

HS2 'Opens Doors' to encourage young people into construction

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The construction industry needs to recruit over 53,000 new entrants every year for the next five years to maintain output, and as the largest construction projects in Europe, **HS2** is no slouch in making sure there is plenty of interest!

The '**Open Doors**' scheme takes young people looking for a change of career behind the site hoardings to experience construction first-hand. Open Doors 2023 was launched this week, with HS2 hosting **Build UK** and a team of 25 eager young people at Long Itchington Wood Tunnel north portal site near Leamington Spa.

The site, managed by HS2's contractor **Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV)**, is where the tunnel boring machine 'Dorothy' is being prepared to begin the second bore of the one-mile twin bore tunnel under an ancient woodland.

HS2's senior project manager for Long Itchington Wood Tunnel, Doug Barnett said: "Open Doors is a fantastic initiative and HS2 is delighted to be partnering with Build UK to launch next year's event. It was great to share my own experience of working in the construction sector with the students on site today,

some of whom are already starting their training on construction-related courses.

“They were very enthusiastic about their first-hand experience of one of HS2’s largest construction sites, and the opportunity to gain unique insight from some of the people working on the project.”

At the launch, the young people heard from Doug Barnett and BBV’s tunnels delivery director Neil Johnson who talked about the massive tunnelling operation currently taking place on the site. They also learned about the types of careers available on HS2, which is currently supporting nearly 30,000 jobs, including over 950 apprentices.

HS2 has partnered with Build UK to offer a number of construction sites for next year’s Open Doors event, which will run across the country from Monday 13 – Saturday 18 March 2023.

During the week-long programme of events, visitors will get a unique insight into a career in construction by going behind the site hoardings to experience the fantastic range of opportunities available in construction. In addition to familiar site-based construction roles, many of the positions available are based externally, with companies requiring a back-office support network, front-of-house sales teams, and cutting-edge technical roles.

The event aims to challenge perceptions and encourage young people and those looking for a change of career to consider construction, Open Doors highlights the diverse range of opportunities available, including thousands of apprenticeship places.

Over ten sites are already registered and available for visitors to explore throughout Open Doors Week, with a wide range of organisations taking part, offering site visits across the UK, with projects ranging from tunnels to skyscrapers, as well as offices, factories and other facilities to demonstrate the off-site roles across the sector.

Suzannah Nichol MBE, Chief Executive of Build UK said: “Open Doors offers young people and others an experience they wouldn’t usually have, and interest is always high. Reading a job description on a website is one thing, but there is nothing like seeing a busy construction site in action or a new building close to completion.

“It’s a unique opportunity to spend some time on site, see what goes on and maybe even see a job you would like to do, and we are really excited to be working with HS2 to showcase the positive impact of construction, along with the diverse range of people and occupations that come together to bring a project to life.”

Delivered by Build UK in partnership with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), Open Doors is supported by industry partners the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS), Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), Go Construct, HS2 and Skylapse Media, and community partners the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Organisations interested in opening a site to the public can email info@opendoors.construction to find out more.