

Taking care of every journey

Govia Thameslink Railway
Sustainability Report 2020

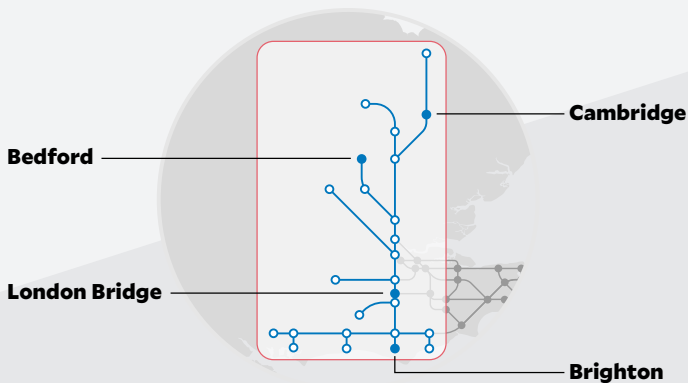




Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) operates Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express services.

The franchise was established to modernise the network and make it easier to use, improving the reliability of services and providing more capacity into and beyond London. GTR took over the services of both Thameslink and Great Northern in 2014. Southern and Gatwick Express brands joined the franchise in 2015.

Nearly one in five of all UK rail passengers are carried on a GTR service, with 3,600 services now running each day, making up more passenger journeys than any other rail franchise. The network itself covers major London terminals, such as London Victoria, London Bridge and London St Pancras, as well as extending the network as far north as King's Lynn and south to Brighton.



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Find out more...

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Our reporting structure

We are committed to putting our customers and communities at the heart of everything we do.

This report is split into five sections:

Stronger communities

To increase positive and proactive engagement with the communities we serve

→ Read more on page 04

Happier customers

To provide a safe, reliable service to our customers

→ Read more on page 09

Better teams

To constantly develop our people

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Cleaner environment

To look at the way in which we can reduce our impact on the environment

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Safer working

To provide safe working environments for our people and our customers

→ Read more on page 23

Chief Executive Officer's message



2020 highlights

- Operated a more reliable and punctual service than at any time in recent history, recording 94.5% PPM between April and July
- Satisfaction with trains increased by 22% on Great Northern year on year
- 57% increase in life saving interventions on the GTR network
- Delivering a £55m train modernisation programme on 270 trains that will last five years
- Contacted over 600 schools to raise awareness on the danger of trespassing on the railway in lockdown
- First train company to sign the 'Rough Sleeping on Rail' Charter

The global pandemic has changed the way we all live our lives and has disrupted our routines, none greater than when national lockdown was imposed in March. Like every organisation in the UK, we have reappraised how we operate each aspect of our business which has led us to innovate and change our operational processes like never before. Looking back, I feel the pandemic has also brought out a strong sense of community with people looking out for each

“There is still a degree of uncertainty of what is to come, but we continue to focus on supporting those most impacted by the crisis and the economic fallout.”

Patrick Verwer,
Chief Executive Officer

other. Key worker roles were rightly celebrated, as those images of people clapping on their street on Thursday evenings demonstrated. In the spring, to show our appreciation for NHS key workers we wrapped three of our trains with a message of thanks, and deployed a further thank you campaign in the summer for all key workers who kept the country moving at an incredibly difficult time for all.

With daily passenger volumes dropping almost overnight and the introduction of a reduced timetable, we recognised GTR had an important role to play in keeping other key workers moving. We worked with over 50 hospitals across our network, as well as NHS suppliers and passengers, to understand their needs. Their feedback meant we could focus on protecting early morning services and lengthening certain trains to allow for social distancing. Providing a safe and reliable service was our focus, ensuring key workers could rely on their train service to get them to and from work. Of course, we had to handle our own challenges when, like many workplaces, more key staff members were needing to self-isolate or shield. To assist with the process, a new app enabling us to manage and track employee absences was developed, alongside working with our partner Siemens to access real time passenger loading information. Together, this meant we could build a new timetable we could confidently deliver, and which key workers could rely on.

We understood the nervousness of our customers when passenger numbers started going up again and took steps to keep our customers and colleagues safe. This included clear social distancing signage at stations and

on trains, enhanced cleaning routines at every stage of the customer's journey and over 1,000 hand sanitiser points installed at stations. On board, we're also using a long-lasting cleaning treatment on all 2,700 of our carriages and have created as much space on our trains as possible – with over 3,000 train services running each day.

This crisis has demonstrated our basic human instinct to care for others, bringing together communities that may not have otherwise connected before. We have focused on members of our communities most in need during these trying times and collaborated with various agencies including the NHS, local authorities and charity partners to reach those individuals. In spring, we contacted over 600 schools with materials to raise awareness of the dangers of trespassing on the railway in collaboration with Network Rail and British Transport Police. This material was also adapted and distributed to our autism support partners, so it was more easily understandable for them. To keep NHS workers healthy and moving, we partnered with several local authorities and NHS Trusts to donate abandoned bikes to NHS staff so they could keep moving.

As we look to the coming months, there is still a degree of uncertainty of what is to come, but we continue to focus on supporting those most impacted by the crisis and the economic fallout. We will be ramping up our efforts to support young people into employment as we know they are one of the groups hardest hit.

Our six year partnership with the Prince's Trust delivers our 'Get into Railways' programme, knocking down barriers for young people to get the experience they need to gain meaningful employment. I have seen for myself how our young trainees continuously inspire our existing colleagues and drive positive change around our business. We will be building upon this success and launching a new sector-based work academy with East Sussex College later this autumn. The scheme will focus on reaching

those who are unemployed and those from more marginalised backgrounds, allowing us to support local economies and communities in the Southern coastal region.

