

outperformance

Issue 14 : autumn 2018



HS2 and VGC - the story so far

First milestone 'a job well done'

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vgc



‘A job well done’ in first HS2 milestone

Our teams played a key part in the nine-month project to demolish the former carriage sheds at Euston station.

The demolition, managed by Costain Skanska JV with contractor Keltbray, revealed the site of the approach tunnels for HS2’s London terminal.

HS2’s London programme director, Rob Carr, said: “The demolition of the old carriage sheds marks an important step forward for the project. I’d like to congratulate the team on a job well done and look forward to moving ahead to the next stage.”

As well as our contract with the Costain-Skanska joint venture between Euston and Hillingdon, our teams are working for Siemens on signalling and cabling at Euston. We are also in discussion with the Fusion joint venture for projects between Aylesbury and Birmingham.

At the same time, our professional and technical recruitment team is providing

people to Bechtel for phase two between Birmingham and Manchester.

Clear recognition of our good work

We have begun to reassign workers to HS2 as work is completed on other projects – a process which reflects our commitment to up-skilling our workforce and offering continuous employment wherever possible.

“We went through a tough tender process before being awarded our first HS2 contract,” said VGC’s operations director Chris Ryan. “We see it as clear recognition of our good work on Crossrail and other rail projects across the UK, including the North West electrification project, Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme, Nexus Tyne and Wear Metro, and London Underground Track Partnership.

“We are fortunate to have this huge project



Matt Teasdale

VGC has spent the last two years investing in systems and resources in anticipation of HS2’s vast recruitment demands.



HS2 at a glance:

- 25 train stations connecting eight out of ten of Britain's largest cities
- Expected to bring over £92 billion of benefits
- 25,000 new jobs created to build the railway including 2,000 new apprenticeships
- £40m will be invested to boost local communities
- Faster and easier travel between Britain's economic hubs to connect industries and help bridge the north south divide

Photographs

Front cover, HS2 enabling works in Euston, London for Costain Skanska JV
 Above left, Katy Higgins, labour manager, Colin Young, section foreman
 Above right, Kiaran Houlihan, storeperson

right on our doorstep. Not only are we able to employ local people, but also, given the long-term nature of the project, we can recruit apprentices from local schools and colleges and get them into construction. That will help to address the industry's skills shortage."

Considerable range of expertise

The range of labour and professional expertise required for HS2 is considerable and we have opened a new office in the Midlands to support our partners.

As one of the most important UK infrastructure projects in a generation, we have spent the last two years investing in our systems and resources in anticipation of HS2's vast recruitment demands.

Matt Teasdale, team leader for professional and technical recruitment, explained: "We have had to identify experienced individuals from unusual disciplines such as archaeologists and environmental scientists.

"We've taken an innovative approach to attracting high quality people with the opportunity to offer long term contracts which is an important factor in getting the right people for the project."



(L-R): Andrew English, Skanska managing director, Chris Ryan, VGC operations director, Laurence McKidd, VGC managing director, Thomas Faulkner, Skanska executive vice president

Acting ethically and transparently

VGC was presented with the 'Act Ethically and Transparently' award at the Skanska Supply Chain Conference in September.

The event brought together 150 of Skanska's top infrastructure suppliers and clients and included a panel debate covering digitalisation, ways to deliver high-performing infrastructure and collaborating to mitigate the impact of the skills shortage.

Putting social value at the heart of our CSR

We are putting social value at the heart of our corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy as part of our commitment to being a responsible business.

Swati Patel, VGC's new CSR manager, who has worked in the sector for more than 20 years, said the company's industry-leading commitment to CSR was already delivering tangible results with lots more exciting plans in the pipeline.

Working alongside trusted partners and key stakeholders, VGC's CSR policy is based on three pillars of engagement: attracting new recruits, supporting our existing workforce and supporting the community.

Swati explained: "VGC has always been way ahead of the curve within the construction industry for its commitment to CSR with a real understanding of the benefits to our people, our business and society as a whole.

"We are embracing best practice in CSR, demystifying the construction industry and leaving a tangible legacy for the future."

Recruitment

We work with schools to promote construction careers and help prepare students for the world of work. Our support programmes include ex-offenders and military service leavers in partnership with organisations including BuildForce, MindtheGap and Women into Construction.

Retention

We invest heavily in people's skills, including apprenticeships, mentoring and volunteering. VGC has donated £87,000 to charity over the last six years. Our occupational health and safety programme includes an emphasis on mental health.

