



AUGUST 2026

BULLETIN 59

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

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Senior leaders debate rail reform and integration.

Become a Mentor!

Building whole-system operational leaders.

Building Connections

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Locally Empowered, Nationally Coherent

CIRO sets out its operational agenda for Great British Railways

Great British Railways is largely reversing the separation of track and train – the very move which caused senior railway figures at the time to create our Institution.

With operations at the heart of running a safe and punctual railway, CIRO is uniquely placed to comment on the challenges and opportunities of bringing the railway together for customers under GBR. But how can we ensure GBR is an operational success?

A policy paper recently published by CIRO sets out the Institution's recommendations to make GBR locally empowered but nationally coherent. This work has been led by a group of CIRO Fellows, whose collective insight can help create a better railway which can deliver for customers and the UK economy.



Secretary of State for Transport Heidi Alexander (Images courtesy of DfT)

Progress & Challenges

CIRO supports the creation of Great British Railways. The case for reform is compelling, and the direction of travel is right. But support for an idea is not the same as confidence that every question has been answered.

Good progress is being made in vertically integrating the railway. The creation of Integrated Railways in Kent, Anglia, Wessex and the West Midlands is beginning to show the benefits of combining track and train. But the purpose of Great British Railways is not just to vertically integrate – it is to create a simpler, more accountable railway with one organisation.

Not all customers experience the railway through a single business unit. A significant proportion of journeys cross the boundaries between individual railways.

The activities of many passenger operators and all freight operators cross business unit boundaries. Almost all railway staff are required to engage with colleagues from other business units and with customers making journeys to and from other parts of the network. GBR must not focus solely on the vertical aspect of integration.

Success depends on recognising the whole network challenge. Customers must experience GBR as a single railway, not a fragmented railway. This is particularly important on routes and at stations with multiple operators. Similar challenges apply to network activities like timetable planning.

CIRO's Operational Agenda for Great British Railways



**A national framework
with local delivery**



**Empowering people to
make good operational
decisions**



**Clear targets that drive
the right behaviours**



**Devolution & stakeholders:
balancing local priorities
and national flows**



**A clear and transparent
access framework**



**Technology to support
good decision-making**



**A strategic approach to
efficiency and workforce reform**

A Framework for Success

Creating strong bonds and frameworks across the national network must not result in decision-making becoming centralised. A single organisation must enable local delivery. Staff at the sharp end of running the railway need to be empowered to make good operational decisions and equipped to act in the interests of all customers and the whole network. Many staff have spent their entire career within the fragmented structure of the privatised railway. Investment in training and empowering staff will be critical to creating a sense of ownership “right down to the station floor”.

Clear targets are essential to drive the right behaviours. Conflicting targets across the fragmented privatised railway have created barriers to good decision-making. CIRO’s Fellows who were running the railway when it was last operated as a single national system emphasise the importance of clear and simple targets. Empowerment will be strengthened if staff are clear how winning is measured.

Devolution offers GBR a real opportunity to improve local accountability and place decision-making closer to customers. Local collaboration must work within a clear national framework so that local priorities and the needs of longer-distance and freight operators are balanced. Experience, for example the transfer of local services to Transport for London control, shows it is possible to strike this balance. There is an important role for national and network bodies and functions to facilitate this. If best use is going to be made of network capacity, some elements of existing access frameworks will need to be maintained.

The industry has failed to exploit the benefits of technology in supporting good decision-making. The structure of the privatised railway means that roll-out of technology has been fragmented.

We have identified improved technology as an element that binds together our other recommendations about responding to the whole network challenge, empowered decision-making and balancing local needs and longer-distance flows.

Government has set challenging cost reduction targets for GBR. There may be significant scope for efficiency savings in multi-operator routes where there are overlaps in capabilities and in the provision of services. More efficient and more effective use of traincrew is almost certainly possible, especially in multi-operator routes. However, the route to efficiency through workforce reform is more complex than it might seem. There are trade-offs between the benefits of operational flexibility and the costs of achieving it and in the short-term it will be better to focus on simpler actions. The industry will need to take a long-term approach to unwinding some of the inefficiencies.

