

News story: Transport investment boost to apprenticeships and skills

Up to 35,000 apprenticeship opportunities are set to be created over the next 5 years thanks to major investment in road and rail infrastructure and technology, a report published today (12 July 2017) has revealed.

In the past year the road and rail sector has delivered more than 2,000 new apprenticeships – and it's expected this number could rise to between 5,000 and 8,000 every year to 2022. Large-scale projects such as HS2 and a focus on new technology and cyber security is set to increase demand for transport skills – in particular in civil engineering, traffic management and digital technology. The proposed expansion of Heathrow could also bring opportunities for an extra 10,000 apprentices across the country.

The [industry report charts the progress of the government's transport investment skills strategy](#), highlighting how the government and transport bodies, including Network Rail and Highways England are rising to the challenge of meeting demand, including:

- better quality apprenticeships, leading to highly skilled jobs, including working with Investors in People on quality standards for employers
- supporting people already working in transport to gain new skills, as well as returners to the industry and those looking for a career change
- investment in jobs and skills written into contracts and rail franchise agreements
- driving greater diversity in the industry
- identifying exactly where and when different jobs and skills will be needed
- working with schools to encourage routes into transport careers

Transport minister John Hayes welcomed the report:

Making our transport infrastructure the best in the world will build business and change lives for the better. Just as putting apprenticeships at the heart of this investment will seed opportunities for thousands of people. This government is taking the big transport decisions for Britain's future like HS2 and Heathrow, delivering the biggest investment in roads and rail for a generation and equipping individuals and businesses with the skills they need to make all this happen. Better journeys creating jobs, driving investment, nurturing the common good and serving the national interest.

Nichola Wright, a signalling technician and former apprentice for Network Rail, said:

Being an apprentice meant I could gain qualifications and learn my craft out on the track, all while earning a wage. I sing the praises of apprenticeships to everyone I meet, as it has given me opportunities beyond what I could have imagined and the chance of an incredible career.

Keeta Rowlands is a marine operations apprentice in Southampton.

Every day is different for me whether it is trying to communicate through language barriers, or organising ships through gaps in huge yacht races. The maritime industry isn't just driving ships. There are so many roles, opportunities and challenges.

Chair of the Strategic Transport Apprenticeship Taskforce and Commissioner at Transport for London, Mike Brown, said:

The transport sector is delivering on its promise to address the skills challenges we are facing. Skilled apprentices are vital for the future of business and it is right that the transport sector should be leading work across government.

The [Strategic Transport Apprenticeship Taskforce was set up in April 2016](#) to deliver the commitments made in the government's transport investment skills strategy. Members include the Department for Transport, Network Rail, the Rail Delivery Group, Highways England, Transport for London, Heathrow, HS2 Ltd and the Trades Union Congress.