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Worker Engagement Key To **Safety** **Best Practice**

Lightways (Contractors) Ltd, based in three depots across central Scotland, continues to boost its reputation thanks to successful health and safety strategy

It is increasingly evident that robust health and safety practice and the successful implementation of compliant procedures indicate the qualities and high standards of a contractor. Distinguishing yourself through skill and expertise alone isn't always enough in a competitive sector, contractors need to find those intangibles that make them stand out.

Lightways (Contractors) Ltd, which operates throughout Scotland, has recognised the value of health and safety best practice, not least in its

dedication to creating the safest possible environment for its workforce but in identifying the qualities of its core capabilities. A safe contractor is a reliable contractor, as Lightways' array of satisfied clients can attest.

And given that it boasts long-term relationships with almost all the local councils across Scotland, the company, which carries out street lighting maintenance and installation, festive lighting, road surfacing and associated civil works, has a proven track record bringing value and experience to every project it undertakes. Above all, it does so safely.

This has witnessed Light-

ways continue to win contracts across the range of its service provision. This includes the installation of all types of street lighting as well as major working-at-height projects involving high mast installation and refurbishment. It also carries out planned, proactive and out of hours reactive service on street lighting for local authorities and housing associations, and supplies, designs, installs, maintains and refurbishes seasonal lighting. In addition, it has expertise in the reinstatement, construction and reconstruction of all carriageway and footway surface types from asphalt to grano, setts, blocks and slabs.

HEALTH & SAFETY LIGHTWAYS

Importantly, every site is judged on a case-by-case basis. A competent manager will visit the site to carry out a pre-start safety audit in order to identify all possible hazards. Where trenching or column erection is concerned, hazards could include the presence of high-voltage cables, substations, railways, cellars or nearby schools. This informs the Construction Phase Safety Plan which incorporates the clients' pre-construction health and safety information.

The Construction Phase Safety Plan is produced for every contract, kept up to date and familiarised with all necessary supervisors and foremen prior to works beginning. This documentation contains all site-specific risk assessments and method statements, as well as COSHH assessments where necessary.

Safety is overseen on site by contract managers and senior team members who are SSSTS certified. The dedicated health and safety team will audit sites on a monthly basis in addition to external audits which help to maintain and drive standards. Indeed, Lightways has enjoyed certification from CHAS, Achilles and Construction Line, further highlighting its ability to develop and implement successful safety policy.

It's an open and transparent internal culture where ideas are encouraged, says Director Helena Swierczek. "We have a very proactive approach to health and safety. And although we have dedicated people – both internally and externally – everyone is empowered to have a responsibility for the safety of themselves and their colleagues."

"We have monthly health and safety staff meetings where all members of the workforce have the opportunity to come in and discuss matters that may be concerning them, new



ideas or any other matters relating to safety. We also have regular toolbox talks where we ask for feedback from our guys regarding method statements and risk assessments. We take every issue raised very seriously."

Graham Stevenson, Operations Manager of the Street Lighting Division, adds: "In discussions with the guys as part of our ongoing improvements, one of the key things that cropped up was between site ownership and communication. If they see something that isn't right or could be done better, there's always an open door policy."

This has led to improvements being made. Recently, Lightways introduced what it calls a "Daily Works Ticket" that incorporates the risk assessment in an easy-to-understand format while streamlining completion and increasing relevancy to each site. Investment in equipment has also seen updates made to its cable avoidance tools to incorporate the new

CAT4 with its enhanced ability to log information to aid efficiency, safety and optimisation. In addition, a new ladder system that provides a strong anchor point and removes the risk of falls through the use of a harness and pulley system has been introduced on sites where access allows.

Graham feels that it's important to maintain robust, effective health and safety procedures but it's even more vital that the workforce is engaged with them. "A understanding of the job helps to develop a stronger policy, that's why we value our operatives getting involved and voicing their opinions. It's not a policy that is implemented from the top down but developed through active communication with the workforce, which makes it workable and realistic. If the workforce is involved they're more likely to make it work and stick by it."

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Best practice through worker engagement

Lightways is a premier contractor providing a street lighting and surfacing service throughout Scotland

Lightways (Contractors) Ltd has recognised the value of health and safety best practice in both its dedication to creating the safest possible environment for the workforce and in identifying the qualities of its core capabilities. The strengths of its health and safety approach has solidified long term relationships with almost all the local councils across Scotland where the company delivers street lighting maintenance and installation, festive lighting, road surfacing and associated civil works.

