

Inspection of Intertrain UK Ltd

Inspection dates:

25–27 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Intertrain UK Limited (Intertrain) is based in Doncaster and provides training for the rail infrastructure network nationally. It is wholly owned by the City and Guilds of London Institute. Intertrain has provided apprenticeships since 2017, funded by the apprenticeship levy, and adult learning programmes funded through West Midlands Combined Authority since 2021.

At the time of the inspection, there were 58 apprentices. There were 33 level 2 rail engineering operative apprentices and 25 level 3 rail engineering technician apprentices. All apprentices are over the age of 19. There were 33 adult learners on short courses preparing them to work in the construction or rail industries.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices and learners benefit from high-quality training delivered by experienced and well-qualified trainer assessors. They quickly develop the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to work in the rail industry. Apprentices at level 2 initially complete personal track safety training and gain other fundamental knowledge that they need to work as rail operatives, such as how to carry out sleeper and rail changes. They also learn how and why to use rail drills, rail saws and detonators. Consequently, they are well prepared to work in the rail industry.

Apprentices and learners experience a culture of high expectations. They are enthusiastic, positive and keen to learn and do well in both their training and workplaces. Apprentices and learners feel well supported by their trainer assessors.

Apprentices show mutual respect and demonstrate appropriate professional behaviours on site. Learners on adult learning programmes are expected to attend punctually and behave in a professional manner as if they are attending a workplace. As a result, apprentices and learners develop the required behaviours to work in the rail industry.

Apprentices and learners feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work. They adhere strictly to safe site working practices and working time regulations. They take responsibility for their own safety and that of their peers. Apprentices and learners know how to report any concerns should they have them and are confident that their concerns would be dealt with quickly.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers work very effectively with employers and stakeholders to plan a curriculum to meet the training needs and address the skill shortages in the rail infrastructure industry. They identify and recruit apprentices who are a good match to rail operative apprenticeship roles. Employers value the training that their apprentices receive and the responsiveness of leaders in ensuring that the training covers essential subjects. Employers identified that they needed learners with a knowledge of how to deal with asbestos and how to work safely at height and leaders and managers subsequently introduced these topics into the programme. Leaders and managers work with Jobcentre Plus to recruit and train adult learners to work in the rail and construction industries.

Trainer assessors teach adult learning programmes in a logical order, beginning with essential industry safety requirements. They then teach learners the skills required to work on railway sites. Learners attend practical sessions that allow them to see professional rail workers in real work situations and learners practise their skills on realistic rail equipment. Staff provide helpful feedback to learners on their written work, including their spelling and grammar, which helps learners improve the quality of their work.

Trainer assessors ensure that off-the-job training links well to what apprentices are doing at work. Apprentices on the rail operative standard develop confidence in using small tools to measure and cut rails and dig sleepers. They then move on to gain new skills and certification to use larger equipment on site, such as rail saws, rail drills and mechanical and hydraulic lifting equipment. Apprentices and learners rightly value the training that they receive and the knowledge and skills that they gain.

Leaders and managers ensure that trainer assessors are well qualified and experienced in the rail and construction industries. They have implemented an extremely useful professional development programme. Trainer assessors keep their knowledge and skills up to date with industry developments and requirements. A few trainer assessors complete university courses to help them improve their teaching. Managers make frequent site and classroom visits to check on the quality of training provided by trainer assessors. They identify areas for improvements accurately and put individual staff action plans in place.

Trainer assessors use their specialist knowledge and experience to support apprentices well to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Staff check rail engineering operatives' understanding to ensure that they comply with the managers' expectations on site and remember what is covered during the site induction and in specific site job plans and procedures. As a result, apprentices take responsibility for their own safety and that of their peers. Trainer assessors assess apprentices' work effectively and provide useful feedback, indicating where apprentices need to provide more detail and context in their answers. Consequently, apprentices produce good-quality work that is at least of the standard expected and often exceeds that standard.

Apprentices receive effective information, advice and guidance from both Intertrain staff and their employers. This ensures that they are very clear about the challenging industry expectations such as undertaking work involving heavy manual labour and the need to work in adverse weather conditions. New recruits benefit from a useful taster day during recruitment, where they practise heavy lifting of rail equipment on realistic sites before they start their apprenticeship. However, a few apprentices leave their programme early because of the unsociable working hours.

Trainer assessors prepare most apprentices well for end-point assessment (EPA). They can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to enter the gateway and what to expect at the final assessment. Apprentices know that they need a portfolio of evidence to showcase their underpinning theory, job reports from the workplace and a discussion with an external assessor. However, a few apprentices are not well prepared for the EPA. For these apprentices, trainer assessors have not explained carefully enough what they need to do to complete their apprenticeship successfully.

Trainer assessors do not use their initial assessment of apprentices' existing skills and knowledge well enough to plan individual programmes of training. As a result, a few apprentices who have prior technical knowledge and skills are not making rapid enough progress.

Trainer assessors do not currently provide enough support for the few apprentices who struggle with mathematical concepts for engineers, and this slows the progress of these apprentices. Leaders have recognised this and have put measures in place for future cohorts. Most apprentices who need to gain English and mathematics functional skills qualifications receive effective support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have put in place effective safe recruitment policies and procedures to ensure that staff are appropriate to work with apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out the role effectively.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive useful training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This helps staff to recognise learners and apprentices who may be at risk. Staff raise concerns and make referrals to external agencies promptly.

Leaders and managers rightly place a high priority on ensuring that apprentices are safe in the workplace. Regular drug and alcohol tests are routine within the workplace and apprentices know the reason for this. Learners on adult programmes benefit from useful information on drugs, alcohol and lack of sleep, and how these can affect them at work and in their personal lives.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices struggling with the mathematical content of their programmes are quickly identified and receive effective support.
- Ensure that initial starting points are used to inform and plan training for apprentices so that they are able to make rapid progress in developing their knowledge and skills.
- Ensure that all apprentices understand and are well prepared for their end-point assessment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278602
Address	Balby Court Carr Hill Doncaster South Yorkshire DN4 8DE
Contact number	01302 815530
Website	https://www.railway-training-courses.com/
Principal/CEO	Alex Pond
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality assurance manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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