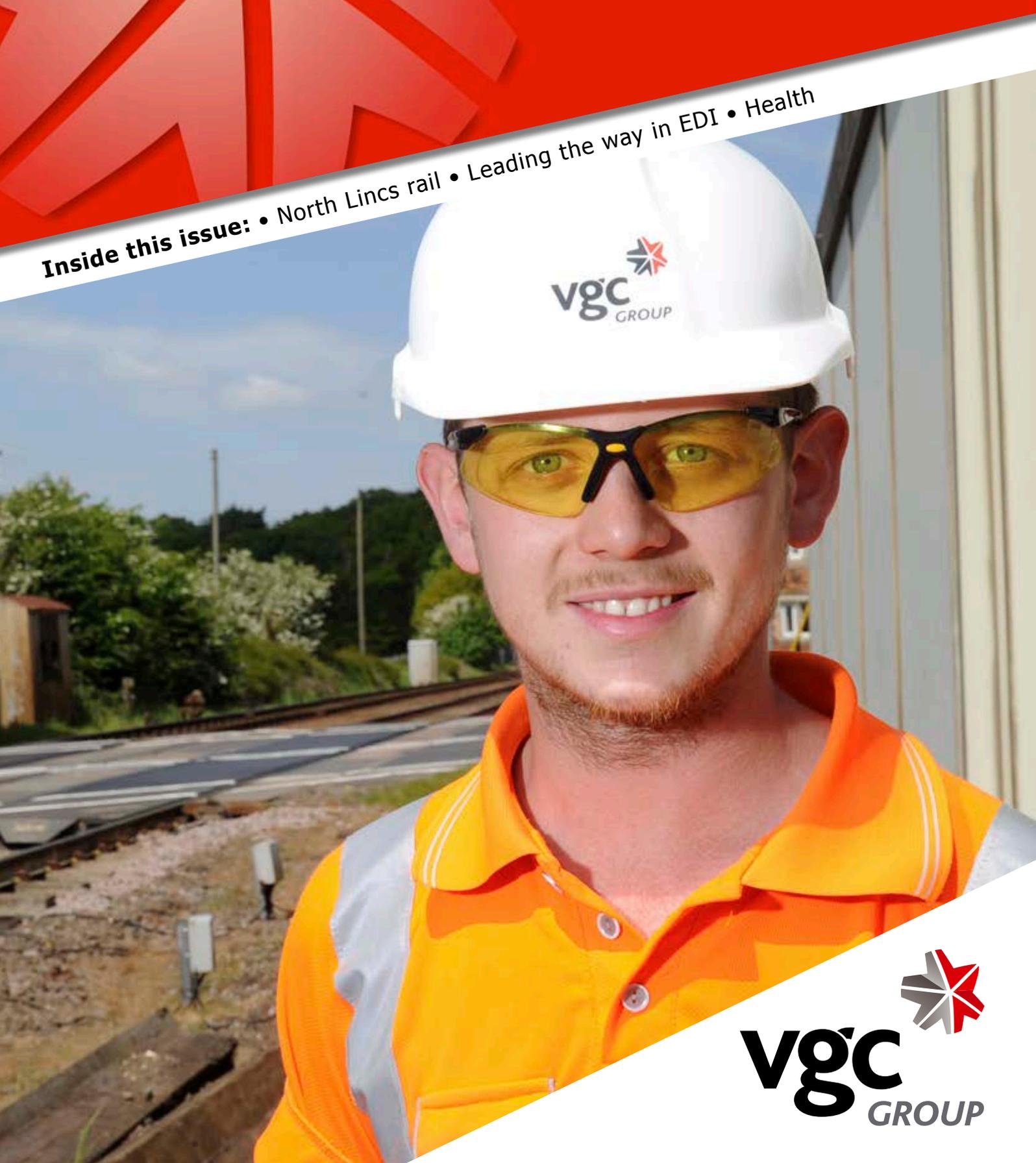


ISSUE SEVEN – AUTUMN 2015

outperformance

People, projects and services for the construction industry

Inside this issue: • North Lincs rail • Leading the way in EDI • Health





VGC's contribution to major north Lincolnshire rail upgrade

VGC Labour Solutions has been involved in the £88 million Network Rail upgrade of north Lincolnshire's railways since February 2014. As one of the main labour suppliers to principal contractor Siemens, we are providing nearly 50 people including skilled trades and supervisors - a significant part of the overall workforce.

