

# Female job seekers encouraged to consider a career on Britain's new railway

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Women aiming to get back into employment after a career break, or who are looking for a new start, are encouraged to consider a career on board Britain's new railway, HS2.

According to ONS data, female unemployment rates have risen month on month since the period January – March 2020, and currently stand at 4.8% for the period October – December 2020.

With over 20,000 roles still to be created through the construction of Britain's new railway, which extends from London to Crewe, HS2 is striving to redress the gender imbalance inherent in the construction and rail engineering sectors. To date, it has exceeded industry benchmarks set for the percentage of Black and Ethnically Diverse, disabled and female employees that make up its workforce.

Maria Grazia Zedda, Senior Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager at HS2 Ltd said:

“Industries like construction and the railways have traditionally attracted a male workforce, but we’re striving to change that. Our culture and employment policies reflect and respect the challenges of individuals juggling work, multiple interests, parental or carer responsibilities, as we know that’s key to

attracting a modern and diverse workforce.

“As a values-led organisation, our people come first and we’re proud of the role that our female employees, at all levels, are playing in this once in a lifetime project. We’d like to see more women taking a lead in our sector and I encourage those who are looking for an exciting new career opportunity to consider our current vacancies.”

The ONS’ latest Labour Market Overview, UK February 2021 shows that the number of job vacancies in November 2020 to January 2021 was 26% lower than a year ago.

The sheer scale of the work required to deliver HS2, which is integral to the government’s Build Back Better strategy, has enabled it to buck that trend, with both HS2 Ltd and its supply chain partners spearheading major recruitment campaigns for both office and site-based job opportunities.

Elena Argirova, Resourcing Manager at HS2 Ltd said:

“We have such a diverse range of roles at HS2, many of which you wouldn’t typically link to our sector, which offer the flexibility to combine home and office-based working.

“We’re committed to supporting our employees to reach their career goals whilst introducing measures which enable them to effectively balance home and work commitments.”

There are currently over 150 live vacancies within HS2’s supply chain and HS2 Ltd is continuing to expand its own workforce, reflecting progress to date in constructing the first phase of the railway and the recent green light for its extension to Crewe.

As International Women’s Day approaches (8th March 2021), HS2 is proud to celebrate the achievements of its female workforce and encourages more women to consider playing a part in revolutionising Britain’s railways.

For more information about careers at HS2, visit [hs2.org.uk/careers](https://hs2.org.uk/careers) to search and apply for the latest vacancies, or complete a skills match assessment to find out about upcoming jobs which align to your skills and experience.

### **Celebrating the women shaping Britain’s new railway as we mark International Women’s Day**

Dr Sonia Zahiroddiny is HS2 Ltd’s Head of Digital Engineering.



Dr Zahiroddiny leads the team that is driving the creation of a 'digital twin' or virtual model of the entire HS2 railway network. As part of her team's journey to create the 'digital twin' they have designed a visualisation hub, which brings their vision for the virtual railway to life.

Dr Zahiroddiny describes the visualisation hub as "the first of its kind to have been used since day one on such a major project". It brings together the masses of data that HS2 Ltd and its contractors are creating about the design and construction process for the new railway. The visualisation hub uses CAD files, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and *Building Information Modelling (BIM)*, which is a 3D model-based process. Collectively, these data sets will inform the creation of HS2's digital engineering masterpiece.



The digital twin will be used throughout the HS2 journey. It has an invaluable role to play in both the design and construction process and the testing and commissioning stages – ahead of Britain’s new railway opening to the public. Once the railway is fully operational, the digital twin will also become a major asset to the railway’s operators, as it will help to inform the ongoing maintenance programme. It allows troubleshooting and repairs to be carried out and tested in the virtual world before being conducted on the permanent infrastructure, enhancing safety and saving time and money.

Demonstrating the diversity of roles on the HS2 project, Dr Zahiroddiny isn’t an engineer by profession. Her journey on HS2 began with her background in computer sciences, while her team members have expertise in learning and development, psychology, data architecture and data sciences. She holds a PhD in Computer Sciences and BIM and today she applies her theoretical grounding in Computer and Information Sciences and practical knowledge in BIM in the Rail and Construction industry. Her passion is in bettering our business lives and simplifying the process of decision making through digitisation, standardisation, collaboration and use of latest technology, while keeping an eye on future developments.

Rubi Sarang is HS2 Ltd’s Commercial Operations Project Manager and deputy chair of HS2’s BAME Network



Rubi is now in her fourth year at HS2. She joined the project in 2017 having secured a place on HS2's two-year graduate programme. Her career journey brings to life the experiences of so many of HS2's employees, as she was able to transition into a different role when she discovered more about the business and how this aligned to her personal career aspirations.

Rubi joined as a Graduate Engineer, but quickly discovered that it was the 'client-side' of the business that really interested her. She switched her studies and successfully completed HS2's Graduate Project Management programme, which opened the doors to her current role in the Commercial Operations team where she works as Commercial Operations Project Manager.

Day to day, Rubi is responsible for managing the model that HS2 uses to estimate the operational cost of the railway and ensuring that decisions made during the construction phase consider Whole Life Cost. Her team is also focused on the end state structure of the railway, which requires careful consideration of the role that wider businesses will play in ensuring the full benefits of the HS2 project are delivered. This includes identifying the organisations that will be responsible for the daily operation and ongoing maintenance of assets, such as the HS2 stations and the land surrounding them, along the whole route of the railway.

Rubi's role is integral to ensuring that the vision for Britain's new railway is achieved and that important factors, such as the overall passenger experience and our environmental credentials are fulfilled.

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*