

# NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

December 2020

- 3** Up in lights
- 4** Without a trace
- 6** Committed to customers
- 9** Feeling festive



## A message from David Brown

Dear all,

What a year it's been. We've faced a global pandemic that has affected every area of society. Transport is just one sector of many that has had to change and adapt dramatically. Who would have known on January 1st of this year what was to come?

And yet, throughout, we have shown our hard work and care for others. I am extremely proud of all colleagues across Go-Ahead. Our bus and train drivers, customer service, cleaning and engineering colleagues have been working day-in, day-out on the frontline as well as everybody in the 'backroom' from schedule planners (what a terrific job they have done) to all our managers. You have all shown so much support and resilience through an incredibly difficult time and really showcased why transport workers are a key part of communities.

Meanwhile, our desk-based colleagues have worked diligently in our offices or at home to support our frontline workers. You have all played a key role

– whether you have scheduled buses from your living room table (see November issue), maintained our IT systems or helped procure stock such as hand sanitiser or face coverings.

We will now be looking ahead to 2021. We need to be promoting public transport as much as we can and ensuring that passengers have the confidence to travel on our services. The streets are becoming more congested as people turn to private cars, which will have a hugely detrimental effect on air quality in the cities and towns in which we operate.

A radical reduction in transport emissions needs a simple, clear message. We suggest 'Walk and cycle if you can, use the bus or the train, only use the car if you need to'. Public transport must be a key part of the UK's economic recovery, and we welcome seeing the results of the Williams Review for rail and the National Bus Strategy in early 2021. We're continuing to be the leader in

providing electric buses, with 70 more coming to London by April. Hydrogen technology is also more on our radar, with potential trials in Crawley for Metrobus and Plymouth at Go South West.

In this edition of News Across the Group you can really see the ways in which our colleagues have helped their communities for Christmas. From GTR's Great Sock Appeal (page 7) to Go North West's moving rendition of 'A Visit from St Nicholas' (page 5) for a local children's charity, we are all working together to help those in difficult times.

I would like to thank you again for all your hard work and wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Here's to 2021.

David Brown,  
Group Chief Executive

# Merry Christmas!

Festive celebrations may be different this year... so we'd like to say a big thank you to every colleague who works for Go-Ahead. Everything you do is valued and appreciated. Have a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## You're hired!

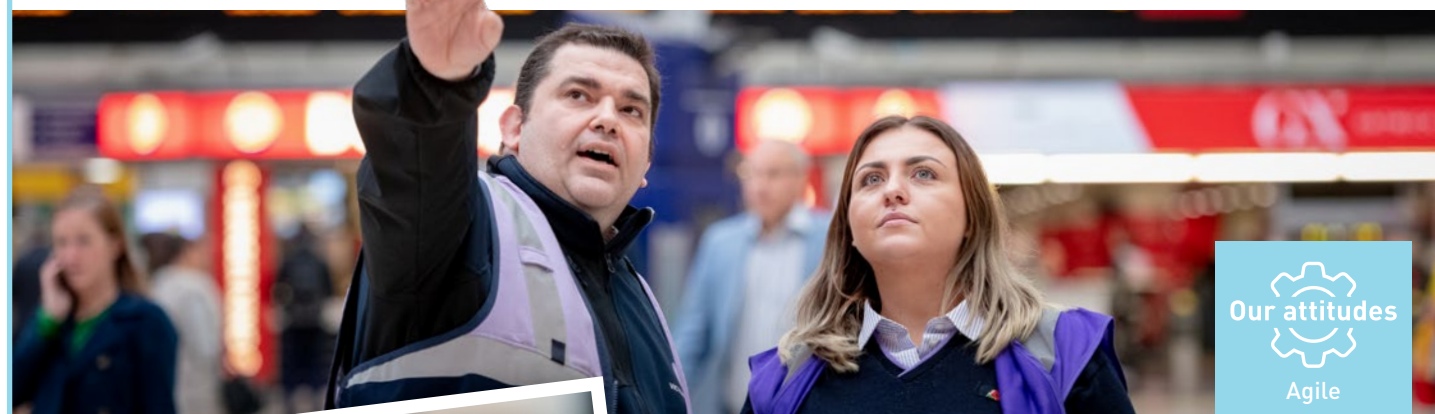
We have recruited more than 50 apprentices a month during 2020 despite the disruption caused by the pandemic. More than 300 apprentice bus drivers have joined Go-Ahead London, of whom 17% are female. This is significantly above the 12% national average of female bus drivers.