Conclusion

CIRO offers this policy paper as a contribution to the work already under way to create GBR. We exist as an Institution to develop the people who run the railway, an ambition summarised in our mission to lead, inspire and accelerate the growth of rail professionals. We know, better than most, that the hardest part of any structural reform is not the legislation – it is making the new model work on the ground, with real people, making real decisions, in real time.

Our recommendations focus on giving the people who run the railway and make the critical operational decisions the tools and empowerment they need to do so effectively. This will be a crucial factor in ensuring GBR’s success – running a safe and reliable railway and reducing subsidy.

You can read the full paper here: <https://www.ciro.org/ciro-outlines-operational-priorities-to-help-shape-the-future-of-great-british-railways/>



CIRO Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Chartered Institution of Railway Operators (Company Registration No. RC000918), whose registered address is Beacon Building, 2nd Floor, Stafford Enterprise Park West, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0BF, will take place on Wednesday 9th September 2026.

The AGM provides an important opportunity for members to engage with the governance of the Institution and hear about key developments over the past year

Full details of the venue and any in-person attendance options will be announced shortly in the Events section of our website: <https://www.ciro.org/whats-on/>

The AGM pack, including the formal agenda and supporting information, will be available to download from our website in advance of the meeting.

We encourage all eligible members to review the documents and take part in the AGM to help guide the Institution’s continued development.

For more information and updates, please visit: <https://www.ciro.org/events/ciro-annual-general-meeting/>

Share Your Knowledge. Shape the Future of Rail.

CIRO is committed to supporting professional development through knowledge sharing, networking, learning opportunities, and collaboration.

Our membership brings together professionals at every stage of their railway journey, creating valuable opportunities to share knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned. From early-career professionals to industry leaders, CIRO members have a wealth of experiences and perspectives that can benefit the wider rail industry.

Whether you have delivered a successful project, overcome an operational challenge, developed your leadership skills, learned through mentoring, training, everyday practice, or are a subject matter expert with insights to share on any of the Professional Operator Development (POD) sections, the CIRO community can learn from your expertise.

Writing for CIRO is an excellent way to share knowledge, raise your professional profile, and contribute to the development of fellow railway professionals. It provides an opportunity to reflect on your experiences, showcase your expertise, and contribute to the development of the industry.

Your contribution can reach a wide audience across the industry, with articles featured in the CIRO Bulletin, member comms, social media and on the CIRO website. Whether your piece offers practical advice, lessons learned, industry insight, or a personal development journey, it could inspire and support railway professionals throughout the CIRO community.

Interested in contributing?

Contact membership@railwayoperators.co.uk or ololade@railwayoperators.co.uk to discuss your idea. We would love to hear from you.



Mentoring: An Opportunity to Learn, Grow and Give Back

Whether you're looking for guidance in your career or want to share your experience with others, **mentoring can be one of the most rewarding professional development opportunities available.**

The CIRO Mentoring Scheme connects members across the railway industry to support learning, knowledge sharing, career development and professional growth. The scheme provides a confidential and supportive environment where participants can discuss challenges, explore opportunities and learn from each other's experiences.

Why Become a Mentee?

You don't need to be new to the railway industry to benefit from mentoring. CIRO members at any level can apply to become a mentee. Whether you're starting out in rail, transitioning to a new role, working towards professional registration, or simply looking to broaden your skills and confidence, a mentor can provide valuable support and perspective.

A mentor won't tell you what decisions to make. Instead, they act as a trusted sounding board, helping you reflect on challenges, identify opportunities and develop your own solutions. Many mentees find that mentoring helps them build confidence, recognise their strengths and accelerate their professional development.

"I've already found the mentoring support really helpful in guiding me to make decisions that will positively impact my career moving forward."

