

# HS2

## HS2 in the West Midlands

Delivering jobs, skills and  
contract opportunities  
across the region

March 2023



# Contents

Foreword	1
Executive summary	2
At a glance	4
New stations, regeneration and connectivity	6
HS2's supply chain	8
What are we buying?	10
Opportunities for local businesses	11
Jobs and skills	12
West Midlands apprenticeship starts	13
Workless job starts in the West Midlands	14
Opportunities for local people	16
Spotlight on Balfour Beatty VINCI	17
Opportunities for young people	19
T-Level placements	20
What now for the West Midlands?	21

## Foreword

The West Midlands is at the heart of Britain's new zero carbon, high-speed railway. HS2 is solidifying the region's position as one of most exciting, dynamic and progressive places in the country, bringing tangible benefits now, long before a single train has started running.

From its inception in 2009, the project has been developed, reviewed and approved in Parliament. We've undertaken an unprecedented programme of earthworks, remediation and the biggest archaeology programme the UK has ever seen. As part of our extensive environmental programme, our ecologists have already planted hundreds of thousands of trees and created over a hundred new habitats for wildlife along the line of route. It's been over two years since our construction partners forged ahead with delivery of Phase One; boring tunnels in Warwickshire, building new bridges near Solihull and constructing viaducts that will carry our state-of-the-art, high-speed trains into the centre of Birmingham.

**“We rightly celebrate progress – but it's important to recognise how we're delivering for local people, businesses and communities right across the West Midlands today.”**

We rightly celebrate progress – but it's important to recognise how we're delivering for local people, businesses and communities right across the West Midlands today. Global events like inflation, caused by the pandemic and war in Ukraine, are not only putting pressure on big projects like HS2, but are affecting people's livelihoods across the country.

Despite the first services being a few years away, HS2 is already building a legacy of jobs, skills and opportunities in the West Midlands region and beyond. Over 1.7 billion pounds worth of contracts have been awarded to West Midlands businesses, hundreds of people have gained new skills and qualifications and over 8,800 local people are already working on the project.

HS2 is committed to delivering positive outcomes for people, places and communities around the UK. As construction accelerates, and momentum on the project continues to build, there is no better time for people, businesses and communities in the West Midlands to become a part of the biggest, most transformative and innovative infrastructure project of this generation.

**Mark Thurston**  
Chief Executive Officer





## Executive summary

# Within a decade, the first state-of-the-art high-speed trains will pull away from our stations, and passengers from across the region will take their maiden trip on High Speed Two.

However, for many businesses, students and workers, their journey with HS2 has already begun – with thousands of job openings, training schemes and contract opportunities generating huge benefits across the West Midlands.

While £21bn worth of tier one contracts have been awarded to UK and Ireland based businesses across the project so far, the impact of this investment is being keenly felt throughout our region. To date, of the £7.8 billion in tier two contracts awarded to suppliers in the UK and Ireland, over £1.7 billion worth of work has been secured by local firms of all sizes, both on and off the line of route.

This economic boost is being experienced in all corners of the West Midlands, with work having been awarded to businesses in Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and the Black Country. As activity continues to ramp up, the scale of these opportunities continues to rise, with hundreds more contracts currently out to tender.

Thousands of West Midlands residents have secured jobs with HS2 and its construction partners – over 8,800 people are working on the project locally, with almost 400 apprenticeships already begun and more than 700 vacancies filled by those who were previously out of work. Located at the very heart of the HS2 network, the region is perfectly placed to benefit throughout the project's 20-year construction programme.

As the drive to attract, train and retain a world-leading workforce continues, HS2 is ramping up its efforts to find talent in new places – holding job fairs across the region, opening applications for the next intake of apprentices and empowering hundreds of workers to gain new qualifications.

**Although it's clear the project is already boosting the regional skills agenda, workforce and economy, it's vital that even more people and businesses seize the opportunities available to them. By continuing to engage with the region's business community, employment agencies and workers, we can secure a lasting legacy – not solely one of carbon-neutral, high-speed rail travel, but of a skilled, prosperous and productive workforce.**

Tunnel boring machine cutter head being lifted into position in Long Itchington, Warwickshire.





## At a glance

# How has the region already benefitted from HS2?

**Jobs and skills**



**8,800**  
people are working on HS2 in the West Midlands

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**729**  
people who were out of work in the region have been helped into jobs on HS2

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**399**  
people who live in the West Midlands have secured apprenticeships with HS2




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**Over 81,000**  
hours of training delivered via Balfour Beatty VINCI skills academies

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**Five**  
further education institutions across the West Midlands have partnered with Balfour Beatty VINCI



**Supply chain**

**£7.8bn** 

of contracts awarded to businesses across the UK\*



**Over £1.7bn** 

of contracts awarded to businesses in the West Midlands\*

\* relates to tier two contracts – providing work and services to HS2 Ltd's tier one delivery partners

