

BULLETIN 57

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION OF RAILWAY OPERATORS



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From front-line role to operational insight.

Glasgow Graduation

Honouring academic achievement in rail.

Variation in Rail Performance

Why system design drives reliability and capacity.

Darren King, FCIRO

George Bradshaw Address

Senior leaders debate rail reform and integration as CIRO host.

IROLS Pilot Launches

Building whole-system operational leaders.



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CIRO Hosts the George Bradshaw Address 2026

Earlier this month, the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (CIRO) was proud to host the George Bradshaw Address for the first time, marking an important moment for the Institution and its growing role in convening senior leaders from across the rail industry.

Held in London on 10 February at One Great George Street, the event brought together more than 200 senior rail leaders, policymakers and innovators spanning operations, infrastructure, government and the wider sector. The George Bradshaw Address has become a respected fixture in the industry calendar, providing a forum for informed debate and reflection on the strategic and operational issues shaping the future of Britain's railway.

Named after George Bradshaw, the 19th-century publisher whose railway guides brought structure and accessibility to Britain's early rail network, the Address continues to reflect the importance of coordination, planning and whole-system thinking.



Over the years, it has featured influential voices from across government and industry, reinforcing its role as a platform where leadership, policy and operational insight come together.

This year's Address took place at a pivotal moment for the sector, as the industry looks ahead to the establishment of Great British Railways and the

opportunities this presents for greater integration, collaboration and long-term performance improvement.

The event was opened by Mark Hopwood CBE, Managing Director of Great Western Railway and Chair of the CIRO Board, who welcomed attendees and introduced keynote speaker Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP, Secretary of State for Transport. In her Address, the Secretary of State shared government perspectives on reform and the future direction of Britain's railway. You can read the Secretary of State's full speech here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/george-bradshaw-address-2026>

The keynote was followed by a panel discussion and audience Q&A chaired by Katy Austin, Transport Correspondent at BBC News. Alex Hynes, CEO at DfT Operator, highlighted the benefits of an integrated structure, noting early signs of reduced subsidy and improving performance. Jeremy Westlake, CEO at Network Rail, echoed the value of removing contractual barriers, emphasising how bringing track and train together can drive efficiencies.

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General at the Rail Freight Group, highlighted that around one quarter of all trains will not sit within GBR. She noted the freight sector is seeking a framework that addresses the cultural implications of this, and that discussions are ongoing regarding clauses within the Railways Bill.

Joining the panel, the Secretary of State also spoke about the Government's decision to freeze regulated fares while emphasising the need to deliver better value for money and reduce subsidy. Alex Hynes added that growing revenue faster than costs, alongside additional services, would be key to reducing subsidy requirements.

Heidi Alexander and Jeremy Westlake both stressed the importance of providing certainty for the supply

chain, with the Secretary of State highlighting the forthcoming rolling stock strategy as an opportunity to take a longer-term, more balanced approach to investment.

In closing, the Secretary of State described the creation of GBR as a generational change, underpinned by legislation on a scale not seen for 30 years, and spoke about the ambition to create renewed confidence and excitement in the railway through reliable service delivery.

A particularly proud moment for CIRO came at the start of the evening, when former learners Bronnie Clarke, Head of Control (East Midlands Route) at Network Rail, and Maro Sakpere, Fleet Service Engineer at Govia Thameslink Railway, shared their career journeys and reflected on how CIRO's professional development support had contributed to their progression, a strong reminder of the value of investing in people across the industry.

Closing reflections were delivered by Phil Sherratt, Chief Executive of CIRO, who emphasised the importance of leadership, professional capability and cross-industry collaboration in shaping the future railway.

Hosting the Address for the first time reinforces CIRO's

role as a trusted convenor within the sector bringing leaders together to share insight, strengthen understanding and support progress at a time of significant change for UK rail. Further event highlights and updates can be found here:

<https://www.ciro.org/george-bradshaw-address/>

Shaping the future of rail, together.



New Corporate Members

We are delighted to welcome new corporate members to CIRO over the last few months. The growing membership shows the strength of our profession and will give even more professionals access to continuing professional development to advance their careers.



Exeter College is dedicated to delivering outstanding learning to its 15000 strong learning community. They are multi-award winning and amongst the selected few Ofsted Outstanding further education colleges in the country.

"Our partnership with GWR is a great example of what can be achieved when a college and fantastic employer work together to create something truly sector leading." John Laramy, Principal and Chief Executive CBE.

