

Northampton, UK
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Secretary of State announces plans to create 30,000 apprenticeships in road and rail industry by 2020

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and Crossrail Chair Terry Morgan CBE visit new rail training academy

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin and Crossrail Chair Terry Morgan CBE today announced increased government support for developing rail skills in the UK. Speaking at the newly-constructed National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR) and Siemens' Northampton rail depot, the Secretary of State outlined plans to create more than 30,000 apprenticeship places across the road and rail industry during the lifetime of this Parliament.

To help deliver this ambition Patrick McLoughlin announced the appointment of Crossrail Chair Terry Morgan CBE to develop a transport and infrastructure skills strategy, to help the transport industry ensure a continuous pipeline of skilled workers.

Over the next ten years, the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) has forecast a skills shortage of over 8,000 jobs specifically in traction and rolling stock. In addition to the industry's ageing workforce, a key problem is a lack of diversity, with women making up just 4 per cent of the rail industry workforce. Today's announcement, which is part of the Government's commitment to invest £70 billion to improving transport infrastructure, goes some way in tackling the skills shortage currently seen in the UK's rail industry.

Announced in 2013, NTAR was set up to help plug the skills gap and act as a national 'hub' for rail engineering excellence in traction and rolling stock. With the first intake of students due later this year, the academy will help train rail professionals from across the industry. NTAR will specialise in the development of a rigorous tailored curriculum for the academy in order to deliver the next generation of highly skilled rail technicians, engineers and managers in traction and rolling stock.

The academy is a joint project between NSARE, the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and the Department for Transport (DfT), who have provided half the funds required, with Siemens contributing the rest.

All of Siemens' 71 rolling stock graduates, interns and apprentices will benefit from learning at NTAR when it opens in autumn 2015. NTAR will also provide South West Trains with a managed service for its 2015 intake of engineering apprentices, providing technical skills training and qualifications through its Northampton hub and its network of partner colleges.

Commenting on today's announcement, Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director of Siemens Rail Systems, said: "At Siemens we have long recognised the need and importance of developing the UK skills base for the rail sector and it is fantastic to once again see the continued support from the Department for Transport as expressed by the Secretary of State Patrick McLoughlin today. Addressing the significant skills shortage in the sector at a time of unprecedented investment is a priority for us as an organisation and our support for the National Training Academy for Rail and our partners at NSARE is a testament to this. This academy will play a key part in transforming the way in which the UK develops skills across the rail sector and we are proud to play such a key role in it."

Neil Robertson, CEO of the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) said: "NSARE welcomes the visit of Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State to visit the National Training Academy for Rail (NTAR). NTAR is a highly significant strand in our industry's preparation for its future challenges. Lives, careers and productivity will all be transformed by this facility, which is a critical objective that NSARE is committed to. I am delighted by the industry's support for it even at these early stages, and I'm grateful for the very professional support our partner Siemens is bringing to its establishment and operation."

General Manager of the National Training Academy for Rail, Simon Rennie, commented: "NTAR exists to serve a number of defined audiences – those in engineering careers joining rail for the first time, those working in rail maintenance wanting to upskill in response to evolving technology and young people embarking on their first careers within rail. We have a broad and practical reach aligned that connects skills gap research with what is useful to real businesses – underpinned by a network of leading partners and respected accreditations."

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Editor's notes

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About Siemens

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 165 years. The company is active in more than 200 countries, focusing on the areas of electrification, automation and digitalization. One of the world's largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies, Siemens is No. 1 in offshore wind turbine construction, a leading supplier of combined cycle turbines for power generation, a major provider of power transmission solutions and a pioneer in infrastructure solutions as well as automation, drive and software solutions for industry. The company is also a leading provider of medical imaging equipment – such as computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging systems – and a leader in laboratory diagnostics as well as clinical IT. In fiscal year 2014, which ended on September 30, 2014, Siemens generated revenue from continuing operations of €71.9 billion and net income of €5.5 billion. At the end of September 2014, the company had around 357,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available at www.siemens.com.

About the National Training Academy for Rail - NTAR

At NTAR, our ambition is to be recognised as an international Centre of Excellence for training in traction and rolling stock – to be the source of pride for the rail industry, acting as a flagship for skills development and for collaborative working, delivering a successful and sustainable model.

Born from an immediate need to train a workforce to maintain the new Thameslink rolling stock, a unique and more ambitious public/private partnership across government, agencies and private enterprise has been developed to address the Traction and Rolling Stock training needs of the market more widely. From this partnership, NTAR has been created with a core objective of playing a leading role in the new Railway Skills development programmes being driven by NSARE – all underpinned by strong collaborative working and consultation with the market to make sure prioritised needs of the industry are met.

Our immediate focus is on consulting with a wide range of potential customers across the industry so that when we open our doors in the autumn of 2015, we are truly responding to the immediate needs of the industry - while also developing what we will offer and how over the medium and long term horizons. We will be attending a wide range of events over the remainder of the year and we are consulting widely so that we really do offer what the industry needs.

- NTAR will establish a hub of core in-house expertise as part of a wider hub and spoke model at a world class facility in Northampton – currently in its build phase – providing a blended learning model, combining use of unique practical equipment and workshop facilities in addition to classroom based teaching
- During the build period, we will consult with the industry to understand and prioritise demand that matters most when finalising our curriculum
- We will build a network of trusted and qualified partners to deliver our syllabus, adopting and reinforcing NSARE's accreditation and skills recording
- We will collaborate with the training businesses, universities, colleges and professional organisations at different locations to help build a complementary ecosystem of training expertise – including delivering to other strategic organisations such as the National College for High Speed Rail. This will include building international relationships to harness knowledge and skills and expand the reach of our catchment.

- We will also make available our facility as a route to support both local and national training organisations in broadening their reach across the industry

About the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering - NSARE

Following two years of research and development, the National Skills Academy for Railway Engineering (NSARE) was established in November 2010, when the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, Vince Cable, announced that the UK Government would support our Business Plan. NSARE Limited was incorporated in January 2011 as a 'not for profit' company, wholly owned by its Members. We 'opened for business' from our National Office in central London three years ago. Our pan-industry Board is chaired by Chris Fenton, CEO of RSSB. We launched our corporate Membership scheme at our first national conference in June 2011; today we have over 360 Member organisations and we are still growing.