

Investing in future talent: HS2's 20 new apprentices

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HS2 has welcomed more young talent into the business as it strives to upskill the next generation to play their part in delivering HS2 and major infrastructure projects of the future.

Twenty new starters aged 16 – 28 have joined HS2 Ltd at office and site locations between Birmingham and London. The demand for an HS2 apprenticeship, which allows candidates to combine work and study over a two-year period, is proving ever popular and this year's recruitment drive attracted a much broader range of applicants.

This year's cohort includes college leavers, university graduates and individuals who were already in employment, but in roles that offered limited career progression. Since HS2 Ltd's apprenticeship programme began in 2017, all candidates who successfully completed the two-year programme have been offered permanent jobs supporting HS2's construction. This demonstrates how vital apprenticeships are in plugging the skills gap and addressing the ageing workforce challenge.

Karen Davis, HS2's Head of Talent and Development said: "HS2 Ltd's apprenticeships attract hundreds of applicants each year, and this year we've seen a significant uptake in career movers, which shows the

desire to retrain and develop new skills is an attractive proposition for people of all ages.

“Getting to play a part in Europe’s biggest infrastructure project, and the recognition that we invest in the long-term development of our workforce, were cited as the main reasons for candidates wanting to join HS2.”

To date, HS2 has welcomed over 950 new apprentice starts, putting it firmly on track to meet its target of creating 2,000 apprenticeships. And as construction gathers pace, the breadth of apprenticeship programmes HS2 provides has expanded. In addition to roles in project management, engineering, and quantity surveying, HS2 has created new roles this year in cyber security, land referencing and health, safety and the environment.

19-year-old Carley Chiles from Birmingham applied to join HS2 as she wanted to continue her family’s tradition working in the rail sector. Carley is studying a two-year Level 3 apprenticeship in Health, Safety and the Environment.

Carley said: “My parents, brother, and my uncle all work in the rail sector, and my grandma started in the steam train days, so I really wanted to carry on the family tradition. The opportunity to join the team building Britain’s new railway, and taking train travel into a new era, was a huge appeal for me. I can’t wait to get started.”

28-year-old Karl Talbot from Birmingham had worked in hospitality for 11 years before joining HS2, but felt it was time for change. Karl is now studying for a Level 4 apprenticeship in cyber security.

Karl said: “I dreamed of the opportunity to build a career in an industry that I’m passionate about. The cyber security apprenticeship really stood out, as technology is constantly evolving, with unlimited learning opportunities and challenges.

“I chose HS2 as I knew this would be a massive opportunity to work for such a vital part of England’s future infrastructure; it’s going to be one of the country’s pinnacle achievements.”

HS2 Ltd’s annual recruitment drive to welcome more apprentices into the business will begin again in February 2023.

HS2’s construction partners are also recruiting for apprentices across a broad variety of sectors. For more information about the opportunities available now, visit hs2.org.uk/careers.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd