

Press release: Pupils find out there's more to being an engineer than first thought

The country needs an extra 20,000 engineering graduates a year and that's why Highways England is taking part in the Year of Engineering campaign, which aims to inspire young people to consider engineering as a rewarding career. Highways England is looking for a continuing pipeline of young engineers to deliver the multi-billion investment plans for our motorways and major A-roads, improving lives and making a positive difference to the world.

Highways England, the government company that looks after England's motorways and major A roads, invited 75 students from four schools: Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick, St Michael's Church of England High School in Rowley Regis, Thorns Collegiate Academy in Brierley Hill and Holyhead School in Birmingham to attend Highways UK at the NEC.

The aim was for them to experience first-hand what goes on behind the cones by taking part in discovery trails around selected exhibits and then having 'big conversations' with senior leaders.

The session started with a briefing section to explain what the highways sector has to offer before providing the students with a series of tasks that involved engaging with exhibitors across Highways UK. Existing graduates and apprentices acted as group hosts, a perfect testimony to encourage the young students. The visit ended with a structured hour back in the theatre with some of the company's senior executives.

Emily Hatfield, a Year 10 pupil at Thorns Academy, said:

I had no idea about the amount of jobs available in the roads industry. It's been really interesting and I particularly enjoyed the exercise where we learnt about the stability of bridges.

The initiative was part of the Year of Engineering campaign, which the theme for November is be "Tomorrow's Engineers". And this week is also Tomorrow's Engineers Week so there's no better time to encourage students to consider engineering, which is a challenging and rewarding prof

Highways England's Chief Highways Engineer Mike Wilson said:

We're delighted to be supporting the Year of Engineering campaign to speak with young people; we hope their experiences are inspiring the next generation of engineers to design and build the roads for the future.

Andrew Nash, Head of Business Development for Balfour Beatty's Major Projects business, said:

We are pleased to have provided this special opportunity to showcase the innovative ways we work to potential future engineers at Highways UK. By utilising simple materials we demonstrated to children and young adults the basic principles of engineering and the exciting ways these techniques are then translated and used to build the country's infrastructure.

From simple activities such as this, through to being a member of The 5% Club, there are many ways we engage with the workforce of the future and show them the long-term careers our industry can offer.

And Kim Faithful-Wright, smart cities lead at Costain, added:

We need that new generation coming in, learning from early on and seeing what new careers are out there.

The Year of Engineering is a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the huge contribution that engineering makes to our country in order to encourage young people to join the profession. The campaign is looking for fun and innovative ways to bring engineering to life and reach young people including under-represented groups, painting a positive picture of an exciting industry that makes real improvements to people's lives.

Highways England aims to reach people of all backgrounds and cultures to widen the recruitment pool beyond a population that is currently more than 90% white and 90% male.

For more information [visit the Year of Engineering website.](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.