The project involves:

- 16 level crossings
- 60 miles of track
- 90 new signal sites
- 150 tonnes of concrete
- 300 signalling equivalent units
- 500 km of cabling

The north Lincolnshire resignalling project, operated out of offices in North Killingholme, is part of Network Rail's planned programme of enhancements for 2014 – 2019. The programme includes modernising the signalling system used to control train movements. This will improve the reliability and facilitate a more flexible operation of train services.

VGC teams have been working to upgrade 16 level crossings, replacing the old-style gates with new automatic barrier systems that will reduce operating costs and improve safety. In addition, the VGC workforce is providing all the infrastructure for the warning light and siren signal systems to be installed by Siemens. The old manually operated signal boxes that currently control the level crossings are also being secured and made safe.

"While some of the work can be undertaken while the trains are running, most has to take place overnight and at weekends to minimise disruption to travellers," said Graham Piggott, director of the northern division of VGC Labour Solutions. "Each level crossing can take up to two weeks to complete because it is essential to get these safety-critical installations absolutely right."

The scheme also includes renewing and re-controlling approximately 60 miles of signalling between Scunthorpe and Cleethorpes with modern and reliable equipment. VGC teams are delivering the civil engineering works, including sub-cable routes, equipment bases and walking routes. VGC is also erecting warning and information signs.

The Network Rail project also includes a new bridge to improve rail links and support growth at the busy Humberside port of Immingham, which is the fastest growing port in the UK. Each week the port's current rail infrastructure handles more than 260 rail freight movements.

When complete, the system will be controlled by Network Rail's York rail operating centre. The new systems will be commissioned at the end of the project during a 17-day blockade over Christmas 2015, including a rare five-day shutdown of the rail network supporting Immingham Port.

VGC is also involved in a similar scheme for Siemens in Crewe, where a team of 20 VGC people is expected to be involved until the end of this year.



“ We’re upskilling people, who are learning while they work, to gain life-long qualifications in a career which can offer so many opportunities. With the industry shortage of skilled workers, we expect our investment to pay dividends for us and for them. ”

Laura Perry, HR manager

Pradeep, Michelle, Alan and Raja from the east Kent office

Equality, diversity and inclusion - VGC at the forefront

The VGC Group is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our business, from recruitment to service provision.

VGC’s high standing in the National Equality Register is testament to our work in removing barriers to employment and development for people from under-represented groups.

Close working relationships with Jobcentre Plus and local labour brokerages, in addition to recruitment open days near key projects, encourage applications from within nearby communities and ensure the workforce is representative of the local population. For example, on the M1 junction 19 project (featured in the spring 2015 issue of *Outperformance*), no VGC worker travels more than 45 minutes to work, thus benefitting the environment, people’s work-life balance and local businesses.

As part of VGC’s talent management, all staff are supported to meet their training and development goals. VGC Training, rated ‘outstanding’ by NSARE, uses a database to flag when workers’ qualifications need to be renewed or updated. Extra support is provided for anyone who needs help with literacy, language and numeracy skills, including those who speak English as a second language.

Currently, over 50 workers across the country are achieving NVQ qualifications through VGC. These are in a wide range of subjects including bricklaying, formwork, general construction, plant operation, and supervisor and project management up to NVQ level 6.

NVQs focus on practical assessments covering relevant skills and knowledge rather than written tests. NVQ assessors visit people on site to help them put together the required portfolios; VGC supervisors and office staff assist with administration. Support includes DVDs and help with written assignments so that even those with weak literacy skills can achieve the qualifications.

VGC’s investment in its people is demonstrated by the regular promotions on site as well as in the office. Staff clearly appreciate the opportunities for career progression: 30 per cent of all employees have been with VGC for more than five years. It is not surprising therefore, that in June VGC received the inaugural Infrastructure 21 CECA/NCE Training Award.

An innovative partnership between GP Strategies and VGC helps unemployed people from deprived areas of Glasgow into work. After a day-long introduction to the industry, they attend a three-week training course, which culminates in a PTS (personal track safety) qualification and those who pass are taken on to begin a rewarding and long-term career working on rail projects.

safety

Putting the 'health' in health and safety



As well as the innovative 'Be Safe by Choice' behavioural safety programme, which has seen close-call and near-miss reports more than double since 2013, VGC also aims to improve the health of its workers.

