



NSAR Annual Report December 2018

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Foreword

I am proud of what NSAR has supported the rail and wider transport industry to achieve. 2018 was a year we all had to understand and work with new approaches, understand our future needs, and deliver more high quality apprenticeships. NSAR has really helped us do all of these things. Its good to see that transport is one of the few sectors that are growing their apprenticeship numbers, and the Migration Advisory Council commented positively on how precise our evidence was.

NSAR's partnership with government has also been good - providing data, advice and support, especially for the STAT committee I also chair, but also through brexit planning, impact of digital, and cross infrastructure labour issues.

This has only been possible because of our generous members, especially Network Rail, TfL, RDG members and the traditional Roscos. Thanks for your invaluable support.

Thanks also to our wider membership and partners who have contributed views, data, time and encouragement throughout the year.

Mike Brown MVO





Purpose, vision & values

Our Purpose

The National Skills Academy for Rail is an employer-led, not-for-profit, member organisation established to enable the sector to deliver a modern and efficient, world class railway through the development of a highly skilled and productive workforce.

NSAR is trusted by the rail industry to provide workable solutions for the provision of skills needed for the increasing demands of a modern railway. We are all about developing people to excel every day, challenging the status quo and inspiring a change in the way skills and competences are delivered.

Our Vision

Delivering a world class rail system through a highly skilled workforce.

Our Values

Integrity, Passion, Trusted Partner, Foresight, Delivery and Expert.



Summary

In 2018, NSAR has built on strong foundations laid in 2017. It was the culmination of a number of pieces of work, to a standard the industry can be proud of.

Rail now has a very strong suite of apprenticeship standards, with a growing number of employers delivering. Contracts and franchises now have mandates or incentives to stimulate further demand for skills.

Training standards have risen: good providers have improved whilst those who cut corners have been removed from sentinel and other training.

Our skills intelligence compares favourably with other sectors. We can accurately project forward demand, forward supply, identify gaps and deliver training and recruitment responses that will increase rail's already strong economic contribution. Talking of inclusion, a pilot project called Skills Live has shown the appetite of disadvantaged young people for digital careers in rail. It's also great to see candidates securing apprenticeships who were unsuccessful first time, through NSAR connect, with Network Rail and TfL.

NSAR is also tasked with thought leadership in the rail and wider transport infrastructure. Our themes for this year of productivity, future skills post brexit and future skills for digital have been very well received. We will pursue these further in 2019.

What else for next year? More of the same – helping employers train more to reduce skills shortages and increase rail and wider transport contribution to GDP. But also, we will launch our new External Quality Assurance service which ensures that apprenticeships are assessed properly, keeping us all safe. Digital and Brexit will clearly be top priorities, as will a focus on leadership and management. Implementing productivity improvements through workforce planning, and deals with government complete the picture.

Thanks again for your support. We're looking forward to working with you in what looks like it will be a lively 2019.



National Training Partnership

NSAR has built on last year's initiative for the National Network of FE Colleges and established a National Training Partnership to deliver an integrated approach to education. NSAR has now brought together nearly 20 FE Colleges, across the country to work with rail employers to deliver apprenticeships and promote rail careers to over 70,000 students.

Ofsted Guidance and Support Service

NSAR launched an Ofsted Guidance and Support Service in response to changes in the way inspections are conducted by Ofsted. The aim of the service is to help training providers understand the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework and support their preparation for Ofsted inspections. The NSAR Skills & Training team have run a number of introductory workshops as well as producing a comprehensive support booklet for organisations requesting further training.

The Apprenticeship Levy

The system has faced criticism since its launch with many commentators stating it too complex for smaller companies to navigate, and not flexible enough e.g. it cannot be used to pay for travel and accommodation costs. However, the Rail industry has seen a 4-fold increase in levy-funded apprenticeships over the last year with more than 1,000 apprenticeships created since its start. NSAR's Apprenticeship Levy Planner tool is available to all members with many who have used it praising its ease of use and ability to calculate their levy contribution and model their workforce planning needs.

Skills Live

Development of the online platform continues to remain on track with a pilot due in the new year. The platform uses video content and a "swiping system" to engage its users. The target audience for the initial set of videos are young, unemployed, disadvantaged groups. It has already attracted support from the likes of TfL, Southeastern, Govia and London Underground respectively.



