



Go South Coast  
Sustainability Report 2016

# Focused on partnership

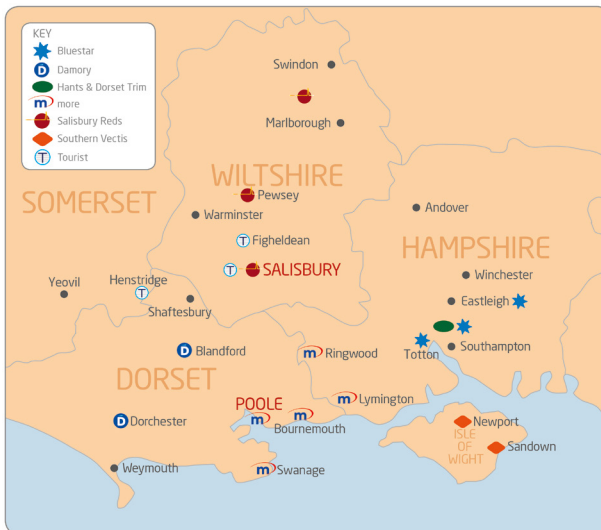
# About us

Go South Coast operates a fleet of 745 buses across Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. With around 104 routes we provide our customers with transport to most of the major towns and cities in the area and offer seamless travel connections encouraging more sustainable journeys.

As a business we are dedicated to investing and developing our employees, to ensure that we offer the best service to our customers and that we have a happy workforce. Our other important aim is to have positive and dynamic relationships with our stakeholders, whether this be working with Councils and local Universities on implementing innovative transport solutions or working with our dedicated charities giving something back to the communities we serve.

## Where we operate

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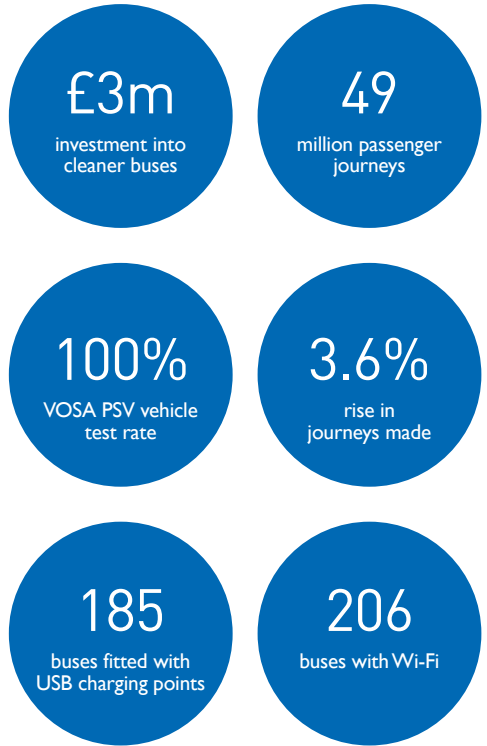


## In this report

- 2 Managing Director's message
- 4 Our approach
- 5 Our stakeholders
- 6 Society
- 8 Customers
- 10 Our people
- 12 Finance

## 2016 highlights

- 91% customer satisfaction
- 185 buses fitted with USB charging points
- Southern Vectis awarded employer of the year at the Isle of Wight Venus Awards
- 5 new websites launched with live bus times feature
- Over £3 million invested in new buses for Go South Coast companies



### Find out more information at:

- [www.bluestarbus.co.uk](http://www.bluestarbus.co.uk)
- [www.morebus.co.uk](http://www.morebus.co.uk)
- [www.salisburyreds.co.uk](http://www.salisburyreds.co.uk)
- [www.islandbuses.co.uk](http://www.islandbuses.co.uk)

 [facebook.com/bluestarbus](https://www.facebook.com/bluestarbus)

 [facebook.com/morebuses](https://www.facebook.com/morebuses)

 [facebook.com/salisburyreds](https://www.facebook.com/salisburyreds)

 [facebook.com/southernvectis](https://www.facebook.com/southernvectis)

We're part of The  
**Go-Ahead**  
Group

# Managing Director's message

"This year our customer satisfaction level is 91% which is a real testament to our employees that are on the road, in our travel shops and work behind the scenes."

Andrew Wickham,  
Managing Director



Go South Coast help our customers to make over 49 million journeys per year and our aim is to not only do this, but to improve on connections with local communities, increase the amount of customer journeys, and stay a step ahead with new and innovative onboard and online technologies, so that our customer service offering continues to exceed customer expectations.



## Society

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Our relationships with local councils and stakeholders are very strong and we work closely with them to offer new and exciting initiatives to encourage people to use public transport more frequently. For example this year we have been working with a local borough council to encourage people who live further away from their nearest bus stop to cycle for part of their journey, then use the new cycle parking at the stop and continue the rest of their journey by bus. This encourages people to get fit and travel sustainably. It is schemes such as this, paired with investment in new buses and attractive ticketing offers, that keep customers returning as well as attracting new users.

We also endeavour to keep our relationships with local councils and communities solid by stepping in where we can do so viably. This year we have launched three services due to high customer demand, and another operator withdrawing a service from the locality. This keeps us in a favourable light in local communities as well as showing we are reliable and dependable.

## Customers

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This year our customer satisfaction level is 91% which is a real testament to our employees that are on the road, in our travel shops and working behind the

scenes, ensuring our vehicles are up to standard and that the information we provide is clear. This inter-departmental teamwork ensures that customers are able to easily navigate their journey.

## People

Our people are at the heart of Go South Coast and we strive to have the best drivers on the road offering first class customer service. This year we have stepped up our training we offer new drivers, as well as putting together a customer promise course which will be an ongoing development course for existing employees. Each month for all brands an employee of the month is awarded for an exceptional achievement, they are in turn invited to the annual Go South Coast awards night, alongside other employees who are invited for recognition of their long service to the company. Those who attend enjoy the event immensely and it gives them a real buzz to be part of something so special, and gives everyone the drive to get the monthly award in order to be invited.

## Values and Vision

We need to continue building strong connections with our local communities, growing passenger numbers, and creating public support for our services above competitors. We need to stay one step ahead of changing customer demands and technological trends that threaten our existing business and build advocacy among our passengers. We need to appeal to potential new employees and build engagement with existing colleagues



Visit [www.go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability) to find out more about our approach

## Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our bus services in a safe, environmentally and socially responsible manner. This report is split into four sections:



### Society

To run our companies in a safe, socially and environmentally responsible manner.



### Customers

To provide high quality local, customer focused bus travel.



### Our people

To be a leading employer in the transport sector.



### Finance

To run our business with strong financial discipline to deliver sustainable shareholder value.



