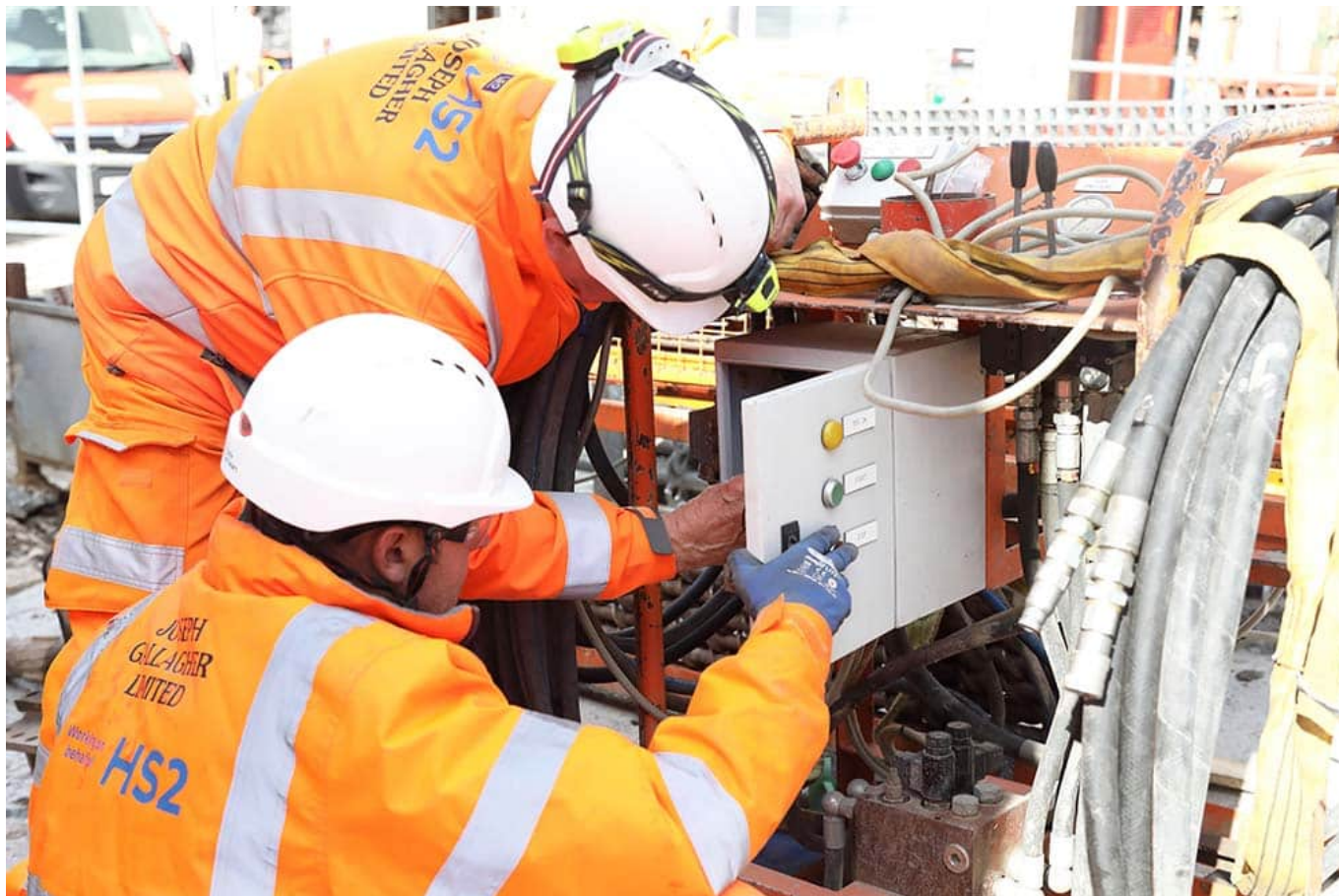# HS2 partnership supporting veterans into employment

May 12, 2022

Veterans and service leavers are being supported into jobs on HS2, thanks to a partnership between HS2's construction partners and Community Interest Company, BuildForce.

BuildForce was established and is run by a group of construction companies, and its Board of Directors bring expertise from the construction, engineering, and military sectors. Its partnership with HS2 was cemented when HS2 Ltd launched its job brokerage partner model in 2021, an initiative designed to support unemployed and under-represented groups into jobs within HS2's supply chain.

Former service personnel can often find the transition to 'civvie street' challenging, with many employers failing to recognise the true value of their transferable skills and experience. With 34,000 jobs forecast and a construction programme spanning two decades, HS2's Skills, Employment and Education Team were eager to support BuildForce's candidates into the range of jobs on offer with HS2's construction partners.

In recent months, 40 veterans and service leavers registered with BuildForce have secured jobs and form part of the 22,000 strong-workforce shaping HS2's design and construction. A further 50 have since been job matched and introduced to HS2's construction partners, ready to begin their career journey.

Jhen-Nel Swanston, Skills Manager at HS2 Ltd said: "The high calibre of referrals that we receive from BuildForce really shows the true value of investing in those that have proudly served in our armed forces.

It's early days in our partnership, but we are confident that we can support hundreds more veterans and service leavers into a career, not just a job, on this transformative project."

Paul Bedford served in the Royal Logistics Corps for nine years and completed his service as Captain in 2019. During his service he was a Troop Commander and was deployed on operations in the Middle East. Through his BuildForce mentor, Paul was skills matched to a logistics manager role with HS2's construction partner EKFB (Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall joint venture). He's now part of the team working on the 80km section of HS2 between the Chiltern Tunnel and Long Itchington Wood.

Paul said: "The skills you learn in the military stay with you for life, and I'd encourage anyone wondering whether a career in construction on HS2 might be for them to go for it. Whether you're looking for a role at the 'coal face' of construction or in support functions like procurement and health and safety, there really is a role for you and BuildForce will support you to find it.

"Delivering logistics support across significant distances was familiar territory for me, and it's great that the team at EKFB are bringing in lessons learned from my military expertise to help deliver efficiencies on HS2."

Caroline Logan, Programme Director, from BuildForce explains the vital role that this new partnership is playing to support former service personnel into work on HS2:

"We are delighted to be working closely with HS2 and their construction partners, strengthening our relationship and promoting the fantastic transferable skills our military personnel bring to the project. Their ability to think outside the box, bringing fresh innovative ideas and reactiveness to change will play a critical role in the build of HS2.

"The breadth of skills required on the project match the skillsets the ex-military train for and we can address the gaps by tapping into a truly exceptional talent pool. We have so far placed candidates in logistics, project management, engineering, quantity surveying, health and safety and plant roles and I'm confident that will continue."

HS2's construction partners are actively recruiting for hundreds of roles, right along the route of the railway, for more information and details of all the latest opportunities, visit hs2.org.uk/careers

For more information about BuildForce and how it is supporting veterans and service leavers into jobs on HS2 visit: buildforce.org.uk