

# Supporting Network Rail in the delivery of better workplaces for frontline staff

## Network Rail (NR)

### Background

In 2022, Network Rail awarded Centregreat the contract to deliver the 'Fixing Your Workplace' programme across Wales. This programme required us to design, construct and maintain built assets (six maintenance delivery units and 54 signal boxes) across the country, to improve the quality of workplaces for frontline staff. This was a high-priority programme for the client, who was eager to improve the working conditions of both offices and critical assets, but who also had to balance budgetary constraints and the round-the-clock demands of providing critical infrastructure assets and services.

### Approach

**Preparing to work on critical assets.** We immediately recognised the importance of minimising disruption for frontline staff as well as rail users, so we planned our operations meticulously before beginning. This enabled us to identify where we might later require line closures and where we could communicate with NR staff to minimise disruption to their day, mitigate workplace safety and operational risks, and ensure the smooth operation of the railway lines.

**Mobilising our workforce to maximise efficiency.** To mobilise efficiently, we conducted site visits and critical asset surveys alongside completing the construction phase plans and work package plans to demonstrate compliance with NR standards. This enabled us to begin procuring long-lead items, and to coordinate work plans with our supply chain. We also separated the programme into 'North Wales' and 'South Wales' regional components.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Improved the quality of workplaces** for frontline staff

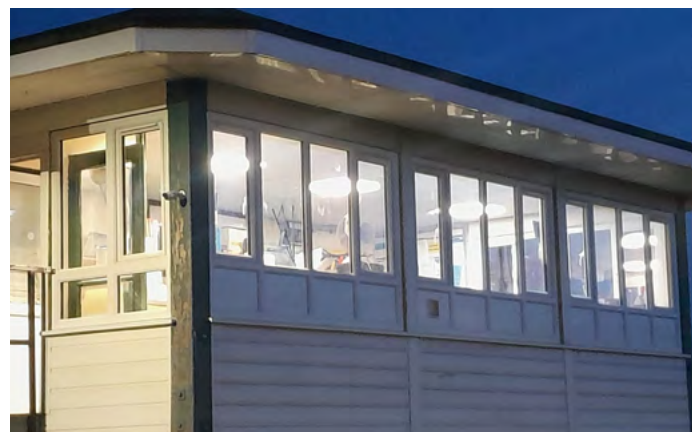
Created over **£20,000 of savings**

**Zero accidents or incidents on the project**, with over 30,000 person-hours worked

**No operational incidents** despite the challenging environment

### Identifying value engineering and cost saving

**opportunities.** For the design development portion of works, we deployed our internal design management team, alongside our trusted supply chain partners, allowing us to comply with NR design processes and standards. Working within budget was a key priority for our client, so we identified areas to cut costs, creating more than £20,000 of savings for NR.



### Effective communications to secure stakeholder buy-in.

As a live project subject to last-minute changes, ongoing client communication was essential. Regular updates meant the client was able to retain control of the budget and could both respond to scope changes, and communicate it effectively with internal senior stakeholders. We varied communication frequency as needed, and established:

- **Daily dialogues** – Our Site Agent led liaison with key members of the NR operations team. These daily updates helped internal teams understand progress and unforeseen challenges, supporting overall programme certainty.
- **Weekly meetings** – These were held between our project management team and NR's delivery team. They covered progress updates, health and safety bulletins and 'planned vs actual' reviews, which the client found so effective that they subsequently adopted them as best practice across other regions.



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**Effective delivery in possessions.** We worked to tight possession timescales, working overnight, at weekends and during weekdays as required. During these possessions, it was imperative that works did not overrun so we eliminated risk by having:

- **Highly skilled operatives**
- **Pre-vetted, trusted supply chain relationships**
- **Rehearsal meetings (T-minus meetings)**
- **A step-up plan**
- **A contingency team available**

**Mitigating risk.** Adverse winter weather conditions added time pressure (e.g. when replacing roof and window systems) and posed safety risks, which we managed by being flexible and maintaining other assets if it was impractical to conduct the planned works. We had zero accidents or incidents on the project, with over 30,000 person-hours worked.

**Knowledge of maintaining heritage structures.** Some of the assets were Grade II listed under Cadw and required skilful use of the DOFF façade cleaning process, which we could offer thanks to our extensive experience and skilled operatives.

## Outcomes

Centregreat delivered the works within budget, in fact we saved NR over £20,000 by looking at cost saving opportunities and through value-engineering. Despite the challenging environment, we completed in advance of the programme's timescales. We also had zero accidents or incidents on the project, with over 30,000 person-hours worked.

The works were delivered to the desired standards and defect-free, improving the quality of workplaces for frontline staff and receiving excellent feedback from the client.

## Get in touch

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