

CELEBRATING  
21 YEARS OF  
SUPPORTING  
SKILLS IN  
SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY

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“WE EMBRACE THE FULL DIVERSITY OF OUR SECTOR, WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER **THE WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW.**”

# A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

## Who we are

We are a specialist in skills for science and technology, a charitable organisation with a family of commercially-focused companies, reinvesting our surplus to promote training and education across the science-based industries.

Our mission is to ensure science and technology employers have the skills needed for success. We influence for the good of our sector, harnessing the power of collaboration, providing industry-specific skills services to create a safe and productive, future-ready workforce.

To find out more about our work visit [www.cogentskills.com](http://www.cogentskills.com)



A workforce rich in scientific talent is fundamental to our world and sits behind every advancement we enjoy today, from our smartphones and medical breakthroughs to the technologies essential to our low-carbon future. Each one is the result of scientific exploration and the practical application of skills.

Science and technology skills stimulate critical thinking, problem-solving and provide the bedrock of innovation; powering our economy, creating jobs and stimulating growth. It's not just about creating the next generation of scientists, it's about equipping our current and future workforce with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions, solve complex problems and continue to push the boundaries of what is possible.

That's why we believe nurturing these skills is not just beneficial but essential for our societal and economic well being. For more than **21 years** Cogent Skills has proudly supported the growth of skills across the breadth of our science and technology sector.

We believe in harnessing the power of employer-led communities. Together we can reach more people and have a greater impact when we collaborate with others who share our passion for skills. We embrace the full diversity of our science and technology sector, working in partnership to deliver the workforce of tomorrow.

FOR MORE THAN 21 YEARS COGENT SKILLS HAS PROUDLY SUPPORTED THE GROWTH OF SKILLS.

This report focuses on the areas where we are committed to making a difference, from working with policymakers to shape the skills landscape, to setting the standards that create safer workplaces and support the next generation of talent.

I'd like to say thank you to our Board members past and present for their contribution in steering Cogent Skills over the last 21 years. Our work is not possible without the energy and dedication of everyone who works with us and for all who continue to share our commitment to supporting skills in our sector, work which is needed now more than ever.



Justine Fosh  
Chief Executive  
Cogent Skills

**8,000+** THE NUMBER  
OF APPRENTICES  
TRAINED USING COGENT  
SUPPORTED STANDARDS.

We harness the power of employer-led communities, supporting the breadth and depth of the science and technology sector to develop the skills needed for success.

# HELPING OUR INDUSTRIES DEVELOP THE SKILLS FOR GROWTH

## ➤ Science Industry Partnership (SIP)

We've been proud supporters of the Science Industry Partnership (SIP) for almost a decade. The SIP is a leading employer-led community championing the skills needs of the UK Life Science sector. SIP members are a powerful and respected voice - offering policymakers an informed and expert view, ensuring employers can access the skills needed now and in the future.

## ➤ Industrial Biotech Leadership Forum (IBLF)

As an influential voice in the conversation about skills in the science sector, Cogent supports the IBLF's strategic coordination of the UK's fast-growing biotechnology sector. Industrial biotechnology is key to achieving Net Zero and straddles disciplines such as genomics and data science.

## ➤ Petroleum Driver Passport (PDP)

An industry-led and Government supported partnership, the PDP scheme sets a benchmark in competency against which all road tanker drivers who are loading, transporting, and offloading petroleum fuel products in the UK are measured. Developed in 2014 by the Downstream Fuel Distribution Forum with support from Cogent Skills, there are now more than 11,000 drivers with a PDP.

## ➤ Nuclear Skills Strategy Group (NSSG)

We are the strategic skills partner for the NSSG, a group that establishes projects to address critical skills risks in the UK nuclear sector. NSSG-led labour market intelligence highlighted the potential 300% increase in the nuclear workforce required to meet demand by 2050.

## ➤ Labour market intelligence

Supporting 'big-picture' understanding of workforce issues across our industry with extensive skills expertise and labour market intelligence. We collaborate with leading UK trade associations to help anticipate risks, identify opportunities and make informed strategic decisions:

### • Fuels Industry UK (FIUK)

Labour market survey to identify the future skills needed for the downstream sector as it transitions towards Net Zero.

### • Chemical Industries Association (CIA)

Supporting the representative body for the UK chemical and pharmaceutical sector to understand their future skills requirements.

### • Nuclear Workforce Assessment

A single source of UK nuclear workforce data, built in collaboration with leading nuclear employers; covering demographics, recruitment, attrition, training and future demand. Providing comprehensive insight for evidence-based decision-making across the nuclear sector.

## ➤ Careers Outreach - Coatings and Plastics

Delivering a bespoke program of careers outreach activity including training, school-ready resources and specialist expertise for both the British Plastics Federation and the British Coatings Federation, designed to equip their members with the skills and confidence to communicate career opportunities within industry.

