



Melissa Millington at Go North East's Chester-le-Street depot

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Six new recruits including first female engineering apprentice in 20 years appointed to award-winning team

The region's biggest bus company, Go North East has welcomed its first female apprentice in two decades, to embark on its unique bus and coach mechanical and electrical engineering apprenticeship.

[Hand-picked from over 500 applicants, Melissa Millington](#), joins six new recruits in the company's most recent apprentice intake. Melissa will undertake training and development alongside Go North East's engineering

team based at its Chester-le-Street depot, building the specialist technical skills needed to maintain the company's high safety and quality standards for its fleet.

The 19-year old from Chester-le-Street, said: "There's still people in society with the outdated view that women are only able to do certain roles but I can't wait to prove that we can excel in engineering. As long as I'm working hard and progressing my career, these kinds of opinions don't bother me - I'm proud to be a female engineering apprentice at Go North East and hope others will be inspired to apply in future."

Go North East has also appointed Lindan Middleton as apprentice stores keeper – this is the first time in 20 years that the company has recruited to the specialist position. Based from the Saltmeadows Road site, the 16-year-old from Sunderland is relishing learning on the job, opting for a more vocational role over full-time education. Learning how to book orders in, feeding parts to the engineering teams across the depots and generally ensuring the fleet is road-ready after paint jobs and upgrades, he said: "I didn't feel sixth form was right for me, so wanted to try something more skills-based – I am really enjoying the apprenticeship and being hands-on at Go North East."

Run in partnership with Gateshead College, Go North East's bespoke programme will see Melissa, Lindan and the latest batch of budding engineers train on-the-job alongside the operator's expert teams. Mentors provide a one-to-one learning environment, while value-added modules throughout the four-year scheme ensure each apprentice qualifies with the most relevant and competitive skills to future-proof their careers.

A total of 30 apprentices at various levels of training, are currently on Go North East's award-winning programme. Widely renowned for nurturing fresh talent and plugging growing skills gaps in the bus and coach industry, earlier this year it was named a Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer by the National Apprenticeship Service. It was also recognised at the recent Gateshead College Edge Awards which celebrated businesses committed to developing a skilled workforce through apprenticeships.

Almost 90% of Go North East's engineering workforce started their careers as apprentices, including head of engineering, Colin Barnes. He added: "Despite being our only female engineering apprentice at the moment, Melissa joins

an increasing number of female Go North East team members, who cover all levels of seniority across our different depots and departments. Many have been with us for their entire careers – committing over 40 years’ service.

“As the region’s third largest employer, we endorse a ‘job for life’ ethos and believe giving local young people opportunities to carve successful, sustainable careers – regardless of their gender, is essential. I look forward to supporting Melissa, Lindan and the rest of the apprentices as they advance their skills and knowledge and welcome them as an integral part of Go North East’s engineering workforce.”

For more information about Go North East, visit www.gonortheast.co.uk.

[Go North East website](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk)