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## Go North East shaping the future of skilled workers

Go North East, the region's largest transport provider, is set to grow the number of apprentices employed within the company as the bus network continues to expand.

Currently, the company is training 18 apprentices across various engineering disciplines. These apprentices are based across multiple sites including Sunderland, Consett, Washington, Riverside, and Percy Main, reflecting the company's commitment to developing skilled professionals across the region.

In partnership with Gateshead College, Go North East is set to recruit another

cohort of ten apprentices in 2024. Maria Bainbridge, Head of People at Go North East, comments: "Investing in new apprentices each year not only increases our skills base but also secures a strong pipeline of talent for our future. It's clear that the value apprentices bring to our company is immense, as we continue to offer opportunities that foster their growth and development."

Go North East is part of The Go-Ahead Group, a national bus and rail group which ranks 5<sup>th</sup> on the Department for Education's list of 'Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers'. Across the UK, Go-Ahead expects to hire 850 apprentices to work as bus drivers, train drivers, and engineers during 2024.

Highlighting the success of the apprenticeship program, National Apprenticeship Week (4-8 February) puts a spotlight on individuals like Philip Hodgson, a third-year Mechanical Electrical Engineering Apprentice, who has thrived under the company's support. Transitioning from the car industry, Philip has embraced the opportunities at Go North East, acquiring skills that have set him up for a promising career in engineering.

Philip said: "I can't learn and take in information by sitting in a classroom. So, for me, my apprenticeship with Go North East means that I'm learning in a practical environment, which is so much better! Learning a trade means that I'll always be able to use these skills for the rest of my life, it's invaluable!"

Similarly, Oliver Jobson and Dan Lee, both apprentices at Go North East, share their positive experiences. Oliver looks forward to a lifelong career in engineering, thanks to the exceptional training and supportive environment at Go North East. Dan, transitioning from the education sector, appreciates the practical knowledge and insider expertise he has gained, which he believes surpasses traditional classroom learning.

The growth in apprenticeships supports ambitious plans to transform buses in the region, which are being delivered in partnership with Nexus, Transport North East, Durham County Council, and Northumberland County Council. Millions of pounds of funding is being pumped into buses as part of the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan.

**Notes to editors:**

Go North East runs a network of bus routes across the North East region including Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham and surrounding areas.

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The Go-Ahead Group is one of the UK's leading providers of public transport, enabling more than a billion passenger journeys each year on its bus and rail services. Go-Ahead places great importance on partnership, adopting a collaborative approach with governments, local communities and strategic partners; developing and operating services that create long-term value for all. For more information about Go Ahead Group visit [www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com)

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