

Our people

This is an exciting time to work at UK Power Networks. We are doing important work that makes a real difference to our customers' lives and our employees are what makes that happen. We are proud of the diverse, inclusive team we are building and the positive effect this work has on them and the communities we serve.



Who is responsible

Andrew Pace
 Director of HR, Legal, Risk and Assurance and Company Secretary

Targets

- Benchmark nationally and globally as a leader in the field and target retention of our Platinum Investors in People accreditation and Best Companies listing throughout RIIO-ED2.
- Retain our National Equality Standard accreditation and status as an Inclusive Top 50 UK Employer throughout RIIO-ED2.
- Improve our safety performance and reduce the Total Recordable Injury Rate to less than 0.05 by the end of RIIO-ED2.
- Establish a Digital Skills Academy to provide DSO and digital future skills and target the achievement of an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating for our training programmes.

It is thanks to the people who work at UK Power Networks that we can deliver excellent service to our customers and build the company that will help bring about the decarbonisation of power.

We have developed a culture where people thrive, and we do our best to make our company a great place to work. Our people work hard, and we take care of them and help them forge a satisfying career with us. This is an exciting time to work for UK Power Networks. We are building a team that will take us well into the future, developing home grown talent through our Academies and Apprenticeship programmes, and in 2023/24 we recruited 15 graduate engineers.

Digital skills academy

The world of energy distribution is developing at a dizzying pace and our whole industry is facing a digital skills gap that must be filled if it is to meet the needs of the Net Zero economy. Digital skills are vital in today's world, as access to reliable data and the ability to manage it are crucial to success. Building our own capability in this field will allow us to keep our strategic focus where it needs to be. At UK Power Networks we have a track record of nurturing some of the most creative, innovative ideas in the business. We want to continue to expand this element of our workforce, to make sure we have the skills we need to continue to push the boundaries of the new generation of power.

Our digital skills academy, which we launched in April 2023, is central to this ambition. The Digital Academy is funded by the apprenticeship levy, so we can provide this training at no cost to

the company or our customers. In designing the Digital Academy, we followed the successful model of our Leadership Academy, which was launched in 2021. The Digital Skills academy provides training and a career path ranging from a basic digital skills training programme at level 3, roughly equivalent to an 'A' level, up to level 7, which is on par with an MSc postgraduate degree. The majority of our intake in 2023/24 was at level 4, where participants develop digital skills such as data analysis, visualising data and some coding.

We have some 20 employees in the Digital Skills Academy so far and intend to swell these ranks up to four times a year in the coming years. We are starting relatively small, as we build the skills to run the programme, working with technical training specialists such as QA and Firebrand. To be admitted to the Academy, employees must already be in a role that requires the skills that are on offer. The programme includes live training sessions (face-to-face and virtual) which are complemented by e-learning, additional modules and self-led learning.

Leadership Academy

Our unique Leadership Academy goes from strength to strength. We saw 40 employees graduate from it in March 2023. Two new cohorts – at levels 3 and 5 – joined in 2023/24 and we adapted the level 3 curriculum to allow aspiring leaders to join. This means that participants who are not currently managing people but who have been identified as having the potential to do so can learn the skills and competencies they need to manage people before taking on such a role.

SOME OF OUR PAST YEAR'S AWARDS



The UK's Best Big Companies to Work For

UK Power Networks remains in the top 10 list of the UK's 25 Best Big Companies To Work For List in 2023 and we remain the only electricity distribution network operator to feature in this list.



International Energy Engagement Award

UK Power Networks won the Energy Institute's International Energy Engagement Award for its collaboration with local authorities.



UK Power Networks took home the 'Digital Transformation Award' at the Utility Week Awards 2023

UK Power Networks picked up the Digital Transformation Award for our smart connections portal and an innovation project which removes barriers to Net Zero by allowing meter operators to upgrade domestic fuses for the first time.



UK Power Networks awarded 'Utility of the Year' at the Utility Week awards

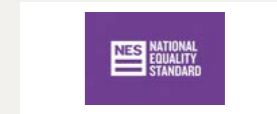
The company's drive to collaborate for the benefit of customers won it the most prestigious prize in the UK's utility industry, 'Utility of the Year', at the Utility Week Awards.

ACCREDITATIONS



Investors in People – Platinum

UK Power Networks has retained its Platinum status reaffirming our position among just 5% of companies globally to be awarded this highest status.



National Equality Standard

Highest standard in the UK of best practice on equality, diversity and inclusion. First DNO to be awarded the National Equality Standard.



Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers

UK Power Networks was awarded second place on the Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers List at the Inclusive Companies Awards. The company has appeared on the list for several years, but this marks UK Power Networks' highest ever ranking.



The Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Corporate Certification Advanced

UK Power Networks maintained its position within an elite worldwide group who have gained the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) Corporate Certification advanced 'Platinum Award'.

A great place to work

UK Power Networks is one of a select group of companies that warrants a Platinum award from Investors in People (IIP). No other DNO has that honour and only 5% of companies around the world are given this accolade. We also retained our accreditation from the National Equality Standard, and we achieved the highest ranking in the Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers List. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is one of the reasons this is a great place to work.

Apprenticeship programme

We took on more than 50 craft apprentices in 2023/24 and for the first time, women made up 10% of that intake. This is the result of a programme of sustained outreach with schools, including all day events, demonstrations and workshops, encouraging girls to study STEM subjects and see the role they play in a company such as UK Power Networks. Our intentional strategy of always having at least one woman on the apprenticeship interview panel has undoubtedly contributed to this.

Valuing our diverse workforce

This year, following feedback from our employees, we trained all our technical trainers in neurodiversity awareness. Our training team ran 11 operational well-being days for field staff. In the course of those events, we learned that around 20% of our field staff have either been diagnosed or suspect they have a neurodiverse condition, such as dyslexia, autism or ADHD. Managers are receiving training to help them spot and support neurodiverse team members and we have trained over 30 neurodiversity allies across the business.

As a matter of policy, our diversity network is all inclusive; we don't have individual groups relating to gender, race, sexuality or neurodiversity. This aligns with our approach that what matters is equity for everyone.

As mentioned above, our schools' outreach is sharply focused on increasing the number of women in our workforce at all levels. This long-term programme, which we began in 2022, starts with year 9 students; our apprentice intake this year shows that it is beginning to bear fruit.

We are also committed to levelling up the opportunities available for potential employees, regardless of background and socio-economic status.

We run initiatives designed to support and encourage school students who might not otherwise see opportunities to progress their career. Future Frontiers is a mentoring programme for year 10 students who are on pupil premiums, and a similar programme called Brightside operates virtually and is aimed at low-income families in remote rural areas.

We are continuing our successful partnership with Urban Synergy which offers paid internships to 16-18-year-olds from under-represented sectors of society and our Powering Potential programme that is part of our STEM project this year includes bursaries and other support for students from low-income households who want to go to university.