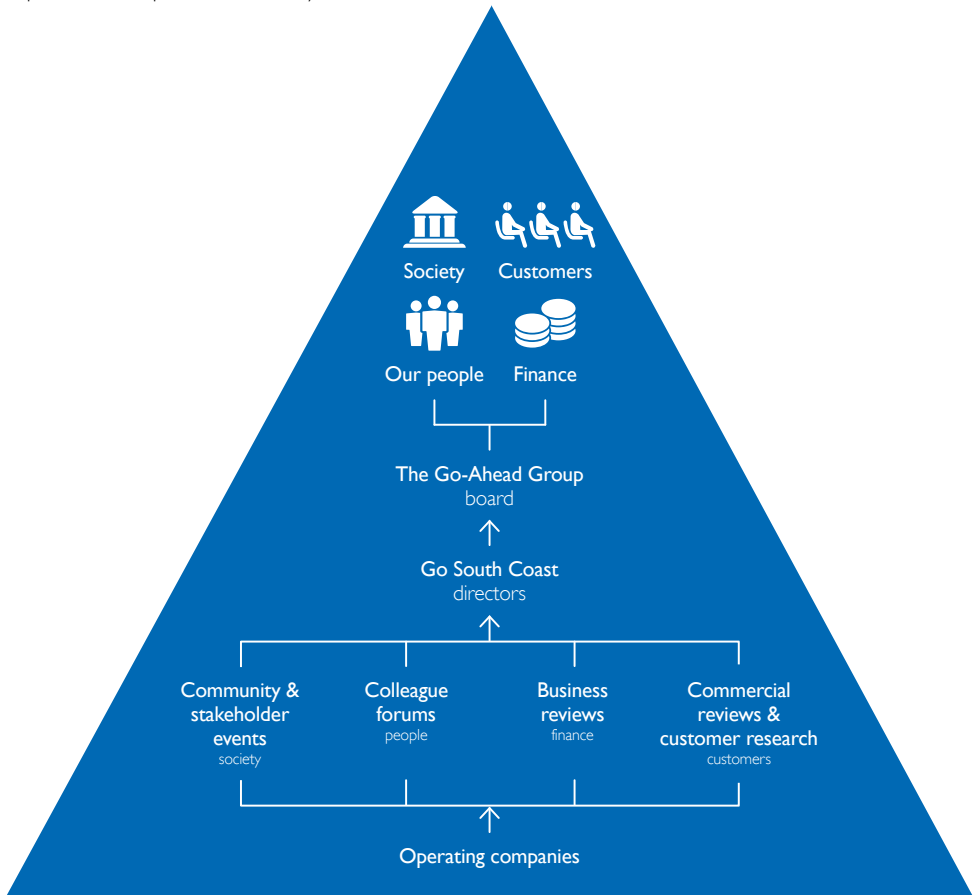
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# Our approach

Go South Coast forms part of Go Ahead. The Group has a clear strategy to which the Board is committed. Our key performance indicators are linked to our strategic priorities.

## Governance structure

Our Go South Coast Managers and Directors are committed to ensuring that our business activities revolve around our four pillars of measurement, each of which we use to track success. These four pillars include Society, Customers, Our people, and Finance, all of which play a very important role in how we plan and implement our operations internally and for our customers.



Read more about our approach  
online at [go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://go-ahead.com/sustainability)

# Our stakeholders

Collaboration with stakeholders and partnership-working is fundamental in our approach to sustainability.

## Stakeholder structure

As a leading provider of transport in the south, we face a wide range of complex issues. Some of those issues are within our control, some we seek assistance with in partnering with our stakeholders, suppliers and local councils to work on a resolution and move forward.





# Society

As a company Go South Coast prides itself on the relationships we have built with local authorities, community groups, charities, schools and universities.

Our services provide vital connections for our customers in their local communities, so it is essential that we have a positive presence within our local areas.

## Key Highlights

£3m

investment into cleaner buses

275

stakeholder events

411

partner organisations/  
beneficiaries  
directly reached

437

employees involved in  
community events

## Together in Partnerships

In our efforts to make travelling by bus an attractive option we work very closely with local councils on making sure all our timetables and infrastructure are accessible for all, as well as stepping in to provide services where other operators have withdrawn routes, we are working with other rail groups. Our latest partnerships with the Three Rivers Rail Group has secured rail passengers who are affected by delays or incidents to travel on our Bluestar 1 service for a reduced fare.

We have two very good relationships with The University of Southampton and Bournemouth University for which we have just secured another ten year contract, this was relaunched as UNIBUS. We hold regular liaison meetings with both universities to ensure our services are working for them. The buses used for the contract are equipped with all the latest onboard technology to ensure students and staff can utilise their commutes between lectures or into work each day. We also take on interns from Southampton University each summer, and students have been given real projects to undertake.

### Launching the new UNIBUS



This year we won a new 10 year contract with Bournemouth University. In order to take the new contract forwards and make the brand more attractive for students and the public we relaunched the service as UNIBUS. The buses are all equipped with free Wi-Fi and usb charging points.



## A Cleaner Environment

This year Go South Coast have invested over £3 million in cleaner buses. These cleaner buses help us to reduce our carbon emissions in city centres. Southampton City Centre will be a clean air zone by 2020. As well as investing in new vehicles with lower emissions the councils initiative involves travel planning with local businesses to encourage employees to use public transport to get into work. We have introduced a number of incentives for employees at local companies to get people catching the bus into the city on a more regular basis.

## Together in Communities

We work very closely with our dedicated charities of the year for each of our brands as well as helping in the wider community too. We also help with local community events such as the Pride Festival in Bournemouth and the Sikh Vaisakhi celebration parade in Southampton, to name a couple. Being a large part of our local communities is extremely important to us.

Go South Coast also supports communities by providing bus services where competitors have previously withdrawn services from the area. Between 2015 and 2016 we've launched three new services. Two of these were to step in and provide bus services for communities who would have been left without a bus service completely.

## Smarter Energy

Throughout the last couple of years we have been improving the efficiency of our operating depots, and this ranges from replacing our regular lighting with LED fittings, having motion sensors installed so that lights are only on when the corridor/room is in use. Along with this, our newer fleet also emit less carbon thus helping our local air quality improve.

## Age Friendly Island



Taking part in the Age Friendly Island project Southern Vectris helped run a special course at a local Isle of Wight College where young people donned age simulation suites, blind folds and special glasses to simulate what it is like to experience the challenges faced by elderly customers whilst they use public transport.

It's perfectly understandable that young people don't understand or appreciate the needs of older people using public transport. It was an excellent opportunity for us to work with Age UK and raise awareness of these very important issues.

“The number of people living here with dementia is almost twice the national average – and research shows that loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health. That is why the Age Friendly Island Projects are essential.”



# Customers

Customer satisfaction is extremely important to Go South Coast. We have invested heavily in our online and customer service offerings to ensure that from the first point of contact, whether viewing our website, or contacting a member of our team, we cater to all our customers needs.

It's vital that we encourage customers back by making sure that in every step of their journey satisfaction with our service remains high.

## Key Highlights



## Improving Customer Experience

At Go South Coast we strive to be as innovative as possible with our services to customers. This year at Bluestar and Unilink we installed USB charging points to the majority of our fleet. When this technology was trialled it was extremely well received and a feature that most of our customers found useful.

We operate the Stonehenge Tour and after reviewing our offering to customers, we launched a digital ticketing system to make booking easier. The digital ticket means that customers who wish to purchase their travel online, no longer need to print a ticket in order to travel; they simply show their phone to the driver. This has improved our offering greatly and is much easier for our customers, many of whom are tourists to the area. We hope to roll out a similar system to our New Forest Tour next season.

This year was the second year that we operated our morebus M1/M2 on Christmas Day, which proved to be very successful, as was the previous year, and was implemented again to ensure the public could still

## Attractive Travel



Bluestar invested heavily this year on new buses for our most frequent route the Bluestar 18. To show off how modern, clean and attractive they are inside, we created a Google virtual tour; to show people how different bus travel now is. Especially for those who haven't travelled on buses for a few years.

get around the conurbation and that hospital employees could still get to work over the holiday period. We also extended the hours of operation for these routes to run all day and all night Monday to Saturdays. The Poole and Bournemouth areas are heavily populated with students, and shift workers and providing a service up to every 3 minutes almost 24 hours a day is a life-line for many. Customer numbers are continuing to grow in the area that the routes serve.

## Accessible

We aim to provide travel for all. Our fleet is accessible for those customers who need wheelchair access and our new vehicles are fitted with flooring and hand poles that are dementia friendly. Our buses for Bluestar and Unilink are all fitted with next stop audio and visual announcements to help those customers who are visually impaired, have hearing difficulties or who are unfamiliar with the area.

## Affordable

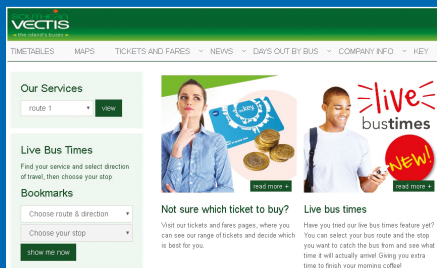
In order for customers to keep using our services we have to be affordable so we make sure we offer great value tickets in a number of different ways. We offer our most competitive tickets via our key and mobile ticketing apps, as these enable quicker boarding, and also allows us to introduce limited special offers. We have regular school holiday offers on our group tickets to encourage families to continue using the buses for leisure trips.

