HR Leaders Group

Wednesday 8th February 2024

Meeting summary

Chair – Dan Appleby, Head of HR, Loram UK
Vice Chair – Iain Taylor, Head of HR, CAF Rail Services
Partner – Rory Stone, Shoosmiths
Rail Forum Host – Cat Appleby, Membership & Engagement Director

Guest Speakers

- Paul Wilkinson, Northern Rail
- Jamie Wood, Northern Rail
- Sonia Howard, Network Rail
- Andrew Bilous, NSAR

The third HR Leaders Group took place on 8th February 2024, within National Apprenticeship Week, with 40 attendees on the day. The delegate list was issued with the joining instructions.

The event was launched by Chair Dan Appleby and Vice Chair Iain Taylor.

Right to Work

The first speaker was Rory Stone from Shoosmiths who provided a very clear overview of Right to Work, following a previous query.

- Reasons for Right to Work highlighted labour market abuse, tax evasions, exploitative working conditions and links with modern slavery. All employees should be checked – legally, before commencement of employment (often at Interview). By completing the checks, the business will have a statutory excuse, even if the check becomes wrong.
- The Home Office policy is very clear – retaining copy of Right to Work check, and apply sensible review: photo match, names match etc. Companies need to have evidence to indicate that the business has checked. This can be stored in the employer portal.
- Sharecodes are generated by the UK PI Portal for non-UK/Irish individuals. Codes should start with W.
- Implications of failure to check can be considerable: likely to be a civil penalty of up to £20,000 per illegal working with plans to increase this to £45,000 later this year. Companies are listed so there is significant reputational risk for non-compliance with the potential of being downgraded on sponsor licence, and Directors disqualified. Recent cases included Dec 2023 - £2.2m civil penalties in London and in the Midlands £1.6m.
- Question – is electronic passport sufficient? Best practice remains seeing the actual item, copying it and wet signature.
- Find more information here

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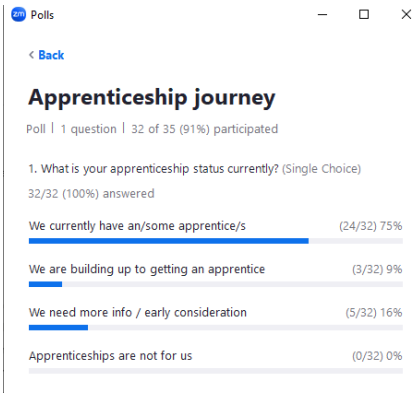
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If you have any questions relating to the Keynote from Rory Stone of Shoosmiths can be issued directly to Rory Rory.Stone@shoosmiths.com

Apprenticeship Enrichment

The participants were asked their current position on apprenticeships in a poll and the results can be seen here.



We were delighted to host three speakers covering a range of topics in

Northern Rail – Paul and Jamie spoke about their experiences working with CAF to enrich Northern's apprentices. Jamie, Level 3 provided a great overview of her experiences and the benefits of this approach. Paul outlined that over 1060 apprentices across their activity covering a range of schemes and that Northern are Silver accredited for the 5% Club.

Network Rail – Sonia and Jyoti outlined activity with Gateshead College for industry wide project management apprenticeships. They currently have 12 members each offering 6 month placements and opportunity to apply for a role at the end of the programme. They aim to improve industry relations, open doors for collaboration and develop skills/professional experience across the sector.

Organisations interested in this should contact Sonia Howard in the first instance: Sonia.howard@networkrail.co.uk

NSAR – Andrew outlined that some organisations find navigating the detail and requirements for apprenticeships difficult and this can be a barrier. NSAR have developed a programme of support that effectively leases companies with an apprentice and NSAR manage the administration / training elements.

For more information on the Apprenticeship Agency and how this can help clear barriers to taking on Apprentices (particularly SME/Micro businesses), please contact Andrew Bilous, Andrew.Bilous@nsar.co.uk

Closing comments – Rail Forum and the HR Leaders group are keen to hear from members that are developing their Apprenticeship journey as a result of this meeting

Event Partners

SHOOSMITHS

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and an agenda item will be included in the next meeting to hear from members about how this is going

AOB

- Course Vacancies – if you are paying for training course places and have spare places, why not open these up to Rail Forum members? Let me know what courses and we can look at how we can best share the opportunities. I have a specific interest in ILM so drop me a line that is something you are delivering and have extra capacity.

- Schools Engagement – the Rail Forum have recently issued a series of lesson plans for educators. We also have developed an Employer Pack for members. For further info, please visit: https://www.railforum.uk/schools-engagement/

- The Rail Forum work with CTP to deliver the **Military is Good for Rail Careers Fair**. Please can you advise if this could be of interest for you, by contacting Elaine@Railforum.uk (event date tbc)

Next meetings

- 12th June 12:30 - 2 (online)
- 11th Sept - MIGFR (in person, venue tbc, timing tbc)
- 6th November 12:30 - 2 (online)
- 5th February 2025 12 - 2 (2 hours) (online) – focus on Apprenticeships given its NAW.

If you have any topics you would like to see discussed at these meetings please let me know.

END.