

Jess Phillips MP hails HS2's drive to support more women into construction

November 1, 2023



Jess Phillips, Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley, visited HS2's headquarters to show support for HS2's Young Adults programme, which upskills women who are out of work so they can begin new careers in construction.

HS2 delivers the Young Adults programme in partnership with Women into Construction, an independent not-for-profit organisation. Women aged 18-30, who are unemployed and live locally, qualify for the scheme, which combines work experience, mentoring and construction safety training.

Mrs Phillips, a passionate equalities campaigner, joined the final session of the programme to inspire the young women ahead of their next career move.

Over 9,000 people in the West Midlands are helping to build HS2, and investment in bespoke training programmes, like the Young Adults scheme, has helped hundreds of local people who were out of work to launch new careers.

79% of candidates that graduated from the Young Adults programme over the last four years secured employment or progressed into further education or training. Mrs Phillips encouraged this year's graduates to seize the opportunities in front of them.

Jess Phillips MP said: "The more we can encourage women and girls to seize opportunities, follow their

dreams and build our future, the stronger our country will be for all of us.”

Amrutha Puthumana Meleppattu, who lives in Mrs Phillips’s Yardley constituency, is one of 15 women taking part in this year’s programme. Originally from Kerala, Amrutha joined the Young Adults scheme as she was struggling to find work in the UK.

Amrutha said: “Joining the Young Adults programme has given me a real confidence boost.

“Securing work experience with HS2’s engineering team, and making new connections in the industry, is exactly what I needed to take my career forward.”

Amelia Morris from Stourbridge had also worked in construction before, but she chose to leave the industry as she didn’t feel women were treated equally.

Amelia said: “This placement opportunity with HS2 has completely re-ignited my passion and reaffirms why I got into the construction industry in the first place. It’s been an invaluable experience. It’s changed my outlook and set me on track to a prosperous career.”

Beatriz Ramos Albert, HS2’s Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Apprentice, coordinates the Young Adults programme. Earlier this month, the 32-year-old from Birmingham was crowned West Midlands Apprentice of the Year at the National Apprenticeship Awards in recognition of her commitment to inspiring others.

Beatriz said: “Creating training programmes which allow women to step inside and see what we do is a great way of encouraging more new entrants into the sector.

“Female representation is on the increase, and we’re proud that women account for 38% of the workforce here at HS2 Ltd.

“I’m exceptionally proud of all today’s graduates and hope they feel inspired to come and work with us.”

Kath Moore, MBE, Managing Director at Women into Construction commented: “We are delighted that this latest programme has supported another 15 young women to explore the world of construction, building their confidence and aspirations to join our sector. We look forward to continuing to support them all on their Journeys into Construction and would like to thank HS2 for their support in this long-standing partnership.”

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd