

## Corporate responsibility

Public transport is at the heart of the local economy in all markets in which we operate and central to the quality of life of communities that we serve.

Buses and trains connect people to jobs and customers to businesses, offering access to education and public services and promoting social inclusion. Not only does local transport contribute to local prosperity and growth, it can also offer lower levels of greenhouse gases and local air pollutants per passenger and reduces congestion due to lower traffic volumes.

As a leading transport operator we provide sustainable travel solutions for our customers and the communities we serve. The contribution of safe, affordable and accessible transport is key to the sustainability of our business. Our approach to corporate responsibility covers our commitment to the environment, safety, our people and communities – the areas where we have a material impact and can bring about positive change.

We have detailed policies in place across FirstGroup that ensure a cohesive approach to corporate responsibility. In each of these areas, we aim to exceed regulatory requirements, and work with expert networks and groups to learn from best practice, helping us to respond to current and future trends. To ensure we are sharing industry best practice, we are active members in groups such as the UK's Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) and Greener Journeys – a campaign dedicated to encouraging people to make more sustainable travel choices. In the US, First Student works closely with the School Superintendents Association (AASA).

We are constantly striving to find innovative ways to meet the changing expectations and needs of our customers. Our aim is always to be the provider of choice for those we serve – optimising our resources and investing in the future of our people and communities.

## Environment

Transport related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions contribute 23% to the global total and are increasing at an annual rate of around 2.5%<sup>1</sup>.

In the last two years, the transport sector has overtaken the power sector as the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions both in the UK and North America. At the same time, there has been a focus on local air quality due to the increasing number of studies showing the links between local air pollutants and human health. A significant modal shift in urban transport from private vehicles to more efficient public transport modes is needed to achieve related objectives of CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions and improve urban air quality.<sup>2</sup>

The provision of affordable and accessible transport is central to our offering 'end to end' journeys with exceptionally low 'per passenger' emissions and high levels of comfort and safety.<sup>3</sup>

### Greenhouse gas emissions

The significant contribution that the transport sector makes to the greenhouse gas emissions in the countries in which we operate has led to increasing scrutiny from policy makers and regulators.

Transport services provided by FirstGroup offer compelling 'per passenger' CO<sub>2</sub> reductions when compared with private transport and air travel. This is indicated in the table below:

Mode	gCO <sub>2</sub> (e)/passenger kilometre
First Bus	81.8
First Rail	44.8
Greyhound	32.1
Car (average UK)*	112.1
Car (average US)**	222.7
Domestic Flight*	267.4

Source:

\* DEFRA Conversion Factors (2017) and UK Gov NTS 0905 (2016).

\*\* EPA/Climate Leaders (2018) and NHTS Federal Highway Administration (2017)

1 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/05/05/leaders-call-for-global-action-to-reduce-transport-climate-footprint>

2 IEA (International Energy Association)

3 RSSB

## Local air quality

The link between vehicle exhaust emissions, poor local air quality and the impact on human health drives our programme of investment in cleaner vehicles and information systems. Regulatory standards for bus engine types in both the UK and North America have become increasingly stringent as shown in the graph on page 24.

The air quality impact of our vehicles is something we are constantly striving to improve. One way in which we can do this is to use the cleanest vehicles we have most often. The latest diesel engine type that we can use in the UK is called Euro VI – offering significant improvements in local air emissions such as Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and Particulate Matter (PMs). In the US the latest diesel engine types must conform to the EPA 2014 standard.

### First Student

In the US, the American School Bus Council reports that each yellow school bus carries (on average) 54 students and takes 36 cars off the road during the morning and evening peaks. Without school buses more than 17m extra cars would be needed to transport students currently riding on all school buses in the US.

First Student emissions of PMs and NOx have fallen by 22% and 17% respectively between 2016/17 and 2017/18. This decrease results largely from our replacement of older fleet with lower-emission alternatives and because we are using our older vehicles less often. For example, we have achieved a 28% reduction in mileage by vehicles which pre-date 2007 – which is the year in which the EPA emissions standards became markedly more stringent with respect to NOx and PMs.