Our confidence building 'Try a Train' programme was paused from spring and we understand now more than ever we need to rebuild and restore people's confidence in using trains. When emerging from lockdown, we ran a pilot with our partner Autism Bedfordshire, taking a small group through an extended programme, focusing on social distancing measures and travelling in a safe manner. This worthwhile initiative has helped individuals who may not have otherwise had the confidence to travel, to maintain their independence and be part of their communities. We look forward to rolling this programme out again to more of our local communities.

As one of the most sustainable means of mass transport, the role rail can play in helping reduce the nation's carbon footprint and promoting sustainable and active travel is huge. Our teams are looking at all opportunities to promote and innovate the way we deliver projects to reduce our impact on the environment. To encourage more sustainable travel around our stations, we have installed Electric Vehicle (EV) points at Hatfield – creating the largest single charging point in rail in the UK. As a passionate cyclist, I'm happy we are able to expand and improve our cycle facilities at stations, integrating sustainable travel at as many points as possible.

While this year has been an extremely challenging time, I genuinely believe it has also brought out the best in our teams and forced us to change our ways for the better. Although the coming months may continue to test us, I'm optimistic that the hardworking and determined nature of our colleagues will flourish as we continue to deliver our role in keeping people and the country moving.

Stronger communities

We have a responsibility to support people in our local communities and have built strong partnerships to access communities that may be harder to reach. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we recognised that some people were more vulnerable than others and this reshaped the work we did with our communities, charities and partners. As we move towards a post-COVID world, we do so with this increased vulnerability in mind.

Caring for vulnerable people

Our commitment to preventing suicides is a multi-agency, intelligence led approach which involves our own staff as well as the British Transport Police, Rail Chaplains and Welfare Officers. This has resulted in a 57% increase in lifesaving interventions since last year across the GTR's rail network.

Following the proven track record of successful interventions, we have expanded the areas covered by our Welfare Officers to ten locations across our network. Their job is to engage with members of the public in need of help and support. For our employees who witness a suicide on our network, we have trained Trauma Practitioners, who are on hand to offer them confidential, peer-based support. Railway Chaplains are provided by the Railway Mission and work with the British Transport Police and station staff, to provide impartial advice and a listening ear to anyone on the railway, employees, customers and local communities.

The Great Sock Appeal

In winter 2019, we launched our 'Great Sock Appeal' supporting six homeless organisations across our network, collecting over 4,000 pairs of socks donated by customers and colleagues. Often overlooked as an unimportant item, for those sleeping rough, a pair of socks is essential for keeping feet warm and dry. Without them, there is a great risk of blisters, fungal infections and even trench foot.



Highlight

Over 289

incidents with vulnerable people spotted between April – July 2020



Awards

Inspiration 'Pride' Award

at the 2020 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

At the 2020 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), husband and wife employees, Paul and Agy O'Brien, were recognised for saving a man at an East Sussex station when he tried to take his own life on the railway.



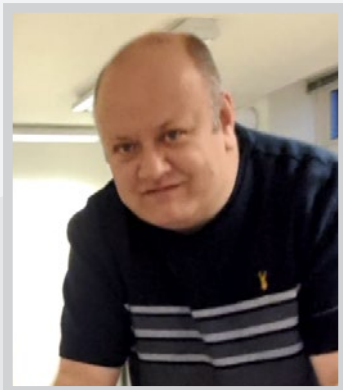
East Croydon Spire CEO, Nigel Carpenter



Spotlight on...Keeping people safe during lockdown

While children and young people were out of school, we made sure teachers and parents had information on railway risks and trespassing. We reached out to over 600 secondary schools with industry guidance on the dangers of trespassing, supported by Network Rail and the British Transport Police.

While there were far fewer people using our stations during spring, we made use of our CCTV hub, manned by volunteers to spot people who are most at risk on our network, allowing us to provide better support to those who need it most.

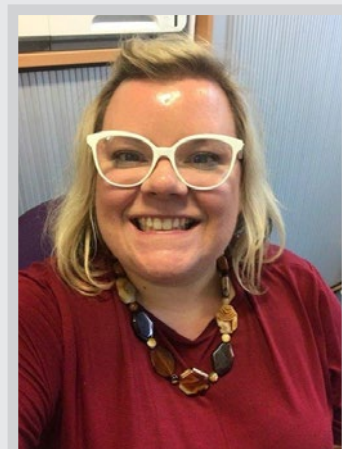


Dan Moon: Brighton based passenger host

Brighton based passenger host, Dan Moon, who has worked on the railway for 13 years, was among those to volunteer. The 40-year-old, said:

“There are a lot of vulnerable people out there at the moment and we’re the eyes to spot them. You might not see anything for five days and then there may be one day when you spot someone who is vulnerable and get help to them, possibly saving that person’s life.”

As part of our shift to move our training online, we also launched our ‘Caring for the Vulnerable’ course. The course provides intervention training focusing on suicide prevention, trespassing, safeguarding and county lines. Over 900 people have completed the training so far.



“The skills that the course shares are not just railway specific. You can look for people who are in distress anywhere you are and notice the behaviours.”

Jeni Redfern,
Fire and Emergency Planning Manager

Stronger communities continued



Spotlight on...Helping customers with autism stay engaged with rail

At the start of lockdown we recognised that the sudden change in routine was having an adverse impact on those with autism following feedback from charity partners. In early summer we ran 'Tea with a Train Driver' where rail enthusiasts with

autism quizzed our drivers, with the purpose of developing a video to help keep them engaged with rail.

Watch our 'Tea with a Train Diver' video here. <https://youtu.be/sF7rju2CjF8>

Helping young and marginalised people into employment

Improving the employability skills of young and more marginalised people is essential to helping them access secure jobs and to become active players in building local economies.

With findings from the GTR sponsored 'Futures at Stake' research showing us that 50% of employers believe traditional recruitment practices no longer work, and half of young people feel they do not get a chance to show their skills effectively, we recognise the importance of our partners in helping us build and deliver employability programmes.

705,000 young people, aged 18 to 24 years, in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in April to June 2020. This is a small decline on last year, but newer data shows a dramatic increase of 122% for the number of 16 to 24 year olds claiming unemployment benefits and there is increasing concern that this generation is at risk of being left behind in a post-COVID world.

Through our employability programmes, and with our partners, we aim to reach young people in more marginalised communities and are proud of the programmes we have in place to help break down barriers to employment for some of these people.

The Prince's Trust 'Get into Railways'

2020 marked the 6th anniversary of our partnership with the Prince's Trust and the 'Get into Railways' programme, which helps young people who are struggling to find work. So far, 202 young people have been accepted onto the programme, 94% of these have completed the course and 76% of those completing have been offered permanent roles at GTR.

Due to the success of the scheme, GTR is now expanding and evolving its offering in the youth employability space, through a new partnership with East Sussex College and a sector-based work academy for Southern coastal areas.

Bringing together businesses, colleges and third sector organisations, GTR co-hosted a panel event with The Prince's Trust to share findings from the 'Futures at Stake' research we sponsored and learnings from our own employability programme. Mims Davies MP, Minister for Employment, attended the event and reflected that "too often young people were being told they lacked experience or the right connections when going for a job."

The Futures at Stake report can be downloaded here <https://www.thameslinkrailway.com/about-us/corporate-and-social-responsibility/young-people/princes-trust-get-into-railways>.

Building Heroes

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing upskilling opportunities, we have also teamed up with Sussex-based charity Building Heroes which supports ex-servicemen and women back into work.

Building Heroes works with Chichester College to put military veterans through an intensive five-week course which gives them a Level 1 foundation course in property maintenance from where they can find work. Working in partnership with the charity, we put our own newly formed in-house maintenance team through the same training, which helps towards the cost of the charity's training.

Additionally, Building Heroes graduates are considered for any vacancies in the maintenance team. A successful candidate from this programme was former army wife, Natalie Parker, whose husband served with the King's Royal Hussars.



Natalie Parker: Building Heros graduate

“I am absolutely over the moon. I’m ecstatic to land a job here. It’s amazing, it really is.”

Natalie Parker

Upskilling during bike refurbishment

While we donated 107 bikes to NHS workers during spring and summer this year, we kicked off a scheme to donate abandoned bikes on our network to charities to be upcycled and reused while providing upskilling opportunities for local people. We partnered with Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) and donated 75 bikes from our Horsham depot. SCDA offers upskilling and training opportunities to older volunteers, but has recently been extended to 16+.

We will work further towards supporting more young people into work, with plans to introduce more skills-based training schemes. Projects include partnering with ‘Groundwork’ to deliver training as part of landscaping projects in our station improvements programme, in addition to working with East Sussex College to provide a skills-based training programme to young people across the region.

Training staff to help homeless people

In October, we were the first train company to sign up to the Rough Sleeping on Rail Charter, outlining our commitment to supporting outreach services, empowering our colleagues to supporting people and working with partners to provide routes out of homelessness.

We recognise that homelessness is becoming an increasingly visible issue on our stations and trains and we want to address this issue, reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough and help them find routes out of homelessness. To support our frontline colleagues in helping us to achieve this, we organised for 46 colleagues to receive bespoke face-to-face training from St Mungo’s HomelessWise training programme. This equipped our station and on-board teams in areas with high numbers of rough sleepers with the knowledge and skills to support and refer them to support services, such as StreetLink.

Stronger communities continued



Spotlight on...Railway Food Collection

At the height of UK lockdown restrictions in April 2020, the Trussell Trust's network of food banks saw an 89% increase in need compared to the same period last year, with a staggering 107% increase in emergency food parcels for children.

As a result, we partnered with the Trussell Trust to support two local food banks on our network - Bedford Food Bank and Brighton Minority Ethnic Community

“Times are tough, unemployment is high and most BAME communities have been affected with this pandemic. The Railway Food Collection gave us another way to collect essential items for our vulnerable BME community and we are glad that it's been such a success”.

Juliet Ssekitoleko,
BMECP Food Bank

Partnership. We hosted food collection points at Bedford and Brighton stations for six weeks during the summer, collecting essential items to support our local communities. Over 300 kilos of items were donated meaning over 500 meals could be provided for families in need.

This pilot was a great way for us to use our stations as a channel to support our local communities.



Bedford Foodbank: Tom Moran, Bernie Lee, with Sarah Broughton, Project Manager, for Bedford Foodbank and Mohammad Yasin, MP for Bedford

83% of people receiving the training said their knowledge of outreach services had improved and 58% of Rail Enforcement Officers felt more confident to approach a homeless person. The training has been developed further to an online training session available for all frontline teams which was launched in October 2020.



Highlight

100%

increase in number of referrals following training at Luton station

Happier customers

At a time of great national challenge, GTR has proudly helped to keep Britain moving, by supporting everyone who needs to travel by rail, adapting to meet the needs of the new world and helping people transition. We've made a big effort to stay in touch with people across our network, including working with businesses to understand the needs of their employees.

This year we saw an improvement in performance compared to the previous year with an average 84.8% of trains arriving within 5 minutes of its scheduled arrival time at its final destination, known as Public Performance Measure (PPM). We recognise that since March 2020, it has been a challenging year for our customers with the COVID-19 pandemic and changing travel patterns. As lockdown began, we responded to the dramatic decline in people travelling with a reduced timetable and, as restrictions have eased, we've been increasing the number of services in line with customer demand and requirements, in order to allow for as much social distancing as possible.

Despite these challenges since March, we have operated a more reliable and punctual service than at any time in recent history, recording 94.5% PPM between April and July, which is a pattern reflected across the UK rail industry. Our punctuality has improved due to a series of knock-on effects; having fewer trains on the tracks has eased congestion and resulted in fewer delays.

Improved customer satisfaction

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) undertaken bi-annually by Transport Focus was cut short in spring this year due with a smaller amount of feedback than normal.

The results demonstrate a significant improvement on Great Northern directly linked to the introduction of the new Class 717s on the route. Train satisfaction was up 22% since spring 2019 to 85% and journey experience has increased by 9% in the same time period.

Satisfaction with our stations has increased across all routes since spring 2019 and punctuality increased on Southern and Great Northern.



Spotlight on...Showing our support for key workers

While we were able to keep key workers moving during the COVID-19 lockdown, we were able to show our support in other ways.

Like much of the country, our teams came together to take part in the weekly 'Clap for Carers' during lockdown. In mid-April, we launched three rebranded trains, stating 'NHS: We Thank You.' These trains continue to run across our network and are an ongoing reminder of our thanks to all keyworkers that travel with us.

We also partnered with several local authorities and NHS Trusts across our network to donate over 100 abandoned bikes to NHS staff. Partners included West Sussex County Council, Handle Bars, Luton Borough Council, St Albans Council & Central Bedfordshire Council.

These were bikes that had been abandoned across our network and not claimed and our partners then serviced, repaired and matched them up with NHS staff. The bikes have kept our frontline workers moving during a very challenging time.

Happier customers continued

Keeping our customers moving

The pandemic saw less customers using our services but our nation's key workers still needed to get to their jobs. While running a reduced service it was important for us to understand when and where these key workers were making journeys to make sure that social distancing measures could be maintained, they felt confident and safe to travel, and they could keep moving.

We needed to know where to prioritise services and make timely decisions on this, so we worked with over 50 hospitals across our network, as well as NHS suppliers and passengers, to understand their needs. Feedback from social media and directly from customer teams resulted in us being able to protect early morning services and double the length of certain services to cater for social distancing.

Our train passenger loading data previously took seven days to feed data into our systems, although with the situation changing on a daily basis we needed to adapt our processes accordingly. We worked with our partner Siemens to adopt its 'TimeTool' app to help us acquire real-time data. This allowed us to determine peak travel times and passenger load numbers across the network in less than 24 hours, identifying hotspots for overcrowding and

“We have been keeping a close eye on our capacity to make sure that people have as much space on our trains as possible.”

Chris Fowler
Southern & Gatwick Express Customer Services Director

working out where we needed to provide more trains the next day to keep our passengers safe.

The data enabled us to identify that most passengers were travelling between 06:00-07:00. Passenger messaging previously had been to avoid peak travel times between 08:00-09:00. Having this knowledge meant we could update our messaging so that passengers could stay safe.

Running a reliable service with limited cancellations

At the start of the pandemic, like many workplaces, the number of staff needing to take time off with COVID-19 related symptoms, or those having to shield for health reasons, was increasing. This meant we were facing rapidly changing absence levels in key roles, including train drivers, and our ability to deliver the planned train services was at risk.

“The TimeTool app meant that the speed at which we could make decisions changed overnight. Traditionally, we take a measured approach to analysing data, looking at trends and making a full assessment over a number of weeks but the situation with the pandemic was different. We had to act very quickly, identifying overcrowding hotspots and working out where we needed to provide extra trains so we could keep our passengers safe and get key workers to their jobs.”

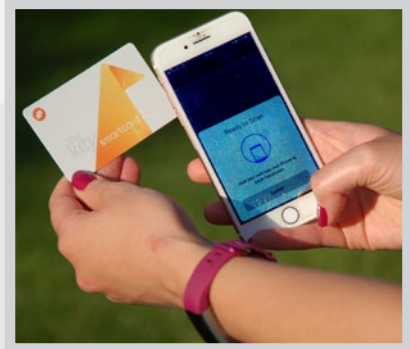
Phil Hutchinson
Head of Strategic Planning



Spotlight on...Learning from our schools

To understand how to help children safely return to school in September, we contacted over 600 local schools and colleges within a one mile radius of our stations. Using the information they provided, we updated timetables, introduced longer trains and added extra stops in key areas when schools opened.

We've also made sure that KeyGo on Key Smartcards will accept student railcards, so they can avoid queues. This helps reduce social contact, even if they choose to Pay As You Go.



It was essential we put together a resilient timetable that key workers could rely on, avoiding the risk of having to make train cancellations due to reduced staff availability. We therefore needed to improve the way we tracked our staff who were needing to take time off, and set this against our delivery plan to understand how the situation was changing daily, so we could confidently run our services.

We had already developed an app to track and record COVID-19 related frontline staff absence. Using this data specifically for our train crew as well, we were able to forecast risks to the operation of our train services. The app meant we could collect and view the person-level information quickly, assess where the constraints were and input into the planning of future timetables, keeping reliability for our customers front of mind at all times.

“Without the absence reporting app, we would have had to have run a smaller timetable so as to not disappoint people with cancellations if we didn’t have enough drivers. The app meant we knew exactly how many drivers we had and as a result, we were able to do the right planning and deliver the right timetable, helping us to maintain the confidence of our passengers during the pandemic.”

Rob Moss
Planning Optimisation Specialist

Happier customers continued

Reducing the impact of vegetation

An ongoing challenge is the impact of encroaching vegetation on our trains and on the tracks. We have partnered with Network Rail to trial Hubble, an AI assisted vegetation management system. It uses a camera mounted to the front of train to capture images of vegetation encroaching that may cause damage, poor track adhesion or impede visibility of signage for our drivers. This will allow proactive removal of vegetation and a subsequent reduction in delays to customers' journeys.

Upgrading Southern, Great Northern and Gatwick Express train fleet

Our engineering team are delivering a £55m train modernisation programme on our Southern Class 377, Gatwick Express and Great Northern Class 387 fleets. The five-year programme funded by Porterbrook, the train owners, will see all 270 trains fitted with upgraded passenger facilities and new LED lighting, as well as the latest smart on-board diagnostic systems to improve punctuality and reliability, which we know is the most important factor for our customers

Understanding what matters now and in the future

The pandemic impacted the way we gather insights from our customers through the bi-annually National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) and our own local customer satisfaction surveys, which are conducted face-to-face at stations. With some customer insight tracking programmes paused, we still needed to understand our customers need, to ensure we were making the right decisions.



We are upgrading our fleet as part of a £55m train modernisation programme

We continued to engage with our Customer Cabinets & Access Advisory Panel and are now also utilising our own online 'Passenger Panel', consisting of approximately 7,000 customers across all routes, to provide feedback electronically. The first two surveys produced 2,500 responses and highlighted concerns over social distancing and face coverings, and how it works in practice, flexible ticketing options and what steps we were taking to make customers safe. This insight has allowed us to adapt our customer messaging in order to address these concerns and supported proposals to the Department for Transport in the ticketing area.

With potential long-term changes in passenger demand and the knowledge that punctuality is the most important factor in customer satisfaction, it raises questions about the future design of services. The timetable pre-COVID-19 was designed to achieve maximum possible passenger capacity at peak times, although research from Transport Focus suggests that in the future our customers will value punctuality and will want crowding to be a thing of the past. Services should also be adapted to recognise a change in work and leisure travel.



Spotlight on...Helping customers with autism rebuild their confidence

Continuing the work we started during the COVID-19 lockdown with our charity partners, we ran a pilot of our 'Try a Train' programme with Autism Bedfordshire with a reduced group size, to help them understand the new social distancing measures at stations and regain their confidence post-lockdown. After their

experience, they all fed back that they felt more confident and would use the train again. Feedback from the group allowed us to make changes to our floor signage at several stations, improving the directional arrows that would have otherwise presented barriers for some individuals.

Focus on – Accessibility

Providing a service that all our passengers can rely on at all stages of their journey is a key priority and this is particularly important when some of our passengers need additional support during their journey. We have taken a number of steps to help ensure that support is consistently available. This includes launching an Accessible Travel Programme, led by a steering group with representatives from across our teams. This group is led by our Head of Accessibility and leads the development and introduction of new initiatives, improving accessibility and services for our customers.

Initiatives we have implemented include updating guidelines to ensure all our ramps used for embarking and disembarking trains are well maintained and our station teams know how to use them safely. We have also issued a telephone directory app to all station colleagues with work issued phones, so they can follow up on accessibility requests at the other end of a customer's journey.

Where we have not met the expectations of our customers to provide them with full support from the beginning to the end of their journey, we review the situation in detail through a safety management programme. This process helps us to identify what went wrong and what steps we need to take to ensure it does not happen again.

All customers deserve the best service

We believe all our customers should have the best experience while using our services and from September onwards, we are relaunching our accessibility training programme. This



All our customers should have the best experience

Happier customers continued

programme focuses on how our teams can support our customers in the best possible way, as well as understanding our legal obligations when it comes to accessibility, equality and assistance. The team delivering the training module have lived with the experience of disability and travelling on public transport, providing real insight and knowledge to help educate our teams.

Investing in making our stations more accessible

Every year we fund and deliver a programme of improvement works under the Minor Works Fund. As part of this, we have made a number of changes to help our customers with accessibility needs. These include a new special assistance desk at Gatwick Airport, wider gatelines at several stations, including Hove and Bognor Regis, and automatic entry doors at Royston and Enfield Chase. We have also upgraded customer information screens to make them easier to read and display more information.

Access for All schemes

We currently have 18 'Access for All' schemes ongoing and at various stages of development across our network. The nationwide 'Access for All' scheme is managed by Network Rail on behalf of the Department for Transport and provides funding for major infrastructure projects to make stations more accessible. Works normally include large scale engineering projects, often in heavily built up areas, replacing Victorian infrastructure with new bridges with accessible lifts.

Work at Crawley station is due to be completed in autumn and will see the completion of a new accessible bridge with lifts on platforms one and two.



Our training focusing on how our teams can support our customers in the best possible way.



New lifts installed at Selhurst station with Access for All funding

Investing in customer experience

Several large-scale improvement projects have been delivered this year, including the £40m fifth platform and track renewals at Stevenage station. Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris marked the completion of the project in August 2020, 12 months ahead of schedule. The fifth platform will allow for increased capacity on the Hertford Loop.

The major redevelopment of St Albans City has made significant progress since work started in summer 2019. The £5.7m project is due to finish in late 2020, further funding has been secured to install a second footbridge. Customers will also benefit from new station toilets, an enhanced retail experience, a new station entrance and more cycle parking.



A look at what's to come: CGI of the new entrance for Gatwick station from the airport side

The transformation of Gatwick Airport railway station started this year and is currently on track for delivery, with improvement works due for completion in 2023. This £150m project is essential to support the growth of the airport, as well as encouraging more people to travel sustainably by rail. Stage one of the upgrade is underway with the demolition and reconstruction of platform number six. The project has been adapted to COVID-19, with the construction team bringing in innovative

ways of working to allow construction to continue in a COVID-secure environment.

