

GTR and The Prince's Trust **5 year partnership**

2019 Social Impact Report *Transforming Lives*





“Providing life-changing opportunities for young people”

I’m immensely pleased with how Govia Thameslink Railway’s partnership with The Prince’s Trust is helping us reach our shared goals: to enable young people to secure jobs and be active players in the economy. We believe young people should have fair opportunities in life regardless of background or the barriers they may face. Get into Railways has been instrumental in focusing our efforts on young people, and playing our part in offering them skills and opportunities.

Our partnership has grown over the years and the results speak for themselves with over 80% of participants going on to find employment or further training. To really emphasise the difference we are making to people, communities and society as a whole, we have calculated that the programme has delivered over £1.6 million in social value. But the inspiring stories of people highlighted in this report really bring the personal impacts to life.

What’s also clear from this report is how the scheme has helped hundreds of young people boost their confidence and inspired them to build a future, not just for themselves, but for their families as well. It is hard not to feel an immense sense of pride in what we have achieved.

I’d like to thank The Princes Trust and my GTR colleagues for their dedication to this programme. I look forward to continuing our partnership for many years to come.

Patrick Verwer, Chief Executive Officer, Govia Thameslink Railway

2019 marks five years of our partnership with Govia Thameslink Railway. GTR is committed to providing life-changing opportunities for young people, going above and beyond to give them opportunities in the transport sector. In collaboration, we have delivered 14 Get into Railways programmes, whereby 182 young people had a taster of the sector and an incredible 77% of those young people progressed into jobs across GTR. The company goes out of its way to create an environment where young people see GTR as a family rather than an employer, providing expert mentor support.

Throughout our partnership, GTR has shared best practice with other train operating companies across the UK to ensure they are providing opportunities for young people across the sector. This is not surprising given that 14% of their London Bridge Station staff have completed a programme with The Prince’s Trust.

Prince’s Trust research shows that young people’s wellbeing remains at the lowest level in a decade, with those who are not in work, education or training (NEET) faring the worst. Sadly, one in four NEET young people say they have no positive role models to look up to. For this reason, we need support from employers like GTR now more than ever, providing mentors, training and job opportunities for young people. It is only possible for our country to succeed when young people succeed.

Thank you,

Nick Stace, UK Chief Executive, The Prince’s Trust



“With our help, young people from all walks of life can go on to succeed”

Partnership Highlights



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) first partnered with The Prince's Trust in 2014 as part of its social commitments. The Get into Railways programme was developed to support young people in the local community get into employment by delivering pre-employability programmes across GTR's networks (Thameslink, Great Northern, Southern and Gatwick Express) and provide sustainable work opportunities for local unemployed young people.

The support, dedication and commitment to helping young people overcome challenges, start out and consequently thrive in the transport sector has had an outstanding impact. Here are some of the partnership highlights:



“GTR and The Prince's Trust have developed a programme together that is generating significant social value.”

- Guy Battle, Chief Executive Officer, Social Value Portal.



Since 2014:

14 pre-employability programmes

delivered to 182 young people struggling to find work



Over 80% of programme participants

went on to education, employment or training



77%

of programme participants employed across GTR

14% of GTR London Bridge staff



have been recruited through the programme



Over £1.6 million in social value generated through helping unemployed young people into work¹

¹ Verified by Social Value Portal. The proxy value for employing a person not in employment, education or training has been built by estimating the average fiscal savings and economic benefits of employing an unemployed young person. Data is taken from the Unit Cost Database.



Achievements

Winners of the Advancing Social Mobility in the Workplace' award at the Employers' Network for Equality & Inclusion in 2019

Four young people nominated for regional Prince's Trust Awards to recognise their achievements

Two young people have become Prince's Trust Young Ambassadors, inspiring other young people to get into the transport sector



About The Prince's Trust



Youth charity The Prince's Trust helps young people to develop the confidence and skills they need to realise their ambitions, so that they can live, learn and earn.

The Prince's Trust believes that every young person deserves the chance to succeed. Yet every year, hundreds of thousands of young people across the UK do not get this chance and face daily struggles that can seem insurmountable.

The Prince's Trust works in communities across the UK, helping young people to succeed. The Trust's practical courses and programmes, together with trusted volunteers and mentors equip young people with the skills and confidence they need to move into work, education and training.

Founded by HRH The Prince of Wales in 1976, the charity supports 11-30 year olds who are unemployed, struggling at school or at risk of exclusion or social isolation. Many of the young people helped by The Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness, mental health challenges, or have been in trouble with the law. The programmes offered by the charity give young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work.

In 2018/19, The Prince's Trust supported over 66,000 young people and over 970,000 young people since 1976. In the next 10 years, The Trust has a bold ambition to support one million more young people.

At the heart of this ambition and crucial work are partnerships. The Trust is looking forward to having an even greater impact with GTR's support.