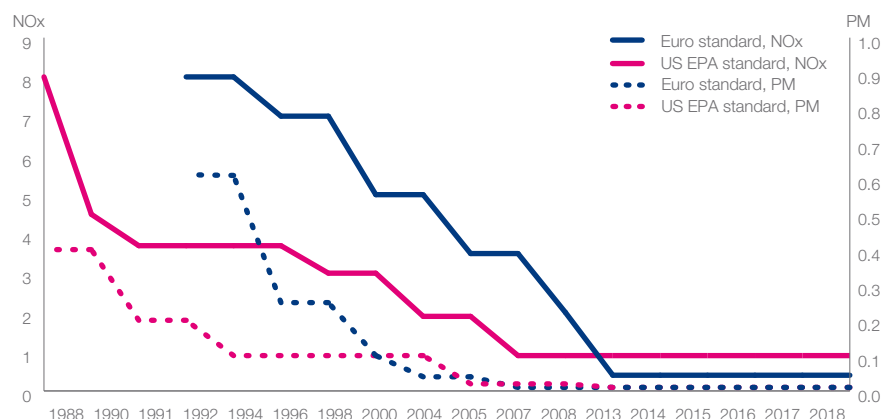
### First Transit

First Transit are at the forefront of new technologies offering zero tailpipe emissions, such as the battery electric vehicles operating in Rochester, Minnesota and Arlington, Texas as well as autonomous shuttle vehicles in San Ramon, California.

We have delivered a range of alternative fuel, low and zero emission buses both in response to customer demand and to meet our longer term aims of carbon reduction and clean air.

In 2017/18 we completed 13% of miles with natural gas and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) powered buses – these are amongst the lowest emission vehicles in our fleet. Whilst tailpipe emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are on par with those of the latest generation of diesel engines, harmful air emissions of NOx and PMs are significantly reduced.

## Local air emissions vehicle standards – US and Europe



### Greyhound

At 32g CO<sub>2</sub>e per passenger km, intercity travel by Greyhound bus offers the lowest per-passenger carbon emissions of any modal alternative – around 88% lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than an equivalent domestic passenger plane journey (at 267g CO<sub>2</sub>e/pkm) and 86% lower than that of the average US passenger car (223g CO<sub>2</sub>e/km).

Greyhound is investing further in new bus and engine technologies and techniques. In 2017, we added 88 new vehicles to our fleet and plan to acquire up to a further 84 new vehicles in 2018/19. This would result in up to 12% of our fleet meeting the most stringent EPA requirements for diesel engines. For each typical 1994 model that is replaced we will see a 98% reduction in gross particulates and 99.6% reduction in nitrous oxides.

Further efficiency savings have been achieved this year through our work to reduce aerodynamic drag on the bus body and chassis, introduction of smart micro-hybrid charging systems and replacement of mechanical fans with efficient electric alternatives.

### First Bus

The topic of air quality has become increasingly significant in the UK and at First Bus we have continued our investment in the latest Euro VI diesel technology which has been independently proven to produce a tiny fraction of NOx and PM emissions compared to previous generations. Independent testing to verify the emissions data for our bus fleet shows our new diesel buses produce fewer local air pollutants than many new diesel cars. In the UK, the proportion of miles we completed using Euro VI buses has increased by 10% in the last two years.

The planned implementation of Clean Air Zones (CAZs) in five UK cities, plus London, highlights the importance and relevance of reducing pollutant emissions, and our continued investment in low emission vehicles ensures we are strongly positioned. The introduction of CAZs is likely to spread to other locations in the UK as the desire for cleaner public transport increases.

