

## Newly-opened Balfour Beatty VINCI academy to upskill local people for HS2

November 8, 2021



Balfour Beatty VINCI has opened a new training centre.

The Balfour Beatty VINCI Skills Academy is based at South and City College's Bordesley Green campus, as part of a new partnership between the college and the HS2 construction partner for the West Midlands.

The academy is designed to upskill people from the surrounding area, who are either unemployed or looking for a new direction in their career. They will earn the entry level skills they need to secure a broad range of jobs on the West Midlands section of HS2.

Balfour Beatty VINCI says the centre will play an important role in helping HS2 to plug the local skills gap: in its recent report Building the Skills to Deliver HS2 – Phase One and 2a, HS2 Ltd forecast its rail project will support over 34,000 jobs at peak construction, including over 2,000 new apprentice starts.

Skills and employment strategy manager at HS2 Ltd, Rebecca Young, said: "HS2 is creating thousands of training and employment opportunities for people right across the region now and into the next decade.

“The Skills Academy will help to ensure that HS2 leaves a lasting skills legacy, and that local people are given every opportunity to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime project that is already transforming the region and supporting its economic recovery from the pandemic.”

In the West Midlands, it is estimated that the construction of HS2 will create a constant labour demand of around 10,000 jobs from now until 2027/28. The findings of HS2’s latest report carefully examines the type of jobs it expects will be needed and measures this against local labour availability.

Where it is thought there are skills shortages, HS2, its construction partners and key stakeholders including local authorities, training delivery organisations and Local Enterprise Partnerships work together to invest in plugging the skills gap. The Balfour Beatty VINCI Skills Academy is a product of that investment and its founders say it is a sign of the shared commitment to upskill local people ready for work on HS2.

Head of stakeholders and communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI, Shilpi Akbar, said: “As our work continues to progress at pace, providing opportunities for people across the region remains a priority. We want everyone – particularly those who are currently unemployed – to benefit from the plethora of jobs set to be made available through the construction of HS2.

“Through our innovative partnership with South and City College, local people will be able to develop and hone the skills required to work on Britain’s new railway; skills that will ensure they thrive in their future careers in the construction and infrastructure industry.”

The Skills Academy will offer hands-on training, matched with classroom-based learning. Students will build and develop new skills, while securing nationally recognised accreditation that will prepare them for jobs on HS2.

As the largest provider of adult education in the UK and one of the highest-performing colleges in the West Midlands, South and City College Birmingham shares the vision of ensuring that learning leads to earning and, through its established connections within the local community, will play a key role in supporting local people into the training and employment opportunities HS2 is creating.

Mike Hopkins, principal at South and City College Birmingham said: “I am really pleased that we have been able to set up the training academy. It is a fantastic partnership between the public and private sector which is for the good of everyone and will have a massive impact locally, providing a new route into jobs at all levels for unemployed people.”

The Academy will host drop-in sessions, supported by the National Careers Service and the Department for Work and Pensions, so people can find out more about the training courses available and how they link to HS2 jobs in the local area. The Academy is open to everyone, not just those attending South and City College Birmingham.

Training programmes will vary in length, according to the job roles they align to, but are tailored to meet each individual’s requirements, regardless of whether or not they have previous work experience.

For more information about the Balfour Beatty VINCI Skills Academy and the training courses available visit

