

What's happening?

Best practice on TLP KO2

Employability Careers Fair with Southwark Educational Business Alliance

Overview:

Siemens Rail Automation (SRA), Balfour Beatty Rail (BBR) and Network Rail (NR) working on the Thameslink programme hosted a stand at the annual Employability Careers Fair (21st - 22nd March 2018), which was organized by the Southwark Educational Business Alliance.

The event focused on employability skills and future career opportunities for secondary school students (generally year 9 students). Each school group were split into smaller groups (usually 6 - 10 students) and visited different stalls over the day.

On the Thameslink stand, the session started by giving everyone an overview of the Thameslink programme and the rail industry more generally. Then each company gave an overview of their role in the project: Network Rail as the client and network maintainer, Siemens Rail Automation as the signalling contractor and finally Balfour Beatty as the track and civils contractor.



The students then participated in speed networking, where they had the opportunity to speak to different volunteers in various project roles – from project managers to materials interface engineers, from office managers to environmental specialists. The staff gave the students an overview of their roles and how they got into that role, and then the students had the opportunity to ask questions.

Over the two days of the Employability careers Fair, approximately 70 students attended the session on the Thameslink stand. There were 10 staff volunteers in total from the Thameslink programme (7 SRA staff, 1 BBR staff, 2 NR staff).



Benefits:

- **Engagement with local schools:** providing careers information and advice to students, some of them locally-based, which improves our relationship with the local community.
- **Promotion of careers in rail:** including apprenticeship schemes, graduate schemes and internship opportunities.
- **Addressing future skills gaps:** inspires children to consider taking STEM subjects and possibly a future career in rail.
- **Community engagement:** increasing awareness in the local community of TLP as a major infrastructure project and rail network upgrade.
- **Benefits to the volunteers:** all volunteers enjoyed their experience and volunteering generally helps staff improve their communication, leadership and teamwork skills.

Challenges:

- Challenging acoustics in the room itself meant that the speed networking activity was difficult to facilitate.
- The age range of students (mainly year 9s) involved was not ideal for engagement at a careers fair. The students were possibly too young to start thinking in earnest about careers and different options.

Meeting Thameslink objectives & targets:

This initiative is aligned with the following TLP Sustainability Strategy Objectives:

- Objective 4: To maximise and report on the social value generated by TLP through local employment & skills, local supply chains and community engagement.