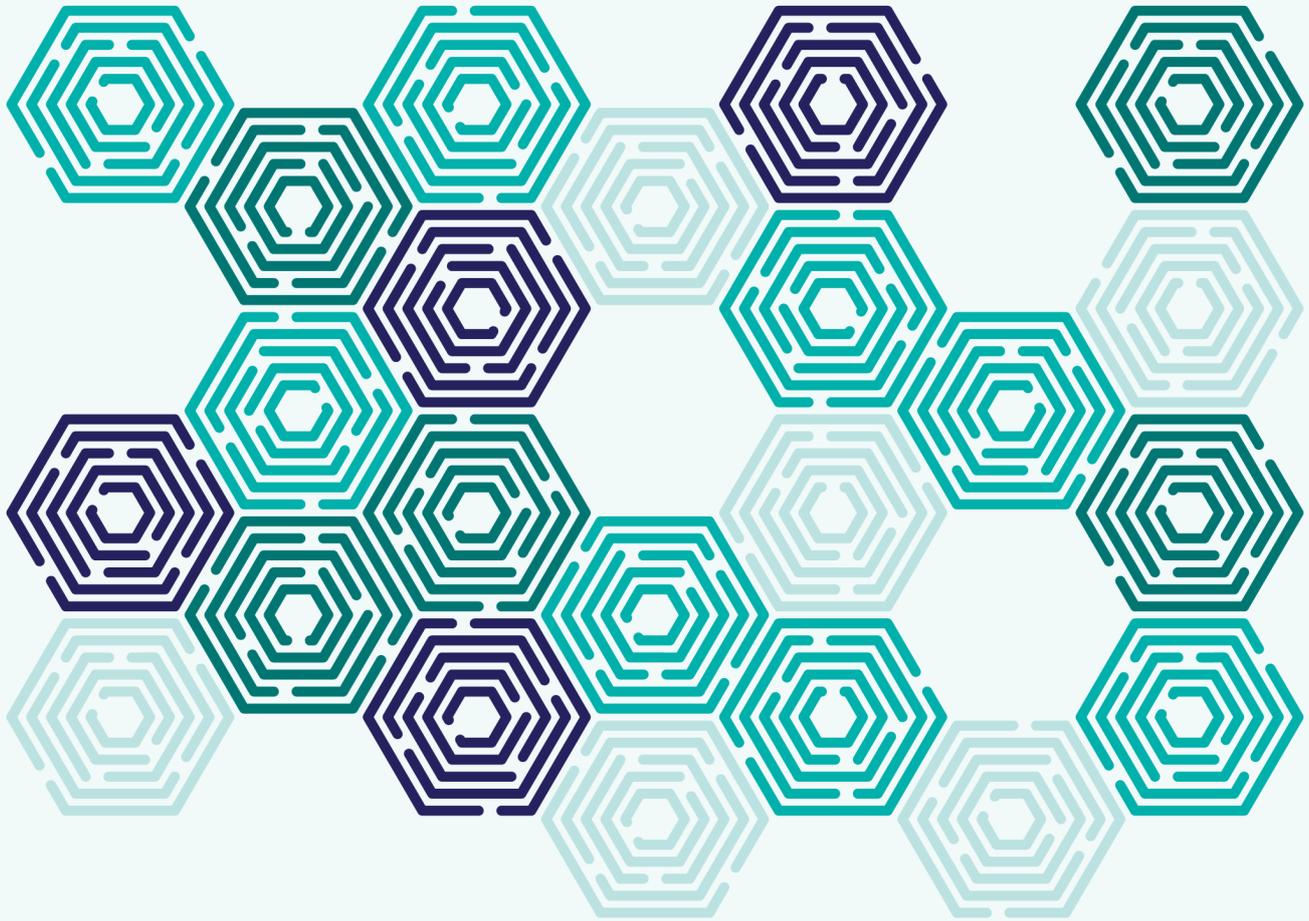




**EngineeringUK**

INSPIRING FUTURES TOGETHER



# Young people's views on professional registration

## Big Bang Fair 2025 survey

February 2026

[engineeringuk.com](https://www.engineeringuk.com)

## 1. Executive summary

The 2025 Big Bang Fair survey confirmed that awareness of professional registration among students aged 10 to 13 is very low, with **72% reporting they had not heard of it** before attending.

When professional registration was explained in an age-appropriate way, it was shown to increase interest in engineering: **62% of students said they were more interested**. This is largely due to themes of trust, respect, career opportunity, and personal confidence.

However, for students who are uncertain about their future or disengaged from engineering, professional registration alone is not motivating and can feel abstract or overly formal. This highlights the importance of framing the concept within broader, relatable narratives that emphasise the excitement, creativity, and real-world impact of engineering.

Professional registration can reinforce engineering's value when communicated as an inclusive, achievable milestone rather than an intimidating requirement.