Applications have doubled at both GTR and Southeastern and risen by a third across Go-Ahead London. New recruits include an airline pilot, a former prison van driver, a guitar instructor, a teaching assistant and a veteran of the French foreign legion.

## We hired more than 650 apprentices in 2020

Southeastern has hired almost 230 apprentices in engineering, customer service and train driving this year. It was recently named one of the Top 100 Apprentice Employers in the UK – the only train operating company to make the Government's shortlist.

Go-Ahead's Group People Director Scott Maynard said: "Public transport is critical for our future and is essential in the fight against poor air quality and climate change. We will always need great people to help us drive our buses, maintain our trains and help passengers on their journeys. Apprenticeships are just one of the ways we are investing in our future."



Our attitudes  
Agile

## Seeking skilled graduates

### Do you know the next leader in transport?

Here at Go-Ahead we know how important it is to bring in fresh, new talent to the transport industry. We have now opened applications for the 2021 graduate scheme, which helps us to develop the next generation of leaders across rail and bus.

Current and former graduates from Go-Ahead London, Southeastern and GTR all came together for filming at the beginning of December to discuss what the scheme has meant to them and how they have benefited from it. Current graduates Ranvir and James at Go-Ahead London and Dan and Rob at Southeastern have contributed case studies to Go-Ahead's website so people can hear directly from them.

If you have a friend or family member who is looking to join the bus or rail industry, please send them a link to [www.go-ahead.com/our-people/graduates](http://www.go-ahead.com/our-people/graduates) and encourage them to apply.

Watch the videos



Our attitudes  
Agile

# Deck the bus

Our attitudes  
Down-to-earth

## Lighting up the South West

A twinkly festive bus has been touring Cornwall and Plymouth this month. Drivers and helpers have been spreading joy by dressing up as Father Christmas and his elves.

The bus is covered in LED lights. There is also a public address system on board to play music, as well as a snow machine. Colleagues have been handing out sweets to children waiting eagerly at bus stops across the region.



## Up in lights Touring through Oxford

The Oxford Bus Company has transformed an open-top City Sightseeing Bus for the festive season.

Volunteers from local charities travelled on the bus dressed in Christmas clothing and delivered presents to disabled children and young people on bus routes across Oxford. The event was broadcast as a live video on Facebook for those who couldn't see the bus in person.

The idea came in partnership with local radio station JACK FM, who helped fund the services and played festive music on board. The bus was also fitted with artwork produced by students at a local college.

Oxford Bus Company Managing Director Phil Southall said: "It has been an incredibly challenging year for us all and I'd like to thank all our colleagues for their valued hard work as ever. Thanks to support from JACK FM we were able to provide the Christmas Lights Bus and spread some joy in our communities in partnership with some wonderful charities."





# Keep your hands clean

Go-Ahead Ireland is helping passengers stay safe



Go-Ahead Ireland has rolled out hand sanitiser dispensers across its entire bus fleet. This was completed with the support of Ireland's National Transport Authority (NTA). The company carried out a trial from September 2020 to review the locations of the units, the hand sanitiser solution and to obtain feedback from customers. 89% of feedback from customers was positive in supporting having hand sanitisers on board the buses. Andrew Edwards, Managing Director, said, "The health and safety of our colleagues and customers is our number one priority and I am delighted that we have completed the roll out of the hand sanitiser units." "I believe we are the first operator to have delivered the whole fleet roll out for the NTA, which ensures that the communities we serve continue to receive a safe clean environment when travelling on buses in Ireland".



# Without a trace

No sign of Covid in our busiest stations

Southeastern and GTR's swab testing programme has come up trumps this winter. No traces of Coronavirus were found at more than 20 of Southeastern's busiest stations. GTR has also carried out comprehensive testing, randomly selecting carriages from all eight of its train fleets. The scheme saw a range of high-touch surfaces swabbed by independent analysts. This forms just part of a landmark £400,000 investment in addition to cleaning and reassurance measures across the network. A total of 41 stations are due to be tested by the end of February.



# Singapore support

Helping our colleagues and their children

Every child should be provided with fair opportunities to learn and develop at school. Go-Ahead Singapore has rolled out its bursary award for the second year running to help colleagues pay for educational materials. The bursary was established to benefit colleagues who had children or grandchildren in school.