This has seen Lightways continue to win contracts across the range of its service provision such as the installation of all types of street lighting as well as major working-at-height projects involving high mast installation and refurbishment. The company's diverse capability also means it can complete planned, proactive and out of hours reactive service on street lighting for local authorities and housing associations. This is in addition to supplying, designing, installing, maintaining and refurbishing seasonal lighting.

Standing out from competitors, Lightways also has expertise in the reinstatement, construction and reconstruction of all carriageway and footway surface types. This includes experience in asphalt, grano, setts, blocks and slabs.

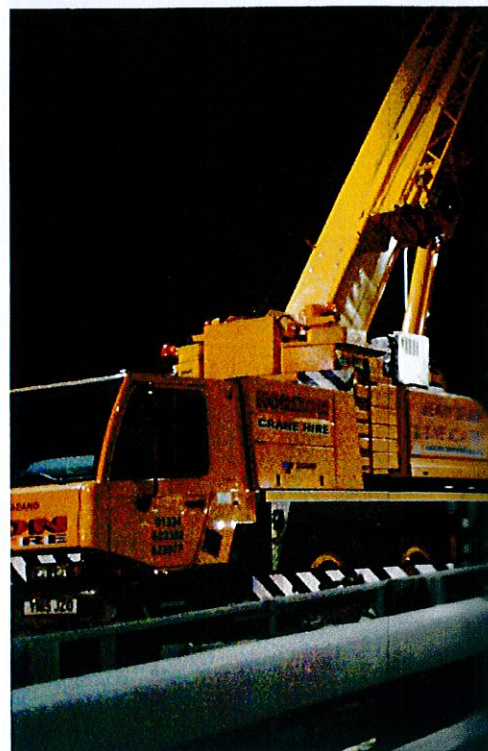
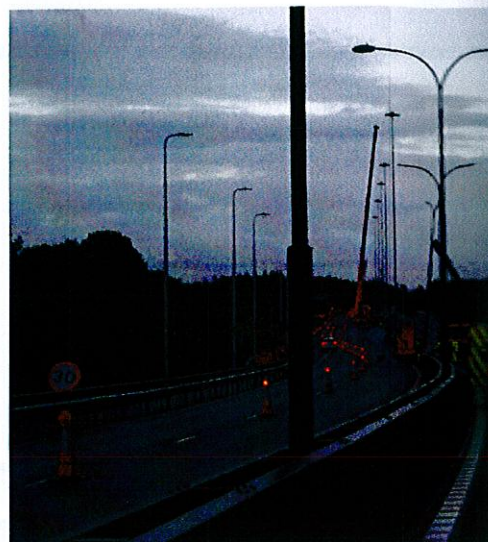
Most recently it completed a major project that was challenging, not least because of the variety of skills required to complete the job, but the health and safety challenges it posed. The contract was with Transport Scotland to carry out the refurbishment and upgrade of the 40-year-old existing lighting and electrical

network at Erskine Bridge. The work extended from the Administration Building at the south across the expanse of the bridge to the high mast lighting at the north including the full refurbishment of the internal electrical installation within the box girder structure.

The best practice approach to worker safety was exemplified by the fact the project produced zero reportable incidences on the £3.5m 20-week project. The lessons learned from the Erskine Bridge refurbishment will certainly promote even more robust practices in future.

Importantly, a core component of Lightways' success is being able to call upon a core group of in-house staff. Its street lighting maintenance and installation divisions, for example, feature a workforce who are vastly experienced and whom most are fully qualified electricians to 17th edition and assessed and certified under sector 8 of the Highway Sector Quality Scheme. As part of the rigorous training regime, personnel where relevant are qualified to the competency levels of ERG39, ECS, HERS, NRSWA, CSCS and CPCS.

Success at Lightways within the area of health and safety has been made possible as a result of maintaining expertise in-house. This has helped it develop core skills and track employees' competencies, providing training if necessary. It has continually supported skills development through individual portfolios which track competency. Required training for specific roles such as working-at-height via IPAF is recorded and updated accordingly. Staff can choose to take their careers forward with further training which is beneficial to them and the business. This results in a far more engaged workforce and promotes best practice and ongoing improvement.



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