

# Partner Webinar

13<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 12:00-13:00

## Retaining talent:

Keeping engineering careers moving forward  
through change and challenge



# Agenda



<b>1 Welcome</b>	12:00	5 mins
<b>2 Retaining talent:</b> Keeping engineering careers moving forward through change and challenge	12:05	20 mins
<b>3 Strategic planning</b> to support value and impact	12:25	15 mins
<b>4 Questions and close</b>	12:40	5 mins



[ellie@chillipepper.online](mailto:ellie@chillipepper.online)

**Keeping  
careers moving  
forward –  
retention of  
women in  
engineering**



# Engineering UK data signalled that women were leaving engineering, and evidence was plentiful but anecdotal



## The Retention Problem

### Women leave engineering at higher rates — especially mid-career

- Exit is rarely a single moment; it's a slow drift driven by friction points
- Life-changing events (parental leave, caring, health) are trigger risks
- Career stagnation and systemic bias accelerate disengagement
- Employers often intervene too late, after withdrawal has already begun

## What the research shows

### Three forces shape mid-career retention

- Career stagnation: stalled progression, lack of sponsorship, unclear pathways
- Systemic barriers: bias in evaluation, exclusion from networks, inflexible cultures
- Life transitions: leave, caring, health, bereavement, burnout

**Women stay when they have connection, clarity and confidence**

## Why women leave

### Structural and systemic barriers compound over time

- Unequal access to stretch roles and high-visibility projects
- “Motherhood penalty” and assumptions about ambition
- Inconsistent manager support
- Isolation as “the only one”
- Rigid working patterns and presenteeism norms

# The literature research showed that the UK economy is losing women at scale because of systemic career barriers, not personal circumstances



## ***The UK is losing tens of thousands of experienced women every year***

Women leave technical roles, either exiting the sector entirely or moving to new employers, because their current workplace blocks progression.

**This talent drain costs the UK £2–3.5 billion per year.**

## ***Women are not leaving because of childcare***

Only 3% of women cite caregiving as the reason for leaving technical roles which directly challenges one of the most persistent myths in the sector.

**Women leave because the system is broken, not because their personal circumstances change.**

## ***The real drivers of attrition are structural and systemic***

### **a. Lack of career advancement**

- 25% of women leave due to stalled progression.
- Women report fewer opportunities for stretch roles, sponsorship, and visibility.

### **b. Inadequate recognition**

- 17% leave because their contributions are undervalued.

