Manpower Engineering

ENGINEERING THE 2025 SKILLS AND TALENT TRENDS REPORT

Recruitment, retention and reskilling in UK engineering – a future forecast

Why this guide

The Manpower engineering 2025 skills and trends report is an analysis of current issues impacting employee recruitment and retention across the UK engineering sector.

The information in this guide is designed to help business leaders mitigate the current skills shortage and to create a resilient, more productive workforce.

What is driving the skills shortage across the engineering sector?

Agitation factors that are making a weak talent situation worse

Today's engineers have work expectations that impact recruitment and retention

Ten steps to close the skills gap for UK engineering organisations

Executive summary

UK engineering on the edge

The UK engineering sector is at a tipping point, as it simultaneously grapples with an **acute skills shortage** and is presented with **unprecedented demand** for innovation and sustainability. Engineers are now expected to tackle climate goals, adopt cutting-edge technologies, expand the globe's manufacturing output and address resource challenges – all at the same time, and with insufficient people for the task.

It's a tough situation, but it's not enough to blame a sluggish economy for the crisis. In truth, the problem is many faceted – starting with a disconnect between education and industry – where UK universities are producing thousands of engineering graduates per year, but many lack the practical skills to navigate complex challenges. On top of this issue, engineers are increasingly sought after across diverse industries, thinning the talent pool, whilst global competition for engineering talent continues to draw workers to other markets where benefits and incentives may be more attractive.

Agitating these issues is a challenging numbers game. Demographic shifts, including an impending wave of retirements, are making themselves felt. 20% of the UK's current engineering workforce will retire over the next five years. Meanwhile, it's estimated that the UK will need up to 1 million more engineers by 2030 to meet current demand, and 59,000 new engineers annually just to meet the needs of the green economy. Lastly, engineering businesses must also adapt to an ever-evolving labour landscape. For some organisations, this may mean totally reshaping their approach to workforce development. Robust reskilling and upskilling programmes, fostering inclusive workplace cultures, and adopting forward-thinking recruitment strategies are just some of the initiatives that are now essential to attract and keep top talent.

To succeed in 2025, the UK engineering sector must align recruitment and retention efforts with long-term goals. Companies will need to invest in sustainable talent development strategies, explore diverse talent pools, and embrace technological and organisational innovation. Only by addressing the many talent challenges head-on can the engineering sector overcome the skills crisis and maintain its pivotal role in driving progress on critical projects and sustainability initiatives.

High demand:

25%

of advertised jobs are seeking engineers

Source: Engineering UK Dec 2024

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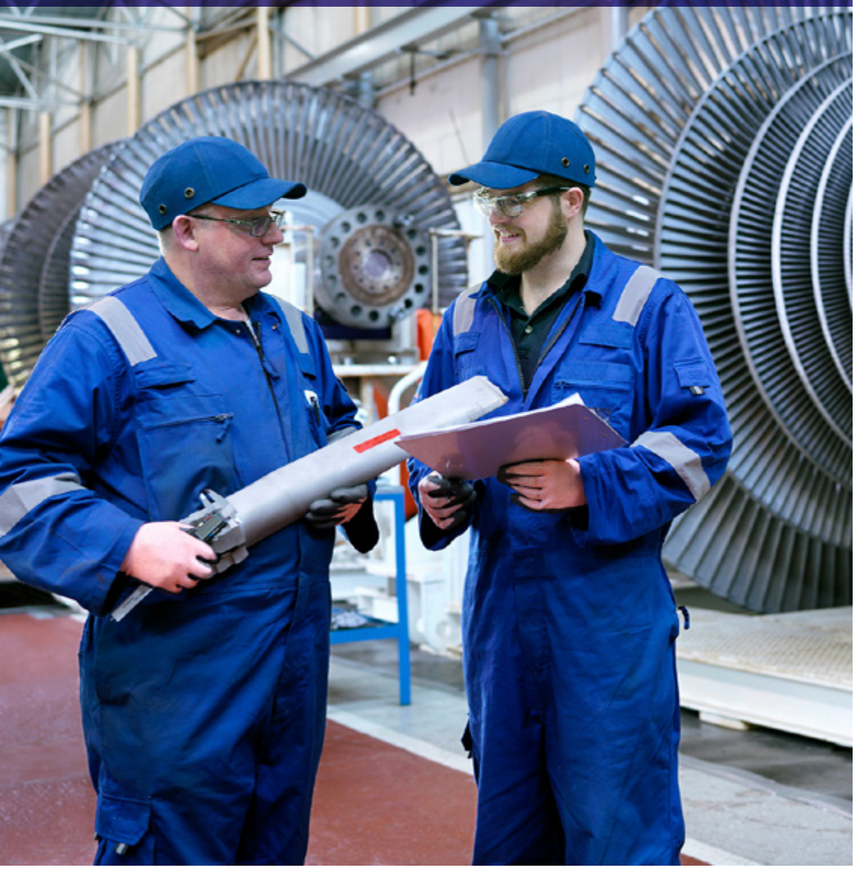


Great expectations hit a roadblock

Even as demand on today's engineers becomes higher than ever, the sector remains burdened by an acute talent crisis

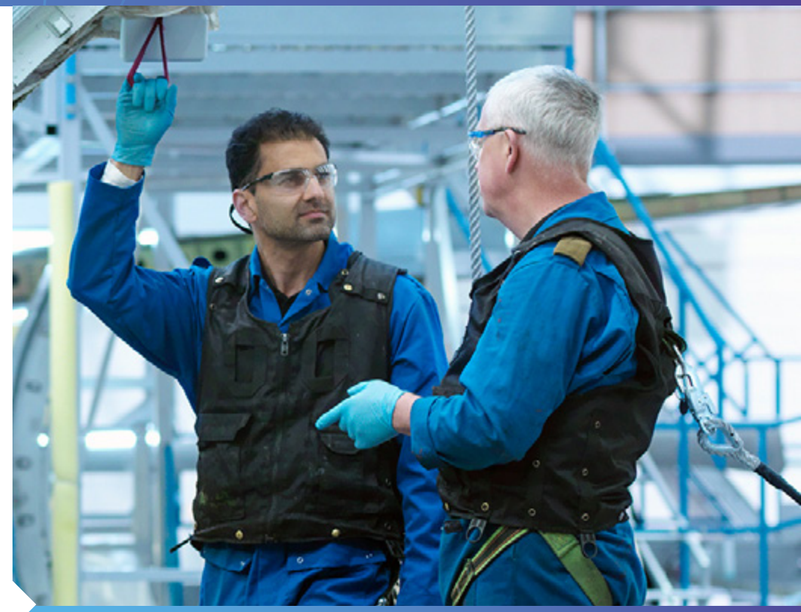
The role of engineers has always been pivotal, but never before has the weight of expectation been so immense or the stakes so high. From addressing the monumental environmental challenges of achieving net-zero, to leveraging the expanding capabilities of technology and navigating the realities of resource shortages, engineers are being called upon to innovate at unprecedented scale and speed.

