

# HS2 offers free construction training course for unemployed along line of route

July 29, 2020



Local people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire who are out of work, or looking for a new career opportunity, are encouraged to register for a free construction training course linked to opportunities to work on HS2, Britain's new low carbon railway.

EKFB joint venture, HS2's construction partner for the 80km section of the railway between the Chilterns and Warwickshire, is co-ordinating up to 200 free places on the training programme, thanks to funding awarded by the Construction Industry Training Board's Construction Skills Fund.

The accredited plant operator training programme, which takes a week to complete, is being delivered in partnership with local training providers, Apple Construction and Buckinghamshire College Group.

Mark Warrilow, Skills Manager for HS2 Ltd said: "We are committed to ensuring that HS2 creates meaningful employment and skills opportunities for local people along the line of the railway, and this is a great example of that.

"With major construction set to begin in earnest this summer, this training course offers candidates that

vital first step into roles supporting the construction and delivery of a project that will truly transform Britain's railways and revitalise local economies."

The application process for the course is now live and weekly training courses are being offered up until March 2021. One hundred people have already registered to take part and 20 have successfully completed the programme to date.

The free training course is accredited by the Construction Plant Competence Scheme – the industry-standard certification to prove the skills of plant operatives. The training programme consists of a combination of both practical and theory-based training and will provide applicants with the entry-level skills needed to work on a construction site.

The course has received backing from Buckinghamshire Business First, who have recently established a Redundancy Task Force in partnership with Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership to support local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Heather Dean, Head of Business Support and Skills, Buckinghamshire Business First said: "In the last few months, we've seen a three-fold increase in the number of Buckinghamshire residents claiming unemployment related benefits.

"National projections suggest that there will be a second rise in unemployment in the autumn, when the government's Job Retention Scheme comes to an end. This free training programme therefore will help to upskill local people, enabling them to make the most of job opportunities being created by upcoming developments in the county."

Michael Sedgwick, EKFB's Skills Manager said: "The low number of construction operatives in the local area meant we were able to secure funding from the CITB to upskill up to 200 local people.

"This training programme will help to ensure that a skilled workforce of plant operatives is in place, ready for the pipeline of construction roles that are coming on board through our supply chain, as we prepare for major construction works on HS2."

The 80km section of HS2 that EKFB will design and deliver includes 15 viaducts, 6.9km of green tunnels, 81 bridges and 30 million cubic metres of excavation.

EKFB JV will be working with its delivery partners and supply chain team to support those that successfully complete the free training programme with work placements and employment opportunities.

Click [here](#) for more details.

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*