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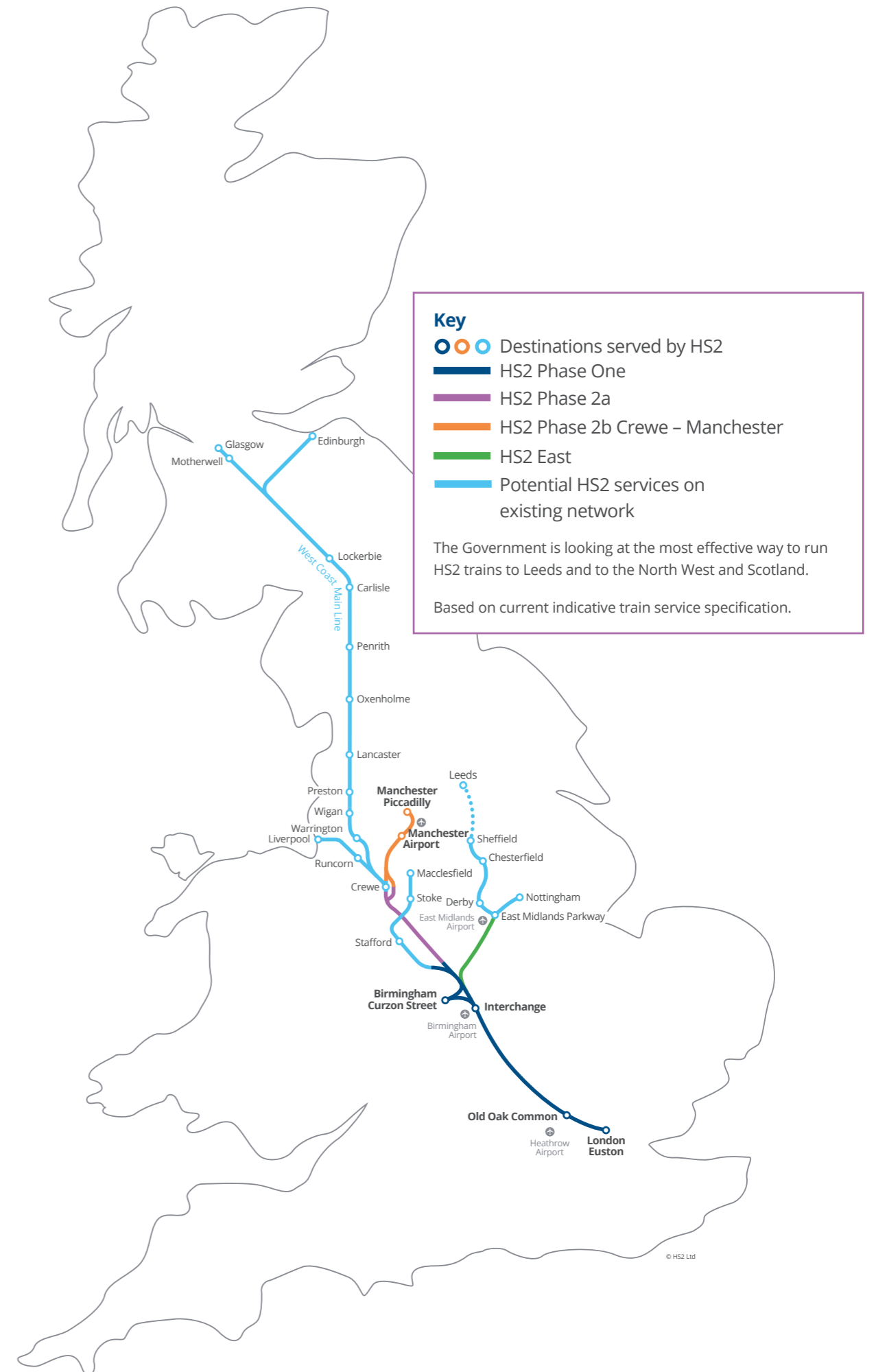


**422**  
businesses in the West Midlands have secured work on HS2 to date

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**6,449**  
West Midlands businesses have signed up to view and access new contract opportunities via CompeteFor



## New stations, regeneration and connectivity

### HS2 will have a transformational impact on the way people work, live and travel across the West Midlands.

The railway will significantly reduce journey times to and from London, the North West, East Midlands and Scotland, while also freeing up space on the conventional rail network for more local services.

As well as running at speeds of up to 225mph on the new high-speed, zero carbon railway, HS2 trains will also connect on to existing lines, boosting connectivity for travellers in Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford.

The impending arrival of HS2 has paved the way for public transport enhancements that will link communities to the high-speed network. For example, enhancements to the West Midlands Metro are either planned or under construction, which will bring trams to Birmingham Curzon Street station, Interchange station, Dudley and Brierley Hill. West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street, is also working alongside Transport for West Midlands and West Midlands Rail Executive to reopen passenger services to local railway stations on the Camp Hill line (calling at Moseley, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road), and on a new network of segregated bus routes, opening up access to HS2.

Work is already underway to build HS2's two brand new railway stations, Curzon Street station in Birmingham City Centre and Interchange station in Solihull, each set to create 1,000 jobs during their construction. In North East Birmingham, the ground is being prepared for an HS2 depot and network integrated control centre at Washwood Heath, where the new fleet of high-speed trains will be maintained, serviced and stored.

### Birmingham Curzon Street station

This state-of-the-art terminus will be at the heart of the region's high-speed rail network. It will catalyse the creation of four new public spaces – including two squares and a promenade – and will be one of the most environmentally-friendly stations ever built.

The station design also improves access to different modes of transport, with the Midland Metro set to run alongside and underneath the station. Work will also be undertaken to improve pedestrian routes to local bus services, install Sprint rapid transit bus services and other local train services, and create space for hundreds of bicycles.

Birmingham City Council's Curzon Investment Plan will see £724 million spent on regenerating the area around the new station. The scheme will take place over 30 years, leading to the creation of several new neighbourhoods across almost 150 hectares, including 4,000 homes and 36,000 jobs.

### Interchange station

Sitting on a 140-hectare site in Solihull, Interchange station will be one of the best connected places in the UK thanks to its links to local roads, the UK motorway network and its direct access to the NEC, Birmingham Airport and Birmingham International station via an automated people mover.

The station design focuses on sustainability and will be built to achieve a 'BREEAM outstanding' certification, meaning it will generate zero carbon emissions in its day-to-day operations.

Having prompted the creation of huge growth plans in the surrounding area, HS2 is working alongside Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority, local landowners, Muse Developments, and the Urban Growth Company as they develop plans to create a thriving community for residents, businesses and visitors, building up to 3,000 new homes and six million square feet of commercial space.

## £724m

will be spent on regenerating the area around the new station

## 6,000,000 sq ft

of commercial space

## up to 3,000

new homes will be built

Artist's impression of Birmingham Curzon Street station.

Artist's impression of Interchange station.





# HS2's supply chain

## £1.7 billion worth of tier two contracts have been awarded to West Midlands businesses.

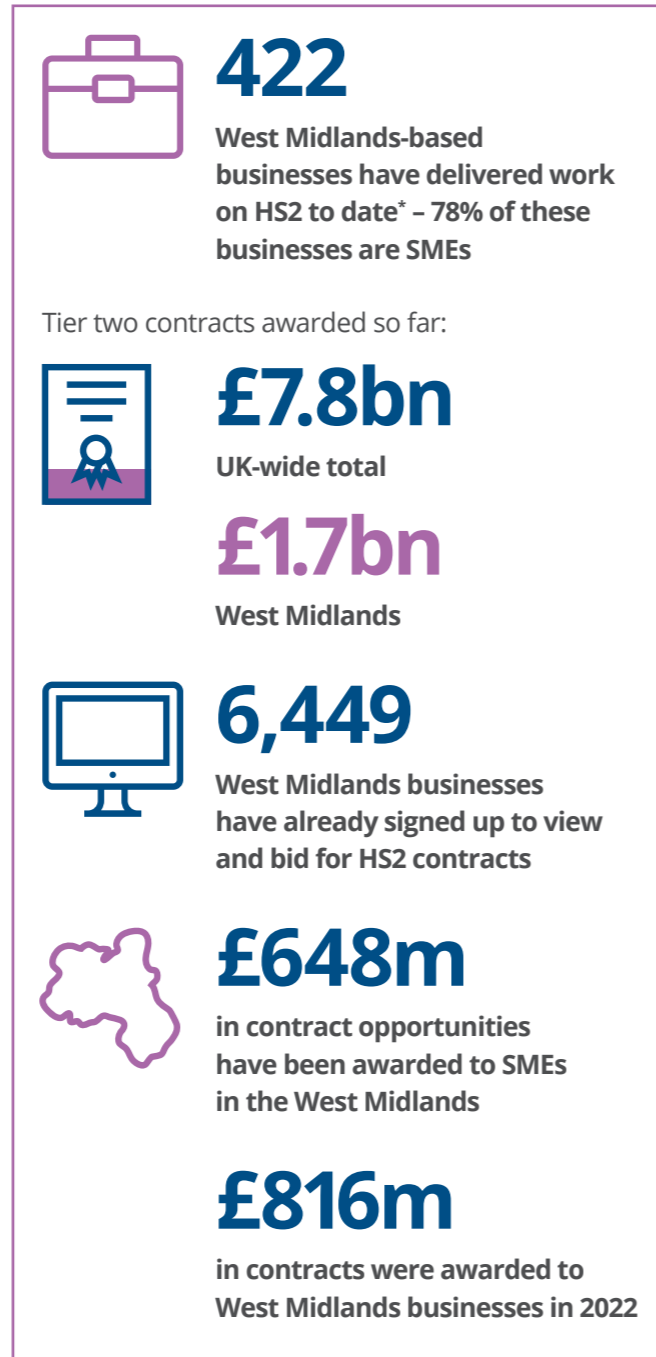
Building HS2 is a mammoth undertaking. Phase One of the project alone will include the construction of four brand new stations, two major depots, 32 miles of tunnel, nine miles of viaduct and 140 bridges. This activity is expected to generate a total of 400,000 contracts, with billions of pounds worth of opportunities set to flow into the wider supply chain.

The project's delivery relies on a network of partners and suppliers, who are working with HS2 Ltd and its delivery bodies to provide a vast range of services, including groundworks, archaeology, technology systems, and the manufacturing of parts, components and personal protective equipment.

A project of this size comes with its challenges, but also presents unparalleled opportunities – particularly for local businesses. Over £21bn worth of long-term contracts have been awarded to tier one suppliers across the UK so far – the construction companies and joint ventures tasked with delivering HS2. This investment is finding its way to local businesses in the supply chain – more than £1.7 billion worth of work (tier two contracts) has been secured by firms in the West Midlands, contracts that are allowing businesses to retain and employ new staff, expand their operations and purchase new plant and machinery. A total of 422 businesses in the West Midlands have been awarded work on HS2 across the whole supply chain (tier one, two, three and four).

