

# Young engineers conference 2026

10:00 – 17:00 BST, Friday 17 July 2026

Glasgow Trades Hall and online

**10:00** Chair's welcome and introduction  
*Kalina Dimitrova, Senior Engineer, Will Rudd*  
*Anna Kellett, Structural Engineer, Buro Happold*

## Session 1: Understanding existing structures: restoration, maintenance, and reuse

**10:10** Looking without seeing  
*Matthew Petticrew, Technical Director, UK Lead for Heritage Structures, WSP*

- Recognising the need for engineers to assess structures without reliable records, while avoiding extensive opening-up that can be costly, disruptive, and could be harmful to a heritage structure.
- Learning to use careful observation and engineering judgement to understand structures while minimising intrusive investigations and impacts.
- Developing an ability to read structures by understanding load-paths, materials, construction, and behaviour, enabling engineers to 'see' as well as 'look'.

**10:30** New life to existing buildings: looking under the skin  
*Michael Kilpatrick, Associate Director, Waterman Structures*

- Outlining how structural condition and suitability are evaluated for retrofit, refurbishment, and conversion projects
- Highlighting approaches to diagnosing defects and selecting effective repair strategies in existing buildings
- Explaining key structural engineering considerations that inform safe and practical interventions in the built environment

**10:50** Bridge maintenance: challenges and aspirations  
*Hazel McDonald, Chief Bridge Engineer, Transport Scotland*

- Highlighting selection of recent bridge maintenance projects on the Scottish Trunk Road Network.
- Outlining some of the challenges in delivering maintenance on a live network.
- Managing stakeholders and their expectations.
- Exploring emerging technologies that could help determine the scope of future projects.

**11:10** Q&A

**11:25** Understanding structural behaviour: using Grasp It to see the invisible  
*Phoebe Hensley, Project Engineer, Atelier One*

<b>11:35</b>	Morning break and networking	
<b>Session 2: Breakout session</b>		
<b>12:00</b>	<p><b>In-person Group A</b></p> <p><b>Workshop: Assessing existing structures</b> <i>Facilitators to be announced</i></p> <p>Through case studies, this hands-on workshop explores two key areas in assessing existing buildings: surveying &amp; defects and life expectancy. Attendees will be guided while working in groups, attempting an exercise of judgement, followed by discussion, feedback, and worked solutions.</p>	<p><b>In-person Group B and online audience</b></p> <p><b>Interactive presentation: engaging clients and stakeholders effectively</b> <i>Ailsa Roberts, Associate, Civic Engineers</i> <i>More facilitators to be announced</i></p> <p>This interactive presentation explores essential communication skills to work with multidisciplinary teams on projects. Participants learn why and how to challenge briefs by understanding client priorities. The session then examines teamwork impacts of design changes and managing stakeholder expectations.</p>
<b>13:10</b>	Lunch and networking	
<b>Session 3: Breakout session</b>		
<b>14:10</b>	<p><b>In-person Group A</b></p> <p><b>Interactive presentation: engaging clients and stakeholders effectively</b> <i>Ailsa Roberts, Associate, Civic Engineers</i> <i>More facilitators to be announced</i></p> <p>This interactive presentation explores essential communication skills to work with multidisciplinary teams on projects. Participants learn why and how to challenge briefs by understanding client priorities. The session then examines teamwork impacts of design changes and managing stakeholder expectations.</p>	<p><b>In-person Group B and online audience</b></p> <p><b>Workshop: Assessing existing structures</b> <i>Facilitators to be announced</i></p> <p>Through case studies, this hands-on workshop explores two key areas in assessing existing buildings: survey and life expectancy. Attendees will be guided while working in groups, attempting an exercise of judgement, followed by discussion, feedback, and worked solutions.</p>
<b>15:20</b>	Afternoon break and networking	

**Session 4: Building a culture of safety. Competence, communication, and quality assurance**

**15:45** This panel discussion focuses on responsibility, competence, and culture: what engineers can control, how safety is ensured, and the part early-career professionals play in raising standards.

**Panellists include:**

- *Mark Lawler, Chair, SER Scottish Registration Board*
- *Luke Bisby, Chair of Fire and Structures, University of Edinburgh*
- *Elspeth Brown, Structural Engineer, Mott MacDonald*
- *Henry Duncomb, Senior Structural Engineer, Expedition Engineering*

**16:50****Chair's closing remarks**

*Kalina Dimitrova, Senior Engineer, Will Rudd*  
*Anna Kellett, Structural Engineer, Buro Happold*

**This programme is subject to change**