Unfortunately, as outlined below, the UK's engineering skills shortage poses a critical risk to progress. Too much work and not enough people has the potential to undermine best efforts to address climate goals, impact the rollout of technological advancements and increase resource challenges.

The digital revolution: Engineering at the nexus of change

Technology is evolving at breakneck speed, shifting from single-purpose applications to integrated, multi-system solutions. Artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies now influence almost every sector, from finance and healthcare to marketing and education.

This digital revolution places engineering firms at the core of transformation, as they must design, implement and optimise these systems. However, despite their critical role, many engineering businesses find themselves struggling to keep pace with demand, as the rapid expansion of digital technologies necessitates a workforce skilled in data analysis, machine learning and system integration – capabilities often missing in current talent pools.



High demand:

+81%

Of UK engineering businesses are struggling to find the talent they need.

Source: Manpower UK Q1 2025

The green economy: A race against time hampered by a lack of skills

Simultaneously, the global push for sustainability has brought about the need for a massive influx of green engineering roles.

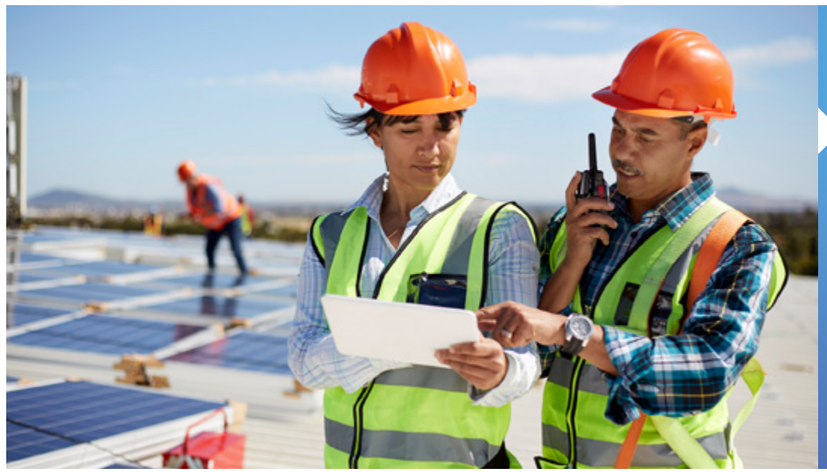
Achieving net-zero targets will require innovation across energy systems, transportation, construction, manufacturing and many other sectors. Yet, the pipeline to fill these roles is sparse. Simply put, the scale of the task is staggering; millions of new roles will need to be created and filled over the next few years, many of them demanding specialised skills in renewable energy technologies, sustainable design and environmental impact assessment.

Without a robust and capable workforce, the transition to a green economy risks significant delays, impacting global climate goals.

The gap between education and industry

While UK universities and colleges continue to graduate thousands of engineers each year, many employers report that these individuals are not adequately prepared for the demands of the workforce.

Graduates often lack practical experience, project management skills and the ability to navigate complex, real-world challenges. The disconnect between academic training and industry needs exacerbates the skills shortage, leaving businesses scrambling to upskill new hires or continuously competing for experienced professionals.



+70%

Of senior UK business leaders say that the current education system leaves college leavers unprepared for work.

Source: Startups 2023.

+70%

Across the globe, the number of employers who are actively planning to recruit for green jobs and skills.

Source: Manpower UK 2024.

Global competition for talent

The demand for engineering talent is not confined to any one sector or any one region. As digital proficiency becomes a fundamental requirement across almost all industries, engineers are increasingly sought after by fields as diverse as manufacturing, IT, retail, entertainment and tourism.

This has created a fiercely competitive global marketplace for talent. UK-based engineering businesses face the dual challenge of competing for skilled workers not only within their own sector but also against industries outside engineering and against international competitors who can often offer more attractive incentives.

Despite the tough talent situation, almost a quarter of UK engineering organisations expected to hire new workers in Q1 2025.

+24%

UK engineering – net employment outlook.

Source: Manpower UK Q1 2025

Tip of the iceberg

The points above provide a snapshot of the talent issues currently prevalent in UK engineering. However, difficult as these problems are, they do not indicate the true scale of the skills crisis across the sector.

From pay scales to recruitment costs and the rising temptation of UK engineers to decamp to foreign shores, the industry is under assault from all directions. Consider the following data as we ask the burning question...

The skills and talent crisis in engineering – how tough is it?

The UK's talent shortage has been a topic of conversation for several years, but the engineering sector is facing a skills crisis of enormous scale

Depending on whom you ask, the UK's skills and talent shortage began in 2019, or as far back as the 1970s. However, regardless of where, when or why the problem started, the result is still the same – across the nation and in almost every industry, businesses are unable to hire the talent they need.

Against this backdrop, the engineering sector, with its constant need for highly skilled workers, is struggling more than most:

- The UK faces a shortfall of 1 million engineers by 2030.
- Demand for 'green' engineering roles has increased by 55% since 2019.
- Demand for 'green skills' has risen by 48% over the same period.
- More than 11 million extra graduates, in addition to the 15.3 million graduates currently in the UK workforce, will be needed to fill jobs in the UK by 2035.
- The UK will need over 1.9 million new STEM professionals by 2035.
- The UK needs an extra 59,000 engineers annually to keep up with demand in the green economy.
- Across the UK, the average time to fill a role in tech and engineering was 56 days in 2024.
- Even as more engineering firms need skilled workers, the number of applicants per open role is falling fast – including a whopping 40% decline between March and April 2024.
- Engineer salaries are rising as firms compete for talent – up 13% in 2024 to reach an average of £65k per year (up from £57k in 2023).
- 44% of UK engineers are considering changing role.
- 51% of UK engineers would consider a job overseas.
- 20% of the UK's current engineering workforce will retire over the next five years.

