

Unemployed secure jobs on HS2 in record numbers

September 1, 2022



The drive to support more unemployed people into skilled careers on HS2 is proving to be a success. HS2 Ltd confirmed today (1 September) that 2,200 people who were out of work have now secured a job helping to build Britain's new railway,

In the last three months, 267 people who were out of work have transitioned into employment with HS2's construction partners and companies in the wider supply chain. They form part of the 27,000-strong workforce spread across more than 350 sites between London, the Midlands and Crewe.

Natalie Penrose, Head of Legacy at HS2 Ltd said: "We know that people are feeling the squeeze financially, which is why we're working closely with our construction partners to ensure those most in need benefit from the huge range of employment opportunities HS2 is creating.

"Through our training academies and specialist skills centres, we're equipping people who had never considered a career in construction with new qualifications, skills and experience to establish a career, not just a job.

“Our approach is helping to create a more diverse workforce that will benefit the whole of the UK. And with two decades of construction ahead of us, we have a unique opportunity to help many more people launch a new career.”

HS2’s specialist training academies and fast-track job training programmes, delivered in partnership with further education colleges, local councils, and enterprise partnerships are all playing a part in the drive to get unemployed people into work. They enable candidates to access free training and progress onto paid work trials, so they can see if the jobs on offer suit their personal career aspirations.

In the West Midlands, HS2’s construction partner Balfour Beatty VINCI has helped hundreds of local people to secure work on the 90km section of the railway it is building between Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

33-year-old Dale Plucinski from Kidderminster recently graduated from the Skills Academy and is now working as a Traffic Marshall at a BBV construction site in Birmingham.

Dale said: “I’d never worked in construction before, but the tutors at the BBV Skills Academy were very understanding of my knowledge level. The programme was flexible, and they broke everything down for me in a clear and structured way. They supported everyone’s needs, from dyslexia to language barriers. The tutors went the extra mile and really built my confidence.”

58-year old Dale Spencer from Castle Vale in Birmingham was made redundant from his job repairing office equipment. He’d been out of work for six months and heard about BBV’s Skills Academy through the Shaw Trust.

After completing his training, Dale progressed onto a paid work trial. He credits his line manager for believing in him and offering him a permanent role in the logistics team where now works as a stores supervisor.

Dale said: “Moving from the work trial into a full time job has given me the opportunity to learn logistical operations on a huge project like HS2. It’s a great challenge and I’m really expanding my knowledge.”

In London, a chance conversation in Camden Town Library led to Karen Britzman signing up for Camden Council’s newsletter, which promoted opportunities to work on HS2. Karen reached out to the Kings Cross Construction Skills Centre and was put forward for an opportunity with Mace Dragados, HS2’s construction partner building the new high speed Euston station.

Karen had never worked in construction before, but her transferable skills made her the perfect candidate for their Team Coordinator vacancy. Karen recently completed a project management qualification, which her employer funded, and she now works in the commercial team.

Karen said: “As a Camden resident, I’m able to walk to work through Regent’s Park, which not only helps financially but it’s great for my wellbeing too.

“Working on HS2 gives me the security I need, as I know we’ve got a long-term construction programme ahead of us. In the current climate, that’s really important and I’m so grateful to Camden Council for the

support they gave me to find this job”

Karen works closely with Mace Dragados’ skills and employment team and is actively encouraging local residents who are out of work to consider a career on HS2. On 14th September, she will join the team at Sidings Community Centre in West Hampstead for a Careers Fair to help raise awareness of the office-based roles currently available on HS2 in Camden.

HS2’s construction partners are currently recruiting for over 350 roles at various locations between London, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Birmingham. For more information about careers and opportunities on HS2, visit hs2.org.uk/careers