

# Railway Industry Association launches a UK Nations & Regions offer

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The Railway Industry Association (RIA), the voice of the UK rail supply community, is announcing plans to develop a UK Nations & Regions network, in order to better support its members across the UK.

This follows clear demand from members in recent years for RIA to increase and enhance its offer outside of London, to provide more intelligence, events and policy and public affairs capability at a UK nations and regions level.

The areas will cover: RIA Scotland; RIA Wales & Western; RIA Northern Ireland; RIA North; RIA Midlands & Eastern; and RIA London & South.

The new network will mean that rail businesses in each area will be able to draw on RIA resources, including lobbying, intelligence, events, networking and meetings, in their particular region or nation. Physical offices are not planned, we will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders around the country for in-person gatherings. Also, the Association will continue to work and collaborate in each area with existing local and regional bodies, to ensure members get an enhanced localised offering, but one which avoids duplication of existing work. RIA North will build on the current Northern Rail Industry Leaders

(NRIL) organisation already established, with NRIL feeding into RIA North's activities.

The launch of the network comes on the day that RIA plays a driving role in regional events in the North and Midlands, at the NRIL Conference in Leeds and the Rolling Stock Network event in Derby. Further events are planned in the nations and regions around the country over the coming weeks, including in Glasgow, Manchester, Derby, Cardiff and London. An event in Belfast is planned for the New Year.

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association (RIA), said: "Today we are announcing a plan which takes RIA on to the next stage of its development.

"Members have been telling us in recent years that they would like us to enhance the work we do outside of London. So whilst we will of course continue to provide intelligence and engage and lobby at the national level, we clearly need to up our game when it comes to developing a UK nations and regions network beyond the capital.

"This development will allow us to provide even stronger support to our members and the rail supply community, whether nationally or in their area. It is also important we roll this out right now, as decision-making and influencing is becoming increasingly devolved, whether through Network Rail's regional businesses, or the increasing importance of regional and national parliaments and combined authorities. It is only right that RIA plays its part in helping its members enhance their presence where these decisions are being made – as indeed we have been doing in recent years, positively engaging with and taking a key role in the North, through the work of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders.

"So, whilst we are making this announcement today, from 2022 members will see the roll out of six new RIA areas where we intend to deepen our offer – Scotland, Wales & Western, Northern Ireland, North, Midlands & Eastern, and London & South – with dedicated resources provided to support the industry, and establish local groups for members to feed into our work. Members will see the benefits of a RIA that works closer to them, giving them a voice and supporting them both at a UK-wide and sub-national level, including through the many events, intelligence and representational activities we provide.

"As we exit the Coronavirus pandemic, this can be an exciting time for the rail supply chain as rail looks to play its part to help the UK, and its nations and regions, build back better. We look forward to working with RIA members and stakeholders on this across the country, as we roll out the network in the coming months and years."

The new network builds on the experience and success of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders (NRIL) which has been working with RIA to give a voice to suppliers in the North of England since 2018.

Justin Moss, Chair of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders (NRIL), said: "NRIL has benefited hugely from its work with RIA, helping to represent suppliers in the North of England. With RIA North's backing, NRIL will be able to help support an even greater national network, whilst continuing to act as the distinct body for the rail industry in the North.

"We look forward to being part of the new national and regional network, and working with RIA to support a growing, vibrant industry both in the North and the wider UK by sharing the lessons from our experience

to date and being ready for the challenges for the future.”

*Photo credit: Railway Industry Association*