

HS2 West Midlands and Warwickshire contractor expands its job-ready training programmes

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HS2's construction partner for the West Midlands and Warwickshire, **Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV)**, has expanded access to its free job-ready training programmes.

It has done so by teaming up with five more further education colleges.

The development follows **BBV's** successful partnership with South and City College Birmingham — which created **BBV's** dedicated Skills Academy in Bordesley Green. Their Academy seeks to provide new skills to people out of work or looking for a new career.

In just 4-6 weeks, trainees can progress onto a paid work trial supporting **HS2's** construction.

- **World Bee Day: HS2 launches British Black Bee conservation project**
- **HS2 completes first stage of 50 mile temporary access road in Bucks**
- **HS2 showcasing opportunities for Cheshire businesses**

To help more local people benefit and progress into employment on **HS2**, **BBV** has joined forces with Warwickshire College Group, Birmingham Metropolitan College, Walsall College, Solihull College and University Centre, and City of Wolverhampton College. Collectively they aim to train at least 600 new recruits who will then progress onto a paid work trial.

Each college will deliver bespoke training programmes in line with the core skills that **BBV** needs to support its construction of the **HS2** network from Warwickshire to the centre of Birmingham and on to Staffordshire. In total, **BBV** expects to support around 7,000 jobs through its programme of work on **HS2** and over 400 people who were out of work in the West Midlands have now progressed into jobs on **HS2**.

The training programmes at the four West Midlands colleges will be funded by West Midlands Combined Authority as part of their Construction Gateway programme, which is designed to ensure that local residents benefit from free skills for life training and accreditation that aligns to local job opportunities in the construction sector.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands said: "It is fantastic news that an expansion of the Balfour Beatty VINCI Skills Academy is underway - reaching out across our region to work hand in glove with even more of our colleges to help people take advantage of the construction of **HS2**."

"It is vitally important for the future of the West Midlands that we ensure our people are effectively connected with the right training opportunities so that they can get the skills they need to achieve the high-quality and well-paid jobs they deserve. The **HS2** Skills Academy is just the right kind of initiative to enable us to do exactly that, with the jobs being created by **HS2** a key part of my 100k jobs plan."

Courses at Warwickshire College Group will be funded via the Government's Strategic Development Fund.

Angela Joyce, CEO of Warwickshire College Group said: "This partnership provides a unique opportunity for Warwickshire College Group, **HS2** and for people across Warwickshire seeking to retrain.

"The Skills Accelerator Programme funding we have received from the government's Strategic Development Fund has enabled us to develop and deliver fantastic training resources and the qualifications which our local communities need, to be able to work on the **HS2** project and with Balfour Beatty VINCI".

The training programmes will cover a broad range of specialist skills needed to support **BBV**'s construction works from steel fixing to formwork and concrete placing.

Shilpi Akbar, Head of Stakeholders and Communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI said: "This is a really exciting time for Balfour Beatty VINCI, as we join forces with another five further education colleges across the region.

"These new partnerships will allow us to expand the training programme we already offer and build on the success of our Skills Academy at South and City College which we launched last year.

"By working together with these colleges, we hope this move will encourage even more local people from

across the region – particularly those who are currently unemployed – to pursue a career in the construction and infrastructure industry, as we help to deliver Britain’s new high-speed railway.”

For more information, or to express an interest in registering for BBV’s fast track job-ready training programmes, contact your nearest participating Further Education college.