

HS2 launches fast-track employment scheme

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HS2's construction partner, Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall (EKFB), is launching an employment scheme to help local people who are out of work develop new skills and progress into paid employment.

The first training programme aims to upskill candidates ready for work on Britain's new railway in just two weeks, and there are 20 places available for Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire residents. Those who successfully complete the course and the assessment day will be offered an 18-month apprenticeship, allowing them to gain nationally recognised qualifications so they can progress their career in the construction sector.

Jhen-Nel Swanston, HS2's Legacy Manager for the region said: "Fast-track employment programmes help new starters to the industry secure sustainable employment with long-term career prospects.

"The two-week training programme is perfect for those looking to get back into the world of work, starting out in their career, or who fancy trying something different. We're delighted we can now extend this offer to Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire residents and look forward to welcoming them onto the programme."

The fast-track programme is supported by the Department for Work and Pensions, who can support eligible candidates who are claiming state benefits to participate in the course.

The programme offers progression onto a Level 2 Groundworker Apprenticeship, combining both practical and theory training and allowing candidates to play a hands-on role supporting HS2's construction in the local area, which stretches across four counties: Bucks, Northants, Oxon and South Warks.

Paddy Patterson, Skills, Employment and Education Manager at EKFB said: "EKFB is excited to partner with the Skills Centre to launch our new fast-track employment programme. After the initial two-week training period, candidates will then progress onto our apprentice programme, where they'll study and work, earning whilst learning. Those who wish to progress their careers further will have real job opportunities available to them, as well as sought-after transferable skills desired in the construction industry.

"Our aim is to leave a lasting skills legacy and inspire future generations through offering quality first hand training and learning experiences, provided by a talented and skilled workforce. These new apprenticeships are designed for any age, gender, and background and we look forward to meeting our new recruits in the coming months."

The training element of both the fast-track employment programme and the two-year apprenticeship will be delivered by The Skills Centre, one of the UK's most successful construction training providers. All training costs will be covered by EKFB and the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and the training will be delivered on-site in Brackley.

Jon Howlin, Chief Executive of The Skills Centre, said: "The Skills Centre already has bases in London, Liverpool and the West Midlands. Our mission is to transform lives, by providing local people with access to career opportunities in their area and we are now working with EKFB to deliver specialist training in Buckinghamshire.

"We are proud to be working on this landmark scheme and look forward to welcoming people through our doors to access sustainable employment and learn essential skills in the construction sector. There will be a range of opportunities for those living in the local area, thanks to the HS2 apprenticeships programme."

HS2 is committed to creating meaningful careers and invests in the long term development of its workforce. It has already helped over 1,000 people to kickstart their careers through its apprenticeship programmes, putting it on track to smash its target of creating 2,000 apprenticeships.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd