

GTR appoints health, safety and security director

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Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) has picked its previous interim head of safety and health, Samantha Facey, to become health, safety and security director.

Samantha started in the new role in late February, reporting to Patrick Verwer, GTR's CEO.

She took on the position after serving as head of zero harm strategy since 2019; in this role she has led GTR's development and delivery of a transformational health and safety programme, which aims to reduce all staff and passenger incidents to zero across the 800-mile network which makes up the Southern, Thameslink, Great Northern and Gatwick Express rail businesses.

During her time in the role, the rail operator has recorded year-on-year improvement in operational safety performance, resulting in a 9% reduction in 2019/20 and a further 18% in 2020/21; GTR remains one of the top performing TOCs for safety of employees and customers. GTR has also seen a 40% reduction in fatalities year-on-year and the number of life-saving interventions more than double, with 40% of the organisation so far undertaking training on how to make a safe intervention.

Other achievements include the roll-out of 313 body-worn cameras to operational staff, resulting in more than 1,000 safeguarding interventions since July 2021 and securing a coveted Gold ROSPA Award in 2021, following a Silver Award in 2020.

Samantha said: "I'm delighted to take up this position at a time where our passengers are returning to our railway and expect a safe and reliable railway. I'm really proud of our Zero Harm strategy and the shift it's facilitated in our safety culture. Having witnessed first-hand the everyday actions colleagues take to look after each other and support our passengers during what has been a complex time for us all, I'm confident we're ready for the next challenge.

"Covid has presented huge challenges for our communities but more so for those who are more vulnerable, so our industry-leading focus on suicide prevention remains crucial to the business, as does supporting each other as we return to a new normal.

"Safety is at the heart of all we do so I'm looking forward to continuing to build on the foundation we've established over the past couple of years. Together in collaboration with our stakeholders and industry partners my aim is to deliver on the promise of ensuring no one comes to harm on our railway," she added.

With more than 20 years' experience in the transport industry, Samantha has held numerous roles across operational delivery, project management, business planning, training and health and safety, and originally joined GTR in 2013.

Most recently she was also serving as interim Head of Safety and Health – a role she held since November 2021 following Mark Whitley's departure for digital network business, openreach – as well as Health and Safety Lead for GTR's owning firm, The Go-Ahead Group. As part of this recent role she was responsible for overseeing the safe running of 10 bus and rail operators, as well as Go-Ahead's international bus and rail divisions.

Patrick Verwer, GTR's CEO, said: "I am delighted that Samantha has been appointed Head, Safety and Security Director. With extensive industry experience, she brings a can-do attitude and firm focus on making things better for customers and colleagues alike; I'm sure we will continue to see great work toward our Zero Harm ambitions with Samantha in her new role."

Originally from Australia, prior to taking on the role of Head of Zero Harm Strategy, Samantha was the Operations Delivery manager for the Thameslink Rolling Stock Programme from 2016 – 2019, a role which saw her manage the introduction of 115 new Class 700 trains to service across the Thameslink route and deliver the 'World's First' operation in European Train Control System and Automatic Train Operation (ATO) in service. She took on this role after three years as a Planning, Resource and Risk Manager on the Thameslink Programme, focused on training more than 1,000 operational staff on the new Class 700 rolling stock, ATO and depot operations. Before joining GTR Samantha held numerous roles at Transport for London.