



FORS Annual Conference 2022 Report

**Working together towards a
safe and sustainable future**

T: 08448 09 09 44

E: enquiries@fors-online.org.uk

W: www.fors-online.org.uk

@FORS_online  

FORS Annual Conference Report

After an absence of almost three years due to the pandemic, the FORS Annual Conference returned in July 2022 with a few changes. Not least was the venue – Manchester Central Convention Complex was chosen to host the event, reflecting the growing nationwide operator base of FORS and the auditorium certainly provided a great backdrop to proceedings.

The second substantial change was in personnel, as FORS is now under new management: Sopra Steria is the new scheme concessionaire. The majority of the original FORS team were welcomed into Sopra Steria, however there were also a number of new figures who took the opportunity to engage with conference exhibitors and visitors.

The theme of the FORS Annual Conference 2022 centred on how FORS will work together with operators and specifiers, towards a safe and sustainable future. Many of the presentations throughout the day reflected the theme, as well as offering advice, guidance and help on how to better manage fleets. As in previous years, there was a well-supported exhibition featuring a wide range of FORS supporters, including Backhouse Jones, Brake, Logistics UK, OdiliaClark and recently announced Affinity Partner The Algorithm People. Headline sponsor Drivetech also had a stand within the expo area and was represented by Managing Director, Charlie Norman on the conference agenda

Also in the speaker line up was Steve Norris, who has held roles such as MP, Minister for Transport in London, and Director General of the Road Haulage Association. Alongside Steve, the speakers ranged from FORS operators to key figures from both FORS and Sopra Steria who were keen to give updates about where the scheme is heading.



A warm welcome

Chairing proceedings at the FORS Annual Conference was Andy Salter, Managing Director of DVV Media, one of the FORS scheme's delivery partners. Aside from his experience within the commercial vehicle media sector, Salter commented that his time as a truck driver at an early age has given him an essential insight into the fleet industry and he understands how crucial it is to society.



He stated in order to retain and recruit the best people into the transport sector, those already in the sector also need to be the best. He emphasised to the audience their attendance at the conference demonstrated they shared that same belief.

Turning to the FORS portfolio, Salter stressed FORS operators had many tools at their disposal that could help mitigate current industry issues, such as fuel price rises. He then explained – for anyone who wasn't aware – that FORS was under new management, and reassured delegates that Sopra Steria was focused on bringing collaboration, openness and transparency to the scheme.

Before the main proceedings began, Salter reiterated the theme of the conference – 'Working together towards a safe and sustainable future' – which, he said, underlined the collaborative vision Sopra Steria had for FORS.

“ In order to retain and recruit the best people into the transport sector, those already in the sector also need to be the best. Your attendance at this conference demonstrates that you share the same belief. ”

Andy Salter



Sopra Steria – FORS Concessionaire

The first speaker to take to the stage was Ian Henderson, FORS Concession Director, who has worked in the transport sector for 27 years and, in that time, has delivered 16 traffic technology contracts for local authorities.



In his opening remarks, Henderson stressed a simple value at the heart of FORS is to provide services that are fair and consistent, open and transparent, rewarding and valued, and simple and intuitive.

The aim of Sopra Steria’s management for the coming year was to be trusted, and Henderson commented he has been speaking with operators, suppliers, and specifiers to understand their needs as they see them now, in both the midterm and into the long term. Henderson told delegates Sopra Steria recognises the challenges that are being faced in the industry, such as rising costs, environmental pressures and staff shortages.

To ensure the challenges are properly addressed, explained Henderson, the focus is on ‘Four Rs’: recruiting new FORS operators; recognising the number of companies specifying FORS; retaining operators and specifiers, and re-engaging with industry stakeholders and dormant operators.

The Sopra Steria vision, revealed Henderson, is for FORS to be recognised as a business enabler and the best in class in the UK and abroad. To do this, he admitted the approach needed to change to ensure operators and specifiers recognise the true value of the scheme. He confirmed a new dedicated 10-strong team that will support engagement with industries, uphold the FORS Standard, be consumer-centric and always be visibly collaborative.



Sopra Steria – FORS Concessionaire

Henderson explained views on FORS are changing and will continue to change throughout the concession period. He stressed he is committed to building on the FORS legacy and will continue to adapt to meet the demands of the challenges ahead.

He also admitted that, in the transport industry, best practice was sometimes challenged, adding that the goals are still to help FORS operators to be safer, smarter, and greener.