No area of engineering is immune

From automotive and aerospace to energy and the built environment, common workforce issues impact the engineering sector

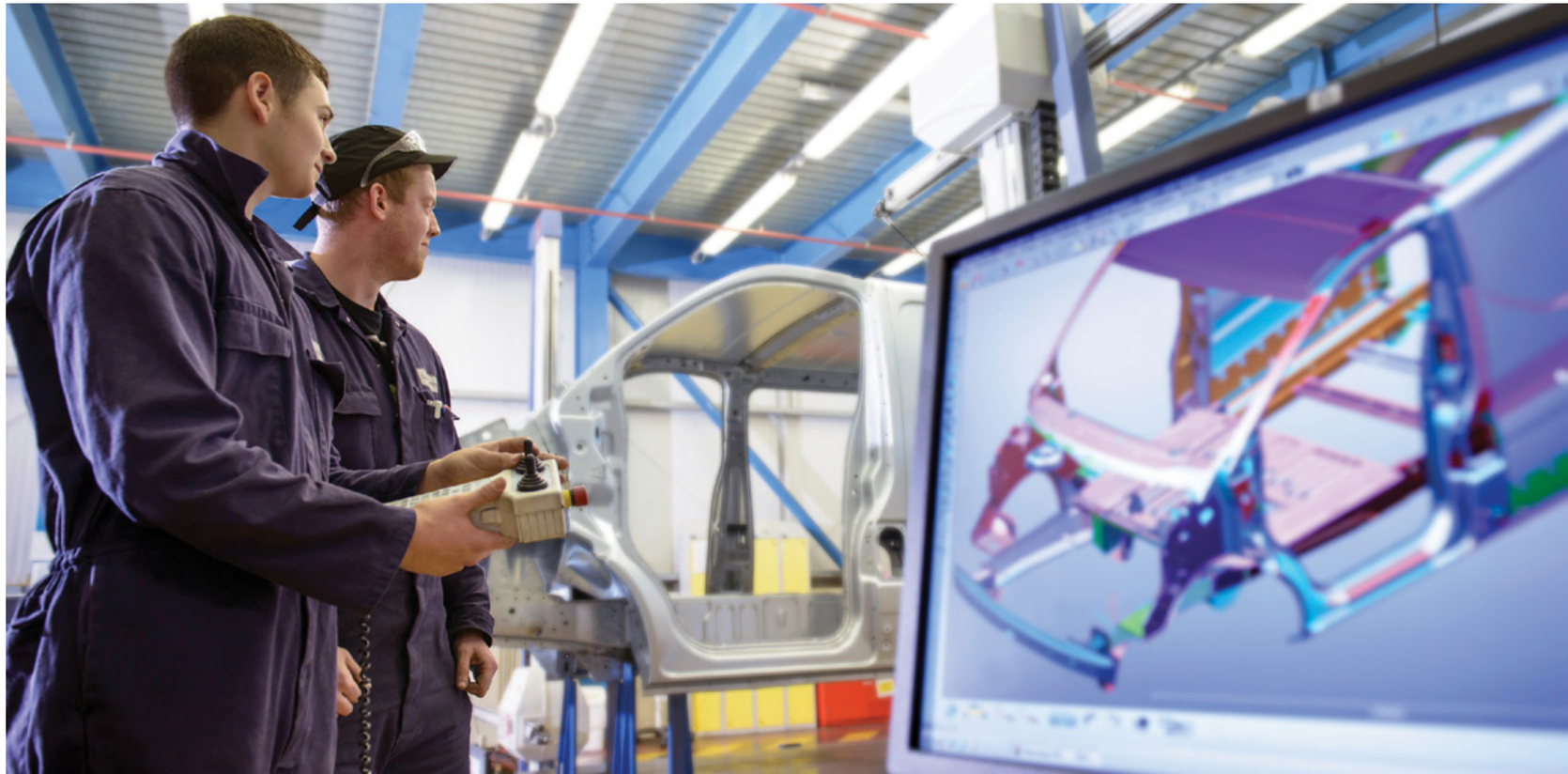
The skills crisis in UK engineering is a national problem that spares no one and shares the same pain points regardless of where engineering businesses work or what they do.

Aerospace

27% of the UK's aircraft engineering workforce is set to retire over the next decade, while almost half are considering moving to an alternative industry. This stark decline flies in the face of growing demand for air travel and the skilled personnel integral to achieving that growth.

Automotive

The automotive sector is facing a formidable skills shortage. In their 2024 UK Automotive Vacancy Overview report, the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) stated that there are currently 4.3 vacancies for every 100 employees in the sector, amounting to 23,000 unfilled jobs. This vacancy rate is 43% above the average for all sectors.



Built environment

A recent study carried out by The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board predicts that by the end of 2026, 91,000 engineers, will have retired or be just about to. Additionally, they predict 29,000 technicians – nearly 18% of the current technician workforce – will have also retired.

Energy

Government-led initiatives to change the way we heat our homes and businesses and phase out millions of inefficient boilers in favour of more eco-friendly heat pumps are in jeopardy. There are simply not enough engineers to deliver the task. Gas engineers were the fourth most in-demand trade jobs in 2023/2024 – a situation that is unlikely to improve as the current UK gas engineering workforce is dominated by older workers. More than 50% are over the age of 55 and will be retiring in the next ten years.

Logistics

The UK supply chain sector is responsible for keeping the economy on the move. However, like every other area of engineering, a shortage of mechanical engineers is having a major impact on the productivity and efficiency of road and rail freight transport. According to Logistics UK, 95% of logistics businesses are experiencing problems filling vacancies for engineer roles. More than half (54%) of surveyed businesses stated the problem was either severe or very severe.

Manufacturing

UK manufacturing represents almost 25% of our nation's GDP, but this productivity is being threatened by a wave of retirements. Professions such as mechanical engineers, metal workers, pipe-fitters and electronic trades could see between a quarter and a third of their workforce retire in the next 10 years.

