the esteemed Verena Winifred Holmes Award by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE). This accolade recognises her exceptional leadership in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives within the rail industry and beyond.

The Verena Winifred Holmes Award celebrates individuals who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to valuing diversity and fostering inclusivity through innovative programmes. Charlotte's outstanding contributions include spearheading programmes such as the 'Women@Alstom Spotlight' series – with over 400 employees participating in interviews with senior female leaders from across the company – and the 'Be the U in inclUsive' roadshow, which visited most of the business' 37 sites across the UK and Ireland.

More recently, Charlotte was instrumental in shaping Alstom's new sector-leading [maternity and adoption policy](#) for staff in the UK, which offers eligible employees full pay for up to 12 months. This policy is viewed as a critical part of Alstom's commitment to supporting female retention and attracting new talent into the organisation and wider rail sector.

"Charlotte has been an inspirational catalyst for workplace equity and diversity, not only within the UK but globally. Her drive and focus have helped transform our organisation, embedding inclusivity into the heart of what we do. This award is a well-deserved recognition of her outstanding efforts," said Matthew Byrne, Services Product Line President and Global Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Alstom.

Charlotte, aged 46, was born in Sutton-in-Ashfield but is now based in Derby, where she works at Alstom's historic Litchurch Lane Works – the company's base for train manufacturing in the UK. Graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Durham University in 2001, Charlotte has been with Alstom since 2012, where she has worked on signature projects, including the Aventura platform – the UK's largest train production programme for a generation.

Charlotte's leadership has significantly shaped Alstom's commitment to fostering a culture of equality and empowerment. Her initiatives have addressed critical issues such as gender parity, inclusive policies and professional development opportunities for underrepresented groups. Her influence extends internationally, with representation at events such as the Alstom Women of Excellence annual summit in Canada in 2002. She has also spent time highlighting the importance of gender balance among

colleagues in France, including among the company's most senior leaders. Closer to home, she was also invited to a UK parliamentary reception that celebrated talented women across various industries.

"I am deeply honoured to receive the Verena Winifred Holmes Award. This recognition is not just for me but for everyone at Alstom who believes in the power of inclusivity to drive innovation and growth. Together, we are creating a workplace where every voice is valued and heard. I'm proud to be part of this journey and look forward to continuing our efforts to make a lasting impact," said Charlotte Briers, Rolling Stock Performance Lead and Chair of the Voices of Women at Alstom.

In 2017, Alstom launched its biannual EDI census to identify improvement areas in the UK and Ireland. 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 – Cultural Diversity, Disability, Pride+ and Women – help to share lived experiences; challenge groupthink in its strategy and policies; have oversight of relevant key performance indicators (KPIs); and act as ambassadors.

Charlotte received the Verena Winifred Holmes Award at the IMechE Annual Dinner 2024, which was held at the Manufacturing Technology Centre in Coventry on Thursday 21 November. Previously known as the Equality and Diversity Award, it is now named after Verena Holmes who joined the IMechE as the first female member in 1924. She represented a welcome breakthrough for equal rights in early 20th century Britain and a significant moment in the Institution's history.

"Charlotte has shown great leadership in her efforts to identify and break down barriers to the recruitment and retention of women in engineering. Inclusion is at the heart of our values and through her impressive work at Alstom, she has highlighted the strength of diversity, and the importance of driving change from within," said Dr Alice Bunn OBE, CEO at IMechE.

With over 120,000 members in 140 countries, the IMechE is an independent professional association and learned society headquartered in London, that represents mechanical engineers and the engineering profession. It was founded by George Stephenson – known as the 'Father of the Railways' – in 1847.

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