- Stephen Wilson, Mentee

"This is a very good programme. It provides reminders to meet the Mentee on a regular basis - in my case I met Alex 3 times - as well as providing great tips on mentoring."

- Chris Prior, Mentor

Why Become a Mentor?

For experienced railway professionals, mentoring offers an opportunity to give something back to the industry while continuing to develop yourself. Mentors often gain as much from the relationship as mentees. Supporting others can strengthen leadership, coaching and communication skills, expose you to new perspectives and help you reflect on your own experiences and career journey. It is also a valuable contribution to Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Mentoring isn't about having all the answers. It's about listening, sharing experiences, asking thoughtful questions and helping others grow.

Who Can Become a Mentor?

To become a mentor through the CIRO Mentoring Scheme, you must be a Member (MCIRO) or Fellow (FCIRO). In addition to professional experience, effective mentors are willing to share knowledge, provide guidance and support, and demonstrate strong communication and leadership skills.

A Valuable Experience for Both Parties

Successful mentoring relationships create benefits for everyone involved. Mentees gain guidance, confidence and insight, while mentors develop leadership skills, broaden their perspectives and play an important role in supporting the next generation of railway professionals.

Whether you're seeking support in your own career or ready to share your experience with others, the [CIRO Mentoring Scheme](https://www.ciro.org) offers an opportunity to learn, grow and make a lasting impact across the railway industry.

Ready to get involved?

Sign up as a mentor or mentee through the [CIRO Mentoring Scheme](https://www.ciro.org) today!



Rail Ops Conference 2026: collaboration, integration & change at the heart of the future railway

This year's Rail Ops Conference brought members together in Manchester for a day of insight, challenge and conversation about the future of railway operations.

With the industry continuing to evolve, the event focused on how operators, funders, partners and professional networks can work together to deliver better outcomes for customers, communities and colleagues across the whole system.

A clear theme running throughout the conference was that the railway is in transition in the UK, but its fundamentals remain the same. Speakers reflected on the opportunities that come with change, the importance of clear purpose and accountability, and the need to think beyond organisational boundaries. Discussions highlighted that a whole-system model must recognise the different needs of freight, open access, Scotland, Wales, mayoral authorities and other parts of the industry, while still encouraging greater alignment and shared ambition.

Professional networks were also central to the day. Delegates heard about the importance of continued support for those progressing through qualifications and building their careers, with CIRO's role as a professional body underlined as vital in helping people stay connected, supported and inspired. The value of networking was evident not only in the formal sessions, but also in the conversations that continued throughout the day.

The conference also explored examples of integration in action. The Bee Network in Greater Manchester provided a strong case study of how local transport can support regeneration, simplify fares, improve affordability and increase services. Its progress demonstrated how bold local approaches can help shape a more accessible and joined-up transport offer for passengers.

The theme of collaboration was returned to repeatedly, particularly during the Q&A discussions. Speakers emphasised that the industry is stronger when it presents a united front, especially when

making the case for investment. There was recognition that while joined-up working is not new, it remains essential: the challenge now is to keep improving it, learning from local success and applying those lessons more widely.

A recurring question was how the railway can achieve the most with the funding available. Operational excellence, customer focus and shared learning were all identified as critical. Delegates were reminded that feedback, even when difficult to hear, should be treated as a gift and a tool for development. Just as importantly, the human side of integration was highlighted: processes and systems matter, but it is people interaction that will ultimately make integration work.

Freight, too, was recognised for its national importance, with discussion of its role on the network and the operational complexity involved in balancing different railway needs. Other sessions looked at career development, the value of gaining wider industry experience, and the need to be ready and responsive as change accelerates over the coming years.

The day concluded with examples of what can be achieved through focus and shared learning, including reductions in train crew-related

cancellations and evidence from Scotland of integrated thinking supporting a high-performing, lower-cost railway. These examples gave delegates practical insight into how ambition can translate into measurable improvement.

