

# Return to work programme creates new opportunities to work on HS2

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Skanska Costain STRABAG Joint Venture, HS2's main works construction partner for the West Ruislip to London Euston section of Britain's new high speed railway, is launching two new careers-focused initiatives designed to support those who have taken a career break to re-enter employment.

In line with HS2's drive to create employment opportunities for local people and those from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, the Skanska Costain STRABAG Joint Venture is working in partnership with London-based organisations Women Returners and STEM Returners to actively engage the local community and support individuals who have taken a career break back into work.

The Women Returners initiative is aimed at experienced professionals from a variety of backgrounds who took a career break of two years or more. The programme will offer six months' paid work placements to six candidates, with a high likelihood of ongoing employment on the HS2 project. Participants will receive comprehensive support, including a Career Returners Coaching Programme from Women Returners.

In 2020, the joint venture recruited six high-calibre employees through the Women Returners programme, with a 100% conversion into permanent employment. It hopes this year's programme will encourage more

people to join the sector and secure long-term employment in line with their career aspirations.

Ambrose Quashie, HS2 Ltd's Skills Manager for Greater London said: "We have set robust employment and skills targets for all our contractors to ensure that local people benefit from opportunities to work on this once in a lifetime project.

"This is a fantastic example of how we are ensuring that those in need of additional support to boost their career can really benefit."

The programme particularly welcomes applications from female returners, as this supports HS2's aim to address the gender imbalance commonplace in the construction and rail sectors. However, recognising that career breaks for parental care or personal reasons are not exclusive to women, the joint venture also encourages male applicants for the programme.

Fabiana, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Administrator and 2020 Return to Work programme graduate said: "Joining the project through the Return to Work programme really helped me with my confidence to be ready and prepared to come back to work. When you are out of work, it can be hard, and you worry about lots of little things. The support provided is essential."

Alice Jennison, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager at Skanska Costain STRABAG Joint Venture explains: "We have already hired six people through our Return to Work programme and we are excited to expand the programme in 2021. We offer tailored support to individuals who are returning to work through coaching, training, mentoring and a dedicated buddy. There are many talented people wanting to return to work and we welcome applications from people with or without infrastructure industry experience."

The joint venture's second recruitment initiative is an innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) focused programme. Six places will be available on the 12-week programme which is designed for individuals with a STEM-focused career background, such as engineering, or those who have worked in the STEM sector. Mentoring and coaching will be provided to ensure that those returning to work, following a lengthy period of absence, are fully supported.

Following completion of the 12-week programme, successful candidates may be offered full-time positions. The STEM Returners programme has already supported almost 200 candidates and 96% have been offered full-time roles at the end of their placement.

For more information about the two back to work programmes, visit [womenreturners.com/](https://womenreturners.com/) for details of the Women Returners programme and [stemreturners.com/](https://stemreturners.com/) for the STEM Returners programme.

The joint venture expects to recruit over 4,000 jobs, including employment for around 550 previously unemployed people and 400 apprenticeships to deliver its programme of work on the HS2 project. Details of current opportunities can be found at [scsrailways.co.uk/careers/](https://scsrailways.co.uk/careers/).

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*