



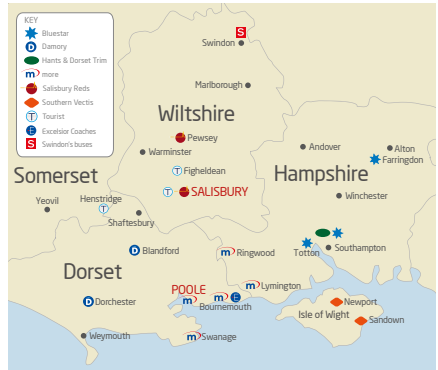
**Go South Coast**  
Sustainability Report 2017

# ABOUT US

Go South Coast operates a fleet of 846 buses across Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

With around 140 routes, all of our buses are locally branded to give the buses within the towns we operate in a local identity.

- 
- Bluestar – Southampton
  - Damory – rural Dorset
  - morebus – Bournemouth & Poole
  - Salisbury Reds – Salisbury
  - Southern Vectis – Isle of Wight
  - Thamesdown – Swindon
  - Unilink – University of Southampton
  - UNIBUS – Bournemouth University
- 



We believe in investing in and developing our people. Colleague training is a focus for our business to develop new skills to enable us to serve our customers well.

We remain committed to the communities we serve and are always looking at new ways to engage with them. Our stakeholder relationships are vital to our continued success.

## In this report

- 2 **Managing Director's message**
- 4 **Our approach**
- 6 **Society**
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## Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our train services in a way that helps to put our stations and services at the heart of the communities they serve.

This report is split into four sections:



### Society

To run our company in a safe, socially and environmentally responsible manner.  
page 6



### Customers

To provide high quality, locally focused passenger transport services.  
page 10



### Our people






To be a leading employer in the transport sector.  
page 12



### Finance

To run our business with strong financial discipline.  
page 14

Follow us on social media:

-  [facebook.com/bluestarbus](https://facebook.com/bluestarbus)
-  [facebook.com/salisburyreds](https://facebook.com/salisburyreds)
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-  [facebook.com/southernvectis](https://facebook.com/southernvectis)
-  [facebook.com/swindonsbuses](https://facebook.com/swindonsbuses)

For more information, please visit our websites:

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

# MANAGING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

“Welcome to our 2017 sustainability report.”



It is a pleasure to report that, during the year, our operations have extended to include Thamesdown in Swindon. As soon as we acquired this business, we started to make changes to introduce our successful formula used elsewhere in Go South Coast. In the first few months, we've paid particular attention to improving communication with colleagues, working with the local community, improved marketing aimed at attracting more people to using our buses, and investment in new equipment and UK-built buses.

People remain at the heart of our business, and we continue to explore the best ways of improving communication, in both directions, with our large and geographically diverse workforce. This helps us to include everyone in our company Vision and Values, and to learn their opinions which are always useful.

We are alive to increasing concern over air quality in our towns and cities. Buses are quite clearly part of the solution to this problem, as increased bus use helps to limit, and decrease, levels of other traffic.

We recognise that buses consume energy and can affect the environment, however. To this end, we continue to invest heavily in the latest, low emission Euro 6 buses, which are amongst the cleanest vehicles on our roads.

We also look forward to introducing new full-electric buses in Salisbury next year.

**Andrew Wickham**  
Managing Director



# OUR APPROACH

## Our vision:

Our vision at the Go South Coast group of companies is to be the company that people want to work for, travel with and use!

- To be at the heart of the communities we serve
- To be a company that people want to work for and hold in high regard

## Our values:

- Trusting people and taking personal responsibility
- Being down-to-earth 'can do' people
- Building relationships and working together
- Staying one step ahead and being adaptable

## Developing people

A restructured training programme has allowed us to invest in our current workforce to create a positive learning environment. This enables our teams to release their potential and feel empowered to do the 'right thing' for our customers. Overall this will improve our customer satisfaction score and employee retention.

Training also allows our colleagues to be in touch with the latest technology and become more confident with the tools they have, to do their jobs to the highest standards remaining ahead of competition.

## Experience

By using research and interacting with customers existing and new, we are able to better understand how they initially search for information about our services. We need to understand what they experience at the bus stop, from waiting facilities to timetable information, and on-the-bus interaction with the driver, to comfort on board. Then we try to find out how they feel after the journey and whether they will continue to interact with us.

