

GTR doubles the number of female driver applicants in less than a year

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Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), the UK's biggest rail operator which runs the Southern, Thameslink, Great Northern and Gatwick Express services, has, through a series of dedicated recruitment and marketing campaigns, successfully managed to double the number of female train driver applicants from 413 in 2019, to 825 in 2020[i].

It's no secret that a diverse talent pool makes a happy, motivated and successful workforce, as well as giving businesses the best opportunity to recruit the most skilled and capable people for the role; not based on gender, but on ability. And whilst historically the rail industry has struggled to attract female talent, the tide may be turning.

Speaking of the company's progress, Zoey Hudson, Head of Talent, Diversity and Inclusion at GTR said: "We're very aware at GTR that to get the best from our staff and be best able to serve our passengers, a diverse and highly skilled workforce is absolutely vital. For this reason, we've invested heavily in a recruitment campaign packed full of programmes and initiatives, such as working with Mumsnet. Our campaigns are aimed at debunking the stereotypes associated with careers in the rail industry and humanising our brands while demonstrating the huge versatility of roles available. All with the

intention of attracting a more diverse workforce to the industry.”

Zoey continues: “We’re truly delighted to have been able to double the number of female train driver applicants in a single year, and we look forward to continuing to be the driving force behind the rail industry’s mission to recruit more women and have a more diverse pool of talent.”

Whilst the progress made is encouraging, GTR recognises that the fight is far from over, and has once again committed to doubling the number of female train driver applicants, this time by 2021. Further commitments include improving diversity in teams across its entire talent pool, with the company setting itself the target of having a 50/50 gender split on all training programmes by the end of 2021.

To ensure this ethos is embraced across GTR, the company also introduced ‘Unconscious Bias’ training, designed specifically to help make the organisation a more diverse and inclusive place to work. Ian McLaren, CFO at GTR commented: “As the executive sponsor of our Unconscious Bias training programme, it is my responsibility to ensure GTR is the diverse and welcoming business that we strive for it to be. We all have biases, it’s how our brains process and categorise the world. But by making ourselves aware of our tendencies to favour people most like us in appearance, background, or world view, we can begin to overcome those biases to create a more agile and innovative blend of ideas and experiences at GTR.”

Paige Lunn (29), Lisa Gibbs (56) and Beau Hawkins (26) are all newly qualified train drivers, working across the GTR network. They applied for the role at different ages and all come from completely different backgrounds. To find out more about each of their individual stories, please click through below:

- Paige used to work in retail but in her mid-twenties she decided she wanted a change. After seeing campaigns calling on women to become train drivers she thought...why not! [Read more here.](#)
- Lisa initially applied to be a train driver when she was 21 years old. After her career took a different turn, she decided to revisit the idea over 30 years later and is loving every minute. [Read more here.](#)
- 26-year-old Beau has been on the railway since she was 19. She’s worked in ticket offices, on the platform and now has the best seat in the house. [Read more here.](#)

[i] In the six months from February 2020.

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