

Recruiting experienced engineers is hard. Keeping them is cheaper.

76%

of engineering employers struggle to recruit for key roles, with technical and specialist sustainability skills topping the list.

IET, UK Engineering and Technology Skills Survey, October 2025. 1,316 respondents with managerial responsibility at engineering and technology employers.

Experienced engineers don't simply leave a vacancy behind. They take technical knowledge, organisational understanding and project continuity with them, and that capability takes time to rebuild. In a sector where **46%** of employers already say turnover is holding back workforce development (IET, 2025), that is an expensive way to lose it.

THE RETENTION PROBLEM

44

WOMEN

vs

60

MEN

Average age engineers left the professional register

There is a 16-year difference in the average age women and men come off the professional register: the years when an engineer is most valuable. The Engineering Council separately finds women spend less than half as long on the register as men.

Engineering Council, Professional Registration Statistics 2024.

WHY ARE WOMEN LEAVING?

In the 2025 Lovelace Report's survey of more than 500 women in technology, nearly **80%** had recently left, or were interested in leaving, their tech roles. Only **3%** gave caring responsibilities as their primary reason.

Oliver Wyman & WeAreTechWomen, The 2025 Lovelace Report.

25% Limited career advancement

17% Lack of recognition

15% Inadequate pay

The opportunity for employers. Advancement, recognition and the quality of career conversations are all things an organisation controls. This is a problem you can fix.

Not confined to the UK: McKinsey's eleventh annual study found 93 women promoted to first-line manager per 100 men (up from 81, but still not parity), and 29% of C-suite roles held by women, unchanged year on year. *McKinsey & LeanIn.Org, Women in the Workplace 2025. US and Canada data.*

If experienced engineering skills are already hard to recruit, what is it worth to keep the women who already have them?

This isn't about fixing the women.

Individual coaching for mid-career women in STEM, with practical development for their managers. Career decisions are rarely shaped by one side.

FOR THE WOMEN Career strategy at a crossroads. Progression: planning the next move. Career conversations: negotiation and visibility. Agency: what she can influence, and what she can't.	FOR THEIR MANAGERS Career conversations before resignation, not after. Sponsorship: access to opportunity and visibility. Recognition: how it drives retention. Progression: spotting and removing barriers.
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THE EVIDENCE

70% of team engagement is attributable to the manager. Trained managers are half as likely to be actively disengaged themselves, and manager development using coaching techniques was associated with a 20–28% lift in performance metrics. Gallup, State of the Global Workplace 2025.	37 trials of workplace coaching, randomised and controlled, covering 2,528 participants. Together they show a positive if moderate effect on leadership and personal outcomes (Hedges' $g = .59$). Academy of Management Learning & Education, 2023.	13% Without a six-month peer-group and coaching programme, early-career women in STEM would have rated their own soft skills nearly 13% lower. Comparison groups declined; theirs rose. PNAS, 2022.
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Coaching cannot guarantee that someone stays. It creates an intervention point before a valuable engineer has already decided to leave.

WHAT IT COSTS TO LOSE HER A CONSERVATIVE FLOOR £30,614 The most conservative published UK figure: lost output over the 28 weeks a new hire takes to reach full effectiveness, plus logistics. A 2014 average, not uprated for inflation.	Illustrative: two alternative bases, not additive. A HIGHER-IMPACT VIEW 100–150% of salary on a widely used HR benchmark, counting recruitment, onboarding and lost productivity: £55,000–£82,500 on a £55k salary, £75,000–£112,500 on £75k.
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On that view, replacing a senior woman starts at **£75,000**, and coaching her and her manager costs **less than 10%** of it.

MEASURED FROM THE START We agree a baseline and the outcomes that matter to you: intention to stay, career clarity, manager capability, internal mobility, regretted attrition, and the barriers surfaced on the way. An impact report sets out what moved, and what to do next.	Individual coaching remains confidential. Organisational insight is reported in aggregate.
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I deliver a clear picture of what is driving retention risk in your teams, and practical action before experienced talent walks out of the door.

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Book a conversation: sallypurdie.com/contact