

INTRODUCTION

The North Somerset Environment Company (NSEC) Driver Training Academy represents a forward-thinking response to one of the most significant challenges facing the UK's transport, logistics and environmental services sectors in recent years: the shortage of qualified drivers and plant operators. Originally established to address internal workforce pressures, our Training Academy has since evolved into a commercially successful training provider, supporting a growing portfolio of public and private sector clients across the South West while continuing to strengthen NSEC's own operational resilience.

Our Training Academy was born from a clear strategic vision set out in 2023 by the late Brian Veale, NSEC's Founding Managing Director. Recognising that reliance on external recruitment alone was not a sustainable answer to long-term driver shortages, NSEC chose to invest in developing talent from within, creating a structured in-house capability that would improve workforce availability, strengthen standards, and open up clearer career pathways for employees.

In April 2023, Heidi Pople was appointed as Business Development Manager to help bring that vision to life, drawing on more than 30 years of experience in the logistics training industry. With that expertise in place, the Driver Training Academy began to take shape as a practical and ambitious response to a pressing operational challenge.

THE BEGINNING OF THE JOURNEY

Momentum built quickly during 2023. An experienced driver assessor was upskilled to become our first dedicated Driver Trainer role, with Kevin Riley moving into the Training Academy team and completing an intensive LGV instructor course. In July 2023, NSEC also acquired our first rigid Category C training vehicle to support the development of loaders into drivers through our Sponsorship Scheme, which funds the full training pathway from medical through to DVSA practical test. The first candidate started training in November 2023, marking the point at which our driver academy became a live operational training function within the business.

Alongside LGV development, we also expanded into plant training. In July 2023, NSEC put our first forklift truck instructor through a 10-day novice ITSSAR instructor course, enabling David Slade to deliver plant training across all of our company's locations. As demand continued to increase, a second instructor was added in June 2024 when Brian Edwards transferred into the team to help meet growing plant training requirements.

With our Training Academy building momentum, in December 2024, we welcomed Spencer Bidwell to our team as our second full time Driver Trainer.

This early investment quickly proved transformative. By building an internal training capability, NSEC were able to improve not only the availability of qualified drivers and operators, but also the consistency, professionalism and safety of our workforce. The Training Academy became more than a recruitment solution; it became a key function for workforce development, operational improvement and long-term resilience.

ESSENTIAL DAY TO DAY ROLE

Our Training Academy also continues to play a crucial day-to-day role within NSEC itself. Ongoing work includes duty of care annual assessments, refresher training on RCVs and Romaquip, manual handling, accident and maintenance assessments, driver assessor training and inductions for new recruits to our operational teams. This internal function remains important because it shows the academy is still rooted in its original purpose: strengthening capability, compliance and safety across our wider business.

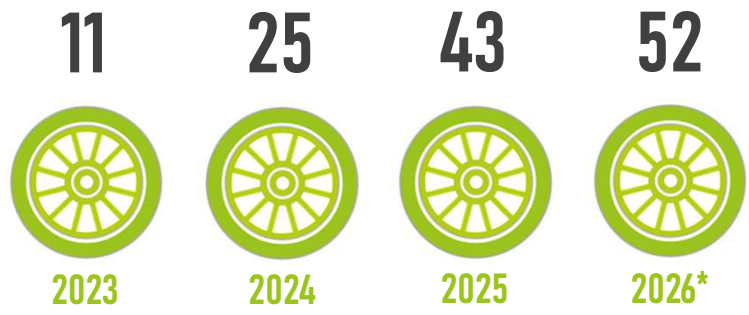


At its heart is a training philosophy built around professionalism, safety and long-term competence, whilst embodying the company's values of Respect, Innovation, Sustainability, Integrity and Collaboration. All courses within the training academy's prospectus are reliable, competitive and tailored, and provided by experienced and knowledgeable trainers, whilst offering ongoing support and high standards of delivery. That combination helps explain why the NSEC Driver Training Academy has developed into a trusted service for a growing portfolio of public and private sector clients within Weston-super-Mare, the North Somerset district and across the South West.

