

Visiting the world of forensic science: Roger Williams MP was paired with industrial scientist at GE Healthcare Life Sciences, Cardiff

The Royal Society Pairing Scheme is a unique training opportunity for scientists working in industry to build up links with policy-makers and civil servants and to learn more about science in parliament and government. The scheme also allows for their Westminster partners to visit industrial scientists in their company and to hear about cutting edge research in their area of work or in their constituencies.

In 2013 Roger Williams MP (Brecon and Radnorshire) was paired with a forensic molecular biologist at GE Healthcare Life Sciences site in Cardiff. GE provides transformational medical technologies and services to improve



Roger Williams MP (right) with forensic molecular biologist Alan Pierce and Cheryl Potts at GE Healthcare Life Sciences' site in Cardiff

healthcare and is a major employer in the constituency. Roger visited GE

Healthcare in February 2014 to learn more about R&D, manufacturing processes and, in particular, about the research and working life of his scientist pair. He commented on his visit: "Visiting GE Healthcare in Cardiff allowed me to see the absolutely excellent science-based manufacturing that goes on in Wales".

During his time at GE Healthcare Roger was taken on a tour around various GE laboratories, where he was introduced to the work of forensic scientists on DNAscan and Human ID. Forensic scientists play an important role in determining what has happened at a crime scene. They assist forensic service providers and police forces by developing specific technologies for human identification. For instance, a leading researcher at GE, Alan Pierce, is working on a project to provide DNA results in less than 90 minutes without the need to send the sample to a specialist laboratory for analysis.

Other elements of the reciprocal visit included a presentation on GE's product portfolio and the R&D sector in Cardiff, a tour around the manufacturing and cell technology areas and a demonstration of a 3D printer.

Like many other MPs, Roger has been taking part in the Pairing Scheme for several years now. But for him it was the first time being paired with an industrial scientist in his constituency. He described this experience as follows:

"I always value taking part in the Royal Society MP Pairing Scheme as science is a major interest in my political work and Wales' reputation through its universities and growing businesses within the field. I enjoyed meeting with industrial researchers in Westminster and at the GE Healthcare Life Sciences' site in Cardiff, one of the leading life science hubs in the UK. Furthermore, the scheme is a great way to keep up to date with the challenges of engaging a career in science."