## 2. Key findings

### Awareness is low

- only **10%** of respondents had heard of professional registration before The Fair
- **72%** had not heard of it
- **18%** were unsure

### Explaining registration increases interest

After hearing an age-appropriate definition:

- **62%** said it made them **more interested** in engineering
- **24%** said it made no difference
- **5%** said it made them less interested
- **9%** were unsure

### Trust is a strong motivator

Learning that engineers are trusted professionals had additional impact:

- **70%** said it made them more interested (a lot or a little)

### Positive themes driving interest

Students who became more interested highlighted:

- status, trust, and respect
- career opportunities and future prospects
- confidence and ambition
- better understanding of engineering
- creativity and enjoyment
- inclusivity and accessibility for everyone

## Registration feels distant for less engaged students

Students reporting no change or uncertainty often cited:

- lack of interest in engineering
- confusion or perceived complexity
- uncertainty about future career plans

Overall, professional registration was most motivating for students already inclined toward engineering.

## 3. Recommendations

### 1. inspire first, explain later

Lead with what makes engineering exciting, creative, and impactful before introducing professional registration

### 2. make professional registration relatable

Use stories of diverse engineers, real projects, and tangible examples to help students connect with the concept

### 3. focus on benefits, not technicalities

Emphasise trust, recognition, and career pathways rather than formal processes or requirements

These actions will ensure professional registration reinforces interest and confidence without feeling distant or intimidating.

## 4. Method

The survey was conducted over three days at The Big Bang Fair 2025. Students aged 10 to 13 completed questionnaires on iPads, including both multiple-choice and open-text questions.

Students were provided with the following age-appropriate definition:

“Professional registration is a way of showing employers and customers that you can be trusted to do a high-quality job. It means your work is at a high, professional standard and that you keep your knowledge and skills up to date.”

Open-text responses were thematically coded to identify motivations, barriers, and perceptions.

## 5. Results

### Respondent profile

- **279 students** from **72 schools**
  - **144** from the Midlands
  - **125** from other regions
- **gender:**
  - **53%** female
  - **41%** male
  - remainder unspecified/other
- **ethnicity:**
  - **50%** White
  - **26%** Asian/Asian British
  - **11%** Black African/Caribbean/British
  - **13%** did not disclose

This diversity provides confidence the findings reflect a broad range of young people.

### **Awareness of professional registration**

- **10%** had heard of it
- **72%** had not
- **18%** were unsure

As professional registration was largely unknown to participants, raising awareness is a critical first step before it can influence interest in engineering. **Appendix 1 provides details about what EngineeringUK already does to promote professional registration to young people.**

### **Impact on interest in engineering**

After explanation:

- **62%** more interested
- **24%** no difference
- **5%** less interested
- **9%** unsure

Trust messaging also increased interest:

- **70%** more interested
- **23%** no difference
- **5%** less interested
- **2%** don't know

### **Themes in student responses**

#### **Students who became more interested**

Key motivations included:

- trust and credibility
- career opportunity
- confidence and ambition
- enjoyment and creativity

- inclusivity

Illustrative comments:

“It shows that I am qualified to be an engineer.”

“Because people I may work with in the future can trust me.”

“It makes me feel capable of being an engineer.”

Some students struggled to explain clearly, suggesting partial understanding.

### **Students with neutral or negative responses**

Key themes included:

- disinterest in engineering
- confusion or perceived complexity
- uncertainty about future career fit

Illustrative comments:

“Engineering isn’t something I’m interested in.”

“It feels too complicated.”

“I don’t really know what a registry is.”

“I do not know what I want to do in the future yet.”

## **6. Conclusion**

The Big Bang Fair 2025 survey demonstrates that professional registration is largely unfamiliar to students aged 10 to 13. However, when introduced in an accessible and relatable way, it can increase interest in engineering, particularly through themes of trust, recognition, and future opportunity.

The concept is most effective for students already open to engineering, while those who are disengaged or uncertain find it more abstract and less motivating. To maximise impact, professional registration should be positioned as an inspiring milestone within broader stories of creativity, real-world engineering, and diverse role models.

## Appendix 1

### Professional registration – what EngineeringUK is already doing

We mention professional registration in a light touch way in the following careers resources on Neon:

- **[From idea to career: explore 12 areas of engineering](#) – page 31**  
We link to each of the 12 featured disciplines' associated PEI website. This resource is also available in Welsh. It was developed in collaboration with 25 PEIs
- **[All routes into engineering](#) – pages 9, 14 and 16 to 19.** This resource is also available in Welsh
- **[What is engineering?](#) – page 7.** This resource is also available in Welsh
- **[Meet the Future You quiz](#)** – each quiz character has a profile page, which mentions relevant PEI websites. For example, the [Electric Dynamo](#) character links out to The IET, IMechE and Energy Institute
- We've updated **Engineer your Future** for STEM Ambassadors/outreach practitioners/business volunteers referencing professional registration within the resource