

Abellio ScotRail

We will start operating the ScotRail franchise on 1 April 2015. Hopefully this Question & Answer (Q&A) summary will answer some of the questions you have about the transition to the new franchise, and about our plans.

If the answer to your question doesn't appear here, please drop us an email to: employees@abellioscotrail.com. We'll endeavour to reply to it as soon as possible and will add the most frequently asked ones to this document. If your question is one that you would not like shared in this forum please let us know when asking.

Newly added Q&As are highlighted in red.

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1. Mobilisation

Mobilisation is the period between us being awarded the franchise and starting to operate it on 1 April 2015. During this time we have a team that is sorting out all the details to enable a smooth and successful transfer of operations from First Group to Abellio.

Question	Answer
We've heard that between now and April you are 'mobilising' but what does this involve?	The type of activities this includes are: getting our Safety Certificate and Licence from the Office of Rail Regulation for running ScotRail; arranging leases for the rolling stock we need; reviewing and setting up almost 500 contracts with suppliers used by ScotRail; making sure the IT platforms and information are transferred for Day 1, this covers most things in the business from operation systems (eg Trust) to ticketing and accounting - and also the rostering and payroll systems so you get paid after 1 April; and many more. Please feel free to chat to members of the mobilisation team if you see us around.



2. Employment in the new franchise

If you currently work for First ScotRail and are transferring into the new Abellio ScotRail franchise then your rights are protected under legislation, known as 'TUPE'. For more details about what this means, please read through the Q&A in this section:

a) Transfer

Question	Answer
What is TUPE?	TUPE is the abbreviation for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. TUPE protects employees' terms and conditions when a business or undertaking, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer.
Will my employment transfer under the TUPE Regulations?	Employees who are in-scope and assigned at the point of transfer (ie working in identified roles to deliver the current services) will TUPE transfer to the new franchise on 1 April 2015, with all their existing terms and conditions.
Is the transfer permanent?	Yes, you will receive formal notification of the intention for you to transfer and then confirmation that the transfer has been completed.
Will my length of service be fully transferred?	Yes. Continuity of employment is protected, which means that employees who transfer to Abellio ScotRail will take their existing length of service with them as if they had always worked for us.
If I am selected for TUPE, will I receive a job offer or new contract from Abellio?	No, you will not receive a job offer or new contract as under TUPE your employment transfers automatically. Your current contract of employment will continue to apply, but you will get a letter confirming a change of employer to Abellio ScotRail.
How does the TUPE process affect people off sick?	Anyone off sick does not affect the transfer, employees will still TUPE across on the same terms. Sickness and absence records will also transfer across as part of the continuity of employment.
If I have concerns regarding the transfer, who should I talk to?	Please talk to your line manager or speak to the current HR team, who will be able to advise. Also, your staff representatives will be involved in the TUPE consultation. They will collate questions and pass any information back to you.
What happens if I am on holiday or off sick during the consultation process?	Line managers and the existing HR team should make arrangements to ensure those on leave are kept up to date with any communications. This applies to people on maternity leave, career breaks, and long-term sick leave or deployed in the Reserve Forces.

b) Terms and conditions

Question	Answer
Will any of my Terms and Conditions change?	You will transfer on your existing contractual terms and conditions. The TUPE Regulations is the employee protection legislation that applies in the UK. It has the effect that anyone whose principal work moves to another employer, transfers to that company with contractual terms and conditions that are directly comparable to the ones they already enjoy. Any changes to terms and conditions remain the subject of consultation or negotiation.



Will I need to submit my CV or go for an interview?	All employees in-scope will automatically transfer. We will not require CVs and applications for that process. If we have new roles then will not need to interview individual members of staff.
On transferring will I get a new contract?	No, your current contract of employment will continue to apply, but you will get a letter confirming a change of employer to Abellio ScotRail.
Will my hours of work alter?	There should be no change to your contractual hours of work. If there is a requirement to change working arrangements at any time, this will be done following the established consultation processes in the normal way.
How will people returning from maternity leave after the transfer date be affected?	People in 'assigned' posts who are on maternity leave from First on transfer day will transfer under TUPE. They will continue to be employed by Abellio ScotRail on their transferred terms and return to work as agreed with First, once their maternity leave has ended.
NEW 30/12: Are there any plans to make changes to the current family friendly policy, in particular to the Maternity/Paternity Leave entitlement? If so, how would this affect staff who inform HR of their intent to take said leave but who have yet to commence leave when the franchise switches over?	<p>Thanks for your question. We have no plans to make any changes to the current policy, indeed the maternity/paternity leave entitlements are part of the terms and conditions that transfer across with you into the new franchise.</p> <p>We will also honour any request for maternity/paternity leave made to First ScotRail prior to the transfer even though it will not be taken until after the 1st April 2015 when Abellio becomes the train operator.</p> <p>We hope that puts your mind at rest and wish you all the best for 2015!</p>