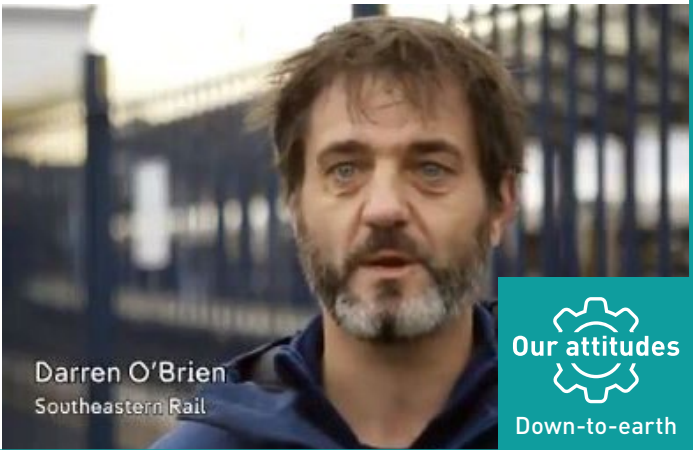
# No excuse for abuse

We're playing our part

Southeastern has played an industry-leading role in the fight to end domestic abuse throughout 2020 - with the roll-out of its ground-breaking Rail to Refuge scheme reaping incredible results. The scheme offers free train tickets to help domestic abuse victims and their children to flee their abusers and get to a refuge. This helps prevent further physical and emotional pain, potentially even saving lives. The scheme has now expanded to cover the whole country and has been extended to run until the end of March 2021. The initiative is all credit to Southeastern colleague,

Darren O'Brien who first came up with the idea when watching a Channel 4 Dispatches documentary about a women's refuge. Bringing his project full circle, Darren himself was interviewed for a Dispatches follow-up this winter.

[Watch Darren's interview here](#)



# 'Twas the night before Christmas...

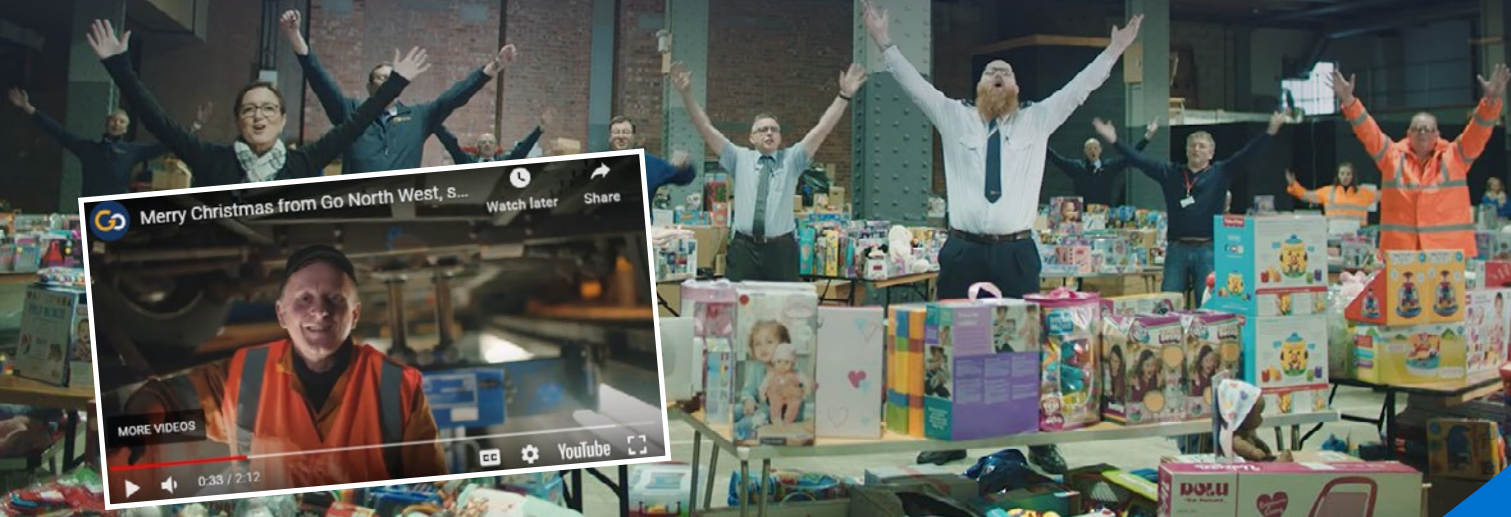
## Poetry has been set in motion

'Twas the night before Christmas / and for a good cause / Go North West read a poem / about Santa Clause. Go North West published a video this month featuring bus drivers, engineers and colleagues reading out the famous Christmas poem "A visit from St. Nicholas". This was in support of its partnership with local children's charity Wood Street Mission.