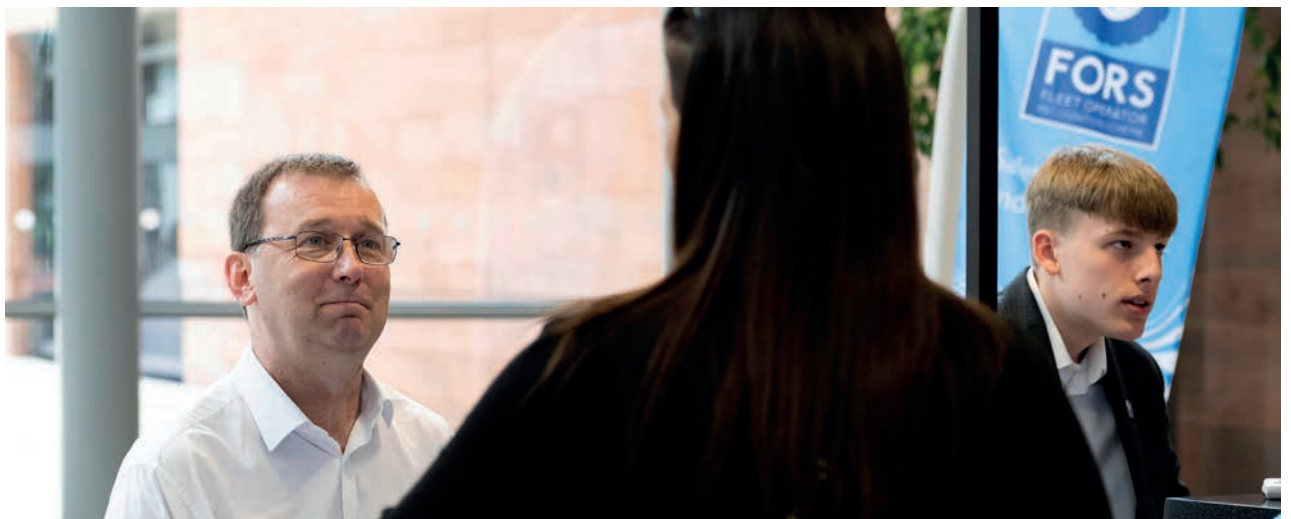
When discussing the FORS online offering, Henderson touched on improvements to the audit process – specifically what it will look like in a year’s time, whether it is fit for purpose and if it is creating best practice. Turning his attention to the marketplace, Henderson promised FORS is looking at how it engages with training providers, how training is booked and many other crucial areas.

A new website will be launched in 2023, which will be simpler, more user friendly and more intuitive, announced Henderson during his presentation. The aim is for processes and channels to be much better aligned to the needs and goals of operators. At the same time, he said he remains committed to focusing on the true benefits of FORS, such as reducing the environmental impact of fleet operations as well as work-related incidents – and improving overall fleet MPG.

“ To ensure the challenges are properly addressed the focus is on ‘Four Rs’: recruiting new FORS operators; recognising the number of companies specifying FORS; retaining operators and specifiers, and re-engaging with industry stakeholders and dormant operators.

Ian Henderson

”



Big project management

The topic of HS2 returned to the FORS Annual Conference in 2022, five years after it had featured on the agenda. This time, Andrew Rhodes, Head of Logistics at the organisation, took to the floor to explain the progress made and the impact the project has had on FORS operators. He said throughout his two years in the role, the approach has been to recognise the scale of HS2 not in terms of size, but how it will influence 40,000 logistics drivers who will visit the site during the project.



Rhodes then explained the different phases of the project, before highlighting its strategic goals, such as being a catalyst for growth and providing value for money – and how they relate to FORS and its vision. Three of the most important goals, according to him, are to develop key skills and employment; raise health and safety and security standards and be sustainable and a ‘good neighbour.’ On the subject of sustainability, he reported that the construction of Phase One of HS2 and operating it for 125 years will use less carbon than one month of the UK’s road network.

There are more than 1,000 vehicle deliveries each day across 200 HS2 sites – a schedule that impacts not only professional drivers but also members of the public and vulnerable road users, said Rhodes. Continuing, he said HS2 needed the support from industry and organisations such as FORS to ensure those movements are as safe as they can be.

Road risk mitigation was also covered by Rhodes, who explained HS2 has a commitment to not putting trucks on the road unless it has to and using rail wherever possible. The key to mitigating risk, he said, is choosing the right contractors. With HS2, that means specifying FORS accredited operators or those with Earned Recognition. HS2 specifies a quality assurance standard to be in place with the operators that are involved in the project.