## Attractive

We invest heavily in our fleet to ensure our vehicles look attractive, and on the inside we endeavour to keep them up to date with innovative technologies such as free Wi-Fi, mobile ticketing and onboard USB charging points. Recently we have launched the live bus times feature on our websites, this tells customers in real time when their bus will arrive, enabling them to wait inside a little longer if the weather is poor or give them an idea of how long the bus will take to arrive in case of delays along the route.

“There is a great demand for up to the minute ‘real time’ travel information and we want to make it even easier for customers to plan journeys with us.”

## Live bus times



Customers can now access real time bus information, thanks to a new feature on our websites. We are excited to be providing those travelling with us, quick and easy access to live bus timetables at the tap of a button or the touch of a smartphone. There is great demand for up-to-the-minute ‘real time’ travel information, and we want to make it easier than ever for our customers to plan their journeys with us.



# Our people

Go South Coast develop their employees through their chosen schemes and help others progress and grow with the company.

Not only that we aim to keep our employees. Our aim is to keep them with great benefits and recognition schemes as well as the chance to be involved with community projects.

## Training

This year we launched the Bus Plus training programme for new drivers. This is now a compulsory addition to their initial training. Drivers go out with their instructors and a simulation duty card so they can familiarise themselves with how to run to an actual duty, and whilst they are driving other events such as customer interaction are simulated so the driver is more prepared for when they first go out in service.

Throughout the year we have customer service training courses, this is given to drivers who have had several customer complaints about their conduct, and this is a chance for us to re-educate them on how and what good customer service is and how to provide it.

## Driving Diversity

In order to encourage diversity in our workforce we have started to recruit drivers slightly differently and periodically throughout the year we hold 'try it days'.

## Key Highlights

1,613

employees

6,633

staff training days

87 years

average length  
or service

437

employees involved  
in community  
engagement  
events

## New training roles



To constantly improve our offering to customers we created a new training programme for all our employees. This course is called Customer Promise and we recruited for Ambassadors to deliver the course from internally.

These are events where people considering bus driving as a career can come and actually try driving a bus and we can help ease their concerns on driving such a big vehicle and assist with any other queries they might have about making the decision on becoming a driver. In particular we have encouraged ladies to attend these days to show them that bus driving can be a great career move.

## Taking care of our Staff

We encourage our staff to go the extra mile in their day to day routine and we recognise them when they do. There is an employee of the month scheme that is run for all our brands and all employees who have won this get celebrated at our Go South Coast Awards Night where we also recognise those employees with long service achievements.

There are regular 'meet the manager forums' where drivers can bring to light any issues, suggestions, or questions they have. If we aren't able to answer these there, we endeavour to respond to them as soon as possible.

## Community Involved

We are currently working with the Rainbow Project in Southampton to help disadvantaged young people to gain the skills they might need to gain meaningful employment. We have just offered our first candidate we had from the project a full time apprenticeship due to his hard work and promise shown during his initial work placement.

“The IRTE Skills Challenge allowed Salisbury Reds the opportunity to challenge its staff’s professionalism and show the high quality of the services we continue to provide.”

## Awards

### Employer of the Year, Southern Vectis

– Isle of Wight Venus Awards. Southern Vectis were singled out for initiatives designed to encourage gender diversity within the workplace.

### Second Place – Passengers Matter –

Community Rail Partnership Awards – This was awards for the 'No train, no worries' campaign that enabled train passengers to travel for a discounted rate when their train had been delayed.

### Runners Up – Combined Bodywork & Mechanical Award – IRTE Skills Challenge 2016.

The challenge is aimed at finding the best engineers across the UK.



Southern Vectis receiving their employer of the year award



# Finance

Go South Coast are part of The Go-Ahead Group plc. Go South Coast supports the local economy by directly employing 1,613 people from across Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and the Isle of Wight, whilst providing our local communities with a sustainable way of getting to work or school.