c) Pension

Question	Answer
What does the change in franchise operator mean for our pensions?	The only thing that will change will be the name of the pension fund Section – to the Abellio ScotRail Section. If you are currently a member of the Railway Pension Scheme (RPS), First ScotRail Section, you will continue to be a member of the RPS and your accrued benefits transferred to the re-named Section. The existing pension contribution rate and benefits remain unchanged. If you are part of the Salary Sacrifice arrangements (sometimes called Smart Pensions), this arrangement will also transfer.

d) Entitlements

Question	Answer
What is happening to our ScotRail free travel cards?	We have agreed to continue providing the existing free travel concessions currently enjoyed by staff and their dependants. We have asked First ScotRail to issue new cards to all current holders. These will be sent out shortly as they expire at the end of 2014.



<p>What annual leave will I be entitled to?</p>	<p>As your contract of employment is unchanged, your annual leave entitlement is unaffected. Any days you have already taken for the year up to the transfer date will of course be deducted from your normal annual entitlement.</p>
<p>Will accumulated lieu leave be carried over to Abellio ScotRail?</p>	<p>Yes - they will transfer with you and can be taken in accordance with the current arrangements for taking such leave.</p>
<p>What happens to my sick pay entitlement?</p>	<p>Under the terms of the transfer, your existing sick pay arrangements continue, any already taken will be taken into account for future sickness as now.</p>
<p>NEW 29/12: Can you please clarify that all First ScotRail staff can use their smartcards for privilege travel on the sleeper services.</p>	<p>As you will probably be aware, the new Smartcards to replace those expiring at the end of 2014 have been/are being issued by First ScotRail for use from January 2015. We have agreed with Serco that the travel concessions currently in place for existing First ScotRail staff who transfer to either the new ScotRail or Caledonian Sleeper franchises will continue, so our expectation is that those arrangements will be honoured.</p> <p>We are just checking with First ScotRail about how these current privilege arrangements are applied to make sure Serco are aware and we will get back to you again when we have their responses.</p>
<p>NEW 29/12: At the minute we can travel on other First Group TOC services using our "free passes" will there be arrangements for this to continue? Will there be arrangements for us to use our passes on other Abellio franchises?</p>	<p>The arrangement you describe is one set up by First Group specifically to cover its own existing TOC services and will therefore cease once the franchise is transferred to Abellio Group.</p> <p>We do currently have reciprocal travel concession arrangements in our three existing franchises but there are a number of questions and steps to be taken before we can confirm those going forward (eg Merseyrail is a concession and passenger revenue income goes to Merseytravel Passenger Transport Authority - therefore it is not solely our decision; and in May 2015 part of Abellio Greater Anglia is due to transfer into the new Transport for London Crossrail concession, to be operated by MTR with similar revenue implications).</p> <p>If we get the necessary clearances we will communicate this with ScotRail colleagues in due course.</p>
<p>NEW 30/12: I am currently employed by First ScotRail at Elgin Station and I should like to say I like the way you have given us the opportunity communicate with you and ask questions regarding the franchise changeover and our terms and conditions going forward.</p>	<p>Thanks for your question and we are glad you like our webpage and the opportunity to ask us questions.</p> <p>A formal announcement will be made nearer the time of transfer, as we wait to confirm certain details of staff travel with Serco, the new Caledonian Sleeper operator, about arrangements on that part of the network. However, it is our intention to reinstate the retired staff travel concessions for ScotRail staff who retire after we take over the new franchise in April 2015, under the same conditions in place now. So when you do decide to retire you will be able to retain those travel benefits while we operate the franchise.</p>



At the present time I am fit and healthy and enjoy my work very much, however, during the next five years I will at some point decide to retire. As a non-safeguarded member of staff my wife and I would retain our staff travel in retirement under the current arrangements. When Abellio take over

- will there be any change to this under Abellio and what would those changes be?
- will those ex-employees who have already retired and their spouses retain their right to travel concessions?

