

Alstom welcomes pupils in Ealing with special educational needs and disabilities

- **Interactive session for West London students showcased potential career options**
- **Event supports existing partnership between High Speed Two (HS2) Limited and Ealing SEND Hub**

6 March 2024 – Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has hosted an insight day for students from Ealing SEND Hub at its Old Oak Common depot in West London.

The event on Monday 26 February was organised in collaboration with High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, the company designing and building Britain's new high-speed railway. It aimed to provide a meaningful workplace experience for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

During the insight session, Alstom employees engaged with the students through a series of activities tailored to their needs and abilities. Firstly, the pupils visited the site's operations room, which overlooks Old Oak Common's main storage yard. The students were able to experience a call coming to request a train's arrival and were amazed that just one person oversees the entire depot's movements.

Next, they visited the train simulation area where they were able to drive a Class 345 along a virtual Elizabeth line utilising the same controls as the real thing. Those waiting for their turn were able to see on a nearby screen exactly what the trainee drivers were doing.

Prior to the onsite session, a science, technology, engineer and maths (STEM) ambassador from Alstom supported an in-school session alongside HS2 to familiarise the students with the project. The students have now been tasked with going back to class and designing their own train based on outlines provided by Alstom – with drawings to go on display in the depot at a later date.

The event also provided an opportunity for Alstom to learn from the students – rail passengers of the future – and further its commitment to inclusivity in the rail industry. As a Disability Confident Leader employer, Alstom is dedicated to supporting underrepresented groups and providing meaningful experiences that enhance life skills.

"The students brought such excitement to our Old Oak Common depot, filling our corridors and meeting rooms full of joy. Overall, working with HS2 and Ealing SEND Hub has had such a positive impact on students and our colleagues alike, and will now pave the way for future programmes. This proves how collaboration with industry and community partners really does help change young people's lives by enhancing their confidence and offering clear pathways to success as they consider their own futures," said, Nina Atwal, Skills, Employment, Education and Diversity Lead for the HS2 Project at Alstom.

As the UK's leading supplier of new trains and train services, Alstom is currently preparing to build Britain's new high-speed trains for HS2 in a joint venture with Hitachi Rail. The 54-strong fleet of

British-built bullet trains – among the fastest in the world – will be constructed and tested at sites in Newton Aycliffe, Derby and Crewe.

Meanwhile, Alstom's existing Old Oak Common depot in West London is home to Transport for London's 70 nine-car Elizabeth line trains. Built by Alstom at its Derby factory, the Class 345 Aventra trains are maintained around-the-clock at the facility, which opened in 2018.

In the future, Elizabeth line trains will call at HS2's Old Oak Common railway station – directly next to Alstom's depot – which is under construction, and set to be the best connected and largest new railway station ever built in the UK.

"This is the third project that we're doing with Ealing SEND Hub and it only gets more rewarding. That is in large part down to partners, such as Alstom, who are able help to give the young people such wonderful experiences," said Ambrose Quashie, Legacy Manager – Skills and Employment at HS2 Ltd.

Moving forward, Alstom plans to host further insight sessions for SEND students, continuing its efforts to provide valuable employer encounters and support for all members of the community it operates in and serves.

Pupils attended Old Oak Common from both Belvue High School and St Ann's School in Ealing. The event was facilitated by Business Education Events (BEE), a community interest company which brings employers and students together.

The insight day came about through an existing partnership between HS2 and the Ealing SEND Hub which has seen other contractors working on Britain's new high-speed railway showcase the various jobs and skills required to build the line, as well as offer guidance on career pathways. The Ealing SEND Hub is the local information and advice service for parents, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities up to the age of 25.

The initiative brings to life commitments made by HS2 in its Skills, Employment and Education strategy, which, similar to Alstom, aims to widen access to the rail industry for underrepresented groups and encourage more young people to consider transport and infrastructure related careers.

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