

HS2 build boosts employment across the West Midlands

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New figures released by HS2 Ltd have revealed that more than 6,800 people are currently working on the construction of the project across the West Midlands.

Over 530 of the West Midlands team were previously unemployed, and 344 apprentices are also perfecting their craft on the project. Many are being trained on construction courses funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), but there are also opportunities to learn key skills in project management, engineering, quantity surveying, cyber security, land referencing and health, safety and the environment with HS2 Ltd.

In total, over 27,000 people are supporting HS2 Ltd's construction, spread across 350 sites between London, the Midlands and the North West.

The information highlighted that as well as laying track, building tunnels and erecting viaducts, the Midlands teams were hard at work on the construction of two significant new stations – 'Curzon Street' in Birmingham city centre, and 'Interchange' in Solihull, ideally located for the NEC and international airport.

As well as helping team members hone their construction skills, the WMCA is also funding rail engineering training, through the Construction Gateway scheme at Wolverhampton College's Wellington Road campus in nearby Bilston. The facility, which has a 40 metre training track, is the first in the UK to offer training on slab track technology which is used in the construction of high-speed rail lines like HS2.

CLlr Ian Courts, the WMCA's portfolio lead for environment, energy and HS2 and leader of Solihull Council, said: "HS2 will transform transport in Birmingham and the West Midlands but it is about so much more

than that. It is critical for our wider success as a region and has already attracted major inward investment creating jobs and growth far beyond the rail and construction sectors.

“These new figures from HS2 show how it is having a positive effect in helping thousands of people from our region into well-paid, skilled jobs and apprenticeships, as well as supporting many more thousands of jobs and businesses through the supply chain.

“I have spoken to some of the new recruits working on the Curzon Street and Interchange stations. It’s really heartening to hear how working on HS2 is having such a positive impact on their lives. The skills and experience they are gaining will set them up for a bright future in construction.”

Rebecca Young, skills and employment strategy manager at HS2 Ltd said:

“Long before HS2 trains start arriving in the West Midlands, Britain’s biggest infrastructure project is delivering for the region. Just under 7,000 people living in the West Midlands have found jobs with HS2, plus hundreds of formerly unemployed helped into work, and apprenticeships and T-Levels helping to train the country’s next generation of engineers, builders and more. HS2 is the UK’s flagship Levelling Up project and we remain committed to driving investment and opportunities into the West Midlands.”

Image credit: HS2 Ltd