

HS2 welcomes over 400 apprentices onto the project

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HS2, Britain's new high speed railway, has announced that 412 new apprenticeship opportunities have been created on the landmark project. The latest figures come just a month after main construction works on the Birmingham - London phase of the project officially started, spearheading the creation of 22,000 jobs.

In its Skills, Employment and Education Strategy, released in 2018, HS2 Ltd committed to creating at least 2,000 apprenticeships during the life span of the project, and is now over a fifth of the way to meeting its target.

A surge in the number of people taking up apprentice roles is expected in the next two years as HS2's supply chain expands and more British businesses come on board to support the construction programme.

Kate Myers, HS2 Ltd's Head of Skills, Employment and Education said: "We're passionate about delivering meaningful training and employment opportunities, and upskilling young people is vital to the country's economic recovery.

“Apprenticeships with us, and companies within our supply chain, provide a fantastic start to working life or the opportunity for a complete career change, knowing that the ability to earn and learn is supported with a qualification.

“The scale and breadth of HS2 provides long-term career prospects and I’m delighted that many of those who joined as apprentices back in 2017 have successfully completed their course and gone on to secure full time employment on the project. It’s that long-term investment that we strive to offer that really makes a difference.”

21-year-old Chris Sadler from Tamworth joined HS2 as a Project Management apprentice in 2017 and now has a permanent role as Assistant Commercial Manager within HS2’s land and property team.

Chris said: “Over the last three years I’ve been able to learn from some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry across different areas of the business.

“The apprenticeship programme enabled me to work and learn simultaneously, and I’ve developed skills that have helped me to achieve results on one of the biggest infrastructure projects in Europe.

“Progressing from an apprentice, to where I am today, is a great achievement for me and really shows the opportunities HS2 has to offer.”

The unique scale of major infrastructure programmes like HS2, and the preparatory works that take place ahead of main construction, means HS2 is capable of supporting apprenticeships in a hugely diverse and broad range of roles that appeal to people with varied interests.

Individuals are currently benefitting from advanced and higher-level apprenticeships in subjects from IT and Site Engineering to Surveying and Community Engagement.

32-year-old Ochure Chujor from Pursfleet in Essex began his HS2 apprentice journey in September this year. The married father of two saw the apprenticeship pathway as an opportunity to “learn from the ground up” and seized the opportunity for a complete career change.

Ochure said: “I’ve wanted to make the move into project management for years and the chance to work on HS2, whilst focusing on my professional development, is a truly unique opportunity.

“For me, my work needs to carry ‘meaning’ so the legacy HS2 will leave for my children’s and future generations is something that really inspired me to join and will continue to push me along the journey.”

HS2’s main works construction partners have welcomed over 100 apprentices on to the project since their contract start dates, opening a plethora of opportunities for individuals to take a hands-on role in the delivery of one of Europe’s biggest infrastructure projects.

It was that unique opportunity that attracted 21-year-old James King from Rugby to join HS2’s contractor, Balfour Beatty VINCI as an apprentice.

James, who is studying for a Level 3 Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship (Materials Testing) said: “I dropped out of an electrical engineering course at university earlier this year, as I wasn’t enjoying the course due to the textbook-style of learning.

“I knew I wanted to work on HS2. It was talked about at school, so I already knew I wanted to be part of it. Balfour Beatty VINCI is the largest contractor on the project, and is building HS2 in my area, so I really wanted to get a job with them.

“Three months into my apprenticeship, I’m working in a laboratory supporting the earthworks department and I really enjoy it. I go out to different sites and run safety tests to make sure the ground conditions are safe to build and work on. I meet new people every day and am learning new skills much quicker on the job. The training is great, and my tutors are really supportive. I get to work independently and am trusted to get on with things, which is really fulfilling.

“Longer term, I want to complete my apprenticeship and become a fully qualified lab technician. I intend to work my way up the ladder and become a Senior Lab Technician and then hopefully become a manager with Balfour Beatty VINCI.”

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