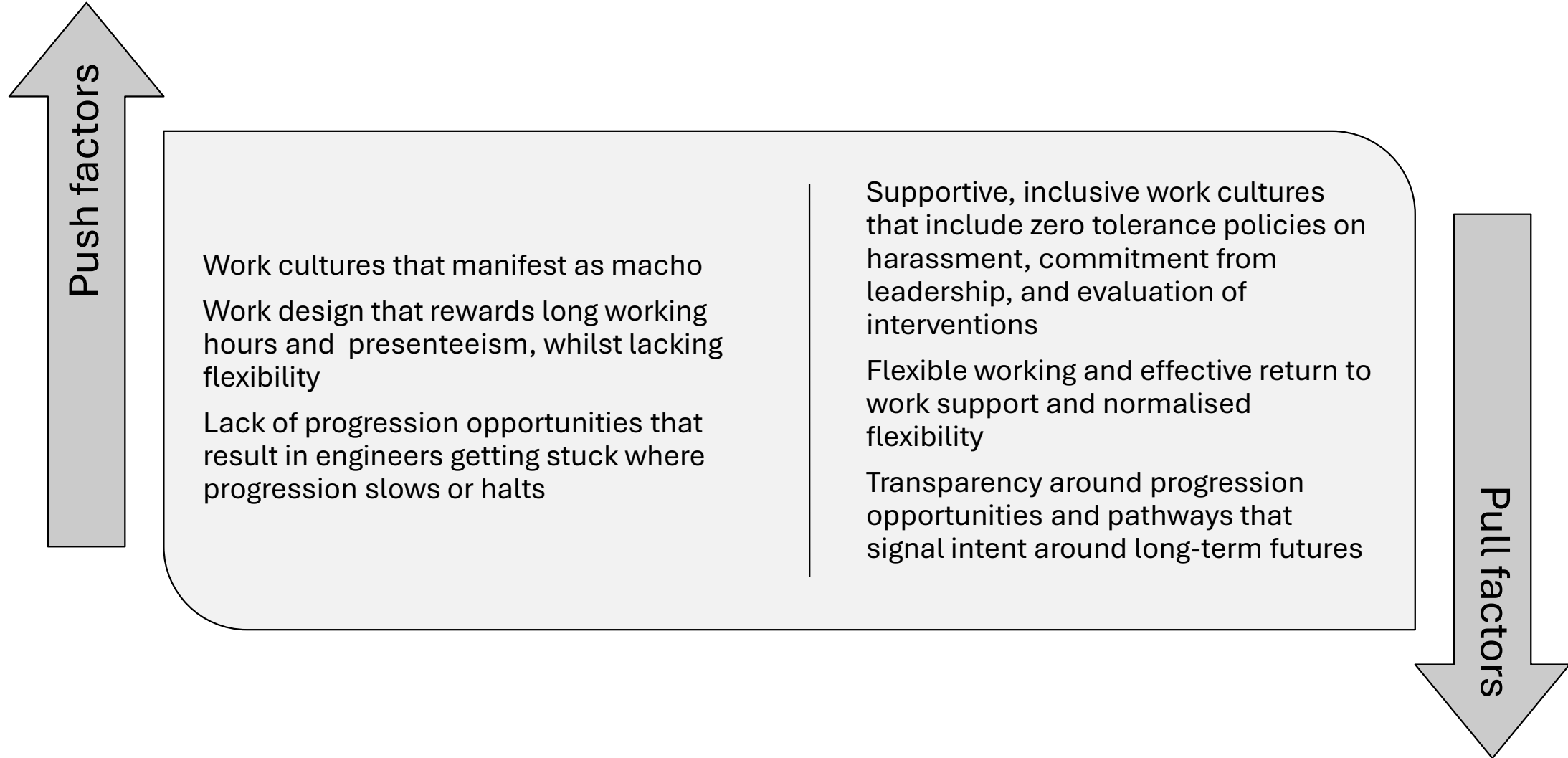
### **c. Pay inequity**

- 15% cite unfair pay as a key reason for leaving.

### **d. A broken career framework**

- The report describes a system where:
  - career paths are unclear,
  - advancement is inconsistent,
  - and opportunities are unevenly distributed.

# The career narrative interview findings were not surprising, but now provide a credible and validating data set for solutioning



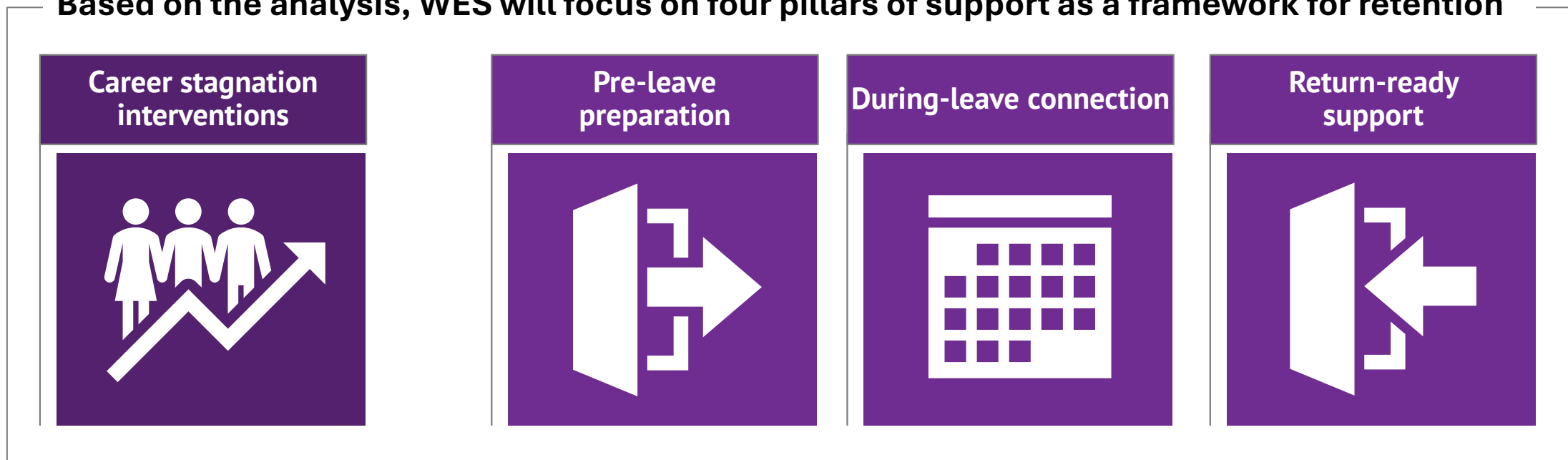
# As part of our WES strategy to 2030, we identified an opportunity for WES to create a value intervention for our members and partners