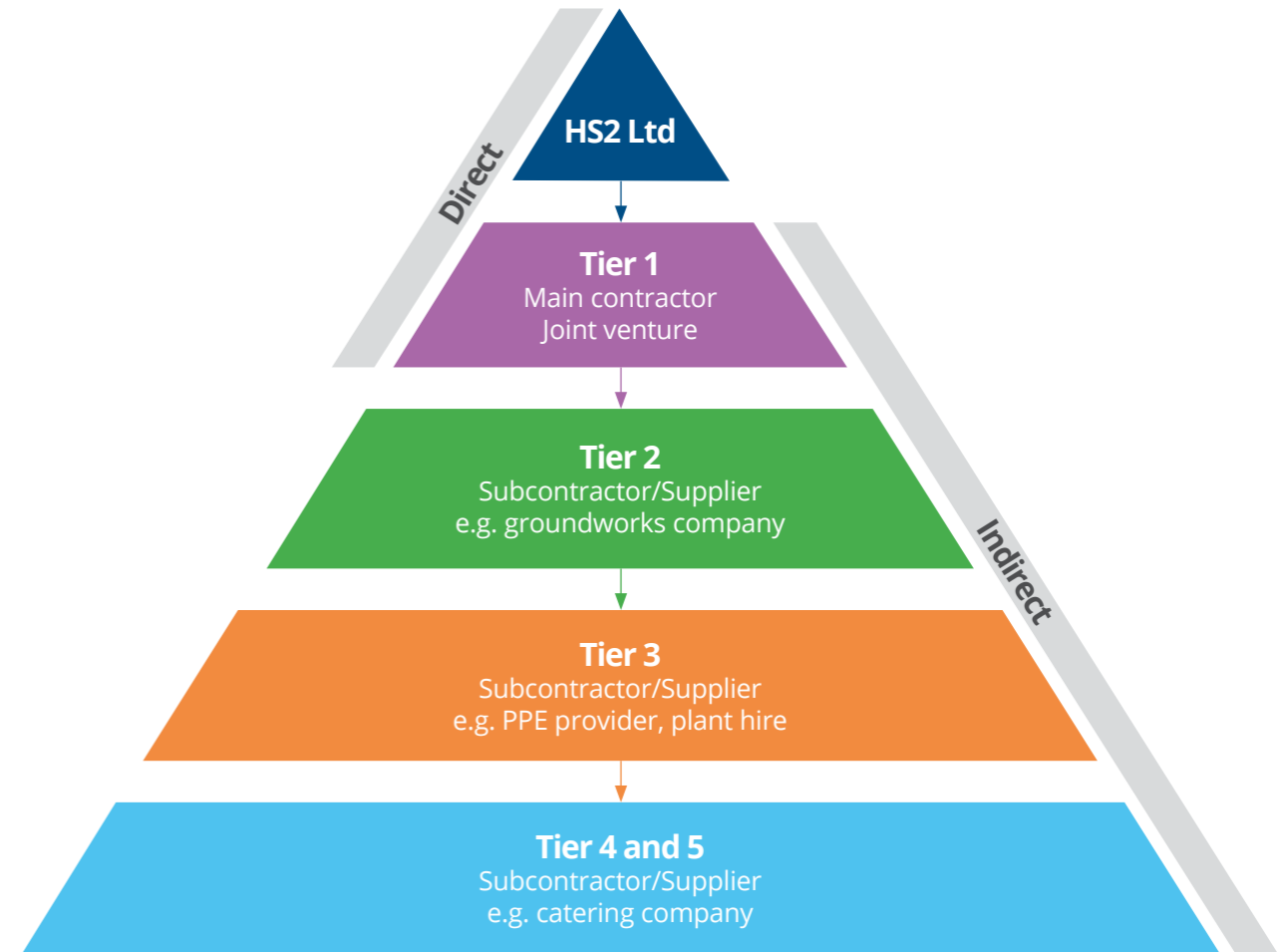
At a time where economic turbulence is negatively impacting business confidence, securing work on HS2 is a big boost for firms of all sizes, with many organisations going on to secure repeat contracts.

For several years, HS2 Ltd has been supporting businesses to get 'HS2 ready', holding events and roadshows to help them meet the environmental and reporting standards required to secure work on the project. To date, 6,449 businesses in the West Midlands have signed up to the CompeteFor platform to gain access to and bid for HS2 contracts.



With another decade of construction planned on Phase One alone, and the Government being committed to building HS2 all the way to Manchester, now is the perfect time for businesses to seize upon the contract opportunities provided by Europe's largest infrastructure project. For many, these opportunities will be a springboard for expansion, innovation and sustained business growth.

\* Tier 1 and 2 contracts



### The supply chain; explained

HS2 Ltd is the Government-owned company created to deliver the UK's new high-speed railway. It employs contractors (many have set up partnerships called joint ventures) to build the railway. Different joint ventures have been given the responsibility to build different sections of the railway, its stations and the high-speed trains that will run on its tracks.

As well as awarding tier one contracts to its joint ventures, HS2 is also creating billions of pounds worth of contract opportunities for thousands of businesses across the UK further down in its supply chain, including hundreds of firms in the West Midlands.

HS2's network of supply chain businesses is working together to build the railway. These businesses are diverse, offer a wide variety of specialist products and services and, in combination, are delivering one of the most complex feats of engineering the UK has ever seen.

## What are we buying?

### Design and services

Professional partners, professional services and design services.



### Civil engineering

Enabling Works and Main Works, including archaeology, ecology, demolition, earthworks (tunnels cuttings and embankments) drainage, bridges, viaducts and other structures.



### Stations

#### Phase One

- Euston
- Old Oak Common
- Birmingham Interchange
- Curzon Street

#### Phase Two

- Manchester Airport
- Manchester Piccadilly



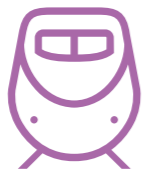
### Railway systems

Includes track, overhead wires, telecommunications, traction power, signalling and mechanical and electrical systems.



### Rolling stock

The rolling stock (trains) that will carry passengers on Phase One of HS2, including initial maintenance. Rolling stock for Phase Two will follow at a later stage.



### Corporate

Commercial services, assurance and regulatory services, alongside a diverse range of business support contracts.



**There are hundreds of contract opportunities available for local businesses interested in working with HS2 Ltd and its construction partners.**

Visit [competefor.com/hs2](https://competefor.com/hs2) to find out more.

## Opportunities for local businesses...

"We kicked off our partnership with HS2 almost as soon as major construction started, and since then it's gone from strength to strength. We've worked on the Colne Valley viaduct and tunnelling sites in West Ruislip, but securing a contract on site at Curzon Street, where our region's new high-speed station is being built, was pretty special.

"Our team of engineers and site teams are installing foundations to support the viaduct that will carry trains into the city centre. As well as creating strong supports for each of the 54 piers that will brace the viaduct, we're also supplying moulds that these piers (or concrete pillars) will be set in. It's precise work and follows on from many years of experience that we've gained working on major infrastructure projects across the globe, including Crossrail, Birmingham New Street station, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Dubai Metro and Zhuhai Macao Road Bridge in Hong Kong.

