

# HS2

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report

2023 – 2024







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Front cover image: Section engineer pictured with Tunnelcraft apprentices in front of the Bromford tunnel boring machine, Mary Ann.



# Foreword



Joanna Davinson.

**“  
We aspire to create an inclusive  
and safe culture where people are  
able to progress and be their best.”**

I am delighted to take on my new role as board champion for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at HS2 Ltd, and to introduce the latest annual report on our progress on this important part of the project's legacy.

As the UK's largest infrastructure project, we have the opportunity and the scale to set new EDI standards across the industry. We are ambitious about attracting diverse people who are new to construction and engineering, and we aspire to create an inclusive and safe culture where people are able to progress and be their best.

This year's report shares how we have found new ways to develop, support and retain our talented and diverse workforce. New programmes are helping people to thrive at work. The report also describes how we champion inclusive leadership and how we are exceeding industry averages in terms of female and ethnic minority representation in our workforce.

Similar progress is being made across our extensive supply chain. As we are in HS2's peak construction phase, this year's report focuses on our main works civils contractors and their excellent approaches to creating inclusive cultures. The case studies shared in this report demonstrate how seriously our supply chain takes all of its EDI responsibilities, and showcases some of the individuals who are furthering their careers and learning new skills that are in short supply across the wider industry.

As board champion, I will support HS2 to maintain the great momentum made on EDI to date, while encouraging the project to strive to do even better, including helping us address long-standing issues such as diverse senior representation and attracting diverse people into all levels of the industry. I look forward to building my knowledge, seeing our impact and supporting everyone to deliver continued progress – and industry-leading change – as we build Britain's new high-speed railway.

**Joanna Davinson**

Non-executive director



# Introduction



Shira Johnson.

Our annual equality, diversity and inclusion report shares how we are delivering on our Equality Act duties. We are leading the industry in this important area, and I am proud to share our achievements over the past 12 months on Britain's biggest build.

Note: The information in this report represents activities delivered between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. All data referring to HS2 Ltd relates to HS2 Ltd employees only, which includes the following staff types: permanent, fixed term contracts, apprentices and graduates. Where specifically indicated, data may refer to core staff which includes the categories above plus agency interim staff, development partner, engineering delivery partner and commercial secondees.

HS2 is at peak construction, with more than 31,000 people working to design and build the high-speed railway. Attracting and retaining diverse and talented people is critical to our success and allows us to achieve our goals. The diverse and skilled workforce we are building will benefit the construction, infrastructure and rail industries for years to come.

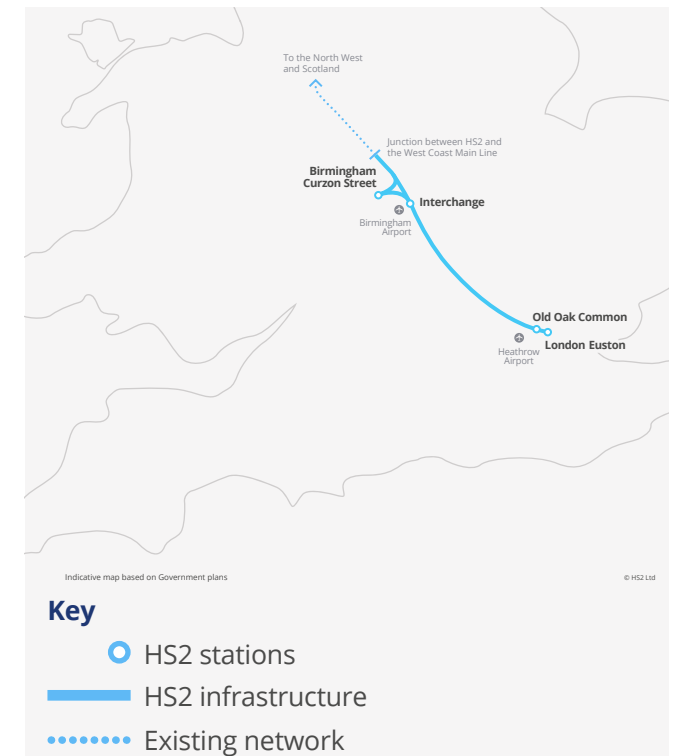
We have achieved important workforce milestones in 2023 – 2024. Over 1,600 apprentices have now joined the project and over 4,500 people who were previously not in employment have started work with HS2 Ltd. There are more than 350 active construction sites between Birmingham and London, where many people new to the construction industry are learning new skills and building their careers.

This report shares our key equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) achievements. Part One describes how we set the standard for our supply chain and the wider industry. It outlines our aspirations to significantly exceed industry benchmarks for workforce diversity. This section also looks at how we lead the way through our inclusive approaches to recruitment, engagement and talent development.

In Part Two, we share how our supply chain is changing the industry with diverse and inclusive teams working across the route. Part Three covers our commitment to inclusive design and safe and inclusive operations, with case studies to bring this to life. Finally, Part Four describes how we make sure we respect the diverse people and places close to the railway construction sites.

## Shira Johnson

Chief people officer, HS2 Ltd





# Equality, diversity and inclusion in 2023 – 2024 at a glance



## 38%

of HS2 Ltd workforce is female.



## 38%

of the HS2 Ltd executive leadership team is female and 33% of directors are female.



## 29%

of the HS2 Ltd workforce has an ethnic minority background, exceeding our corporate target of 23%.



## 8

Staff networks support the improvement of EDI.



## 23%

of HS2 Ltd staff successfully received reasonable adjustments in the workplace.



Clear Assured Platinum status retained.



Disability Confident Employer.



## £44.1m

spent with diverse owned suppliers.

Part One

# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024

**We seek to set new standards for our industry, benefitting the UK for decades to come by addressing national skills gaps and building a new, more diverse construction and infrastructure workforce. This section explains how we are improving our inclusive recruitment and retention processes and practices, how we monitor staff progression and pay gaps, how we engage our staff and seek their views, and how we support and develop our talent.**

## Inclusive leadership

Inclusive leadership is a key part of how we build and maintain a culture where our people feel safe and are able to be their best at work. Our approach includes:

- a board sponsor for EDI, Joanna Davinson.
- an executive leadership team (ELT) sponsor for all eight of our staff networks, to provide strategic guidance on aligning HS2 Ltd annual priorities, with those of our networks, and to provide senior visibility and advocacy.
- an EDI goal in all staff annual objectives, with a bespoke library of goals, which is refreshed annually, for our ELT and our senior leadership team (SLT) focused on championing inclusivity and challenging bias;
- training for our senior leaders focused on evidence-based decision making; and
- our reverse mentoring programme that pairs SLT members with a mentor to help them better understand the issues that are important to our staff, as well as the lived experience of a junior colleague.



Emma Head, HS2 Ltd's chief railway officer.



BBV supporting women in construction.



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### Inclusive leadership case study: leadership values week

Our values are integral to who we are, and since 2020 we have brought to life what our values mean for our people through quarterly values weeks. Each values week highlights one of our four values: leadership, integrity, safety and respect. In January 2024, our leadership values week saw over 1,400 people take part in the following four events.

- **Why am I proud to work at HS2?** This event showcased our leaders as they highlighted their proudest moments working at HS2 Ltd from interventions and support to family-friendly policies or learnings from reverse mentoring.
- **Leading on your performance.** We shared help and guidance on taking the lead on working more efficiently.
- **What does exceptional leadership mean to me?** Our eight EDI network chairs and members led a panel on what an inspirational leader looks like for them, allyship in leadership and how leaders have affected their personal journeys and growth.
- **Maintaining a positive outlook during challenging times.** Our occupational health provider shared strategies for nurturing resilience and maintaining a positive mindset.

### Our values award winners



#### Integrity Award Joanne Brown, senior third party agreements manager

Jo worked diligently to solve a funding dispute on behalf of HS2 Ltd which resulted in the release of funds for work carried out whilst HS2 Ltd undertook Curzon Street enabling works.



#### Leadership Award Shindi Kaur, head of HR

Shindi championed a Women of Colour in Leadership programme which provided tailored support to our top diverse talent.



#### Respect Award Laura Branningan, assistant project manager

Laura provided exceptional leadership and support as a facilitator for the Women in Construction programme.



#### Safety Award Fiona Bird, community engagement advisor – Helpdesk

Fiona showed exceptional professionalism and composure in a critical situation that could have posed significant risk to a distressed stakeholder's safety. She acted swiftly and helped coordinate emergency services support to resolve the issue.

### Our guiding values

#### Integrity



Acting fairly, transparently and consistently. That means using the powers we've been given wisely; acknowledging the impact of the HS2 programme; and doing the right thing, even in difficult circumstances.

#### Leadership



Using innovation and challenging to lead by example. That means making the most of the unique opportunity HS2 offers; having clear direction to deliver excellence; and setting new standards for mega-projects.

#### Respect



Understanding others, recognising their value and behaving accordingly. That means listening and being open-minded; explaining decisions clearly; working flexibly; and appreciating the impact of our actions.

#### Safety



Caring for our workforce, passengers and the public by creating an environment where no one gets hurt. That means making safety our first consideration and speaking up and intervening if something is unsafe.





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Workforce diversity: gender

We are working to achieve greater gender diversity across our workforce at HS2 Ltd.

We maintained our challenging and aspirational corporate target of 40% representation for 2023/24, achieving 38% this year. We will continue to strive towards a better gender balance to achieve our KPI.

Our internal talent and development team provide programmes and initiatives to support the development of female talent. We continue to collaborate with our gender balance staff network to develop events and programmes that share the experiences of women in our workforce and industry and highlight how we can continue to develop the culture within our organisation.

In 2023/24, we focused on enhancing our recruitment and retention strategies at directorate level – particularly focusing on the celebration and promotion of our internal female talent – offering opportunities to develop, enhance skills through initiatives such as coaching and both traditional and reverse mentoring. This will help us ensure that our talent pipeline has female representation across all disciplines.

We have newly formed directorates this year which at the end of the financial year 2023-24 show gender distribution as follows:

Directorates	Male %	Female %
<b>Phase Two</b>	45	54
<b>External Affairs</b>	53	44
<b>People, Organisation and Community</b>	45	54
<b>Chief Finance Officer</b>	58	41
<b>Systems</b>	59	39
<b>Railway</b>	71	27
<b>Civils</b>	72	27
<b>Stations</b>	76	21

Roles	Male %	Female %
<b>Directors</b>	67	33
<b>Senior technical/functional lead</b>	72	24
<b>Head of function</b>	77	22
<b>Senior manager</b>	67	31
<b>Manager</b>	54	46
<b>Adviser</b>	46	52
<b>Assistant</b>	36	61

Note: We have a small number of staff who prefer not to share their gender, and those who 'prefer not to say' are excluded from the table. This means not all directorates and grades have 100% gender representation in the figures shown.