Technology

The UK's Institute of Engineering and Technology says that the engineering skills shortage in the tech sector costs the UK economy £1.5bn per year. Workers in the sector are in high demand, but the current pipeline of engineers and technicians with the right skills is insufficient to match the needs of businesses.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications is a constantly evolving industry with advancements in 5G, the development of 6G and increased AI usage across all sectors demanding more and more relevant skills. However, a lack of workers, especially in network deployment and maintenance, is creating delivery delays across the sector. 42% of telecoms businesses report a specialist digital or IT skills gap and more than 60% of telecoms engineers are over the age of 50 and getting close to retirement.

No matter where you look, the engineering skills shortage is making impact. However, the simple lack of workers is not the only problem.

Internal issues

Engineering businesses cannot obtain the skills they need – but the UK's talent shortage is not the only reason recruitment and retention are so difficult

The shortage of experienced talent and the weaknesses evident in graduate skills are core issues that are unlikely to go away in 2025. However, they're only one part of the recruitment and retention problem. Instead, many engineering organisations may also be hobbled by internal problems that intensify external hiring pressures and widen internal HR flaws – **often without knowing they exist.**

The truth is, a wide range of employer-led issues may be widening the talent gap, making it harder to attract and retain skilled employees. In turn, these structural problems can further fuel the workforce infinity loop where businesses increase spending on recruitment to backfill holes in their employee plan but fail to address the underlying causes of their difficulties.

Round and round they go – with engineering businesses stuck in permanent recruitment mode and a perpetual cycle of rising costs, unnecessary strain on managers and unsatisfactory outcomes.

Key issues include:

Giving workers what they want

Today's engineering workforce is empowered, seeking more than just a pay cheque from their employers. With a talent shortage amplifying their choices, employees are prioritising factors such as **work-life balance, flexible schedules** and strong **opportunities for career advancement**. More importantly, when they don't get what they want, they vote with their feet and move elsewhere.

86% of Gen Z and 89% of Millennials

say that having a sense of purpose is important to their overall job satisfaction.

Source: Deloitte 2024

Additionally, alignment with company values, especially regarding DEIB, ESG and a compelling Employee Value Proposition (EVP), hold significant sway, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z. Leadership that comprehends these desires and champions employee wellbeing and contribution will be crucial in 2025. Loyalty can no longer be assumed; it must be earned through meaningful engagement, performance recognition and support for individual growth within the organisation. Businesses that fail to make the necessary amendments to their operations and workplace culture will likely continue to struggle to attract the talent they need.

Most UK workers are seeking a ‘good job’. But what does that look like?

- Opportunity for career growth
- Fair pay & conditions
- Flexible working
- Meaningful work
- Strong DEIB policies
- Transparent management
- Leadership shows empathy to worker needs

Source: CIPD

Only 28%

Of UK employers know what T-Levels are and understand what they involve

Source: Engineering UK Dec 2024

Meeting the needs of early careers candidates

Early Careers (EC) candidates are individuals who are at the early stages of their career. Typically, this means anyone with less than three years of work experience and can also encompass anyone in education who is looking to build their industry experience and insight. This includes entry-level and graduate roles, internships, placements and apprenticeships as well as work experience and shadowing opportunities. Unfortunately, businesses frequently overlook the unique preferences of EC candidates, an oversight that poses significant challenges as EC candidates represent the future leadership pipeline. Without attracting and nurturing this vital talent, organisations risk stagnation and irrelevance.

Strong and differentiated value propositions will be necessary to engage EC candidates in 2025, highlighting the reasons why they should choose to work for a particular company. Patience and diligence to shepherd young workers through the onboarding process – which may be lengthy due to security and background checks – are also essential virtues. Not recognising and addressing these differences may undermine the ability to secure the innovative and diverse leadership needed for sustained growth and relevance in the long term.

Supporting a positive workplace culture

Workplace culture is one of the most important deciding factors when candidates consider a new job or when existing employees have the option to stay or leave. Engineering businesses that have a poor workplace culture, one where employees are disengaged, grievances are left unresolved and management are aloof or deemed ‘uncaring’ about their staff, will typically struggle to hire and have above average employee turnover. According to Gallup, only 20% of UK workers feel engaged with their employer. Business leaders should expect workplace culture to be at the forefront in 2025.

What are Early Careers candidates looking for from an employer?

- Opportunities to kick start their career – which may include ‘sampling’ different roles
- Training to give them better ‘work relevant’ skills that complement or even supersede their educational learning
- A clear career path with opportunities for growth and promotion
- Positive workplace culture
- Strong DEIB policies and EVP.

Emphasis on skills, not experience

Many employers continue to prioritise candidate experience over an assessment of their skills. While a positive candidate experience is important, it should not overshadow the crucial evaluation of candidates' competencies and aptitudes. Skills-based hiring instead of experience-based hiring can give employers an advantage in a talent shortage, allowing them to better fill the skills gaps in their workforce and avoid the risk of hiring candidates who may have generous experience but still lack the necessary hard or soft skills to excel within the role.

Supporting systems and methods must meet today's recruitment needs

Across the engineering industry, people managers and hiring managers are facing escalating pressures due to the complexities of managing hybrid workforces and catering to candidates' heightened focus on purpose. Issues include:

Excessive reliance on artificial intelligence **(AI) for candidate selection** can overlook nuanced qualities and experiences that may not be properly captured by algorithms.

42%

Of surveyed global enterprise businesses deploy AI to screen job applicants.

Source: BBC 2024

This may neglect the full potential of more seasoned workers and other underutilised talent pools, resulting in missed opportunities for diverse perspectives and skill sets – effectively overlooking the 'diamonds in the rough'.

Instead, leveraging AI and technological filter tools **for fair and merit-based decisions** can foster equity, support a company's EVP and boost the bottom line. By ensuring fairness through their use of technology in hiring and promoting the results, employers can build trust with customers and stakeholders, reduce legal risks and enhance their brand reputation. Ultimately, equitable AI systems can improve important decision-making processes, leading to better resource allocation and innovation – an approach that can create a competitive advantage, as it promotes a positive work environment and attracts the highly-skilled talent that is crucial for financial success and sustainable growth.

Insufficient or outdated assessment experiences can leave both candidates and companies in the dark regarding role fit and organisational alignment. Lack of clarity on job expectations, company culture and values can contribute to misalignment and dissatisfaction on both sides.

Hiring managers may lack an understanding of skills-based hiring, an issue that can impact internal talent mobility and creating opportunities for new hires. Insufficient motivation factors, lack of internal policies/procedures and inadequate HR training can compound these challenges.

