

# Rail Sector

## What is the Rail Sector?

The UK's rail network is one of the most extensive in the world with a long history. Workers in the sector now build, maintain and operate rail services for passengers and freight.



Average annual salary  
**£31,595**



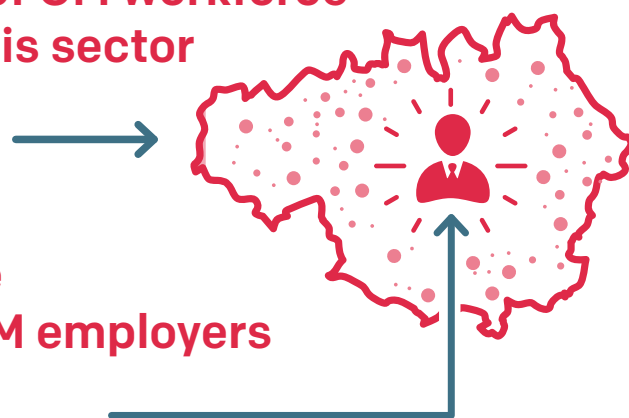
## Percentage of GM workforce working in this sector

**1.6%**

(21,000 employed)

## Approximate number of GM employers

**1,600**



## Who might you work for?

- [Northern Rail](#)
- [Network Rail](#)
- [Freightliner](#)
- [Virgin Trains](#)
- [Arriva](#)
- [GB Railfreight](#)
- [HS2](#)
- [Emeg Group](#)
- [Rail Freight Group](#)



- Effective communication skills
- Team working
- Customer care
- Numeracy
- Problem solving skills
- Project management
- Technical IT and engineering skills
- Commercial skills – optimising resources

## Workplace trends

- National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) outlines that skill shortages are set to escalate. Up to 120,000 additional people will be required in the sector over the next five to ten years. Between 7,000 and 12,000 additional people will be needed every year by the industry.
- Employers in the sector often take special steps to attract female and ethnic minority workers to jobs.

- Employers often cluster in Manchester City Centre, Trafford, Wigan, Salford and areas close to rail links.
- Ageing workforce and Brexit leave increasing openings for fresh entries to the sector.
- Advanced Technology High Speed Two (HS2) programme.
- The largest skills gaps are in engineering, specifically railway design and assurance, but in other areas of civil engineering too.

## Roles that GM employers are currently recruiting for

- Rail Transport Operatives
- Rail Construction Operative
- Electrical Engineer
- Tram and Train Drivers
- Rail Travel Assistant
- Lead Designer
- Rail and Rolling Stock Build and Maintenance
- Civil Engineer
- Traffic Management
- Signaller

## Types of qualifications

- Colleges often offer entry level operative courses (level 1-2).
- A range of relevant Apprenticeships at levels 2-5.
- [Employers training academies](#).
- [Industry recognised qualifications](#) through the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and the [Institute of Civil Engineering](#).

## What do I need to start my career?

**There are a rising number of apprenticeships to move into the sector.**

- Traineeships.
- Retraining from other sectors, often through schemes like [Skills Bootcamps](#).
- Sector's own graduate recruit schemes.



## Shortage and in demand roles

- Rail Construction Operative
- Signaller
- Steel Fixer
- Electrical Engineer
- Groundworker
- Lead Designer
- Civil Engineer

## What does the future hold for this sector?

- Specialist areas (such as electrification) due to the rail industry moving towards net zero carbon plans.
- Digital transformation is changing some job roles and requires new technical skillsets.
- There are new requirements for the Advanced Technology High Speed Two (HS2) programme in two sectors: construction and rail engineering.



**Want to know more?** - Find out more about the rail industry by visiting the [National Skills Academy for Rail](#), [Railway Industry Association](#) or [Railway Operators](#) websites. You can also [search for an apprenticeship online](#).