Each Be Safe brief, shared monthly with all operational staff, includes advice on occupational health, which is an important part of the wellbeing of our workforce.

VGC also arranges free health checks at sites across the country to encourage workers to take responsibility for their health. Sessions are arranged at convenient times during the working day. Tests available include measuring BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. Results are then discussed in confidence with a qualified medical practitioner who can offer appropriate advice.

“ Thank you for the medical. I've wanted to get one for a long time, so much appreciated. ”

One staff member tested recently said, "I've changed my lifestyle completely as a result of the health check. It was a bit of a shock when the nurse took my blood pressure and gave me the result. I've made changes to what I eat and now have much more fruit and vegetables, and have cut out pastries and cakes." He has also returned to martial arts training, which he used to enjoy when younger, and he has noticed that his mental wellbeing is better, as well as his physical health.

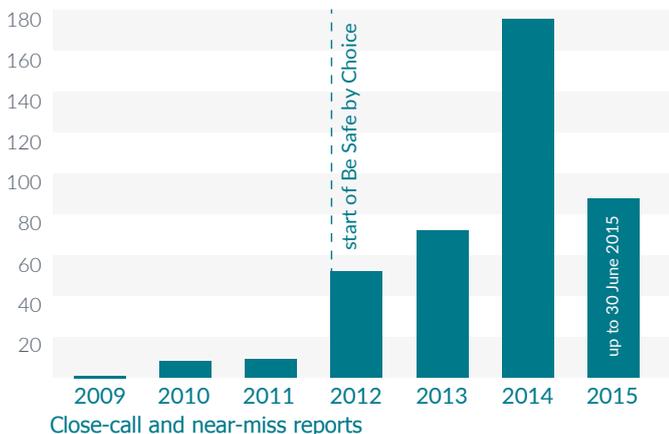
Aggregated test results from across the company suggest that many people would like to adjust their lifestyles to include eating more healthily and taking more exercise. Among the practical outcomes is a 30-day summer fitness and nutrition challenge organised by Laura Kenneally at Cardinal House.

VGC also encourages sports participation as part of a healthy lifestyle, sponsoring football and rugby teams and supporting individual staff such as Jack Ridley, who recently won a bronze medal in the World Muai Thai Boxing Championships.

Safety statistics

Hours worked over last 12 months	1,066,085
Days since last RIDDOR reportable accident	77
Hours worked since last reportable accident	730,607
12 month RIDDOR AFR*	0.14

As of 30 June 2015. *Accidents per 100,000 hours worked



BE SAFE WITH vgc



Welcome to 11 new key influencers who attended the intensive three-day training course run by Steve Wiskins of Inspiring Safety Solutions.

Commendations

Thanks and congratulations to all of our 'outperformers'.

Balfour Beatty

Balfour Beatty Rail commended Norman Wood on his good work and positive attitude on the north west rail electrification scheme.

Network Rail

Network Rail thanked

- Austin Harrison, Drew Harrison, Austin Harrison Jr and Michael Oates for "their continued dedication" to rail delivery
- Adam Hards and Sascha Rogers for their "excellent work" also on rail delivery
- Graham Walker, Colin Southam, Les Molyneaux, Darren Oxley and Kevin Gaskell for their work on the north-west electrification scheme.

COSTAIN

SKANSKA

Pastorel Caplea received an environmental award for his work on the Costain-Skanska JV Bond Street Crossrail project.

ATKINS

The Atkins SAG (Safety Action Group) gave Shane Jupp's team the January 2015 safety award for safe and orderly work at Gillingham for the East Kent resignalling project. Luke Silver was nominated in December for the award and Jedd Carey for the February award. In addition, Paddy Collins received an Atkins award for his ongoing contribution to H&S in the stores compound.

ferrovial agroman

Ferrovial Agroman presented safety awards to workers at Heathrow:

- Elias Woldeyes for security, and for checking the taxiway for foreign objects
- Carl Hardy for good and safe work
- Jaskaran Singh for overseeing H&S and for good work on site.

SIEMENS

Graham Piggott and John Daly were thanked by Siemens for excellent performance on the north Lincs resignalling project.

AWTG LIMITED

AWTG thanked Tadgh Bolgar for 'doing a great job' on the University of Surrey 5GIC project.



Tadgh Bolgar, University of Surrey 5GIC project

What is ICI?