## Key Highlights



## Supporting the UK Economy

Each one of the 49 million journeys taken on our services every year is important to us. During the year, Go South Coast made a direct contribution to the economy by providing people with a convenient way to get to work, shops key services and leisure activities every day.

We connect communities and support local businesses, which plays a part in strengthening the UK economy. We directly employ 1,613 people in the South Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and Isle of Wight areas and value our staff, investing in our people through training, development and creating supportive, inclusive workplaces.

## Fair tax mark

We're part of The Go-Ahead Group, renowned for being a socially responsible organisation, where financial transparency and openness are important. The Group has been awarded the Fair Tax Mark, a label for good taxpayers and companies that are open about tax affairs and seek to pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place. A fair tax system is to the benefit of everyone and crucial to support a vibrant mixed economy.

## Ethical Procurement

We realise the importance of partnering with suppliers who align their work with our values as this supports efficient delivery of our services. We rely on suppliers to take a partnership approach in working together to jointly deliver the best service possible.

Our ethical procurement approach is embedded in our supply chain procurement and management processes. We take into account ethical as well as commercial and technical factors, when considering which suppliers to partner with and we encourage our suppliers to adhere to similar high standards of corporate responsibility.

# Key data

Go South Coast	2015/16	2014/15
<b>SOCIETY</b>		
<b>Safety</b>		
Bus accidents per million miles	<b>68</b>	68
Fleet with CCTV (%) <sup>+</sup>	<b>79.9</b>	54
Number of reported crimes <sup>+</sup>	<b>90</b>	93
<b>Environment</b>		
Carbon emissions per passenger journey (kg)	<b>0.77</b>	0.74
<b>Community</b>		
Community Spend per Employee (£)	<b>2.39</b>	4.48
Stakeholder events (number)	<b>275</b>	217
<b>CUSTOMERS</b>		
Customer satisfaction (Latest Passenger Focus score) (%)	<b>91.0</b>	91.3
Deregulated / local bus punctuality (%) <sup>+</sup>	<b>83.3</b>	80.5
Expenditure on new buses in financial year (£'000) <sup>+</sup>	<b>3,315</b>	6,514
Average age of bus fleet*	<b>9.2</b>	9.6
<b>Accessibility</b>		
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (%)*	<b>84.7</b>	82.1
<b>OUR PEOPLE</b>		
Average number of employees <sup>+</sup>	<b>1,613</b>	1,453
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees <sup>+</sup>	<b>0.9</b>	1.2
Employee engagement index	<b>46</b>	46
Employee turnover rate (%) <sup>+</sup>	<b>12.8</b>	15.1
Absenteeism rate (%) <sup>+</sup>	<b>4.1</b>	4.6
Training Spend per Employee (£)	<b>309.14</b>	176.25
<b>Diversity</b>		
% of female employees	<b>13.8</b>	14.9
% of Asian, black and other ethnic group employees	<b>2.0</b>	2.3
<b>FINANCE</b>		
Passenger Journeys (m)	<b>49</b>	47.7
Passenger volume growth (%) <sup>+</sup>	<b>3.6</b>	2.3

**Key**

+ For the reporting period

\* as at the reporting period end

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 [www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com)

## More information

You can find out more about Go South Coast visiting our website: [gosouthcoast.co.uk](http://gosouthcoast.co.uk) and more information on how Go South Coast manages sustainability can be found by visiting: [www.go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://www.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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**BUREAU  
VERITAS**

### Summary verification statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Ltd has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc over selected sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPI) data contained within the Group's annual report covering the period 28 June 2015 to 2 July 2016.

The full verification statement including the verification scope and Bureau Veritas' verification opinion, methodology, areas of good practice, recommendations and a statement of independence and impartiality can be found on the Go-Ahead Group website: [www.go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability)

Produced by The Go-Ahead Group and designed by Black Sun plc

We're part of The  
**Go-Ahead**  
Group