

## INSPECTION REPORT

### Neway Training Solutions Ltd.

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| <b>Address</b>          | <b>Kelvin House<br/>RTC Business Park<br/>London Road<br/>Derby<br/>DE24 8UP</b> |
| <b>Telephone number</b> | <b>01332 360 033</b>   |
| <b>Email address</b>    | <b>enquiries@neway-training.com</b>  |

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| <b>Unique Number</b>       | <b>RTAS 0245</b>            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>    | <b>27 &amp; 28 May 2014</b> |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b> | <b>Steve Howland</b>        |

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NSARE Ltd.  
4th Floor  
1 – 11 Carteret Street  
London  
SW1H 9DJ

Telephone: +44 (0)7850 793794  
Fax +44 (0)20 7117 3480  
Email [enquiries@nsare.org](mailto:enquiries@nsare.org)

## Introduction

This was the second inspection of this provider. The last inspection took place on 7 – 8 June 2012. This inspection was carried out by one inspector on behalf of NSARE as part of a national programme of inspection within the railway industry. The inspector made 5 overall judgements against a set of common criteria which are available on the NSARE website at [www.nsare.org](http://www.nsare.org).

Before the inspection, a range of documentation was scrutinised including the self-assessment report (SAR) and quality improvement plan (QIP) produced by the provider. The inspector spent one-and-a-half days on site. During this time two trainers were observed. Other activities included a review of the company's website, a tour of its facilities, reading notice boards, discussions with the Managing Director, Competence Manager, trainers and learners, scrutiny of documents, and an evaluation of the company's training and assessment results provided by NSARE.

## Description of the setting

Neway Training Solutions Limited was established in November 2002 and specialises in providing training and assessments for external clients. Its modern air conditioned training rooms, practical training facilities, dedicated lounge for learners and grassy outdoor quadrangle are located on the RTC Business Park in Derby, close to M1, Derby Railway Station and East Midlands Airport. In addition to on-site live and static railway facilities, training also takes place at the nearby Great Central Railway and Midland Railway Centre.

The company provides 125 different training courses and associated assessments primarily to the rail industry and against Sentinel requirements in track safety, permanent way, competence management, electrification appreciation, plant and occupational health and safety.

A managing director heads the company and is supported by a senior management team consisting of a financial director, office manager and competence manager. Training and assessment courses are provided by four full-time and five associate trainers. All are well qualified specialists in their fields and experienced members of the railway industry. One is currently operational. Since the previous inspection the company has delivered 2469 training and 54 assessments to 1852 learners.

In addition to being a member of NSARE and an accredited training provider, the company is a City and Guilds registered centre and an active member of the Association of Railway Training Providers.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The overall effectiveness of the company is outstanding. It fully complies with NSARE's requirements.
- Its capacity to improve is outstanding. It has met or exceeded the recommendations from the previous inspection and improved in many areas of provision, leadership and management in order to successfully improve outcomes for many learners.
- Learners' outcomes are outstanding. Overall, pass rates have improved from 96% to 99% since the previous inspection. Learners make exceptional progress, including those with barriers to their learning, and benefit economically and socially from the impact of training. They enjoy training and are treated fairly. They feel safe, know how to stay safe and are free from bullying, harassment and abuse.
- The quality of provision is outstanding. Well qualified, experienced and up-to-date trainers provide interesting and engaging training experiences, which are sometimes inspirational. Training is adapted to match learners' learning styles, which improves their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills. All learners are well supported irrespective of their diverse backgrounds.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. A clear vision coupled with the setting of ambitious targets creates an ethos of aspiration for excellence. The engagement with users to support and promote improvements is particularly well developed and effective. Facilities and resources are extremely well managed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Learner Outcomes**
  - Refine the use of data to improve the monitoring of the performance of groups of learners on courses where the pass rate is less than 100%.
- **Leadership and Management**
  - Further develop feedback processes to capture objective data on the effectiveness of the company's equality and diversity policy and procedures.

