



Severfield builds its capabilities for nuclear

Structural steel market leader Severfield is aiming to build its presence across the nuclear sector with support from the Fit For Nuclear programme.

With six sites across the UK, Severfield has an annual capacity of 150,000 tonnes of fabricated steelwork. Two of its specialist production sites have been granted F4N status by the Nuclear AMRC, and the group is now working to grow its nuclear capabilities in other locations.

Bolton-based Severfield Nuclear & Infrastructure was first granted F4N in 2019, under its previous name of Harry Peers Steelwork. Following its acquisition and integration into the Severfield Group, the business was regranted in late 2022.

For newly appointed head of nuclear quality Arwen May, managing the regrating process provided a solid grounding in the business and the specific demands of the sector.

“Going through the regrating process certainly helped me to refresh myself,” she says. “What I like about the F4N approach is that it gives you a gap analysis of where you are – it lets you

understand what nuclear clients are looking for, and helps you decide what you need to approach first.”

With three fabrication bays totalling some 6,000m², the Severfield Nuclear & Infrastructure factory has the capacity and capabilities for major projects in the sector. It has supplied decommissioning projects on the Sellafield site for 13 years and, in February 2023, was one of the reasons why Severfield was appointed as a key delivery partner under Sellafield’s new Programme and Project Partners scheme. Under the new contract, Severfield will provide steelwork for a variety of major projects over the next 17 years.

The business is also winning work in nuclear new build, including internal and secondary steelwork at Hinkley Point C.

Severfield’s Products & Processing division, which specialises in modular buildings for critical plant such as





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switchgear, is also supplying to Sellafield. The division was inspired to enter F4N by the experience of the former Harry Peers business, and was granted in 2021.

The F4N programme scales well to groups like Severfield, May says, as its site-specific approach helps build experience and share best practice across different locations and divisions.

“Because each location has its operational needs, it’s nice that you can break this down,” she says. “I like the way the assessment can be used to compare and contrast your locations as well. It’s useful as a management tool.”

The group is now developing its capabilities at its largest site in Thirsk, with plans to dedicate a production line to nuclear projects. As well as continuing work with F4N industrial advisor Nigel Goodrich and the Nuclear AMRC team to help embed nuclear culture with production colleagues, May and the team are engaging with Sellafield and other nuclear customers to better understand their specific expectations.

“With nuclear, it’s not something you can switch on overnight, because there’s so much behind the nuclear safety culture,” she notes. “Structural steelwork is essentially the same in any sector but, with nuclear, it’s less about what it is and more about what it’s doing.”

May says that F4N provides a useful way to demonstrate nuclear capabilities to clients without the demands of a formal accreditation such as ISO 19443, which can deter smaller companies from considering the sector.

“If you are a small company thinking about where you are best investing your time, I’d recommend the F4N route as a starting point because you can get the additional support around it,” she concludes. “If you’re starting out in nuclear, you might think you know what you’re getting into, but until you do it, you really don’t.”

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