

Business Secretary Greg Clark opens new Victoria technology college

The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, formally opened the new Sir Simon Milton Westminster University Technical College (UTC) which is located at Ebury Bridge, Victoria, on Tuesday, 20th March 2018. He commented *“it’s marvellous to be able to celebrate a landmark project which is going to change the lives of young people.”*

Around 120 guests attended the event including staff, representatives of the unique Employer Alliance¹, members of the local community and many of those who had been involved in the design and development of the state-of-the-art building.

Students and staff were on hand to greet guests and give personal tours of the college, its classrooms, IT and engineering workshops. Additional speeches were given by Chair of Governors, Mrs Elizabeth Phillips; Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman of Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, the lead employer partner; Mrs Diane Yeo, Deputy Chair, Court of Governors of the University of Westminster; Mr John Barradell, Chair of the Sir Simon Milton Foundation, and Lord Baker, the inspiration behind the UTC concept.

Sir Peter Hendy highlighted the *“unique collaboration”* of business and educators which underpins the UTC saying *“The industry has a huge crisis in finding enough young and agile minds to keep us working in the 21st century. In Network Rail in the London area alone there are 150 job opportunities each year for people with a real insight into the world of work. This is an opportunity to address long term skill shortages.”*

Year 12 students D. Kadiata and G. Beloso-Brun and Year 10 student J. Bekono inspired the audience by praising their teachers as *“hardworking and diligent”* and said that they were *“overwhelmed by how supportive and kind the teachers were and how welcome they made me feel”*. One student added *“joining the UTC has opened my eyes to the opportunities in engineering”*.

Closing remarks were made by Christabel, The Lady Flight, founding Trustee of the Sir Simon Milton Foundation² and the inspiration for this UTC. She described the challenges in bringing the UTC from initial idea to fruition, highlighting her determination that it should succeed with the words: *“If you have a dream, just go ahead with it – nothing is impossible”*.

Like all UTCs, Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC focuses on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) with a strong emphasis on the practical applications of learning and readying students for life in the workplace.³ It was co-founded by the Sir Simon Milton Foundation, the University of Westminster and Network Rail. It is supported by Westminster City Council.

Notes to editors:

Note 1. Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC specialises in Transport Engineering, and Construction and the Built Environment. It provides its students with hands-on workplace experience through collaboration with a unique Employer Alliance of relevant industry partners, including Network Rail, Landsec, Sir Robert McAlpine, Alstom, Colas Rail, BT Fleet Solutions and Transport for London. Each partner designs and delivers business challenges per half term, enabling students to complement their studies with practical applications.

Note 2. The Sir Simon Milton Foundation is a Westminster based charity set up in 2012 in memory of Sir Simon Milton, inspirational, innovative and longest serving Leader of Westminster City Council. The Foundation aims to get young Londoners into work through training and education and reduce loneliness and isolation among older people. The Foundation was instrumental in convincing Westminster City Council to establish the College and is a founding member of the UTC.

Note 3. There are currently 49 UTCs open across England, but only one in Central London, the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC. UTCs have a fantastic record of achievement for their students: of the 2000 students who graduated from UTCs last year only 26 are NEETs, i.e. not currently in employment or further education or training.

Employer Partners quotes:

Landsec

Colette O'Shea, Managing Director – London Portfolio, Landsec

"We're delighted to see the UTC up and running; it is a privilege to work with students and teachers from the college. We are very pleased to have been able to offer an insight into the construction industry."

Network Rail

Sir Peter Hendy CBE, the chairman of Network Rail

"Network Rail is delighted to lead the Employer Alliance of construction and engineering companies that came together to address the future skills gap in Greater London, and ultimately led to the creation of this UTC. The opening of the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC is a proud moment for everyone who has been involved in getting it off the ground."

"The transport and construction engineering industries provide a wealth of exciting employment opportunities. Network Rail and the Employer Alliance is committed to supporting the UTC and its students to realise their full potential and find rewarding careers within these sectors."

Colas Rail

"As supporters of the UTC since it first opened its doors in 2017, we are delighted to continue our support during the official opening. We aim to continue to work in partnership with the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC to promote STEM subjects and to inspire, educate and develop the next generation of engineers. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and look forward to speaking to both current and future students at various careers and event days. Both of which are keenly supported by our current apprentices and graduates who not only promote the rail industry, and all it has to offer, but share valuable first-hand experience and knowledge with potential leaders of the future. "

Alstom

Piers Wood, Managing Director Regional and Intercity, Alstom UK and Ireland

"Alstom is proud to support the Sir Simon Milton UTC, which is already making a big difference to science and engineering education in the capital. Increasing uptake in these key subjects amongst a diverse range of young students is incredibly important to the future of industries such as the railway. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the UTC, including on an important project on high tech wheel sensors later in the year."

Sir Robert M^cAlpine

Edward McAlpine, Executive Partner

“We are supporting the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC because of the vital role it has to play in nurturing and developing the high-achieving construction professionals of tomorrow. We look forward to working with the UTC to support and inspire its students on their journey from education into employment, helping them put theory into practice and opening their eyes to the many exciting career paths our industry has to offer.”

BT Fleet Solutions

Steve Webb, HR Director

“UTC’s will play a significant role in the upskilling of young talented individuals of the future. Here at BT Fleet solutions we see our relationship with SSMWUTC as key in helping to plug the significant engineering skill gap that exists across our industry through the provision of high quality practical education that will serve our needs in to the future”