Directorates cannot be directly compared this year against 2022/23, as organisational change has meant that some functions have merged, and new ones have been created.

# 38%

of the HS2 Ltd executive are women.

# 33%

of our directors are women.

# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### Developing our female leaders

We introduced a new leadership development programme, Empower, to help talented women across HS2 Ltd overcome challenges, lead authentically and progress in their careers.

Following the programme, 82% of the attendees said they were likely to take on additional responsibilities in their roles in the next three years, and 100% ended the programme feeling energised to give more to the organisation.

Women who took part in Empower said:

“**This programme has changed the way that I think and consider how I am at work. It has encouraged me to think more deeply about how I work as well as the work I do.**”

“**I think HS2 will benefit from me being better able to articulate my views and ‘stand on firm ground’ when faced with opposition, rather than potentially acquiesce to those more senior. I think I will be a better, more grounded leader.**”



Leadership celebration event with delegates from Women of Colour in Leadership programme and Empower – Leadership for Women.



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### **Sarah Chaudry, chief of staff**

Sarah has been at HS2 Ltd for seven years. She was previously head of civils integration supporting integration across the four main works integrated project teams, particularly how civils will handover to rail systems on the West Midlands – London route. Before this, she was a senior business manager and worked on projects including the HS2 Improvement Programme and negotiated contracts to make sure we achieved Notice to Proceed with main works construction in 2020.

Sarah was part of the Empower leadership programme in 2023, and in early 2024 she was appointed chief of staff. In her new role, Sarah supports the HS2 executive team in the effective management and coordination of the business and the HS2 programme. She also delivers priority projects and identifies, escalates and manages strategic programme risks and issues.

“

**This is a huge year for HS2 as we are at peak construction in civils and expect to award around £5 billion worth of rail systems contracts. I'm looking forward to playing my part in keeping this momentum going, providing value for money and delivering on our organisational priorities.”**

**Sarah Chaudry**  
Chief of staff



Sarah Chaudry.



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Workforce diversity: ethnicity

We have set a challenging corporate target of 23% for ethnic minority diversity in our workforce at HS2 Ltd. As with gender, this is a target that sets our aspirations considerably above industry standards.

We have surpassed our ethnic minority target with workforce representation at 29% in 2023/24. This has improved from 24% in 2022/23.

Having exceeded our target for ethnic minority employees for the second year running, we have continued to collaborate with our REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) network, celebrating key events like Black History Month and Race Equality Week to showcase our colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds and encourage allyship across all levels at HS2 Ltd.

Despite our achievements in EDI, we acknowledge that there is more we can do to improve the representation of ethnically diverse colleagues. Over the next three years we will prioritise the following.

- A focus on aiming to increase the number of senior positions held by colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Continue to use data to target training and support, so that recruitment, talent, and performance outcomes are evidence-based.
- Ensure our diverse talent pipeline is supported and developed with a range of high-quality learning and development opportunities.

Ethnic minority representation in directorates in 2023 – 2024, as well as representation across grades, is set out in the following tables:

Directorates	White %	Ethnic minority %	
<b>Chief Finance Officer</b>	62	33	
<b>People, Organisation and Communities</b>	67	32	
<b>Phase Two</b>	62	31	
<b>Civils</b>	66	30	
<b>Systems Delivery</b>	66	26	
<b>Stations Delivery</b>	70	23	
<b>Railway</b>	72	22	
<b>External Affairs</b>	74	22	

Seniority level (grades)	White %	Ethnic minority %	Change from 22/23
<b>Director</b>	83	0	0
<b>Senior technical/functional lead</b>	85	7	-6
<b>Head of function</b>	85	8	+1
<b>Senior manager</b>	65	25	+4
<b>Manager</b>	54	38	+7
<b>Adviser</b>	53	42	+7
<b>Assistant</b>	60	38	+3

Note: We have a small number of staff who prefer not to share their ethnicity, and those who 'prefer not to say' are excluded from the table. This means not all directorates and grades have 100% ethnicity representation in the figures shown.

Directorates cannot be directly compared this year against 2022/23, as organisational change has meant that some functions have merged, and new ones have been created.





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### Leadership and our staff networks

All of our staff networks have an executive sponsor. They provide strategic guidance and support, and this is one of the ways our leaders show visible allyship for diverse staff at HS2 Ltd.

The REACH network promotes and celebrates ethnic minority staff and is a network for everyone interested in a range of cultures and religions. The network explores issues and opportunities to improve inclusive recruitment and promote career progression for diverse talent so that our workforce represents the diverse communities in which we operate.

Alan Foster, our chief financial officer, became the new executive sponsor of the REACH Network in 2023. In this he is supported by Meredith Boden, head of programme integration delivery. As a long-term supporter of REACH, Meredith has supported Alan in his first year as sponsor.



Alan Foster.

**“ I have learnt a lot at the REACH events that I have attended – both from the events presenters but also crucially from the questions and stories shared by attendees. This initial engagement has really whetted my appetite of what we can achieve together in 2024/25.”**

**Alan Foster**  
Chief financial officer



Meredith Boden.

**“ The energy and ideas members bring to our race diversity network are truly inspiring. They've built a strong foundation of mutual support, sharing experiences, and fostering a space for learning from diverse perspectives. It's empowering to see how they champion inclusion, both personally and professionally.”**

**Meredith Boden**  
Head of programme integration

# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### Developing our future leaders

We aim to achieve better representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds in senior roles. To achieve more diversity at senior levels, we are investing in developing our talented managers so that they are prepared for more senior roles when these become available.

In 2023, we introduced a Women of Colour in Leadership programme to help a talented cohort of women from ethnic minority backgrounds build confidence, learn new tools and techniques and network.



Women of Colour in Leadership cohort, October 2023.

**“** Thanks to the confidence and empowerment I gained from the Women of Colour in Leadership Programme, I applied for several internal jobs at the end of 2023. I was extremely grateful to receive multiple job offers – an outcome completely out of my expectation.”

**Joanne Chau**  
Euston station project manager

**“** As diversity sponsor, it has provided me with the opportunity to network and engage in targeted workstreams and activities to help support our talent and future leaders.”

**Yohan Udunuwara**  
Rail systems procurement director





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Workforce diversity: disability

The number of staff at HS2 Ltd identifying with a declared disability under the Equality Act has increased, with 6% of employees disclosing their disability status in our HR system, marking a 2% rise compared with last year.

We have continued to work with Clear Talents to support our colleagues and their line managers implement requests for reasonable workplace adjustments and support.

Of our workforce, 23% receive adjustments in relation to their inclusion profiles and we continue to monitor this to ensure that office and home working arrangements are suitable.

## Improving accessibility

This year we have placed particular emphasis on ensuring digital accessibility is met, and through the work of our internal accessibility working group we have continued to develop our digital accessibility hub. The hub provides the following.

- Information, advice and resources to all staff at HS2 Ltd who would like support, or who are experiencing barriers in relation to accessibility in the workplace and require support with IT.
- Guidance to managers and staff about provisions and solutions to address accessibility requirements.

- Digital tools that can be used for a range of disabilities and long-term health conditions such as hearing loss, visual impairment and neurodivergent conditions.

We continue to increase the awareness of our workforce about accessibility through lunch and learn events – led by our disability and accessibility network, 2gether.

## Case study

### Disability Inclusion Week

In December 2023, the 2gether network, our access and inclusion Staff Network, delivered HS2 Ltd's first Disability Inclusion Week in line with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

During this week, the network launched its campaign to increase disability declaration at HS2 Ltd to ensure all colleagues eligible for support receive it and to reduce the stigma around the term.

Presenters from the network committee shared personal experiences with the term 'disabled' and highlighted the benefits of declaring disability. The event also highlighted the practical work the network completed within our internal HR system, which included changes to language used to describe disabilities and long-term health conditions.

To support the messages in this session the network developed bespoke values moment presentations for members of the 2gether network to deliver at meetings in their own directorates. These presentations prompted good conversations

about the importance of making disability more visible in the workplace and creating greater accountability for implementing adjustments across directorates and teams. This resulted in a 1% increase in staff sharing their disability status in less than three months.

Since the campaign the disability declaration at HS2 Ltd continues to increase, and the network hopes to continue to support our workforce over the next year.





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024

## Gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps

HS2 Ltd publishes pay gap data every year.

This data outlines the difference of average earnings of employees across gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability groups.

While we acknowledge that reporting pay gaps for all protected characteristics is not essential, we believe the public disclosure of this data supports us to strive to address and reduce disparities.

For the fifth consecutive year, we have reduced the mean\* gender pay gap, achieving an almost 7% reduction since 2019. This year's report shows that the mean gender pay gap has reduced from 19.7% in 2022 to 18.6% in 2023 (the median average is now at 23.4%). Our pay gaps are largely driven by less

diversity in the upper quartile of salary earnings, which reflects the gender diversity in our senior grades. The profile of leavers and joiners has also contributed this year. As we continue to improve senior level diverse representation, our pay gaps will reduce.

Although not mandatory, we continue to report and publish our pay gaps on ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. We do this to gain valuable insights into our data to help inform our decision making to continually improve our diversity as an employer.

The ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation pay gaps are also outlined in the table below.

	Gender %	Ethnicity %	Declared disability %	Workplace adjustment %	Sexual orientation %
<b>Mean</b>	18.6	22.5	8.4	10.5	13.2
<b>Median</b>	23.4	22.3	14.8	11.5	21.4

\* The mean pay gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings of two groups of employees. The median pay gap is the difference between the middle values from a ranked order of hourly earnings of two groups of employees.

“

**We continue to be proactive in supporting all areas of equality, diversity, and inclusion at HS2 Ltd. This is critical to building an inclusive and diverse workforce, given the historical over-representation of men in the rail, engineering and construction industries. We are proud of the actions that we are implementing across the organisation to help address the pay gap: we have set enhanced equality, diversity and inclusion requirements for our executive search firms, senior level recruitment, and third-party recruitment agencies and as such we have seen some improvement in the representation of women at head of function and director level.”**

**Shira Johnson**  
Chief people officer



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

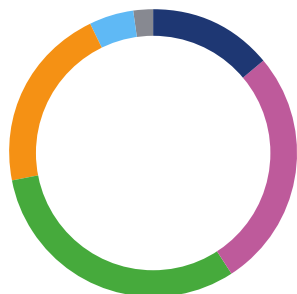
## Age

Almost 60% of our workforce is over 40 years old.

