



Education and Skills Impact Report

March 2024

GTR

Great Northern

GN
GATWICK EXPRESS

SOUTHERN

ThamesLink/

Driver apprentice Kevin and his son Samuel, an engineering apprentice.



Foreword

Education & skills programmes are a vital element of Govia Thameslink Railway's (GTR) plans to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.



Angie Doll
Chief Executive Officer, GTR

As CEO, I want to provide even more opportunities to attract and develop talented people from many different walks of life, representative of the broad range of communities we serve.

There's no single route to working with us, our recruitment pipeline includes young people straight from school or university, as well as people who decide to change career later on in life and bring a whole lot of experience with them.

This is at the heart of a personal ambition of mine, to nurture a greater diversity of thinking within GTR and the wider rail industry. I believe that's key to helping us innovate and improve at every level for our customers.

This Education & Skills Impact Report gives a flavour of what we are doing at GTR to equip our people with the skills they need, and it shows how we attract people into the business who might not have considered it. To do this, we collaborate with organisations who specialise in this area, and we are grateful for their time and expertise.

The report picks up on several initiatives that will contribute to making us more diverse, and will help us foster an inclusive culture, which our people and our customers will benefit from.

Looking ahead I'm really excited about making a real difference for people who live on our network who might be interested in rail, and in helping our communities thrive. I'm very proud of what we have achieved so far, though we are on a journey, and there's a lot more I want us to achieve.

Angie Doll
Chief Executive Officer

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Lifelong Learning

Our programmes cover all ages from school, to working age and re-entering the workforce.



We have included a monetised estimate of the social value with some of our schemes. These come from the Rail Social Value Tool, a collaboration between the RSSB, Network Rail and Loop. The results give us an alternative way to understand the impact of our work.

Go-Learn

- 3,000 children participated in rail safety discussions since April 2022
- 3,000 children learnt how to use the railway network, buy a ticket and choose a train
- 1,700 children visited stations and trains
- Social value of about £18m since 2022

Work Experience

- 53 participated since 2022
- Social value of £210k since 2022

Get Into Railways

- 210 people participated since 2015
- Programme now in its tenth year
- 57 current employees entered through the programme
- Social value of £8m since 2015

SWAPs

- Over 4 cohorts, 40 people have successfully completed work-readiness training since 2020
- Social value of £245k in 2023
- Fifth cohort in progress

Apprenticeships

- 14 types of high quality apprenticeships
- GTR currently has 500 apprentices
- 1/3 of new apprentices are women
- In 2023, youngest apprentice was 18, and the oldest was 58
- Social value of £14m since October 2022

Career Returners

- 5 people joined our driver apprenticeship programme from Career Returners in 2023
- 15 hours of additional coaching
- 1,000 applicants

GTR Managing Suicidal Contacts Training

- Over 800 people have participated in the last two years
- 95% of participants said it worked
- £130k social value over the last two years

GTR Accessibility Training

- Over 5,000 completed it over the last two years
- 10 million people have a disability in England
- £900k of social value over the last two years

GTR Development Hub

- 2,000 use it every three months
- Estimated 500 hours of CPD-accredited training completed every month
- £1.6m social value since October 2022

Safety Education

How it works

Giving young people the confidence to use rail safely and independently instils sustainable and safe travel habits early on. Southeast Communities Rail Partnership's education officer visits primary and Special Educational Needs and Disability schools across Sussex and Kent.

Go-Learn is part of wider programmes of life skills teaching called Junior Citizen in West Sussex, and Safety in Action in Kent and East Sussex. Developed for Year 6 pupils, it helps children make safe choices as they become more independent. Southern's Rail Enforcement officers and the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership focus on railway safety. Classroom workshops teach pupils how to plan journeys, purchase tickets, and use rail services safely and confidently. Pupils can put into practice what they have learnt with a trip to the station and on the train.



Go-Learn

We've worked with Southeast Communities Rail Partnership to develop Go-Learn, the award winning education programme which has been running since 2015.

Go-Learn has three parts - staying safe on the railway, travel planning and personal safety, and practical station and trip experiences.

The scheme in numbers

Since April 2022:



3,000 children have participated in discussions on rail safety



3,000 children have benefited from classroom workshops talks



Over **1,700** children have visited stations and trains as part of the programme



This is estimated to be worth **£18m** in social value.*

*Estimates of monetised social value are calculated by the Rail Social Value Tool

Work experience



Our work experience programmes open up a range of careers to young people. From our office spaces to our engineering sheds, our stations to our driver depots and everything in between, we open our doors to students to show what life at GTR is like.