GB Railfreight

GB Railfreight (GBRf) is a leading UK rail-freight operator, established in 1999 with a clear ambition to modernise the sector through professionalism, trust, and customer focus. Known for innovation, reliability, and industry-leading customer service, GBRf continues to grow rail freight by developing new terminals, investing in sustainable assets, and delivering complex, high-volume operations for some of the UK's most significant infrastructure and logistics projects.

Integrated Railway Operations Leadership Pilot Programme set to Launch

The Integrated Railway Operations Leadership Scheme (IROLS) Pilot Programme launched yesterday, marking an important step in the rail industry's approach to developing leadership capability and whole-system operational understanding.

Designed as an industry-wide learning initiative, the programme has been developed in response to long-standing challenges around operational capability, siloed decision-making and the loss of experienced talent across rail operations. Its purpose is to support the development of leaders who understand how the whole railway system fits together and who can make more informed, joined-up decisions.

Open to rail professionals at different stages of their careers, the IROLS programme combines structured learning workshops with authentic operational placements, deliberately exposing participants to both track and train environments. This cross-industry approach enables individuals to gain insight into areas they would not normally engage with, helping them better understand operational constraints, priorities and trade-offs.

The learning objectives underpinning the programme have been agreed by senior leaders from across the rail industry, ensuring the content reflects shared priorities and real-world operational challenges. Strong industry support for the programme is reflected in a short film featuring insights from some of the most influential leaders in rail, who share why whole-system leadership matters and the value this programme can deliver for the future of the industry. The video highlights the breadth of senior-level engagement and the collective commitment to developing confident, system-literate leaders.

The Chartered Institution of Railway Operators has played a key role in shaping the programme and will act as a proxy delivery organisation during the pilot phase, working closely with industry partners to coordinate learning activity and ensure relevance to live operational environments. The programme also aligns closely with the long-term vision of Great British Railways, placing integration and collaboration



at the heart of leadership development.

Find out more

To learn more about the Integrated Railway Operations Leadership Pilot Programme, including its aims, structure and upcoming launch, visit:

<https://www.ciro.org/integrated-railway-operations-leadership-pilot-programme-to-launch/>

Watch the leadership video:

<https://vimeo.com/1156477697>

IROLS at a Glance

- ✓ An industry-wide learning programme comprising 12 workshops and 4 placements
- ✓ Builds cross-industry insight, especially beyond participants' usual roles
- ✓ Uses a proven "Train and Track" approach that strengthens experience
- ✓ Designed to develop current and future operational leaders
- ✓ Supports learning through real-world placements and facilitated workshops



Understanding Common Causes of Variation in the Railway System and Their Effects on Service Delivery

Railways are complex socio-technical systems, integrating infrastructure, rolling stock, people, and technology to deliver services that millions rely on every day.

Despite continual improvement in planning and operations, variation in performance remains a persistent challenge. Delays, constrained capacity, and fragile reliability are familiar symptoms, often attributed to poor management or isolated failures. In practice, they are more commonly the result of the system itself.

Understanding common causes of variation within the railway system is essential for effective service delivery. Without this understanding, performance interventions risk addressing symptoms rather than causes. This article examines where variation originates, how it affects service outcomes, and why distinguishing between common (i.e. those that are predictable and seen as ongoing fluctuations inherent to a process) and special causes (e.g. extreme weather, or sudden demand) matters for operators and planners.

Variation Embedded by Planning and Design

Decisions taken during planning and design establish the long-term performance envelope of a railway. Once implemented, these decisions can persist for decades, constraining operational flexibility and limiting achievable performance. In many cases, variation is embedded in the physical and operational structure of the network rather than created through day-to-day operation.

The British railway network illustrates this clearly. Much of its infrastructure was designed for low-frequency steam services. At grade junctions such as Ely and Newark, now operating close to capacity, might unrealistically expect multiple services to operate consistently within 30 seconds of plan and

when they don't, they create inherent conflicts between train movements. Each potential conflict introduces delay risk that propagates across the timetable. Here, variation is structural, arising from design rather than execution.

Timetable design embeds similar effects. Highly optimised timetables maximise throughput but leave little margin for recovery, while generous margins protect reliability at the expense of capacity. European practice illustrates this trade-off. French high-speed services prioritise speed but operate with limited recovery margins, while Switzerland's integrated clock face timetable deliberately embeds recovery time to protect connections and system stability.

Rolling stock strategy also influences variation.