### Employees age breakdown in 2023/24

Age ranges**	Percentage
<b>18 or under</b>	0
<b>19-29</b>	14
<b>30-39</b>	27
<b>40-49</b>	31
<b>50-59</b>	21
<b>60-64</b>	5
<b>65 and over</b>	2

- 19-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-64
- 65 and over



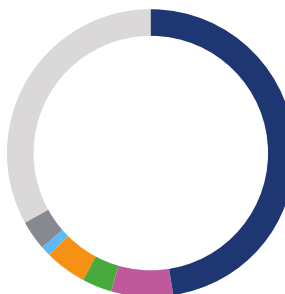
## Religion and belief

The most common religion or faith among our employees is Christian at 42%.

### Employees religion and belief breakdown in 2023/24

Religion/belief***	Percentage
<b>Christian</b>	42
<b>Muslim</b>	6
<b>Sikh</b>	3
<b>Hindu</b>	4
<b>Jewish</b>	0
<b>Buddhist</b>	1
<b>Other</b>	3
<b>Atheist/secular and Agnostic</b>	29

- Christian
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Other
- Atheist/secular and Agnostic



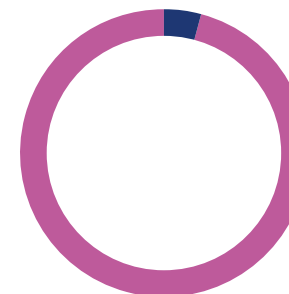
## Sexual orientation

A total of 4% of our staff identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQ+). This has been maintained since last financial year.

### Sexual orientation in percentages

Sexual orientation***	Percentage
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	4
<b>Heterosexual</b>	89

- LGBTQ+
- Heterosexual



\* We have a small number of staff who prefer not to share their religion or sexual orientation, and those who 'prefer not to say' are excluded from the table. This means there is not 100% representation in the figures shown.

\*\* Directorates cannot be directly compared this year against 2022/23, as organisational change has meant that some functions have merged, and new ones have been created.





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024

## Career progression and talent management

We are committed to supporting our internal talent to develop, and over the last year we have supported people in our workforce to progress in their careers.

In 2023/24 one of our key inclusion improvement priorities was to ensure we were supporting and developing our diverse internal talent. Initiatives this year included the following.

- **Women of Colour in Leadership programme:** Workshops delivered to highly talented ethnic minority women in the organisation, aimed at identifying essential skills, tools, and habits to amplify their leadership impact. The programme also guides participants in crafting a strategic roadmap for achieving leadership success.
- **Empower: Career Ready programme:** A three-month virtual learning programme targeted at women who are identified as top talent, providing them with an opportunity to identify and develop skills required for senior leadership roles and opportunities.
- **Executive Networking:** Provided a platform for diverse talent and the executive team to get to know one another and share knowledge, expertise, and experiences as well as share barriers to professional/personal development and gain advice/support from our ELT members.

**There were a number of achievements from our targeted interventions:** One in three of our diverse talent cohort have had personal successes since the start of our initiatives. They include managed moves, internal secondments and promotions alongside personal growth journeys which have challenged people to venture beyond their comfort zones, such as engaging in public speaking and project work.

We have also maintained the following talent and development initiatives.

- **Managed moves:** Six-month development moves to internal roles.
- **SLT development seats:** Giving top talent the opportunity to be part of the HS2 SLT for 12 months to develop their understanding of the project and enhance relationships with senior leaders.
- **Lunch and learns:** Online sessions covering all aspects of personal and career development at HS2 Ltd.
- **Internal apprenticeships:** Access to both further and higher education opportunities and qualifications through apprenticeships at levels 3 to 7.
- **Coaching and mentoring opportunities:** Access to both internal and external coaching and mentoring provisions.

- **Leadership and management development:** Structured, blended programmes of development for all levels of management and leadership.
- **Professional memberships and qualifications:** The opportunity to gain professional qualifications and access learning and events through membership of professional bodies.

## Workforce diversity and promotions

Promotions have been proportionate to our workforce diversity across both gender and ethnicity.

### Workforce diversity

	Workforce promotions 2023/24	Workforce diversity 2023/24
<b>Ethnic minorities</b>	27%	29%
<b>Females</b>	32%	38%
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	5%	4%
<b>Disability</b>	8%	6%
<b>Non-Christian</b>	17%	18%
<b>Adjustments</b>	22%	23%



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Graduates and apprentices

We welcomed another cohort of graduates and apprentices. We continue to implement inclusive recruitment practices so we engage a diverse cohort of talent. During 2023 – 2024, we recruited 21 apprentices and 40 graduates.

We have developed a two-week induction programme to ensure our apprentices receive a thorough overview of the project. This includes a range of activities such as presentations, training sessions and team-building exercises. The graduate programme is designed to expand graduates' business knowledge, strengthen soft skills, and offer networking opportunities. The programme develops the expertise that not only the business is looking for, but also the wider industry and country.

### Graduate and apprentice diversity

Graduates	Graduates %	Apprentices %
<b>Male</b>	55	68
<b>Female</b>	43	32
<b>Ethnic minority</b>	41	39
<b>Disability</b>	4	5
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	2	7

“**Being able to do extracurricular activities and meet people from across the organisation is one of the best parts of being at HS2 Ltd. Everyone has been supportive and the opportunities I have been given make HS2 Ltd a very supportive and enjoyable place to work.”**

**Joe Daniels**

Apprentice project manager

“**HS2 Ltd is committed to providing jobs and helping develop the skills to show off the very best of British engineering. We are excited to welcome our largest intake of 40 graduates which is in addition to the opportunities also available with our joint venture partners and across the supply chain.”**

**Karen Davis**

Head of talent and development

“**During the lifecycle of the project, HS2 Ltd and its supply chain will create at least 2,000 apprenticeship opportunities across a wide range of disciplines and specialisms. The apprentices will be provided with the opportunity to learn from the best in the industry, whilst gaining hands on experience and working towards recognised qualifications.”**

**Triya Patel**

Early careers manager



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024

## Recruitment

We are committed to cutting out potential bias at every stage of our recruitment process, starting from initial application and CV screening to interviews and hiring decisions. Our strategies include the following.

- Collaborating with external partners including Vercida and TMP to attract candidates from under-represented groups.

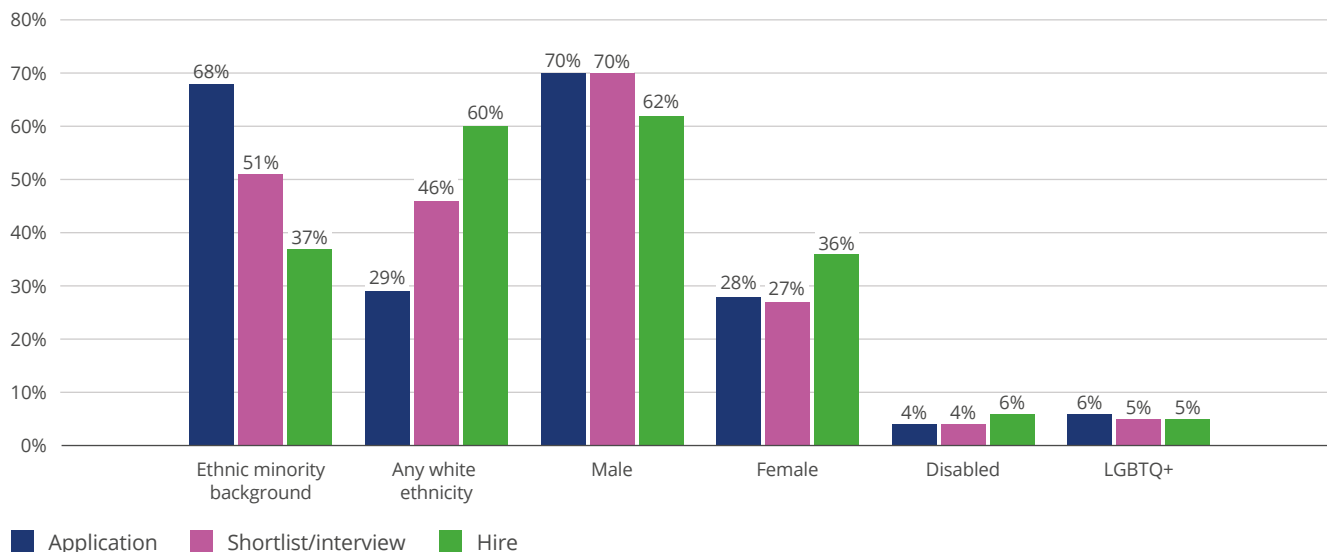
- Implementing a new skills-based CV screening tool, MeVitaie, to hide personal information including protected characteristics.
- Promoting diverse interview panels.
- Conducting competency-based interviews.
- Training for our line managers on inclusive recruitment, evidence-based decision-making and the elimination of bias.

During 2023-2024 we saw the following trends.

- There was a rise in applications from candidates with ethnic minority backgrounds. In 2022-2023, 63% of applicants were from ethnic minority backgrounds, which increased by 5% to 68% in 2023-24, leading to 37% of all hires.
- While we still attract a low number of female applicants, the percentage increased slightly from 27% to 28% in 2023-2024. Despite the low number of female applicants, they perform well in the recruitment process, with 36% of all hires being female in 2022-2023.
- The number of hires with declared disabilities doubled from 3% in 2022-2023 to 6% in 2023-2024.
- LGBTQ+ candidates apply in proportionate levels to the diversity of our workforce.

In 2024-2025, our priorities for inclusion improvement include maintaining focus on ensuring fairness and transparency throughout our recruitment processes.

## EDI trends in our recruitment



Note: Not all candidates choose to declare gender and ethnicity, meaning total % shown in the tables is less than 100%.





# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024

## Our staff networks

We have eight employee networks that support us to become a more diverse, inclusive place to work. Our networks promote activities and encourage debate on issues that affect our employees.



### REACH Network

The REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) Network promotes and celebrates our

ethnic minority staff and is for everyone interested in a range of cultures. The network explores issues and opportunities to improve our organisation, ensuring we represent the communities in which we operate.

Last year, the REACH network delivered a range of events, with topics ranging from intersectionality to pay inequity and celebrated religious events such as Vaisakhi, Eid and Easter.

However, there were two notable achievements for the network. The first involved two events in Snowhill, Birmingham and Old Oak Common, west London, to provide employees and visitors with an opportunity to recognise where we are on our EDI journey, appreciating the contributions of individuals from diverse racial backgrounds and sectors. The events focused on how we can work with the education sector to further develop and understand education to employment pathways, and the opportunities being provided to individuals from ethnic minority communities.

