

Rail Transportation Newsletter

March 2025



A Review of 2024

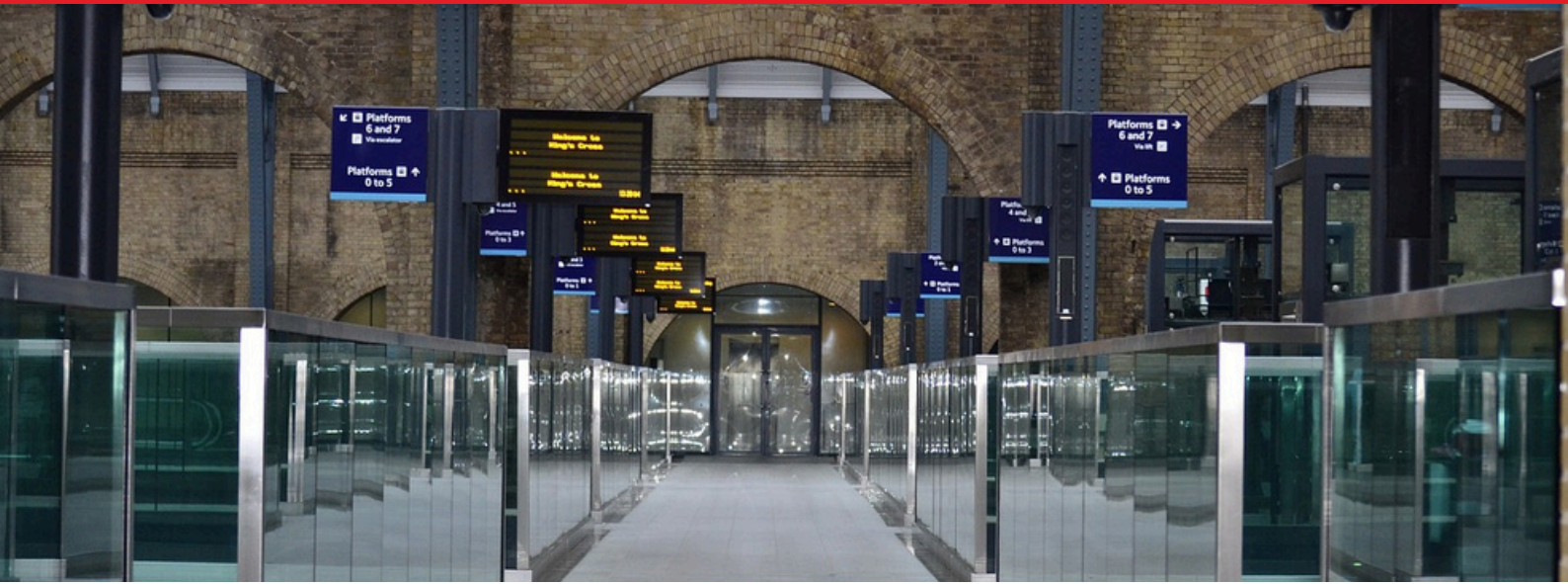
Reflecting on 2024 and looking ahead, what skills will be essential as rail services transition back to public ownership by 2027?

Interview with the Regional Fleet Train Manager at EMR

We sat down with Mark Dickinson as he talks to us about his first 2 years in the role.

Women in Rail Outreach

An insight into the Never Mind The Gap scheme and how it is benefitting women and the rail industry.



Welcome to the first edition of the Rail Transportation Newsletter

Ganymede is excited to launch its Transportation newsletter, dedicated to keeping you informed on the latest trends and developments within the rail operations sector. Each edition will feature exclusive interviews with industry leaders, offering valuable insights into their areas of expertise and their pivotal roles in ensuring the smooth running of the UK rail network.

This publication will celebrate the achievements of top performers and provide key updates on sector developments and labour market trends.

The newsletter aims to highlight the contributions made across the rail sector, share industry knowledge, and foster collaboration in addressing the challenges associated with managing the 1.7 billion journeys undertaken on the UK rail network each year.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH

MARK DICKINSON EAST MIDLANDS RAILWAY REGIONAL FLEET TRAIN PRESENTATION MANAGER

Introducing the new “In Conversation With” section, featuring discussions with industry leaders who share insights into their experiences, challenges, and contributions to the rail sector.

Mark Dickinson, Regional Fleet Manager at EMR, joins as the first guest in this series. Cleanliness on trains has become an area of growing importance, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for robust cleanliness standards has become integral to daily operations, and Mark provides an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the changes that have been implemented.

What does your role consist of?

“Train presentation is exactly what it says on the can.

Our primary job is to clean trains and ensure they go into service in the best possible condition for our customers and stakeholders. Our team varies in size, with sites across the country where we provide train presentation services.

I ensure we meet our standards and targets while keeping our teams trained, compliant, and working to their full potential. This involves focusing on current operations while also planning for future improvements in areas like innovation and development. At the heart of it all are the people who work for us.

They do a tough job, and my focus is on supporting them—ensuring they have the right mindset, that their well-being is prioritised, and that they are equipped to perform at their best.”

Any achievements / highlights within train presentation for 2024?

“I joined the business around two years ago, and at that time, train presentation didn’t really exist; it was part of the fleet function.

In the last 18 months to two years, we’ve developed a formal department with its own structure, including management systems and procedures. This has created an environment where people share ideas and feel confident in what they are doing.

Despite the challenges of implementing big changes, we’ve achieved a lot in a short period of time. For example, we’ve seen a 20% increase in units and trains in the East Midlands fleet, and we’ve found ways to manage that.

While it’s still a work in progress, we’ve made great strides. In just 18 months, the whole management team, including Simon Kelly, Head of our function, has accomplished a lot.”

What are the key challenges you have faced or regularly face within train presentation?

“One of the key challenges is adapting new ideas and concepts to fit into a very old system of work.

Coming from an industrial background, the railway was a shock to the system—it operates very differently and within its own parameters.

It's fine to come in with new ideas and say, "we're going to do it this way," but that doesn't necessarily mean it will work. Challenging the status quo takes longer than expected. However, I think we've done well so far, and the culture shift is starting. In the next 12–18 months, we should be heading in the direction we want."

Ganymede and EMR have enjoyed a strong working relationship over the years. What has been the key benefit of this partnership to your role?

"Ganymede's workforce solutions and staffing have been a massive help. They have supported us by providing additional resources, and a big part of what we do relies on temporary recruitment.

Ganymede has played a key role in this by ensuring due diligence is carried out upfront, assessing individuals to ensure they are comfortable with what we're trying to achieve and our expectations. This has made the process seamless, with new staff ready to enter the training environment and integrate into the team. Compliance has been fantastic, and they fit in easily, coming in without preconceptions and fully understanding how we operate and what we want to achieve. This is down to Ganymede and the processes they use to prepare them."

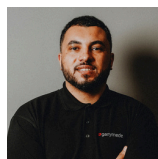
What's next for train presentation in 2025?

"It's about identifying incremental changes we can make going forward and exploring how we can utilise Ganymede's services more effectively, potentially across the entire function, not just within my sector. As a fairly new team and function within EMR, it's important to ensure the fit continues, providing resources for our stakeholders and passengers while also maintaining the resources we need to succeed."

Any final comments?

"From my perspective, when I joined this industry, there was a prevailing mindset among the train presentation crew and carriage cleaners, that they were "just cleaners". Over the last 18 months, I've worked hard to change that mindset and culture, and I will continue to drive this message in the years to come. These individuals underpin the service we provide. Without their efforts, the rest of the business would likely struggle to function effectively."

Ganymede extends its thanks to Mark for taking the time to participate in this interview. Mark regularly shares his insights into effective people management and train presentation initiatives on LinkedIn - connect with him [here](#).



Michael Dobson
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Thank you to Mark Dickinson for participating in the first edition of the 'In Conversation With' series.

It is hoped that this insight into the industry has been valuable. This series will be a regular feature in the Transportation Newsletter, providing expert perspectives on key topics and emerging trends across the supply chain.

Should you want to take part in the next issue, please contact Charlotte Cruise at charlotte.cruise@ganymedesolutions.co.uk or Michael Dobson at michael.dobson@ganymedesolutions.co.uk

WOMEN IN RAIL OUTREACH

Ganymede recognises the importance of diversity and views the rail industry as a sector where women can make a significant impact. While female representation has improved, with the latest NSAR statistics showing an increase from 16% to 17.4% in 2024, further progress is still needed.

As a proud supporter of Women in Rail, Ganymede actively promotes initiatives like the Never Mind the Gap (NMTG) programme, which encourages women currently out of work to explore career opportunities within the rail sector. Charlotte Cruise, Client Relationship Manager and active member of Women in Rail, has been instrumental in this effort, recently supporting the launch of the first NMTG programme in the Leeds area.

Leeds 2024 Launch

Ganymede partnered with Network Rail, LNER, Northern, and TransPennine Express to deliver the two-week Never Mind The Gap programme, aimed at promoting careers in the rail industry for women.

The programme provided participants with the opportunity to experience the various roles available in the rail sector and encouraged them to explore potential career paths within the industry.

Key Highlights

- CV writing and interview skills workshops, facilitated by Ganymede.
- Visits to stations, depots, and maintenance facilities, offering valuable insights into the diverse range of roles within the rail industry, with Northern, TPE, and Network Rail.
- Hands-on experience with the on-board team at LNER, including meeting a train driver and enjoying a first-class journey home after a day of shadowing.
- Personal branding training, delivered by TransPennine Express.
- Imposter Syndrome and confidence-building sessions, organised by Network Rail's Inspire Employee Network.

The programme successfully equipped participants with the essential skills, knowledge, and confidence required to pursue careers in the rail sector.

The Impact

Participants brought varied work experience, unique skill sets, and diverse aspirations for what they hoped to achieve from the programme.

Feedback revealed that the programme not only equipped them with valuable skills for entering the job market but also significantly boosted their confidence and deepened their interest in pursuing a career within the rail sector.



“

I joined this programme after being a stay-at-home mum for 10 years. I was eager to get back to work, but anxious that the gap in employment would be a barrier.

“This course has been invaluable to me; it has provided me with the confidence to progress in my job searches and has me looking forward to a potential career in rail.

Serena Woodcock
Never Mind The Gap Participant Leeds 2024

”

STAFFING TRENDS

Temporary to Permanent Recruitment

At Ganymede, we have seen a significant increase in the number of our clients within rail transportation and rolling stock requesting temporary-to-permanent recruitment.

Within our client base, two main reasons have been expressed for this preference:

Reducing Time to Hire

Ganymede utilise an efficient temporary-to-permanent hiring model which enables swift onboarding of staff to meet time-sensitive operational demands. At Ganymede, our standard lead time for onboarding non-Sentinel rail staff is between five to seven working days. This includes complete documentation management and the successful completion of rail-standard medical assessments and drugs & alcohol testing.

This model offers a clear advantage to clients, allowing them to quickly onboard key talent as external contractors, while awaiting the necessary approvals / capacity to engage them as permanent members of staff.

Tackling Attrition

Simply put, this model of employment allows both parties to gain a better understanding of each other before committing to a permanent arrangement.

Starting a new position in the rail sector often involves significant investment from both the employer and employee in company or site specific training, competency development, and accreditations.

The support which Ganymede provides its customers to mobilise new workers, substantially reduces the time and labour burden across pre-employment checks, training and performance management in a workers first months in their business. It is therefore unsurprising that the highest demand for this service has been within high volume hiring campaigns for Train Presentation, Gateline and Depot Maintenance personnel.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR WORKFORCE

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to recognising the achievements of our exceptional workforce. Each quarter, outstanding individuals are highlighted for their contributions in going above and beyond, improving processes, or promoting safety.

Our core values:

- Safety First, Safety Always
- Delivering Excellence
- Taking Pride
- People are our Passion
- Being Socially Responsible

Are at the core of everything we do, and recognising and rewarding those who exemplify them is a key priority.

Each winner is awarded a gift card in appreciation of their outstanding efforts.

