

Skills Training Centre Ltd

CITY & GUILDS 6033-03 HIGHWAY INSPECTION & MONITORING

REFERENCES

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

There has been discussion over several years at the Highways Maintenance grouping of the South Eastern Counties Service Improvement Group (SECSIG) of the CSS about how to train Highways Inspectors so as to be able to demonstrate competence; views have varied from developing "in house" training programmes at one extreme to using Training Centres at the other. To my mind the advantage of the latter is that a consistent approach and standard of training is achieved and when combined with assessment against a National Qualification (in this case C&G 6033) this demonstrates competence.

The training that the Skills Training Centre has provided for Oxfordshire has been tailored to our needs to the extent of including local Policies where these exist and vary from the National recommendations. This has assisted our Highways Inspectors in placing our Policies in context and enabled proper assessment of their individual abilities in a "real life" work environment. We have all appreciated this and the Highways Inspectors undergoing training (a mix of experienced and inexperienced Inspectors) have commented very favorably on this aspect. The Inspectors trained all carry out "safety inspections" on the County Council's highways network.

The course content was considered good and relevant. It covered well the needs of our Highways Inspectors without either being too broad (and thereby covering unnecessary topics) or too narrow and missing out essential elements. **For us this training was exactly what we needed and was very well delivered.**

I would commend this training to those Authorities considering how best to train their Highways Inspectors and demonstrate competence.

*Brian Short
Area Engineer (South)
Oxfordshire County Council*

TORFAEN

Please find below an account of the merits that have been gained since my staff successfully completed Unit 311.

Following a restructure within the division, the roles of the former highway inspectors and environmental inspectors was merged into the generic role of the Environmental Inspector. These individuals, prior to appointment, were required to complete a vigorous interview process, which included a competency based assessment. This was to ensure that we appointed high calibre individuals who would be representing the Council on the front-line. The role of the new inspectors was to provide ownership of all environmental issues and act as

the “one stop shop” to elected members and residents of the County Borough. Additionally they would be required to undertake statutory highway inspections, combining them with cleansing grounds maintenance inspections. Six officers were appointed with each were from varying backgrounds, ranging from highways maintenance, grounds maintenance, cleansing and refuse.

An intensive training regime was planned over a period of 6 months which included, customer care, evidence at court, cleansing inspection and highway inspection units.

I required a training module which would address highway policy and also the practical inspection aspect of the service and the modules offered through the London Borough of Barnet addressed both these needs. As there were a number of officers who required the training, it was more cost effective for the training to be undertaken in-house, with officers from Barnet working from within County Hall at Cwmbran.

We were fortunate in that, we had robust policy and procedures in place and that assisted the process and enabled the tutors to mould the course around how highway maintenance is delivered within Torfaen. **It was interesting to find that individuals who failed the practical assessment were actually from a highway maintenance background and had been mentored through a previous highway inspector.** However, following further assessment all individuals successfully completed each of the modules.

Since undertaking the training some 18 months ago, I have seen significant improvements to the service. I now have a team of inspectors who fully understand:

- The legal background to highway maintenance
- The reasons why inspections are to be carried out
- What a safety defect is
- Council policies – such as winter maintenance plan and highway maintenance plan

Additionally, improvements have been seen in our insurance claims from two areas, namely:

1. We are able to repudiate a high percentage of insurance claims using our statutory defence. i.e. policy in place and demonstration of it being adhered to through inspection.
2. **Also, when inspectors have been required to present evidence at court, they are able to say they have a qualification in highway inspection, and this together with the legal training they have received, enables them to present detailed and technical evidence at court. Therefore, our success rate at court, is also very high.**

Indeed, we are in the top quartile of high performing highway authorities in Wales in this area!

So in conclusion, I consider the training that my officers undertook was cost effective and very successful and I certainly will be looking to use Barnet again during the next restructure, which is on going at this very moment!

Christina Harrhy

***Head of Environmental Services BSc(Hons), CEng, MICE, FIHT, MCMI
01633 648429***

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

As part of a joint initiative with our partnering contractors (Carillion and Ringway), the County Council (Transportation Service) commissioned Skills Training Centre (STC) Ltd to manage the training and assessment of our highway safety inspectors and stewards.

Skills Training Centre approached this work in a very professional manner. They helped us to identify our broad training requirements and carefully planned the type of training to meet the various needs of staff taking part. **They also ensured that they were fully acquainted with the County Council's guidance and procedures for highway safety inspections and how this related to both the legal requirements and current codes of practice for highway authorities.**

I have also been impressed with the quality of training provided by STC. We received positive feedback from a number of our inspectors and stewards, who, it has to be said, do not readily pass on comments of this type.

Perhaps the best testimonial I can provide about the help and support provided by STC is that all of our staff have now passed the relevant City & Guilds Unit 311 modules.

We would be more than happy to invite STC to quote for further City & Guilds skills training in the future.

Richard Ireland
Highway Asset Manager

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL – PRESS RELEASE

County Hall in Kingston was recently the venue for the formal certification of The Surrey Highways Partnership's newly qualified highways safety inspectors.

The Surrey Highways Partnership comprises Surrey County Council and the two companies which carry out the majority of maintenance work on the county's roads – Carillion Highway Maintenance Ltd covering the east of the county and Ringway Highway Services Ltd looking after the west.

Highway inspectors from Carillion and Ringway and highway stewards from Surrey County Council achieved stage 1 of the Surrey Highways Partnership's own highway maintenance qualification, which the partnership hopes to get nationally recognised in the near future. In doing so they also achieved the City and Guilds highway inspection and monitoring qualification, which is a nationally recognised accreditation of competence. This is an integral part of the partnership's qualification, which includes three other traffic modules.