In these cities it is expected to be mandated that all diesel buses must be Euro VI standard in a short timeframe. In many of these areas we are a significant, or the largest, bus operator in the city. As such, First Bus will support these aims through deploying cleaner (Euro VI engine) diesel and alternative fuel buses where possible – leading to reductions in roadside emissions of PMs and NOx.

Funding has been made available through local authorities across the UK and we are confident of securing more than £7m to retrofit a proportion of our fleet to the cleanest Euro VI standard. This would allow us to retrofit more than 400 buses over the next two years.

In addition to modern efficient diesels we continue to pilot alternative fuel types such as hydrogen, electric and biogas. For example, in York, where First Bus has been operating battery electric vehicle (BEV) fleets successfully since 2014, First Bus will add a further 21 new BEVs to its existing fleet of 11 vehicles, to support growing local and tourism demand.

### First Rail

First Rail operates three rail franchises and one open access operator, carrying around 263m passengers, around 11.9bn passenger kilometres per year. The rail sector's contribution to reducing the UK's greenhouse gases is directly influenced by investment in electrification infrastructure, the continued de-carbonisation of the UK energy grid and

## Biogas buses in Bristol, UK



In 2015 First Bristol trialled the UK's first bio-methane powered single-decker bus. In August 2017, working in partnership with Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council we were awarded £4.8m grant funding for 110 double-decker bio-methane buses and fuelling infrastructure.

The grant funding will unlock £29.4m of private investment from First Bus, which takes our investment in clean vehicles for Bristol to more than £60m in under four years. Using bio-methane, the vehicle's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are 84% cleaner than a Euro V diesel bus on a well-to-wheel basis (i.e. when looking at carbon emissions using a lifecycle approach that encompasses emissions from procurement of materials through to combustion of the fuel).

In addition to the new biogas fleet, we are also retrofitting up to 72 existing vehicles with new engines and selective catalytic reduction technology to achieve a Euro VI standard – the best environmental standard available (Euro VI engines produce 95% less NOx emissions compared to Euro V).

In 2020, after all biogas vehicles are in service, every vehicle operating in the city's designated 'Air Quality Management Areas' will meet the highest emission standards. Bristol will have one of the cleanest and greenest bus fleets in the country.



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## Our carbon footprint

### First Transit – 19%

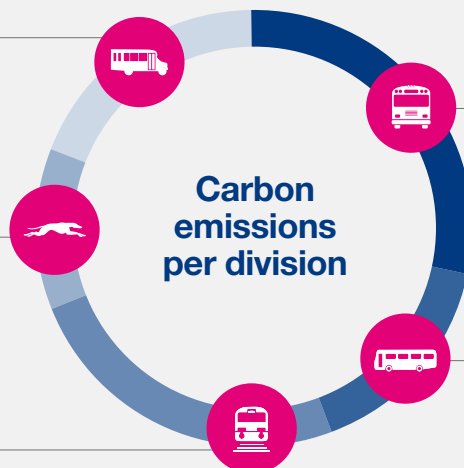
- 13% of miles completed by Liquid Natural Gas (LNG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)
- Operating zero emission vehicles in San Ramon
- Forefront of autonomous vehicles

### Greyhound – 12%

- Over 10% of fleet will have latest emissions standards in 2018
- Reduced aerodynamic drag to improve fuel efficiency
- Smart micro hybrid charging systems

### First Rail – 25%

- First operator to introduce tri-mode trains
- Automatic energy efficiency controls in buildings
- Winner of Sustainability & Environmental Excellence industry award



### First Student – 29%

- 17% reduction in harmful NOx emissions
- 22% reduction in particulate emissions
- Each bus takes 36 cars off the road

### First Bus – 16%

- More than £7m funding will supplement further investment to retrofit more than 400 buses to Euro VI standard
- 110 biogas buses to be added in Bristol
- Rapidly increasing electric vehicle fleet

our ability to attract travel from other carbon intensive modes through rail's greater convenience, speed, price and accessibility.

In 2017, we were the first UK rail operator to introduce next generation 'bi-mode' trains offering increased seating capacity, reduced emissions (zero point emissions when operating in electric mode) and lower overall carbon emissions per occupied seat. When operating in 'electric only' mode, we have calculated up to 30% reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

FirstGroup's investment in reduced carbon emissions from its fleet has been supplemented by a range of measures to reduce energy use at stations and depots. GWR and TPE have invested in energy efficiency controls, which have centralised the monitoring and management of energy and the use of automated switching through timers and sensors.

In winning the UK's Rail Business Award for Sustainability & Environmental Excellence in 2018, TPE demonstrated how their innovative portfolio-wide lighting upgrade to the latest LED lighting has ensured that they are on track to achieve their ambitious 31% franchise energy reduction target.

## Carbon reporting

Our reporting follows the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, applying the operational control approach to our organisational boundary.

- Scope 1 – Direct emissions from: vehicle use (owned and leased); fugitive refrigerant gas emissions; heating fuels used in buildings; and road and rail fuel use
- Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from: electricity used in our buildings, and to power our electric rail and bus fleet. We report both location based emissions (taking into account the UK grid average) and market based emission

- Scope 3 – Indirect emissions from: First Travel Solutions (third party vehicle provision); business travel by air; and North America and UK waste recycling and disposal
- Out of scope – Indirect emissions from: burning biofuels in our First Bus vehicles, in line with Defra reporting guidelines

For more information, see our reporting guidelines at [www.firstgroupplc.com/2018\\_Reporting\\_Guidelines](http://www.firstgroupplc.com/2018_Reporting_Guidelines)

## Our performance in 2017/18

### Our carbon footprint in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e):

	2017/18	2016/17
Scope 1	2,308,915	2,377,452
Scope 2 (location based)	276,973	270,988
Scope 3	9,340	10,668
Out of Scope	10,065	9,530
Total tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> (e)	2,605,293	2,668,639 <sup>Δ</sup>
Total tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> (e) per £1m revenue	384.81	399.80
Scope 2 (market based)	46,683	46,128

Δ Data in this table has been independently assured by Carbon Clear. See [www.firstgroup.com/responsibility](http://www.firstgroup.com/responsibility) for assurance opinion and for notes on the breakdown of this table.

Reporting period – 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, in line with the Group's financial year.

Data has been re-baselined to reflect new addition of SWR rail franchise in accordance with our stated re-baselining policy.

### Safety

Our commitment to the safety of our passengers, our employees and all third parties interacting with our businesses remains unwavering, and is articulated through our Dedicated to safety Value which applies in everything we do.

Dedicated to safety, always front of mind – safety is our way of life. Throughout the year, we have continued to feel the impact of the tragic incident on the Croydon tram network in November 2016 – our thoughts remain with the victims and everyone affected. We are fully assisting with all ongoing investigations. Over the past year from before the final Rail Accident Investigation Branch report, Tram Operations Limited (TOL) took a series of actions, working closely with TfL on whose behalf we operate the tram services, to implement additional measures including enhanced speed monitoring and restrictions, improved signage and renewed guidance on fatigue management. TOL has learned from the RAIB's analysis and its own internal reviews and it will continue working hard, alongside TfL, to follow the RAIB's recommendations and to make further improvements where necessary.

Sadly, there were two employee fatalities this year and seven passenger fatalities across our divisions. These tragic events strengthen our resolve to achieve zero harm to our employees, passengers and anyone else we come into contact with in the course of our business.

#### Approach

Our approach is a combination of behavioural change, constant evaluation (including external assurance) and technology, to ensure we are always operating as safely as we can.

#### Behavioural change

Our behavioural change programme, Be Safe, focuses on our objective of zero harm and making safety a personal core value for our employees. The delivery of Be Safe training to all managers and supervisors is supported by robust safety management systems, and a clear focus on ensuring compliance with processes, policies and procedures. The Be Safe programme promotes the positive reinforcement of safety critical behaviours through regular touchpoints (daily positive safety coaching interactions) and debriefs (weekly collective discussion and feedback on touchpoints delivered).