## A sector-wide prevention tool does not currently exist

- Women lack continuity, community and confidence during leave or stagnation
- Employers lack structured early-intervention support
- WES is uniquely positioned to convene, guide and set standards

## Based on the analysis, WES will focus on four pillars of support as a framework for retention



# The value proposition delivers for our three key stakeholders

<b>For Engineers:</b> <i>Support that protects identity, confidence and connection</i>	<b>For Employers:</b> <i>Practical tools to retain talent and reduce disruption</i>	<b>For the Sector:</b> <i>A resilient engineering workforce that drives UK growth and innovation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition planning and confidence-building</li> <li>• Optional touchpoints and peer networks</li> <li>• Light-touch CPD and skills refreshers</li> <li>• Mentoring and progression mapping</li> <li>• Tools to navigate bias and systemic barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager guidance for pre-leave and during-leave support</li> <li>• Continuity planning templates</li> <li>• Inclusive leadership micro-training</li> <li>• Bias-aware performance and progression practices</li> <li>• Retention dashboards and check-ins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens national engineering capability</li> <li>• Protects critical skills pipelines</li> <li>• Reduces systemic talent loss</li> <li>• Supports a more innovative, future-ready workforce</li> <li>• Enhances sector resilience by stabilising mid-career expertise</li> <li>• Accelerates progress toward national engineering priorities</li> <li>• Boosts long-term economic value by retaining the engineers whose knowledge, leadership and experience fuel UK growth</li> </ul>

• **Support from other organisations**

*"I went to the WES [Women's Engineering Society] conference and just, it was just very...It was very supportive to be surrounded by so many female engineers and scientists, really, WES has kept me going in engineering, really, to a certain extent.*

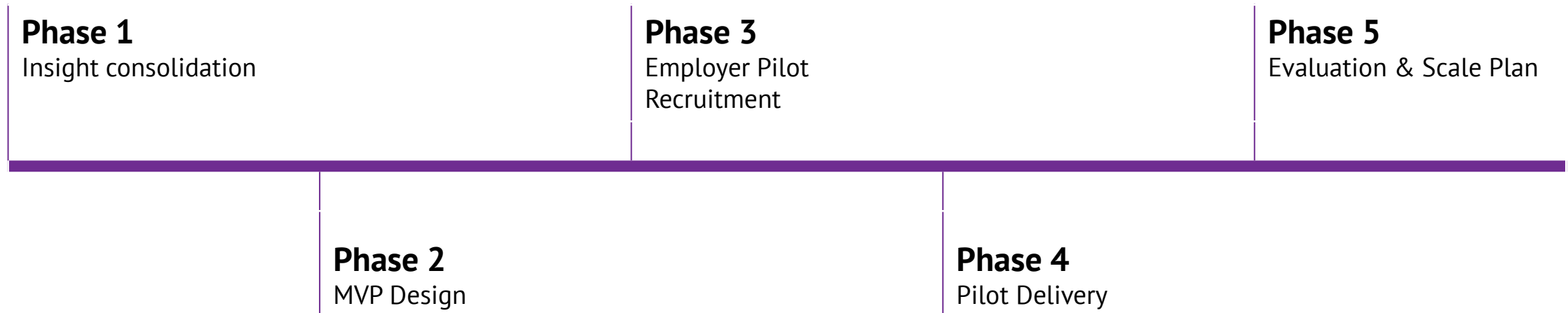
Returner, office-based, mechanical engineer, over 500 employees