## MAIN FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### Capacity to improve

### Grade: Outstanding

A clear vision of 'Aiming to be the best training provider in the rail industry' and well publicised mission statement combined with very effective self-assessment that leads to the achievement of many ambitious targets, have resulted in an excellent track record of sustained improvements.

Consequently, the company has met and sometimes exceeded the six recommendations for improvement listed in its previous inspection report. Additionally, it has: improved the overall pass rate for learners from 96% to 99%. It has increased its annual turnover by 51%. In addition, it has installed Wi-Fi that enhances online training, added two Smart Boards that make some aspects of training inspirational. It has actively involved all employees in improving the company through schemes like WASP (Win A Suggestion Prize), and identified the learning styles of learners prior to training. As a reaction to these suggestions, training methods have been adapted to meet these needs.

The Managing Director is now directly involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of training, which has increased the rigour of self-assessment. Furthermore, although the company already has outstanding access to adjacent static and live practical training facilities, it is constructing a second switch and crossing area to make training even safer.

The increased demand for training courses, caused partly by the reputation the company has achieved for high quality training, is being met by increasing the amount of training provided by associate trainers. Nevertheless, the company has analysed the market and predicted future demand and consequently, is advertising for two additional associate trainers.

### Learner outcomes

### Grade: Outstanding

Learners make exceptional progress from their starting points (which are identified during the pre-course completion of an expectations form) to successful achievement of their certificates of competence and qualifications. Post training feedback forms show learners stating they have moved from beginner to intermediate or intermediate to advanced levels due to training.

Pass rates have risen year-on-year since 2012 to 99%, which means nearly every learner acquires knowledge and develops the understanding and skills required to return to their employers better educated and more skilful than when they left.

The company's very well managed data shows there is no substantial variation in performance between different types of courses or groups of learners, although the monitoring of groups on courses that achieve a less than 100% pass rate is slightly underdeveloped.

Discussions with learners and analysis of case studies reveal that learners improve their economic and social well-being exceptionally well as a result of training. For example, one has progressed since 2003 from a junior engineer to being a project engineer covering the East Coast line from London to Doncaster and Lincoln. Another has matured over several years from a trainee technical officer within a large company to employing six engineers within his own company.

Learners enjoy their training, make helpful contributions to discussions, sometimes challenge their very knowledgeable trainer, and develop leadership, communication and teamwork skills, particularly during practical work.

All learners say they feel safe, know how to stay safe and know of no accidents, near-misses or incidents associated with the company, which has a clean record since it was established in 2002. Learners feel treated equally, partly because they are provided with extra help if they require it. The company has received no complaints about unfairness. Additionally, the absence of bullying, harassment and abusive behaviour makes learners feel safe during training, as does their belief that the company would take swift and effective action in the unlikely event that any unsafe behaviour emerges.

### **Quality of Provision**

### **Grade: Outstanding**

Well qualified, very experienced and up-to-date trainers use interesting and engaging learning methods, which often involve skilful questioning, clear explanations and the effective use of technology, including interactive whiteboards. Sometimes, training is innovative and inspirational. For example, several trainers use interactive whiteboards to access Map applications to show railway line features in parts of the country where learners work. This substantially aids learners' planning, for example, when planning a safe system of work. Consequently, some learners now use these map applications in the workplace.

Trainers also identify learners preferred learning styles and adapt their training accordingly. For example, trainers make more use of model railways and images for visual learners and use plenty of practical work for kinaesthetic learners. In response to learners' feedback, one trainer now provides practical training on the first rather than second day of Trackback training, in order to set theory into a meaningful practical context. This improves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and assessment scores and pass rates.

Although all trainers hold at least a level 3 training qualification, they improve their effectiveness through regular continuing professional development, which is targeted within their annual performance management process. This, combined with many years service on the railways and, in one case, current operational practice, improves their credibility and enhances the training experience for learners.

