

Occupational traineeship in rail track

What is it?

The occupational traineeship in rail track is a flexible programme delivered by traineeship providers to help young people to progress rapidly into a job in the rail industry. It provides technical knowledge, a licence to practice, and high quality work experience. On finishing this programme, young people can expect to move into a role preparing the ground and laying new track for trains, as well as checking track safety and carrying out repairs. It is a first step to a career in the rail industry.

Who is it for?

The traineeship is for young people aged 19-24 who would not otherwise have the opportunity to work in the rail industry. It is aimed at young people who want to work in the industry but do not have the skills or experience to start work straightaway. Young people do not need to have any qualifications to start the programme, however they must be able to speak and read English, be able to manage the physical demands of the job, and pass drugs, alcohol, and medical tests. The programme is only for young people aged 18-24 because the work requires night shifts for rail maintenance.



What will young people learn?

The programme is typically 13 weeks long and is the same as a general traineeship in that it includes work preparation training; a high-quality work experience placement; and English, maths and digital skills provision where needed. However, it is also designed to give young people a good insight into the rail industry and everything they need to start working in it straight away.

The programme gives young people experience of a real work environment, and enables them to gain the licences needed to work in the rail industry. Young people will first build technical knowledge and skills through simulated work experience and classroom learning, followed by work experience in a real rail track environment.

'We've had all of the necessary qualifications and tickets and stuff that we need to actually work on the railway. So, then that will put us in front of everyone else but then that will also allow us to progress upwards. As long as we put our minds to it, we can pretty much do whatever we want in the railways just from doing this course. We can do almost any job that you can think of, essentially, in the railways'

Rail track trainee

What are the benefits?

All tutors delivering the traineeship have experience of working in the rail industry. This means the teaching is relevant to the workplace, and young people can get practical tips as well as realistic insights about future careers.

Employers offer extensive pastoral care to trainees including mentoring and support with practical challenges such as transport. They may also pay trainees an allowance for the hours they work to recognise their contribution.

As part of the programme young people learn about careers in the rail sector, with guidance from when they apply to after finishing the programme.



What do employers say?

Employers are enthusiastic about the traineeship. They see it as an opportunity for them to grow their workforce and reach out to young people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to work in the rail sector. The programme helps them to employ new recruits who have the skills, interest and enthusiasm to start their careers in rail and potentially progress to senior and more highly paid roles.

'So, our trainees that participated on our first course, for the seven weeks they worked hard, they showed their practical experience, they were showing what they learnt in their technical knowledge, and then applying it to practical knowledge. And our recruitment consultants really wanted them on their teams because they had the work experience.' **Rail track employer**

Next steps

If trainees do well on their programme they will be offered a job by their work experience employer. Skill shortages in the rail industry, along with new infrastructure projects such as HS2, mean that if young people are qualified to work as rail track engineers they can expect well paid work, and opportunities to specialise and progress.

'Occupational traineeships give individuals that are not quite ready for an apprenticeship or employment, the opportunity to be able to move into the rail sector. The rail sector has a huge skills gap at the moment and a very ageing workforce so to bring young individuals that want to move into the sector, it gives them the opportunity to taste what the industry is actually like.' **Intertrain staff member**

Find out about how to apply for a traineeship [here](#)

