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RSK Group adds weight to utilities and infrastructure offering with ABS Commercial Solutions acquisition

RSK Group has acquired ABS Commercial Solutions, a Chorley-based specialist provider of commercial, operational, compliance and recruitment services to the UK utilities and infrastructure sectors.

The acquisition will further strengthen RSK's support for clients across the utilities and infrastructure markets. It will create opportunities to connect ABS's delivery capability and sector relationships with RSK's wider environmental, engineering, water and infrastructure expertise.

Founded in 2014, ABS Commercial Solutions employs around 170 people and supports regulated utility companies and Tier 1 contractors through a combination of specialist personnel, managed services, operational delivery and accredited training. Its clients include United Utilities, Network Plus, M Group, Amey, United Living, Burns & McDonnell, Ipsum, Last Mile and Energetics.

Commercial, operational and compliance services for utility companies

ABS Commercial Solutions operates across six areas: streetworks and training; commercial services; recruitment; operational solutions; audit and finance; and business transformation. Its services range from embedded specialist resources to managed delivery and independent assurance.

The business supports clients with streetworks management and compliance, quantity surveying and commercial services, recruitment and operational delivery. Its field services include water meter installation, infrastructure surveys and site supervision. ABS also provides accredited training through the City & Guilds, EUSR and CABWI programmes.

Utilities recruitment, procurement and contract and commercial management expertise

The business's commercial services include the provision of skilled commercial managers and quantity surveyors who support clients with bid and tender preparation, contract formation, procurement strategy, final accounts, claims and dispute resolution. The recruitment team provides interim and permanent staff across commercial, operational and supporting functions.

ABS Commercial Solutions' services support critical utility and infrastructure programmes across the UK. They are particularly relevant to regulated markets, in which clients and contractors must respond to changing volumes of work while maintaining commercial control and meeting detailed compliance requirements.

Strengthening support across regulated utilities and infrastructure

RSK Group Chief Executive Officer Alan Ryder said: “ABS Commercial Solutions has built an impressive business serving utility companies and infrastructure contractors across the UK. Its expertise in commercial management, compliance, operational delivery and specialist resourcing complements RSK’s existing capabilities and strengthens our ability to support clients throughout the life cycle of major infrastructure programmes.

“The business has established trusted relationships with organisations including United Utilities, Network Plus and M Group and brings valuable experience across regulated utility markets. We are pleased to welcome Phil and his colleagues to RSK and look forward to supporting the next stage of their growth.”

Solving operational, commercial and compliance challenges

ABS Commercial Solutions Managing Director Phil Preston, who will continue to lead the business, said: “ABS Commercial Solutions has grown by helping utility companies and contractors solve operational, commercial and compliance challenges through practical, specialist support. Joining RSK gives us access to a much broader range of expertise, services and client relationships, while allowing us to retain the culture and approach that have been fundamental to our success.

“RSK’s strength in the water, environmental and infrastructure sectors creates exciting opportunities for our people and our clients. We look forward to working with businesses across the group to develop new opportunities and expand the support we provide across the UK.”

Combining operational delivery with environmental and engineering expertise

RSK Divisional and Board Director Ian Strudwick said: “ABS Commercial Solutions has a strong reputation for helping clients manage compliance, delivery, commercial performance and resource requirements in complex operational environments. Its specialist services will complement RSK’s water and infrastructure offering.

“There are clear opportunities to connect ABS with RSK businesses that already support water companies, utility providers and infrastructure clients. By combining these capabilities, we can offer clients more integrated support without losing the specialist focus and responsive service that have been central to ABS’s success.”

The acquisition adviser was MHA.