## Community engagement

Participation in engagement projects helps to make us more attractive to the best potential recruits and increase awareness of our brands in the towns and cities we serve.

It can develop employees' personal skills and competencies and build effective teams, giving them satisfaction and a sense of pride. It will improve our profile and awareness as a caring business and employer.



## Our five inter-connected change themes

1

### Developing people

Trusting our colleagues and investing in training to create future leaders.



See page 10

2

### Community engagement

Entwining ourselves in the communities we serve to support the towns we operate in.



See page 6

3

### Customer experience

Considering every aspect of our customers' journeys to improve the overall experience.



See page 8

4

### Technology

To improve process and keep our product innovative and adaptable.



See page 9

5

### Cultural change

Working within our Visions and Values to deliver a common goal.



See page 5

### Cultural change

Leading by example, with our managers working to our Vision and Values, allows us to deliver cultural change. It is not something that is shouted from the roof tops, but it is in how we operate, communicate and deliver our daily tasks.

By working within the alignment of our Vision and Values we aim to achieve change throughout the business to the most positive effect.

### Technology

Keeping up with the latest technology allows us to be more efficient in all areas of the business. It keeps us motivated and enables us to learn new skills. Most importantly, technology permits us to be a market leader in a competitive environment, ensuring we remain the bus operator of choice. This in turn contributes to our financial success.



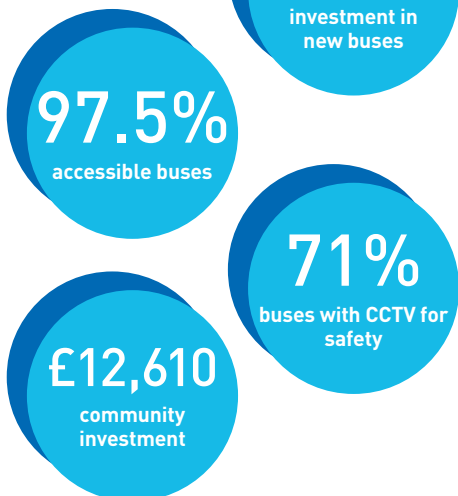
# SOCIETY

By understanding and working within the societies we operate in, Go South Coast can build stronger, better services that are fit for purpose and accessible to all.

We work with specialist groups and community groups, and spend time actively nurturing relationships with major stakeholders in each area we operate in. These include universities, local authorities and charities.



## Highlights



## Community

Being involved with current hot topics is how we embed ourselves in the communities we serve.

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust seeks to encourage new mothers to feel confident about breastfeeding when out and about. Go South Coast has long been an advocate of mothers' rights to breastfeed in public, including on Go South Coast buses.

When we found out from local primary schools that the 'Naughty Bus' was the book on the year 1 syllabus – we were only too keen to engage with local schools and join in story time, to show them not all buses are naughty! Helping bring lessons to life and engage within the communities we serve.





Each Go South Coast brand has a charity of the year, and we have partnered with the hospitals in some of the towns we serve. In Poole we have a dedicated charity bus where customers are able to donate on board and the interior of the bus tells the charity's story. In Southampton, we offer 50% travel discount to encourage hospital staff to get to work by bus, and have dedicated bus rears promoting both the hospital and the charity.

## Environment

Go South Coast latest investment has been 77 new single and double decker buses, each with a Euro 6 engine. In line with the Government's draft Air Quality plan, we are making every effort to promote the bus as a solution to the problem of harmful exhaust fumes and to encourage more people to make good use of sustainable transport.

All our vehicles are fitted with MiX telematics equipment. During 2017/18, our miles per gallon target is currently in line to achieve 7.53 mpg, with a CO<sub>2</sub> kg/mile rating of 0.431.

Our new bus washes significantly reduce water usage, saving up to 30 litres every time we wash a vehicle. We also harvest rainwater at the depot and store it in 100,000 litre underground tanks.

In addition, all depots have movement sensitive lighting which assists in reducing greenhouse emissions.

## Safety

Health and safety issues are at the heart of our business, so we invest in our employees to ensure they understand what health and safety is and how it affects them and our customers.

Two qualified advisers provide guidance on all aspects of health, safety and environmental issues to managers and employees. Our approach is that 'everyone plays their part', so that employees work with the safety department to ensure our risk assessment, policies and safety culture are under constant review, enabling employees to own the 'feeling of safety' at work and contribute to a positive environment.