"Like most businesses in the construction industry, the COVID-19 pandemic was tough for us – projects were delayed during lockdown and we were unsure when demand would recover. Securing work with HS2 has helped us to bounce back even stronger – our headcount is steadily growing, and we're looking to recruit for various roles. The added certainty these contracts have provided has allowed us to invest in more equipment as demand for our services and solutions grows, as well as support our employees with their growth and development.

“

**We're proud of our 85-year heritage as a Black Country business and it's fantastic to employ local people to work on this historic project. With construction continuing over the coming years, it's a really exciting time for us, and we hope to continue to play an important role in building our new high-speed railway."**

**Mark Pickard**

Managing Director at Altrad RMD Kwikform based in Aldridge, Walsall

...like  
**Mark's**



## Jobs and skills

### The construction of HS2 will show the world the very best of British skills, innovation and ambition.

From engineers to labourers, analysts and archaeologists, HS2 Ltd and its construction partners have engaged, trained and employed almost 30,000 people. Currently, over 8,800 people are employed in HS2's construction across the West Midlands.

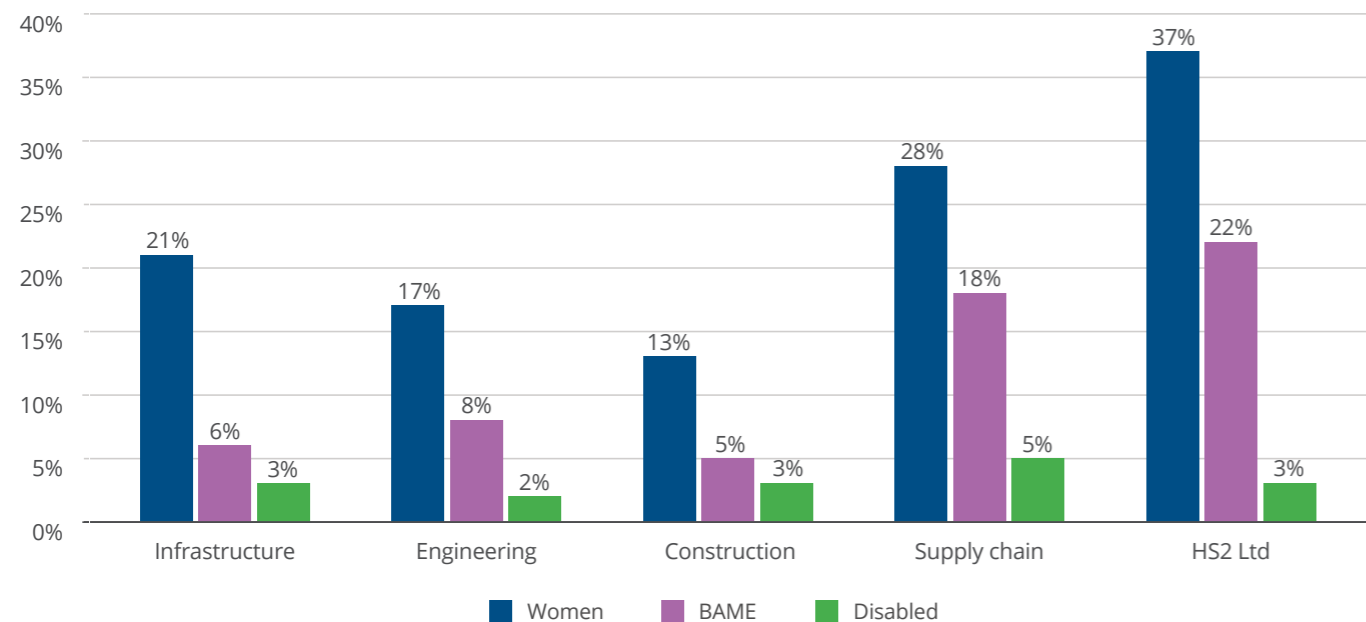
HS2 is nothing without its workforce and efforts to find, train, and retain new talent remain a priority. So far, 399 apprenticeships have been started by West Midlands-based employees and 729 people who were previously unemployed have secured work on HS2. Over a third of all apprentices working on HS2 are based in the West Midlands.

Training and development opportunities are available for workers of all ages, from pioneering T-level courses for college students, work placements for undergraduates, apprenticeships for post-graduates and professional training, apprenticeship and accreditation courses for employees of all ages.