Members getting on the RoATP

As part of its Apprenticeship service NSAR has provided advice to member organisations considering applying for registration to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers helping them determine if there was a business case for registration in the first instance. For those members who decided to proceed with registration NSAR has provided guidance and support throughout the process.

Standards

- **Rail and Rail Systems Engineering apprenticeship standards Level 5, Level 6 and Level 7**

Each of these standards have now been approved and end point assessment plans have been submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA). Employers can now choose from a range of Rail Engineering standards from Level 2 through to Level 7.

- **Train Driver Level 3**

Over 30 employers from across passenger, freight and on-track machine have come together and developed a new Level 3 Train Driver apprenticeship standard. The standard and end point assessment plan have been approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) and are now ready for delivery. As part of this project, rail will be removed from the Level 2 Passenger Transport apprenticeship standard and replaced by a tram option, this standard will also cover bus and coach.

- **Rail Infrastructure Network Operations Apprenticeship Standards – Level 2**

Since it was approved for delivery, the Level 2 has seen a steady number of starts on the Rail Infrastructure Operations

- **Rail Engineering Permanent Way NOS review**

NSAR engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including Network Rail, to conduct a comprehensive review of the 35 Rail Engineering Permanent Way National Occupational Standards (NOS) across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The updated NOS are available on the UK Standards website.



Strategic Workforce Planning (SWP)

NSAR has worked extensively with a number of organisations in helping them shape their own SWP strategies. Through this work, NSAR has noted that a large number of businesses are failing to plan for their long-term recruitment and training needs with just 3% of businesses possessing a strategic workforce plan.

Data & Analysis

NSAR continues to use data analysis in a practical way to provide a meaningful base for critical decision-making to positively influence and support the industry meet its skills and workforce targets. NSAR has worked with STAT and a number of other organisations to support their efforts in shaping sector and individual organisation strategic workforce plans. **The DfT Skills Forecasting Baseline Study** commissioned by STAT used data collected and analysed by NSAR.

Digital Analysis

NSAR has conducted analysis into the shape and scale of future needs in Rail for digital skills. NSAR's research estimates that the digital rail programme will affect over 200,000 of the rail workforce - 55% upskilling, 40% re-skilling and 5% new entrants. NSAR with RDG, Network Rail and the Digital Railway team to understand what skills will be needed, when and where. As part of its Apprenticeship support NSAR is reviewing existing Apprenticeship Standards in Digital Skills to determine what is applicable in rail.

New & Existing Clients

NSAR has worked with HS2, Welsh Government, Crossrail 2 and several Train Operating Companies to determine their required workforce in the future. NSAR is working with Network Rail to design a bespoke SIM model for their own specific workforce planning requirements. NSAR's work on SWP has attracted interest from outside of the rail sector and work has been commissioned by Heathrow Airport and the Offshore Wind sector with further opportunities arising internationally.

SkillsID

The existing SkillsID competence management system has had a total rewrite and redesign. The new version which is available now has new features including dashboards, competence and observational assessments, as well as being far faster and easier to use.



Quality Assurance & External Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

NSAR is committed to the improvement in the quality of training provision across the rail sector and continues to support Network Rail in identifying good practice and investigating bad. Since 2014 there have been 95 investigations ranging from minor misdemeanours to deliberate criminal actions.

This year has seen the Enhanced Assurance Framework embraced by the training providers, NSAR has seen significantly more providers striving to improve.

The Quality Assurance Framework has also been revised and relaunched with a strong focus on leadership and management, encouraging the ongoing development of 'inspirational' trainers. NSAR continues to encourage new trainers to achieve or be working towards a professional qualification e.g. Certificate of Professional Development: Teaching in a Work Based Learning Sector (40 Credits at Level 4) or an equivalent programme.

NSAR has collaborated with Network Rail to rewrite the RTAS Rules and produce an Everyone Matters Guide to Inclusive Learning. The team has also created a Quality Assurance procedure for RDG ICT delivery.

A new customer support helpdesk for training providers and general enquiries has been introduced to provide a more responsive service.

External Quality Assurance

NSAR has been appointed by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) as the EQAO for Rail, Freight and for the Digital Industries. NSAR will provide external quality assurance across 5 rail standards, 4 freight standards and 13 digital standards. For the digital apprenticeships there are over 12,000 starts on the new standards. The EQA service ensures that the end-point assessments are compliant and comparable and consistent across end-point assessment organisations.





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