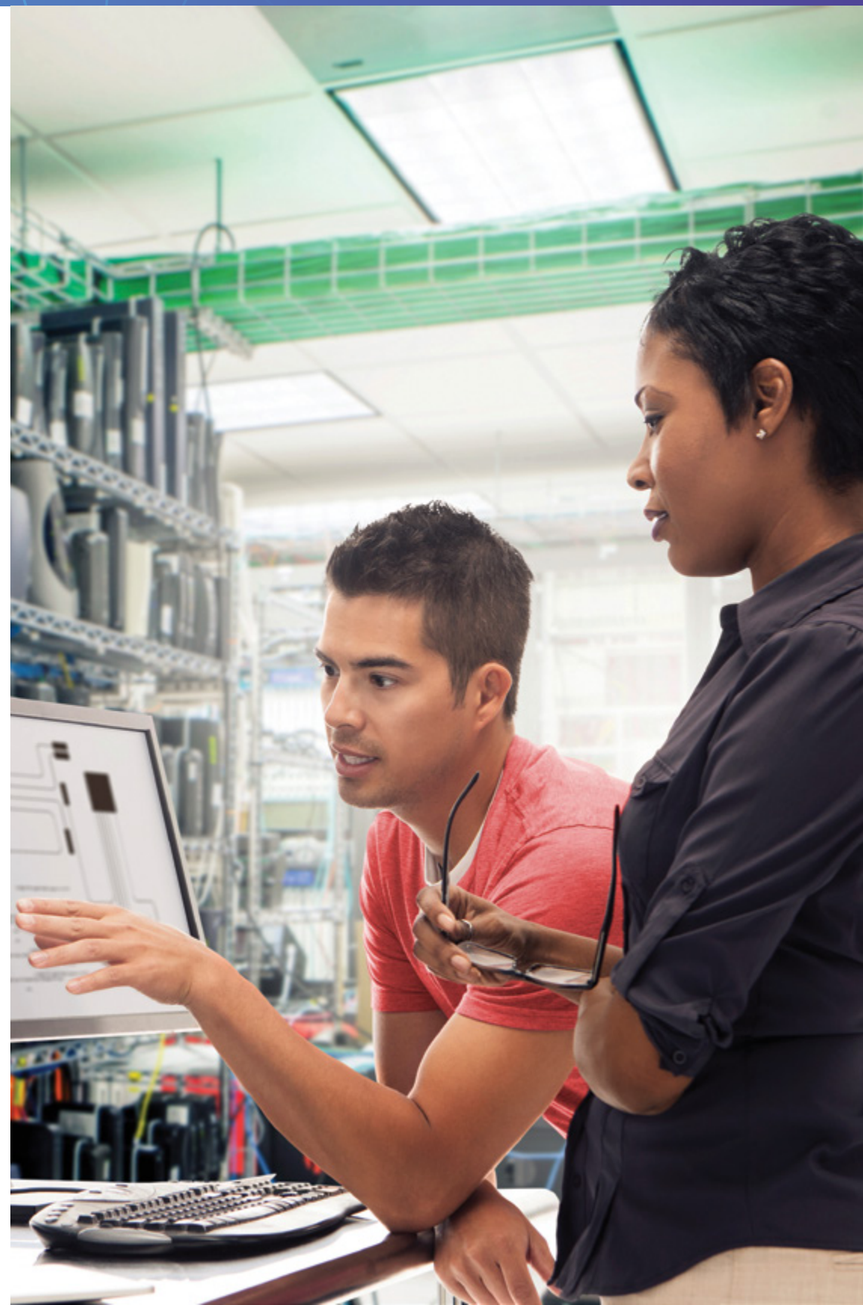
Confusing the competitive drivers unique to each talent landscape. Many hiring managers still keep their recruitment focus on traditional competitors, even though their actions in the labour market may be irrelevant. For example, it is common for engineering businesses to monitor hiring and job postings of their nearest competitors, using those findings for their own recruitment strategies. Unfortunately, this approach does not consider rapid change in many other industries, such as retail, that can also place great demand on candidates with strong digital skills. Confusing the full scope of the competition for talent can make organisations overconfident in their hiring expectations or leave them unaware that their offer does not meet candidate needs.

Rock meets hard place - the 2025 version

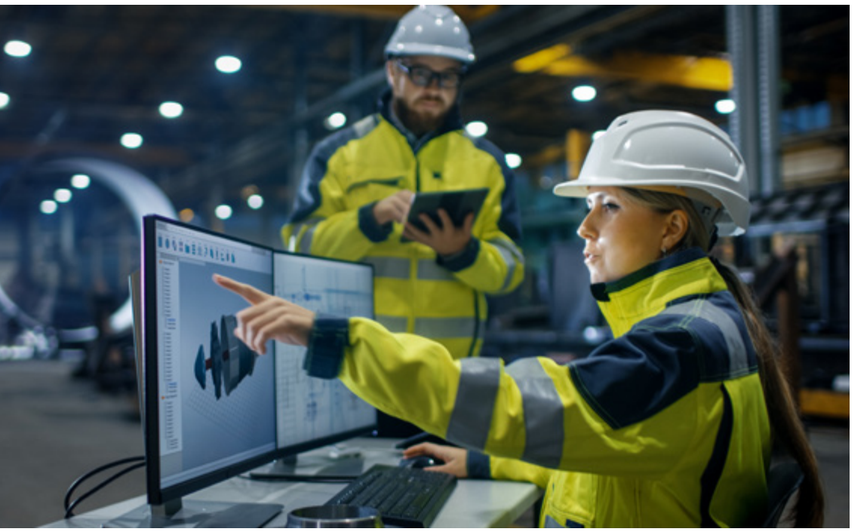
Without a paradigm shift in candidate education, selection, training processes and more, the recruitment and retention difficulties currently hampering the engineering sector are likely to persist in 2025

The UK engineering sector finds itself at a critical juncture, pinched between rising market needs and a skills crisis. High demand for engineering expertise is being driven by the rapid pace of technological advancements, expanding responsibilities across industries and the pressing need to deliver key sustainability goals. However, this demand has been met by an acute shortage of skills and qualified candidates, leaving businesses struggling to fill crucial roles. As expectations for engineers broaden to include proficiency in cutting-edge technologies, sustainability practices and interdisciplinary collaboration, the sector will be stretched to its limits in 2025.