How it works

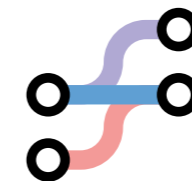
Our work experience programmes are aimed at students aged 14-18 and are open to young people from all ability levels and backgrounds. It's not necessary to love trains to enjoy work experience at GTR (but we also welcome those who do). For us, work experience has never been about making the tea or filing documents, we want to truly show young people what our industry has to offer and introduce them to new skills that can be used in any workplace. Opportunities for work experience are currently available across our Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern routes and in head office.

The scheme in numbers

Since April 2022:



53 young people participated in our work experience programme in the spring and summer of 2023 and we are expecting a further 20 later this year



20 young people will be joining our next work experience cohort in spring and summer of 2024



Improving Gender Balance
more young women are joining the programme



Generated an estimated
£210k
of social value*

*Estimates of monetised social value are calculated by the Rail Social Value Tool



Get into Railways

The Prince's Trust



GTR has partnered with The Prince's Trust for 10 years. The Get into Railways programme was developed to support young people aged 18-25 in our local communities into employment by delivering pre-employability programmes and providing sustainable work opportunities.

Nineteen cohorts of unemployed young people have received the skills based training and support offered by the programme. They have shown dedication and commitment in overcoming challenges, and have been able to thrive and find further education and employment - many within GTR.

How it works

After a taster day, participants take part in a four-week intensive course. The first half is based in the classroom where they learn customer service skills, conflict resolution, first aid and health and safety. This is then followed by two weeks working alongside GTR mentors in stations, depots or at Head Office. The real life experience enables them to put their skills into practice and get an insight into the rail industry. It also helps the trainees develop the skills and confidence that will help them be work ready and take the next step in their career.

We have embedded the scheme into our recruitment practices which means many of the young people who go through the scheme go on to join us in a range of roles such as IT and On Board Supervisors.

The scheme in numbers



10th year of The Prince's Trust partnership



19 cohorts



210 gained work experience through the programme



57 are still currently employed at GTR in roles including train conductor, customer service, train dispatch, revenue protection, IT and on-board supervisor



The estimated social value* from 2015 until now stands at just around **£8m**

*Estimates of monetised social value are calculated by the Rail Social Value Tool

Case studies

Mollie Craddock

Mollie Craddock, 22, is the coordinator for GTR's Employee Network Groups, a new role she successfully applied for after completing the Prince's Trust 'Get into Railways' course in April 2023.

"There are four employee network groups. The Gender Equality Movement and the Race Equality, Disability Employee and LGBTQ+ networks. I like working in this area of diversity & inclusion, I feel it has a real impact on people.

"I finished Uni in 2022 and job opportunities seemed hard to find, especially after Covid. I noticed the advert for The Prince's Trust course in my local Jobcentre. I didn't know anything about the railways at the time, but it looked like a great opportunity to upskill, meet young people in similar stages of life to me and venture into a new profession I didn't know much about.

"I really enjoyed the four-week course which included two weeks' work experience at Luton Airport Parkway station. It helped my networking and communication skills - it's great for people



my age who might lack a little confidence. I'm still friends with the others from the course. It really added to the skills I gained at Uni."

Mollie hadn't considered working in rail before but she's glad she went for the role. "It's so versatile, I get to support the groups with event organisation and internal communications to increase engagement and awareness of the groups in the business.

"I'm also working towards a Business Administration Apprenticeship where I learn about the organisation and build on skills like project management, customer service and problem solving. I definitely see opportunities for development at GTR, and I am looking to stay on, whether in my current role or in a new position."



"I originally went to university to study law, but a year into the degree, I realised it wasn't for me. I was working as a bartender in London and felt at a crossroads with my future, I didn't know where to go next; I just knew I wanted a rewarding career. My cousin had completed the 'Get into Railways' programme and managed to secure a job with Thameslink that he was really enjoying so I thought I might as well try it for myself."

"At the start of the course, there were around 20 people and we all had to be interviewed as part of the programme. The interviewers then selected the candidates who they thought best fit the course and I was lucky enough to be chosen. The

Ephraim Tshola

GTR's partnership with The Prince's Trust on the 'Get into Railways' programme was the route Ephraim Tshola took to help him enter the world of rail.

scheme consists of classroom-based training and on-the-job learning, giving you a broad range of experience in a short amount of time."