Closing the conference, thanks were given to all speakers, delegates, sponsors and the CIRO team who made the event possible. WSP, sponsoring the conference for the second-year running, encouraged attendees to continue the conversations beyond the formal programme, meet new people and challenge ideas in the spirit of collaboration that had defined the day.

Rail Ops Conference 2026 showed that while the industry faces significant change, it also has the expertise, commitment and relationships needed to respond positively. For CIRO members, the message was clear: by working together, learning from each other and keeping people at the centre of integration, the railway can continue to build a stronger future. Looking ahead to next year's conference, if you would like to put forward suggestions of topics, please give them here:

marketing@railwayoperators.co.uk

Recordings of all speakers are available on CIRO TV on the members' portal.



Welcoming Alstom & EPRail as new corporate members

CIRO is delighted to welcome Alstom and EPRail as new corporate members, strengthening our community of organisations committed to supporting excellence, professionalism and development across the railway operating sector.

Corporate membership brings together employers, suppliers and industry partners who share a commitment to raising standards, investing in people and supporting continuous professional development. By joining CIRO, organisations become part of a wider network that encourages collaboration and helps individuals at every stage of their railway career access meaningful learning and development opportunities.

ALSTOM

Alstom brings an extraordinary depth of experience and a long-standing presence in the UK and Ireland rail industry. With 37 locations and almost 6,000 employees, it is the UK and Ireland's leading supplier of new trains and train services, as well as a major provider of signalling and rail infrastructure. Its work spans the design, manufacture, testing, servicing and support of railway systems, making it a significant contributor to the continued operation and future development of the network.

Alstom's Derby facility is a cornerstone of the UK rail industry and the only site in the country with capability to design, engineer, build, and test trains for both UK and export markets.

Alongside Derby, the company operates major sites at Crewe, Glasgow Polmadie, Plymouth, Widnes and Old Oak Common in London, as well as depots and offices across the UK and Ireland. This extensive footprint reflects its continued role in supporting rail delivery, innovation and skilled employment.

EPR

The Rail Services Partner

We are equally pleased to welcome EPRail, the trading name of Europhoenix Rail Ltd. Incorporated on 13 April 2023, EPRail is a specialist provider of end-to-end rail solutions for the UK industry, with a focus on the safe and efficient movement of rolling stock. Its services support an essential part of rail operations, helping rolling stock to be moved, managed and delivered in line with the needs of operators, maintainers and wider industry partners.

EPRail's focus on safety, efficiency and practical delivery aligns closely with the values that underpin professional railway operations. As the industry continues to adapt to changing demands, specialist organisations such as EPRail play a valuable role in providing the capability and operational support needed to keep the railway moving.

The addition of Alstom and EPRail further strengthens the breadth and diversity of CIRO's corporate membership. From major international manufacturers and infrastructure providers to specialist operational support businesses, our corporate members reflect the range of expertise required to deliver a safe, reliable and forward-looking railway.

We look forward to working with both organisations, supporting their people through professional development opportunities and welcoming their teams into the wider CIRO community.



CIRO Learning Update: Developing Railway Professionals Across the Industry

At CIRO, we're committed to developing the knowledge, skills and leadership capability that will shape the future of Britain's railway.

Over the past few months, we've celebrated new programme launches, expanded our learning portfolio and opened applications for the next generation of rail professionals. Here's a round-up of the latest developments from the CIRO Learning team.

"CIRO Connect has given me a much broader understanding of the rail industry and the opportunity to learn from industry experts."

— Sara Flowers

CIRO Connect arrives in Manchester

We were delighted to welcome a new cohort of learners in Manchester to our award-winning CIRO Connect programme, with the programme launched on 7 July. Designed for those new to the railway or looking to broaden their understanding of how the rail industry operates.

"Having someone explain concepts in a really engaging and understandable way has been incredibly useful. I'd recommend it to anyone involved in the rail industry."

— Charlie O'Donnell

CIRO Connect provides a practical introduction to the whole railway system through expert-led sessions, interactive workshops and industry guest speakers.

