

[News story: Industry and education join forces to inspire future engineers in Northern Ireland](#)

Northern Ireland's engineering innovation was in the spotlight as HM Government Envoy for the Year of Engineering Stephen Metcalfe MP visited the country to see first-hand how the industry is inspiring budding engineers.

During the trip last week Stephen Metcalfe visited a pioneering garden which prevents local flooding while acting as a resource to teach schoolchildren how engineering can help communities. He also met engineering apprentices and launched a new competition that will give thousands of schoolchildren the chance to discover what they could achieve as engineers.

Throughout 2018, the [Year of Engineering](#) has seen government join forces with more than 1,400 industry, education and charity partners to transform perceptions of engineering among children, their parents and teachers – with a target of giving young people a million direct experiences of engineering by the end of the year.

As well as visiting the Clondeboye Rainwater Garden, a collaboration between Northern Ireland Water, the Department for Infrastructure and Aecom, Stephen Metcalfe saw first-hand some of the country's groundbreaking engineering at Bombardier, Thales and Ulster University – covering sectors from aerospace to nanotechnology.

He also helped launch the Northern Ireland Primary Engineer and Secondary Engineer Leader's Award, a competition which will bring thousands of schoolchildren face to face with real engineering role models and experiences. The competition is supported by Ulster University, Thales and the Royal Navy. Already running in England and Scotland, last year it saw 37,000 young people come up with their own inventions to solve real engineering challenges.

Stephen Metcalfe said:

Northern Ireland has a rich engineering heritage and it's been fantastic to see first-hand the creativity and innovation of the industry, and the vital work being done to inspire young people throughout the country to consider careers in engineering.

Bringing young people from all backgrounds face to face with engineering experiences and role models is at the heart of the campaign, so it's fantastic to see this in action with collaborative projects like the Clondeboye Rainwater Garden and the launch of the Northern Ireland Primary and Secondary Engineer Leaders Award.

I have no doubt that the combined enthusiasm and expertise of the industry here in Northern Ireland will inspire schoolchildren across the country and bring about a positive change in the number of young people realising what they could achieve as engineers.

Engineering makes a major contribution to the UK economy, but the sector faces a major skills gap and lack of diversity – there is annual shortage of 20,000 engineering graduates each year, only 12% of the engineering workforce is female, and less than 8% comes from a black, Asian or ethnic minority background.