Touchpoints happen across the Group every day, and more than 42,000 debriefs have taken place since the programme began, from the Chief Executive down to front line managers. Behavioural change takes time but, in the last 12 months we have seen our employee injury rate reduce by 4% and the number of days lost following incidents is down by 3%.

First Rail has focused on the use of precursor events to have a positive impact reducing potential significant operational events. Leadership training has further reduced employee injuries through changing behaviours in a positive way.

We abide by our Be Safe Principles of:

**Knowledge** – Directing our greatest efforts at the key safety behaviours that will help reduce incidents

**Learning** – Taking learning opportunities to continuously improve workplace safety from the reporting of incidents and near misses

**Recognition** – Focusing on acknowledging colleagues 'doing it right' and positively reinforcing these actions whilst continuing to challenge unsafe behaviours

**Openness** – Regular safety conversations and coaching activities take place and communication is open and honest

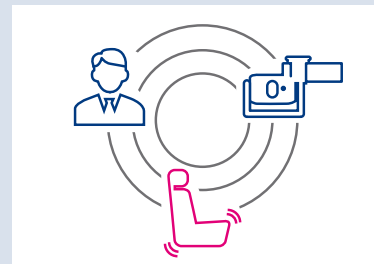
**Courage** – Our employees are empowered to accept responsibility for their own safety and that of colleagues. If something is assessed to be unsafe we have the courage to stop and find a safer way of doing things.

#### Assurance

Our Executive Safety Committee (ESC) is chaired by the Chief Executive, and meets six times per year to review the Group's safety strategy, procedures, performance and practices. The ESC assists the Board Safety Committee in obtaining assurance that appropriate operational systems and processes are in place to manage safety risks and to promote a safety focused culture. Our Board Safety Committee reviews the safety performance of the Group on behalf of the Board, oversees the management of the Group's operational safety risk profile and promotes a positive safety culture throughout the Group. More information on the Board Safety Committee can be found on page 67.

In 2017 we commissioned an independent review of the completeness and effectiveness of our safety arrangements across operations in the UK and North America. The review was undertaken by Arthur D Little, selected for their extensive experience of strategic

### Using technology to monitor driver condition and enhance driver alertness



The Seeing Machines Guardian system uses an onboard processor linked to an infrared sensor that monitors driver head position, facial gestures (such as yawning) and eye closure, through real-time image analysis. Algorithms developed and enhanced over the last 20 years can interpret these physical behaviours as signs of drowsiness and inattention, and by tracking head position and direction of gaze, can determine if the driver is not looking in an appropriate place.

If an event is detected as possible fatigue the system will trigger an audible alert as well as vibrating the driver's seat. The event is recorded and then followed up with the driver. If an event is detected as possible distraction the system will trigger an audio alert only and uses a different tone from the fatigue event.

Ten vehicles on our Reading-Heathrow Airport RailAir coach service had the system installed in June 2017. Once the system went live to the drivers, a reduction in reported events was recorded.

The system has also been fitted to the 35 London trams, with the addition of an overspeed reporting functionality.

The system is being considered for other applications in First Bus and is being considered for our divisions in North America.



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independent reviews of safety as well as deep industry expertise.

The review considered both defined safety management arrangements, and the extent to which these were effective in the operational businesses – both from a compliance perspective and in behaviour. The report gave assurance on both systems and compliance and proposed some development opportunities for strengthening safety systems.

This year First Student and First Transit developed and implemented a Safety Quality Assurance Programme to audit location compliance to our standards. They have also designed and implemented a Location Safety Manager programme for new starters to improve compliance and role clarity.

### Initiatives in technology

We continue to innovate and explore the use of technology to improve safety performance, learning from other businesses and sharing best practice across our divisions.

