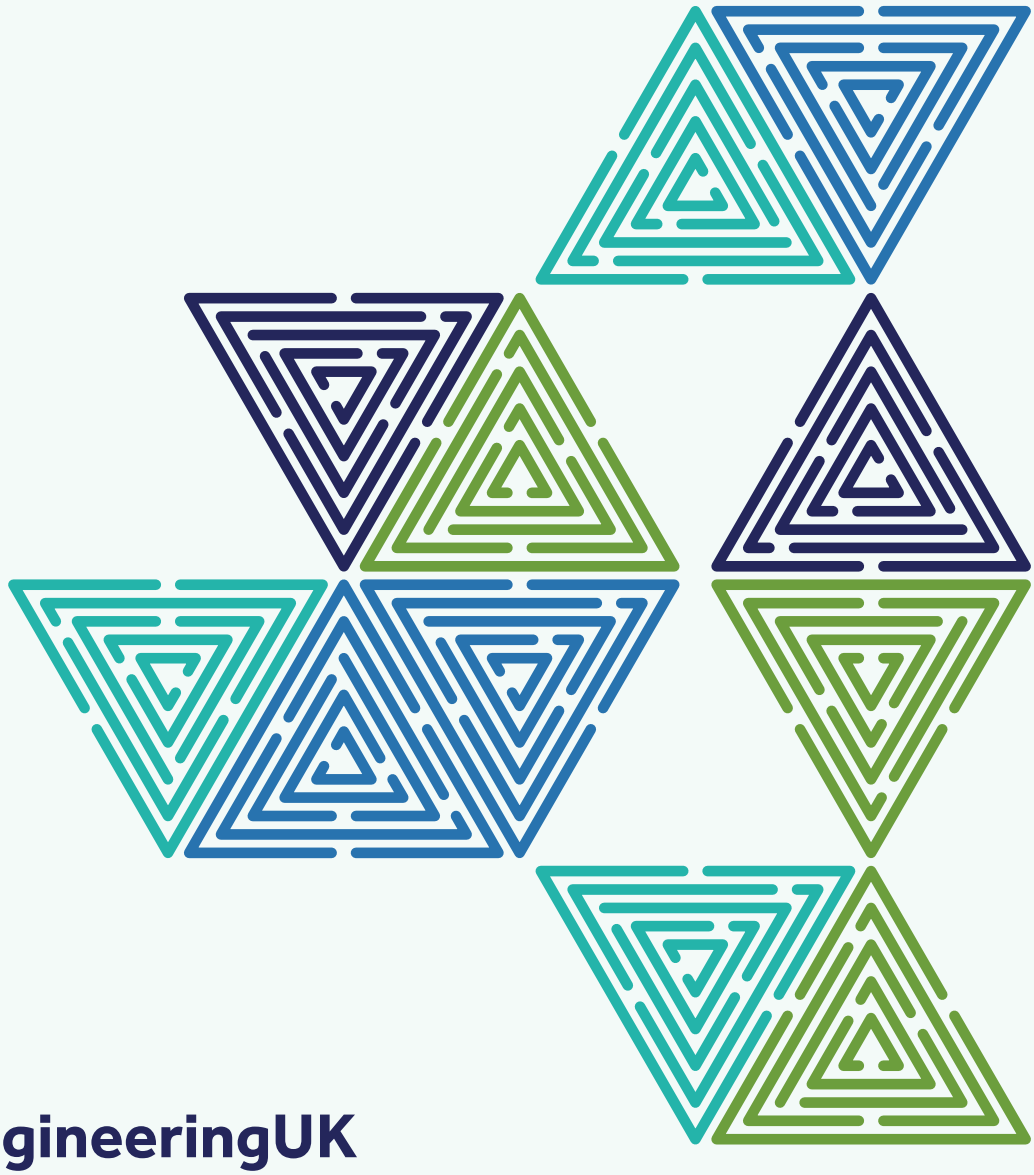
THE ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY WORKFORCE

April 2026



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Introduction

Each year, EngineeringUK provides insight into the engineering and technology workforce, showcasing the number and characteristics of people working in these occupations in the UK. We do this using the Office of National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force Survey (LFS)[1].

The engineering footprint

The engineering footprint is an agreed upon list of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and Standard Industry Classification (SIC) codes developed by EngineeringUK, the Engineering Council and Royal Academy of Engineering to ensure a universal and consistent definition of engineering and technology[2]. These definitions are used throughout this briefing when referring to those working in engineering and technology occupations, and those working in the engineering and technology industry. All diversity data focuses on those working in engineering and technology roles, using the SOC codes.

Data quality issues in the Labour Force Survey

Due to ongoing issues regarding the quality of the LFS we adjusted the way in which we measure the size and composition of engineering and technology in 2024. Please see our methodology section for more details. These quality concerns have also been acknowledged by the ONS itself and attributed to steadily declining response rates, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic[3].

Positively, the ONS has implemented short-term improvements to the LFS and is developing an online-first replacement called the Transformed LFS (TLFS). However, the aim is that this will replace the LFS fully in November 2026, and this could likely extend into 2027[4].