Ephraim, 28, started working as an On-board Supervisor for Southern in 2020.

"I still love working for the railway. I love being customer-facing and helping hundreds of people each day. If it wasn't for the 'Get into Railways' scheme, I probably wouldn't have ever considered working in this industry. It really helped to propel me into a fulfilling career, and I'd recommend it to anyone."

Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP)

In 2020 GTR launched its first Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP), in conjunction with East Sussex College and Jobcentre Plus. We established the SWAP to build on the success of our 'Get into Railways' programme.

While the Get into Railways programme was developed to provide training and work readiness skills for young people aged 18-25, the SWAP scheme is open to anyone in our local communities over the age of 18, with most referred from their Jobcentre Plus. It has therefore been a great opportunity for anyone starting out or starting afresh to develop skills and confidence for their next step.

At the end of last year, we ran our fourth swap. Eight people completed the training, and we recruited two, generating an estimated £245k in social value. Over the life of the programme so far, 40 people gained new skills from the programme. The latest SWAP started in February 2024.

How it works

Working with East Sussex College and Jobcentre Plus, the SWAP aims to break down barriers that many people face when seeking employment. Targeted at those who are long-term unemployed or who aren't in training or education - the three-week programme gives candidates the opportunity to develop essential employability skills whilst gaining qualifications.

The course equips candidates with skills in customer service, equality and diversity, and health and safety, as well as offering work experience shadowing railway station staff. They are given a guaranteed interview and will receive support in preparing for it.

The scheme in numbers



Almost **40** people have successfully completed work-readiness training



Cohort 4 generated an estimated **£245k** of social value*

*Estimates of monetised social value are calculated by the Rail Social Value Tool

Case study

Paul Bull

Gateline Assistant Paul Bull, 62, joined the team at Barnham station a year ago. His route into GTR was through a SWAP.



Paul joined a SWAP at Chichester which gave him a guaranteed interview with Southern.

Paul said: "They taught us how to prepare for an interview and I was happy to be one of two people who were taken on, out of around 10 on the course."

"This job changed my life. I hadn't worked full time for a while and my mental health had not been good. I just felt like I needed a break. I worked as a car park steward in the summer, and I enjoyed meeting people so when I was told about the course aimed at a job in the railways, I thought it would be interesting. It would be sociable."

Paul's skills make him well suited to his customer service role. "The job is perfect for me. I'm cheerful with people as they go through, and I'm happy to help with whatever they might need."

Paul is pleased to share his success with his daughter and his baby granddaughter. He says: "We have a good bond - she lives local to me, and she can see the difference this has made."

When asked what he thinks he'll do in future he says: "I love the job - I'll probably still be here when I am 75."

Career Returners

We have a mission to entice people of all backgrounds to consider a career in rail. That is why we partnered with purpose-led consulting, coaching and networking organisation Career Returners. The partnership helped us tap into the talent pool of those who have taken a career break and are looking to get back into employment.

How it works

Because there are disproportionately few female train drivers, it's a priority for GTR to increase the diversity of applicants to become drivers. So GTR worked with Career Returners to develop a bespoke programme to raise awareness of these opportunities and recruit trainee train drivers later in their career.

Successful candidates benefit from a formal training programme, which includes a Level 3 apprenticeship. Tailored career coaching is also provided from Career Returners, not only for the recruitment and onboarding process, but three months into the training programme too.

The scheme in numbers (2023)



5 people

joined our trainee driver programme via Career Returners



15 hrs

participants receive an extra 15 hours of coaching, easing their return to work



1,000

total number of applicants



Case study

Vicky Fleming

Vicky Fleming is an apprentice trainee driver who joined GTR having answered a call for applicants via Career Returners.

"We've moved around a lot as my husband was in the military. I have a background in teaching but between moves and the pandemic, I didn't work for around two years. We returned to the UK and, at 40, I was a bit stuck as to what to do next. Even writing my CV was a challenge as I tried to explain the gaps in my work history.

"While researching what to do next, I saw an advert for train driving linked to Career Returners. I immediately thought that could be a different and interesting career move. I might not have considered it, but this was clearly aimed at those in my position who hadn't worked in this area before, so I decided to apply."

Vicky went through the recruitment process and was very pleased to secure a position on the trainee driver apprenticeship course starting in April 2023. She has completed the first six months teaching in the classroom and is now doing practical learning with a driver instructor. With Career Returners she received additional coaching sessions to assist the return to work.

