

HS2 sets equality and diversity standard across its supply chain

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HS2's pledge to increase diversity and champion inclusion across its supply chain has taken another giant leap forward with the launch of its new Marketplace platform.

HS2 Marketplace, which launches today (1 November 2021), is designed to support companies of all sizes who are engaged in HS2's supply chain by equipping them with the tools they need to embed Diversity and Inclusion best practice across their business processes.

The platform is designed and backed by the Clear Company, who earlier this year recognised HS2's exemplar commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by awarding it the Clear Assured Platinum Standard accreditation – HS2 Ltd was the first company in the UK to achieve the award.

Over 2,300 businesses have already won work on HS2 and thousands more are expected to join them as £25bn worth of HS2 contract opportunities flow out into the wider supply chain over the coming years. Through the Marketplace platform, businesses can access training and resources to support them in meeting and evaluating progress against key performance indicators set by HS2, in line with the Clear Assured standard.

Embedding a contractual commitment for HS2 suppliers to champion diversity and create inclusive working environments will lead to improved outcomes and opportunities for workforces right across the country.

Mark Lomas, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at HS2 said: “With two decades of construction work ahead of us HS2 is naturally placed to be a real driver for change, and we’ll achieve this by ensuring that every company engaged in delivering Britain’s new railway plays their part in setting a new EDI standard.

“HS2 Marketplace enables our suppliers to be confident that their practices and processes, from recruitment through to the workplace environment, are truly inclusive and follow the best practice standards we expect.”

HS2’s supply chain is already performing well, with the number of disabled, Black and Ethnically Diverse, and female workers exceeding industry averages. Through the launch of HS2 Marketplace, it aims to ensure that this trend continues.

HS2’s seven construction partners have already introduced a number of practical measures to champion diversity, inclusion and employee wellbeing across their worksites. Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall (EKFB) has developed a bespoke programme of men’s and women’s health workshops, as well as creating wellbeing and prayer room spaces at its construction sites.

The Skanska Costain STRABAG joint venture (SCS) is upgrading its employee app to enable staff to capture, track and monitor EDI best practice; while Mace Dragados has implemented a new ‘Make it Stick’ campaign, which ensures that LGBT + trained allies are easily identifiable on site through high visibility stickers worn on their hard hats.

Kate Headley, Director of the Clear Company said: “Once again HS2 have demonstrated ground-breaking progress and innovation with the launch of the Marketplace platform.

“This is a significant step forward in creating a truly inclusive engineering sector and the constructive, supportive approach will enable HS2 suppliers to improve access to long term career opportunities, for all people, right across the sector.”

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd