



Case Study

Unemployed people across Birmingham are getting their lives back on track by securing jobs on the railways thanks to an innovative employment initiative.

Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG) and railway maintenance recruitment agency SkyBlue Rail have joined forces under a Local Employment Partnership which is likely to lead to jobs for around 50 people in the next 12 months.

Nine former long-term unemployed people have already started work maintaining the rail network across the Midlands, while a further nine are waiting to begin their employment after completing a strict training process. The work involves rail maintenance, changing rails, changing sleepers, changing ballast, and track renewal work, mostly at weekends.

SkyBlue Rail is a specialist business created to

focus efficiently on the challenges facing Network Rail, its principle contractors, train operators and the travelling public. It supplies people to both Network Rail for maintenance and to major suppliers, such as Amey Colas, working on infrastructure renewals. SkyBlue Rail's Birmingham depot, has a total workforce of 402, of which 330 are associates, working on track maintenance.

Georgina Murphy, Centre Manager at PPDG's Yardley Advancement Centre, said: "The LEP works really well for both PPDG and SkyBlue.. It means that we are able to ensure that all the necessary training and preparation have taken place so that the people being put forward are the ones that SkyBlue will employ".

Ken Davidson, SkyBlue office team leader, said: "When I do the induction I paint the worst possible scenario – the unsociable hours, the inclement weather, the danger. If they have the right attitude to accept those conditions then they are the sort of people we want to recruit. As a result of the

LEP, we find that far fewer people are leaving, and the continued retention of workers is invaluable because they are gaining experience all the time.”

Peter Thompson, SkyBlue Area Manager, confirmed that the nine new recruits already taken on would be joined by the nine currently undergoing training, followed by a further 12 PPDG clients every 13 weeks, up to a total of around 50 each year.

Once the successful 12 candidates have been selected they are put on their 10 day Track Induction. After completing the course it takes less than a week for their card to come through and they can start work on the railways.

“We can now claim a success rate well above 90%. PPDG’s clients are being given first class training to go on to an excellent career path. It is very apparent that the calibre of recruits is much better now because of the thorough interview screening that is taking place.

The training is an ongoing process even when they have been taken on by SkyBlue. Mr Thompson stated: “New starters and trackmen will go on a programme to achieve NVQ Level 2 in railway engineering. We have a real commitment to ongoing training as every member of staff and associate worker that works on the rails will attend.”

For more details contact

T: 0845 111 4334

F: 0870 1293786

ask@skybluesolutions.com

SkyBlue Rail specialises in providing qualified and well-managed rail gangs, both directly to Network Rail for rail maintenance, and to contractors working on track renewal projects.

SkyBlue Rail also offers welding services, Thermat, Rail-Techpla, maintenance, repair of crossings and burning services for Carillion and a number of external suppliers.



THERE IS MORE TO SKYBLUE PEOPLE