Set in various locations across Greater Manchester, the video production aims to celebrate the outstanding work

that Wood Street Mission have been performing in the community for more than 150 years. The charity supports low income families across Manchester and Salford who struggle to make ends meet. Go North West has set an ambitious goal to raise £1,500 for the charity appeal. Click the button to donate.

[Donate here](#)





# Committed to customers

## More success in the South West

Plymouth CityBus has won numerous accolades in the past year, including a Queen's Enterprise Award and a platinum 'Investors in People' accreditation. This month it won a Customer Commitment Award at the Devon and Plymouth Chamber Awards. This award is a testament to the hard work that the customer experience team put in to ensure passengers are happy and kept up-to-date with the latest news.



## BBC Africa visits

### A Go-Ahead London colleague will appear on BBC Africa this month



A Go-Ahead London bus driver is set to appear in a BBC Africa programme that will celebrate the "invisible key workers" of the pandemic. Doreen Berchie was nominated for her positive attitude. She has been part of the team since 2016.

The BBC came to the depot in late November and Doreen described her experience working for the company, driving and interacting with people and helping her customers. She showed off her hard work with a commendation letter from Managing Director John Trayner.

Doreen said: "Bus drivers are really important. We've kept the city going, we've helped a lot of people and we've all played our part. Doctors save lives but I take the doctors to work!"



# A first for transport

## How GTR is helping the long-term unemployed

GTR has launched its first ever Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) with East Sussex College. This new partnership builds on the success of its 'Get into Railways' programme with the Prince's Trust, which is now in its sixth year.

Targeted at those who are long-term unemployed or who aren't in training or education, the course equips candidates with skills in customer service, health and safety and two days virtual work experience.

Twelve candidates were on the first programme and two have won full-time roles at GTR's Southern station.

Angie Doll, Managing Director for Southern and Gatwick Express, said: "We're committed to providing support in the communities we serve and feel it is more important than ever to help people in society that may be at risk of exclusion. This is just part of our wider strategy to enable social mobility."



# Helping the homeless... through socks

## Socks send a strong message

GTR has been spearheading the Great Sock Appeal for the second year in a row by raising money online for good causes.

Often overlooked as an unimportant item, socks are essential for homeless people and those sleeping rough. This basic item of clothing helps you to avoid blisters, fungal infections and trench food – while also keeping your toes warm, dry and healthy.

This year, the campaign is particularly poignant for GTR. One of the operator's colleagues is speaking out for the first time about his experience of being homeless. Allen Howe, Senior Contracts Manager, wishes to spread his story in order to break the stigma associated with homelessness. He says: "I know all too well the hardship and danger facing homeless people this winter, having spent many months on the streets myself after suffering abuse as a child and being forced out by my stepmother soon after my 16th birthday.

"Although I could've easily just given up, I knew I had to keep on pushing to try and get myself out of the situation. I went on to spend 14 and a half years working for the local council developing initiatives to support the homeless, as well as

later working for the NHS before moving to GTR. I have turned my life around and now have two daughters that I absolutely adore. Don't be too proud to ask for help – there are ways to get you out of whatever situation you may be facing.

"There's a huge stigma around being homeless. People often think it's related to drugs or alcohol – or that you've done something to get yourself there. The average person doesn't realise that if you miss just three mortgage payments, you too could find yourself on the streets. There were many times I felt like giving up, but if you do then you'll never experience the positive side of life."





# WORLD AIDS DAY ROCK THE RIBBON

## Stopping stigma and discrimination



Go North East's colleague group One Team GNE is continuing to promote good causes. Its LGBT+ working group supported by World AIDS Day this December by encouraging colleagues to wear red ribbons.

HIV facts posters have been displayed at depots, and two colleagues living with HIV have chosen to anonymously share their stories of being diagnosed with HIV.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "We're raising awareness amongst colleagues of a disease that affects so many people, colleagues included, in order to break down some of the stigma around HIV."