The programme continues to receive outstanding feedback from learners.

"It's helped me gain a better understanding of the railway and how everything fits together."

— Jack Wheelhouse

We're also pleased to confirm that applications remain open for our London cohort. Find out more and secure your place: www.ciro.org/ciro-connect

New Whole System Thinking course completed with the Department for Transport

CIRO has recently completed delivery of its new Whole System Thinking course with the Department for Transport, further demonstrating the growing demand for learning that develops a broader understanding of how Britain's railway operates.

The course explores how infrastructure, operations, engineering and people work together to deliver safe, efficient and reliable railway services. Delegates examine topics including operational safety, communications, infrastructure, workforce planning, rostering and the political, social and economic factors that influence railway operations. Built from a module within CIRO's Diploma in Railway Operations Management, the course has been developed as a standalone programme, allowing organisations to strengthen whole-system thinking across their teams without committing to a full qualification.

Following the success of the initial delivery, we're now exploring future public cohorts. Interested in joining a future programme? Register your interest by emailing: learnserve@railwayoperators.co.uk. We'll keep you informed as new dates become available.

Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers reaches another milestone

CIRO's Operational Leadership for Traincrew Managers programme continues to go from strength to strength.

Developed collaboratively with the Rail Delivery Group and shaped by train operators, industry leaders and trade union representatives, the programme provides a consistent, industry-wide approach to developing one of the railway's most critical operational leadership roles.

The programme has also recently received national recognition, winning the Supplier & Contractor Excellence Award at the Rail Business Awards 2026. The award recognised the programme's innovative, collaborative approach to developing traincrew management capability and its potential to deliver lasting improvements in operational performance across the railway.

Designed specifically for Area Driver Managers, Driver Managers and Depot Managers, the programme combines practical learning, real-world operational scenarios and cross-industry collaboration to strengthen capability in workforce management, operational performance and industrial relations.

As we near the completion of the first phase of delivery, we're looking forward to sharing more about the programme's impact, learner feedback and future rollout plans in a forthcoming edition of the Bulletin.

Find out more about the Rail Business Awards win: <https://www.ciro.org/rail-business-awards-2026-win/>

Applications now open for the Level 4 Passenger Transport Operations Manager Apprenticeship

Applications are now open for the November 2026 intake of CIRO's Level 4 Passenger Transport Operations Manager Apprenticeship.

Build leadership capability with an apprenticeship designed specifically for the rail industry. CIRO's Level 4 programme is fully rail-contextualised, combining practical, real-world learning with the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to lead effectively in a complex, safety-critical environment.

Supported by experienced tutors and coaches throughout, apprentices gain confidence, broaden their operational understanding of the whole rail system and develop the capability to lead people, performance and change across rail.

What you will achieve:



"The apprenticeship had a real impact on my development and career progression... I now lead a team and oversee operations at Britain's busiest station."

— Sara Ashmore Barrios

"The CIRO Level 4 Passenger Transport Operations Manager programme has been truly transformative for both my personal and professional development. This programme did more than develop my skills; it reshaped my mindset, expanded my opportunities and enabled me to become a more impactful leader. It has been a defining foundation in my career journey thus far."

— Maro Sakpere

"The CIRO Level 4 Passenger Transport Operations Manager apprenticeship, with its focus on the whole rail system, is a really good development tool for both new and existing managers and team leaders. I had been on the railway 20 years when I undertook this apprenticeship and still gained lots of useful knowledge. I like the way the CIRO deliver this standard. Teaching sessions are well planned and delivered by rail experts and their learner support is second to none."

— Trevor Bain

If you're an employer looking to develop your future operational leaders, now is the perfect time to nominate an apprentice. Refer an apprentice today: <https://www.ciro.org/level-4/>

Take your railway career further with a CIRO academic programme

Applications are still open for CIRO's 2026 academic programmes, with the application window remaining open until the end of August.