Diversity

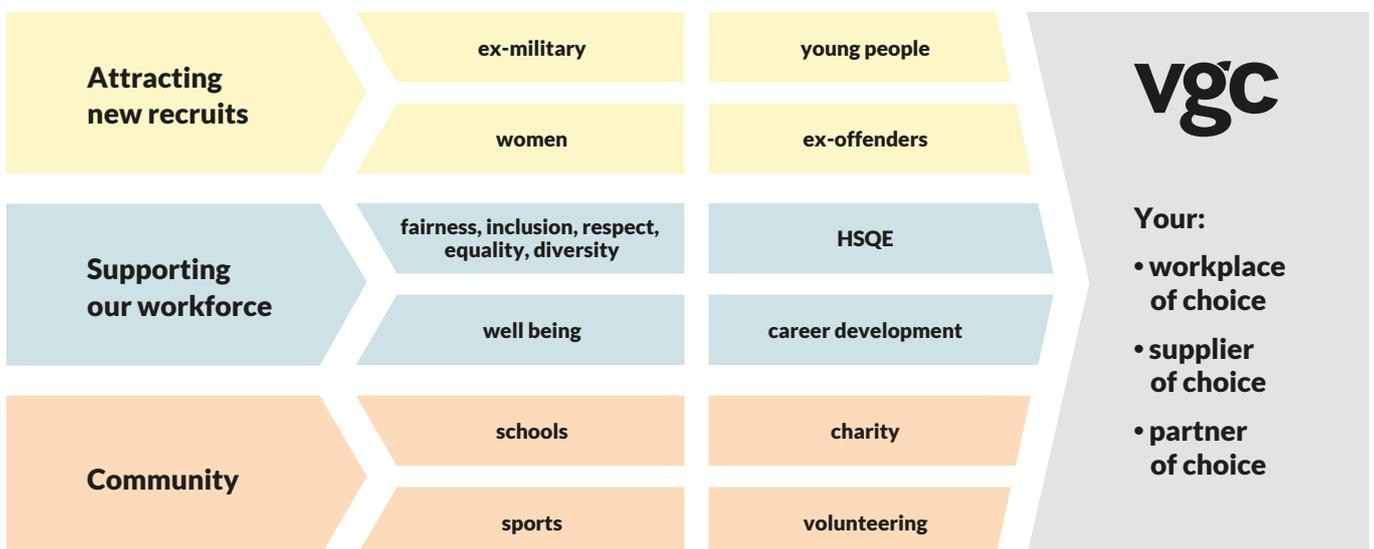
Our fairness, inclusion and respect (FIR) ambassadors and trainers support all our workers. We are the only labour supplier to date to gain the Ethical Labour Sourcing Standard.



Swati Patel, corporate social responsibility manager

"We are embracing best practice in CSR, demystifying the construction industry and leaving a tangible legacy for the future."

CSR plan at a glance





All VGC workers at Sellafeld live within 50 miles of the site

All Together Cumbria

VGC is proud to be a founder partner of the All Together Cumbria social enterprise.

In partnership with Morgan Sindall and Sellafeld, All Together Cumbria (ATC) will provide a collaborative, effective and long term solution to address local employment and broader social development in the county.

At the heart of ATC is a dedicated labour desk which co-ordinates the supply of local people to match demand.

Louise Starkie and George Farquhar at VGC's Cleator Moor office in west Cumbria work closely with the ATC team at Westlakes Science and Technology Park.

Sarah MacGregor, ATC manager, said: "We are thrilled that VGC is on board, and since our launch in April 2018 we have been working together on a number of initiatives aimed at really benefiting our local communities.

"In particular, we were very proud of our recent work with Lakes College in its collaborative application for Construction Industry Training Board funding."

Chris Nattress, principal of Lakes College, said: "Collaborating with All Together Cumbria, VGC, and other major employers enabled us to develop a really strong partnership case for funding.

"We now have a strong model that could support 700 local people who have never worked in construction before to gain access to employment."

Client commendations



Photograph (L to R) Jahid Hussan, banksman slinger, Claudio Valeriu Nedeku, forklift driver, Shegaw Bekaris, groundworker, Fred Pike, traffic management, Sawaran (Monby) Deep, site supervisor, Tommy Carhill, security supervisor, Costain SHE manager Matt Dean, Kulwinderjit Singh, traffic marshal, Andy Smith, supervisor, Fred Idoni, groundworker, Aliona Muschei, welfare keeper, Kevin Rowledge, driver



Costain presented VGC foreman Andy Smith and the team at Goodmayes (pictured) with a SHE award for helping the emergency services and passengers after a passenger incident.

