



# BLOG.

## INCREASE IN UK RAIL TRAINING



RAILSAFE GROUP | JULY 2024



Railsafe Group Training Academy, East Tilbury



*With the UK rail industry facing a critical skills shortage in 2025, we must prepare for increased demand for training at every stage of the career path to benefit new entrants and support and upskill our ageing workforce...*

Everyone in the rail sector is aware of the impact of the skills gap as the UK faces a national shortage of engineering and construction workers. While recruiters are doing their utmost to extend outreach and promote the incredible opportunities available as the infrastructure expands, we need to anticipate increased demand for training moving forward.

Forward-thinking leaders are planning ahead, as demographics indicate that a generation of skilled workers are set to be retiring at a time when there is a massive upturn in projects coming onstream. In fact, a joint report by City & Guilds and NSAR published in 2020 indicated that up to 120,000 extra people will be required in the years up to 2020, with demand peaking in 2025.

As 28% of rail sector workers are over 50, catering to the needs of an ageing workforce as well as onboarding newcomers is bringing training requirements front-of-mind so everyone can benefit from cross-mentoring and skills sharing.

The latest figures from NSAR show that the industry is heavily male dominated with the proportion of women in the work force at 16.3%. Given that women make up 51% of the population in England and Wales according to the last census in 2021, there is considerable work to be done to improve diversity.

Our sector needs to highlight the opportunities available to job seekers and enhance its reputation so that more young adults, women and BAME people see it as a great industry to be part of. Currently, 27% of BAME people would consider a career in rail, compared to 32% of white people. Railsafe Group also notes that midlife adults are more open to a career in rail than younger people with 39% of 35 to 44 year olds, and 28% of 18 to 24 year olds reporting that they would consider it.

As our industry looks to bring together more workers from different talent streams with a focus on reaching common goals, having the right training in place to support them needs to be a long-term strategy at every level, growing skills, confidence, experience and flexible teams.

Our team at Railsafe Group believe that an enriched culture of learning and development is at the heart of attracting and retaining talent. In fact, our experts believe that a commitment to personal and professional growth is set to become the 'new normal' throughout our industry and they are already creating highly specialised training courses to anticipate our clients' needs moving forward.

Railsafe Group is well-versed in supporting everyone from the frontline maintenance crews to the CEO suite and is always striving to deliver the very best solutions so that every learner is set up for success. Our training and education is all supported with a range of industry accreditations such as working in partnership with accredited organisations to deliver Ofqual Regulated rail courses, NVQs and diploma level courses, and leading-edge Health and Safety training such as fire safety and emergency first aid.

As ambassadors for our industry, we are keen to play our part in making the rail sector a career destination for the next generation and exploring untapped talent. We are always keen to spark change and new conversations with a view to changing lives. For example, RSG has delivered its first-ever Rail Awareness Course to men in custody at HMP & YOI Chelmsford – giving a hard-to-reach demographic the opportunity of a fresh start and a lifelong career.

RSG also actively encourages young people in and around Greater London to take part in a range of Skills Bootcamps at its East Tilbury Training Centre in Essex. These comprehensive and fully immersive NVQ courses are booking out thanks to word-of-mouth referrals and the friendly and approachable training team. Our focus on quality, integrity, safety and delivery combines practical learning with classroom theory as we have a simulation rail track for hands-on training.

Meanwhile the RSG Leeds Training Centre is supporting industry and community needs in the North of England with three cohorts of learners now studying a specially designed NVQ in Rail Engineering in partnership with West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Creating new collaborative partnerships will be key to delivering reliable and progressive people to the rail industry as well as ensuring that more experienced staff are fully resourced. RSG is anticipating that team leaders and managers will also need regular refreshers especially if they are entering the industry mid-career and are adjusting to a new working culture. As we explore job shares, increased role flexibility and more opportunities for part-time working, RSG stands ready to assist decision makers in delivering the right learning development and training support in place for every new hire. This will ensure that team members can be onboarded smoothly and feel at home swiftly ensuring greater staff retention and productivity.





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*Thanks for reading!*

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