HS2 – which is in year 14 of a 30-year timescale – has identified some key risks that needed more effort than others. One of them was rural driving and Rhodes revealed the company is rolling out its own rural driving training package for contractors. He added the company is also looking at tippers, stating HS2 has specified more safety equipment than is required by FORS because it could see there would be a continuing risk around vulnerable road users.

He also said the company has undertaken a deep dive into road risk and is in the process of developing a road risk strategy. While HS2 does not operate a fleet, commented Rhodes, it wants to be part of the conversation. There is a desire to collaborate and get all the best practice onboard to improve overall standards across the board.

The workstreams of the road risk strategy were then detailed by Rhodes, such as systems, measurement, and data, vehicles and equipment, and sites and road interfaces. While Rhodes admitted the visions for the strategy haven’t yet been finalised, he stressed they included a desire for zero road deaths or injuries, for HS2 to be an industry exemplar, to leave a lasting legacy, to shift the dial nationally and to play a part in the improvement of road safety.

Benefits of FORS Gold Accreditation

To give the perspective from an operator, Wayne Allen, Northern Compliance Manager at Galaxy Insulation and Dry Lining, took to the stage to tell the story of his company's rapid rise to FORS Gold. The Yorkshire-based operator was established in 2009 with branches in Leeds and Sheffield and expanded into other areas, including Birmingham and Haydock in 2017 and the South West, London, East Midlands, and North East since then. He revealed the company started looking into FORS in 2019 and gained Bronze accreditation that year. In 2020, Galaxy pushed for Silver, specifically for a single site it was operating in London. Not long after that, the decision was made to roll out the requirement for Silver accreditation across the whole fleet.



Allen explained he knew there would be resistance – including staff saying that FORS accreditation was only something needed for London and the South East. However, he recalled how he had explained the business benefits of the scheme to help alleviate any fears or concerns they might have.

By the end of 2020, he explained to the audience, the company had taken the decision to push for Gold, a target that was achieved in the middle of the year, just 17 months after gaining Bronze accreditation. Recalling the journey, Allen told the audience it had opened people's eyes about how Gold status made it easier for the company to work towards becoming carbon neutral. He said one of the aims of being at the conference was to let operators know the differences and improvements FORS Gold would make to its business.

Galaxy, he explained, was quick to embrace FORS because of the desire for best practice and the fact that it made sense for the whole company, not just those in London. He admitted that because the board had bought into it, the process was easier as they could see the operational benefits as well as the financial ones, such as lower fuel costs.



Safeguarding you and FORS

After the first break in proceedings, Graham Holder, quality assurance and compliance manager, FORS, began his presentation focused on the new FORS Quality Assurance Guidance document, which, in January 2022, replaced the Compliance and Enforcement Guidance document (introduced in 2017). He reassured the audience that the content of the document remains the same, but the terminology has been changed to reflect the importance of quality assurance throughout FORS. Going further, Holder explained the document was designed to help if there is an activity that required the quality assurance team to investigate a specific situation.



He highlighted quality assurance triggers, such as the traffic commissioner's applications and decisions (As & Ds) as well as work-related road risk (WRRR) and gate checks.

Holder also mentioned the role of the Police Commercial Vehicle units and said FORS has engaged with two authorities about the roadside checks carried out by the units. If the unit finds the stopped vehicle has a FORS logo and it is not compliant, it reports back to Holder and his team.

The conversation then moved on to the appeals and complaints process, which he described as "absolutely crucial" to the FORS community. If operators think there is inconsistency or that a complaint needs to be made, he said the process is there to air concerns. If the complainant is unhappy with the eventual outcome, Holder urged them to raise it again.

He pointed out that, in rare circumstances, complaints are escalated to the Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG) who will make a final decision. However, typically, he explained, disputes are resolved before it gets to this stage.

Regional briefings were also covered by Holder – eight have been held so far: two webinars and six face-to-face events in Bristol, Cambridge, Southampton, Birmingham, Manchester, and Edinburgh. The FORS expert said it was good to get out and represent FORS in various parts of the country, demonstrating to operators that the members of the team are willing to listen and feed back to people working on Version 7 of the FORS Standard "as this is the ideal opportunity to have your say". He also stated it was important for FORS not to be seen as London-centric.

Finally, Holder told the audience regional briefings in Bristol, Leeds and London are being planned for October and November, and reassured the audience that if they were oversubscribed, he would make sure he got to see people who missed out.

From the House to haulage

A former MP and Minister for Transport in John Major's Government, Director General of the Road Haulage Association and ex-board member at Transport for London, Steven Norris was one of the highlights of the FORS Conference. He spoke about both his time in Westminster and his vision for the future of haulage in the UK.