## ➤ Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI)

Cogent has worked with the CPI to re-establish a technical-level apprenticeship programme for future paper makers. The UK paper industry employs more than **56,000** people and we're proud to support the skills needs and ambitions of this critical sector.

## ➤ Trailblazer standards development

Cogent has supported industry to develop 19 apprenticeship standards from Level 2 to Level 7 across the science and nuclear sector, from operator/technicians to postgraduate-level scientists. This work continues as the standards evolve to reflect the changing needs of industry, ensuring apprenticeship standards remain relevant for future entrants. These standards have supported more than **8,000** apprentices.

"OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH COGENT UNLOCKS RESOURCES FOR OUR MEMBER COMPANIES WHICH BENEFIT RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE SUPPLY OF SKILLS AT ALL LEVELS."

STEVE ELLIOTT, CEO,  
CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES  
ASSOCIATION





**20,000+** PROCESS SAFETY PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED USING COGENT-SUPPORTED STANDARDS.

# MAKING OUR INDUSTRIES SAFER

We equip employers with the skills and knowledge to create safe, compliant and productive workplaces. We deliver training that's recognised by regulatory authorities and support the development of safety standards for our sector.

## Setting safety standards

We actively support the development of process safety standards for employers operating in high-hazard process industries. These standards have been adopted by more than **400** employers and used to train more than **20,000** process safety professionals globally.

## Focussed training

We have delivered safety-focused training to more than **23,000** employees in regulated industries, helping businesses maintain safe and productive working environments. This training achieves a delegate satisfaction score of over **90%** and is regularly requested by leading organisations.

"WE'VE CHANGED OUR THINKING THAT TRAINING EQUALS COMPETENCE, TO FOCUSING ON THE FACT THAT ASSESSMENT PROVIDES A TRUE REFLECTION OF A PERSON'S WORKPLACE COMPETENCE."

OPERATIONS MANAGER,  
NATIONAL GRID

## Working with safety leaders

We collaborate with employers and regulatory authorities to develop the process industries training standards which build the skills required to lead and manage people in technical and challenging working environments. More than **2,000** current and future leaders have been trained in these standards.

## Nuclear site safety

With more than **40,000** cumulative course completions, the Triple Bar Programme is a 'three bar' training course developed collaboratively with industry to provide a basic understanding of working in nuclear. With a version for existing sites, new build sites, nuclear manufacturing and new leaders.

**40,000+** PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED IN NUCLEAR SITE SAFETY.



**£44 MILLION** - THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYER INVESTMENT INTO APPRENTICES AND GRADUATES FOR OUR INDUSTRY, DELIVERED THROUGH COGENT SKILLS.

# SUPPORTING TALENT PIPELINES

Cogent Skills is the trusted skills partner for the sector, offering end-to-end early talent services to build our future skills pipeline.

## Apprenticeship expertise

We've supported almost **4,000** learners over the last two decades, ensuring employers in our sector can access the apprenticeship talent needed for success.

## Employment services

Our outsourced employment approach has directly supported more than **2,000** people, with more than **90%** staying in the industry on completion. This supports the growth of STEM skills and makes it easier for employers to take on apprenticeship and graduate talent.

## Employer investment

From initial Government seed funding of **£1 million** in 2012 to improve the supply of apprenticeship and graduate talent to the science sector, employers have subsequently invested more than **£44 million**, boosting the availability of skills in the UK.

## Careers outreach

We've trained more than **700** Science Industry Partnership Ambassadors to promote careers in science through a range of aspiration-raising activities and events in classrooms across the UK.

## Nuclear learning resources

NSSG's partnership with Developing Experts has delivered accessible STEM resources to more than **6,600** schools via an online virtual learning platform - with engaging nuclear learning resources, aligned to the curriculum, delivered directly into the classroom.

## Career taskforce

The SIP Careers Taskforce, is made up of early career professionals from diverse backgrounds who share a passion and pride for science-based careers. The taskforce makes a difference to the lives of young people through outreach activities.

## Nuclear bursary

Funded by employers and managed by NSAN since 2008, **509** skills bursaries have been awarded to support individuals seeking a career in the UK nuclear industry to enter the industry, or advance their careers.

## GAIN - Growing Awareness in Nuclear

An NSAN-supported collaboration that provides tailored programmes to onboard and induct new starters, apprentices and graduates into the nuclear sector. GAIN has supported over **1,500** employees in 2022/23 alone.

## T level workplace pilot

NSSG has worked across industry and government to develop a T level pilot programme to significantly reduce the barriers to work placements in the nuclear sector.