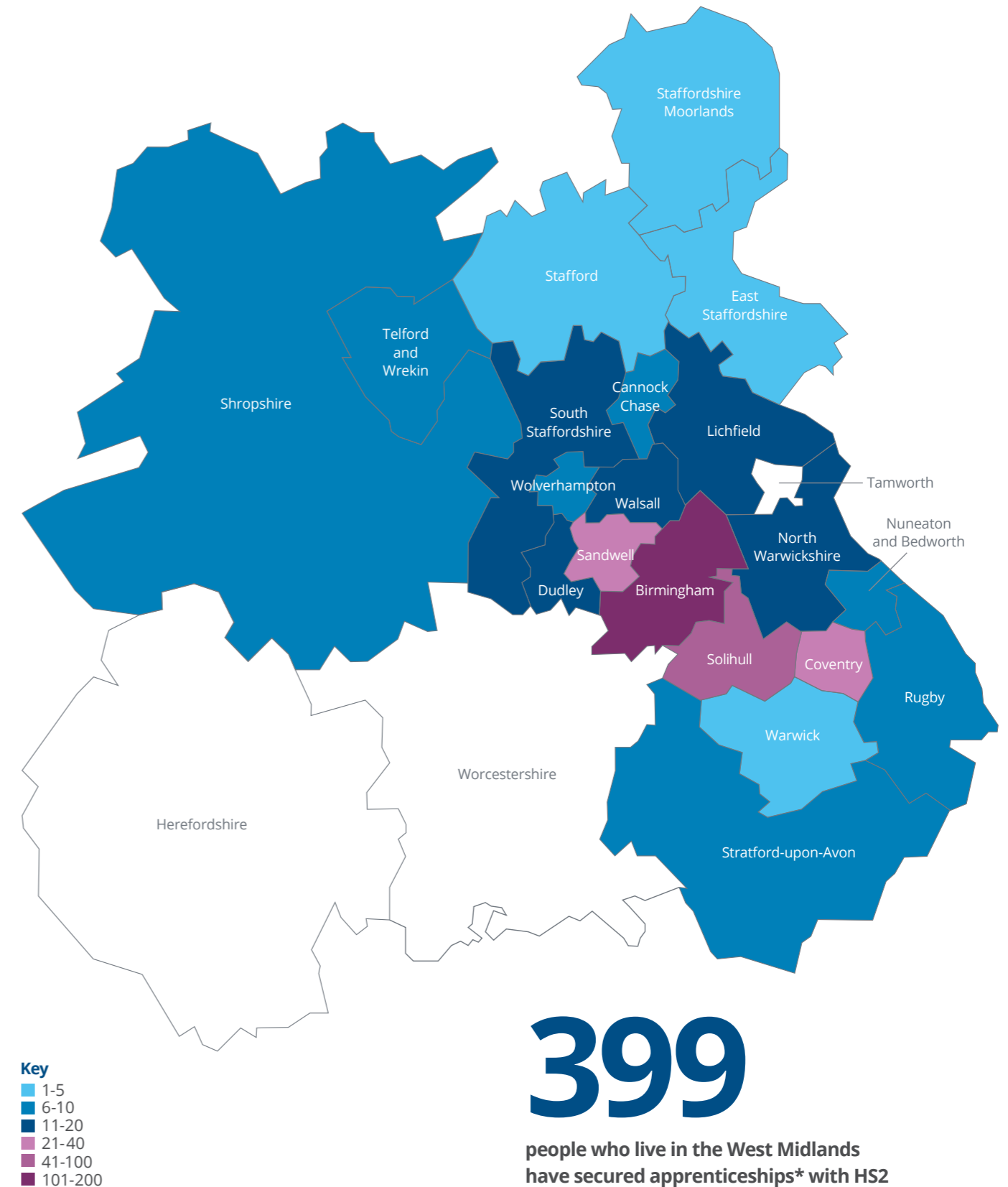
This multi-pronged approach to training and talent attraction is central to HS2's commitment to securing a diverse workforce – while there is still more work to be done, HS2 is proud that its direct employee base and that of its construction partners are made up of a significantly higher proportion of women and BAME workers than the industry average.



### Workforce diversity sector averages



## West Midlands apprenticeship starts – to date



\* Apprentices that have started and been active in their apprenticeships for more than 12 weeks



# Workless job starts in the West Midlands – to date



# 729

workless job starts\* in the West Midlands

- Key**
- 1-5
  - 6-10
  - 11-20
  - 21-40
  - 41-60
  - 61-80
  - 81-100
  - 101-200
  - 201-300

\* Employees of HS2 and its construction partners that were previously not in work and have been in employment for more than 26 weeks

Earthworks at Bromford Tunnel site, Water Orton, Warwickshire.



# Opportunities for local people...

“Working on HS2 has been life-changing for me. I was a labourer for a domestic builder on and off for about 10 years, taking on jobs in warehouses to tide me over – picking, packing and forklift driving, that sort of thing. I was getting by, but when my boss at the building company had a period of bad health, the jobs dried up and I spent a while out of work. For the first time ever, with this opportunity in hand, I feel like I have a career, not just a job.

**“I thought that qualifications were for people in their teens and 20s, and that for someone in their 40s, the opportunities were limited. I now know that’s not true.”**

In the past year with HS2, I've got my CSCS card, traffic marshal ticket and abrasive tools ticket, meaning I can use power tools on-site. I've also gained an EUSR card and telescopic handler licence. In the meantime, I go to the Balfour Beatty VINCI Skills Academy one day a week where I'm studying an apprenticeship in groundworks.

The rest of the time, I work on-site at Washwood Heath, paving the way for the new maintenance depot that is being built here. No two days look the same – I can be concreting and pipe-laying one day, and putting up fencing or block paving the next. Being out on site is a real change of pace and something I should have done years ago.

The list of things I've learned is ever-expanding. If anyone's curious about whether a job at HS2 is for them, I'd say, just go for it. I work alongside men and women of all ages, people who were made redundant from office jobs and people who were long-term unemployed. The amount you put in is the amount you get out, and I couldn't recommend it enough.

There are still so many things I want to learn and try, and one day, I'd like to take on more responsibility as a site supervisor. If you apply yourself here, listen and learn, the sky is genuinely the limit.”

...like  
**Anthony**

Anthony Jordan, 42, works on HS2 through Balfour Beatty Vinci's labour supply partner, Danny Sullivan Group.



## Spotlight on Balfour Beatty VINCI

In the West Midlands, HS2's construction partner Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV) has helped hundreds of local people to secure work on the 56 mile (90km) section of the railway it is building between Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

So far, BBV has attended over 200 engagement events in partnership with colleges, councils and job centres, identifying, speaking to and following up with 755 people interested in working on the project.

BBV's network of skills academies are supporting people across the region, providing them with the training and skills they need to start a new career, and the accreditations they need to progress in their existing roles.

The Kingsbury Skills Academy, which opened its doors in February 2022, focuses on upskilling employees already working on HS2. Since opening, over 63,000 hours of training and 8,125 courses have already been delivered from its indoor and outdoor facilities, which include an off-road, 4x4 driver safety range.

Its skills academy in Bordesley Green, operated in partnership with South and City College Birmingham, opened in November 2021 and was set up to upskill members of the community who are currently out of work. It allows trainees to gain the accreditations they need to work on a construction site, as well as providing paid, on-the-job work placements.