Highway inspectors are essential in maintaining the quality and safety of Surrey's highways. Their role is to inspect roads and pavements, logging any defects and listing them in priority. West Surrey has 12 inspectors and east Surrey has 11, and their efforts mean that every publicly maintained road in the county is inspected at least once a year. To put it in perspective, that's 6,000 kilometres of road and 6,000 kilometres of pavement.

In total 46 staff from Carillion, Ringway and Surrey County Council achieved the qualification, which followed five weeks of assessment. The course, provided by the Skills Training Centre

and funded jointly by the three organisations, provided instruction on an array of subjects including the history of roads, how to inspect them and common case law. Those who participated completed modules in the health and safety, technical and legal areas of highway inspection following the national code of practice for highways management.

Road safety inspectors are often used as expert witnesses in court in cases involving highways. The qualifications gained by the Partnership's inspectors will not only strengthen their practical skills, but also reinforce their credibility as professionals. The accreditation scheme also provided the inspectors with real court experience as they participated in a mock trial using genuine law professionals.

Helyn Clack, Surrey County Council Executive Member for Transport, said "One of the strengths of the Surrey Highways Partnership is the pooling of knowledge and expertise between the three organisations with the aim of achieving the best practice and delivering the best service we can. These qualifications are a significant part of that process."

Dave May, Carillion's Contract Manager, said of the qualification "It's great to see the competence of our operatives finally recognised."

Jerry Pert, Regional Director for Ringway said "A lot of people have put a great deal of hard work into formulating and achieving this qualification. At the end of the day it's the Surrey road user who will see the real benefit"

Surrey is one of the first counties in the country to have City and Guilds qualified inspectors, and is the first to have its own standard, stage two of which is being devised for the future. The county also has more road users than any other county, so it is appropriate that it also has some of the most qualified people working for it.

BOURNEMOUTH MBC (Extracts from 2 references)

Bournemouth Borough Council has welcomed the opportunity of assessment and VQ accreditation for highway inspection staff as this complies directly with recommendations outlined in the 'Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance Code of Practice'.....

Without exception, our inspection staff have found this assessment to be a challenging but rewarding experience. By achieving this unit, it has been confirmed to both my staff and myself the increased emphasis now placed on the need for accurate inspection and monitoring.....

Furthermore, I am convinced that this accreditation will benefit our Authority in it's defence of future highway related insurance claims; and this whole process emphasises our ongoing training and development of staff.....

Both the council insurers (Zurich Municipal) and our in-house claims department have given their approval to our Inspection Manual, and regard the Unit 311 training and assessment as vital in the future defence of highway related insurance claims.

**Regards
Larry Austin
Principal Engineer**

HARTLEPOOL MBC (Pilot Authority for NEREO)

Extracts from Evaluation Forms following recent Unit 311 Training.

“Very Well delivered, including variety of Practical/Theory elements – mixture kept the course interesting”

“Better & Safer Inspections, better preparation for court”

“It will improve the Standard of Inspections”

“Will help development and understanding of role and Health & Safety issues. Will maintain High Standards and make improvements. Very beneficial to my role...”

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Just wanted to say thanks to yourself and Bill for the training course provided for our inspectors and superintendents, after a reluctant start by some!

All were in agreement that it was very worthwhile and relevant to our everyday task, with well presented background knowledge and information, interesting scenarios and helpful tuition.

ISLE OF WIGHT

All I can say is the training we were given (C&G 6033 Unit 301 Health & Safety) was very well delivered and very well received, and as you know we are in the process of booking up another unit 301 course and some colleagues wish to undertake the other units. The results of the training have been put to good use, as we have undertaken several risk assessments before we have gone out surveying rural roads.

SANDWELL MBC (JACOBS BAPTIE)

Five members of staff from Jacobs Babtie attended the 311 Highway Safety Inspection course, each person had varying degree of knowledge from HNC Civil Engineers, graduates thought to school leavers.

We approached the course requiring training & coaching in Highway Safety Inspection.

The course was well presented, in a precise manner, with the content very much geared to our level, I personally found it interesting, knowledgeable and good value.

The assessment process was very rigorous, although you were able to use the course material (open book) to assist in the written assignment, it was not as simple as transferring answers. The practical assessment was a challenge too with the whole process requiring additional thought and gave a few sleepless nights. It was good to see that to pass this course you didn't just have to turn up.

Our success and being credited to carry out Safety Inspections of the Highway as been beneficial as we have been awarded a five year Term Contract with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council to carry out Highway Safety Inspections.

I would recommend this course to others working in this field.

**Nathan Harrop
Senior Land Surveyor
Jacobs Babtie**

UKPMS STEERING GROUP

Skills Training Centre Ltd, who were Barnet Training Centre, provide City and Guilds accreditation for Coarse (CVI) and Detailed Visual Surveys (DVI) to help improve the quality of the condition surveys.

The Centre worked with the UKPMS Condition Survey Sub Group to produce practical assessments which tested the competences of the Inspector using a variety of methods, including questions on the Survey Manual, photographs of defects and a video of a route.

The assessment was developed to be as close to a real condition survey as practicable and can be assessed locally to the Inspector at a reasonable cost. Over 300 people have been assessed.

This qualification is now a requirement for all Inspectors who undertake CVI and DVI for Best Value Performance Indicators, which is giving the CVI/DVI a greater credibility.

Once the initial assessments were implemented, there were a few user concerns, which had to be addressed. These were dealt with very well and changes agreed.

This award has been very good in improving the credibility of UKPMS as a condition tool and I can only compliment Skills Training Centre in their part in that process.

Chris Capps
Head of Transport Asset Management
Chair UKPMS Steering Group