

The Hire Association Europe (HAE) Assessment Centre
HAE IAC 18-02

Summary Document



Hire Association Europe (HAE) Assessment Centre

Sector Overview and Context

Tool, plant and equipment hire in the UK is worth more than £6bn to the economy and has an overarching enabling role in supporting the rest of the industry. Nothing gets built, maintained or serviced within the economy or wider society without the engagement of hire and rental. Hire Association Europe (HAE) joined the Infrastructure Assessment Commission to develop a network of new assessors to qualify the specialist workforce as there was limited coverage across Great Britain.

Following centre approval HAE worked with CITB's Partnerships Team and National Specialist Accredited Centre (NSAC) to promote the centre to the wider industry. We focused on three specific qualifications for the sector, Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Hire and Rental Operations, Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Supervising Hire and Rental Operations (Equipment, Plant and Tools) and Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Construction Plant or Machinery Maintenance. HAE had previously worked with CITB to develop specialist short duration courses, as accompanying underpinning learning is the preferred route for many candidates undertaking competency based qualifications in the sector.

The whole World suffered from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a number of our candidates were placed on furlough by their employers due to the lockdown(s). HAE kept in touch with them and our assessors also held regular catch-up's and offered advice for those still operating on collecting evidence in the workplace. We introduced several e-learning modules on a new platform, including HAE Covid-19 Practical Guidance for Hire Centres and HAE Mental Health Awareness and we offered candidates access. We shared workbooks, and provided candidates access to the Virtual Reality modules to keep up their learning. We also moved to utilising e-portfolios and an on-line webinar platform to deliver support and training. Following the changes to the CITB Grants Scheme this also had an impact on overall delivery numbers and participants as our assessment offer was based around also offering short duration training underpinning programmes.

Whilst the sector has many large national employers operating multi depot outlets across Great Britain the majority of employers in the hire and rental industry are independant SMEs. Reviewing the initiative with our project team, we determined that an increased number of employer face to face visits (or virtual meetings) to promote the benefits of engaging in the initiative and developing a qualified workforce may have helped. We undertook quite a few public events and a lot of media, but increased face to face time may have helped earlier on in the process. The call on time even for on-site assessment is a challenge and often a real barrier, but setting expectations and increased promotion of the benefits could have made a difference.

The project had three key outputs and the support from CITB was crucial in allowing the sector to take responsibility for developing new assessor infrastructure and the delivery of National Vocational Qualifications. A number of employers are now benefiting from the investment made in qualifying their workforce, delivered by specialists within their sector as a result of CITB's investment. Through this partnership working we have developed a network of new assessors and more than 40 individuals have completed or are working through qualifications via our centre. Whilst we may not have delivered all of the original numbers, we have met the outputs and success criteria and have a sustainable centre that is available for use by the sector. This has freed up space for CITB to support other sectors through the National

Specialist Accredited Centre (NSAC) which is helping to meet the targets set by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) for a fully qualified, not just skills carded workforce.

The investment from CITB has been crucial on our journey to create a sustainable assessment centre. This project has been a success and in our opinion has created real value for money for the sector and made a difference to both individuals and employers in the industry.

Paul Gaze
HAE Chief Executive Officer
February 2021