

Pershore College strikes apprenticeship partnership with Network Rail

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A Worcestershire college will be helping to keep the country's railways moving after striking an apprenticeship partnership with Network Rail.

Pershore College, which is part of college group WCG, will be supporting the rail infrastructure company to develop its off-track technicians after winning a competitive tender process.

The apprentices will work in teams that are responsible for maintaining the areas near the railway track, ensuring that services run smoothly across Britain.

This includes maintaining access points, vegetation, trees, drainage, line-side equipment and making sure the surrounding area is set to purpose.

Network Rail is training an initial 10 apprentices with Pershore College.

It is the first time Network Rail have run a bespoke apprenticeship scheme for these roles and it joins the 46 apprenticeship programmes totalling more than 3,000 apprentices across the organisation.

The programme is a combination of two apprenticeship standards, arborist and fencing, which will be completed over four years.

A second cohort of 12 apprentices are set to start on the programme in November – with Network Rail holding planning to introduce it as an annual rolling scheme.

Jyoti Jassi, apprenticeship delivery manager at Network Rail, said: “We’re pleased to be working with Pershore College and WCG on the development of this apprenticeship scheme to train the railway workers of the future.

“Our off-track technicians are crucial to the smooth running of the railways. This is the first time we have run a specific programme specifically for these important roles, which keep everything beside the railway in tip top condition.”

Students will study in block weeks at renowned horticultural college Pershore College over the four years.

The college will also be delivering additional training in countryside management for apprentices.

WCG is the largest provider of apprenticeship training in the region, with over 2,500 apprentices training each year, working with over 1,100 employers across the Midlands and nationally.

Krishna Parekh, Head of Business Development at WCG, added: “It is fantastic to be working with Network Rail on this programme. Our team has designed a bespoke programme which will support and develop a highly trained, engaged and flexible workforce for the off-track team.

“We are delighted to support Network Rail with their commitment to expand and develop their apprenticeship offer, which is in-line with the Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy to create 30,000 new apprentices in the transport sector.”

WCG offers a wide range of apprenticeships in a variety of industries. For more information visit wcg.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Photo credit: WCG photographer Kieren Bodill