In light of these challenges, and despite our amends to the way in which we measure engineering and technology in the workforce, we remain concerned about the reliability of the data. We are confident in the validity of the overall numbers, but believe that these issues prevent us from looking at some of the granularity. As such, whilst we have produced an annual report this year, we only report headline statistics. We will not be providing detailed insights, for example into sub-sectors or individual roles within engineering and technology. We will also not be featuring statistics on the intersectionality of characteristics such as gender and ethnicity. Additionally, we don't feel that small changes year-on-year are reliable, but instead need to rely on longer term trends. We hope that the introduction of the TLFS will enable us to include these valuable insights in the future.

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[1] https://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys/informationforhouseholdsandindividuals/householdandindividualsurveys/labourforcesurvey

[2] Read the full report on how our engineering footprint was developed and adjusted to take into account the ONS' updated occupational coding system from SOC2010 to SOC2020 online at www.engineeringuk.com/footprint

[3] Office of National Statistics. (2024). *Quality under challenge: regulating statistics and data from the labour force survey*. Available at: https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/blog/quality-under-challenge-regulating-statistics-and-data-from-the-labour-force-survey/

[4] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/labourmarkettransformationupdateonprogressandplans/november2025

The engineering and technology workforce

Analysis of the 2025 LFS data using the engineering footprint shows there were approximately 6.3 million people working in engineering and technology occupations, which accounts for 19% of the UK workforce. This is broadly consistent with 2024. There are approximately 4 million working in core engineering occupations and a further 2.3 million in related engineering occupations[5] (table 1).

Table 1: Number and percentage working in engineering and technology occupations in the UK

	Approximate number	% of the overall workforce
Core engineering and technology	4.0 million	12%
Related engineering and technology	2.3 million	7%
Total engineering and technology	6.3 million	19%

Source: EngineeringUK analysis of 2025 Labour Force Survey data

Over 1 in 10 of the employed UK workforce were working in an engineering and technology occupations **within** the engineering and technology industry (12%). A further 10% were working in the engineering and technology industry but *not* in an engineering or technology occupation (for example in HR or communications). A smaller proportion were working in engineering and technology, but within a different industry (6%). Overall, this means that engineering and technology accounts for 29% of UK employment (table 2).

Table 2: Percentage working in engineering and technology industry in the UK

Occupation and industry	% of the overall workforce
Working in an engineering or tech role in the engineering and tech industry	12%
Working in the engineering and tech industry but not in an engineering and tech role	10%
Working in an engineering or tech role in a different sector	6%
Neither working in an engineering or tech role nor in the industry	71%

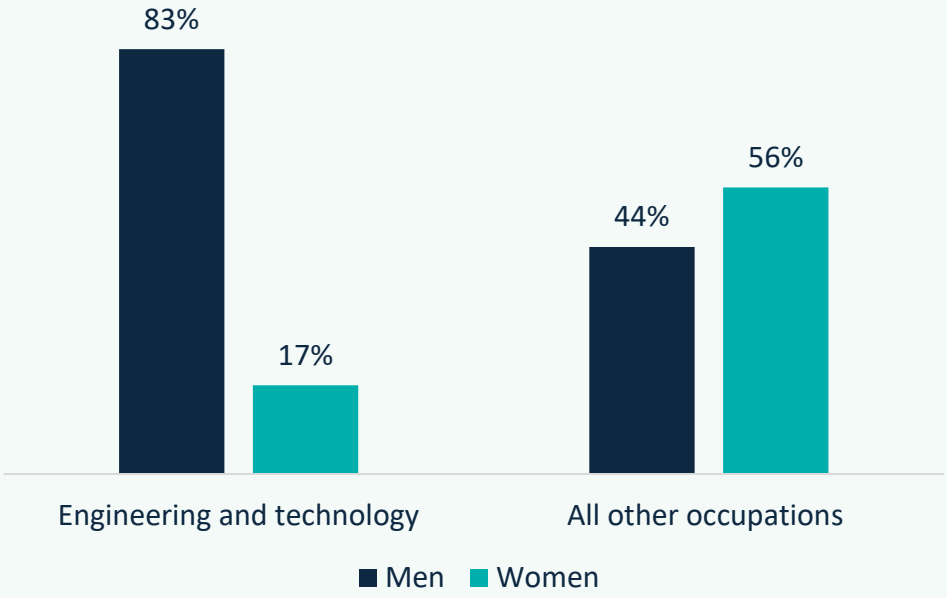
Source: EngineeringUK analysis of 2025 Labour Force Survey data

[5] Definitions of core and related engineering and technology occupations can be found online at www.engineeringuk.com/footprint

Gender

The proportion of women in engineering and technology roles has increased, albeit slowly, from around 10% in 2010[6] to 17% in 2025. This is still worryingly low, especially compared to the percentage of women working in all other occupations (56%).

Figure 1: Gender of those in engineering and technology and other occupations



Source: EngineeringUK analysis of 2025 Labour Force Survey data

[6] https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/app/uploads/horton2023-02-02.pdf

Ethnicity

Due to small sample sizes and ongoing concerns regarding the validity of the conclusions drawn from the LFS, we were unable to look at ethnicity above the 5 category variable. We found that 15% of those working in engineering and technology were from a UK minority ethnic group. This is lower than the 19% for all other occupations.