Mixed fleets with different acceleration and braking characteristics complicate timetable construction and increase variability in running times. On routes such as the Great Western Main Line, the coexistence of high-performance electric trains, slower diesel units and heavy freight trains reduces resilience and constrains effective capacity.

Designing Beyond Current Operations

A recurring weakness in railway planning is designing future infrastructure around current operating conditions. While understandable, this approach risks hard-wiring today's constraints into assets intended to last many decades.

Avoiding this requires a clear distinction between common and special causes of variation. Special causes are irregular, exceptional events that cannot be eliminated, and their impact can be mitigated through proportionate resilience measures. But common causes are inherent to the system: infrastructure layout, timetable structure, fleet mix, and established

operating practices. They determine baseline performance. If these are poorly configured, no level of operational excellence can consistently overcome them.

Effective design, therefore, requires two questions: which common causes of variation can be removed or reduced through design choices, and which special causes are likely to challenge the system over its life? Addressing both raises baseline performance while limiting the impact of disruption.

Variation from System Use

Railways are shaped daily by how passengers, freight operators, and staff interact with them. These behaviours introduce further sources of variation. Passenger behaviour directly affects dwell times, which become increasingly variable under high demand. Systems designed to account for this perform better. In Tokyo, active platform management maintains predictable dwell times during peak periods.

On London's Elizabeth Line, wide doors and level boarding were adopted specifically to reduce dwell time variability. Where infrastructure does not account for behaviour, variation in dwell time becomes a persistent operational constraint. Even the placement of shelters along a platform may have operational implications when it rains.

Freight services introduce additional variability on mixed-traffic networks. Differences in speed, braking rates, and scheduling flexibility between freight and passenger services reduce usable capacity and complicate recovery from disruption. Even when freight operates to plan, its interaction with faster passenger services introduces structural variation. Operational practices also matter. Variations in driving style, dispatching decisions, and local control actions may be individually small, but when repeated across the network they accumulate into system-level effects. Consistency of practice is therefore critical.

Variation from Unaccounted Change Over Time
Railways are long-lived assets operating in a changing environment. When systems fail to adapt, variation increases. Demand growth, technological change, and external conditions all introduce new pressures. Infrastructure designed for lower passenger volumes becomes constrained, resulting in crowding, longer dwell times, and reduced punctuality. On London's Jubilee Line, peak demand growth led to significant dwell time increases once design limits were exceeded, reflecting outdated assumptions rather than operational failure.

Technological change can also introduce variation if integration is incomplete. New rolling stock or signalling may outpace supporting infrastructure or operating practices, creating transitional instability. Climate change adds further pressure, exposing assets to conditions beyond historic design tolerances. Heat, flooding, and landslips are now recurring challenges that must be treated as common causes of variation.

Implications for Service Delivery

Variation manifests directly in service delivery. Reliability is the most visible casualty. Railways are tightly coupled systems in which small deviations propagate quickly. Persistent punctuality challenges are often linked to systemic bottlenecks rather than isolated failures.

Capacity is also reduced. High variability forces additional margins into timetables, lowering the number of services that can be operated reliably. Passenger experience deteriorates accordingly, as inconsistent journey times undermine trust and suppress demand. Costs rise as additional rolling stock, staffing, and contingency measures become permanent features of operation.

Addressing Common Cause Variation

W. Edwards Deming's insight that most performance problems arise from common causes is highly applicable to railways. Sustainable improvement depends on systemic change rather than reactive intervention.

Projects such as the Elizabeth Line were conceived to remove long-standing structural constraints, raising baseline performance. The Japanese Shinkansen demonstrates how infrastructure design, timetable structure, rolling stock, and operational discipline combine to minimise variation and deliver exceptional reliability.

Continuous adaptation is equally important. Regular timetable revision, demand monitoring, and operational learning prevent small mismatches from becoming embedded. Finally, resilience must be designed into the system. Recovery margins, alternative routings, and operational flexibility ensure that inevitable variation does not escalate into widespread disruption.

Understanding and addressing common causes of variation is therefore central to delivering a reliable, efficient, and resilient railway.

Advancing capability across the railway: Key achievements from CIRO's Learning Department

Over the past year, the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (CIRO) Learning Department has continued to play a central role in developing the capability, confidence and whole-system understanding of rail professionals across the industry.

Through the launch of new programmes, expansion of partnerships and continued investment in apprenticeships and professional development, CIRO has strengthened its contribution to building the skills required for a modern, integrated railway.



Award-winning CIRO Connect expands industry reach

A major milestone for CIRO Connect came with the industry-wide launch in October. The award-winning development programme was designed to build cross-industry collaboration, professional networks and leadership insight.

Bringing together participants from across rail organisations, the programme focuses on shared learning, operational understanding and professional connection, equipping individuals with broader industry awareness beyond their immediate roles.

Following its successful launch, two further cohorts are already scheduled for delivery in 2026, reflecting strong demand and sector appetite for collaborative development opportunities.

Learn more: <https://www.ciro.org/ciro-connect/>

Apprenticeship growth across Levels 3 and 4

Apprenticeships remain a cornerstone of CIRO's learning offer, and since the start of 2026, new cohorts have launched across both Level 3 and Level 4 programmes.

These latest intakes reflect strong cross-industry representation, with learners joining from organisations including CrossCountry, GTSR, Govia Thameslink Railway, Network Rail, South Western Railway, Greater Anglia and LNER.

Through structured learning, coaching and operational context, these programmes continue to develop the next generation of rail leaders, equipping apprentices with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to operate effectively within complex railway environments.



National Apprenticeship Week celebrations

CIRO was proud to mark National Apprenticeship Week with a series of activities celebrating the impact apprenticeships have across the rail industry and the people who make them such a success.

Throughout the week, we highlighted the

achievements of our learners, the commitment of employer partners and the dedication of tutors and coaches working behind the scenes to support apprentices at every stage of their development. Their guidance plays a vital role in building confidence, capability and professional credibility within operational rail environments.

We also visited a teaching session in London with Network Rail Graduates completing their Level 4 Passenger Transport Operations Manager Apprenticeship. The light rail-focused session gave learners the opportunity to apply operational thinking through interactive, real-world learning.

National Apprenticeship Week provided a valuable opportunity to celebrate learner success while recognising the collective industry effort that underpins apprenticeship delivery.



Learner voices showcased at the George Bradshaw Address

A particularly proud moment for CIRO came at the 2026 George Bradshaw Address, where two former CIRO academic learners were invited to speak to an audience of senior rail leaders.

Bronnie Clarke, Head of Control for Network Rail's East Midlands Route, and Maro Sakpere, Fleet Service Engineer at Govia Thameslink Railway, shared reflections on their career journeys and the role CIRO's learning and professional development support played in helping them progress.

Their contributions provided a powerful demonstration of how investment in professional education translates into real-world operational leadership, while showcasing the value of CIRO's academic pathways to the wider industry.

Learn more: <https://www.ciro.org/george-bradshaw-address-2026/>

Specialist End-Point Assessment to launch

Further strengthening professional standards, CIRO will launch rail-contextualised Transport Scheduler End-Point Assessments in April.

This specialist assessment offer ensures learners are evaluated against occupational standards within a rail-specific operational context, supporting more relevant, industry-aligned outcomes and reinforcing CIRO's role as a professional awarding body.

Learn more: <https://www.ciro.org/epa/>

New Whole System Thinking short course

Responding directly to industry demand, CIRO has also launched a new Whole System Thinking short course, developed at the request of the Department for Transport.

The course focuses on effective operational resourcing from both current and future planning perspectives, while strengthening collaboration between operations and engineering functions, supporting more informed decision-making and improved system performance.

Supporting the railway of today and tomorrow

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the breadth and impact of CIRO's Learning Department across the rail sector.

From apprenticeships and academic pathways through to leadership schemes, short courses and cross-industry programmes, CIRO continues to develop the capability, confidence and system-wide understanding needed to support an integrated, high-performing railway.

By investing in people, strengthening collaboration and championing professional excellence, CIRO remains committed to shaping the future of rail, together.

Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers programme launches

The Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers programme has recently launched, marking an important step forward in strengthening leadership capability within traincrew management across the UK rail industry.

Led by the Rail Delivery Group and developed in close partnership with the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators, the programme has been created to address a long-recognised gap in consistent, structured development for traincrew managers – roles that are critical to operational performance, workforce culture and service reliability.

Operating in complex, safety-critical and highly unionised environments, traincrew managers have historically had limited access to tailored leadership development. This programme responds directly to that need, equipping Area Driver Managers, Driver Managers and Depot Managers with the practical skills and confidence to manage people, performance and industrial relations effectively.

A programme built on real operational need

CIRO's involvement began at the earliest stages of development, working alongside RDG and industry subject-matter experts to shape the learning objectives, curriculum and delivery approach. Drawing on CIRO's experience in professional development and operational leadership, the programme was designed to bridge the gap between policy, guidance and real-world application.

CIRO also played a central role in delivering the pilot phase of the programme, which ran during 2025. The pilot adopted an applied learning model, combining scenario-based activities, experiential learning and cross-industry discussion to reflect the realities of modern traincrew management.

Evaluation of the pilot demonstrated strong gains in participant capability and confidence, reinforcing the value of a practical, industry-aligned approach to



leadership development.

Industry recognition through Rail Business Awards success

The impact of the pilot programme has been recognised at a national level, with the Traincrew Management Training Programme Pilot winning Supplier & Contractor Excellence at the Rail Business Awards 2026.

Presented at the Manchester ceremony and attended by senior rail stakeholders, the award reflects both the quality of the programme and the strength of collaboration between CIRO and Rail Delivery Group, highlighting the value of partnership working in strengthening operational leadership capability across the industry.

Supporting the future of rail operations

With the programme now launched and RDG managing recruitment and future cohorts, CIRO remains a strong supporter of the initiative and its objectives. The partnership has demonstrated how industry-led collaboration can respond effectively to real operational challenges while supporting long-term performance improvement.

As the rail industry continues to evolve, strong, confident traincrew leadership will remain essential to delivering safe, reliable and resilient services. The Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers programme represents a significant investment in the people who lead at the front-line of rail operations.

Find out more and register your interest

The Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers programme is delivered by the Rail Delivery Group, who are managing recruitment and future cohorts. To find out more about the programme or to register your interest in joining a future cohort, please contact Rail Delivery Group directly at: traincrewprogramme@raildeliverygroup.com

Elevate Your Rail Career: Why Now Is the Time to Upgrade Your CIRO Membership

Upgrading your CIRO membership isn't just a title change; it's a strategic step in your professional development and industry recognition. Becoming an Associate, Member, or Fellow of the Institution reflects your growing experience and commitment to excellence in railway operations, backed by the Professional Operators Development (POD) framework.

A higher membership level enhances credibility with colleagues and employers, opening doors to career opportunities and leadership roles. It also expands your access to CIRO's rich networking, mentoring, professional development resources, right to vote at the Annual General meetings, opportunity to contribute to key industry discussions, and give back to the rail industry.

As a CIRO member, support is available via the Members' Portal; you'll find the Upgrade Guidance Pack and events webinar recordings. We also run regular Upgrade Drop-in sessions on Teams; details are on the events page. For further help, you can

contact the Membership Team at: membership@railwayoperators.co.uk

Learn More: <https://www.ciro.org/upgrade-your-membership/>

"The upgrading process was also a way for me to develop my career further. It gave me the knowledge of which areas I'd like to build upon and aim my CPD towards."



Jose Del-Prado
MCIRO

Celebrating Academic Achievement at CIRO's Glasgow Graduation Ceremony

In November 2025, the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators proudly celebrated the achievements of its academic programme students at a special graduation ceremony in Glasgow, marking another important milestone in CIRO's long-standing commitment to professional development in the rail industry.

The ceremony was held in Glasgow and brought together graduates, their families, academic colleagues and industry representatives to recognise the dedication and hard work required to complete higher-education study alongside demanding professional and personal commitments. As in previous years, the occasion served as a powerful reminder of the transformative impact of education and lifelong learning within the rail sector.

This year's celebration was particularly significant as

it marked 20 years of partnership between CIRO and Glasgow Caledonian University. Over the past two decades, the partnership has supported hundreds of rail professionals in gaining accredited qualifications in railway operations management, strengthening capability across the industry and helping individuals progress their careers.





The enduring success of the programme reflects a shared commitment to academic rigour, practical relevance and accessibility, enabling learners at all stages of their careers to achieve recognised qualifications while remaining in full-time employment. The continued growth of the programme underlines the importance of structured, industry-aligned education in developing confident, capable railway leaders.

Following the formal ceremony, CIRO hosted a celebratory reception, providing graduates with the opportunity to reflect on their achievements and connect with peers, colleagues and members of the CIRO team. The event recognised not only academic success, but also the resilience, determination and professionalism demonstrated by learners throughout their studies.



inspiring example to graduates and current learners of what can be achieved through commitment to learning and development.

The graduation ceremony showcased the breadth of learners across CIRO's academic pathways, from Certificate and Diploma programmes through to Bachelor's degree awards, with graduates representing organisations from across the UK and international rail industry. Their success highlights the strength and relevance of CIRO's academic offering in meeting the evolving needs of the sector.