Delivered in partnership with Keele University, CIRO's academic pathway provides railway professionals with an opportunity to gain industry-recognised qualifications while developing the knowledge, confidence and strategic thinking needed to progress their careers.

Whether you're looking to build a solid operational foundation through the Certificate of Higher Education, broaden your knowledge with the Diploma, or develop strategic leadership capability through the BSc in Railway Operations Management, CIRO offers a structured pathway designed specifically for rail professionals.

Our programmes combine academic excellence with practical railway application, allowing learners to apply their knowledge immediately within their organisations while gaining professional recognition and joining a community of more than 14,000 rail professionals. Applications close at the end of August. Apply today: <https://www.ciro.org/academic-application/>

Developing the rail's leaders of tomorrow

CIRO and Keele University are intending to launch a new part-time MBA for rail leaders in January 2027, creating a new development opportunity for aspiring and established leaders across the rail industry.

Building on the success of the previous levy-funded programme, the two-year MBA is being developed to help participants strengthen their strategic, commercial and leadership capability while continuing to apply their learning in the workplace.

The programme is expected to combine flexible learning with practical workplace application, including two teaching days on-campus at Keele University for each module (with 10 modules in total), live online learning, and a substantial company-based project focused on organisational impact.

Participants will explore key leadership and management themes such as strategy, organisational performance, financial decision-making, digital transformation and evidence-based decision making, alongside specialist rail-focused content covering railway systems integration, comparative railway operations and industry-specific commercial and operational challenges.

Designed to help organisations strengthen succession planning and build senior leadership capability, the programme will support leaders to navigate an increasingly complex and changing rail environment.

The course can be either employer-funded or self-funded. Individuals considering self-funding may also wish to review the Lifelong Learning Entitlement information online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lifelong-learning-entitlement-lle-overview/lifelong-learning-entitlement-overview>

At this stage, CIRO is seeking expressions of interest from organisations and individuals who may wish to join the inaugural January 2027 cohort.

Register your interest by emailing: learning@railwayoperators.co.uk



Area Events Round-up

CIRO Area Councils continue to deliver outstanding events, creating opportunities for members to learn and network. Whether enjoying social heritage railway days, networking with fellow professionals, or gaining exclusive behind-the-scenes access to railway operations, members benefit from a diverse range of experiences. We extend sincere thanks to our dedicated volunteers, whose hard work and commitment make these opportunities possible.

Progress Rail Depot Visit Gives Members Behind-the-Scenes Insight

Members experienced an energising North East Area Council visit to **Progress Rail's Roberts Road Maintenance Depot in Doncaster**, gaining a valuable behind-the-scenes view of locomotive maintenance and railway engineering.

Hosted by **Scott Lawton, Depot Manager**, the visit began with an introduction to Progress Rail, a Caterpillar subsidiary focusing on rail infrastructure and locomotive manufacturing, including the Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) brand. Members toured the state-of-the-art facility, which undertakes a

wide range of maintenance activities for Class 66 locomotives and rolling stock, from wheel changes to complete engine rebuilds.

During the tour, members explored key depot facilities including the wheel lathe, sand replenishment facility, load bank and maintenance buildings, providing a valuable opportunity to appreciate railway operations activities rarely seen by the public.

In addition to the wider system-view of railway operations, connections were made through professional networking and knowledge sharing. A great example of this was when colleagues from Northern and Southern shared best practice about a DMU that they both had experience of – this is excellent to see and shows the fundamental benefits of CIRO.

The North East Area Council thanks go to Scott and Progress Rail for hosting this superb event.

Members Explore, Learn and Connect Across CIRO Area Councils

Here's what else has been going on...

In the North West & Wales, members gained behind-the-scenes insights during a visit to Sandhills Railway Operations Centre. Members explored the operations and simulator facilities, learning about how the Merseyrail network is managed, providing valuable understanding of the challenges and complexities of operating a modern railway.