## End-point assessment

Our end-point assessment services for scientific, nuclear and technical apprenticeship standards - established at the request of employers to address an area of market failure - have supported more than **2,000** learners and continues to go from strength to strength.



# ONE VOICE ON SKILLS

In a landscape of constant political change, Cogent remains a consistent and clear voice throughout. We're on the side of industry driving the change needed for success and speaking out about the skills issues that matter.

- **Futures Group**  
This is a collaboration between Science Industry Partnership employers, Office for Life Sciences (OLS), Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) and BioIndustry Association (BIA) working with Association of British HealthTech Industries (ABHI). The group first identified the potential of the Life Science sector to create approximately **133,000** jobs by 2030 in the Life Science Skills Strategy and will refresh this forecast in 2024.
- **Apprenticeship Strategy Group**  
The Apprenticeship Strategy Group is a collaborative forum for the Life Sciences sector, covering apprenticeships and technical education. The group champions the apprenticeship agenda, responding to key consultations and reviews of policies and standards, as well as developing a deeper understanding of wider technical education for the sector.

## WORKING IN COLLABORATION TO BOOST SKILLS, IS IN THE COGENT DNA.

- **Great British Nuclear**  
Launched in 2023, Great British Nuclear (GBN) supports the UK's nuclear industry by providing better opportunities to build and invest. The Nuclear Skills Strategy Group provides essential labour market intelligence and acts as a vital conduit to employers on key skills issues.
- **Nuclear Skills Taskforce**  
The Nuclear Skills Taskforce was established to ensure the UK's defence and civil nuclear sectors have the right people with the right skills to seize growth opportunities. NSSG will work alongside the taskforce as a trusted, strategic skills partner and remain represented through its membership.
- **Green Jobs Delivery Group**  
As the Government's central forum for action on green jobs and skills, Cogent works collaboratively with industry stakeholders to set out the plans that enable the UK workforce to deliver its Net Zero ambitions.
- **Shaping UK skills policy**  
Our unique role as a trusted and knowledgeable skills partner to industry has enabled us to take a lead role in shaping the skills element of sector deals with Government, in the Life Sciences, Nuclear sector, and the UK's industrial strategy. Supporting measures designed to boost skills and productivity across the UK and working in collaboration is in the Cogent DNA.

- **Women and Work**  
A pilot Women and Work project – backed by the Employer Investment Fund – brought benefits to more than **500** women in the science sector during its two years of operation during 2010/2011. Covering pre-apprenticeship, technical training and leadership skills, the programme encouraged women to take advantage of learning opportunities that gave them the skills to progress.
- **Devolved Government**  
We're proud of the work undertaken with each of the UK nations, helping establish vital frameworks that support apprenticeship talent in our industry:
  - 6 apprenticeship frameworks in Wales
  - 7 modern apprenticeships and 1 foundation apprenticeship in Scotland
  - 2 apprenticeship frameworks in Northern Ireland.

- **National Occupational Standards (NOS)**  
NOS describe the knowledge, skills and understanding an individual needs to be considered competent and are used to create qualifications, apprenticeship frameworks and training programmes. Our robust and comprehensive approach to developing NOS underpins our collaborative work in facilitating employer groups, with some **1,298** NOS created over two decades and more in the pipeline.
- **Nuclear Vocational Education Group**  
A Cogent-supported and industry led group that proactively engages in the design of a fit-for-purpose vocational system that meets the needs of nuclear employers, through the articulation of clear policy positions and overseeing the design of standards and regulated products.

"IT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT EMPLOYERS DO NOT HAVE TO FACE SKILLS CHALLENGES ALONE. SIP PROVIDES A FANTASTIC PLATFORM THAT ENABLES US TO COLLABORATE TOGETHER."

DR MALCOLM SKINGLE  
CHAIR, SCIENCE INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP





THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRIAL  
PARTNERSHIP DELIVERED  
**2,871 TRAINING COURSES** TO  
SUPPLY CHAIN COMPANIES.

# SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES

We're on your side with a range of services along with practical and actionable advice on how to get the most from the skills system.

## Nuclear Industrial Partnership

The Nuclear Industrial Partnership delivered **2,871** training courses including STEM training, traineeships, funding to supply chain companies for additional apprentices, support for individuals transitioning into the sector, and subject matter expert development.

## LifeArc

As a member of the Science Industry Partnership, LifeArc was keen to attract a wider pool of future talent. Our apprenticeship team helped to select the right apprenticeship programme and standards which led to its first apprenticeship cohort working towards a Level 6 Laboratory Scientist Degree Apprenticeship with Manchester Metropolitan University.

"THE BIGGEST STRENGTH OF NSAN IS HOW THEY MAKE IT EASY TO ACCESS RELEVANT SKILLS AND TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS. WE CAN LOOK AT ALL THE TRAINING THAT'S ON OFFER WITHOUT HAVING TO GO LOOKING FOR DIFFERENT TRAINING PROVIDERS."