The second achievement was the celebration of the 30th Courageous Conversation session, which gave colleagues an opportunity to challenge bias, dismantle barriers and cultivate empathy. Each session took a theme, such as mixed heritage, culture, and identity, and encouraged those taking part to share their experience, listen, and support one another.



### Gender Balance Network

Our Gender Balance Network advocates for gender equity in our workforce and supply chain.

The network promotes the development of a more inclusive culture at HS2 and provides a platform of support and encouragement for men and women across the organisation.

During the year, the network had a number of several notable achievements including:

- collaborating on the Women in Rail Mentoring programme;
- celebrating International Women's Day with an event that focused on how we can collectively amplify the voices and contributions of women, paving the way for accelerated progress in HS2 Ltd and across the wider infrastructure and transport industries; and
- collaborating with the 'Women in Projects' group during Women's History Month to deliver an event titled 'Women who advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion'. The discussion panel explored and celebrated women in project management and those advocating for inclusivity.



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023 – 2024



## Onboard Network

Onboard is our network for LGBTQ+ staff and allies.

Onboard supports and promotes

the belief that 'everyone has the right to be who they want to be in our workplace'.

Through the year, the network has delivered events on intersectionality, trans awareness and access to health.

The network delivered allies' sessions to encourage HS2 Ltd colleagues to get involved and learn more about the LGBT+ community.



## 2gether Network

2gether is our Access and Inclusion Network, which provides support to staff with experience

of disability, access and inclusion challenges. It raises awareness of disability, provides information on events, shares and promotes best practice and aims to support the achievement of HS2 Ltd's EDI objectives.

This year 2gether launched Disability Inclusion Week, which is the UN's International Day of People with Disabilities. The week included the following events.

- Embracing Disability: HS2 Ltd supplier Nuneaton Signs joined us to share how it has successfully employed a majority workforce of disabled people and is thriving.
- Disability Inclusion in the workplace: Colleagues discussed their personal journeys with disability and its impact when navigating the workplace.
- Loud and Proud – Declaring Disability: Encouraged colleagues to declare their disabilities.
- Disability Allies Training: Encouraged our colleagues to become an ally to those with disabilities.
- Caring for disabled kids – lived experience from HS2 Ltd colleagues: Employees shared how HS2 Ltd is helping them care for their disabled children.



## Green Network

Our Green Network is raising the bar by educating and informing colleagues, inspiring

behavioural change, and telling the story of this unique project. Since launching, the network has become the fastest growing network running regular events to showcase innovations, promote carbon learning, encourage volunteering, and support people to make personal changes.

Over 2023-24 the Green Network has delivered events covering a range of topic areas such as: building a greener supply chain, creating a green design legacy and active travel.



# HS2 Ltd: our performance in 2023–2024



## Professional Development Network (PDN)

The Professional Development Network encourages and

supports HS2 Ltd professionals to:

- build their network
- develop their knowledge and skills, and
- enhance their careers.

The key focus of the network is attracting, nurturing, and retaining the best talent for HS2 Ltd and the UK infrastructure industry. Topic areas explored through lunch and learns this year included:

- information and cyber security
- strategic optimism, and
- a series on artificial intelligence.



## Early Careers Network

The Early Careers Network aims to improve industry knowledge, diversify skillsets, and encourage

progression for those at the start of their careers.

The network supports members by:

- improving their industry knowledge
- developing their confidence
- diversifying their skill sets
- encouraging progression within the network as well as within the organisation
- providing feedback on early careers, and
- employee experience.

The network achieves this through a variety of events including the following.

- The 'Future You' series, where presenters are selected from the business to highlight key milestones they have achieved professionally and how they achieved them.
- Networking events.
- Lunch and learns.
- Site visits.
- Access to external events with Major Projects Association and Young Rail Professional.



## Armed Forces Support Network

The Armed Forces Support Network comprises of:

- former serving members of the Armed Forces
- serving members of the Reserve Forces, and
- those associated with the services through marriage/partnerships.

It is open to all staff within HS2 Ltd and is not only for those with a service connection.

The network delivered a number of events this year including the following titles.

- Hiring from the armed forces community.
- Veterans and reservists into construction.
- Took part in the Great British Tommy Sleepout.





Part Two

# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023-2024





# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

**EDI is embedded in our complex supply chain to achieve lasting change that promotes industry-wide benefits. This section focuses on how diverse businesses, in terms of their composition and ownership, are benefitting from supply chain opportunities. It also provides a picture of workforce diversity for main works civils contractors: Align, Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV), Eiffage Kier Ferrovial BAM (EKFB) and Skanska Costain STRABAG (SCS Railways).**

## HS2 supply chain

We are creating a diverse supply chain that is representative of the communities who live and work along the route of the railway.

We define minority-owned businesses as those where women, ethnic minorities, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender) or disabled people make up more than 50% of the partners or directors in day-to-day control of the business; or where a sole proprietor is from one of these groups. We also monitor our spend with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro businesses.

Between April 2023 to March 2024, 248 suppliers were paid for services provided in support of delivering HS2.

The total HS2 supply chain spend in 2023/24 was £6.5 billion, up from £6.2 billion in 2022/23. Large businesses, at £6.3 billion, account for 97% of the overall spend. Total spend with SMEs and micro-businesses over the same period was £173.2 million and £12.5 million respectively.

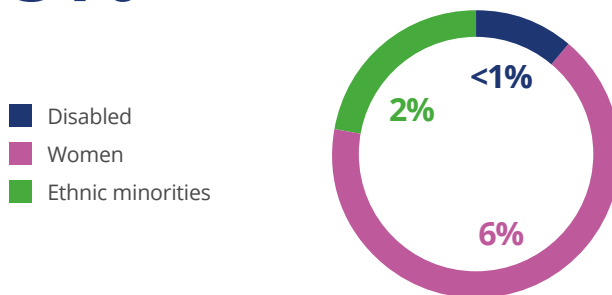
Total HS2 Ltd spend with SMEs and micro-businesses in 2023/24

**£185.7m**



Representation of diverse-owned suppliers in 2023/24

**8%**



Total HS2 spend with diverse-owned suppliers in 2023/24

**£44.1m**





# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

Since 2017/18, the highest total spend by HS2 Ltd across minority-owned businesses has been with those owned by women – £22.3 million in 2023/24. This is closely followed by spend with ethnic minority-owned businesses – £21.7 million.

Spend with businesses owned by disabled people is significantly lower – £100,000. In total, £6 million has been spent with businesses owned by disabled people since 2017/18.

During 2024/25, we will continue to promote HS2 contract opportunities with local and minority-owned businesses. This will include working with business support stakeholders.

## Minority-owned businesses in our supply chain

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
<b>Women</b>	£4,500,000	£2,800,000	£77,500,000	£24,700,000	£14,200,000	£14,200,000	<b>£22,300,000</b>	£160,200,000
<b>Ethnic minority</b>	£3,200,000	£200,000	£13,800,000	£20,000,000	£10,000,000	£11,600,000	<b>£21,700,000</b>	£80,500,000
<b>Disabled</b>	£1,900,000	£300,000	£200,000	£2,700,000	£700,000	£100,000	<b>£100,000</b>	£6,000,000
<b>Total</b>	£9,600,000	£3,300,000	£91,500,000	£47,420,000	£24,900,000	£25,900,000	<b>£44,100,000</b>	£246,700,000







# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## HS2 main works civils contracts delivery on workforce diversity

In order to build an inclusive and diverse workforce where everyone feels safe we have built EDI into procurement and contracts.

For the entire HS2 programme, contractual performance measures are set that cover:

- policies and procedures;
- recruitment;
- workforce monitoring and reporting;
- supplier diversity;
- training; and
- a requirement to obtain an externally verified EDI standard.

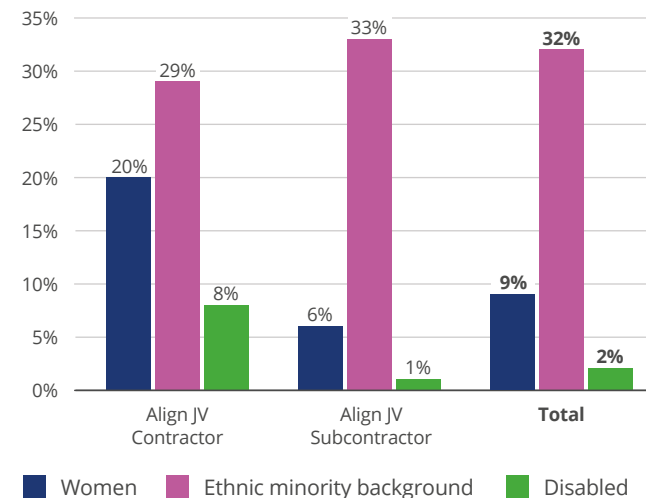
HS2 Tier 1 contractors are regularly assessed on their performance and this flows down to their subcontractors.

Given that the HS2 programme is now focused on main works civils, the next section of this chapter highlights each of the main works civils contracts workforce diversity for gender, ethnicity and disability.

## Workforce diversity statistics: Align

- 9% of Align's total workforce for HS2 are female. This comprises 20% of its Tier 1 workforce and 6% of its subcontractors.
- 32% of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background. This comprises 29% of its Tier 1 workforce and 33% of its subcontractors.
- 2% of Align's total workforce are people with disabilities. This comprises 8% of the Tier 1 workforce and 1% of its subcontractors.

Chart 1: Align workforce diversity statistics



# 9%

of the entire Align JV workforce are female.

# 32%

of the entire Align JV workforce is made up of people from an ethnic minority background.

# 2%

of the entire Align JV workforce are disabled.

# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023–2024

## Case study

### **Align: Positive action with Carers Trust Hillingdon**

Align is a proud partner of the Carers Trust Hillingdon and its young carers service. The service supports young people aged 5–24 who provide regular care to a family member who has a long-term illness, disability, or mental health or substance misuse issue.

Caring responsibilities vary and can have a significant impact on a young person's physical and mental health, education and social opportunities. The Carers Trust Hillingdon provide emotional support, information and advice, training opportunities, regular free social groups and days out.

Through a relationship with our strategic partner Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges, Align has worked with the trust to deliver a range of activities that have led to three people being employed by Align.

This relationship also led to Align, alongside some of its supply chain partners, sponsoring the inaugural Young Carer Awards that took place in March 2023. The awards recognised Align's commitment to supporting young carers with Sonu Jhall, a Hillingdon resident and maintenance and operations engineering technician apprentice, winning the Apprentice of the Year Award.