We have invested £0.67m in smaller improvements to help our customers with accessibility needs, including customer information screen upgrades, a new special assistance desk at Gatwick Airport, and wider gatelines at several stations, including Hove and Bognor Regis.

We continue to work with our partners Network Rail to jointly deliver schemes under the national 'Access for All' programme that will make our services accessible to everyone. We have 18 stations either with work already underway or with funding secured for works from the Department for Transport (Dft). Stations include Alexandra Palace, Biggleswade, Coulsdon South, Luton and Selhurst.

2020 saw the start of £15.3m station projects being delivered with funding that was set aside last year. Completed improvement projects include the installation of rail's largest electric vehicles (EV) charging point hub at Hatfield station, as well as at Haywards Heath. Over 1,000 projects will be delivered across our network, improving the sustainability of and passenger experience at our stations. The programme of works was developed following a three-month engagement exercise with input from local councils, rail user groups and industry bodies.

Again, we have invested £1.1m in improvements at our smaller stations. Projects have included improvements for footpaths accessing stations and interchanges for local transport such as buses at stations like Meldreth and Watton-at-Stone. We've also increased car parking availability at Horley station, previously at 100% capacity daily.

Better Teams

As an organisation of over 7,000 employees, we have people from all walks of life, bringing with them a wealth of experience and insight, and representing the diverse range of communities that use our services. Making diversity part of our DNA is one of our primary focuses, ensuring that we have representation at all levels and in all parts of our business.

A national challenge for the rail industry is an aging and pre-dominantly male workforce. To address this, we have expanded our apprenticeship programme to attract more young people.

Apprenticeships

We offer 19 different apprenticeships covering engineering, customer services and office management. Last year we launched an industry first train driver apprenticeship open to anyone over the age of 20. This programme is going from strength to strength with 16 participants aged between 25-60, and over 30% female trainees.



Najla Almutariri won Outstanding Personal Contribution at 2020 National Rail Awards



Ben O'Day trainee train driver

This is in addition to our very successful Prince's Trust 'Get into Railways' programme, celebrating its 6th year in 2020, which allows us to reach more diverse and marginalised communities. Graduates from our Prince's Trust programme have gone on to progress to other roles within GTR and elsewhere, including Passenger Hosts and Roster Clerk.

Ben O'Day took part when he was 18. He is now 25 and has progressed to becoming a trainee train driver. Najla Almutariri, 27, a station assistant based at London Victoria recently won Outstanding Personal Contribution at the 2020 National Rail Awards, recognising her commitment to inspiring and increasing the flow of young people into the rail industry by being a vocal advocate for the 'Get into Railways' programme.

As a company, we are taking steps to bridge the gap in departments that have traditionally been more male focused such as train drivers and operational roles. Following a targeted media campaign to raise awareness, we have seen a significant increase in the number of female applications for train drivers, increasing by 78% from 2019 to 2020. Since 2017 we have recruited 80 female drivers and celebrated our first all-female trainee class intake.

Marking Women in Engineering Day

23 June marked International Women in Engineering Day and this year we marked the occasion by running an interactive virtual event, giving an insight into engineering careers. While the event aimed to attract more women into rail, the event was open to anyone

considering a role. We partnered with Women's Engineering Society, Working Mums and The Female Lead to promote the event. We had over 60 females register for the event, with an individual put forward for our engineering graduate scheme.



Spotlight on... Adapting our training

Our teams are always looking for ways to improve services to our customers and make their experience better. To support colleagues learning and development whilst many were working from home, we created an online development hub so they could continue to access training and support online. Whether our people wanted to refresh their skills, remind themselves of advice and guidance or develop their career by learning new skills, there was a module for them.

Moving training online has shortened the time taken out of their days and has meant employees can spend more time focusing on managing their teams and delivering a good service during a challenging time. New e-learning modules included Caring for the Vulnerable, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness.

It was also an opportunity to move our onboarding process for new colleagues online, ensuring that new starters were able to begin their role with minimal delays.

“Being able to induct people remotely means we haven't had to put the company activity on hold. The new way has been very efficient, and helped ensure we are able to connect our employees, not just to each other, but to additional learning opportunities.”

Laura Metitiri

PA to Managing Director of Southern and Gatwick Express

Cleaner environment

At GTR, improving our environmental impact is a core company value. Across our network, we have established several initiatives to reduce our environmental impact and improve the lives of the people in the communities we serve.

In 2019, the Government committed to achieving a net zero carbon emissions target by 2050, which is a great opportunity for the rail industry. As one of the most sustainable means of mass transport, the role rail can play in helping reduce the nation's carbon footprint is huge.

We believe a core part of our passenger expectations is for cleaner, greener and environmentally responsible travel providers, and are always looking at ways to improve and widen the reach of our green initiatives.

Investing in technologies that make a difference

One of the biggest differences we can make is in the amount of energy our trains need to operate, which is one of the reasons behind our recent roll out of new trains on the network. This has allowed for a number of breakthroughs in terms of energy use, management and efficiency.

On-board intelligence systems allow us to monitor, record and analyse the fleet's energy, enabling us to better understand the demand pattern on the railway system whilst working with our delivery partners to always better our services. Using an innovative regenerative braking system, our trains recycle energy used and give it back to the line, as well as improving our braking performance. This, alongside further enhancement in future Automatic Train Operation (ATO) with improved acceleration and deceleration rates, will allow for enhanced timetable introduction.

Our new Class 700 and Class 717 carriages are also roughly 20% lighter than the previous generation. This significant weight reduction of the trains creates less wear and tear on tracks. The 717s have also brought a 50% increase in regeneration per kWh, thanks to the new braking system. In their first year of operation, they have already generated enough electricity (17 million kWh) through their brakes to power the equivalent of all the households of Welwyn and Hatfield for 32 days, potentially saving more than 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.



Highlight

Cutting emissions for deliveries

One of the identified causes of carbon emissions in urban areas is the increase in traffic for delivery of online orders. To help reduce the numbers of stops required by delivery vans and for the convenience of our customers, we have installed Amazon lockers at 51 locations across the Southern network. The lockers are located in locations where customers can collect while using the station or within the local community. This scheme will be expanded across Thameslink and Great Northern stations over the next 12 months.

Encouraging sustainability in other transport modes

To successfully improve the overall sustainability of our network, we are encouraging lower emissions travel to and from stations so passengers can have cleaner end-to-end journeys. One way we're doing this is by introducing electric vehicle charging hubs.

This year we marked World Electric Vehicle Day by opening the UK's largest dedicated EV charging hub at Hatfield station, in partnership with Pod Point. The charging points will provide additional accessibility and convenience for customers and are part of the project which will also see 12 new charging points installed at Haywards Heath train station.



“We’re taking great strides towards our goal of having one of the best electric vehicle infrastructure networks in the world. This means a network for current and future electric vehicle drivers that is affordable, reliable, accessible and secure.”

Grant Shapps
Transport Secretary



Highlight

All of our non-traction electricity is sourced through green energy tariffs. By generating our own green electricity through our energy gardens, and installing solar panels at Denmark Hill station in partnership with Network Rail, we will be able to improve our energy consumption in the next 12 months.

These locations were chosen following a heat-mapping exercise which revealed EV ownership and sales hot spots. With an increasing number of people switching to electric vehicles, we responded to local demand by providing greater access to charging infrastructure. The new charging points are in addition to the existing 114 in place across the GTR network, which have all undergone improvements as part of the project. We'll be monitoring how regularly our passengers use them in the hope that they trigger and encourage demand as more customers see low-carbon travel as a part of everyday life.

A further £320,000 of funding has been secured to install more EV points around our network.

The installation is part of our station improvement programme to improve the overall journey experience by making stations smarter, safer, more comfortable and more environmentally sustainable.

Cleaner environment continued

Solar energy powering local community projects

We have partnered with Energy Gardens, a London based organisation, that funds community projects from profits generated from the sale of solar energy. This will see solar roof panels installed at two engineering depots and entering into a power purchase agreement for electricity generated by these and other similar sites.

Energy Gardens work with local communities across the capital to create gardens and open spaces for the enjoyment of local people and education of young people. Green spaces will be developed across our network and stations in London, boosting biodiversity and making stations more pleasant places to be.

As part of our station improvements programme, we are landscaping some of our stations to make our rewilding initiative possible. This will see wildflower meadows, hardy shrubs and perennials planted in green spaces across our network. This work aligns with a broader rewilding policy across our network to protect natural wildlife and enhance the ecological value of our sites.

Active travel

For many, lockdown was an opportunity to get outside and rediscover, or enjoy for the first time, the benefits of cycling or walking, as well as exploring more of what is on offer in their local areas. With many returning to a new normal, more people want to keep up these new activities, both for the physical and mental health benefits and are looking at how this can be incorporated in their day-to-day lives.



Highlight

Our environment and energy management system is certified to the ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 international standards, ensuring a commitment to continuous improvement of environmental and energy performance is embedded in all our business activities and operations.

While many passengers already walk or cycle to our stations, more passengers than ever may consider this as an option when returning to their place of work this autumn. GTR is installing more secure cycle facilities across our network, including a £190,000 cycle hub at Elstree and Borehamwood which will hold 100 bikes, and have CCTV, a maintenance area, bike detection system, and cyclists will be able to access it for free with a Key smartcards. Additional cycle storage has been added to stations including Drayton Park and St Albans.

The GTR network spans across the South East and gives direct access to many areas of outstanding, natural beauty as well as local attractions. Several community rail partners have put together guides of how passengers can travel sustainably and get out into the countryside to visit areas of Cambridgeshire, Kent, West and East Sussex as well as the coast line.

Vibrant communities

Our station partners and Community Rail Partnerships continue to go from strength to strength, delivering projects that connect our railway with the communities they serve. Many of the projects brighten up and improve the appearance of our stations, as well as having a positive environmental impact.

Projects include clearing and renovating overgrown urban space at Gispay Hill and Crofton Park, and installing a rainwater harvesting water-butt at Angmering.

Greener stations

As part of our Station Improvement programme we asked local community groups and stakeholders which green initiatives, what they would like to see at their local station to improve the environment, promote active travel and make stations more sustainable. A range of initiatives have been delivered over spring and summer, with many more due in the next twelve months. Projects already delivered include an impressive six-metre nature-themed mural and a new planter with a large Palmers Green sign have been installed at Palmers Green station. A third project on the horizon is the creation of a mosaic on one of the platforms.



An impressive **six-metre nature-themed mural** installed at Palmers Green station

Cleaner environment continued

Boost to gardeners' green credentials at Angmering station

In spring, 'Friends of Angmering', station partners at Angmering station, identified the solution to an ongoing challenge by installing a water-butt to collect rainwater at the station. This simple, but essential item, has made it much easier for local volunteer gardeners to water the much loved station garden located on the opposite platform away from the station water tap.

The water-butt was donated by Southern Water and installed at the station thanks to funding from our Passenger Benefit Fund, set up to provide tangible benefits to passengers across our network.

