

# Work trials fuel employment boost on HS2

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Midlands residents who are out of work are being encouraged to 'give a work trial a go' and explore the opportunity to start a new career on HS2.

Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV), HS2's construction partner for the region, provides work trials in both construction-focused and office-support roles. The placements combine training with on-the-job experience and typically last between 10 and 20 days. Candidates who successfully complete their trial transition straight into full-time employment, either with BBV or companies within its supply chain.

BBV's work trial programme has already helped over 130 people who were unemployed to start new careers, and more placement opportunities are being offered throughout 2023.

Husband and wife Wahid Ahmed and Maisha Choudhury from Stechford registered their interest in a work trial after meeting BBV's skills and employment team at a careers event at Birmingham City Football Club. They were both made redundant from their previous jobs, where they processed Covid-19 PCR tests, and were actively seeking new opportunities.

Wahid and Maisha were job matched to vacancies within BBV's materials testing laboratory, where

materials such as aggregate, concrete and asphalt are tested. They both successfully completed their placements and have now secured full time employment with BBV. They start their new roles as Materials Testing Technicians at the Kenilworth laboratory later this month.

Wahid said: "I had no idea about how and why materials are tested to inform major construction projects like HS2. That's why the work trial programme is great, it opens your eyes to all the different careers out there that you wouldn't even know existed.

"This is my first permanent job, so this is really special to me. The fact that I'll be working with my wife is great, as it means we'll have the same work timetable, so we can plan our personal lives better too."

Maisha said: "Getting a permanent job was a major step forward. I'm so happy, as this means that I can now house hunt in earnest and plan for my future.

"I hope to achieve great things while working for HS2. There's a lot of career progression available, which can help you gain more skills. I really want to progress and hopefully work my way up to becoming a laboratory manager."

9,750 people are currently helping to build HS2 in the West Midlands and many more will be needed to complete the 90km section of the railway that passes through the region.

Work trials ensure that local people, regardless of their skills or experience, can benefit from the career opportunities that HS2 is creating. The programmes are fully funded, and candidates are paid a salary for the duration of the training programme.

Shilpi Akbar, Head of Stakeholder and Communities at Balfour Beatty VINCI, said: "As HS2's construction partner in the Midlands, our role means we must also deliver for communities across the region, making sure they feel the full benefit of this project. That's why we're encouraging residents to improve or learn new skills by giving our work trials a go.

"These placements combine training with on-the-job experience either in construction or office-based roles. Candidates who successfully complete a work trial are guaranteed an interview for full-time employment directly with us or within our supply chain."

Candidates interested in joining BBV's work trial programme can either speak to their Work Coach at the Job Centre or contact BBV directly by emailing [see.team@balfourbeattyvinci.com](mailto:see.team@balfourbeattyvinci.com)

*Photo credit: HS2*