"I enjoy it, even the variety of shifts which I can manage around my family life now that we are settled in one place. There are more female drivers coming into the industry and that's important, so we are more diverse, and more representative of our customers."

Apprenticeships



Apprenticeships are both an opportunity to recruit but also an opportunity for colleagues to develop their careers at GTR.

Apprenticeships ensure colleagues receive high quality training for their job ensuring we are more strongly placed to serve our customers now and into the future.

How it works

Our 14 apprenticeships cover programmes such as customer services, engineering, management, train driving and business administration covering qualification levels 2-7.

Our apprentices also offer the opportunity to increase the diversity within our workforce. This year we have seen a 50% increase in the number of women joining an apprenticeship scheme with 60 women joining out of 176 new starter apprentices.

In 2023, the oldest apprentice joining the programme was 58, while the youngest was 18. New and existing employees were encouraged to apply, with applications coming from people from a wide range of backgrounds, not necessarily in the rail industry. Overall, the number of employees taking on an apprenticeship increased by 22% last year.

The scheme in numbers



14 apprenticeship courses with qualification levels 2-7 on offer at GTR from customer service to engineering



205 new apprentices, including 65 female apprentices in 2023



500 current apprentices



£13.6m in social value* from October 2022

*Estimates of monetised social value are calculated by the Rail Social Value Tool

Case studies

Jenson Joy

Jenson Joy joined GTR in 2021 straight from school at 16 which made him the youngest person on our Engineering Apprenticeship programme.

"I knew I wanted to pursue an engineering career, so I started looking at different courses online and saw this one. I did the application process and was pleased to get a place. I wanted to get into the working world as soon as I could, so the traditional university option wasn't for me.

"The first year was college based to get us all up-to-speed with the theory before heading to the depots. Since then, we've continued with some classroom training, but now there's more practical work shadowing engineers at the four



GTR depots. We get to work at all of them which is really interesting and gives you variety in your experience.

"I've been doing my apprenticeship for two and half years now, with about a year to go, and I'm enjoying it. I would recommend it to those who want to start work after school and be more 'hands-on'. I can also see that there are opportunities for the future with a career in engineering and possibly even higher-level apprenticeships or degree level study."

Mehmet Pacaci

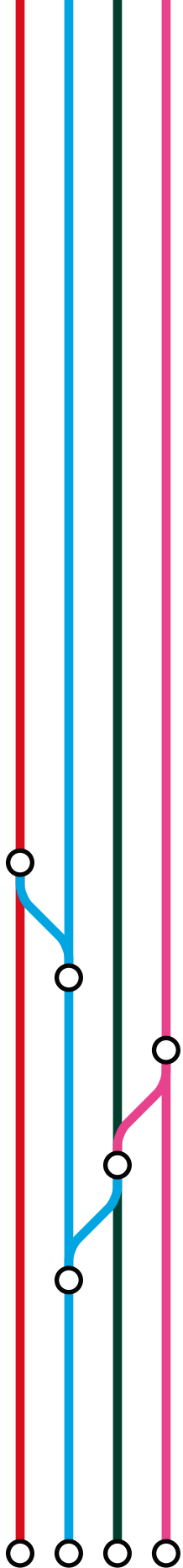
After a temporary career swap to the Metropolitan Police Mehmet Pacaci, 28, made a comeback to the railway in 2022 as a station sales assistant and is now a station team leader.

"As strange as it sounds, it took leaving the railway for me to appreciate how much I enjoyed it. Working for the police gave me good career experience, but I found I was missing the railway family and I'm very happy to be back. There's lots of opportunities to upskill yourself in rail, helped by a variety of apprenticeship courses that support personal and professional development.

"I enrolled in a Passenger Transport Operative apprenticeship which provided a well-rounded look at customer service, security and safety on the railway, as well as preparing us with how to deal with difficult situations. I'm pleased to say I completed this apprenticeship and was awarded a distinction.

"I think everyone should take the opportunity to do an apprenticeship if they can because it's another qualification to proudly put on the CV. Mehmet already had a customer service apprenticeship under his belt from his first stint in the railway.

"I was keen to do another apprenticeship as I learned so much on my first one and I'm constantly looking to develop my skills. As long as apprenticeships are on offer, I will always look to see which ones fit with my career because they really do help you progress in the industry."



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) began operating in September 2014.

GTR consists of: Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express.

Our trains serve London as well as a number of important regional centres including: Cambridge, Luton and Peterborough to the north of the region; and Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton in the south. It also provides direct links to major airports (Gatwick and Luton) as well as St Pancras International.

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