This quarter, we are delighted to celebrate two champions: Janine, our 2024 Champion, and Shadreck, our Quarter 1 Champion for 2025.

Janine Kilbride, a Train Presentation Team Leader at Northern, was initially hired as a temporary train presentation operative. She was later promoted to Train Presentation Team Leader and became a permanent member of Northern's team. Her Team Leader highlighted how she has gone above and beyond, quickly mastering all aspects of the role while maintaining a high standard of work. When her Team Leader went off sick, Janine stepped up and took on higher-grade duties. She focused on fostering strong communication within the team, who have commended her for her outstanding contributions. She thoroughly deserves to be recognised for her amazing contributions in 2024.



Janine Kilbride, Train Presentation Team Leader

Janine further stated "I highly recommend Ganymede and I am truly overwhelmed with all the support from yourselves and Northern Management."

Well done, Janine, for going above and beyond!



Shadreck Chawada, Train Presentation Operative

Shadreck has been working with the nights team at EMR for several months.

Peter Castro-Solomon, Train Presentation Manager at EMR stated "Upon starting as a Train Presentation Operative Shadreck has demonstrated the core values of teamwork, integrity, passion and success and has gone above and beyond to contribute to the team. Shadreck often steps outside of his comfort zone, he has demonstrated a willingness to learn new things and always carries himself with dignity. Shadreck is a hard worker, who has earned the respect of his colleagues and is a well-liked member of the team. Shadreck often demonstrates flexibility and always looks for new ways to show commitment to his employer. It is an absolute pleasure to work with him and we look forward to his continued success."

Shadreck further stated "I am truly grateful for the incredible opportunity to work with such a talented and supportive team. Ganymede and East Midlands Railway beautifully exemplify the spirit of collaboration and excellence, and it has been an honour to be a part of this journey. My time here has not only helped me grow professionally, but also enriched me personally. I deeply cherish the challenges that pushed me to excel and the opportunities that allowed me to learn and contribute. Thank you for creating such a positive and inspiring environment, I will always value my experience with this great team."

A REVIEW OF 2024

Major changes in the UK rail landscape and what can we anticipate for 2025.

The UK rail sector is undergoing its most significant transformation in decades, with the government moving decisively towards bringing all passenger services under public ownership by October 2027. To oversee this shift, Great British Railways (GBR) will be established to manage both infrastructure and train services.



GBR will be based in Derby, a city steeped in railway history, where the aerospace and rail industries contribute a third of the city's Gross Value Added (GVA). The Labour government claims that nationalisation could save up to £1.5 billion annually by tackling inefficiency and fragmentation within the sector. They argue that this will result in a more cost-effective railway, allowing for reinvestment in service improvements, including enhanced internet connectivity and automated systems.

Among the key proposals under nationalisation are ticket refunds for delays and a 'best-price' ticket guarantee.

However, there is scepticism about whether nationalisation can truly deliver these benefits. Critics argue that without the competitive drive fostered by privatisation, inefficiencies could resurface, leading to stagnation rather than the desired improvements and modernisation.

One point both proponents and critics agree on is that the success of nationalisation will depend upon effective integration between infrastructure managers, train operators, and the government. The government's projections outline a mid to long-term strategy, aiming for significant financial returns around the five-year mark. However, many contend that immediate investment is essential to tackle urgent issues, particularly the widening skills gap.

The National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) has identified this as a critical challenge, predicting that between 7,000 and 12,000 additional workers will be needed each year to meet the demands of upcoming projects.



This situation is further complicated by an ageing workforce, with over a third of current employees aged over 50.

The future workforce will need strong technical expertise, but also a broader understanding of the integrated railway. High-demand skills will include digital transformation, sustainability, and the ability to manage complex projects across the full railway system. Professionals with strong collaboration skills, adaptability, and cross-disciplinary experience in both infrastructure and rolling stock will be highly sought after.

2024 saw a cautious approach to investment, with CP7 funding moving slower than expected and some operators holding off on major asset investments. However, this may be the 'calm before the storm.' With future investment expected, new organisational structures, greater integration, and an expanding skills shortage, it presents an exciting opportunity for professionals in the sector



Those who can adapt to these evolving demands will have the opportunity to advance their careers quickly in an industry that, despite its challenges, continues to progress.