Each division has pursued best available technology to enhance and monitor driver performance and assist with alertness. System solutions that are now available have improved dramatically in recent years with the wide availability of GPS data. This availability is redefining best practice requiring a constant assessment of the systems in use. The majority of the Group's fleet is now equipped with safety sensors and recording devices.

## Our people

Our people are at the heart of our business. In depots, stations and offices across North America, the UK and beyond, FirstGroup employees are all working towards the same goal of keeping people moving.

During the year, we have taken action aimed at ensuring our people feel valued and supported, that their views are listened to and that we are developing the skills we need for the future.

### Employee engagement

Engaged employees are better able to deliver great service to our customers, work safely and find ways to continually improve the business.

As well as gathering feedback through informal channels, FirstGroup employees are given the opportunity to make their voice heard through our regular employee opinion survey Your

Voice. The survey measures employees' satisfaction with the way they are managed, the pride they feel in working for the business, and how likely they are to recommend us to others as a great place to work. Survey feedback stimulates action on the issues that matter most to our employees.

During the year, our First Rail businesses and our UK corporate functions conducted Your Voice surveys. Engagement scores ranged from 60-88%, which compared well with UK external benchmarks.

Surveys for First Bus and our North American divisions are scheduled for later in 2018.

### Employee communications

Good employee communication is key to engagement; with a large, mobile workforce covering thousands of locations, we are continually looking at new and better ways to enable effective two-way communication.

Following successful pilots in our First Bus and TPE businesses, an employee app has been rolled out across First Student. The app enables employees to receive company news, safety information and other relevant data. First Student drivers were introduced to the technology at the beginning of the 2017 school year, and by mid-March, 18,795 employees had downloaded it on their personal smartphone devices. This is now a vibrant source of local news with 65% of First Student's 500 Location Managers posting an average of 6.3 updates per month. The app is also now live across First Bus and will be launched in our First Transit, Greyhound and GWR businesses during 2018.

### Diversity and inclusion

A diverse workforce is better able to reflect the communities we serve, understand and meet the needs of our diverse customer base, and attract and retain the best available talent.

Our full gender snapshot is shown in the table above. The passenger transport industry remains male dominated, and we are committed to improving the gender diversity of our workforce.

During the year, the overall proportion of women reduced slightly from 40.1% in 2017 to 38.9% in 2018; this was due to a headcount reduction in our largest division, First Student, which is majority female. However, the proportion of women in senior management has increased from 20.6% to 22.3%, another rise from 17.3% in 2014.

We have also been strengthening the pipeline of women building their experience for the most senior roles: although the proportion

## Gender diversity

### Diversity snapshot at 31 March 2018

● Female  
● Male

#### Total employees

2018	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	38.9%	61.1%
2017	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	40.1%	59.9%
2016	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	40.5%	59.5%

#### Senior managers<sup>1</sup>

2018	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	22.3%	77.7%
2017	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	20.6%	79.4%
2016	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	18.0%	82.0%

#### Board Directors

2018	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	20.0%	80.0%
2017	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	11.1%	88.9%
2016	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	11.1%	88.9%

1 Using the Companies' Act definition of 'any employee who has responsibility for planning, directing or controlling the activities of the Company or a strategically significant part of the Company'.

of female managers remains at 35% of all management roles across the Group, 50% of succession candidates for the most senior roles are female compared with 28% in 2016.

In our First Student division, more than 28,000 women are employed across a variety of driving, supervisory and management roles, and 47% of managers are female.

During the year the Group published our first gender pay gap report. Although the aggregated UK results showed a positive gender pay gap, with the median average pay for women 9.1% higher than that for men, we recognise there is still much to do. In order to close gender pay gaps where they do exist in some of our individual businesses, we are determined to accelerate our progress, increasing the number of women at all levels, and supporting them to take advantage of the wide range of career opportunities and interesting roles we can offer.

Our businesses are leading a variety of initiatives to further improve diversity and inclusion.

