

News story: Scottish Secretary meets engineers and apprentices as UK Government launches campaign to inspire the next generation

Scottish Secretary David Mundell visited a major engineering company to support a pioneering UK Government campaign to transform the way young people see engineering and boost numbers entering the profession.

Mr Mundell toured Mitsubishi Electric's Livingston facility and met engineers and apprentices as the Year of Engineering was launched to highlight the scale of opportunity that careers in the industry hold for young people in the UK.

2018 is officially the Year of Engineering and will see a national drive in all corners of the country to inspire the young people who will shape our future.

Engineering is one of the most productive sectors in the UK, but a shortfall of 20,000 engineering graduates every year is damaging growth. There is also widespread misunderstanding of engineering among young people and their parents and a lack of diversity in the sector – the workforce is 91% male and 94% white.

The new campaign is aimed at filling those gaps and changing misconceptions, and will see government and around 1,000 partners deliver a million inspiring experiences of engineering for young people, parents and teachers.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

It was great to be at Mitsubishi Electric to promote the UK Government's Year of Engineering campaign and see engineers and apprentices in action. Scotland has a world class engineering sector which makes a major contribution to the UK's economy. But there is a shortage of young people entering the profession in the UK and a lack of diversity. Our campaign will help address these challenges by increasing the understanding and awareness of this exciting career among young people and deliver a new generation of talented engineers.

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling said:

Engineers – whether they are working on cutting-edge technology in aerospace, energy or artificial intelligence – are vital to the lifeblood of our economy.

We want to show young people and their parents the immense creativity, opportunity and value of the profession. By bringing them face to face with engineering role models and achievements we can send a clear message that engineering careers are a chance for all young people, regardless of gender, ethnicity or social background, to shape the future of this country and have a real impact on the lives of those around them.

Skills Minister, Anne Milton said:

I want to see everyone whatever their background, wherever they live to have a chance to get a rewarding career or job in engineering whether they come via a technical or academic route.

The Year of Engineering gives us a great opportunity to work together with business to inspire a new generation of world class engineers. We want to build the science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills that we need for a growing economy, as highlighted in the Government's Industrial Strategy.

Yoshihiro Sumida, company president of Mitsubishi Electric Air Conditioning Systems Europe (M-ACE) said:

Our Corporate Mission is to continually improve our technologies and services by applying creativity to all aspects of our business. Advanced Engineering is obviously a key to this as well as to the growth of our business here in Scotland. In this context we operate a well-established engineering apprenticeship programme in our factory, with the valued support of West Lothian College. I welcome the UK emphasis on improving engineering skills and we as a company will keep making contributions to this end.

All this week, engineers, businesses, schools and universities will be marking the launch of the campaign by celebrating the positive impact of engineering.