"Thank you for showing VGC and Costain in such a good light. Your on-going support for the project is appreciated. And when you go the extra mile, as you did in this case, we are delighted to acknowledge it."



Lundy Projects' site manager thanked the VGC team working on the Salford Central station upgrade.

"I have noticed how professional they are and how prepared they come to the works. The client has commented to me on numerous occasion how well they are working."



The ATC Systemwide auditor commended VGC's approach to occupational health, describing us as 'a caring organisation' with 'a visibly strong leadership in driving health'.



VGC's Lee Cavill, working on the North West Electrical upgrade, was commended by Siemens for spotting used needles. He marked the area, notified the supervisor and warned the parents of children playing nearby.

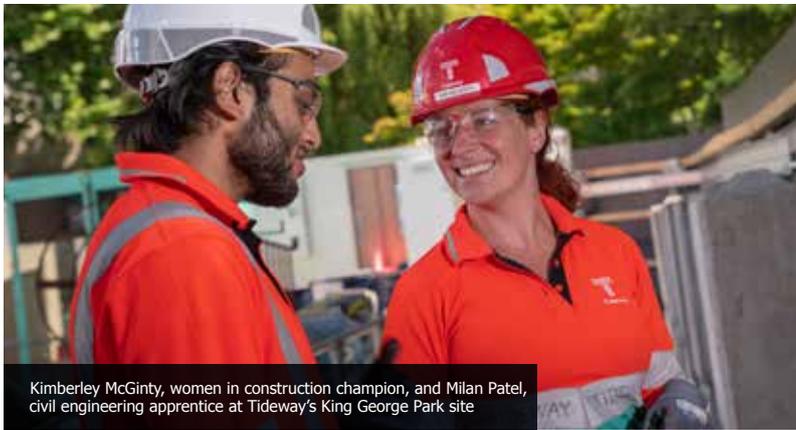


Volker Fitzpatrick's project engineer, for the Crossrail Anglia Route complimented VGC's site manager Donal McCarthy.

"The team has been doing a great job considering the constraints we have on site. Keep it up!"



VGC's key influencer Emmanuel Adetayo working on the London Underground Track Partnership was commended for taking swift action to ensure the safety of his colleagues after an incident on track.



Kimberley McGinty, women in construction champion, and Milan Patel, civil engineering apprentice at Tideway's King George Park site

Pulling together for Thames Tideway

Kimberley McGinty spent a week working on the Thames Tideway Tunnel project to gain insights into the challenges faced by women working in construction and find inspiration to support more female participation in this thriving sector.

After securing her green CSCS card and undergoing a full induction, she joined teams on site for Tideway West, working as a traffic marshal and helping prepare an area for site workers. She said: "The whole approach was about pulling together. We made a team, whether we were experienced or just beginning."

VGC supports the BAM Buttall, Morgan Sindall and Balfour Beatty Joint Venture for Tideway West from Acton to Fulham. We are also supporting Costain, Vinci and Bachy Soletanche on Tideway East, from Bermondsey to Stratford.

See Kimberley's blog about her experience at www.vgcgroup.co.uk/tideway-blog

Client commendations



VGC's Macdonald Onwona, general foreman and lead worksite train controller, won a Crossrail collaboration award jointly with Michael Lee, construction interface manager, for their work on the ATC Systemwide C610 contract.



VGC's Colin Southam, Darren Oxley and Les Molyneux were thanked by Siemens, the police, a train driver and signaller for supporting a vulnerable member of the public who was on the track.



Graham Construction's senior QS at Kew Gardens described our team as "consistent, professional and always go above and beyond to assist."



Ferrovial Agroman's H&S adviser complimented VGC key influencer Richard Nickell for his 'across the board' contribution to the Heathrow Kilo substructure project.

Why we are members of...

the Supply Chain Sustainability School



John Hannan, HSQE director

So, what's the Supply Chain Sustainability School?

It's a partnership of 35 leading construction and engineering companies, plus 10,000 individual members, sharing knowledge and resources to improve

sustainability in the industry. We have Gold member status, and as one of the partners we help to direct the school.

Gold status, that sounds impressive, what does it mean?

Fewer than 1% of members have achieved Supply Chain Sustainability Gold status. It's a measure of engagement with the school, including sharing knowledge with other members, as well as continuously increasing sustainability competence.