Sonu Jhall with his Apprentice of the Year Award at the Young Carer Awards ceremony.



# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Workforce diversity statistics: BBV

- 13% of BBV's total workforce are female. This comprises 20% of its Tier 1 workforce and 12% of its subcontractors.
- 20% of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background. This comprises of 38% of its Tier 1 workforce and 17% of its subcontractors.
- 1% of BBV's total workforce are people with disabilities. This comprises of 2% of its Tier 1 workforce and 1% of its subcontractors.

**13%**

of BBV's total workforce are female.

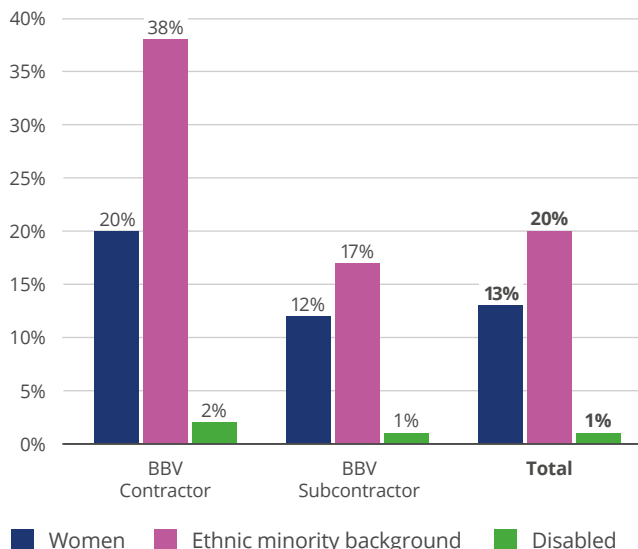
**20%**

of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background.

**1%**

of BBV's total workforce are people with disabilities.

Chart 2: BBV workforce diversity statistics



## Workforce diversity statistics: EKFB

- 11% of EKFB's total workforce are female. This comprises 27% of its Tier 1 workforce and 8% of its subcontractors.
- 25% of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background. This comprises of 17% of its Tier 1 workforce and 26% of its subcontractors.
- 1% of EKFB's total workforce are people with disabilities. This is on par with the representation figures within the subcontractor workforce and across the entire EKFB workforce.

**11%**

of EKFB's total workforce are female.

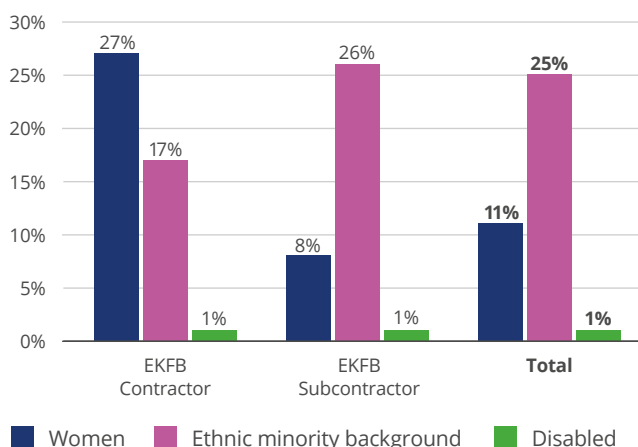
**25%**

of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background.

**1%**

of EKFB's total workforce are people with disabilities.

Chart 3: EKFB workforce diversity statistics



# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### **BBV: Celebrating the UK's first female rig driver**

Natalie Smith, a 44-year-old mother living in Castle Bromwich, Solihull, is among the growing number of female construction workers who have changed career to work on HS2.

Having worked as a forklift truck driver in warehouse operations, Natalie felt it was time for change.

She felt confident there was a transferable element to her skillset and began researching construction-related roles.

Natalie contacted SB3 – the Bachy Soletanche and Balfour Beatty Ground Engineering joint venture, contracted to Balfour Beatty VINCI, which is leading the foundation works for HS2 in the West Midlands. SB3 was recruiting for trainee piling operatives, a skilled role that requires driving steel columns into the ground. SB3 was offering one-year's training with accreditation.

Within three weeks of applying to SB3, Natalie was on board with a team of 10 new recruits working on HS2. She sailed through the training programme and became a qualified rig attendant.

Now an established member of the team, Natalie and her colleagues began the concrete reinforcement works to stabilise the ground ready for a network of viaducts and bridges that will carry HS2 trains. Her passion and enthusiasm shone through and when she was ready for career progression, Natalie's construction manager put her forward for the next available course.

SB3 funded her training, which saw her progress from rig attendant to rig driver, taking charge of an 86-tonne piling rig and driving 20-tonne steel rods into the ground.

When Natalie completed the course in September 2023, awarding body CITA confirmed she was the first female in the UK to achieve rig driver status.

Natalie hopes more women will feel empowered to step forward and start a career in construction.



Natalie Smith.



# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### Stephanie's new HS2 role gives her work-life balance

Buckinghamshire residents have been given a helping hand to launch a career in construction with Aylesbury-based contractor, Blackwell Earthmoving Limited.

HS2 Ltd's construction partner EKFB appointed Blackwell to deliver the earthworks on a 30km section of the route from Calvert South to the North Chilterns.

To ensure local people were first in line to benefit, the team worked closely with Bucks Training Academy to support those looking for a new career.

Stephanie Oliver, aged 36 from Aylesbury, completed her training and moved into full-time employment.

It's been a huge change for Stephanie, who worked as a care worker during the pandemic. She never imagined she'd find herself driving a 60-tonne dumper truck, but the career change has given her more time to spend with her family.

**“If I'd known there was a role like this for me in construction, I'd have gone for it years ago. I didn't imagine myself driving a 60-tonne truck, but now I'm here I absolutely love it. This is my first full-time job, and it gives me the security I need to provide for my family. Being local also means I have a great work-life balance, and for me that's really important.”**

**Stephanie Oliver**  
Plant operator



Stephanie Oliver.

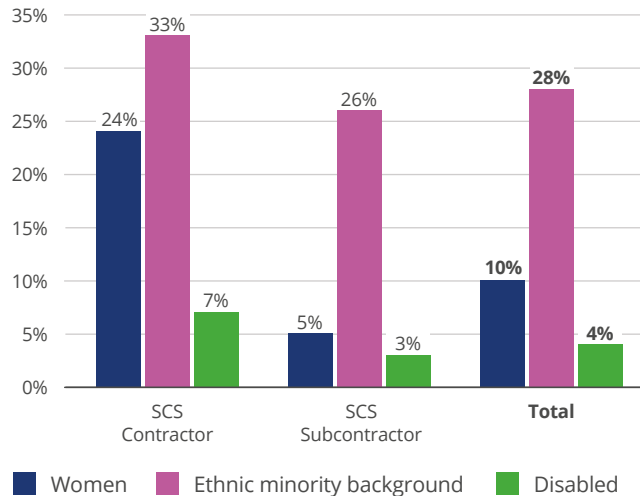


# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Workforce diversity statistics: SCS Railways

- 10% of SCS Railways' total workforce are female. This comprises 24% of its Tier 1 workforce and 5% of its subcontractors.
- 28% of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background. This comprises of 33% of its Tier 1 workforce and 26% of its subcontractors.
- 4% of SCS Railways' total workforce are people with disabilities. This comprises of 7% of its Tier 1 workforce and 3% of its subcontractors.

Chart 4: SCS Railways workforce diversity statistics



# 10%

of SCS Railways' total workforce are female.

# 28%

of the total workforce are from an ethnic minority background.

# 4%

of SCS railways' total workforce are people with disabilities.



# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### SCS: Keeping talent

SCS Railways has contributed substantially to a programme-wide priority around staff retention, which sits alongside a commitment to recruit people from the diverse communities we operate across.

The SCS Railways approach has been to understand the needs and concerns of its workforce through a voice survey, open to all staff, and a line managers respect survey. The results of these surveys have informed positive action measures to foster an inclusive workplace environment in support of staff retention.

### EDI champions

SCS Railways have now recruited 70 EDI champions across over 25 sites and offices – a third are male and 50% hold managerial positions – offering support to the workforce. This support includes 'inclusion stand ups' to make space for meaningful conversations for all staff working on the project. The aspiration is to train a further 60 EDI champions with a 30% representation rate from within the SCS Railways supply chain.

### Disability Inclusion Action Plan

In December 2021, SCS Railways achieved Disability Confident Level 3 Leader status, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace for individuals of all abilities. A comprehensive Disability Inclusion Action Plan was implemented focusing on four pillars:

1. championing accessibility
2. empowering through training
3. elevating recruitment practices, and
4. encouraging feedback and reporting disability data.

### Menopause awareness

The SCS Railways Menopause Support group was established in 2023 and has delivered a range of activities, including a raising awareness coffee morning to mark International Women's Day 2024. The menopause is an issue that everyone can benefit from learning more about to help create an inclusive culture.





# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Bringing EDI outcomes to life

These case studies highlight innovative and industry-changing work in the HS2 supply chain.

### Case study

#### AtkinsRéalis Clear Assured Platinum Accreditation

AtkinsRéalis has provided support through all stages of the HS2 programme with its involvement including:

- an engineering delivery partner;
- rail systems and systems integration; and
- commercial delivery and controls.

In February 2024, AtkinsRéalis became the first firm in the UK engineering sector to achieve the Clear Assured Platinum Standard accreditation recognising its commitment to embedding EDI across the company.



The EDI accreditation – assessed by the Clear Company following an in-depth, evidence-based assessment – is given to organisations that include diverse talent in every aspect of their operational performance and have leaders who proactively challenge themselves and their teams to be more inclusive.

There are 450 organisations in the Clear Assured community. AtkinsRéalis is one of only three organisations, including HS2 Ltd, to achieve the top platinum standard, after receiving gold in 2021.

Platinum accreditation was awarded based on AtkinsRéalis' progress and impact with EDI initiatives across several areas including allyship, industry impact, inclusive recruitment, and inclusive policies and procedures.

AtkinsRéalis continue to work to promote diversity and inclusion across the industry, extending invitations to events such as Nurturing Neurodiversity and Supplier Diversity to HS2 and other partners in the industry.



# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023 – 2024

## Case study

### **Balfour Beatty VINCI SYSTRA (BBVS) and SCS Railways: Successful diverse recruitment**

Balfour Beatty VINCI SYSTRA (BBVS) and SCS Railways celebrated wins at the Moving on Up (MoU) Awards for their work and achievements on recruiting young black men into their organisations.