We also intend to honour the travel concessions for those retired staff and spouses who currently enjoy those facilities. As you may be aware, we have asked First ScotRail to reissue new ScotRail Smartcards to all those staff, retired and current, and dependants who are currently in possession of the ones that expire today. Again there is some detail to finalise before we can announce.

I hope that puts your mind at rest for when you do decide to hang up your uniform! Best wishes for the New Year and we look forward to working with you from April 2015.



3. Our plans for the new franchise

a) Engineering plans at Haymarket depot

Question	Answer
<p>NEW 16/12: We work at Haymarket depot, Edinburgh and are seeking some clarification on the future engineering plans for the business. With the influx of new Hitachi trains in 2017 which it seems are to be based at a new depot at Millerhill, and the arrival of 27 HST sets around 2018 it would be logical to assume that the bulk or all of the Class 170's will be returned to the Rosco. This raises several questions about future staffing levels at Haymarket. Will the HST's be maintained here or will the work be contracted out to the holder of the East Coast franchise at Craightinny? If the work is contacted out what does the future hold for Haymarket as the workload will be reduced significantly with only 158's allocated here and Corkerhill now doing some of this work? Will the staff at Millerhill work for the ScotRail franchise or Hitachi? We think that these questions need to be answered by whatever means are at your disposal. We are unsure of the protocol for contacting the staff at present but it has gone awfully quiet since the initial announcement and this only leads to rumour and speculation (such as 8 class 158 and 4 class 170 leaving the fleet in the near future). We all want the best for the business in the long term but obviously job security is very important to all of us. Thank you for your time in advance.</p>	<p>Thank you for your questions. We appreciate that any period of change is unsettling for staff and we will try to answer as many of your questions as we can at the moment. We stress in doing so that we are not trying to substitute or bypass the formal procedures that exist with your recognised trade union representatives. We will fully consult with them when we are in a position to do so; however, in the meantime we can tell you that Abellio has given a commitment that there will be no compulsory redundancies, which we hope will allay many fears.</p> <p>The planned changes in the new franchise will affect a number of depots. Whilst we recognise there will be reductions in workload at Haymarket, there will be more than 20% more vehicles in the revised ScotRail fleet in 2019 than at the start of the franchise. This is to accommodate the expected growth in passenger numbers that there will be during the franchise. We will have to keep DMUs in the early years to then be able to carry the extra passengers towards the end of the franchise.</p> <p>The introduction of HSTs and the new EMUs will have an impact at Haymarket. The changes will not, however, begin until December 2017, following electrification of the EGIP (Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme) route. There will be further changes by December 2018. I can confirm there will be four fewer Class 170s on day one (1 April 2015), as these units have been signed up to operate on the new Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) franchise. All 9 x Class 170 Eversholt units have been leased to GTR, but 5 x Class 170s units are being sub-leased back to ScotRail.</p> <p>The exact number of DMUs at Haymarket is not yet finalised but whatever happens there will still be a mix of Class 158s and Class 170s. The facilities at Millerhill will be limited to the facilities of a light maintenance depot, as the exam work required on the new EMUs will be undertaken by Hitachi at Craightinny. Hitachi will become the depot operator at Craightinny before the IEP trains are introduced. Our contracts will be with Hitachi rather than the East Coast operator, Virgin/Stagecoach. The HST workload is envisaged to be split between Inverness and Craightinny.</p> <p>We will confirm numbers of DMUs at Haymarket as soon as we are able to; and are fully committed to undertaking all levels of necessary consultation / negotiation / bargaining with your representatives at the appropriate time.</p> <p>At the moment the mobilisation team is undertaking many different activities and as and when we are able to do so we will communicate more and more details about our future plans for the franchise. The channels we will use will include a website with Q&As on it, a freephone number to call us, a Facebook page and the opportunity to meet us face-to-face at roadshows – the exact dates are to be confirmed but likely to be towards the end of February. We will share more details with staff very soon, once all channels are set up and working.</p>

