

# Rail operator welcomes 50 per cent increase in female apprentices ahead of National Apprenticeship Week

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Ahead of National Apprenticeship Week (5-11 February), [Govia Thameslink Railway \(GTR\)](#) has revealed a sharp increase in the number of females starting an apprenticeship. GTR welcomed a total of 176 new starters in 2023, with 60 of these coming from female applicants, representing a 50 per cent increase from the previous year.

The data comes after 2022 saw the highest number of female applicants for train driver roles in five years, revealing a growing interest in the industry. The numbers are a positive reflection of rail becoming more inclusive and demonstrates GTR's commitment to diversify its workforce.

There are a total of 14 apprenticeship courses on offer at GTR, and the rail operator supports employees to study alongside their day jobs in order to aid development and upskill. As well as an increase in females starting apprenticeships, the overall number of employees taking on an apprenticeship increased by 22 per cent last year.

One woman now reaping the benefits of GTR's apprenticeship programme is Wioletta Kuszyk, who graduated to become a qualified train driver in 2023. She said the training programme served as a practical introduction to rail after she swapped careers aged 39.

"After making a big decision to change career paths from a chef to train driver post Covid, the GTR apprenticeship was a great introduction to the industry. It gave me all the skills and support I needed in those early years of my new career, and a thorough understanding of what my short and long-term opportunities were. There are so many apprenticeships on offer at GTR to suit different people's needs, so if you're interested in the rail industry, it's a great way to get started."

David Jackson, Apprenticeship Specialist at Govia Thameslink Railway, commented: "It's great to see more women taking on apprenticeships and benefitting from further education at no cost. Our people are our biggest asset and we're proud to be able to offer training and qualifications to support their development at GTR."

GTR's apprenticeships are now open to new and existing employees and attract applicants from a wide range of ages and backgrounds. In 2023, GTR's most senior apprentice started the programme at age 58, while the youngest in the programme is just 18 years old.

Anyone considering applying for an apprenticeship with GTR can sign up for alerts at: <https://gtrailwaycareers.com/jobs/apprenticeships>.

*Photo credit: GTR*