

Robotics challenge helps scope out the engineers of tomorrow

AS part of the recent National Apprenticeship Week students from 24 schools across Northern Ireland took part in a regional heat a robotics competition.

Managed locally by educational charity Sentinus, and hosted in partnership with The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB NI), regional heats of the Tomorrow's Engineers EEP Robotics Challenge have been taking place in early 2020 across the UK, ahead of the national finals at The Big Bang Fair in March.

By building, programming and controlling LEGO robots, the Challenge introduces student teams to real-world engineering, technology, robotics and computing tasks, and aims to help students put their school learning into context and at the same time discover exciting new careers. Students had to research, design and present their own solution to a contemporary engineering problem faced by STEM professionals in the aviation industry.

Sentinus CEO, Bill Connor commented: "The Tomorrow's Engineers UK-wide competition is a fantastic way of inspiring the next generation of engineers and gives participants first-hand experience in problem-solving, initiative and team working. We hear regularly from the industry about STEM skills shortages and gaps, therefore communicating the breadth and variety of engineering careers to young people is vital for the future of the Northern Ireland economy. Sentinus is passionate about highlighting the excitement and creativity of engineering through events and competitions like this, and the Challenge is instrumental in developing engineering design, construction and programming skills."

Barry Neilson, CITB NI, CEO said: "We were delighted to work in partnership with Sentinus for the Tomorrow's Engineers EEP Robotics Challenge, it was great to see all the school pupils working hard within their teams, focusing on their skills in order to compete in the challenge. The skills the teams had to demonstrate are vital for a career in construction and it was clear from their hard work and determination that they are indeed the constructors and engineers of the future."