My advice for 2025 is for individuals to seek opportunities that expand their experience. For rail businesses, investing in the talent pipeline is essential. As competition for talent intensifies, focusing on early career development, alongside strategic high-quality leadership hires, will help create a resilient workforce capable of navigating the changes ahead.



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UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS

March

**27
MAR** | Rail Forum
Servitization
Workshop online

April

**24
APR** | RIA Future of Rail:
Integrated Transport

May

**7
MAY** | TOCTalk -
Birmingham

**15
MAY** | Women in Rail
Awards 2025

**22
MAY** | WIR - Embodiment
Session

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

Fatigue – Night Working

Shift work can involve long hours, which can increase fatigue. Working at night or during irregular hours also disrupts our body clock, making it harder to sleep during the day. Thankfully, good habits can help you manage your sleep and stay alert on duty.

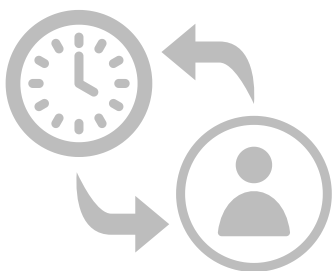
Preparing for Night Duty

The first night shift often poses the highest risk of fatigue, as adjusting your body clock can be challenging. Here are some tips to help you prepare:

- The night before your shift, stay up later than usual so you can wake up later in the morning.
- Try to find time earlier in the day for some exercise, even a walk. Exercising just after you wake up can work well.
- Prepare your meals in advance, including a nutritious night-time meal and some healthy snacks for your shift.
- If you'll be outside during midday, wear sunglasses to help you get better sleep in the afternoon before starting your shift.
- After lunch is a good time for a nap. Set an alarm for 90 minutes (the length of one full sleep cycle). Be aware that you might feel groggy when you wake up, so wait at least 20-30 minutes before driving.

During Your Shift

- Stay hydrated by drinking water regularly, and take small sips from a coffee flask to help boost alertness. Snack on the healthy foods you prepared earlier.
- Midnight is a good time for the light night-time meal you prepared. Regular meals help keep you alert, but avoid overeating as it can reduce your alertness and make you feel drowsy.



After Your Shift

- If you're feeling sleepy after your shift, do not drive. Arrange alternative transport with your manager/supervisor, or consider staying at a hotel. As a last resort, take a short nap before heading home.
- If it's light out, wear sunglasses on your way home to avoid boosting your alertness before bed.
- Have a light breakfast before going to bed to help settle down for sleep.

If You Feel Your Alertness Dropping During a Shift

- Inform your supervisor or on-call manager, as they need to be aware of anything affecting team safety, including fatigue.
- Take a break and go for a short walk (discuss this with your supervisor first).
- Drink some coffee to help boost your alertness.

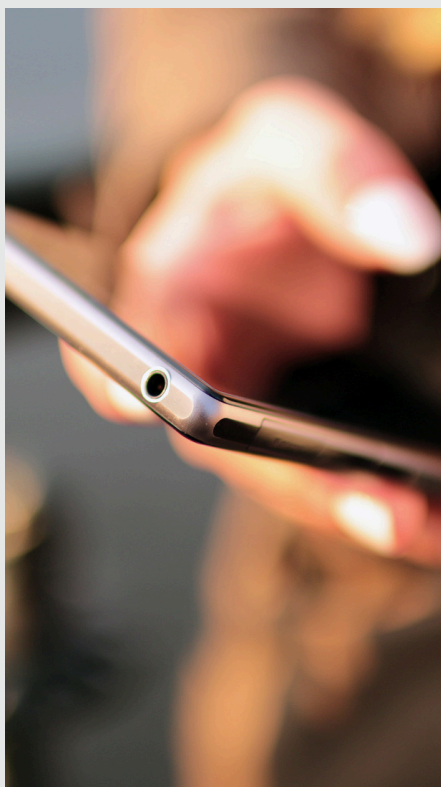
Team Effort

Here's a checklist to help you look after your team:

- Ensure everyone has planned breaks and actually takes them. Use these breaks for a snack and a drink to recharge.
- Chat with your team. Talking not only helps you gauge if someone is feeling fatigued, but it can also help boost their alertness. If someone seems moodier or grumpier than usual, it might be a sign of fatigue.
- Double-check each other's work. This helps spot any errors and keeps the team engaged.
- Buddy up with a teammate. This allows you to look out for one another and watch for signs of fatigue.