Supporting today's youth

GTR's work with The Prince's Trust is needed now more than ever. According to The Prince's Trust's Futures at Stake report, 46% of young people don't feel like they have any role models in their community, 34% of young people don't feel their communities care about them. The Trust's 2019 Youth Index has revealed that young people's happiness and confidence has flatlined to its lowest level in a decade.



Get into Railways Programme



The Get into Railways programme was designed in partnership with The Prince's Trust to offer skills-based training, qualifications and work opportunities across the transport sector for young people aged 18-25 who have struggled to get into work. By offering mentoring and hands-on experience in one of GTR's teams, the programme has helped young people to build transferable skills by working closely with our experienced colleagues who coach and support them through their journey.

How it works

After being invited to an initial taster day, participants take part in a four-week intensive course, half of which is spent in the classroom learning key customer service skills, conflict resolution, first aid and health and safety. This is followed by two weeks of hands-on experience alongside GTR's fully-trained mentors at stations, depots or GTR's Head Office, where they can put their skills into practice. Meanwhile The Trust provides a 'wrap-around' of well-being and financial support, advice and guidance. Real-life work experience gives applicants an insight into the rail industry and helps them become work-ready, developing knowledge and confidence that will help them in their future careers – and in many cases leads on to permanent roles at GTR. Since the first programme in 2014, GTR have embedded the scheme into recruitment practices and have offered a range of dynamic roles such as IT and On-Board Supervisors as initial entry points for young people who successfully complete the course.



GTR progression mentors

Mentors are integral to supporting the young people and making sure they thrive on the programme. The scheme is integrated into GTR's learning and development programme, offering training with The Prince's Trust so they provide the best support, and learn crucial pastoral skills to welcome participants into the company and integrate them into our organisational culture.

- Mentors volunteer for an average of five hours a month to support their mentee
- 17 trained and dedicated progression mentors helping young people to thrive at GTR
- Over 800 volunteering hours have been donated by GTR employees since the partnership began

The support offered by GTR and The Prince's Trust to young people has evolved and intensified over the years to ensure that, together, young people are receiving the best opportunity to thrive and be set up for success during and after the programme.



Ben O'Day, 24, lives in Peterborough and is a Hitchin-based Rail Enforcement Officer. He is looking forward to becoming a Train Driver.



Turn the clock back six years and Ben had just finished sixth form and was unsure what to do next. He said:

“I was 18. I was a typical teenager in that I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life and I lacked motivation. Eventually my dad encouraged me to go down to the local community centre. It was the last day of The Prince's Trust course for work experience on the railway. I applied to take part and the next day I had a phone interview and got invited to a taster day.

“I was sceptical. I thought it was going to be one of those 'go out and you can do it' courses. But the first day was eye-opening. The Prince's Trust trainers were so welcoming and understanding of everyone's circumstances. There were a lot of people who were struggling, and work wasn't working for them.

“A lot of employers would read your CV and say you don't have a lot of experience, but it's difficult because you're 18. You need to get experience somewhere. The Prince's Trust aren't like that. They see what skills you have and ask you where you would like to go, which is cool. They don't shy away from a challenge.

“Everyone was treated as individuals and everything they said was tailored to people's needs. It was really refreshing to see. The trainers were very firm with us, but fair.

“I did a placement at King's Cross and Finsbury Park stations. I think there were 15 or 16 people on my course and all of us but one was offered a job. It was awesome to get a job. I was given a role in revenue control on the gateline at St Pancras, which I did for a couple of years. Now I'm a Rail Enforcement Officer and I'm waiting to start my training to become a Train Driver after passing all the assessments.

“I think my dad would be shocked if he was told six years ago this is where I would end up. Getting in touch with the Prince's Trust changed my life. I had a mortgage at 20 and a daughter by the time I was 22. At 24, I'm set to train as a Train Driver, which is a well-paid and a sought-after position. I have done a lot in a short space of time. None of it would have been possible if it hadn't been for The Prince's Trust and the people in our company who give so much of their time to support young people.”

“I think my dad would be shocked if he was told six years ago this is where I would end up. Getting in touch with The Prince's Trust changed my life”

Otis Mitchell, 26, is a father of three from Luton. Several years ago, a back injury made him reconsider his career options and led him to follow his childhood dream - working on the railway.

Otis said: "I must have been working as a labourer on building sites for about five years before I hurt my back. Because of my injury, I was no longer able to do heavy lifting and had to look at other work options.

"I went to the Jobcentre and that's where I came across a leaflet that said 'Get into Railways with The Prince's Trust'. As a child, I had been interested in the railway. I used to look out of my bedroom window and see the trains go past.

"I sent in my CV and things moved very quickly. I was invited for an interview the following day, and then there was a taster day. I was a bit nervous at first, but it was a good experience and I learnt about CV building, first aid, conflict management and all about GTR. For the two-week placement, I was based at Finsbury Park and King's Cross stations. I really enjoyed it, especially meeting new people and being out of my comfort zone.

