



**Go**North East  
[www.simplygo.com](http://www.simplygo.com)

*Moving with our people...*

Corporate Responsibility Report 2011

**Go**North East  
[www.simplygo.com](http://www.simplygo.com)

We provide the largest and busiest bus network in the region and we are totally committed to running our business with integrity, listening to our stakeholders, focusing on our customers, innovating in all aspects of our service and taking responsibility for the role we play in our communities and the environment we operate in.



We're a part of the  
**Go-Ahead**  
Group

[www.simplygo.com](http://www.simplygo.com)

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## ABOUT GO NORTH EAST

A passion for the service and endless innovation in every part of it are the twin engines driving Go North East's growth in passenger volumes and satisfaction levels. Refreshing conventional approaches as much as introducing new technology in the communication, pricing and delivery of our services across the region, we have developed a reputation for working with public and private sector partners, and delivering value for customers in ways that challenge conventional thinking about the provision of bus services.

## 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

- Continued passenger growth in a difficult economy
- Growing passenger satisfaction with our innovative service approach
- Successful introduction and widespread take up of Go-Ahead's smartcard, the key
- Outstanding performance by our employees
- Further improvements in environmental measures
- A rich and rewarding involvement with our communities

## WHERE WE OPERATE

Go North East is the leading bus operator in North East England, with 665 buses and over 2,100 employees.



MESSAGE FROM  
PETER HUNTLEY,  
MANAGING  
DIRECTOR



I am proud to welcome you to our seventh annual Corporate Responsibility Statement. In this report we set out our engagement with the wider community and economy of the North East and explain our wider contribution beyond our 'day job' of taking 80 million passengers a year safely to their destinations.

The last two years have presented many challenges including two exceptionally bad winters, economic recession and significant cuts in public spending. Such problems also present opportunities and the winter disruptions demonstrated this with our use of Facebook and Twitter to keep customers right up to date with what was happening. With over 39,000 subscribers this is now a permanent part of our communications.

Listening to customers is very important to us and we have continued with consultation exercises with our customers, with full explanations of our plans, open consultation and the publication and sharing of consultation results. Our website is central to this open communication and customer use of the site continues to grow substantially. Several services have been improved over the last year with proposals often amended to reflect passenger comments. Our commitment to allow all Tyne & Wear Senior Citizens a ticket that enables them to enjoy the longer summer days with cheap travel before the start of the concession scheme at 0930 exemplifies our responding to customer requests.

Engagement extends well beyond our customers and our efforts embrace youngsters in broader community efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour under the 'It's Your Choice' programme and working with the Prince's Trust to give disadvantaged young people a better start in life. A wide range of local charities are offered practical and financial support. Direct engagement with groups representing disabled people helps focus our efforts as the most accessible transport provider in the region.

In Spring 2011 we launched 'the key', an exciting new Smartcard payment system, which offers even greater value and flexibility for bus users, and will support the upgrading of integrated ticketing

systems with Metro and other providers. We have revolutionised our fares discount for young people with an extension of 'child' fares up to age 18 and a specially discounted 80p flat fare off-peak to provide mobility for young people.

Go Ahead remains the only UK transport operator to achieve accreditation by the Carbon Trust. This sets us a very high benchmark and I am pleased to say that Go North East has the youngest and cleanest fleet in the region and is now making our clean air credentials even more transparent with our 'red kite mark' emissions indicators. In 2010 we introduced our cleanest diesel buses yet on the prestige 'Quaylink' contract in Newcastle and Gateshead and in 2011 our first hybrid diesel/electric buses in Sunderland.

We are also taking the environmental message 'home' with a package of encouragements to local families to leave the car behind in partnership with the 'Smarter Choices' campaign. A pilot project in Low Fell has provided personal advice to residents on how to do this free and reduced travel offers designed to encourage people to try the bus instead. We will be taking this campaign forward in 2011 with a new 'Scrap a Banger' scheme, to introduce car users to our 'Lifestyle' package combining increased use of public transport at the best possible prices with favourable car club and cycle hire deals.

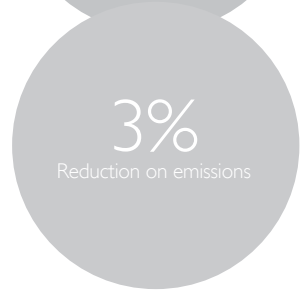
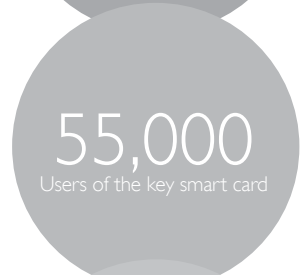
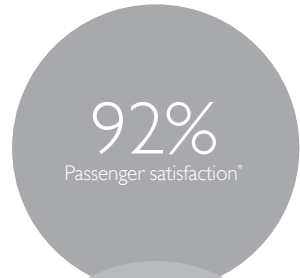
We take our commitment to ensure access to everyone in the community very seriously and have one of the largest 'easy access' bus fleets in the country. We uniquely guarantee access and arrange for a free taxi if we are unable to transport a wheelchair user. In response to concerns on reliability of some of our older wheelchair ramps we have begun a programme of ramp replacement. Accessibility issues are not just about the buses themselves and our efforts include staff training initiatives, supporting the 'Bridge Card' scheme for communicating individual needs and improving access to information.

Last, but by no means least, we pride ourselves in our relationship with our 2,100 employees. We are passionate about sharing the benefits of our success with staff and enhance rewards to reflect performance for safe driving, good customer care, detection of fraud, fuel efficient driving and long service. We operate what we believe is the best staff discount scheme anywhere in the transport sector; contribute substantially to attractive pension schemes, encourage employee involvement in all levels of the business through face-to-face and web-based employee forums, reward staff for suggestions and engage positively with Trade Unions in protecting the interests of their members. Above all we are a people business and we will continue to strive to give the best possible service to the people of North East England.

### Peter Huntley

Managing Director

## OUR 2011 PERFORMANCE



\* Passenger Focus Report

# SAFETY

## A proactive approach

100%  
of fleet have CCTV

Safety training maintained  
at a high level

We are proud of an excellent safety record and maintain a culture of vigilance, open reporting and a proactive approach to safety throughout the organisation.

Safety training across the range of roles and skills is maintained at a high level and during the year the level of resources dedicated to risk assessment and accident prevention has been increased further. Additional man hours have been provided for with extra staff recruited to enable the rolling programme of risk assessment across the company to maintain momentum whilst refreshing earlier assessments.

Passenger and employee safety have benefitted from continued investment in CCTV. Coverage throughout our bus fleet was achieved several years ago so investment is now concentrated on upgrades to improve image quality and retention. Our dedicated team of CCTV co-ordinators, led by a senior manager, has been invaluable in accident investigation and prevention whilst contributing significantly to community safety via their work with Northumbria and Durham Police.

Cross departmental accident prevention teams at each depot regularly monitor incidents and contribute to reduction measures. For the coming year we have set ourselves a reduction target in road traffic accidents of 10% by building on the efforts of the depot prevention teams and providing route risk avoidance guides to drivers.

Our professional in-house occupational health team continues to be a major strength in maintaining safety. The all round health of operatives is clearly a significant safety factor and our team have developed increasingly proactive programmes to promote the health and well being of our workforce. This includes campaigns promoting exercise, health and well being surveys, and discounted access to gyms and leisure centres.

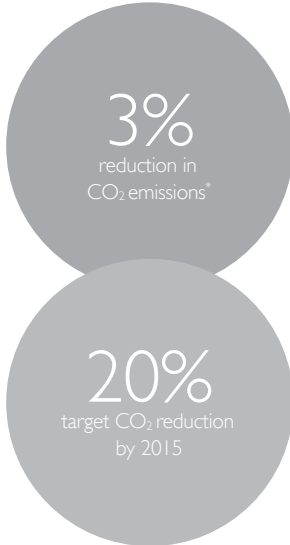
Safety information and training is backed up with investment in the right equipment being available and in use in our workshops. This includes specific safety equipment such as protective glasses and high visibility clothing, or the tools for the job itself. New workshop health and safety campaigns are proving effective in ensuring a strong culture of prevention is developed.



Developing safety awareness early on amongst our maintenance teams is given a high priority.

# ENVIRONMENT

## A real focus



\* Per passenger journey since 2007/8



The high profile Quaylink contract consistently delivers Euro 5 emissions benefits.

Our emphasis this year and in the coming year is on delivering our action plans to contribute to the achievement of Go-Ahead's targeted 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger journey by 2015. This will include reducing fuel usage, monitoring and managing driver performance through vehicle telematics and reducing site energy whilst growing passenger numbers.

Energy forums with energy champions are in place at each location, focussing on consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction through local initiatives, and engaging staff to take ownership and develop a team ethos to tackle these issues.

Site energy usage has been addressed leading to reductions in fuel, gas and electricity consumption. Simple housekeeping measures such as Switch Off campaigns aimed at staff have complemented investment in smart lighting systems and energy management systems.

Telematics equipment is now fitted to our vehicles to monitor engine idling, over revving, harsh acceleration, harsh braking, and over speeding, and provides warning lights to drivers whilst recording individual performance.

Fuel reduction benefits have been achieved from reducing idling and more frequent tyre pressure checks. We now aim to reduce consumption by 2% in the coming year and are actively exploring areas such as:

- Tyre technology for improvement in rolling resistance.
- Wheel/axle alignment.
- Automatic idle shut off.
- Acceleration limiter fitment.
- Vehicle performance matching to route topography.
- The installation of a spill free fuelling system.
- An evaluation of hybrid technologies and new engine cooling systems.

Our fleet profile has seen continued increases in Euro 5 vehicles with notable contracts such as the Quaylink service in Newcastle and Gateshead and the Npower Rainton Bridge/ Red Arrows service. We are now operating our first hybrid diesel/electric buses for the City of Sunderland and University of Sunderland on the Sunderland Connect contract.

A significant reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> has so far been achieved. Since 2007/8 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per passenger journey have reduced by 3%. At present, we have achieved 0.822 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger journey, and are targeting a further reduction of 0.144 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger by 2015.

# PASSENGERS

Innovation continues

92%  
customer satisfaction rating

55,000  
customers have the key



The key mobile app delivers information and ticketing into the hands of bus users on the move.

This year, Passenger Focus independently measured customer satisfaction and an extremely encouraging 92% satisfaction rating has been reported.

Go North East has pushed the boundaries of established practice on customer involvement, extending its customer consultation model to involve even more stakeholders in plans for services before decisions are concluded. Bus Users UK (BUUK) described the company as a "prominent operator that has an excellent record of consulting with its passengers".

Conflicting reports of public sector cuts have made this a difficult time for bus users. It was encouraging to get recognition from BUUK for our efforts to provide clear reassurance to customers. Those affected by service changes made by Durham County Council as well as those who were not were directly targeted in a communications campaign. Early publication of overviews of changes and advance distribution of timetables continue to be vital, if traditional, activities.

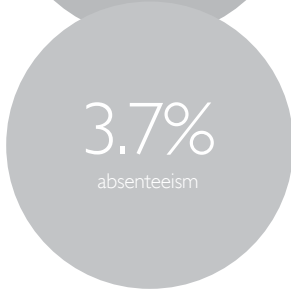
Less traditional has been our move into mobile website design, followed by mobile information and ticketing apps. This suite of services from the key mobile follows our successful roll-out of Go-Ahead's smartcard, the key, ticketing system in May. 55,000 customers hold key cards and Go North East is aiming to double that in the year ahead. Targets for Facebook were exceeded with almost 40,000 'likes' making this one of the most successful bus pages in the country.

The money-saving benefits of the key have been supported by a range of initiatives to deliver extra value to customers through simplified fare zones and route pricing. Sales of Route Savers and Town and City Savers have, with the rejuvenated Cheap Day Returns, grown significantly, underlining the need in this economic climate to keep innovating in more conventional ticketing whilst driving forward the use of new technologies.

Service innovation continues alongside our route branding strategy to deliver genuine customer benefit and has led to media comment on some of our local brands by everything from *The Times* to Chris Evans' Radio 2 show! Customer feedback remains overwhelmingly positive and the year ahead will see new brands developed with even more customer input.

# EMPLOYEES

Highly valued



At Go North East, we value the contribution of our employees extremely highly. It is a key contributor to our success. Without the ideas and support of our staff, innovations for customers would simply not progress, our culture of continuous improvement would have stalled and our community and stakeholder involvement would be falling flat.

Tight cost control continues to be important at Go North East, but within its constraints, we offer competitive terms to staff. Rewards and incentives are constantly being redeveloped to reflect the developing priorities of the business. For example, in fuel efficiency and environmental performance, a new bonus structure has been introduced and our gold standard rewards drivers who deliver the very best in customer service.

We back these measures up with a benefits package that is as good as any in the industry; provide the support of a professional, in-house occupational health team, and retain our Investor in People status through our commitment to the training and communications opportunities that we offer.