This mismatch between demand and supply is likely to be further complicated by shifting workplace standards and a rapidly evolving labour landscape. Workers now prioritise flexibility, career development and meaningful work, and businesses that do not adapt may face increasing attrition rates. Combined with external pressures such as international competition and demographic shifts, the UK engineering sector must confront its challenges head-on or risk stalling progress on critical projects, including green initiatives and infrastructure development.



What lies ahead for the UK engineering sector?



- **Intensification of competition for top talent:** Employers will face significant challenges as they compete to attract and retain skilled engineers, both domestically and internationally.
- **Rising attrition rates:** Businesses that do not adapt to workers' demands for flexibility, professional growth and improved work-life balance may face increased employee turnover.
- **Increased salaries:** Top engineering talent will continue to be able to command premium salaries. The impact of this may trickle down, forcing wage increases across the sector as employers rush to remain competitive.
- **Heightened overseas competition:** International firms will continue to attract UK talent, leveraging higher salaries, remote work opportunities or relocation incentives.
- **Demographic shifts:** A significant wave of retirements and health-related workforce exits will exacerbate the talent shortage, as fewer new engineers enter the workforce and the talent pipeline stutters.
- **Green initiatives driving demand:** Accelerated progress toward net-zero goals could further widen the talent gap, as there is already an insufficient number of engineers available to deliver these critical projects.
- **AI's mixed impact:** While advances in artificial intelligence promise long-term efficiencies in hiring, its deeper integration may also disrupt traditional recruitment processes and exacerbate skill mismatches.
- **Need for workforce reskilling:** Upskilling and retraining programmes to retain more potential retirees and equip current workers with the skills for tomorrow will become essential to meet industry demands.

To succeed in the talent stakes in 2025, engineering organisations must adopt a strategic approach that matches a detailed and closely co-ordinated recruitment, retention and reskilling plan to the long-term objectives of the business. Playing catch-up will not be good enough. To power growth and meet demand, engineering businesses must get ahead of the skills gap by exploring and exploiting every talent avenue.

10 steps to bridge the engineering skills gap

A ‘skills-based’ hiring programme can help to close the gaps in your organisation’s workforce plan, create new opportunities for reskilling loyal workers and support employee retention

The 10-point plan below outlines strategic actions to attract, develop and retain talent for your organisation. From enhancing workplace culture and flexibility to fostering diversity and collaboration, these steps aim to deliver a workforce with the essential skills for success.

1 Conduct a ‘skills audit’

A skills audit is crucial for evaluating your business’s capabilities. Start by identifying the expertise needed for current operations and future growth. Analyse surveys, interviews and performance reviews to assess employee skills, using the results to uncover gaps and areas for development. Leverage this data to create strategies for upskilling staff and recruiting talent to address immediate and future demands.

Key benefits of Step 1:

- Identifies skills gaps
- Provides a roadmap for future hiring
- Indicates individuals most suitable for reskilling

2 Provide training for managers

Investing in training for middle managers is crucial for optimising workforce development. Provide your managers with the tools and techniques to identify employee potential and offer opportunities for advancement. Train them to assess the skills and capabilities of potential candidates during the recruitment process. By enhancing their ability to spot talent and nurture it, your managers can significantly contribute to employee engagement and retention.

Key benefits of Step 2:

- Supports retention
- Enlarges organisational knowledge pool
- Optimises existing talent capabilities whilst reducing ‘wastage’ in the hiring process.

3 Enhance your Employer Value Proposition

Ensure that your EVP is robust and aligns with your organisation's mission and values and highlights opportunities for growth and development. Clearly demonstrate your Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) policies to showcase your commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. By effectively communicating your EVP and DEIB initiatives, you can position your organisation as an employer who understands employee values and aspirations.

Key benefits of Step 3:

- Widens potential talent pool
- Presents an attractive workplace culture
- Positions your business as a 'career destination' for aspirational talent

4 Present your job offer from the candidate's perspective

Job postings that simply present a list of needed skills and experience are no longer effective in today's hiring market. Beyond learning what is necessary for the role, candidates need to know what the role will do for them. This means businesses must convey the potential growth and opportunities that the role can deliver for the candidate. Outline the benefits of the position, emphasise potential advancements within the organisation. Highlight how the role could align with the candidate's career aspirations and long-term goals.

Key benefits of Step 4:

- Widens potential talent pool
- Presents an attractive workplace culture
- Positions your business as a 'career destination' for aspirational talent

5 Give workers what they want

It is important that your organisation answers the question of what today's workers want. This goes beyond the scope of compensation and basic benefits. Today's workers want to thrive at work, which means they are seeking:

Flexible working – 45% of UK workers want to choose their own start and end times. 18% would work a four-day work week for less pay. Does your organisation offer flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse lifestyles and preferences?

Supportive leadership – Workers want workplaces with supportive managers (74%) and trusted leaders (71%) that offer more flexibility, autonomy, trust, coaching and development.

Meaningful work – Employees (74%) want to feel their contributions to the company are valued and aligned with the organisation's purpose. Recognition of a job well done is important.

A family-friendly future - As work, school and home life have collided in recent years, working parents now want more from employers, including support to stay healthy, (56% want fitness resources; 54% want healthy food options).

Better mental fitness - Mental wellbeing is high on public and corporate agendas. 25% of workers want mental health support from employers to protect them against burnout.

Key benefits of Step 5:

- Widens the potential talent pool
- Supports retention
- Supports productivity
- Strengthens organisational EVP.

6 Search for skills, not experience

Work experience may not be a perfect indicator of a candidate's capabilities. Instead of focusing on experience alone, prioritise candidates who have the specific skills needed to address your organisation's skill gaps. Recognise the value of soft skills, such as communication, adaptability and problem-solving, which are transferrable across roles. Be prepared to provide training for necessary hard skills that may be lacking in candidates. By investing in training, you can cultivate a workforce that possesses the ideal combination of technical expertise and interpersonal abilities, ensuring they can more effectively contribute to your organisation's success.