<p>Integrity We conduct our business with honesty, transparency, and strong ethics.</p>	<p>Innovation We embrace creativity and continuously seek new ways to improve our products and services, whilst delivering high-quality services through proficiency and skilful colleagues.</p>	<p>Sustainability We are committed to ensuring long-term growth while minimizing environmental impact and cultivating social values.</p>	<p>Collaboration We work together as a team and foster partnerships with our customers, suppliers, and communities.</p>	<p>Respect We encourage inclusivity, fairness, and open communication in the workplace, recognizing colleague worth and acting with professionalism.</p>
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OUR CANDIDATES IN NUMBERS

Our Training Academy team has grown steadily over the years, and an increasing number of candidates have successfully achieved their qualifications through our programme. These figures reflect the number of new drivers developed.



* 2026 Data Based on Year to Date at Time of Publishing

GROWTH & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The success of our internal training model soon revealed a wider opportunity. In December 2024, following strong results in LGV driver development, NSEC took the decision to commercialise the Driver Training Academy. External demand had become increasingly apparent, particularly among organisations facing similar recruitment and compliance pressures but lacking accessible, high-quality training provision of their own. By opening our offering more widely, NSEC positioned the Training Academy as a regional provider capable of supporting both individuals and organisations with professional, flexible and tailored programmes.

Today, our Training Academy offers one of the most comprehensive portfolios in the region. NSEC's course provision spans across LGV Category C1, C and CE, PCV D1 and D, Driver CPC Initial and Periodic Training, Duty of Care assessments, HIAB operating and loading, shunter training, and a range of forklift and mobile plant courses. This breadth of offering ensures relevance far beyond one sector alone, enabling us to support logistics, waste management, highways, passenger transport and wider operational environments where safe, compliant vehicle and plant use is essential.



The LGV training offer is particularly central to our Training Academy's identity, promoting comprehensive, high-quality training for individuals and business teams, covering practical driving, vehicle safety, maintenance awareness, road safety regulations, load considerations and efficient driving techniques. Ensuring that the Training Academy's purpose is not simply to help candidates pass a test, but to prepare drivers for the real operational and safety demands of professional driving.

We've since continued to expand our specialist capability. In February 2025, NSEC applied to offer Driver CPC Periodic Training, initially to keep our own drivers compliant and able to drive legally, before extending the service to commercial customers. This has since become a standard offering as part of the academy with a schedule of 2026 dates being planned and showing strong signs of future growth potential.



A further major milestone came in July 2025, when our application to the DVSA and the National Dangerous Goods Training Consortium was approved, enabling NSEC to deliver ADR training. The ADR Hazardous Freight course addition as part of the academy's prospectus strengthened its ability to support customers operating in one of the most highly regulated areas of road transport.



In August 2025, Winter Gritter training was introduced at the request of a customer, adding another practical specialism that also supports NSEC's own highways department. This was followed in September 2025 by the purchase of our first CE training vehicle to meet growing demand for articulated vehicle training, with that vehicle dedicated to commercial customers. These additions demonstrate that the academy has grown responsively, shaping its services around real-world operational need and market demand rather than following a fixed or narrow training model.

INNOVATION TODAY, RESILIENT TOMORROW

Overall, the NSEC Driver Training Academy is a compelling example of innovation born from operational need. What began as a strategic internal investment to address driver shortages has developed into a regionally significant training function that supports workforce development, improves resilience, raises professional standards and contributes to safer, stronger operations across multiple sectors. Through continued investment in people, vehicles, accreditations and course development, NSEC has built a Training Academy that reflects both practical leadership and a long-term commitment to excellence.



CONTACT US

For more information about our Driver Training Academy, the courses on offer and to find out how you or your team can benefit from our team's knowledge, expertise and professionalism, please visit us at NSECLTD.CO.UK or email TRAINING@NSECLTD.CO.UK