

NSAR becomes flexi-job apprenticeship agency

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NSAR has announced it is joining the register of flexi-job apprenticeship agencies.

Flexi-job apprenticeships are a Department for Education initiative to support apprentices in industries with less predictable contracts and working patterns. As a flexi-job apprenticeship agency, NSAR will recruit and employ apprentices and arrange placements with host organisations for the duration of an apprenticeship.

This will de-risk apprenticeship provision for organisations, who can take on apprentices knowing that NSAR can place them elsewhere if the work pipeline changes. NSAR will be supported by Coyles in offering this new service.

Apprenticeships can ease wage inflation pressure and bring fresh, diverse talent into the industry. Rail has low apprenticeship recruitment and utilisation compared to other industries. We have done some great work to get us to where we are now – 2,500 apprentices per year, approximately – but that is only about half of what is needed. NSAR's ambition is for the industry to act collectively and collaboratively to address

skills and productivity gaps by doubling current levels of apprenticeships to reach at least 5,000 per year.

In becoming a flexi-job apprenticeship agency, NSAR can support this goal, complementing other apprenticeship support services it offers – such as **Skills Match** (a brokerage and advice service), apprenticeship planning and levy optimisation.

NSAR Chief Executive Neil Robertson says: *“The NSAR board is very clear about the importance of helping the supply chain. If suppliers can only see a few months ahead and the apprenticeship programme is three years, they can take on an apprentice knowing that NSAR will place them elsewhere if the work dries up. NSAR is excited to get stuck in and continue to support the rail industry address skills shortages.”*