As CIRO reflects on 20 years of partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University, the 2025 graduation stands as a celebration of past achievement and future opportunity. CIRO remains committed to supporting accessible, high-quality education that empowers



The 2025 graduation was made even more special by the success of Poppy Tuppenny, CIRO's Senior Learning and Development Coordinator, who was awarded the Caroline Tuff Award for Academic Excellence. The prestigious award recognises outstanding academic achievement and commitment, and Poppy's success was warmly celebrated by graduates and colleagues alike.

Poppy's achievement reflects both her personal dedication and the values at the heart of CIRO's academic programmes - excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement. Her award served as an



rail professionals to develop, progress and lead with confidence.

CIRO congratulates all graduates on their achievements and looks forward to continuing to support learners on their academic journeys in the years ahead.

If you're considering the next step in your professional development, CIRO's academic programmes offer flexible, industry-aligned routes to recognised qualifications.

Explore current courses and applications here: <https://www.ciro.org/courses-applications-open/>

Congratulations to all our Academic Programme Graduates

BSc in Railway Operations Management

		David Pitt			
		Cassandra Unger		Colin Keogh	
Rosalynn Bairstow		Stuart Vinten		Brian Canavan	
David Bettles		Hristo Vitanov		Matthew Finney	
Casey Boyles		Claire Weston			
Darren Brown		Karn Khanna			
Judith Urmston					
Lauren Clancy					
Richard Cole					
Alan Crawford					
Gerard Daly		Sarah Bladen		Alexander Weekes-Hanson	
Ravi Gadepalli		Karl Breakspear		Fahad Alharbi	
Lucy Golding		Sarah Webb		Jonathan Birchett	
Aaron Gracey		Gary Cummins		Jenna Chinery	
Bex Hartley		Jamie Dickson-Virgo		Kevin Cunnick	
Chloe Hobden		Luke Driver		Chelsea Eddowes	
Harry Howe		Ieuan Farnham		Lisa Flaherty	
Matthew Hoy		Carly Hainie		Tom Guthrie	
Lisa Hunter		Aoife Harding		Samantha Hook	
Zahid Hussain		David Hunt		Ryan Leggat	
Carol Jarrett		Emma Isted		Liam McCormick	
Tom Law		Anthony Keelan		Koffi Muamba	
Connor Lempriere		Thomas Keogh		Damien O Leary	
Allan Mackay		Daniel Lane		Emmanuel Ofosuhene	
Tara McCadden		James Mcdowell		Liam O'Shea	
Brian McGilly		Michelle Ruth		Victoria Peacock	
Steffan Murray		Andrew Ring		Laura Roper	
Djibril NDjai		Nicholas Strong		Sami Shaim Alrashidi	
Lloyd Parkes		Poppy Tuppenney		Renata Sorokinaite	
Gareth Pennington		Philip Ware			
Robert Perkins					

Certificate of Higher Education in Railway Operations Management

Luke Roberts	
Neil Huston	
Alexander Weekes-Hanson	
Fahad Alharbi	
Jonathan Birchett	
Jenna Chinery	
Kevin Cunnick	
Chelsea Eddowes	
Lisa Flaherty	
Tom Guthrie	
Samantha Hook	
Ryan Leggat	
Liam McCormick	
Koffi Muamba	
Damien O Leary	
Emmanuel Ofosuhene	
Liam O'Shea	
Victoria Peacock	
Laura Roper	
Sami Shaim Alrashidi	
Renata Sorokinaite	

Diploma of Higher Education in Railway Operations Management

Sarah Bladen	
Karl Breakspear	
Sarah Webb	
Gary Cummins	
Jamie Dickson-Virgo	
Luke Driver	
Ieuan Farnham	
Carly Hainie	
Aoife Harding	
David Hunt	
Emma Isted	
Anthony Keelan	
Thomas Keogh	
Daniel Lane	
James Mcdowell	
Michelle Ruth	
Andrew Ring	
Nicholas Strong	
Poppy Tuppenney	
Philip Ware	



Case Study: Waqas Mahmood Unlocking Operational Insight with the CIRO POD Framework

Background and Role

Waqas Mahmood has been a Customer Welcome Host at Nottingham Station with East Midlands Railway since September 2018. In this role, he is often the first point of contact for passengers, ensuring they feel safe, informed, and supported as they move through the station.

From assisting customers with accessibility needs to managing high-footfall periods, Waqas approaches every interaction as an opportunity to improve the passenger experience.