Recognition is a priority. From 40 years unbroken safe driving to life saving heroics, from staggering work in the community to dedication to going the extra mile for colleagues and customers. Every year, our staff awards and long service nights provide us with heroes to cheer once more. We have also celebrated our staff's dedication and commitment during the severe winter with a family day out at Beamish Museum and a night out on the Tyne's favourite ferry boat. This year has been a remarkable one for the company and the contribution from our staff has been little short of stunning.



Peter Huntley joins Matty Hampson to celebrate a remarkable 40 years safe driving.

## COMMUNITY

Accessibility high on the agenda

100%

of regular service network low floor and ramp equipped

Go North East has an established community investment programme with a range of grants supporting groups and individuals within the communities served by our network. We are proud of the tradition amongst our employees for supporting community and charity activities. This year we moved the two together by giving ownership of the company's community fund to employee representatives to determine where our support will go in the coming years.

We are also involved in programmes that have a more direct business rationale, such as our work with the Prince's Trust which has provided development opportunities for young managers who found their active involvement in those programmes immensely valuable. Working with Keyfund has been instrumental in spreading the word about the key smart card and new fares for under 18's to thousands of young people through major musical events and local programmes.

Accessibility remains high on our agenda and our easy access wheelchair guarantee provides the reassurance of free taxi back up if for any reason the wheelchair cannot be accommodated on one of our network services. 100% of our network journeys are now provided by accessible buses.

From a safety and behavioural viewpoint, the company has worked within the 'It's Your Choice' programme alongside public sector partners such as Nexus. The programme aims to reduce anti-social behaviour on and around public transport.

The most significant community contribution of the year; however; was the effort our staff have made to keep services running through the prolonged period of severe weather when record low temperatures were experienced in the North East last winter. Individual heroics and collective determination saw services being run and customers being kept informed against impossible odds. The positive response from customers, the wider community, business and political leaders left us in no doubt as to the community-focussed qualities of the 2,100 people we employ.



Lady Elsie Robson kicks off the X25 route, branded to promote the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation.



	2010/2011	2009/2010	2008/2009
<b>Safety</b>			
Bus accidents (per million miles)	25	23.45	24.93
Fleet with CCTV (%)	100	100	100
<b>Environment</b>			
Carbon emissions per passenger journey (kg)	0.82	0.82	0.82
Site energy savings			
– Gas consumption (kwh)	4,137	4,486	4,378
– Electricity consumption (kwh)	2,297	2,273	2,293
Fuel efficiency			
– Miles per gallon	7.21	7.51	7.48
<b>Passengers</b>			
Number of journeys running to schedule (%)	93	93.9	93.43
Total fleet with low floor (%)	63.2	84.7	82
Web sales (%)	1.2	4	–
<b>Employees</b>			
Number of employees	2,032	2,019	2,059
Turnover rate (%)	10	10	10
Absence rate (%)	3.7	4	4
Number of staff training days	4,027	3,861	10,928
Diversity by ethnic group (%)			
– Asian, black or other origin	0	3	2
– White	100	97	98
Diversity by gender (%)			
– Women	8	8	8
– Men	92	92	92
Average length of service (yrs)	12yr	11yr 3m	11yr 4m
<b>Community</b>			
Charitable giving and investment (£)	9,800	14,010	13,200
Number of stakeholder events	60	31*	n/a

\* First year of data collection.

For information on the full Group data please visit our corporate website [www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com)

# We're a part of the **Go-Ahead** Group

You can find out more about Go North East by visiting our website [www.simplygo.co.uk](http://www.simplygo.co.uk) and more information on how Go North East manages its corporate responsibilities can be found by visiting [www.go-ahead.com/responsibility](http://www.go-ahead.com/responsibility)

If you have any comments, views or ideas on how we might improve, or have any thoughts on other issues that we should address in this report, please write to:

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**BUREAU**  
**VERITAS**

## Verification of Corporate Responsibility data

For the third year Bureau Veritas UK Ltd has worked with the Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) to verify and to provide an independent opinion on selected corporate responsibility (CR) key performance indicators (KPI) data contained within the Go-Ahead Group's Corporate Responsibility Report 2011. The information and data reviewed for this verification process relates to the reporting period 1st of July 2010 to the 2nd of July 2011. The verification incorporated site visits, interviews, document review and checking of Group and Operating Company data.

The full Bureau Veritas verification statement is available in Go-Ahead's Corporate Responsibility Report and at <http://www.go-ahead.com/responsibility.aspx>

This report was put together by The Go-Ahead Group and designed and produced by Black Sun plc, London.

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