# WES will now start to create a MVP to develop a credible, testable pilot product



The working vision is for a sector-wide standard for supporting engineers to stay in engineering resulting in:

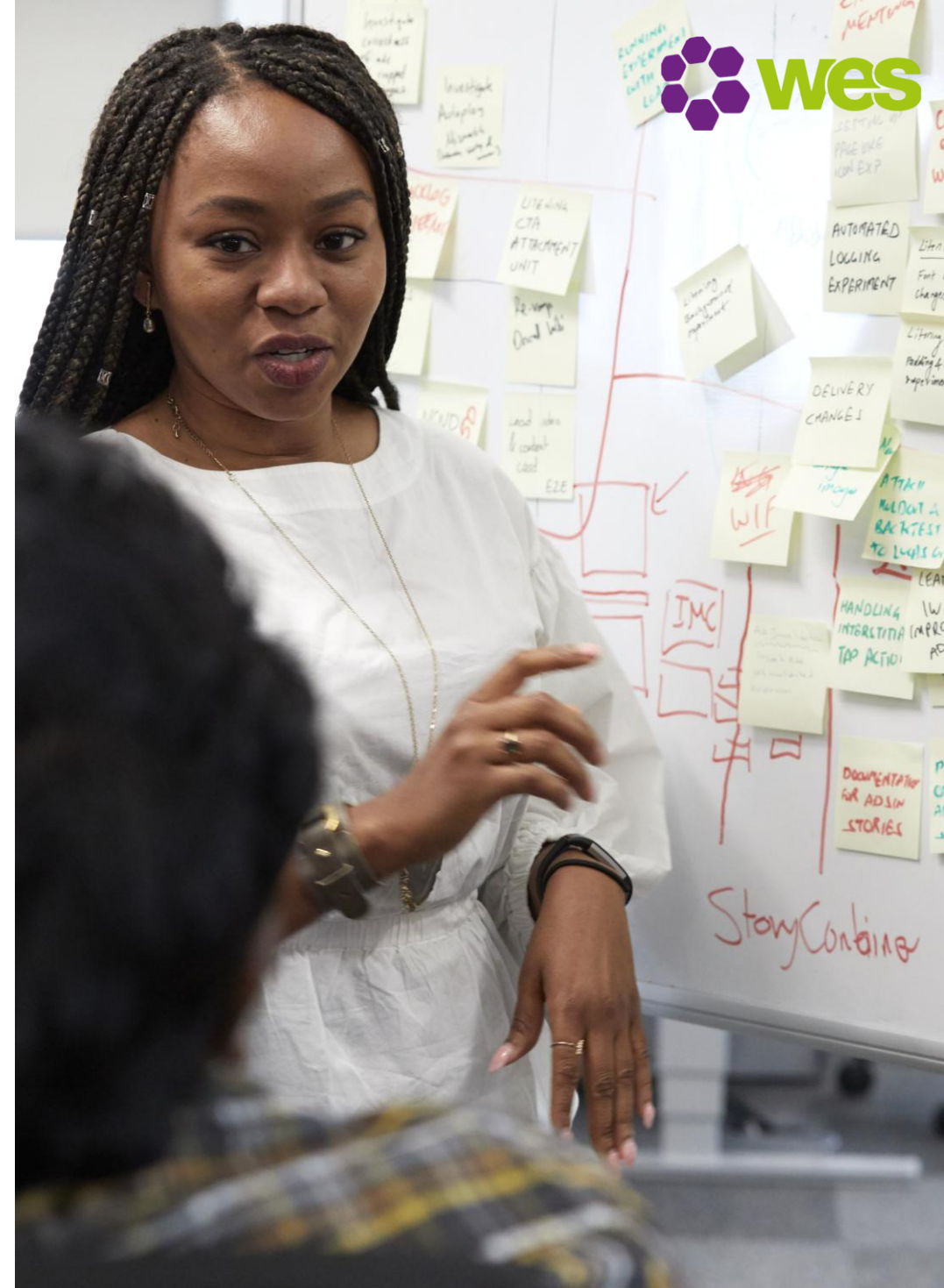
- A recognised WES programme adopted across engineering employers
- A measurable reduction in mid-career attrition
- A stronger, more inclusive engineering workforce



Now we've shared the research progress and our plans for a useful and new intervention, we will keep our members informed in process so they can help us shape a solution that is practical, relevant and genuinely valuable for the whole engineering community.