Table 3: Ethnicity of those working in engineering and technology and other occupations

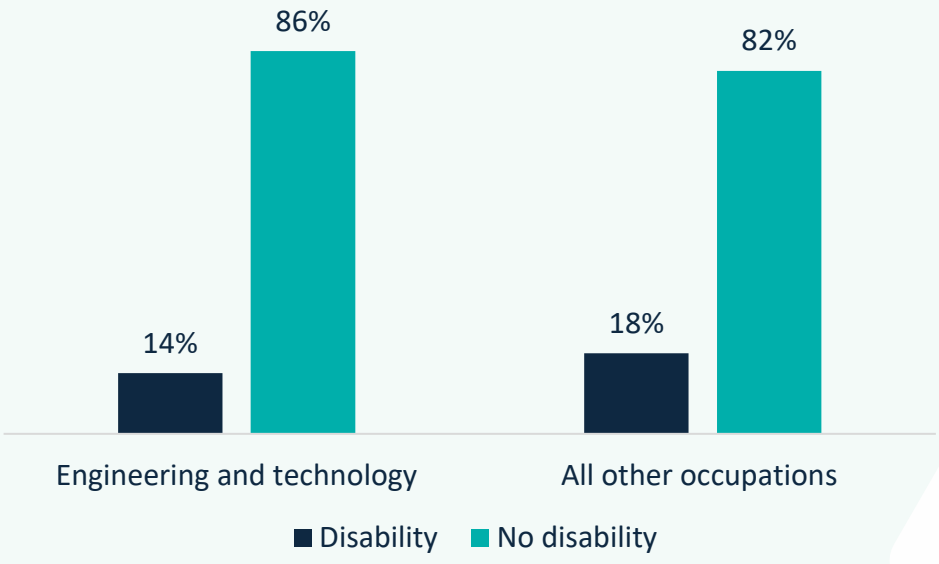
Ethnicity	Engineering and technology	All other occupations combined
Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and any other Asian background)	8%	9%
Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British	3%	6%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2%	2%
Other ethnic group	2%	2%
White	85%	82%

Source: EngineeringUK analysis of 2025 Labour Force Survey data

Disability

A smaller proportion of engineers reported a disability (14%) compared to all other occupations combined (18%) (figure 2).

Figure 2: Workers who reported a disability in engineering and other occupations



Source: EngineeringUK analysis of 2025 Labour Force Survey data

Methodology

Full details of our methodology as it relates to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) can be found at www.engineeringuk.com/footprinttechnical. This document outlines challenges with the LFS data in recent years (discussed in the introduction of this paper), and our subsequent decision to amend our methodology.

Defining engineering and technology

Throughout this report, engineering and technology occupations were defined using our engineering footprint, an agreed upon list developed by ourselves, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Engineering Council. In March 2024, we published a report prompted by the ONS revising its standard occupation classification (SOC) codes, which provided up-to-date figures for the percentage of people working in engineering occupations and be accessed at www.engineeringuk.com/footprint.

Gender

The data collected by the ONS records the current sex of respondents. We refer to gender throughout this report when using this data.

Ethnicity

At a UK level, ethnicity is provided in the LFS data in 9 categories. However, due to small numbers in the sample we combine these to use 5 categories: Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British, mixed or multiple ethnic groups, white, and other.

Disability

Disability is measured using the Equality Act definition, for which the ONS use the Government Statistical Service's harmonisation questions[7]. The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' is defined as more than minor or trivial and 'long-term' means 12 months or more.

[7] https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/measuring-disability-for-the-equality-act-2010/

Who we are

Established in 2001, EngineeringUK is a not-for profit organisation, funded predominantly via the professional registration fees of individual engineers, as well as the support of a range of businesses, trusts and foundations, and a corporate membership scheme. Our ambition is to enable more young people from all backgrounds to be informed, inspired and progress into engineering and technology.

Working in partnership to inspire more young people from a greater range of backgrounds to pursue the exciting career opportunities in modern engineering and technology is at the heart of EngineeringUK's purpose. Collaboration is essential to reach our long-term vision: for the UK to have the diverse workforce needed for engineering and technology to thrive and to drive economic prosperity, improve sustainability and achieve net zero.

Driven by data

Our work is rooted in our understanding of the current and future needs of the engineering and technology workforce. We complement that understanding by establishing which activities help increase the number and diversity of young people choosing engineering, technology and technician careers, especially those in sustainability and net zero.

We base everything we do on evidence and we share our analysis and insight widely. We publish comprehensive data on all aspects of engineering and technology in the UK – providing a detailed examination of the economic contribution, the workforce composition, as well as the extent to which workforce supply through education and training is likely to meet future demand for engineering and technology skills.

We evaluate all our activity to help ensure our engagements with young people are as effective as possible. It is through evaluation that we can identify the extent to which our programmes are winning the hearts and minds of young people, increasing their understanding of engineering and technology, and changing their perceptions of a career in it as something they'd consider for themselves, regardless of background and gender.