All our vehicles are checked each day and we have appropriate signage in all buses encouraging customers to remain seated plus all buses are fitted with CCTV.

Any incidents are fully investigated and appropriate remedial action is taken if required.



# CUSTOMERS

We believe in great customer relations. Our goal is to make bus travel easy to understand and appealing to all.

Understanding our customers and offering them more is the key to continued growth. We carry out regular research so that we can benchmark our own performance and highlight areas for improvement.

Customer growth of 13.6% across the Go South Coast network is a significant achievement – from cities, market towns, rural settlements and island communities – whilst others in the UK are in decline.

## Customer experience

The customer experience is vital and it impacts the user from the early stages of journey planning to on board and post-trip interactions.

**Before the journey** – our websites are easily found and provide maps, timetables and fares at the touch of a button. Our bus information is listed on Google Maps.

Timetables are available from various outlets throughout the towns we serve and high street travel shops are available to help people plan their journey.

**At the bus stop** – many bus stops are equipped with real time information and modern shelters with seating and raised kerbs. All bus stops have bespoke printed timetable information with times and direction of travel and information about how to contact us for further queries.

**On the bus** – our friendly drivers have been trained to deal with all our customers' needs. They can advise on ticket types and route planning, and are experienced enough to help those who need a little extra care. Seating is clearly labelled and next stop announcements help new customers identify where to get off. All buses are equipped with CCTV for the added benefit of customer safety.

**Post-journey** – customers can stay in touch with us in a variety of ways, including eNewsletters and social media as well as telephone or email. They will receive information relevant to them so it's easier for them to get the most out of their travel. Customers can 'join in' with our brand experience and have fun with free social media competitions.



## Technology

Using technology to stay ahead of the game and remain the bus operator of choice is one thing that Go South Coast stands out for. We were the first in our areas to offer onboard wifi and we can proudly claim that we were the first in the country to install USB chargers on our buses in Southampton.

Giving our customers quality, reliable information is at the heart of what we do – real time bus information is available at the touch of a button with the ability to bookmark specific stops, while access to Google Maps makes it easier to plan a route. All timetables are available online and in printed format.

Customers now find it easier than ever to travel across the region thanks to the introduction of contactless payments including bankcards as well as wearables such as the Apple watch and the option to pay with their iPhone.

We are the first bus operator in the region to offer this facility – thus providing our customers with quicker and more convenient ways to pay.

12% of all cash transactions are now taken via contactless. This will continue to grow as we roll this out across all brands at Go South Coast.

## Highlights

**13.6%**  
customer growth  
across GSC

**160**  
buses with  
free WiFi

**271**  
buses with  
free USB  
chargers

**86%**  
buses take  
contactless  
payments

### New for 2017

The introduction of contactless payments.

As an operator, we continuously seek out new ways to enhance our services for those living and working in the region. And this latest move is expected to increase accessibility and speed up overall journey times.



# OUR PEOPLE

At Go South Coast we believe in communicating with our colleagues to ensure they are better informed, which in turn helps to raise the standards of our customer service and our employee engagement ratings.

Creating a diverse workforce and investing in enhanced training, and thanking and recognising our people, helps us deliver our values, and to be a company that people want to work for, travel with and use.

**Rewarding** – many of our colleagues are front line employees and are at the forefront of our business, delivering great customer service every day. To recognise this, we have various Employee of the Month schemes across all our individual brands; such as More Hero and Star of the Month. Colleagues and the public can nominate a colleague each month. The 12 monthly winners of each brand are invited to the Go South Coast annual awards night and receive £500. They are put forward for the vote to become the overall Employee of the Year for Go South Coast; with a prize of £3,000 plus two weeks' additional annual leave. On the same awards night, we also recognise our colleagues that have achieved long service of 25, 30, 35, 45 and even 50 years.

**Communicating** – each individual brand has its own newsletter, full of local information to help to keep colleagues updated on procedures and events within their brand. These are produced either weekly or bi-weekly. Colleagues can receive these in print or email.

Each quarter we hold colleague forums that will have at least two directors present.

Colleagues are given an update on the company's performance and can ask questions. These forums are well attended and promoted in advance.

**Developing** – we trust and encourage all colleagues to be the best they can be and allow them to take responsibility for situations. Our five-day Customer Promise training course has been focused on allowing our colleagues to unlock their full potential.