# Strategic Planning

Partner opportunities for engagement in the year ahead



# Early engagement in the value map unlocks full Partnership value and FY27 growth opportunities



	ATTRACT	RETAIN & GROW	BRAND VISIBILITY	Core Partnership Outcomes	Scale up opportunities <i>Additional investment or gifts in kind</i>
<b>Q1</b> Annual Conference	●	●	●	Current Employees CPD, networking and belonging Future employee applications	Host a lecture, workshop (to gather data) or expo stand Sponsor the student poster competition Host a social dinner or drinks reception
INWED	●	●	●	Brand visibility within industry	Take part in our centrally coordinated campaign and celebrate at the House of Lords Breakfast reception
WE50 Awards		●	●	Raise the profile of existing talent	Sponsor the celebration
<b>Q2</b> WES Awards open		●	●	Current leaders as judges and current women profile raising	
<b>Q3</b> Careers Fairs	●		●	Future intern, placements, employees or researchers	Sponsor to headline an industry
Caroline Haslett Lecture WES awards	●	●	●	Current Employees CPD, networking and belonging Brand visibility within industry	Sponsor drinks reception or brochure printing
<b>Q4</b> Apprentice Day	●	●	●	Current Apprentices CPD & retention	Host ( <i>taken for 2026 and 2027</i> )
Apprentice Showcase	●		●	Future Apprentice talent attraction	Headline the campaign
Launch of WE50 nominations		●	●	Current leaders as judges and raise profile of current talent	

# Thanks to everyone who came along to the conference



wes 2026 ANNUAL Conference	
<b>What to expect on Day One:</b>	
09.30 - 10.00	Opening Dr Kathie
10.00 - 10.30	Designing together Usha Rao
10.30 - 11.15	Panel - R STEM Re
11.15 - 11.45	COFFEE B
11.45 - 12.45	Breakout Christina
12.45 - 13.45	LUNCH
13.45 - 14.45	Breakout spin-outs Susan Ro
14.45 - 15.15	COFFEE B
15.15 - 15.30	Sponsor Phillip P
15.30 - 16.00	Engineer Magdale
16.00 - 16.10	BREAK
16.10 - 17.10	AI, Accou Practice Ann Don
17.10 - 18.00	Networki

wes 2026 ANNUAL Conference	
<b>What to expect on Day Two:</b>	
09.00 - 09.15	Welcome
9.15 - 9.30	Sponsor session - ISS: Lightning Talk Ro Walker, ISS
09.30 - 10.15	Building the RAS ecosystem Agata Suwala, Manufacturing Technology Centre
10.15 - 10.30	Sponsor session - Amazon RME: Engineering Intelligence In Action Emma Swinscoe, Amazon RME
10.30 - 11.00	COFFEE BREAK
11.00 - 12.00	Breakout 1 - The Power Years: Owning Your Impact in Later Career Stages Sarah Haslam and Alexandra Walker, Ford
12.00 - 13.00	LUNCH
13.00 - 14.00	Engineering Intelligence Beyond the Algorithm Kerry Evans and Patricia Ashman
14.00 - 14.30	The next era of space: innovation, resilience, and the engineers who will build it Jennifer Barry, Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd
14.30 - 14.50	COFFEE BREAK
14.50 - 15.50	Breakout 3 - Early Careers Support WES Membership DC
15.55 - 16.25	Personal Growth and Volunteering Dawn Ohlson, IET President
16.25 - 16.30	Closing remarks

*“What I love about the WES Conference is how energising and real it feels. You walk in and instantly know you’re surrounded by people who understand your world, your challenges and your ambitions. I always leave with new ideas, new connections and a renewed sense of why I chose engineering in the first place.”*

# Thank you to all those of you who have sponsored the Annual Conference 2026



Plus, community exhibitors Daphne Jackson Trust and STEM Returners

# A reminder that the Woman Engineer Journal spring edition is now available online



**WHY FELLOWSHIP MATTERS**

## The Power of Fellowship: Why It Matters, and Why It Might Be Your Next Step

Fellowship is one of the highest levels of professional recognition awarded by organisations such as the Women's Engineering Society (WES). It is granted to individuals who have demonstrated sustained excellence, leadership, and a meaningful contribution to both engineering and the wider community.

