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Media release

Advancing women in mathematics

The London Mathematical Society (LMS) is launching its report *Advancing Women in Mathematics: Good Practice in UK University Departments* at the House of Commons on 27th February 2013.

The event will be hosted by Andrew Miller MP, Dr Julian Huppert MP and Stephen Metcalfe MP, and the guest speaker will be Professor Margaret Wright of the Courant Institute, New York University, who chaired the International Review of Mathematical Sciences 2010. One of the review's main recommendations was that urgent action should be taken to improve the participation of women in the UK mathematical sciences community.

The LMS is concerned about the loss of women from mathematics, particularly at the higher levels of research and teaching, and at the missed opportunities that this represents. Although over 40% of graduates from UK first degree mathematical sciences courses are female, there is a significant drop-off in the proportion of women who become academic mathematicians, and only around 6% of professors of mathematics in the UK are female.

Through its Women in Mathematics Committee, the LMS has established a Good Practice Scheme to support university departments seeking to address these issues. A large number of departments from a wide range of backgrounds have signed up as supporters of the scheme with many participating in a comprehensive benchmarking survey, which led to this report.

Although similar surveys have been done for other disciplines, this is the first such survey that has been carried out for mathematical sciences departments. The report provides valuable data on the proportions of women at different career stages and an insight into areas of good practice in which mathematics departments are particularly strong, as well as areas which require further development. It also provides many examples of practical actions that some departments have already taken. The report will enable departments to benchmark themselves against the national picture and will assist both departments and the LMS to target actions appropriately.

Professor Gwyneth Stallard, Chair of the LMS Women in Mathematics Committee, commented, 'We are delighted that the UK mathematical community is beginning to engage seriously with the issues surrounding the careers of women mathematicians. We hope that this report will help departments to identify practical steps that they can take to enable more women to achieve their full potential as mathematicians'.

Notes for Editors

1. The **London Mathematical Society (LMS)** is the UK's learned society for mathematics. Founded in 1865 for the promotion and extension of mathematical knowledge, the Society is concerned with all branches of mathematics and its applications. It is an independent and self-financing charity, with a membership of over 2600 drawn from all parts of the UK and overseas. Its principal activities are the organisation of meetings and conferences, the publication of periodicals and books, the provision of financial support for mathematical activities, and the contribution to public debates on issues related to mathematics research and education. It works collaboratively with other mathematical bodies worldwide. It is the UK adhering body to the International Mathematical Union.

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