



**Press Release: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Manufacturing Companies Need to Act Now to Address Skills Gap**

UK manufacturing companies urgently need to work more closely with universities to address the shortfall in engineering skills. That's the view of Carol Burke, who heads Unipart Manufacturing Group comprising several sites based in the Midlands.

Burke was commenting on the Review of Engineering Skills carried out by Professor John Perkins on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The report sets out the importance of engineering skills to the UK economy. It states that these same skills are crucial to addressing global issues such as providing food, energy and clean water to an ever growing and ageing population.



"This is a vitally important report," said Burke. "It's essential that UK manufacturers have access to highly trained, highly motivated people with engineering skills. This may be seen as a long-term issue, but it needs to be addressed now."

Professor Perkins' report provides 22 recommendations, many of which involve collaborative working between education and industry to inspire, attract and skill tomorrow's engineers.

According to Burke, this is a fundamental aspect of Unipart Manufacturing's ongoing strategy for growth in UK and international markets. In October Unipart and Coventry University announced plans to develop a new Engineering and Manufacturing Institute on Unipart's manufacturing site in Coventry.

The £32 million project will see the creation of an international centre of engineering and manufacturing excellence, which will be the base for a sustained programme of innovative teaching and learning, product development and research activity.

Unipart is contributing £17.9 million towards the creation of the new facility with a further £5.6 million towards student scholarships and product research and development, and including support for the new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in manufacturing and the advanced engineering and management programmes that will emerge as a result of the initiative.

According to Burke, the new facility is an investment for Coventry and for Unipart's manufacturing businesses. "The engineering institute will not only provide young people with hands-on experience learning about cutting-edge engineering techniques in a production facility, it will also provide UMG with access to some of the best and brightest young engineers, some of whom will stay with us to grow our business at home and globally."

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#### **Editors' Notes:**

#### **About The Unipart Group**

The Unipart Group employs more than 10,000 personnel worldwide and has an annual turnover of more than £1billion. It is a leading UK manufacturer, full service logistics provider and consultant in operational excellence.

Operating across a range of market sectors, including automotive, leisure, manufacturing, mobile telecoms, rail, retail and technology, Unipart offers a breadth of services from third party logistics to expert consultancy.

All Unipart sites operate according to the Group's proprietary version of Lean known as The Unipart Way. This is a philosophy of working underpinned by tools and techniques that inspires efficiency, flexibility and outstanding customer service in any process.

The company, which is based in Oxford in the UK, has a growing number of international sites supporting a wide range of blue chip clients. For more information visit: [www.unipart.com](http://www.unipart.com).

**The Perkins Review** as published by BIS on 4 November and is available for download: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engineering-skills-perkins-review>