Reflecting on his post in John Major's government, Norris explained that the Department for Transport was a wonderful place to work, with the ability to do and change things that make a difference. He cited his role in the extension of London's Jubilee Line as a personal highlight as it enabled the Olympics to be held in the capital and helped start the regeneration of the Docklands.

However, he recalled that there was little policy relating to HGVs and logistics. He claimed that no-one was willing to tackle it as part of a policy plan. HGVs, he said, were seen as a problem because they were viewed as dirty, noisy, and dangerous. Norris said FORS was created due to this lack of activity – there was a desire from operators to show they were doing their best and wanted recognition. Norris' time in government and TfL enabled him to have, what he described as, "a continuous hand on the development of FORS from 1992 until 2016".

He said he was pleased to see how the scheme had grown but warned there were tough times ahead. Addressing the green agenda and the targets that have been set for UK emissions reduction, he said he would not be surprised if the 2040 deadline for ceasing use of any new internal combustion engine HGVs was extended. However, he added vehicle manufacturers have a history of getting things done when they need to, citing the EURO emissions phases as an example where EURO VI vehicles are exceptionally clean, compared with EURO I.

He questioned the sense around electric HGVs, which typically require a huge battery that impacts on the payload of the vehicle and, therefore, operating costs for haulage companies. Norris highlighted alternatives such as synthetic fuels and CNG, but claimed, because these are not true 'green' alternatives, a different option was needed. Norris' suggestion? Green hydrogen. With the fuel, he explained, there was the option of putting it into a fuel cell or compressing and freezing it before dispensing it in the same way fuel stations do today.

The drawback, he warned, was the expense of the process. He explained there were ideas in development that would bring the costs down, such as proton matching and added more fascinating developments will follow with funding being given to fresh ideas.

Finally, Norris reflected on how the pandemic had changed many things, including the working patterns of people, including HGV drivers. The growth of online deliveries had been unexpected but was now huge business. He said he did not know what the future held but did warn about the potential influence of connected autonomous vehicles. He asked what that could mean for FORS or how the industry – and the scheme – is preparing for autonomous vehicles.

On a related note, he cited the statistic that more men on the planet are employed in driving jobs than any other occupation. The thought of driverless vehicles would therefore have big implications for many.

A word from our sponsor

Addressing a growing issue in many industries, including transport, Charlie Norman, Managing Director of Drivetech – headline sponsor of the FORS Annual Conference 2022 – talked about employee wellbeing.



He described wellbeing as answering the question ‘Are you OK?’ or ‘How are you feeling?’ Norman acknowledged there were elements that covered employee wellbeing in the FORS Standard but urged the audience to step up and put more energy into looking after staff. According to NHS statistics, he said, in 2021 1.49m people got into contact with the service’s mental health department. In addition, he told the audience that over the last two years, according to the Office of National Statistics, life satisfaction has decreased, and happiness and anxiety has increased (ONS, 2021). He acknowledged, as people spend a great deal of time at work, it is important to have the right working conditions and support system in place to contribute to people’s wellness.

Norman said for those suffering or experiencing wellbeing or mental health issues, the expectation from employees of their employers has been increasing. But employee awareness is a growing trend after years of a reluctance to discuss the subject. The need to value people has become more noticeable, he said – a fact highlighted by the driver shortage. Norman quoted a study that said the actual cost to businesses of mental health is between £53-56bn, something triggered partly by presenteeism – lower productivity employees who are going into work who shouldn’t be.

Helping mental health and wellbeing isn’t just a ‘nice thing to do,’ said Norman, reiterating it was core to Drivetech’s business strategy. He suggested all businesses should be investing in it, just as they invest in recruitment, new trucks, and the loads in the vehicles. Investing a small amount of money in mental health has a big return, he reasoned.

Finally, he explained that Drivetech is working with TfL, London bus drivers and Loughborough University to develop pillars for raising awareness and to train drivers in issues of mental health and wellbeing. The five pillars are: traffic congestion and how to deal with it; prolonged driving conditions and focusing for extended periods of time; diet and opportunity to exercise; 24-hour operations and looking at shift patterns and sleeping patterns through educational modules.



FORS Standard update: Version 6

One of the most important sessions of the FORS Annual Conference followed the lunch and networking break. Delegates were given a chance to learn more about what's new with Version 6 of the FORS Standard and find out how plans for Version 7 are progressing.