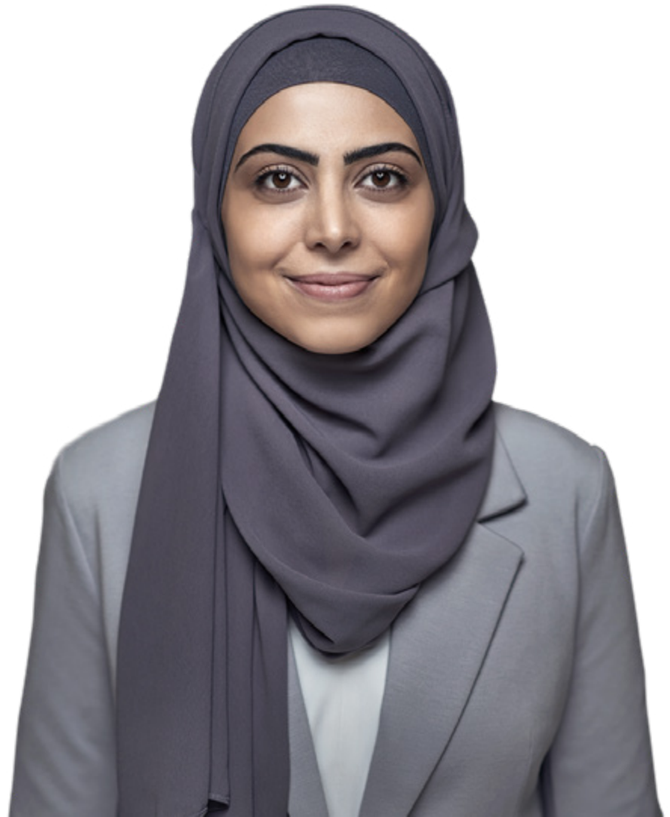
Key benefits of Step 6:

- Sharpens the focus of your search
- Can deliver a more diverse candidate pool
- Can provide a better and faster solution to your skills requirements.

65%

Of UK employers say a University Degree is less important than skills

Source: Personnel Today. August 2024



7 Widen your talent pool

The best candidates for your needs may not be found via mainstream search. Expand your recruitment strategy by considering applicants from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including seasoned workers who may offer valuable skills gained over a long career. Casting a wider net allows you to tap into talent that is often overlooked but may bring unique insights, industry knowledge and a strong work ethic to your team.

Key benefits of Step 7:

- Widens the potential talent pool
- Supports culture and performance
- Supports organisational EVP
- Supports organisational DEIB.

8 Consider your reliance on technology

AI can efficiently screen CVs and assess technical skills, but the emotional element of candidate evaluation remains crucial. Human judgment allows for a deeper understanding of a candidate's cultural fit, personality and potential for growth within an organisation. Integrating both technical and human input ensures a comprehensive approach to identifying the best-fit candidates for your team.

9 Fine-tune your onboarding processes.

Effective onboarding of new employees is vital, especially for early-career professionals who are transitioning into the workforce for the first time. Tailoring your onboarding processes to meet their needs can significantly impact their performance and long-term engagement with your organisation.

Start by providing comprehensive orientation sessions that introduce them to the company culture, values and expectations.

Assign mentors or buddies to help them navigate company policies, procedures and office dynamics, easing their transition and fostering a sense of belonging.

Additionally, offer structured training programmes to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge for their roles. This might include technical training, soft skills development and exposure to relevant tools and systems.

Key benefits of Step 8:

- Reduces technical bias
- Provides a more thorough and accurate review process
- Creates opportunities for 'talent at the margins' to shine through.

Key benefits of Step 9:

- Supports retention
- Enhances performance
- Reduces time to effectiveness
- Promotes a positive workplace culture.

10 Take a long-term approach

Supporting employees for the long term is crucial. Investing in regular training and reskilling opportunities is essential for maintaining and enhancing employee capabilities, which in turn supports retention and organisational growth.

A continuous learning mindset not only strengthens employee skills but also demonstrates your commitment to their professional development. This can boost morale and engagement. Moreover, providing reskilling opportunities enables employees to adapt to evolving job roles and market demands.

Key benefits of Step 8:

- Reduces technical bias
- Provides a more thorough and accurate review process
- Creates opportunities for ‘talent at the margins’ to shine through.

Putting theory into practice

Manpower Engineering is adept at delivering workforce solutions to the UK engineering sector.

Read on to see how we apply creativity, unique market intelligence and determined research to overcome the talent challenges of today’s engineering organisations.

Real-life case study #1

Shifting the dial - Parker Meggitt (Heatric)

MEGGITT

Heatric is a world leader in diffusion bonded heat exchangers. The company works across the aerospace, defence and energy sectors.

The challenge:

The organisation was facing difficulty hiring manufacturing operators at one of their facilities and had very high attrition rates for the hires that were made. Multiple good hires were leaving the business after only 1-2 months in role. Pay rates were competitive and the business fosters a positive working culture, so it was difficult to discern why they were facing this recruitment problem.

The solution:

Manpower Engineering hired over 30 staff for Heatric in this role over a two-year period. Throughout this process we gained market feedback when engaging new candidates, alongside conducting exit interviews with eight of the candidates we employed who left the business.

It was apparent from the early stages of engaging candidates in similar roles that the **shift pattern** was not desirable, even with the generous pay on offer. Compensation levels were enough to attract quality candidates to join the business, but it quickly became impossible for those employed to maintain a healthy work-life balance with the shift pattern on offer. (For reference, the shift pattern was changed weekly across mornings, afternoons and nights. The constant and dramatic change in sleep pattern left the candidates unable to work the role for an extended period of time. This therefore meant the candidates would only have short tenure).

We gathered this data, relayed feedback from over 20 candidates and 10 exit interviews to Heatric. **We recommended aligning to a more generic '4 on, 4 off'** shift pattern which still covered the 24/7 manufacturing requirements but provided a healthier work-life balance.

THE RESULT:

Once the changes to shift patterns were implemented, **attrition rates fell by 76%** and the organisation's need for backfilling has become minimal. Continued feedback finds both new and legacy workers in the role are happier and able to work more efficiently and effectively due to only changing their sleep pattern once per fortnight across two shifts, rather than once per week across three shifts.

Alongside this we also received **over 3x more interest in candidates applying.**

Attrition rates fell by

76%

3x more interest in candidates applying

Real-life case study #2

Accelerating the process – Aston Martin

Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings PLC is a British manufacturer of luxury sports cars and grand tourers.