MoU is an initiative led by Action for Race Equality to tackle disparities young black men in London face in the labour market. The first MoU Awards took place in March 2024, recognising the achievements of young black men in London and employers creating opportunities for them. BBVS and SCS Railways were recognised in the following categories.

#### **Best Job Outcome (Brent), winner: Jemel Harri-Nanan (BBVS procurement apprentice)**

Jemel, a Brent resident, was first engaged through the Brent MoU project and had been working at a bicycle shop and was furloughed before being made redundant due to Covid-19.

The support Jemel received from the Brent MoU project led to an introduction to BBVS through Brent Council acting as a HS2 Job Brokerage Partner. Initially, Jemel did a work placement in the BBVS procurement and supply chain team and the significant impact he made led to him securing an apprenticeship and completing the programme.

#### **Outstanding Employer Impact Award, winner: SCS Railways**

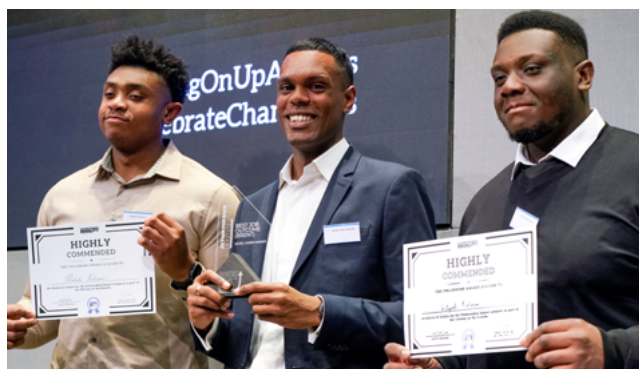
HS2's Job Brokerage service was launched in 2022 to help recruit the workforce that will build HS2's 26-mile London tunnel network. Through employment opportunities available from SCS Railways and labour supplier Danny Sullivan, a pre-employment programme – involving training, paid work placements and guaranteed interviews for paid employment – was delivered to attract local people into a specialist sector that needs diverse talent.

The success of this programme led to 10 people living in central and west London securing employment with SCS Railways and Danny Sullivan.

#### **Outstanding Impact Award, highly commended: Malachi and Elijah Robinson (brothers and SCS Railways tunnelling operative apprentices)**

Malachi, a Hammersmith and Fulham resident, attended a MoU careers event with his parents and met the HS2 Legacy team. He was recruited on to the tunnelling pre-employment programme, and successfully completed it.

Based on Malachi's experience, his brother Elijah, also from Hammersmith and Fulham, joined his brother and they have now both been tunnelling operative apprentices since May 2023.



Left to right: Malachi Robinson, Jemel Harri-Nanan and Elijah Robinson. Photograph credit: Luke Agbaimoni.

# HS2 supply chain: our partners' performance in 2023–2024

## Case study

### Supply chain collaboration inspires pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

Our contractors have joined forces to deliver three education programmes for young people in Ealing with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The initiative brings to life commitments made by HS2 Ltd in its skills, employment and education strategy to encourage more young people to consider transport infrastructure careers.

Align, BBVS, Alstom (part of the Hitachi Alstom joint venture), Mace Dragados and SCS Railways worked with the Ealing SEND Hub to deliver the programmes, which included science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning sessions and tours of the HS2 Euston and Old Oak Common station sites and the Elizabeth Line train depot in Old Oak Common.

The sessions explained the different jobs and skills needed to build the new high-speed railway and provided guidance on career pathways – including opportunities to join HS2 Ltd on work experience and placement days.

Four schools in Ealing – Belvue, John Chilton, Springhallow and St Ann's – have taken part in the programmes, which were tailored to meet the learning requirements of pupils. From mock job interviews to working alongside HS2's community and traffic management teams, the pupils were encouraged to explore how their skills aligned to different job roles.

HS2 Ltd and its supply chain partners are Disability Confident employers. They work closely with local support services, such as the Ealing SEND Hub, as part of a commitment to help young people with SEND to launch careers helping to build HS2.



Students from the Ealing SEND Hub visiting the HS2 Old Oak Common station site.



## Part Three

# Inclusive design and operations





# Inclusive design and operations

**Integrating inclusive practices into site operations helps improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff. Inclusive design is essential in ensuring our stations and trains are accessible to everyone. This section explains how we embed EDI in our approach to health, safety and wellbeing and how we ensure all of our design is inclusive.**

## Operations

We seek to achieve a respectful and inclusive work environment for our site-based workers. HS2 has over 31,000 people working across the project. Our workforce comprises people with multiple languages, religions/beliefs, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, ages and race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. Our aim is for our sites to be safe, accessible and inclusive and where everyone feels able to deliver their best.



Members of the tunnelling team, Victoria Road crossover box.





# Inclusive design and operations

## Embedding Inclusive Health, Safety & Wellbeing

We started 2023/24 with a focus on embedding industry best practice and lessons learned from main works civils and stations improvement plans. Our focus included the following priority areas.

### Priority 1 – Prevention of modern slavery

It is estimated that more than 50 million men, women and children are being exploited globally after having been forced into modern slavery. Our modern slavery requirements at HS2 Ltd include these areas.

- Modern slavery questions in invitations to tender.
- Six monthly supply chain reporting on modern slavery.
- Contractual modern slavery requirements within the works information.
- Site-based training for Tier 1 joint venture operatives and their supply chain.
- Anonymous reporting (whistle blowing line) available in multiple languages at site level.
- Project-wide modern slavery 'tool box' talks.
- Industry collaboration on modern slavery best practice.
- Client tracking of Modern Slavery Acts' risks captured on HORACE.
- Regular engagement with Tier 1 Joint venture employee and industrial relations leads.

### Priority 2 – Health and Safety reporting systems on site

All workers are able to report health, safety, wellbeing and security observations on site. The reporting application which measures our Health and Safety Performance Index (HSPI) is called HORACE.

Workers are encouraged to report observations through campaigns such as "Don't Walk By" and site-based 'tool box' talks. Reporting incidents also needs to be inclusive for workers who may feel apprehensive to raise an incident due to their language ability or the types of incidents they observe.

HORACE is translated into five languages: English, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian and Punjabi, the most common languages spoken in UK construction. There is also a feature to raise any concerns about suspected incidents of modern slavery and/or bullying and harassment.

We work to embed EDI across our programme including how we raise EDI observations at site level. HORACE allows the user to select anyone who directly or indirectly experiences an unsafe work experience where the person is protected by the Equality Act. Workers are also able to raise observations that could be physically or verbally related to a victim's race or gender. Incidents are reported each quarter through the HSPI and followed up with the site-based health and safety teams.



# Inclusive design and operations

## External accreditation: Clear Assured

Within our EDI works information, we have a requirement for our supply chain to partner with an external EDI accreditation provider. One of the more common external providers, Clear Assured, works with our supply chain to ensure we are embedding EDI at all levels of the business.



BBV 's Kingsbury compound.

In 2023/24, we worked with Clear Assured to ensure health and safety requirements were reflected in the accreditation. Some of the requirements were taken from best practice during enabling works and at the start of main works. These requirements included the following.

### Health and Safety with EDI lens

Identifying and analysing how the diversity of the workforce including languages, religions, gender and culture could affect people's health, safety and wellbeing.

### Health and Safety messaging assurance

Workers need to understand and have appropriate knowledge and skills to tackle risks in their activities. Managers and supervisors need to demonstrate and have assurance that workers have this understanding, knowledge and skill and that the following is accessible to all.

### Health and Safety incident/observation reporting

To ensure incident/observation reporting includes people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and is available in multiple languages.

### Modern slavery training

Ensure supervisor staff and workers have had modern slavery training.

### Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) – UK specific

To sign up to the Construction Protocol.

### Signs and language at our work sites

We need to make sure all of our work site signs can be seen and understood by everyone in our workforce.

This can help to avoid misunderstanding and help prevent life threatening situations.

# Inclusive design and operations

## Leadership Training

To ensure leaders understand and act on safety impacts and risks for people protected by the Equality Act.

## LGBTQ+ psychological safety training

Ensure all leadership, supervisor staff and workers have had this training.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing training

Training for the leadership team and worksite staff that specifically targets issues which may affect vulnerable workers. For example, transient/non-English speaking workers on site.

## Disability safety training

Ensure all leadership and supervisor staff have had this training.

## EDI events on site

To complete this task, provide evidence of events on site organised on the following topics: Menopause awareness; breast cancer awareness; mental health; and domestic violence. Educating site workers on these issues and offering help and support can improve health and wellbeing for everyone.

## Inclusive personal protective equipment

This is shown by how contractors introduce inclusive protective wear for a diverse range of needs including gender and people with disabilities.

## Accessible site offices for meetings

All organisers need to be ready to accommodate all workers and visitors with visible or non-visible restricted mobilities. Some individuals might not have a disability, but they might suffer from restricted movement from conditions such as back problems or age-related ailments.



Washwood Heath worker.



# Inclusive design and operations

## Inclusive design on site

In achieving an inclusive design for HS2, the design team will account for our commitments under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. This is being achieved through the systematic application of relevant standards, regulations, and best practice. This helps create a design that removes barriers to access, eliminates experiences of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for people working at and using our stations regardless of their diverse needs and requirements. Examples of best practices in inclusive design includes these areas.

- Provision of gender-neutral toilet facilities in all locations across stations where standard facilities are provided.
- Implementation of quiet spaces to support people who are neurodivergent or have other requirements for quiet spaces whether for faith or well-being.
- Achieving hazard-free and optimal circulation spaces for staff and passengers, including waiting rooms, corridor widths and lobby sizes.

## Inclusive health and safety initiatives 2023/2024

- Health and Safety procedure reviews to include translations for non-English speaking operatives.
- Training for site staff on EDI incidents and observations.
- Health and safety procedures translated into simplified English and pictures (for operatives who struggle with reading).
- Rainbow Laces Campaign called All Tied Up that promoted the LGBTQ+ community and highlighted allyship.
- Behavioural-based safety delivered on the project that included site supervisors receiving training on cultures, behaviours and language affecting health and safety.
- Safe at Heart training on site with an area focused on cultures and language factoring in health, safety and wellbeing.
- LGBTQ+ training for operatives.
- EDI Champions extended to workers.

- Mental Health Awareness Week including discussions and activities linked to health and wellbeing.
- 'Tool box' talks and site-based training delivered in multiple languages.
- Continued EDI reporting, measured with health, safety and security incidents.





# Inclusive design and operations

## Case study

### BBVS respect programme at Old Oak Common

BBVS, our contractor Old Oak Common station, is committed to taking steps toward behavioural change across the workforce. Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected at work – everyone is responsible for reinforcing positive behaviours and reporting unacceptable ones.