Area Councils also brought members and their families together through a series of successful family day events. In North West & Wales, members enjoyed a day at Cambrian Heritage Railways, combining heritage railway experiences with informal networking and community-building. The Midlands Area Council hosted its annual family day at the Severn Valley Railway, where attendees explored one of the UK's most popular heritage railways while enjoying a relaxed day of travel and fellowship. Also at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, the North East Area Council hosted a memorable day through the picturesque Brontë countryside, travelling aboard a vintage steam train in beautifully restored Victorian-era coaches.

Elsewhere, in Ireland, members attended visits to the Mallow Level Crossing Control Centre, Signalling Location and Driver Simulator facility.

Members explored how modernised level crossing operations are managed across the network, while also gaining insight into signalling systems, driver training technologies, and the important role Mallow plays as a key railway junction. Also, in the South West & Wales, members gained insight into the modern signalling, operations management and railway control systems at the Thames Valley Signalling Centre in Didcot, learning how passenger and freight services are managed across the busy Great Western route.

Together, these events showcase the breadth of activities delivered by CIRO Area Councils, from technical learning and operational visits, heritage experiences and more social events. They continue to provide members with valuable professional development, industry insight and opportunities to connect with colleagues across the railway community.

Missed an event or looking to strengthen your knowledge in a specific POD area? Catch up anytime on CIRO TV via the [Members' Portal](#). There's plenty more to look forward to - visit the [CIRO website](#) to discover upcoming events and opportunities within the Institution.

"Thanks again for organising such a meaningful event. It provided me with in-depth insights into railway operations, including the work carried out behind the scenes and the operational challenges involved". - Shanmuga Velu



Area Council Case Study

Supporting Members, Building Connections: Heather Mackenzie's Contribution to the CIRO North West & Wales Area Council



With 36 years in the railway industry, Heather Mackenzie has witnessed significant change across the sector.

Today, while working in a zero-hours role, she continues to make a valuable contribution through her involvement with the CIRO North West & Wales Area Council, where she serves as Treasurer and helps organise events.

A Welcoming and Supportive Environment

One of the things Heather appreciates most about CIRO is the support available from both the CIRO team and the wider Area Council community.

"There is a lot of support from the team at Stafford, and everyone is made to feel welcome."

Connecting Members with the Institution

Heather believes Area Councils play a vital role in connecting members with the Institution, helping to build engagement, strengthen relationships and ensure members remain part of the wider CIRO community.

Thinking About Getting Involved?

When asked what advice she would give to members considering joining an Area Council, Heather's answer is simple: **"Just do it!!"**

Getting involved with CIRO is a rewarding way to expand your network, develop new skills, and give something back to the railway community.

Looking Ahead

Heather's current professional priority is to secure a more stable position within the railway industry while continuing to contribute to a sector she has proudly served for more than three decades.

Outside of work and her Area Council activities, she enjoys reading and travelling to Scotland to visit family, a pastime that often includes a rail journey.

Inspired by Heather's Experience?

Joining a CIRO Area Council is a fantastic way to connect with fellow professionals, support the community and help shape member engagement in your region. If you've ever considered becoming more involved, Heather's advice is clear: **"Just do it"**. Email: events@railwayoperators.co.uk.

Inspired by the CIRO Community

Heather's decision to get involved with the North West & Wales Area Council was influenced by all the good things she read and heard from other members. Having seen the positive impact CIRO was making across the industry, Heather was keen to get involved, support fellow professionals and contribute to the community.

Bringing People Together

As a member of the North West & Wales Area Council, Heather has taken an active role in organising events that create opportunities for members to connect, learn and share experiences. **"I've organised a few events, which I love doing."**

The Reward of Networking and Supporting Others

For Heather, one of the most rewarding aspects of being involved with CIRO is the opportunity to build relationships and help others discover the benefits of professional membership.

"The biggest benefit is the networking, but I enjoy telling people about CIRO and breaking down the barriers that stop people joining."

Through her involvement, Heather enjoys encouraging others to engage with CIRO and access the opportunities available through membership, professional development and industry networking.

