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SM UK

Thirty new jobs and £4m Leeds HQ as auto-engineer expands



SM UK, an auto-engineering firm that specialises in the installation of safety systems for commercial vehicles, is investing £4m in a new 35,000 sq ft Leeds headquarters and workshop which is set to open in June and has announced plans to create a further 30 new jobs in the coming months.

The business, which earlier this year launched a range of covid-safe welfare vehicles designed to ensure teams working on remote sites have access to a secure, virus-free environment, specialises in vehicle conversion and installation for firms with their own fleets. Vans and HGVs are equipped with features such as blind-spot camera systems and high-tech internal racking systems to make them safer and more efficient.



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SM UK managing director Steve MacDonald, who founded the business in 2000, said: “We have continued to grow and to diversify the services we can offer our customers, and our HGV safety systems teams in particular have seen a rapid increase in demand.

“During the first lockdown it quickly became evident the transport industry would play a massive role in the pandemic and as a team we have been really proud to be on hand to support the fleets operating up and down the country.

“Many of our customers also operate in the construction industry, so as restrictions were eased, and more vans and HGVs returned to the roads, an increase in demand for our conversions and safety systems came with it.”

He added: “We’re now on the point of outgrowing our 10,000 sq ft Leeds facility, which we opened in 2018, and it’s exciting to be progressing the development of our new northern workshop and headquarters in the city, which will give us plenty of room to expand further.”

The business has acquired the 1.4 acre former Winerite warehouse site on Gelderd Road in Leeds and work to redevelop the property as a state-of-the-art auto-engineering workshop is currently underway, with completion scheduled for June.

SM UK, whose clients range from blue-chip companies with large fleets of HGVs, to individuals with a single van, currently employs 70 staff across its sites in Leeds and Tamworth. The 30 new hires which will be for both engineering and office-based roles, will take the workforce to around 100. Sales of the firm’s covid-safe welfare vehicles have grown rapidly and are expected to double the number initially forecast by the end of 2021.

“Everything we do is about making vehicles safer, both for drivers and for other road users and people working on sites,” said Mr MacDonald. “Legislation such as Transport for London’s Direct Vision Standard has brought safety to the fore and prompted owners of commercial vehicles to ensure they have the relevant safety, lighting or racking systems installed on their fleet, and that is good news for everyone.”

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Photos: SM UK MD Steve MacDonald at the site of the firm's new 35,000 sq ft Leeds workshop and head office, due to open in June