PETE STAVELEY, GENERAL  
MANAGER & DIRECTOR, FORT  
VALE NUCLEAR LTD

## Science Industry Apprenticeship Consortium (SIAC)

Facilitated by Cogent, SIAC is an employer-led group in the North East, successfully collaborating to drive better quality training by leveraging the combined demand for apprentices. Since 2014 more than **250** apprentices have been trained, representing a skills investment of more than £5m. The cohort is widely recognised for its innovative approach, achieving significant cost savings. Whilst a partnership with a local college has led to the development of bespoke training programmes - embodying the ambition of an employer-led apprenticeship system.

## National Grid

As National Grid's appointed supplier for delivering process safety management training, Cogent's expertise in high-hazard environments led to the development of a competency management system that continues to drive competency and safety improvements for the business by reducing the risk of harm to people, assets and the environment.

## Measuring competence

As an independent end-point assessment organisation, SIAS assesses whether an apprentice has developed the knowledge, skills, and behaviours for occupational competency. SIAS has supported more than **600** employers, **120** training providers and **2,000** learners across a broad spectrum of STEM-based industries.

"THE SIAS  
APPROACH IS  
TRAILBLAZING; YOU  
KNOCK SPOTS OFF  
OTHER PROVIDERS."

JACKIE LANAGAN,  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - EAST  
DURHAM COLLEGE

## UK Nuclear Skills Awards

The UK Nuclear Skills Awards is the premier skills event for the industry. Running for the last 15 years and managed on behalf of the sector by NSAN and Cogent Skills, the awards recognise and celebrate exceptional individuals and companies in the nuclear sector.

"A STRENGTH OF THE COGENT SKILLS TEAM IS THEIR ABILITY TO THINK CREATIVELY TO ADAPT THE STANDARD TO SUITE THE INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS NEEDS.... WE CONTINUE TO BE IMPRESSED BY THE SERVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THIS TRAINING PROVIDER."

EXXONMOBIL



# OUR LOW-CARBON FUTURE

We work with industry to identify and deliver the skills needed for our low-carbon economy and have supported the development of standards necessary for Net Zero.

## Greenprint for Skills

Our landmark report addressed green skills and the occupations required to achieve Net Zero within the UK science and technology sector. The work was employer-led and based on discussions with more than 40 experts across a range of sectors, including hydrogen, carbon capture, batteries, fuel cells, and nuclear.

## Hydrogen Skills Alliance (HSA)

The HSA is a landmark collaboration with the High-Value Manufacturing Catapult (HVMC) which aims to ensure the industry has access to the right skills; using a systematic, evidence-based approach to identify future workforce needs, develop content and address skills gaps.

## First occupational standards for hydrogen

As the leading skills specialist for the science and technology sector, Cogent Skills has supported employers in facilitating the development of the first National Occupational Standards for hydrogen. The steering group was chaired by the Tank Storage Association and included representatives from Cadent Gas, XPO Logistics, Downstream Oil Distribution Forum and Progressive Energy.

## First standards for battery manufacturing

Cogent Skills – in conjunction with WMG, University of Warwick – formed the first trailblazer group of employers to develop a standard that would be fit for the expanding battery industry and enable it to take the lead in low-carbon products.

As a charity committed to making a difference on the availability and quality of skills in our sector, we only succeed when the commercial parts of our group perform.

“FROM THE BEGINNING, THE COMPANY STOOD OUT FROM THE REST. BOTH THE PEOPLE AND WHAT COGENT DOES AS A COMPANY, MAKE ME PROUD TO BE PART OF COGENT SKILLS.”

MARK BOLAN, DELIVERY TEAM ADMINISTRATOR, COGENT SKILLS

# VALUES-DRIVEN BUSINESS

From our beginnings as a Sector Skills Council, we have evolved into a strong values-driven organisation that's well positioned to deliver our aspirations. With a national reach, we're proud to maintain a footprint in the north of England employing over 80 people across two locations.

Over the course of 2022-23 we paid special attention to defining and embedding our values, which define who we are, our expectations of ourselves and of each other. In everything we do we are guided by four values that underpin the culture of Cogent Skills.

WE ARE WELCOMING. WE SPEAK OUT.  
WE ARE ENTERPRISING. WE CARE.





## OUR PARTNERS



And the many others who share our commitment to supporting the growth of skills for science.

## ABOUT COGENT SKILLS

We are a specialist in skills for science and technology, and a charity that's committed to making a difference on the availability and quality of skills in our sector. To find out more about our work visit [www.cogentskills.com](http://www.cogentskills.com)

To find out more about this report contact [info@cogentskills.com](mailto:info@cogentskills.com)

## OUR FAMILY



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