## Taking cover

### Working together to protect everyone

A pilot campaign on face covering enforcement – which saw Southeastern, Great Northern, Southern and Thameslink join forces with the BTP – proved an outstanding success across London this autumn, with a massive 90.8% of people found to be complying with regulations. This figure shot up to 98.4% when those not wearing masks were spoken to, with just 0.2% refusing to comply and facing removal or penalties.

Richard Cummings, Southeastern's Revenue and Enforcement Manager who worked on the eight-week programme with GTR colleagues said: "Passengers have been really pleased that the joint taskforce has been tackling non-compliance – especially those who were



feeling nervous and not wanting to get into a confrontation. Our teams have seen first-hand the effects patrols have on passengers not wearing face coverings – on sight of an officer, they'd actively put them on. Our teams have also really felt the importance of their work on passenger confidence, as they've had so much praise on their travels."



## Carriage capacity increases

### Improving passenger journeys

Passengers on GTR's Great Northern services between Cambridge and King's Lynn (the Fen Line) are now benefiting from twice-longer carriages with much more capacity. Network Rail built a new siding outside of King's Lynn station to occupy Great Northern's longer trains. This means eight-carriage services can stop at the smaller stations of Littleport and Waterbeach.

Great Northern has made carriages available to provide the longer trains, which will add more than 2,000 extra seats to morning trains.

Great Northern and Thameslink Managing Director Tom Moran said: "This long-awaited news will make a real difference for our passengers on the Fen Line between King's Lynn and Cambridge. I'm so impressed by the collaborative work we've seen between Great Northern, Network Rail and the communities along this route. By doubling the length of so many trains, we'll add

2,000 seats every morning which will make it easier for passengers to socially distance and, when people return after the pandemic, get a seat."



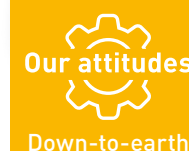
## Feeling festive

### Dressing up for Christmas

Drivers from Go South Coast have been getting into the festive spirit by sporting Christmas jumpers and fancy dress throughout December for charity.

Southern Vectis, Morebus, Bluestar, Salisbury Reds, and Swindon's Bus Company workers were raising money for their own individual corporate charities – and pulling on the seasonal sweaters was their latest fundraising initiative.

Head of Marketing Nikki Honer said: "Our drivers are a festive bunch – and every Friday and Saturday during December they've been donning colourful Christmas jumpers in aid of their very worthy causes. We wanted to raise as much money as possible – and we invited customers to get into the Christmas spirit too."





# Changing climate

Brighton & Hove and Metrobus Managing Director **Martin Harris** explains how the company has been inspired to talk more on climate change.



We all recognise the need to take a closer look at the world around us and to play our part in the changes needed to secure our futures. We've seen in lockdown how air quality can improve and what life with fewer cars can be like, and recognised the opportunities to ensure buses are part of the answer for tackling climate change.

At Brighton & Hove and Metrobus we have taken another step on that journey with 24 new extended range buses, bringing the total in our fleet to 54.

These Enviro400 ER buses use GPS to switch to zero-emission mode in the city's Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), also in London Road – another air quality hotspot – and at our hospital. These currently are the most practical and affordable way of achieving zero emissions in these sensitive areas.

They are an important stepping stone to our goal of becoming emissions-free ten years ahead of the government's target in 2030 and five ahead of Go-Ahead's target of 2035. However, the next steps are going to be much tougher in the wake of Covid.

The 54 buses are a significant investment of nearly £18 million, generated from the revenues from two of the busiest routes in a city with the highest use of buses per head of population outside London – with no government grants – demonstrating our commitment to help our city to live and breathe.

We've been getting the message out there through climate assemblies and customers and stakeholders, as we reinforce the return to public transport. We have just published a video with ex BBC anchorman Neil Pringle, to explore how together we can affect change for the future – and to lift the lid on our new bus technologies.

The 15-minute video features speakers from (the Low Carbon) Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, Brighton & Sussex Medical School and Alexander Dennis Ltd alongside local representatives, to reach more key audiences. It will reach more key audiences, explaining why with why buses are such an important part of the solutions needed to combat congestion, air quality, and carbon.

These buses cover 244,000 emissions-free miles annually, providing 3 million emissions-free journeys. These are significant steps in the right direction. And we'll keep pushing the envelope to operate emissions-free in other parts of Brighton, and when battery technologies move forward, who knows how far these buses can take us.

With one double decker taking as many as 75 cars off the road, our buses will remain an integral part of Brighton life and we will ensure their continued success remains a high priority for the city as its new strategies on transport and environment emerge in the spring.