**Fellow Focus**

## Leading from the Seabed Up: How Mentorship and Technical Leadership Are Shaping the Next Generation of Women in Subsea Engineering



Emelia Ntiamoah, is a former Controls Engineering Lead at SLB-OneSubsea, a Fellow of the Women's Engineering Society (FWES), and a Fellow of the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM),

In the high-stakes world of subsea engineering, where systems operate thousands of metres beneath the ocean surface and a single interface failure can cost millions, leadership is not a title. It is a practice. For Emelia Ntiamoah that practice has been forged through years of hands-on project delivery, cross-cultural collaboration, and a deliberate commitment to lifting others as she climbs.

**Engineering Intelligence**

## Engineering Intelligence for Climate Resilience

By Eng. Nsiimire Annet



Eng. Nsiimire Annet is a Ugandan engineer, consultant, and trainer with over 20 years of experience in infrastructure, climate resilience, and sustainable development. She is the Founder and Managing Director of 3N ENGTECH Innovations Consultancy Limited, an Associate Trainer with RedR UK, and a trainer for the Global Center on Adaptation Masterclass on Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

If you would like to join the Climate Emergency Group, please get in touch at [CEGChair@wes.org.uk](mailto:CEGChair@wes.org.uk)

# A reminder that we have the WES Wikithon: Session 2 today after the successful Session 1 last week



WES Wikithon: The WES community has a real opportunity to make lasting impact by using its collective expertise to strengthen the public record and ensure women engineers' contributions are accurately documented. By building a confident, supportive group of volunteer editors who keep improving content over time, we can create change that goes far beyond a single event — leaving a legacy of visibility and representation long after the Wikithon.

**WES Heritage Special Interest Group** is a new volunteer group for WES members that preserves, curates and champions the history of women in engineering and WES's role since 1919.

As a group it will advise WES on heritage priorities, partnerships, preservation, storytelling and public engagement to ensure our history is protected, visible and used to inspire future generations.

If you would like to join,  
please get in touch at [heritage@wes.org.uk](mailto:heritage@wes.org.uk)

**If you would like your organisation's  
heritage to feature or have a milestone  
coming up we would love to work with you**

# A reminder about our WES Cluster Events

The flyer is for a 'WOMEN'S ENGINEERING SOCIETY NETWORKING EVENT' on Wednesday 27th May 2026. It features a circular photo of four women in a meeting. The WES logo is at the top right. The event details include: 'ABOUT THIS EVENT' (inspiring and informal networking), 'When: Wednesday 27th May 2026', 'Time: 1730 to 1930 PM', 'Where: Capula, Orion House, Unit 10 Walton Industrial Estate, Beacon Road, Stone, ST15 0LT', and 'Hosted by: CAPULA'. Contact information at the bottom includes 'comms@wes.org.uk' and 'wes.org.uk'. A large QR code is positioned at the bottom right of the flyer.

  
women's engineering society

**Wednesday 27th  
May 2026**

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**WOMEN'S ENGINEERING SOCIETY  
NETWORKING EVENT**

**ABOUT THIS EVENT**  
Join us for an inspiring and informal networking event dedicated to shaping the future of the engineering workforce in the Midlands. This is your chance to connect with industry leaders, emerging talent, and like-minded professionals in a welcoming environment designed to spark meaningful conversations and new opportunities.