The Women in Bus Forum has recently been launched in First Bus, to increase the number of women working at all levels in the business. Whilst this forum is in its infancy, it is hoped that it will play a key role in identifying and preparing women for leadership opportunities, through the provision of mentoring and positive role models.

We are piloting new approaches to the way we market roles which have traditionally attracted many more male than female candidates. For example in TPE, advertising the 'Conductor' role as a 'Customer Service Professional' last year resulted in 38% of new hires being female, a significant increase. Following a proactive campaign at TPE to encourage females to apply for train driver vacancies, 12.5% of recent hires were women, compared with 4.7% of the existing driver population.

We have refreshed all our UK recruitment advertising photography and video content to ensure women are prominent, and we now use the software tool 'Textio' to check the language of our recruitment advertising material to ensure it is not unconsciously biased towards male candidates. Following these actions, we saw a 9% increase in the number of women viewing our opportunities in First Bus, and a 3% increase in the proportion of job offers made to female candidates.

### Health and wellbeing

We want to support our people to stay healthy and active; good physical and mental health helps ensure better customer service, employee motivation, performance and safety. All our businesses offer access to free and confidential counselling for employees.

### Audrey Simpson Bus driver, First Bus



Audrey works on the flagship Glasgow Airport service based out of our Caledonia Depot. Before joining First Bus in 2008, mother-of-three Audrey previously worked in the school kitchens, then later as a Catering Supervisor at a local hospital but was always interested in changing career paths to become a bus driver.

Audrey says: "I always wanted to be a bus driver. After having kids, I saw an advert on the back of a bus and decided to go for it. Working on the Airport bus, I'm often the first person tourists speak to when they arrive in Glasgow. I love my job."

In addition, each runs local initiatives targeting the issues most relevant to the workforce.

SWR provides interactive wellbeing kiosks at key locations, where employees can measure themselves on a range of health indicators including mental wellbeing. SWR is also rolling out mental health awareness workshops to help managers to understand how they can best provide support for their people.

At TPE, free health assessment events help colleagues understand their key health indicators such as cholesterol, blood sugar and lung health. A network of wellbeing champions have received training in musculoskeletal health, nutritional awareness, communication and influencing skills so that they can act as role models and encourage colleagues to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

At GWR, the in-house occupational health team continues to provide free rapid access to physiotherapy for employees with musculoskeletal conditions, and also proactively undertakes risk assessments in ticket offices, on trains and in depots to prevent incidents and injuries from occurring.

First Bus has promoted healthy eating options in canteen menus, and has offered health 'mini MOTs' and healthy eating workshops.

In North America, we operate a variety of wellness initiatives and reward programmes designed to help employees to get a full picture of their health, provide them with advice and support to help them meet their goals, and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. Greyhound's 'Rolling Strong' programme provides wellbeing advice to drivers with a particular focus on healthy eating. The programme expanded further this year by partnering with a major gym provider in Canada, enabling colleagues and their families to benefit from discounted gym membership.

### Developing our people

Across the Group we continue to invest in developing the skills of our people. This year, we are proud that our North American divisions have developed e-learning platforms, giving our frontline distributed workforce access to good quality training to enhance and grow their skills. During the year, employees across the US, Canada, Mexico, and Panama took more than 11,000 online courses through FGA University and Greyhound University.

### Our UK graduate scheme



Following a degree in International Business at Edinburgh University, Evie was looking for a 'hands on' graduate scheme which would give her the opportunity to apply what she'd learned. The transport sector appealed because of the change and modernisation that's ongoing, and she felt that First Bus offered a broad graduate scheme with lots of opportunities.

Evie says: "It's a fantastic graduate scheme with the chance to see all aspects of the business first hand. People here are very friendly and supportive. I love the variety, it will help me decide which type of management role I want to take on after the two-year programme."

### Building future capability

In addition to investing in the skills of our existing workforce we are expanding our UK graduate and apprenticeship schemes to bring in new engineering, operational and leadership talent for the future.