Deirdre Carolin, who is Chair of the Friends of Angmering Station and a teacher at Georgian Gardens Primary School, said: "We're delighted our request for rainwater harvesting has come to fruition. It's very much in line with our ethos of sustainable and environmentally friendly gardening."

Rainwater harvesting, and ensuring water availability supports biodiversity and protects natural capital, are key guiding principles in our wider environmental strategy. This project is a great example of how our community rail partnerships work with local volunteers and businesses to bring sustainable projects to life.



Safer working

The impact of lockdown meant a change for all our colleagues. Many frontline colleagues continued to work at stations and depots to keep key workers moving, while others were working from home for the first time for an extended period. We took a series of steps to support as many colleagues as possible.

We developed a working from home guidance for employees, which provided advice on setting up a safe and comfortable workspace and guidance on taking regular breaks. All COVID-19 documents, briefings and news were stored in a new intranet site for easy access. We sought feedback from colleagues throughout lockdown to understand their experience, what worked well for them and what improvements could be made.

Like many workplaces we had colleagues shielding for personal or family health matters and we worked with managers to develop a return to work toolkit to support colleagues. To keep our teams informed of the latest government, rail safety advice and company policies, we held weekly briefing calls for all management grades.

With lockdown easing in summer, more people were back on the move and we made changes across our network to help keep our customers safe, and to help them feel safe.



Spotlight on...Protecting our customers all the way

To help our customers be and feel safe, we're supporting social distancing measures and using enhanced cleaning routines at every stage of their journey. At stations, we've installed over 1,000 hand sanitiser points, rolled out 19,000 floor signs, and are sanitising touchpoints such as screens, buttons and handrails throughout the day.

On-board, we're using a long-lasting cleaning treatment on all 2,700 of our

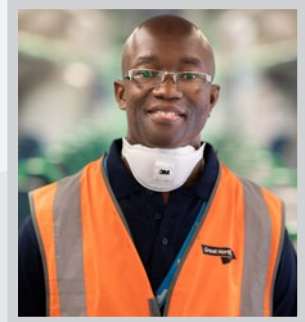
carriages, and have created as much space on our trains as possible – running over 3,000 daily train services.

The cleaning treatment is applied on a 21-day cycle, and a specially-developed app tells staff when each train carriage was last cleaned with the viruscide. Swab tests of treated areas are carried out around a week after application to make sure it remains effective.

Safer working continued

Jason Davis – Train Presentation Cleaner

After spending years driving London buses, Jason recently swapped road for rail and hasn't looked back. He said: "My number one priority is making sure trains are clean and ready for use. The new cleaning products we've introduced help prevent onward spreading of the virus and are being used on all 2,700 train carriages in the network."



Jason Davis: Train Presentation Cleaner

Promoting positive mental health

We also know that in these unsettling times of full or partial lockdown, that our mental health can suffer. That's why we created peer support networks to keep our teams connected, especially for our colleagues who had to shield during this time. This peer-to-peer support group consisted of over 30 GTR volunteers trained in wellbeing and mental health support, with 29 colleagues receiving support from these volunteers.

We also launched mental health masterclasses focusing on mental health resilience and managing stress during times of crisis. We delivered three classes during lockdown with 73 people attending these sessions. We also delivered online Mental Health and Resilience Training for Line Managers, with over 650 taking part. We have also developed learning tools for our people to enhance their understanding of mental health for both themselves and to support their colleagues.



Highlight

Over 1, 000

no-touch hand sanitisers installed for staff and passengers at stations



Highlight

100 extra

cleaning staff, with a focus on cleaning frequent touchpoints such as ticket machines, chip-and-pin machines, door buttons, tables, grab poles and handles

Key data: Govia Thameslink Railway

	2020	2019	2018
Stronger communities			
Community investment per employee (£)	63.41	57.11	39.1
Number of stakeholder events	167	239	173
Cleaner environment			
Traction carbon emissions (T)	222,974,779	223,486	250,608
Non-traction carbon emissions* (T)	2,408	17,885	22,267
Waste recycled (%)	33	31	23
Happier customers			
Customer satisfaction (%)	81	78	75
Rail punctuality PPM	84.8	87.2	80.8
Safer working			
SPADs per million miles	1.2	1.11	0.88
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	0.29	0.11	1.12
Passenger RIDDOR accidents per million journeys	0.16	0.11	1.12
Accessibility Trains certified accessible (RVAR) (%)	42	43	45
Number of reported crimes	5,361	5,462	5,256
Better teams			
Number of employees	7,394	7,220	7,071
Employee engagement (%)	82	64	57
Training spend per employee	571.61	754	113
Female employees (%)	18.2	17.0	17.7
Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees (%)	19.7	18.3	18.7
Absenteeism rate (%)	6.6	4.1	6.0
Turnover rate (%)	5.6	6.0	8.2

* Reflects the switch to a green energy tariff.

Key

RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations at workplaces
DDA – Disability Discrimination Act



For information on the full Group data, please visit our corporate website: [go-ahead.com](https://www.go-ahead.com)

More information

You can find out more about GTR by visiting our websites:

gatwickexpress.com

greatnorthernrail.com

thameslinkrailway.com

southernrailway.com

More information on how Go-Ahead Group manages sustainability can be found by visiting:

go-ahead.com/sustainability

If you have any comments, views or ideas on how we might improve, or have any thoughts on other issues that we should address in this report, please write to:

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EC3R 8AT

E: community@gtrailway.com

Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Ltd (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group's Annual Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 30 June 2019 to 27 June 2020.

The full verification statement including Bureau Veritas' verification opinion, methodology, recommendations and a statement of independence and impartiality can be found on the Go-Ahead Group website:

www.go-ahead.com



Bureau Veritas UK Ltd
October 2020