



Professional Services Ltd

Railway Consultancy Services

AARCPS Expands into Operational Training Delivery

After almost a decade of providing bespoke operational training materials to the rail industry, AARC Professional Services has expanded into training delivery.

AARC Professional Services (AARCPS), led by industry stalwart Steve Derrick, has been offering a wide range of support and advisory services covering rail operations, projects and engineering, safety and assurance, and rail training since 2014.

Drawing from over five decades of industry experience, Derrick and his team of like-minded rail professionals have a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of key elements of the rail industry, including its training and development requirements.

The consultancy has developed bespoke training materials for its clients for many years, but its journey to operational training delivery started in 2021, when it was engaged to support the development of electrical control operator learning on behalf of Network Rail.

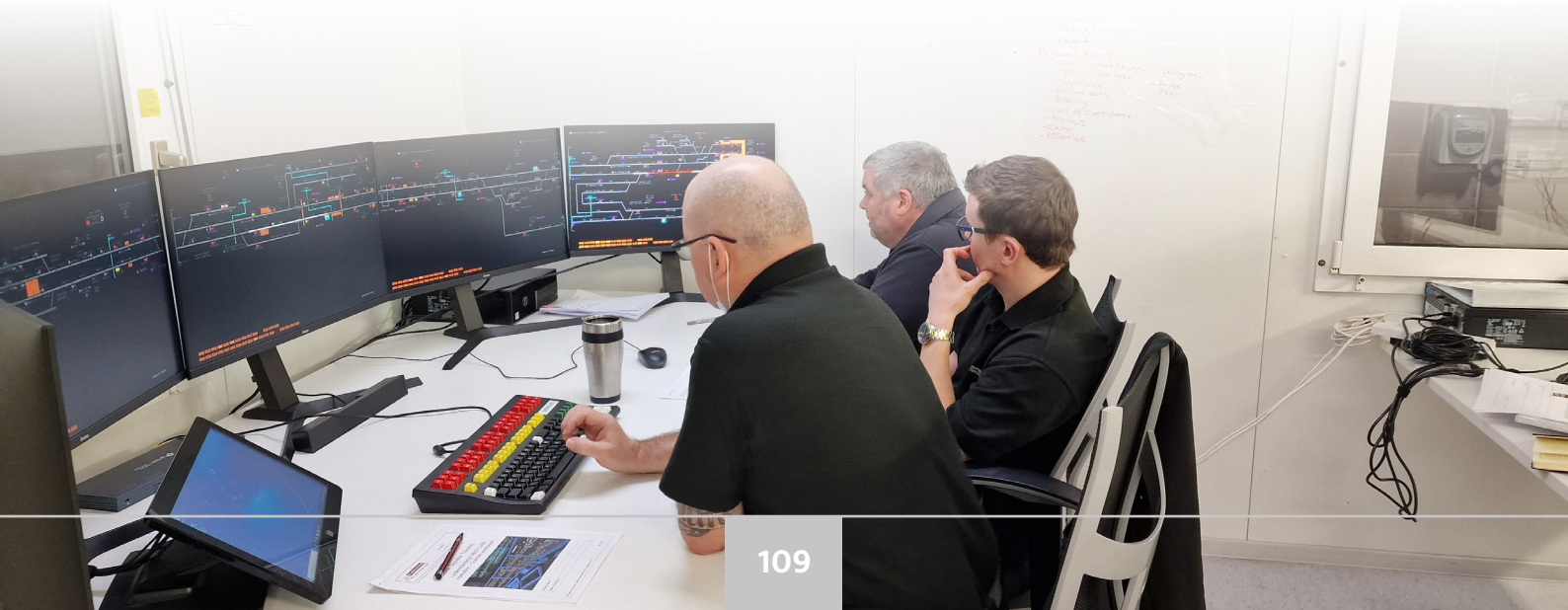
At the same time, the UK’s main infrastructure manager also asked AARCPS to produce bespoke signaller training modules for Scotland’s RETB and STB signalling systems, while Amey Infrastructure Wales (AIW) approached the organisation about delivering depot controller training.

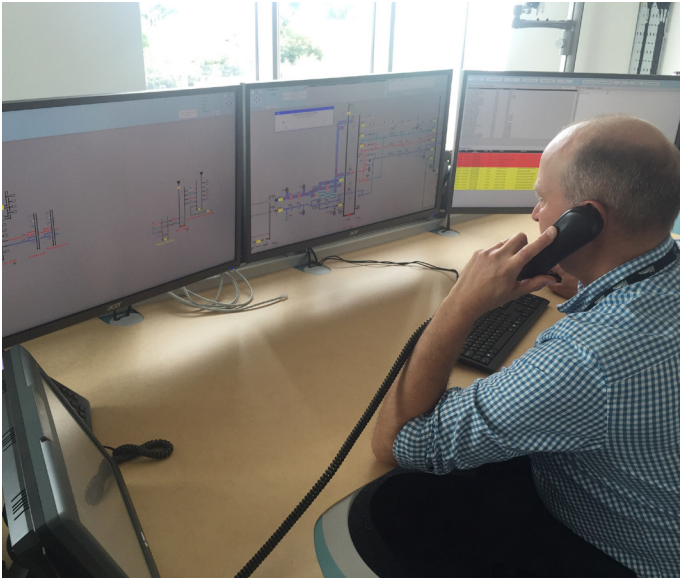
AIW had worked closely with AARCPS for some time, which was why Head of CVL Operations, Colin Hughes, thought Derrick and the team were perfect for the job.