Following the success of further education training at Bordesley Green, BBV has now joined forces with Birmingham Metropolitan College, Solihull College and University Centre, City of Wolverhampton College and Warwickshire College Group to reach trainees from across the West Midlands. Collectively, this programme aims to train at least 600 new recruits, who will then progress on to a paid work trial.

So far, the scheme has trained 176 unemployed residents from across the region. Participants have gained 483 accreditations through 14 fully customised training programmes focused on preparing them for roles across the project, including becoming a general operative, environmental technician, document control assistant and information management trainee. In total, 18,318 hours of training have been delivered.

### BBV skills, employment and education events (to 31 January 2023)

Area	Events	Attendees	Expressions of interest	Follow ups
Birmingham	92	3,063	503	503
Coventry	11	235	16	16
Lichfield	10	133	25	25
Sandwell	1	41	6	6
Solihull	35	1,205	105	105
Stafford	1	39	1	1
Walsall	8	191	19	19
Warwickshire	20	283	58	58
Wolverhampton	12	169	28	28
Virtual	20	145	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>5,504</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>755</b>

**The scale of opportunities available on local work sites and offices continues to grow. A full overview of the jobs and training opportunities currently available across the West Midlands can be found here:**

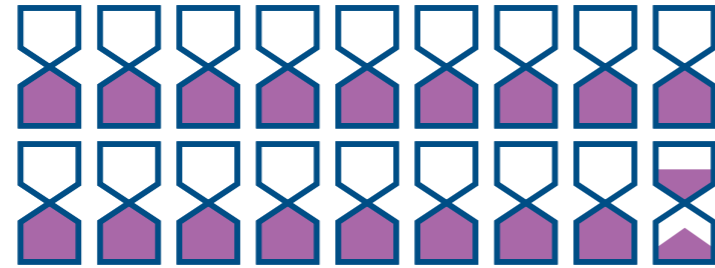
[hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills](https://hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills)



Training for unemployed West Midlands residents

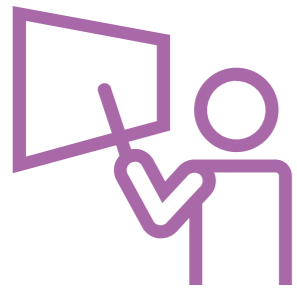
**18,318**

hours of training delivered via the Bordesley Green Skills Academy and partner further education institutions



**176**

unemployed residents have received training



**5**

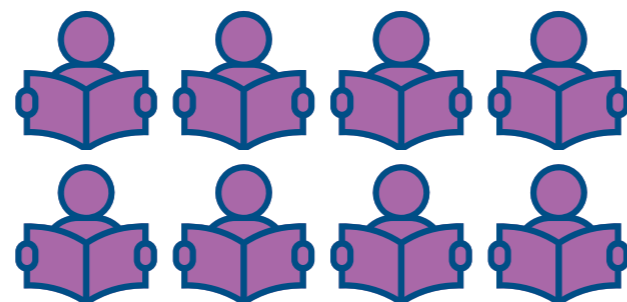
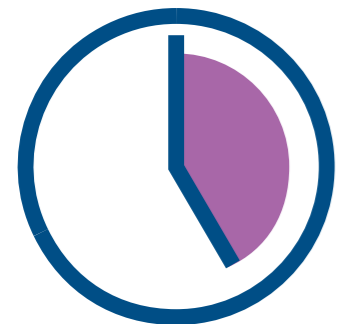
BBV has forged partnerships with five further education institutions across the West Midlands through its community-based skills academies



Training for employees who have secured work on HS2

**Over 63,000**

hours of training delivered at The Kingsbury Skills Academy



**8,125**

courses undertaken, including supervisor induction training, first aid and 4x4 driving

Opportunities for young people...

As a young person, the idea of settling on a career path – what you want to do, who for, and how to get there, can feel daunting. I was inspired to pursue a career in construction by my mum. She works in publishing, but a few years ago fulfilled a life-long dream of having our family home completely rebuilt, to her own design.

For nine months, we lived in a mobile home on-site, and I watched our new house being built from the ground up. Speaking to the builders, seeing what they were doing and asking questions was enough to get me hooked. I learned about T-levels through my school, and when I found out I could do a construction-led course at Walsall College, going out to work on HS2, Europe's biggest infrastructure project, I knew I had to secure a place.

This course has shown me what it really means to work in construction. I've been pushed out of my comfort zone and learnt to thrive in a professional environment – mixing classroom-based learning with being in an office and on site. So far, I've shadowed site managers, seen the work that goes into preparing the ground for tunnelling and designed the roof for a slurry treatment plant at Long Itchington in Warwickshire. Doing the calculations, selecting the materials and finalising

the design was a great learning experience – but afterwards the design was approved and then the design was approved and built, which was pretty amazing.

Working on a project like HS2, with the support of the team at Balfour Beatty VINCI, I feel like I'm one step ahead. Looking back to my T-level interview, and how nervous I was, I've come on so much since then. I'm already interviewing for apprenticeships that start after the course finishes in May, and I feel so much more comfortable within myself. I have real experience to draw upon and I've taken confidence from working alongside my mentors in a professional environment.

**“ I don't know what the future holds, but I do know I now have the skills, experience and confidence I need to get to where I want to be. There's a job in construction for everyone, and I can't wait to find mine.”**

...like **Charlotte**

Charlotte, 17, is studying a T-level in Design, Planning and Architecture at Walsall College, completing practical placements with HS2 contractor, Balfour Beatty VINCI.