Another aspect of this programme is the confidential RESPECT reporting tool. It allows the team to report inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, address incidents, offer support and capture insights into our progress.

We have **zero tolerance** toward racism, harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, or any other form of unacceptable behaviour. **If you experience something unacceptable, remember:**

**See it? Say it. Report it.**

Use the confidential RESPECT reporting tool available in welfare facilities and noticeboards.

## RESPECT



Understanding others,  
recognising their value and  
behaving accordingly.

## Case study

### Menopause training at BBV

Menopause is a common EDI challenge. Employees experience having their work life directly or indirectly affected by health, anxieties, absence or concerns and those affected often lack knowledge on the topic. Educating the wider workforce is essential, including those indirectly affected.

Menopause awareness and training is essential to:

- understand and reduce barriers that may prevent colleagues from performing/developing;
- identify appropriate workplace changes or adjustments; and
- establish an inclusive and productive working environment.

In 2023, Balfour Beatty won the ENEI Enhancing Wellbeing and Belonging at Work Inclusivity Excellence Award, for its work on menopause. It was commended for the success it has achieved in a male-dominated environment. It was also highly commended at the Inspiring Women in Construction and Engineering Awards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative of the Year, for supporting menopause in the workplace.



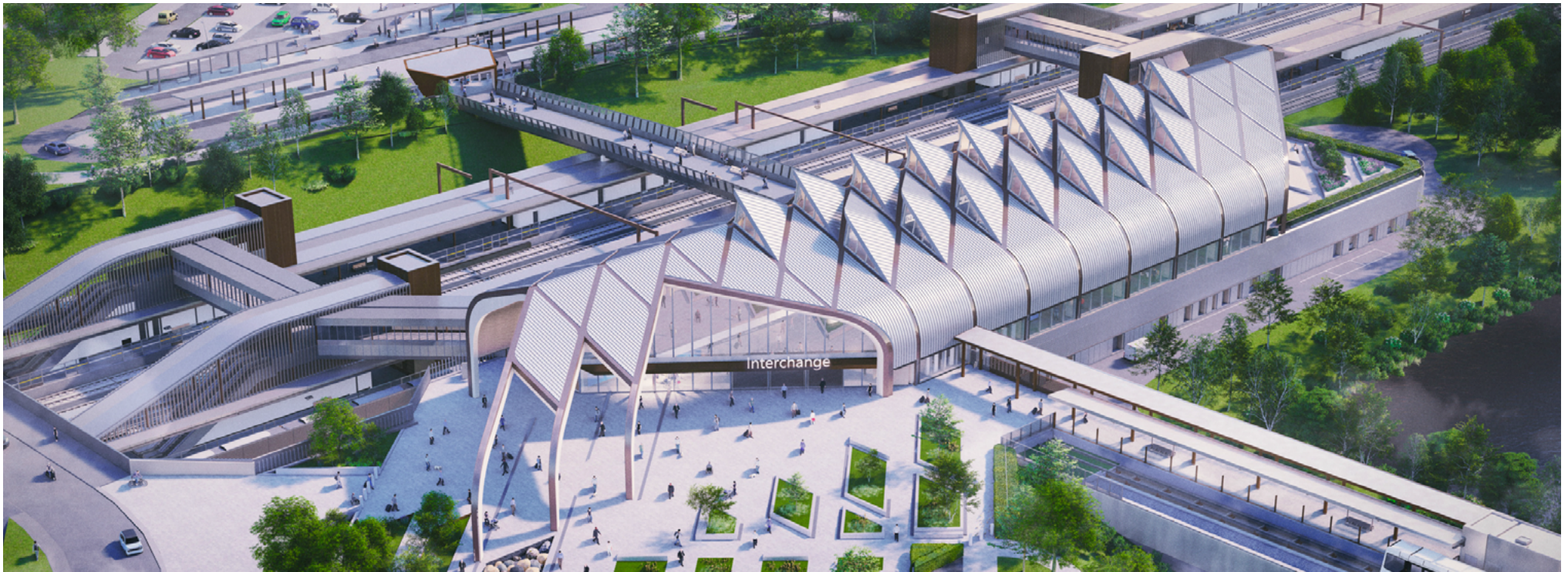
# Inclusive design and operations

## Inclusive design of the new railway

We are committed to delivering a design and service that is inclusive: a design that eliminates barriers to participation for all users – passengers, staff, and visitors, that people feel safe using and are able to use with ease, independence and dignity. This will ensure that the project delivers maximum benefits for all and the greatest value possible. This is clearly set out in our Inclusive Design Policy.

We encourage an approach to design that means our stations, depots and rolling stock will be designed around the people using them. This approach recognises diversity and difference between individual users and seeks a design which offers an equitable experience. This is clearly set out in the Inclusive Design Policy, which identifies the design is an integral part of the design and development process at all stages of a project.

We have an on-going engagement with the Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP). During 2022/23, BEAP reviews have included the developing car parking and public realm designs for Interchange station, and the developing designs for the station seating. Now construction has started at Curzon Street station, we are planning our next BEAP consultations as we develop the detailed designs for the station.



An artist's impression of Interchange station in Solihull, West Midlands.



# Inclusive design and operations

## Case study

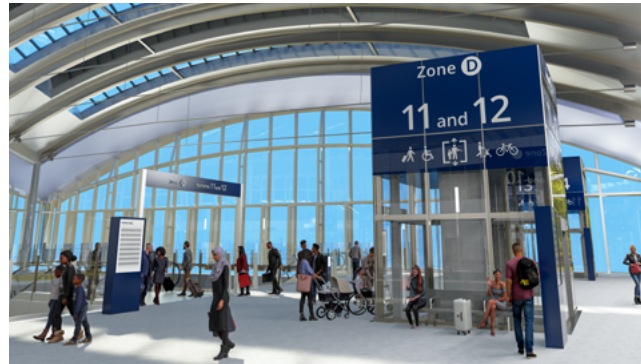
### Inclusive Environments Recognition Certificate

HS2 Ltd is the first infrastructure company to be awarded Inclusive Environments Recognition certification at organisational level by the Construction Industry Council (CIC).

The award acknowledges the work, led by HS2 Ltd and companies within its supply chain, to ensure Britain's new railway is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all.

The certification is awarded to organisations that support and follow the CIC Essential Principles Guide for Clients, Developers and Contractors. In order to be considered for recognition from CIC, organisations must submit the following evidence to show that they support the six essential principles:

1. Appointment of an Inclusive Environmental Champion at board/trustee level
2. The organisation's Inclusive Design Strategy
3. An example of inclusive design requirements included in a project brief and project budget
4. An example of how procurement process have addressed inclusive design



Visualisation of passengers passing through Old Oak Common station.

5. Evidence of the use of access and inclusive design expertise and of consultation with diverse users
6. Evidence of monitoring and appraisal of completed projects to assess outcomes and successes in creating accessible and inclusive environments

The CIC identified that HS2 Ltd is comprehensively embedding inclusivity and inclusive design into its ethos, championing this crucial agenda and being a catalyst for the inclusive delivery of transport systems and infrastructure.

“

**We're absolutely delighted to receive this award. HS2 is the first new railway to be built north of London in over 100 years, so this is a unique opportunity to address the day-to-day challenges that so many passengers face. The CIC has recognised our commitment to ensuring that everyone has a great experience on HS2, whether visiting our stations, travelling on our trains, or working in our depots. Our spaces are designed with a 'people first' approach and we're exceptionally proud of that.”**

**Neil Smith**

Inclusive Design Lead at HS2 Ltd

# Inclusive design and operations

## Case study

### A new standard for health and well-being

HS2 Ltd has strategic goals for setting new standards for customer experience and health and safety in the operation of the railway and therefore requires its designers to take an inclusive design approach so that infrastructure is designed for the people who use it, both customers and staff. Providing quiet spaces for people from religious and non-religious backgrounds, and people with different neurological backgrounds is essential to this.

Existing standards recommend spaces are provided. However, these are insufficiently developed to allow a consistent approach across HS2's stations. HS2 Ltd therefore commissioned research to assess user requirements, determine space provisions and develop a specification for use by station designers. The output of the research provides a standard design approach for customer and staff facilities, defines sizes for stations, and includes a sizing method which can be adapted for other facilities.

Providing quiet spaces can help remove barriers to using the transport network by customers, and to employment for staff. Such a provision is fully aligned with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which sets out how HS2 Ltd and its suppliers will address the needs of people who have protected characteristics as specified within The Equality Act (2010).

The specification is now included in the HS2 standards baseline for Phase One and is in the process of being implemented in the station designs.



Indicative layout plan for a customer quiet room facility.



## Part Four

# Communities





# Communities

**We aspire to respect the diverse people and communities we affect as we build the new railway. We know that planning and building the railway disrupts the lives of local people and we always try to reduce disruption as much as possible. This section explains how we engage with diverse communities along the HS2 route and share the opportunities the project brings, from education programmes, to jobs, skills and apprenticeships.**

## Respecting people, Respecting places

Our Community Engagement strategy, Respecting people, Respecting places, acknowledges the affect that the project has on people's lives as construction increases between Birmingham and London. The strategy includes our 10 community commitments to reflect the issues most important to the people whose lives we affect.

You can view the strategy here:  
[gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-ltds-community-engagement-strategy](https://gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-ltds-community-engagement-strategy)

## Case study

### Specialist support services

We are serious about our responsibilities and do our best to design and build HS2 in ways that reduce the impact of our construction work.

However, we recognise that some residents require additional support to understand complex issues. Some people also need support to articulate the impact the project is having on them and their health. We therefore have a range of specialist support services for vulnerable people or people who require additional support as a result of HS2 construction activity, including an independent advocacy service. The service provides independent support to people whose personal circumstances, disability, or long-term medical conditions impact on their ability to self-advocate. The service provides advice, signposting, and additional assistance in understanding our documentation and completing paperwork. So far, 103 people have received support from the advocacy service.

In the last financial year, 86% of service users who responded to a feedback survey on the service reported that they were 'very satisfied' with the support they are receiving.

“

**Thank you for all the support, you were very helpful, chased up answers, and explained things clearly. You were helpful in every way.”**

#### Service user

March 2024

We also continue to consider and provide tailored mitigations to individual members of the public who may have specific needs and where the range of support we already have in place does not provide them with adequate protection from our construction works. We have set up a panel, which includes independent and expert members, to oversee and manage the way these cases are assessed. The panel considers the individual circumstances of the case, and, where appropriate, seeks to find alternative solutions and implement reasonable adjustments. To date, we have supported 231 households with additional and bespoke mitigations, including 77 in the 23/24 financial year.



