

DANIEL LYNCH

LADIES FIRST



New directors: Karen Witts of Vodafone has joined Wolseley, the builders' merchant. From top: Vanda Murray, defence firm Chemring; Ruth Kelly, National Grid; Lesley Knox, Centrica

Cameron claims victory for women in boardroom

DAVID CAMERON will this week claim early success in the drive to put more women into Britain's boardrooms, writes James Ashton.

The prime minister will host a Downing Street event on Wednesday evening at which Lord Davies, the former trade minister, is expected to announce that nearly one-third of FTSE 100 appointments

have been women since he published a report on the subject in February. The latest Cranfield School of Management survey shows that 14% of FTSE 100 board posts are held by women, still a long way short of Davies's 2015 target of 25%.

Meanwhile, a mentoring initiative that pairs high-flying women executives with FTSE 100 chairmen has moved up a gear.

The promise of more work from the likes of Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays and Lloyds has enabled Peninah Thomson to launch the Mentoring Foundation as a limited guarantee company.

Since 2003 she has matched 82 promising female executives with chairmen, including Dick Oliver of BAE Systems and National Grid's Sir John Parker, helping

them to gain experience to take on board roles. Thomson will also expand her programme into the FTSE 250.

"There are still some chairmen who think there are not enough good women," said Sir Philip Hampton, chairman of RBS. "I don't agree with that."
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