Assessments are conducted in accordance with relevant regulations and learners receive constructive feedback on their performance. Those with barriers to their

learning receive extra support during training and assessments, which ensures all learners are treated fairly and given an equal chance to succeed, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds. The use of online Learn Direct is sometimes recommended to support literacy, language and numeracy and links with a local college are being pursued.

The company provides 125 different training courses and associated assessments which meet the needs of learners, employers and the railway industry exceptionally well. Approximately half of all courses are delivered throughout the UK and flexibly at night and weekends if required. Some courses are taught in Ireland and Turkey, and exploratory talks are underway to provide training in the Middle East.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade: Outstanding**

The Managing Director has set a clear vision for the company and the Competence Manager very effectively contributes to a very positive and supportive culture that aspires to excellence. There is a strong sense of inclusion throughout the company, which is promoted by very effective communication between all staff, especially those serving around the UK or overseas.

Demanding targets for the company are set and met, which drive improvement and expansion. The Managing Director's personal contact with clients and his excellent administrative support results in a clear picture of demand that is processed in a welcoming and efficient manner.

All statutory duties are fulfilled and quality assurance is rigorous and robust. For example, the Managing Director, Competence Manager and internal verifiers assess the quality of training and assessments frequently, and feedback from learners and employers is monitored and evaluated very effectively. The company uses technology well to ensure that all employees operate to the latest standards and most current documentation. There are robust systems in place to prevent irregular and fraudulent issuing of certificates.

Equality and diversity are very well promoted by posters and notices throughout the training centre. Trainers, who have all attended equality and diversity training, are very aware of its importance and emphasise it at the beginning of training sessions. Although learners can report any feelings of unfairness to trainers, administrators and managers, in person by writing or via a QR code link to the company's website, the company has not yet fully refined its feedback processes to capture objective data about the effectiveness of its policy and procedures. Nevertheless, there have been no complaints about unfair treatment.

The degree to which the company engages with users to support and promote improvements is particularly strong. The views of employers are systematically sought by phone calls from the Managing Director and emails from the Competence Manager. Apart from yielding positive feedback, suggestions for improvement are sometimes made and then acted upon. For example, feedback that the skills and understanding levels of employees upon entry into the

workplace were falling, resulted in consultation between the company and employers, which led to increasing the length of a grinding course from five to eight days. Consequently, employers are now far more satisfied with the performance of their employees.

Feedback from learners is also analysed carefully and suggestions for improvement are often acted upon. For instance, feedback about the impractical nature of using a large volume of text outdoors resulted in the company designing a popular mini weatherproof handbook for Stressing of Continuous Welded Rail. Additionally, learners who reported difficulty learning by passively listening to the trainer and watching slides now benefit from the company's bespoke designed work book methodology which fully engages learners in active learning and has improved the quality of their learning.

Facilities and resources are extremely well maintained by the company which is financially healthy and provides exceptionally good value for money. As one self-employed learner who pays his own fees said, 'The company is not the cheapest but in my experience it is the best and training here carries weight in the industry.'

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| <b>INSPECTION JUDGEMENT GRADES</b> |
|------------------------------------|

|   | <b>Grade</b>        |
|---|---------------------|
| Overall effectiveness   | Outstanding         |
| Capacity to improve   | Outstanding         |
| Learner outcomes  | Outstanding         |
| Quality of provision  | Outstanding         |
| Leadership and management including the provider's provision for equality and diversity | Outstanding<br>Good |

### What the judgements mean

| <b>Judgement</b>     | <b>Description</b>   | <b>For overall effectiveness</b>   |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Outstanding          | These features are highly effective                        | The provider will receive another inspection within 24-36 months   |
| Good                 | There are very positive features present                   | The provider will receive another inspection within 18-24 months   |
| Requires Improvement | There are features which must be improved                  | The provider will be suspended from delivery until it can demonstrate to the Inspectors that the areas for improvement have been addressed, which must be within 4 months or accreditation will be permanently withdrawn |
| Inadequate           | There are features which are not of an acceptable standard | The accreditation for delivery will be permanently withdrawn   |