# Communities

## Community Environment and Business and Local Economy Funds

The £40 million HS2 Community Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF) opened in 2017. This funding is available to local communities and businesses that are demonstrably disrupted by the construction of Britain's new high-speed railway between the West Midlands and London.

Community charity Groundwork UK independently administer the funds.

To date, £16.09m has been awarded to 285 projects across Phase One and Phase 2a.

Note: Funding for Phase 2a closed for applications in November 2023 following the Government announcement in October 2023 to cancel Phase 2 of HS2.

### Case study

#### Scamps Playgroup (CEF)

Scamps Playgroup is a community group that is located in Whitacre Heath, Warwickshire.

The group received a CEF award of £25,344 to provide a weekly play and support group for children with additional needs and their families. Scamps Playgroup provides a safe, supportive, non-judgemental environment for children to flourish and parents to relax. The sessions are planned, co-ordinated and run by an experienced SEND teacher and provide a place where families can interact with other carers dealing with SEND and use specialist sensory equipment. They also provide a toy library, lending specialist sensory equipment to the families.



Scamps Playgroup.

### Case study

#### Bikeworks CIC (CEF)

Bikeworks is a Community Interest Company (CIC) in London. They provide access to cycling to increase physical activity, wellbeing, and connectivity, with environmental impact interwoven throughout.

The charity received a CEF award of £56,426 to enable people to make utility and leisure trips on a side-by-side four-seater 'Fun2Go' cycle. These cycles are controlled by trained 'pilots' and people can choose whether to pedal. The project offers a cycling experience for older, lonely and less mobile people, and people with a disability who may not be able to access cycling using a standard bicycle. This project is being delivered in Hammersmith, Ealing and North Kensington.



The Ride Side by Side (RSBS) project, which is supported by CEF funding.

# Communities

## Case study

### Doorstep Library (CEF)

Doorstep Library is a registered charity in Victoria, London, but their project is based in Hammersmith and Fulham. They are a community-focused literacy charity dedicated to bringing the magic of books and the joy of reading directly into the homes of children.

The charity received a CEF award of £58,839 to continue their service and increase their volunteer numbers in the Old Oak and White City estates in order to reach out to more children on their waiting lists and respond to the increased need in the area. The project is dedicated to ending the cycle of illiteracy-induced poverty by establishing a foundation of reading for pleasure in the lives of children living in disadvantaged areas. They work with children from birth to 11 years old and their families.

Their trained volunteers visit families in pairs, knocking on doors carrying backpacks filled with books, and bring stories into the homes of children and families on a weekly basis during term time. Reading sessions consist of 20-minute slots, and volunteers will read with up to four families per evening. Volunteers visit families for as long as their work is valued and valuable. This ongoing support for children has a deep and long-lasting impact. It also allows the volunteer to build a trusted relationship and further help the family by signposting to other resources.

## Case study

### Sähëli Hub (CEF)

Sähëli Hub is a registered charity in Balsall Heath, Birmingham. It is dedicated to improving community health and wellbeing by providing innovative services and solutions that educate, motivate, inspire and empower.

The charity received a CEF award of £74,995 to expand their services and meet the demand for the provision of health and wellbeing activities for men across Alum Rock, Washwood Heath and Ward End. They deliver regular sessions in community settings such as parks and community centres, organising weekly social clubs, moderate exercise sessions, seated cycling activities and cycling sessions around Ward End Park.



Sähëli Hub group members cycling in Ward End Park.



# Communities

## Case study

### Skills and training opportunities at Euston Skills Centre

HS2 is at peak construction and is supporting 31,000 jobs. We are attracting people to the project workforce who might never have considered careers in construction or transport, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds, women and people with disabilities.

More than 4,500 people who were previously not in employment have now started work on HS2 and have stayed in employment for 26 weeks or more.

A new centre built to upskill communities living close to HS2's Euston station site was officially opened in a ceremony attended by the then Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP. The Euston Skills Centre, which opened its doors to students in February 2024, was constructed by the HS2 team and its operation is part-funded by HS2 Ltd.

Camden Council hosted a launch event celebrating the new facility which will deliver skills training to students from the local area. The centre will help with workforce requirements for infrastructure and housing in Camden, as well as HS2.

Situated on the site of the old Maria Fidelis School overlooking the HS2 station site, students will benefit from close proximity to the HS2 project. HS2 Ltd's station construction partner, Mace Dragados

joint venture (MDJV), completed the construction of the centre which spans two floors with a mix of workshops and classrooms. Some utility services and systems exposed nearby will act as a learning aid for students initially.

Camden Council is an official HS2 Jobs Brokerage Partner and working with HS2's contractors MDJV and SCS JV, there has already been success in schemes such as fast-track job training programmes which support local unemployed people into a new career. The new Euston Skills Centre will be at the centre of this work in the future.

Speaking at the launch event, the then Rail Minister, Huw Merriman MP said:

"The benefits of HS2 go far beyond the 140 miles of improved connectivity it's set to deliver when complete, it has also supported tens of thousands of jobs and over 1,500 apprenticeships, providing an incredible opportunity for young people starting their careers. This new centre, supported by £4.1 million of funding, will play a vital role in skilling up the next generation, encouraging more people to consider a career in infrastructure and helping deliver the country's biggest rail project."



Students working at the launch of the Euston Skills Centre.



Huw Merriman, Lord Hendy, Cllr Georgia Gould and Jules Pipe cutting the ribbon at the launch of the Euston Skills Centre, which was built and part funded by HS2.

# Communities

## Case study

### Recruitment hubs in the West Midlands

HS2 Ltd's innovative approach to the development of its Job Brokerage Service continued in the form of three new dedicated recruitment hubs in the West Midlands. Working in close collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the hubs will capitalise on the continuing employment opportunities generated by HS2 in the West Midlands.

The new recruitment hubs are co-located within the Washwood Heath, Birmingham Central and Chelmsley Wood Job Centres – close to the three key sites where HS2 will be bolstering its workforce. They are used to advertise new jobs on the project and provide prospective candidates with the opportunity to meet face-to-face with recruiters.

**“HS2 is all about changing lives and creating new opportunities and years before the first trains arrive in the region, it's evident what a difference this project is making. There are lots of exciting milestones on the horizon, and we're focused on ensuring that even more people who are out of work benefit from the opportunities ahead.”**

**Natalie Penrose**  
Head of legacy



HS2 Recruitment Hub.

# Communities

## Case study

### Supporting over 4,500 people into employment

In January 2024, 19-year-old Millie Bayliss from Kingstanding, Birmingham, became the 4,000th unemployed person to secure a job on the project.

Having made the tough decision not to go to university, Millie was out of work for eight months. She heard about the opportunity to work on HS2 after former school colleagues and family members' recommendations. Within just three weeks of applying, she was welcomed into the team.

Millie joined HS2's construction partner for the region, Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV), as facilities assistant but in just six months, she secured a promotion and progressed into a new role as data support analyst.

Millie now works alongside a team of engineers to update and maintain 4D models of BBV's intricate engineering works, ensuring records are maintained and all works are recorded in line with safety and environmental standards.

**“**Joining HS2 has been a life-changing experience for me as I've found my passion and have been welcomed into the construction industry. Working in Balfour Beatty VINCI has allowed me to progress to the next stage of my career within just six months, and with the exciting projects and opportunities ahead, I couldn't imagine a better place to build my career, learn and grow.”

**Millie Bayliss**

Data support analyst at Balfour Beatty VINCI



Millie Bayliss.





# Communities

## Inspiring the next generation

### Case study

#### Work experience in partnership with the Social Mobility Foundation

In summer 2023, HS2 Ltd hosted its biggest work experience programme to date. To reach a range of young talent, we partnered with the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF), a charity which aims to make a practical improvement in social mobility for young people.

A total of 60 students joined us at four offices and sites (Snow Hill, Podium, Albany House and Old Oak Common) to learn more about the UK's biggest infrastructure project.

Our education programme prioritises young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and groups that are under-represented in the transport infrastructure sector. Of the students who completed the summer work experience programme, 35% identified as female and those who completed a diversity monitoring form (39 students) were from 12 different ethnicities.

A total of 49 students completed a post work experience survey. Of the respondents, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that they could understand how their skills and career interests related to the transport and infrastructure sector and 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the placement was useful for their career.

Ria and Anne joined us on a work experience placement and were hosted by Daniel Kitcher. After an induction day with the education team, they were introduced to the world of risk management, finance and a range of other disciplines by staff from different teams and directorates.

Ria's favourite part of the week was 'engaging and learning about various stakeholders involved in the HS2 process.' Whilst Ria is a budding economist or politician, she learned that 'this experience has shown that you do not have to work for a financial company directly to work as an economist, as there are many people working in finance, law, politics and other interesting areas.'

Anne is hoping to develop a 'career that comprises design, artificial intelligence and engineering.' Her favourite part of the experience was '...working in teams and collaborating to bring an idea to life and presenting it to the supervisors. The interactive and project management skills involved in these tasks were enjoyable throughout the week.' Anne also went away with a different view of how she could meet her career goals and noted that 'The experience has broadened my understanding of the different engineering pathways that I could take in the future.'

Daniel referred students and supervised over both weeks.

“

**I signed up as I think it is important to mentor and support young students to know about HS2 and their future career pathway. I knew the programme would help the students to gain some form of experience and increase their knowledge to enable them to make effective decision in their career choices. Additionally, I believe as HS2 staff, I have the opportunity to give back to the community.”**

**Daniel Kitcher**

Risk manager



# Communities

## Case study

### Epic Engineers

EPIC Engineers is a day-long STEM workshop usually delivered to 60 students in Year 7 to 9 (11 to 14 years old).

The workshop brings real world context to STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and provides students with a chance to explore career opportunities in transport infrastructure. The workshop also helps students recognise their own essential skills and inspires them to become EPIC – Extraordinary People Initiating Change.

During the day, the students work in teams on two core activities. In ‘stations of the future’, they consider future trends and customer experience as they design an inclusive and sustainable train station that will meet the needs of customers of the future. They design their station on paper then pitch their ideas to the class. In ‘tunnel builders’, they apply their knowledge of forces to design and make a cut and cover tunnel structure using just paper straws and masking tape. The tunnels are then weighed and tested, with the winning tunnel being the lightest structure that can bare the load to encourage efficient use of materials.

From April 1st 2023 to March 31st 2024, we delivered 64 EPIC workshops in schools.



Students from Stoke-on-Trent Co-op Academy working on their tunnels.

# HS2

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