In 2017, 75 new apprentices began their careers in our First Bus and Rail divisions, an increase on the 66 who joined in 2016.

Our UK graduate programme continues to help us attract engineering and leadership talent, with ten graduates joining in 2017, and 22 due to join us in 2018.

During the year we made significant efforts to promote our graduate opportunities to women, and we were particularly pleased that 55% of the offers and 67% of the engineering places for our 2018 graduate scheme went to female candidates. This represents another step forward from last year when 43% of our graduates were female.

## Our communities

We are proud to serve our communities across the UK, North America and beyond. We use our expertise, passion and support to make a positive impact wherever we work, helping to meet our ambition of being the preferred partner of the communities we serve.

### Community engagement

Community partnership and engagement remains at the heart of our business. Much of our success depends on the relationships we foster in the communities we serve. Towards this, our focus is building a culture of engagement with our stakeholders and within our five divisions across the UK and North America.

To ensure a consistent approach to stakeholders, every new employee is trained in our approach to community engagement. We also hold cross-divisional sessions to provide opportunities for our location leaders

to learn, ask questions and share best practices. We take this further with cross-divisional collaboration opportunities in key cities and regions to develop synergies and expand strategic plans to collectively deliver on our communities' needs.

### Community investment

An important part of our approach to engaging in the communities in which we operate is the investment we make with charitable organisations who share our ambition of keeping our communities prospering. In total, FirstGroup and our employees donated £4.12m during 2017/18 as measured by the London Benchmarking Group (LBG) model on community impact. This year we supported hundreds of charitable organisations through corporate donations and gifts in kind, including the donation of advertising space and vehicle hires, event sponsorships and tickets.

Our employees take us even further into our communities, giving their time and effort to fundraise and support the causes they are passionate about. This year we continued to offer our UK employees matched funding for their fundraising efforts, matching up to £200 per person to registered charities. In addition, many of our UK employees took part in our payroll giving scheme, donating almost £100,000 to charity through their pre-tax pay in the past year alone.

### UK charity partnership

In 2017 FirstGroup employees in the UK voted for a new charity partner and from April 2018 until 2021, FirstGroup will work with Action for Children to support the mental health of the UK's most disadvantaged children.

Action for Children helps young people across the UK through fostering or adoption, by intervening early to stop neglect and abuse, by influencing policy, and by making life better for disabled children. With more than 600 services, the charity improves the lives of 370,000 children, young people and families every year.

Our three-year partnership will have the objective of raising funding for mental health projects and enable the delivery of essential specialist support to young people who desperately need help.



## Partnering with schools



Photo credit: Ahead Partnership

TPE has been working with the Ahead Partnership, an organisation that links up businesses and educators to help employers engage, inspire and motivate young people about skills, career options and future employment. Through the 'Make the Grade' programme TPE is helping young people develop employability skills across the Leeds City Region and North East, as well as raising greater awareness of career opportunities and pathways into the transport industry.

Projects have included a 'transport scheduling challenge' which sees a technical team from TPE working with students to give an insight into how the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects studied at school are applied in a real world scenario.

## Prostate Cancer UK Partnership



In 2015, FirstGroup employees voted for Prostate Cancer UK as our UK charity partner for a three-year term, with the ambition of raising £1m in fundraising, corporate donations and the commercial value of gift in kind advertising to support men with prostate cancer and those close to them. The partnership exceeded all expectations due to the commitment and generosity of everyone connected to FirstGroup – and by March 2018 had achieved a partnership value of more than £1.5m, significantly ahead of our original target.

Over the course of the partnership, employee fundraising and corporate donations have funded the production of one million 'Know your prostate' pocket guides and ensured more men have access to this vital health message. FirstGroup has also donated hugely valuable advertising space throughout our bus and rail networks across the UK to promote Prostate Cancer UK's health awareness campaigns and the support available from the charity.



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