

# Linbrooke's new NATIONAL TRAINING ACADEMY

With all of the work going on around Britain's railways, it's not surprising that it is exposing some skill shortages. Starved of funding for some time, a career in rail was not as attractive as it had been in former years.

As a result, now that infrastructure investment has not only been restored but enhanced, many contractors find themselves fighting to recruit the talent and expertise that they need.

One of these is Sheffield-based Linbrooke Services, specialist supplier of network infrastructure solutions to the telecommunications, power and signalling sectors. Committed to the highest standards of professional competence and safety in all that it does, the company has developed enduring working partnerships with its clients and is a licensed principal contractor to Network Rail.

This brought the company face-to-face with that skill shortage. So Linbrooke set up ntrs (network training & resource solutions) as its training and recruitment partner to supply well-trained, experienced and highly motivated engineers for its own projects.

This initiative worked well. Using advanced training methods, a wide-ranging training portfolio and state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, ntrs fulfilled Linbrooke Services' training and resource needs. Many ex-forces personnel were trained to develop new skills along with civilian engineers and



students from further and higher education.

As a result, Linbrooke now has a staff of over 450 based at its Sheffield headquarters and at regional offices around the UK. Most recently, the company has opened a new rail design office in Station Square, Swindon. With state-of-the-art design equipment and facilities, the new office has brought Linbrooke's support and right-first-time ethos to the heart of the Great Western.

However, it doesn't end there. Continuing its quest to train recruits and existing staff to the highest possible standards, Linbrooke and ntrs have now opened a National Training Academy at their Sheffield base. An investment of over £500,000 has resulted in a facility which includes an authentic track layout with a simulated rail platform and a live fibre-optic network of around 240km which incorporates both legacy and 21st century equipment.

The new technical academy stands to deliver world-class training and accreditation across multiple disciplines and industry sectors, not just for Linbrooke but also for commercial customers worldwide. It is an impressive facility which can

offer students hands-on practical experience on the latest telecommunications, signalling and power equipment.

Operational communication systems training includes Station Information and Surveillance Systems (SISS), Driver Only Operations (DOO) systems, concentrators, transmissions and lineside equipment. Courses cover the installation, testing and commissioning of both fibre-optic high-speed Multiprotocol Label Switching (IP/MPLS) and traditional copper networks.

The new site's realistic platform and tracks incorporate various styles of signals, point operating equipment and train detection and protection equipment which provide a realistic and accessible set-up for safe and practical training from basic appreciation right through to high level modular testing competence. In order to enhance the learning experience, the signalling facility also incorporates associated power and communications equipment.

An established capability for electrical and power training for both rail and DNO (distribution network operator) networks is being expanded, with a view to delivering courses on both low voltage (LV) and high voltage (HV) installation and commissioning.

Opening the new facility, music entrepreneur Pete Waterman, who is both a rail enthusiast and also a Patron of NSARE (the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering) praised Linbrooke's commitment and investment.

'XXXXXXXXX,' he said. 'XXXXXXXXX.'

The Lord Mayor of Sheffield was also enthusiastic about this new addition to the city's training facilities. 'XXXXXXXXXXXXX,' he said. 'XXXXXXXXXXXXX.'

It won't be long before the impressive ntrs National Training Academy will start to graduate the next generation of telecommunications, signalling and power engineers both for Linbrooke and for the railway industry at large, helping to fill the skills gap.