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MEET YOUR TRANSPORTATION TEAM

Michael Dobson - Recruitment Manager - 07823 521 992

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As Recruitment Manager for the Transportation team, Michael is responsible for managing several key accounts with some of the UK's best recognised train operating companies. Michael has been with Ganymede for over seven years, progressing from a consultant to leading the recruitment team in London. Michael has established long term relationships with key contacts at a number of train operating companies and provides services ranging from staffing, account management, salary benchmarking and payroll & compliance management.

Charlotte Cruise - Client Relationship Manager - 07583 083 743

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Charlotte is responsible for supporting our clients within the transportation sector with tailored workforce solutions. She is also a committee member of Women in Rail and is passionate about bringing diversity into the sector. She has eleven experience years in recruitment and seven within the rail sector specifically. Charlotte is based in our Derby HQ.

Michael Anderson - Recruitment Consultant - 07876 441 692

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Michael is an experienced recruitment consultant specialising in the transportation sector. His primary focus is on delivering exceptional talent within the rail depot environment, including train presentation, maintenance, and depot operations. He has eight years of recruitment experience and has been with Ganymede for just under two years. He is dedicated to delivering a high standard of service to both clients and candidates. He takes pride in building strong relationships, understanding their unique needs, and providing tailored solutions.

Karla Delczeg - Recruitment Consultant - 07935 524 351

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Karla is a seasoned expert in transportation operations and the railway industry. Prior to working in recruitment Karla has worked frontline within customer service management, responsible for station based teams. She collaborates with Train Operating Companies, providing strategic support across a diverse range of functions. Her main expertise is within, Gateline, Customer Service, Operational Management and Train Presentation roles. Karla is committed to ensuring operational excellence and exceptional service delivery.

Charlie Corbett - Recruitment Specialist - 07704 543 745

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Charlie operates in the transportation sector with an emphasis on Building Services Engineering, Rolling Stock Engineering, and Soft and Hard FM. He has three and a half years' experience recruiting in this field and has been with Ganymede since October 2023. He enjoys his role at Ganymede, as he has always had a passion for the engineering and railway sectors and likes helping people secure jobs in these industries.

Yasmin Gilani - Recruitment Administrator - 07788 369 050

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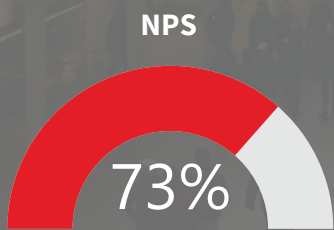
Yasmin is based in our London office and is responsible for managing all HR queries. One of her key responsibilities is managing the onboarding process for new starters, including comprehensive compliance checks and as such she is an essential part of the Transportation team.



Ganymede specialise in recruiting the best technical and engineering talent and providing complete workforce solutions to help build and maintain infrastructure and transportation for a wide range of UK and international clients. As part of the RTC Group, an AIM-listed recruitment group, Ganymede is a market leader in providing a diverse range of people solutions to the rail, energy, water, highways and transportation sectors.



Our NPS score



The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a key metric for measuring customer service experiences, offering valuable insights into how our clients and customers perceive their journey with us. According to ClearlyRated, the average NPS for the staffing industry is 36%. We are thrilled to share that our recruitment NPS is an impressive 73%, a result that reflects our commitment to delivering exceptional service to everyone we work with. We are proud of this achievement and remain dedicated to maintaining the highest standards in everything we do.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

If you want to give us any feedback on the Transportation newsletter or have topics you would like to share with us, scan the QR code on the right or click [here](#). All feedback is recorded anonymously and reviewed regularly by our Transportation and Marketing teams.



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