The challenge:

Aston Martin had **an urgent requirement to recruit 142 automotive technicians** at their plant in St Athan in South Wales, to support the production of their new DBX SUV model. Twenty automotive technicians were needed immediately (within three weeks), with a further 20 required each week thereafter.

The solution:

Manpower Engineering supported the requirement for contingent labour for Aston Martin via a hybrid model that combined attraction, selection and assessment of skilled vehicle technicians to support the ramp-up in production of the SUV models, as well as account management based both onsite and offsite.

From a standing start after contract sign-off in February 2022, we produced detailed market intelligence into the status of the industry and regional analysis of the labour market in South Wales including labour availability, salary benchmarking and candidate demographics. These insights were used to inform and manage demand planning and help focus hiring efforts on key demographics, and to inform our attraction media channel plan and flight schedule.

We successfully launched a client-branded advertising campaign across multiple media channels to initiate the attraction process. This campaign generated a significant interest level, both due to the prestige of the brand but also the attractiveness of the role and the Employer Value Proposition it offered.

With in excess of 1,000 applicants passing through the initial pre-screen, our teams further narrowed down the list of candidates invited to a skills assessment centre, allowing physical testing of competency in assembly of automotive components. This assessment was combined with a final interview and the successful candidates advised of the outcomes.

THE RESULT:

In **less than three months we successfully onboarded 102 skilled technicians**, satisfying the immediate demand, and created a **back-up** list of approximately 40 candidates who had passed all the tests and interview process and were given the opportunity to join the team at a later date as demand/ resourcing profiles were finalised.

Real-life case study #3

A custom fit – WHP

WHP Engineering Ltd is a world-class leader in the supply of bespoke design and build services, providing construction solutions to national and international clients for cleanroom and complex process systems. They have been a Manpower Engineering client since 2015.

The challenge:

WHP approached Manpower Engineering to seek our expertise in the supply of a diverse range of skilled contract professionals with experience in the complex construction and manufacturing of cleanrooms in the pharmaceutical, surgical and process industries. The company had already engaged a number of talent suppliers which was costing them time, money and continuity. They were looking to partner with a sole supplier to provide a robust registration and onboarding process, along with a tax compliant payroll system at the correct price. We needed to source suitably qualified personnel who were flexible regarding travel and work commitments, and implement a robust registration, onboarding and tax compliant payroll system to ensure the projects ran smoothly.

The solution:

Manpower Engineering provided an account manager from within our Specialist Technical team, to act as a **dedicated point of contact**. The account manager organised regular client visits to ensure that our specialist consultants always had a clear, up-to-date understanding of the changing needs of the business and the critical path of all the works in order to **source the correct talent pool** at the correct time. The account manager also arranged onsite visits with contractors to discuss any issues that they had and fed this back to the client in order to avoid any continuity issues during the works. We provided WHP with a comprehensive registration and onboarding service which included:

- Sourcing suitably qualified personnel using market intelligence, advertising platforms, talent insights and our national contractor database
- Referencing potential candidates
- Verifying qualifications and proof of right to work in the UK.

Manpower Engineering also provided WHP with a robust payroll process and suitable payment terms, ensuring that all personnel are tax compliant and any changes in legislation are adhered to.

THE RESULT:

Ten years on, Manpower Engineering continues to assist WHP as their business grows rapidly. We are currently a **principal supplier of numerous skilled contractors** to WHP for various high-profile projects throughout the UK.

Manpower Engineering - we understand the engineering sector

At Manpower Engineering, we connect employers to highly specialised, in-demand talent – accelerating careers and driving business growth.

Manpower has the sector knowledge

Our recruiters are industry specialists dedicated to leveraging their expertise for your success. With deep market knowledge across sectors, we ensure a seamless hiring process. Using leading insights and data, we understand your business needs and provide the latest market intelligence to match the best candidates to your organisation.

Manpower has the talent

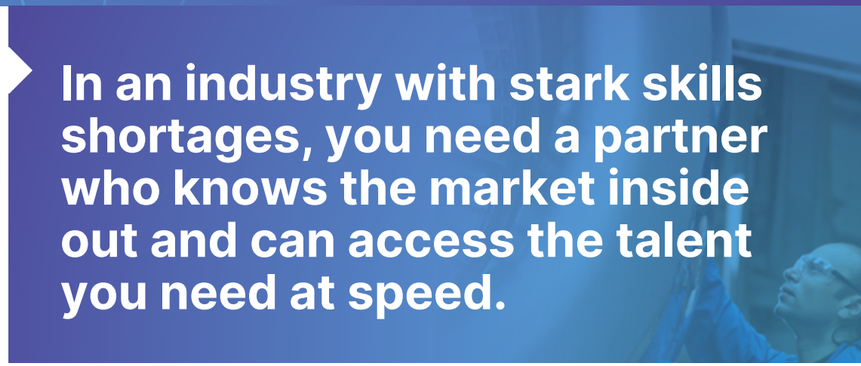
We have deep talent networks because we expertly match our engineering consultants with enriching, challenging roles in outstanding companies like yours.

Manpower can work at scale

Whether you need one engineer or a one-stop-shop for comprehensive workforce solutions, make Manpower Engineering your first choice.

Our key services:

- Permanent hiring – For long-term solutions and fixed-term contracts, we provide the stability and expertise your business needs for sustained success. We specialise in permanent recruitment across a wide range of engineering skills, both nationally and internationally.
- Contingent hiring – Our highly skilled engineers and technicians form part of your team to support your project-based staffing requirements



In an industry with stark skills shortages, you need a partner who knows the market inside out and can access the talent you need at speed.

- Retained assignments – Delivering on diverse and confidential searches for niche skills, providing highly tailored solutions aligning with your timeframe and budget
- Managed services - For extended projects and fixed-term contracts, we provide the stability and expertise your business needs to achieve long-term success.

Across key engineering sectors:

- Defence and aerospace
- Automotive
- Built environment
- Manufacturing
- Renewables

Find out more →

Manpower Engineering

Find out how Manpower Engineering can support your business in 2025

The UK engineering sector will face persistent skills shortages in 2025, with businesses of all sizes struggling to secure essential talent.

However, engineering organisations that embrace a **comprehensive workforce plan** and foster **adaptability**, will likely be best positioned to mitigate the skill shortages and sustain their growth.

Contact us today →