A key part of his role involves acting as a vital link between EMR Control and customers during both planned and unplanned disruptions. In these situations, accurate, calm, and timely communication is critical. Waqas takes pride in providing clear, real-time information that reassures customers and helps them understand what is happening and why.

Before joining EMR, Waqas worked as a Travel Officer with Nottingham Trams, developing strong customer service and operational awareness skills. Earlier in his career, he served as a Constable with the Punjab Highways Patrol in Pakistan, an experience that reinforced his commitment to public service, safety, and community support. Together, these roles

have shaped him into a resilient, customer-focused professional with a growing passion for railway operations.

Understanding the Railway Industry

While Waqas had a strong grasp of the customer-facing side of the railway, he became increasingly curious about what happens behind the scenes. Questions around disruption management, operational decision-making, contingency planning, rolling stock utilisation, and authority structures sparked a desire to learn more.

This curiosity became more focused when he completed the POD Self-Assessment on the CIRO website. The results highlighted the depth and complexity of railway operations, making it clear that there was far more to understand beyond front-line delivery. Rather than being discouraging, this insight motivated him to explore the industry at a deeper level.

Discovering the CIRO POD

Waqas had long wanted to build his knowledge of railway operations but was looking for a credible, industry-recognised route to do so. Discovering CIRO

provided exactly that. The POD framework showed him not only what he needed to learn but how to structure his development into a clear and achievable pathway.

What stood out most was the accessibility of the platform. Despite covering complex operational concepts, the POD framework is structured in a way that makes learning approachable and engaging for people from a wide range of backgrounds. For Waqas, it provided direction, motivation, and a solid foundation for progressing towards an operational career.

Identifying Skills and Knowledge Gaps

The POD framework helped Waqas reflect on his strengths while identifying areas where further development would add value. His front-line experience was reinforced rather than replaced, but the structured learning highlighted how different railway functions interconnect and depend on each other.

This broader systems perspective helped him recognise the importance of expanding his understanding beyond his immediate role, particularly in areas such as operational planning and strategic decision-making. The POD gave context to his existing knowledge and helped him see where targeted development could make him even more effective.

Learning Impact and Professional Growth

Several POD sections, such as Emergency and Incident Management, Managing Safety, Customer Service, and People and Change, are closely aligned with Waqas's day-to-day responsibilities. These sections validated his existing experience and strengthened his confidence in the work he already carried out.

However, the greatest impact came from the sections that introduced unfamiliar concepts and wider operational frameworks. These helped bridge the gap between front-line delivery and system-wide thinking, giving Waqas a more holistic understanding of the railway. Through CIRO, he developed knowledge of key industry frameworks, including the Service Quality Regime (SQR), the Performance Improvement Management System (PIMS), and the Risk Management Maturity Model for Performance (RM3P), areas he had previously limited exposure to.

Application in Day-to-Day Work

One of the most significant benefits of the POD learning has been Waqas's improved understanding of Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD). With a clearer picture of operational processes and decision-making, he now feels more confident and composed when responding to customer queries during disruption.

This enhanced understanding allows him to communicate more accurately and calmly, improving customer trust and reassurance. Learning around prioritised planning and service recovery has also strengthened his approach to disruption management, helping him organise tasks more effectively, make better decisions under pressure, and support smoother service recovery.

Career Progression and Long-Term Goals

Waqas's long-term ambition is to move into railway operations and control. CIRO has played a crucial role in helping him understand both his current position and the steps needed to progress towards that goal.

Through structured training programmes, mentorship, CPD opportunities, short courses, and academic pathways up to degree level, CIRO provides a clear and tangible framework for long-term development. For Waqas, this alignment between learning and career ambition has been invaluable.

Recommendation to Colleagues

Waqas strongly encourages other railway colleagues to consider joining CIRO. He believes the biggest barrier is often taking the first step, but once engaged, the growth in knowledge, confidence, and professional capability becomes clear.

He describes CIRO membership as a worthwhile investment, one that offers credibility, structure, and genuine opportunities for progression within the industry.

Personal Interests

Outside of work, Waqas enjoys watching documentaries and travel vlogs, which allow him to relax while gaining new perspectives on the world. He has a strong interest in music and enjoys learning new languages; currently, he is studying Arabic and Hebrew, finding both the challenge and the process rewarding.

New Delivering Operational Performance Video Suite and Resources Launch

The Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (CIRO) has launched a new suite of Delivering Operational Performance video learning resources, developed to support cross-industry operational capability and enhance professional understanding of the core drivers of performance across the railway system.