All job vacancies are posted internally and all colleagues are welcome to apply should they have the right skills and aspire to change direction. As well as recruiting management and graduate trainees, we have an internal management development programme which is designed to find the hidden stars within our workforce and allows those non-graduates to develop their careers from the shop floor upwards.

**Involving** – by building relationships and working together we encourage our colleagues to become involved with our chosen charities of the year and join in with community events. Each brand has its own charity of the year which is nominated and voted for by our employees.

## Diversity

Go South Coast has been actively encouraging female recruits for all roles within the business, whether at job fairs or 'Try a Bus' driver recruitment days. During the last year we have recruited two female graduates and we have just taken on our third. One of these graduates has successfully completed her training and is now an Assistant Operations Manager. This now gives us four female AOM's in total across GSC when two years ago we had none.



## Highlights

224

drivers trained as dementia friends

Top current UK National Driver\*

7028

colleague training days

1837

employees

\* Dave Forrester – Southern Vectis Driver

Currently our female percentage is stable. Reasons for leaving are retirement or a new job in a different industry. Recruiting from minority groups is a challenge due to the lack of diversity in the regions where we work. When advertising we now use more generic themes, so as to encourage minorities.

## Training

To raise the standards, drivers with weaker customer skills have attended an improvement course and overall response has been excellent.

All drivers now attend our five-day Customer Promise course, with 600 attending this year alone. The objective of the course is to equip them to be able to make decisions in customers' interests and modify behaviour where needed.

We have a diversity forum that meets regularly. Our Customer Equality and Diversity course, developed in partnership with RNIB, RND and Age UK, is CPC, but is also part of initial staff training.

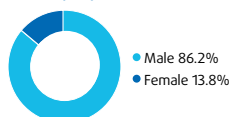
Management graduate trainees are part of our development plan and we currently have three in this process.

## Dementia Friends

Many of our colleagues are signed up as "Dementia Friends" which a visual identifier allowing for additional assistance for those who need it on board our buses which have also been designed to use colour coding which is dementia friendly.



All employees



Senior Management



# FINANCE



Go South Coast are part of The Go-Ahead Group plc. Go South Coast supports the local economy by directly employing 1,837 people from across Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire, Swindon and the Isle of Wight, whilst providing our local communities with a sustainable way of getting to work or school.

## Supporting the UK economy

Each one of the 52 million journeys taken on our services every year is important to us. We connect communities and support local

businesses, which plays a part in strengthening the UK economy, we provide a convenient way to get to work, shops, key services and leisure activities every day.

## 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.

## Highlights



\* (This is 6.1% up on prior year which includes Thamesdown) or 2.3%

## 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 in supporting a vibrant mixed economy.



# KEY DATA: GO SOUTH COAST

2016/17 2015/16

## SOCIETY

### Safety

Bus accidents per million passenger journeys	<b>65</b>	68
% of buses with CCTV	<b>84.4</b>	79.9
Number of reported crimes	<b>96</b>	90

### Environment

Carbon emissions per passenger journey (kg)	<b>0.78</b>	0.77
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### Community

Total community investment (£)	<b>12,610</b>	11,903
Number of stakeholder events	<b>195</b>	275

## CUSTOMERS

Customer satisfaction (%)	<b>92.0</b>	91.0
Bus punctuality (%)	<b>83.0</b>	83.3

### Accessibility

Buses certified accessible (%)	<b>97.5</b>	84.8
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## OUR PEOPLE

Average number of employees	<b>1,699</b>	1,613
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	<b>0.97</b>	0.92
Employee turnover rate (%)	<b>13.7</b>	12.8
Absenteeism rate (%)	<b>3.8</b>	4.1
Number of staff training days	<b>7,126</b>	6,633
Training spend per employee (£)	<b>379</b>	309

### Diversity


% of female employees	<b>14.1</b>	13.8
% of Asian, black and other ethnic group employees	<b>2.2</b>	2.0

## FINANCE

Passenger journeys (m)	<b>52</b>	49
Change in passenger journeys (%)	<b>6.1</b>	3.6

RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

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 by visiting our website: [gosouthcoast.co.uk](http://gosouthcoast.co.uk), and more information about 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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## 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) of selected sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPI) data contained within the Group's Annual Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 3 July 2016 to 1 July 2017.

The full verification statement including 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



Bureau Veritas UK Ltd  
August 2017

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