“AIW had been asking us for a while about our capability to take on operational training – in particular basic signaller and electrical control operator (ECO) training,” says Derrick. “Towards the end of 2022 and after discussing with the team we felt the time was right for us to develop our training offering further.”

Developing a Specialist Training Delivery Programme

Starting from scratch, AARCPS undertook a full risk-





included them from the start,” says Dan Barrett, a Senior Consultant at AARCPS.

“The signalling training included time with workers in interfacing roles, such as train drivers and control room staff, to give them visibility of the tasks associated with the roles that they’ll work closely with.

The ECO trainers, on the other hand, wanted to counteract the fact their cohort couldn’t spend time in a live electrical control room, and so we’re including considerable time on a simulator, where they can practice in a safe environment.”

Blended Learning

The trainers took a fully blended approach to learning when developing the courses, understanding that people learn in different ways.

“From the outset, our training programme tries to ensure that all styles are catered for, but we’re able to change the methods dynamically as the course progresses,” Edwards points out.”

“On the signalling course we saw that our trainees learned more from practical application. As a result, we altered our approach on a number of topics, for example allowing them to use the WESTCAD Simulator before returning to the rulebook to understand the theory behind their actions.”

Quality Assurance

AARCPS also developed an internal quality assurance process using ORR, RSSB and Sector Skills Council guidance to make sure the training materials and delivery were to a consistent and high standard.

“A key part of this process is feedback from the trainers and assessors, which enables us to continually develop our own professional and assessment skills and use the lessons learned to help shape further training for AIW and other clients,” notes Liz Parkes, an HSQE Senior Consultant with AARCPS.

Feedback and Further Development

With one course completed and the other more than half-way through, Hughes says that AARCPS has exceeded expectations.

based training needs analysis to break down the overarching elements of each course into a set of trainable and assessable tasks, using national operating procedures as guidance and taking AIW’s specific needs into consideration.

“Other training providers offer pre-defined courses, but with AARCPS I was able to scope out what I wanted and have courses designed for my needs,” says Hughes. “They developed the programme and then I had the opportunity to review and add any additional items to meet my requirements.”

For the signalling course, AARCPS identified 500+ tasks a signaller must undertake competently. *“Once identified, it’s necessary your training programme covers all of these,” says Senior Consultant and Training Specialist Greg Edwards. “An awful lot of thought and debate took place when we determined the order and flow of the course, but we can confidently say that we can demonstrate all of the skills and knowledge requirements and identify where, when and how we have delivered these.”*

AARCPS’ Approach to Training Delivery

Standout features of AARCPS’ training delivery include the embedding of non-technical skills (NTS) into every aspect of its courses.

“Whilst developing the material it became very clear how important NTS are to these roles, and so we

“They incorporated all the latest ideas around training delivery and were able to tailor that to our needs, delivering training that’s bespoke to the equipment we’re using. There’s now an off-the-shelf training package ready to go whenever needed – I can just contact them to deliver it. Plus, together we can refine it in line with any changes in approach or technology.”

The trainees have also been positive about their experience.

“I thought this was much better than other training I’ve undertaken,” one trainee says. “It was tough, and really pushed me, but the trainers were great and really took the time to ensure I understood things. When possible, they also made the training fun.”

Next Steps

AARCPS is currently undertaking a review of these first courses and will use feedback to identify where any improvements can be made.

Derrick hopes to continue developing AARCPS’ training delivery, offering to support a wider range of roles. He is keen to hear from other rail organisations that could benefit from a bespoke training development and delivery provider.

www.aarcps.co.uk



“We’ll be exhibiting at Railtex 2023 in Birmingham this May and would be happy to discuss our development of training delivery – along with any of our other services.”

Get in touch to book a time or simply drop by and see us at stand no EO2.”

Steve Derrick, Managing Director, AARC Professional Services Limited



Railway Consultancy Services

AARC Professional Services Limited draws from over five decades of experience to provide expert support to the industry.

We are a railway consultancy bringing together likeminded rail professionals with a common goal to deliver outstanding outcomes:

- By helping clients achieve their goals...
- Through delivering strategic and technical expert advice...
- Across a range of disciplines...

Professionalism, collaboration and a friendly though determined ethos form the basis of our core values.

Run by railway people, for railway people