"Working on a building site every day is the same; but on the railway every day is different. I've been working for GTR for three years now and it feels like only yesterday I was getting in touch with The Prince's Trust. It has gone so quickly; I've enjoyed every minute of it.

"I have three young children as well, and they always ask me how my day has been and what I've been doing. They want to work on the trains now, so I've inspired another generation. I'm proud that I can be a good role model for them and they're proud of their dad.

"In the future, I'd like to become a driver – that's my main goal. But I'm happy doing what I'm doing for the moment."



"I must have been working as a labourer on building sites for about five years before I hurt my back. Because of my injury, I was no longer able to do heavy lifting and had to look at other work options."



Prayer's Story



Prayer Okpaka, 26, lives in Hackney and has two young sons. This year he became a Dispatcher at London Bridge after taking part in the Get into Railways programme.

Prayer said: "After finishing my degree in psychology and counselling therapies, I worked full-time in a bookmakers. I enjoyed working there, but I didn't view it as something I would be doing in the long-term. I wanted something where I could see myself progressing and learning new skills.

"Then my mum sent me a WhatsApp message and it had The Prince's Trust in it. The Trust offered a lot of opportunities, and I saw the railway and thought 'that's cool'. I'd always wanted to work in the railway industry and was very excited to see everything on offer.

"I rang up about the 'Get Into' programme and that's how it all started. I then did my two-week placement at London Bridge and it felt like home. I made new friends really quickly and they were hoping I would come back after the two weeks.

"During my placement, I particularly enjoyed working on the platform. It felt like fulfilling work; I was actually helping out with the trains and telling trains when to go. I was helping people get to where they needed to go if they weren't sure which train to get on, and I was helping wheelchair passengers.

"Now I'm actually working as a Dispatcher at London Bridge and I'm very happy in the role. I look forward to coming into work every day. Hopefully from here, I can move onwards and upwards. Looking to the future, maybe I could become a train driver, conductor or competency developer."



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Najla's Story



Najla Almutairi, 27, lives in Park Royal, London, and is a Station Assistant on the platform at London Victoria. Najla is a Young Ambassador for The Prince's Trust and hopes to inspire other young people to overcome challenges.

Najla said: "I moved to the UK at the age of 16 with my mother who at the time was offered a scholarship to study a PhD. I completed my secondary school education and college, and after that I studied for my degree in architecture.

"During my studies, my mother developed a spine condition and I became her carer. It was a life-changing and heartbreaking moment to see the strongest person in my life becoming weaker day by day. I kept going and managed to complete my studies, as well as holding down a weekend job and looking after my younger siblings. After graduating I spent a year and a half working part-time doing all sorts of local jobs.

"I often thought about the future and what I wanted to become, and I must admit I had a fear of working for a large organisation. I was also worried about who would look after my mother and I would often postpone my plans, telling myself 'when things get better, I will start my career'. Then eventually I came to terms with the situation and realised nothing will change unless I do.

"My ambition is to progress into a management role and develop further leadership skills to inspire and support more young people."

"I really wanted to start a sustainable job - a career to be in a better position to support myself and my family. I didn't know where to start and didn't even have a CV.

"I got in touch with The Prince's Trust and they offered me different options from setting up my own business, to studying or training for a job. I then started the Get into Railways programme.

"I entered the February 2018 intake, spending two weeks in a classroom and two weeks on a placement at a station. Following on from this, I was offered the role as a Station Assistant (platform) which commenced in May 2018. My mentor really supported me through my transition period and through difficult times.

"I enjoy every day working on the railway. I love being part of our team and assisting passengers. My ambition is to progress into a management role and develop further leadership skills to inspire and support more young people."



Looking Ahead



The Prince's Trust and GTR are excited to continue working together to inspire and transform more young people's lives and provide them with incredible opportunities to join GTR. We will also work together to champion young people by promoting social mobility, diversity and inclusion across the railways. Our priorities over the next two years:

- Ensure there are more local opportunities for young people facing barriers to employment.
- Challenge ourselves on how we can further support young people from all backgrounds to thrive in the sector and look at additional role types as further opportunities to support young, diverse talent.
- Share best practice across sectors and inspire more companies to support young people into employment.



“We look forward to providing more young people with the chance to join our GTR family.”

Paula Hilliard, Employee Engagement Specialist, GTR

2019 – 2021: More Lives Transformed

At least 5 more Get into Railways programmes

Over 70 young people gain employment skills

Share GTR's alternative recruitment practices across sectors

Assess further placement options within GTR such as Engineering

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) began operating in September 2014 and is the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue and staff. Some 273m passenger journeys are made each year on its services and over 7,000 people employed.

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

The franchise serves 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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**The Prince's Trust thanks GTR for their
invaluable support over the past five years.**

**Hundreds of thousands of young people across the UK don't
get the chance to succeed and face daily struggles that can
seem insurmountable. Without support like GTR's, young
people would lose hope and the self-belief to turn their lives
around and none of this would be possible.**

GTR



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