

SLC Operations celebrates second birthday with driver recruitment push

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Train operator and driver training specialist SLC Operations (SLCO) is celebrating its second anniversary with a major recruitment drive, giving train drivers the opportunity to earn over £100,000.

Formed in February 2020 by Chiltern Railway's stalwarts Cath Bellamy, Adrian Shooter and Ian Walters, the business has already made a major impact, with a client base including MTREL, Transport for Wales, Transport for London, South Western Railway, Network Rail, Colas Rail, VivaRail and Balfour Beatty Rail. The company also recently secured £750,000 funding which will help double its headcount to more than 40.

Explained Cath Bellamy, SLCO's Managing Director: "We set out with a vision to become a market leader in the provision of railway operational support and safety critical training. Our first two years have been really successful and we are well on the way, with big plans for the future."

Based at Kings Norton, Birmingham, SLC Operations offers services ranging from train driver and guard hire, operations training, instructor hire and rail vehicle introduction/acceptance including fault-free and mileage accumulation through to rolling stock collection and delivery.

Within its first 12 months the business was awarded its non-passenger operating licence, which it has used to help clients with ad hoc rolling stock movements, deliver water-jetting services and help introduce new/modified trains on to the network, including the mileage accumulation and fault free running of Transport for Wales new diesel/battery hybrid and South Western Railways third rail type units. In its first year alone, it has operated over 1,000 trains.

Driven by customer demand, the company then made a successful application for its passenger train operating licence, awarded in October 2021, which it immediately put to good use supporting VivaRail and Network Rail to run the UK's first emission free, fully battery powered mainline passenger train at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

Added Cath: "The last two years have been an incredible journey and for a relatively new business, we have achieved so much, a large part of which is down to my fantastic team, along with the support of amazing clients and the excellent relationships we have with them – thank you!"

The company is also building a reputation as one of the UK's leading specialist train driver training providers through its division, The Rail Academy, offering driver/train crew and instructor training and route familiarisation, investing in the very latest digital technologies.

Now as it celebrates two years of successful operations, SLCO is actively recruiting drivers to play a major part in the next stage of its development, seeking the following:

- Five fully qualified depot drivers based in the London area
- Two fully qualified main line drivers, also based in the London/Greater London area
- Seven fully qualified main line drivers, initially supporting the West Midlands area

There will also be opportunities for further development for the new recruits, with the five depot drivers and seven mainline drivers being given the chance to train as main line drivers and fully qualified driver instructors respectively, all funded by SLC Operations

Added Cath: "The role of the train driver has never been more important and they form a core role in our business. As such, we're looking not just to fill new vacancies, but are offering people the chance of a rewarding career and self-development within a fast-moving business."

And with salaries for trained qualified drivers in the company starting at £62,000 and, in some cases over £100,000 with overtime, the financial rewards are clear.