

Press release: HS2 marks National Apprenticeship Week by launching its search for apprentices

Work can now begin on Britain's new railway after the first phase of the route between the Midlands and London secured Royal Assent last month. High Speed Two (HS2) will create around 25,000 jobs during construction as well as 2,000 apprenticeships. It will also support growth in the wider economy, worth an additional 100,000 jobs.

HS2 apprentices will develop skills in areas such as engineering and project management, while getting paid to play a part in building Europe's largest infrastructure scheme which will create more space on our congested railways for passengers and freight and improve connections between the biggest cities and regions.

The launch of the HS2 Ltd apprenticeship scheme comes as former apprentice and newly appointed CEO, Mark Thurston joins HS2 Ltd. As a former Transport for London apprentice, Mark is understandably a strong advocate of the apprenticeship scheme.

Commenting on HS2 Ltd's apprenticeship scheme, Mark said:

My own career path demonstrates that apprenticeships can lead to a rewarding career, and I'm delighted that HS2 is playing its part in creating a talent pool for the future. Our commitment to creating 2,000 apprenticeships across the project will play a key role in the development of a highly-skilled workforce in the high speed rail industry.

HS2's apprenticeship scheme marks a commitment by the company to bring new people into the business and create meaningful career opportunities that combine work experience with recognised qualifications.

The application process for the first 26 Level 3-4 vacancies opens today, with career opportunities in project planning, project management, project controls and procurement. Twenty of the posts will be based at HS2 Ltd's headquarters in Birmingham, with the remaining 6 positions based in London.

HS2 Ltd is keen to encourage a diverse range of candidates. The vacancies are open to everyone from school leavers to parents returning to work, or those looking for a new challenge. To qualify, candidates must hold 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths.

All successful candidates will start in post from September 2017.

HS2 is playing a key role in implementing the Transport Infrastructure Skills

Strategy, delivering 30,000 apprenticeships in roads and rail by 2020 and gender parity by 2030.

Data farming provides new insights on soil fertility

Scientists from the British Geological Survey and NRM Laboratories have found a novel way of using soil data to assess soil fertility. Maps show that the pattern of more acidic soils – which can reduce soil fertility – increasingly reflect geology and typical rainfall patterns across England and Wales. In recent years, less agricultural lime has been added to farmers' fields to neutralise soil acidity.

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News story: MMO support second round of EMFF England FLAG launch events

Cornwall FLAG will hold their launch event at Looe on 10 March 2017, closely followed by Dorset and East Devon on 13 March 2017 at Weymouth. North of Tyne will then launch at North Shields on 16 March 2017 and finally on 17 March 2017 North Thames will hold their event in Leigh on Sea.

The launches mark a significant step in the progression of the FLAG community led local development strategies after six FLAGs were awarded £800,000 under

the EMFF scheme, and the four FLAGs follow [Holderness and Hastings FLAGs](#) who launched in January.

Commenting on the FLAG launches Michelle Willis (MMO Director of Finance and EU) said:

“Senior MMO staff will attend all of the FLAG launches to show our support for the critical work of the FLAGs. The strategies being pursued by all of the FLAGs will make a significant contribution to fisheries, industry and the wider community.

I personally find it very rewarding to follow the progress of the FLAGs and to see the difference EMFF funding is making to individuals and business. Both the journey of the FLAGs and a focus on projects funded by EMFF is available on our [Marine Developments Blog](#).”

[Clean heating system to cover 700 villages in Beijing](#)

Electric devices are replacing coal stoves as the major heating source among Beijing’s rural families.

This year, about 700 villages in Beijing are going to be installed with electric heating systems, which can eradicate the pollution caused by the burning of charcoal.

“We had to carry coal home several times throughout the winter in the past and the courtyard was usually spotted with clusters of cinder,” said Liu Yuming, a rural villager who recently received the service to upgrade the family heating system with electric facilities.

According to the Beijing Municipal Agricultural Commission, the electric heating devices come in diversified designs for the different decorations of each household. By using the Internet of Things, the families installed with the new instruments can check the quantity of water flow and the internal and external temperatures on the platform of WeChat.

According to Liu, after being revamped with electric heating devices, the entire house looks much cleaner.

For those whose families have not been equipped with the electric heating system, the municipality is providing a number of processed clean coals.