



Shirley Connell and Stephanie Young at Go North East

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## **On the road to success – Go North East celebrates its inspiring females with senior appointments**

Ahead of International Women's Day (Friday 8 March 2019), Go North East has announced a series of appointments to the company's senior team, boosting its pool of inspiring female talent.

A recent restructure to bring together its regional north and south divisions has paved the way for three committed female team members to step into senior leadership positions that will help the region's biggest bus operator

realise its future growth plans.

**Shirley Connell**, who marked 25 years with Go North East in 2018, has taken on the new role of head of operations, with all depot managers and the service delivery centre reporting into her. Last year, she won the Leadership category at the annual Team GNE Awards for her unwavering commitment and dedication in helping the company meet its operational and commercial goals. From her first role in the company as a mini-bus driver, which equipped her with essential grass-roots experience, Shirley has worked her way up into the senior team. In her role at Gateshead Riverside, Shirley has twice led the team to success at the annual Team GNE Awards, winning 'Depot of the Year' in 2016 and 2018.

**Sophie Moorby** is one of Go North East's rising stars and, at 23 years old, became the youngest depot manager in the company's 105-year history, looking after 146 team members. A former graduate trainee, Sophie has a breadth of experience across the business, flying the flag for female achievement, and earning a place on company-wide steering groups to deliver major campaigns. Guided in her career by mentor Shirley Connell, in 2016 Sophie was bronze winner in the Young Manager of the Year category at the UK Bus Awards. Her ambitions led her to a role at Arriva Darlington as general manager, but she returned to Go North East on 4 March as operations manager at Gateshead Riverside.

Compliance and Risk Manager **Stephanie Young** continues to make her mark as in the senior management team in a recently-expanded role that reflects her transformational role in the business. After joining the award-winning company as its first in-house occupational health advisor in 2000, she has driven a change agenda that has introduced critical risk management processes and reduced motor incidents by 10%. Stephanie has also shaped health and wellbeing support services for around 2,100 employees, boosting staff retention and team morale. In her new position, Stephanie will continue to improve the female versus male ratio for employment as Go North East's 'Bus Women's Champion' and will carry on in her role on the North East Chamber of Commerce's Women's Advisory Board.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director of Go North East said: "Shirley, Stephanie and Sophie have been recognised not only for getting the job done, but being role models, leading by example, and championing our vision, beliefs and attitudes, which are at the very heart of the company.

“While we operate in a traditionally male-dominated industry, having a diverse, inclusive environment is something we take very seriously. Our workforce must reflect the communities we serve, to allow us to successfully deliver on our customer promise of ‘journeys taken care of’. We hope these latest senior appointments will encourage others to aim high – no matter what industry they set their sights on. They demonstrate how, with hard work and dedication, the sky is the limit.”

For the first time in 20 years, Go North East recently enlisted a female recruit as part of the newest intake to its unique bus and coach mechanical and electrical engineering apprenticeship. Melissa Millington, aged 19, has embarked upon the four-year course at the bus operator’s Chester-le-Street depot.

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[Go North East website](#)