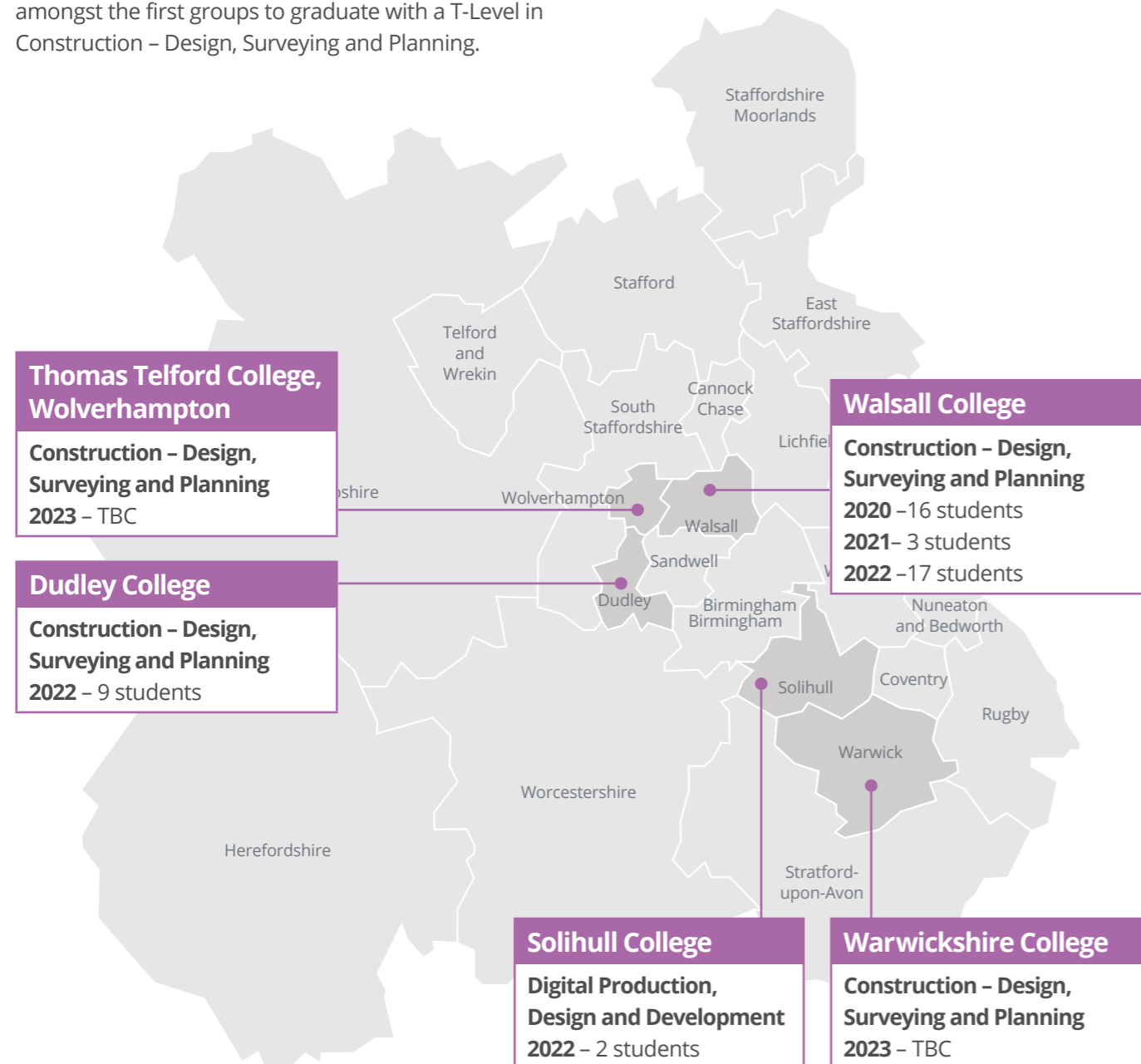


## T-Level placements

# Balfour Beatty VINCI's partnerships with local colleges are providing training to the next generation of talent.

In 2020, it collaborated with Walsall College to give 16 students a 45-day placement working on HS2 that would account for 20% of their overall T-Level grade – a new technical qualification. In 2022, all 16 students passed both the placement and theory elements of their course (10 distinctions, six merits), making them amongst the first groups to graduate with a T-Level in Construction – Design, Surveying and Planning.

Since then, alongside a continued partnership with Walsall College, students at Dudley College and Solihull College have been offered work placements, with plans underway to widen T-Level placements out to Thomas Telford College in Wolverhampton and Warwickshire College in 2023.



## What now for the West Midlands?

The benefits that HS2 has already brought to people, places and businesses across the West Midlands are considerable. However, with work set to ramp up further, there are huge opportunities for people to gain new skills, training and jobs, and for businesses to grasp new contracts as progress accelerates.

### For individuals

There are hundreds of jobs, work placements and training opportunities available, working either for HS2 Ltd or one of its delivery partners.

[hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills](https://hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills)

### For businesses

Businesses interested in working with HS2 can access our supplier guide, which includes more information on the type of contract opportunities available, how to engage with us, and how to access support when bidding for contracts, here:

[hs2.org.uk/about-us/our-documents/hs2-supplier-guide](https://hs2.org.uk/about-us/our-documents/hs2-supplier-guide)

There are a wealth of contract opportunities already out to tender, that local businesses can view and bid for via HS2's CompeteFor procurement platform. Register for updates and view open contracts, here:

[competefor.com/hs2](https://competefor.com/hs2)

Transport Secretary, Mark Harper MP, inside a tunnel at Long Itchington Wood site, Warwickshire.



HS2 is committed to analysing and showcasing the impact it is having across the West Midlands region and will continue to do so over the coming years. For a comprehensive overview of HS2 in the West Midlands, including personal stories from suppliers, employees and trainees, visit

[hs2.org.uk/hs2inthewestmidlands](https://hs2.org.uk/hs2inthewestmidlands)



# HS2

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