The Industry Common Induction (ICI) is a rail industry briefing initiative that covers safety procedures and risks that are common across the UK rail network.

Developed by Network Rail in partnership with the Infrastructure Safety Liaison Group and the Rail Infrastructure Assurance Group, ICI provides a consistent health and safety induction for working on railway construction sites, rail depots and station maintenance.

Because the ICI covers the general induction information that is common to all rail work, site-specific inductions can focus on the risks and hazards particular to the job and the location. It will save time by avoiding duplication of briefings, and it provides clear records of the workforce both trackside and non-trackside.

It is expected that ICI will become the entry-level competence for those working in the rail industry. As a sponsor, VGC has already registered over 120 of its rail staff onto the ICI module.

The self-paced e-learning module is followed by an online assessment that must take place at an approved assessment centre. (VGC has two approved assessment centres: in west London and Manchester.) When both elements have been completed successfully, the ICI competence is added to the individual's Sentinel smartcard.

For more information about ICI, see www.vgcgroup.co.uk/ici



Outperformance awards:

The first winners of our new monthly safety inspection form competition were John Daly, Mark Beer, Ian Keen, Nick Wells and James Callaghan.

In the rail delivery team, Stuart Riley received a safety award and Alan Axon and Paul Gregory received VGC driver safety awards.

Outperformance awards were given to Joseph Atherton, Chantal Austin, Alex Dalton, Laura Edwards, Daniel Macuica, John McGarry, Julie Norris, Wayne Pleasant, Chris Ryan, Tony Travaskis and Natalie Wood.



Working collaboratively as a whole project team has ensured the project has been delivered efficiently and to high standards.

Sean Thompson – delivering quality to our rail projects

Ensuring that VGC delivers consistent quality day in, day out is the responsibility of VGC Rail Projects' quality manager, Sean Thompson. He has most recently been working on Network Rail's East Kent re-signalling project, where VGC Rail Projects is a key partner of main contractor Atkins.

Speaking with the authority of 23 years' engineering experience, Sean ranks East Kent "among the most challenging projects" that VGC has undertaken.

"We worked alongside Atkins to ensure the civil engineering design and construction aligns with the signalling installation and commissioning. Working collaboratively in this way as a whole project team has ensured the project has been delivered efficiently and to high standards."

Attention to detail is fundamental to Sean's role, whether it is doing design checks, reviewing engineering drawings and work planning schedules or supervising the work of others.

His responsibilities have included mentoring two young civil engineers assigned to the project as part of VGC's Institution of Civil Engineers' graduate training scheme. "This real-world experience is invaluable for our graduates' future careers," he says.

Sean started working with VGC in 2011, and he is delighted to see railway-related projects contributing so significantly to the company's business.

An early experience of tunnelling was the catalyst that shaped Sean's future career. "A friend of mine, who had graduated from the Camborne School of Mines in Cornwall, was working as the section engineer on the marine tunnel north on the Channel Tunnel, where I was offered a role and got involved with the TBM (tunnel boring machine). That experience put me on my career path," he explains.

Studying for a degree in architecture further honed his eye for detail and his enthusiasm for construction and engineering. These were enhanced by experience on such diverse projects as the National Theatre in London, the ExCeL centre in London's Royal Victoria Dock, King's Cross western ticket hall, Docklands Light Railway, tunnelling and pipe-jack projects and various London Underground station modernisation and construction projects.

Constructing the ExCeL centre was particularly interesting. Among the more unusual jobs was "building a trial post-tensioned floor slab for testing to destruction in order to validate the chief engineer's analysis."

Along with his interest in railways, Folkestone-born Sean is a family man who has little trouble filling his spare time: "I love music, design, art; lots of things," he says. Over the years he has "played rugby and football, enjoyed karate and swimming", until a damaged knee slowed him down, although he still manages to ski "badly!"

Sean's other spare time activities range from restoring a "beautiful MGA roadster" to converting an old agricultural building in Sardinia into a holiday home. The obvious attention to detail and passion that he invests in these projects is reflected in the level of care he applies to his day job.

That, combined with his enthusiasm and energy, shows why VGC's work on challenging rail projects is in such capable hands.

Contracts update

We have made good progress in meeting our corporate objectives, and in our recent six-month review Managing Director Laurence McKidd commended key achievements.

VGC Rail Projects

- Network Rail has extended VGC's rail delivery contract to the end of March 2016.
- The company has been awarded a £2.2 million contract by Costain to undertake line-of-route and minor civils installations on Crossrail Anglia.