These new materials build on CIRO's commitment to practical, accessible learning by offering a modular video series paired with supporting documentation designed to help individuals and teams strengthen performance insight within live operational environments.

The suite has been created to support learners at all stages of their careers – from emerging leaders to experienced operators – and reflects a consistent focus on real operational behaviour, applied learning and whole-system thinking.

The Delivering Operational Performance videos draw together insight from experienced practitioners and operational leaders, covering topics including:

- Understanding performance measures and their impact
- The relationship between reliability, resilience and customer outcomes
- Managing variability in operations
- Performance planning, measurement and improvement

Each video is accompanied by supporting materials, including facilitator guides, reflective questions and case scenarios that encourage discussion and application within teams. Designed for both individual learning and facilitated group sessions, the resources help translate the content into practical workplace insight that can support performance improvement across functions and organisations.



CIRO developed these resources in response to industry feedback emphasising the need for practical, flexible learning that goes beyond theory. By combining short, engaging video content with structured reflection and application tools, the Delivering Operational Performance suite is intended to support continuous professional learning and day-to-day decision making.

The launch complements other CIRO cross-industry learning initiatives, including its Integrated Railway Operations Leadership Scheme (IROLS) programme and the Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers training, demonstrating CIRO's continued commitment to strengthening operational capability and leadership across the rail sector.

Making the most of the resources

The Delivering Operational Performance video suite is available to CIRO members and industry partners. Learners are encouraged to use the materials as part of team workshops, professional development plans or reflective practice sessions, making the content relevant to both individual and organisational performance goals.

As rail continues to face operational complexity and changing customer expectations, accessible, practical learning resources such as these play a vital role in supporting a confident, capable and performance-focused workforce.

Find out more

To explore the Delivering Operational Performance video suite and supporting learning materials visit: <https://www.ciro.org/delivering-operational-performance-new-cross-industry-learning-resources-launched/>

Area Events Round-up

Our Area Councils have recently been delivering a wide range of engaging and informative events that brought members together and strengthened our community. Thanks to all our Area Council volunteers. Here are some highlights.



CIRO South East Area - International Study Tour Roundup

On 16 October, 15 delegates took part in the CIRO International Tour to Paris and Brussels, hosted by Eurostar and SNCF Réseau. In Paris, delegates learned about the expansion of RER Line E and visited the impressive Operations Control Centre at Pantin.

New rolling stock, line extensions and the introduction of Automatic Train Operation will significantly increase capacity on this key route, effectively making it Paris's equivalent of the Elizabeth Line.

The group then visited Gare du Nord to see the changes being implemented by Eurostar to accommodate the EU Entry/Exit System, alongside plans to increase capacity and support additional services.

A smooth onward journey took delegates to Brussels, where they were given a tour of the Eurostar Operational Crisis Centre, offering valuable insight into the complexity of operating international services across five countries and the Channel Tunnel.

The tour concluded with a visit to the Train World museum in Schaerbeek, providing a fitting historical perspective to round off the visit.

Other Area Council Events...

The North West & Wales Area Council hosted a series of fascinating events, including Potters Bar 2002: The Fatal Derailment and the Lessons That Shaped Rail Safety; Bridging the Tracks – A Career at the Interface of Train Operations and Network Rail; The Greatest Gathering: Staging the World's Largest Railway Festival; and Railway Safety, Regulation and the Future.

Meanwhile, the South West & Wales Area Council offered members the chance to hear from Mark Hopwood CBE, Managing Director of GWR and CIRO Chair; South West and Wales Annual Quiz, as well as hosting a Managing Category A Event at Cardiff.

The North East kept members busy with a York Rail Operating Centre Visit, their Christmas Social, and a talk on The Power of Open Access.

In the Midlands, members explored Reconnecting Coventry, Leicester, and Nottingham by Rail; enjoyed the Midlands Area Festive Gathering 2025 & The Greatest Gathering – The Inside Story; and toured Etches Park Depot.

The South East Area Council welcomed new members at their Reception; organised Docklands Light Railway - Looking to the Future; and Discover the Future of High-Speed Mobility.

The Scottish Area Council offered insights into Meteorologists and Their Role on Scotland's Railway and hosted An Evening with Ross Moran & Mark Ilderton.

While the Irish Area Council organised visits to Grand Central and NIROC.

If you missed any of our online events, you can catch up on the many recorded events at your convenience on CIRO TV via the Members' Portal.

You can also check out upcoming events on our website: <https://www.ciro.org/whats-on/>





www.ciro.org