**When:** Wednesday 27th May 2026  
**Time:** 1730 to 1930 PM  
**Where:** Capula  
Orion House,  
Unit 10 Walton Industrial Estate,  
Beacon Road,  
Stone,  
ST15 0LT  
**Hosted by:**  
**CAPULA**

 [comms@wes.org.uk](mailto:comms@wes.org.uk)  [wes.org.uk](http://wes.org.uk)



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<b>FEB</b>	Liverpool
<b>MAR</b>	Edinburgh & Aberdeen
<b>APR</b>	Cumberland
<b>MAY</b>	Midlands (27 <sup>th</sup> ) with <b>Capula</b>
<b>JUN</b>	South Coast (18 <sup>th</sup> ) with <b>Harwin</b>
<b>JUL</b>	London (TBC) with <b>Kingston Uni</b>

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If you would like to find out more,  
please get in touch at  
**[partners@wes.org.uk](mailto:partners@wes.org.uk)**

# Last month we shared more on the Women in Engineering Charter Mark and shared the Mark with you for use on your website



**The Charter aims to complement existing initiatives, providing coherence, shared ambition, and a common language for progress**

**Shared goals**

- ☐ **Strengthen the pipeline** of women engineers, from early education to senior leadership
- ☐ **Improve retention, progression, and visibility** of women across the engineering ecosystem
- ☐ Support **identification and removal of structural barriers** for women in engineering
- ☐ **Embed inclusive cultures** where women feel valued, respected, and able to thrive
- ☐ **Demonstrate that engineering excellence** depends on attracting and retaining the full breadth of engineering talent

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**The proposal is for our partners to align behind the principles through their partnership with WES**

**NOW**

- Leadership accountability**  
Partner Chief Engineers named as taking accountability for inclusion in engineering
- Inclusive pathways**  
Partners leveraging WES support for apprenticeships, placements, returners and untapped talent
- Inclusive recruitment & progression**  
Partners to use the WES channels to attract diverse and hard to reach talent
- Talent development**  
Partners leveraging the memberships for their women for equitable access to growth and leadership

**NEXT**

- Cultures of inclusion**  
Partner best practice case studies of inclusion embedded across the operating model
- Data transparency**  
WES report from publicly available Partner data on recruitment, retention, progression & pay gaps to benchmark & show progress

You'll already be doing a lot of this, but if you're not sure how to make the most of your WES partnership, just reach out — we can walk you through the best ways to unlock its value.

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**The Women in Engineering Charter Mark is available now for download from the Partners Area of the website**

**Please share this pack with your corporate affairs, ESG, and comms teams** so we can get this Charter Mark on your corporate website and show our collective commitment. This will be the soft launch as a Partner Community. To be followed by a hard launch on WES's social media. This is a great opportunity for your brand to repost and highlight your leadership on inclusive talent attraction and development in engineering.

**Please look out for emails asking for confirmation of your Chief Engineer as an accountable Exec** for your organisation. This is a great way for them to show their public support for women in engineering as the named signatory.

**More information about the launch on social media will follow.**

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## What's our Ask?

We emailed you to ask for your senior signatory contacts and to display your commitment to women in engineering through the Charter Mark.

**Please help us to help you** share your commitment to existing and prospective talent by following up on these actions to get the most out of this benefit of your partnership with WES. **The Charter Mark is ready to download from the Partner Area of the website**

Thank you to everyone who nominated for the WE50 Awards



**“Visibility is not a luxury for women in engineering - it is a catalyst for change.”**

Awards are about visibility, influence, and opening doors for others. When women win awards, the whole profession benefits: more role models, more innovation, more equity.

**Winners will be notified in advance of 23<sup>rd</sup> June, and will have instructions on how to share embargoed announcements with their employers for maximum visibility and recognition.**

**Good luck to your nominees.**



# A reminder about our INWED26 Campaign



 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN  
IN ENGINEERING DAY

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23 June 2026

**“Show Us Your Engineering Intelligence”**

**A simple, powerful invitation for organisations to showcase women driving intelligent engineering**

## Campaign options (*partner discounted rates*)

	Supporter	Featured	Signature
Visibility	★	★★	★★★
Media and PR	★	★★	★★★
Digital	★	★★	★★★
Leadership	1	3	6
Cost	£3,550	£5,950	£10,250
Cost <i>Non-profit</i>	£1,150	£2,150	
Cost <i>SME</i>	£750	£1,250	

Free downloads for all partners wishing to do internal events <http://wes.org.uk>

Email [comms@wes.org.uk](mailto:comms@wes.org.uk) to express interest

**WES Partner Newsletter**  
29-10-2025

**Before you scroll past...**

This newsletter supports **maximising the value of your WES partnership**. You've already made the commitment to attract and retain women in engineering by partnering with WES, now make sure you're unlocking the full value to advance innovation, resilience and sectoral growth.