VGC Construction

- AWTG awarded the company the contract to provide bases and cable routes at the University of Surrey's 5G Innovation Centre in Guildford.

VGC Personnel

- VGC Personnel now has ten full-time consultants working in Cardinal House and in central London.
- Among the company's new clients are BAM FM, Mountjoy, Select Surveys, Bellrock and Adston UK.

VGC Labour Solutions

The company has recently secured work on the following projects:

- Nexus – *TXM Rail*
- Scarborough Bridge – *Story Rail*
- Highways maintenance area 10 – *Balfour Beatty-Mott Macdonald joint venture*
- Crossrail tunnel fit-out – *Costain-TSO-Alstom joint venture*
- Thameslink – *Balfour Beatty*
- Heathrow Terminal 5 – *Mace Logistics*
- A34 Milton interchange – *Skanska*
- Deephams – *Kier*

As one of five partner suppliers (selected from over 117 companies) on the newly created Morgan Sindall Labour Desk, we are successfully providing labour to Morgan Sindall contracts.



Developing VGC people

The VGC Group encourages staff to achieve their full potential through a range of internal and external development programmes, and has a policy of promoting suitably qualified internal candidates.

Stephen Burns has been promoted to business development director, and John Hannan has been promoted to HSQE director. Instead of retiring, Terry Dutton-Wells, our previous HSQE Director, continues to support the company with his extensive knowledge and experience as a non-executive director.

Other recent promotions include Theresa Harrington, Joanne O'Hara, Nicki Mason, William Dalton and Nick Wells.

To find out more about recent appointments, please visit www.vgcgroup.co.uk/our-team



John Hannan (L) and Terry Dutton-Wells



Charity update

Our official charity Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research continues to benefit from a variety of fundraising efforts.

Among events and activities in the first half of the year were an office Easter egg hunt, an international food day that involved cuisines from around the world, and a baby photo competition.

VGC's annual charity golf day, which took place as usual at Pedham Place golf club in Kent in May, raised over £1,000 for the fund.

At the end of June, the total raised by VGC staff for the blood cancer charity had reached £5,992.

News in brief

RISQS awards VGC maximum 'five stars'

The Railway Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme (RISQS), formerly Link-up, awarded VGC Rail Projects and VGC Labour Solutions five stars in the March 2015 audit.

Five stars is the highest score that can be achieved and demonstrates that a company's business management processes meet the health, safety, operational and competence standards required for working in the rail environment.

'Contractor of the Year' at Bond Street Station



VGC was named as 'Contractor of the Year 2014' on the Crossrail project at Bond Street Station. Since the project began in January 2014, VGC was named 'Contractor of the Month' more often than any

other contractor working on the project.

Principal contractor Costain Skanska JV measures seven safety areas monthly and awards 'Contractor of the Month' to the company that scores highest. VGC has already come top in the first five months of 2015.

Shortlisted for *Construction News* 'Employer of the Year' award

The VGC Group was one of only eight companies to be shortlisted for the 'Employer of the Year' award in the annual *Construction News* awards.

Announcing the shortlist, *Construction News* said, "Congratulations to all the finalists who have made the cut from a bumper crop of excellent entries – we have a very impressive shortlist. The 'Employer of the Year' award turns the spotlight on diversity and corporate social responsibility as companies rise to the challenge of tackling skill shortages and community engagement."

VGC's training recognised in Infrastructure 21 awards



The VGC Group received the Training category award in the inaugural Infrastructure 21 awards earlier this year.

The awards, which recognise best practice in key supply chain competencies, are part of a new leadership programme by CECA (Civil Engineering Contractors Association) and *New Civil Engineer* magazine.

VGC Group Managing Director Laurence McKidd received the award from Beth West, commercial director of HS2.

Another top from Balfour Beatty in Kent

In March this year VGC came top of the Balfour Beatty subcontractor table for the A21 Tonbridge to Penbury road widening project. The award was based on indicators including shift briefings, toolbox talks and safety suggestions.

Praise from London Power Tunnels

The HSQE inspection on behalf of the London Power Tunnels for the National Grid noted in its report that the VGC site at Earls Court was "a safe well-run site ... they clearly look out for each other."

Get involved – we'd love to hear from you

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 Follow us on LinkedIn (VGC Group)

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