Tell us more. We've been involved in the school since it was formed in 2012. It tackles environmental, social and economic sustainability issues. At VGC sustainability is pretty important to us – we believe that business has a central role to play in creating enduring social, environmental and economic well-being and our partnership with the school helps us to achieve that.

Ok, give us some examples. Well it's all pretty much wrapped up in our CSR policy. We call it the three pillars: attracting new recruits, supporting the existing workforce and the wider community.

So what are the highlights of the school membership?

We like to play a positive role in the construction industry. Our clients know we're adhering to best practice and we get to use all the school's resources, for example we use their FIR programme for our onsite team toolbox talks. We are not a business to rest on our laurels; being part of the school helps us to keep moving forward and drives continuous improvement.



Leading the way on apprenticeships

VGC is already ahead of industry targets for recruiting apprentices.

Six per cent of VGC staff are currently enrolled on 'earn and learn' positions at various levels - ahead of industry targets.

As a member of the 5% Club, VGC is committed to having five per cent of its workforce on 'earn and learn' programmes.

"For many years VGC has been committed to the development of its workforce," said Simon Clamp, VGC's learning and development manager.

"As part of our on-going commitment to staff development I am pleased to say we are already ahead of the five per cent apprentice target, with six per cent of our staff enrolled on apprentice schemes at various levels.

"Unlike some employers we pay our apprentices more than the minimum rate - they get the site rate for the trade they have chosen. We believe this is morally right and it gives them the chance to use their earnings to improve their circumstances."

Check out Simon's video about his work to support our apprentices at www.vgcgroup.co.uk/SimonClamp



The 5% Club

The 5% Club is a dynamic movement of employer-members working to create skills and training opportunities across the UK by driving the recruitment of apprentices, sponsored students and graduates.

Apprentice example

Name:
Gurpreet Singh

Apprenticeship:
Level 2 BTEC diploma in Construction Operations and Civil Engineering Services - Highways Maintenance.

Start date: September 2017 on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme.

"I was born in the Punjab region of India and came to this country nine years ago," said Gurpreet. "I joined VGC as a groundworker and my aim is to work my way up through the company - next I want to become a concrete finisher."

Gurpreet's ganger, Satinder Pal Singh (pictured top with Gurpreet), is helping him to learn on the job and he has already been promoted to multi-skilled operative.

"Everyone on the A14 project works together to support each other," said labour manager James Burke. "It's an attitude led by the integrated delivery team general foremen; there's a real feeling of teamwork."



News in brief



Group services director Ciara Pryce has been named one of the top 100 Modern Slavery influencers.

The inaugural 2018 Annual UK Top100 Corporate Modern Slavery Influencers' Index recognises people from all sectors who are leading awareness to end modern slavery and labour exploitation.



Sudarshan Deshmukh has been promoted to IT director.

Sudarshan joined the company 12 years ago and has been instrumental in the development and maintenance of our IT infrastructure across the UK. "I look forward to helping to implement our ambitious plans for growth," he said.



We warmly welcomed new team member, Joe, after he secured his first job in five years following a decade of being homeless.

Joe accessed funding from a homeless crowd-funding platform to train as a slinger signaller and is now working for VGC on the Northern Line extension at Battersea.



Two of our projects won Network Rail star awards this summer.

In the award report Crossrail's senior construction manager noted good practice, including well-managed exclusion zones, at the sites at Gidea Park and Shenfield where VGC is building auto-transformer substations. Client Balfour Beatty's unit director congratulated our teams.



Ion 'George' Panaite, traffic marshal on A14 C2H upgrade

Thanks to VGC's track record on major road construction projects, we expect to play a key part in the new regional delivery partnership frameworks.

Our current projects include the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade (for the A14 integrated delivery team – see spring 2018 Outperformance), M4 and M6 (Balfour Beatty Vinci), M20 (Vinci JV, Kier, and Balfour Beatty), M23, M6 and A13 (Kier), M27 and M62 (Bam Nuttall Morgan Sindall), A1 and A6 (Morgan Sindall).



(L to R): VGC team members outside Windsor castle – Costantin Grigoras, Daniel Taran and Samuel Yick

VGC was honoured to play our part in Prince Harry's and Meghan Markle's wedding.

VGC teams helped ensure roads and pavements around Windsor Castle were in good order as part of a £5.5m highways and maintenance contract awarded to Volker Highways by the royal borough in February 2017.

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