



Trillium Flow Technologies brings new culture to historic brands

Specialist manufacturer Trillium Flow Technologies is aiming to put its valves back at the heart of the UK nuclear industry after being granted Fit For Nuclear.

Although the Trillium name only dates to 2019, the origins of West Yorkshire business date back 180 years to when Joshua Hopkinson set up shop in Huddersfield to serve the town's new steam-powered mills.

The Trillium Flow Technologies portfolio of brands now encompasses Hopkinsons isolation valves, Batley butterfly valves and Blakeborough control valves, with products used in the UK's nuclear power stations and submarine fleet, and nuclear plants globally. And they're still designed and manufactured at Trillium's modern factory in Elland, an ASME N-Stamp accredited manufacturing site located four miles from Hopkinson's original cottage workshop.

"We design, procure, manufacture, assemble and test here in Elland," says managing director Steven Brayley. "We have a machine and welding shop on site manufacturing components, but essentially 90 per cent of parts are bought within the supply chain and assembled on site."

Around 130 of Trillium's global workforce of 2,500 work at the Elland facility, formerly part of the Weir Group.

In 2022, the company looked at how it could secure more work in the domestic nuclear market, and identified the F4N programme as a way to benchmark and promote its capabilities.

"Our heritage is UK engineering," Brayley says. "We thought the Nuclear AMRC was a great place we could use to showcase our name within UK manufacturing."

The company had been driving continuous improvement for several years, and was rewarded with a silver supplier award from a prime customer for work in the submarine sector. That experience put them in good stead for the F4N assessment.

"The assessment went really well," recalls Ged Chauveau, head of engineering. "We'd done the pre-assessment and scored ourselves quite highly, at 97 per cent, and had great engagement from all the departments."

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The self-assessment was confirmed by the formal review led by F4N industrial advisor John Hilton. "The engagement from all the employees we met on the day was very enthusiastic – it's a very impressive team" Hilton says. "One of the things that stood out for us was that their safety culture wasn't just about safety in the workplace. At the time of the assessment, their safety message was based on safe winter driving, which shows the culture extends beyond the factory."

The assessment did identify some actions to drive further improvement, in capturing lessons from both positive and negative feedback, promoting successes internally, and empowering employees to drive improvement through the Kaizen approach.

"They were welcome because they were all around that nuclear culture, and we recognised them as things that our customers want and expect," Chauveau says. "We've taken all that on board and put in some great improvements."

"One of the lessons was that we don't showcase ourselves enough about what we've achieved, so we're now showcasing our continuous improvement journey on the shopfloor," Brayley adds. "We started looking at timelines, and I was surprised how much we had achieved."

The team say that F4N has given them new enthusiasm to get out and talk to major players in the UK nuclear market, with

the sales and engineering team now engaged with several tier one groups for the first time.

"When we're talking to our customers, companies are asking are we F4N?" Chauveau says. "People are pleased that we're F4N granted, because that's what they're looking for now."

The team are also looking to develop new technical capabilities, and are now scoping potential projects with the Nuclear AMRC and other High Value Manufacturing Catapult centres in areas such as additive manufacturing.

The team currently see strong opportunities for their products in the emerging market for small modular reactors (SMRs).

"Success for me is being highly involved with SMRs, not just in the UK but globally," Brayley says. "We want to be more involved with new build in the UK."

The team also see growing opportunities in the submarine sector, following the announcement of the international Aukus programme. "That will be a challenge for the UK industry to keep up with the drumbeat of that 18-month turnaround, but we're up for the challenge," Brayley notes. "We have improved our on-time delivery to the drumbeat of our customers. It's quite exciting."

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