

# Rail Alliance and University of Birmingham announce combined service offer to the rail industry

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The Rail Alliance and Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education (BCRRE) have officially announced the formal integration of the two organisations to an audience of over 300 industry leaders and professionals at Millennium Point in Central Birmingham (next to the site of the future High Speed 2 station at Curzon Street).

The coming together of Rail Alliance and BCRRE, both highly respected organisations in the rail industry, sets out a powerful new approach where industry and academia work in partnership to directly address real railway challenges, providing access to leading edge R&D and innovation supported by practical knowledge and experience.

Alex Burrows, Managing Director, BCRRE and Rail Alliance said: “This is a golden opportunity for the rail industry, especially SMEs, bringing together a wide range of talents in one team that combines world-leading capabilities across a large number of research areas with real industry expertise and know-how. This is an extremely compelling offer that brings significant opportunities to all parts of the rail supply

industry.”

Located at the University of Birmingham’s Edgbaston Campus and housing one of the world’s most respected rail engineering faculties, organisations can engage on a one-to-one basis with BCRRE and works in partnership with experts in their field to develop products and solutions for the rail market. Further bolstered by the Rail Alliance, SMEs can take advantage of assistance in taking innovation to market in addition to access to physical test and trial facilities, plus access to programmes such as DIGI-RAIL or Rail Mentor – all developed to support the successful development and adoption of innovations.

Managing Director at Siemens Mobility UK, Gordon Wakeford, summarised his thoughts on the union, by saying: “Bringing together the two great railway organisations of Rail Alliance and the BCRRE creates a unique and exciting opportunity for railway suppliers and academia to co-create the railway of the future. This team will be an instrumental pillar in ensuring the delivery of the recently announced Rail Sector Deal.”

Martin Little, Commercial Director, and Eli Rees-King, Marketing Director, delivered a strong message to industry that the Rail Alliance is doing business as usual by continuing to support and promote organisations in the rail sector. However, with the benefit of a larger team in addition to access to specialist R&D and R&I capability, companies in the Rail Alliance community have an even greater opportunity for engagement and collaboration than ever before.

Organisations that want to be part of this growing community can now register free of charge which means that there is no longer any barrier to entry to joining the Rail Alliance Community. The only requirement is that companies must have a genuine interest in growing their business in rail as well as supporting the UK rail supply industry.

Mike Noakes, Head of Rail at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), sees this as a major step forward for the industry, commenting: "Rail Alliance and BCRRE coming together like this

really furthers BEIS' Industrial Strategy agenda, helping to blend the innovative juice of the SME community with the academic and scientific rigour and mass of BCRRE and the UK Rail Research and Innovation Network.

This Government's modern Industrial Strategy relies on industry identifying where it can excel and in partnership with government making that happen - in achieving this, Rail Alliance and BCRRE coming together can make a real difference to UK rail and UK plc."

The University of Birmingham's Centre for Railway Research and Education (BCRRE) holds close relationships with the global rail industry, ensuring that research and teaching draws on real-world experience.