**Missed the last Partner Webinar?**  
Catch up on the full detail and more via the [WES Partner Area](#)

**Cut through AI sludge - the Student Careers Fair**  
All partners receive a virtual booth with which to connect with women in engineering students from across the UK. Share your information before the weekend with the team. Contact: [carol@robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:carol@robson@wes.org.uk)

**The Conference Advantage - Partners can lead**  
Explore why in-person conferences are a powerful tool for research, visibility, and leadership development. Preview the 2025 theme *Engineering Intelligence*. Contact: [susan.robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:susan.robson@wes.org.uk)

**Shaped by apprentices, powered by partnership**  
Thanks to Amazon RME, generous host for England & Wales and Scotland events. We're inviting Apprentices' input to shape the content. Please share the survey with them to co-design the experience. [Share the survey](#)

**Development opportunity for future-facing leaders**  
We're looking for volunteers to join our Directors' Committee as part of their leadership development plans. Find out about the commitment, terms of reference and benefits of getting your organisation's voice on this forum. Contact: [susan.robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:susan.robson@wes.org.uk)

**Miss the upcoming Partner Webinars**  
Here have been some ideas shared in the topic and timing of some of those webinars

ing legacy into inspiration	19 Nov 2025	<a href="#">Register</a>
ing for 26-27	30 Dec 2025	<a href="#">Register</a>
ing the INWED Campaign	23 Jan 2026	<a href="#">Register</a>

**Community Engagement Opportunities**  
Share the opportunities to shape what WES does within your organisation and get involved in our special interest groups (SIGs)

**Forum**  
ed on inclusive safety across ing and in partnership with he first priority is the ing BSI Standard on PPE ing January 2026). You can he session via the [Partner our website](#)  
Contact: [susan.robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:susan.robson@wes.org.uk)

**Climate Emergency SIG**  
ocused on embedding sustainability and resilience in engineering, this long-standing SIG at WES has a history of delivering impactful initiatives across our collective  
Contact: [CEOChair@wes.org.uk](mailto:CEOChair@wes.org.uk)

**Education SIG**  
ocused around interests of those in research and academia, and how we can support women in engineering students and faculty  
Contact: [susan.robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:susan.robson@wes.org.uk)

**Maximising your Partner Value**  
Share the opportunities to shape what WES does within your organisation and get involved in our special interest groups (SIGs)

are WES materials internally to maximise partnership value, particularly to make sure the opportunities ach the key decision-makers in your team who may want to leverage for strategic impact

are looking for your input as we start an **strategic review**. Please let us know your thoughts for input into r strategy setting process through our [Partner Strategy survey](#)

ike sure your members are using their WES memberships. Contact [Tritan.Holland@wes.org.uk](mailto:Tritan.Holland@wes.org.uk) to find out w to ensure your teams are taking advantage of their membership

ase let us know if you have a rich engineering project, best practice or research paper that you would like showcase through one of our Technical Talks, Conference or Journal. This is a great way to raise areness of your brand and work, attract new talent and instil pride in your existing talent. Contact [Susan.Robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:Susan.Robson@wes.org.uk)

LinkedIn YouTube TikTok

① Register for Member Webinars and Partner Webinars on the Partner Area of the Website

❑ Check email for the **Partner Newsletter**

❑ Follow us on **LinkedIn**

❑ Slides and recordings: **Website Partner Area PARTNER24 – you will be able to download slides and the Charter Mark**

❑ Listen to our **The Woman Engineer** podcast – live recording of new sub-brand “The Turning Point” at the conference

❑ **Book a one-to-one meeting at any time with me**



**Questions and feedback – ask via zoom**

General Partner enquiries: [partners@wes.org.uk](mailto:partners@wes.org.uk)

One-to-one partner meetings: [susan.robson@wes.org.uk](mailto:susan.robson@wes.org.uk)

Events and awards enquiries: [comms@wes.org.uk](mailto:comms@wes.org.uk) or [events@wes.org.uk](mailto:events@wes.org.uk)

Members enquiries: [membership@wes.org.uk](mailto:membership@wes.org.uk)

Operational and job board enquiries: [operations@wes.org.uk](mailto:operations@wes.org.uk)