First up in this two-hander was Helen Bonner, who works for Steer – the organisation that is custodian of the FORS Standard and the FORS Governance & Standards function. She forms part of the team responsible for devising the final approvals of Version 6, and she started by reminding the audience that the new Standard was implemented at the beginning of July, having been published in October 2021. The relatively long lead time was provided to give FORS operators a chance to deal with the changes at the end of what has been a challenging time. She assured those gathered that the timescales involved were not a reflection of the number or size of changes from Version 5. In fact, she revealed, the alterations were smaller in number and less significant to Version 5, which, itself, was considered a huge revision from Version 4.

Taking over from Bonner was Graham Holder, making his second appearance of the day on stage. He advised all the Version 6 changes – regardless of size – were detailed in Annex 6 of the new Standard document and encouraged people to read that part of the document.

Holder then detailed the various changes to the Standard that had come into effect at Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. At Bronze, there are updates to M7 Regulatory Licensing and M6 Vehicle Safety Equipment. For M7, regional/city vehicle permits relating to safety or environmental requirements have been added, but only as an option, where applicable. Also, in M7, FORS operators shall now report to FORS for any licence or permit revocations, suspensions or curtailments that are relevant. The final major change, explained Holder, states that where an operator license is held, FORS operators shall declare any enforcement sanctions within the past 12 months and any impending regulatory action. In the case of M6, the document details that Class V and Class VI close-proximity mirror fields of view may now be achieved using a camera monitoring system.



FORS Standard update: Version 6

Another change to Bronze was 01 Routing – a procedure that includes any route scheduled by the FORS operator or authorised by a competent authority. Notified routes for abnormal indivisible loads movements are included.

At Silver, in S2 Performance Data ‘Actively monitoring and benchmarking’ has been changed to ‘actively monitoring and managing operational performance’ this included the new requirement to have an Operational Performance Plan that details items such as performance indicators, methods of data capture and other activities that have been completed to achieve operational targets. S7 Noise Pollution sees the removal of customer locations from the noise impact assessment document. There is also clarification that FORS operators may use the FORS Noise Assessment template to help evidence this demonstration.

Finally, FORS Gold has been reduced to six requirements from nine, explained Holder. Sections removed are: G2 Performance Data (elements have been merged into S2 Performance Data); G3 Case Study (covered under the new G3 if the company would like to promote sustainable initiatives) and G7 Promoting FORS (for the same reasons as the removal of G3 Case Study).

G3 Sustainable Operations (previously G6) now states ‘The review of fleet operation to improve operational performance shall inform fleet replacement decisions’. Also, it now says at least 50% of the fleet should meet ultra-low emission engine standards. The fleet replacement plan should demonstrate progression towards 100% ultra-low emission fleet and FORS operators may also provide evidence of promoting sustainable initiatives, such as engagement with communities and developing case studies.

Finally, at FORS Gold, wording in G6 Contracted Services (previously G9) has been changed to ‘The FORS list of accredited operators should be explored when placing contracts for transport suppliers’.

For news about Version 7, Bonner returned to explain that GSAG is currently convening existing and new working groups to prepare for the process ahead. New groups include the area of vehicle safety equipment, environment, and vans. One other area that is new to FORS and has its own working group is micro vehicles, such as cargo bikes. FORS, said Bonner, is trying to understand what the contribution would be and what role they will play in FORS.



Explaining more about GSAG

Following on from the Version 6 update, there was more GSAG-related content, courtesy of a panel chaired by Steve Agg, the group's Chair. Agg reiterated GSAG members were passionate and credible professionals who engage not only with FORS, but also operators and individuals who want to operate above, not just at, the legal standards and requirements. He confirmed there were currently 23 GSAG members and appealed to any interested audience members to make contact with the group and access the necessary applications forms.



John Bourn, Senior Partnerships, and Policy Officer at Transport North East, was the first of three speakers on the panel. He explained his region was the first outside London to liaise with FORS in 2012 and confirmed a number of documents will be published over the next year that look at the current state of freight in the region. He cited the 'North East Freight Study' out this year and 'Road Infrastructure and Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategies' to follow afterwards. The latter, explained Bourn, would consider the needs of freight and how to decarbonise freight transport.

Continuing, Bourn added the region faces a number of challenges, such as rising costs and economic difficulties – meaning many operators might see FORS as a 'nice to have' benefit, rather than essential for the business. He highlighted there were concerns at local authority levels about inputting extra costs on businesses and added that an extra challenge was demystifying FORS and a need to explain the benefits and relationship to CLOCS.

O'Donovan Waste Disposal's Managing Director Jacqueline O'Donovan was next up, and she started her presentation by reinforcing the importance of education. Thrust into her current role at 19, she quickly realised she needed to get the right qualifications to get on in the transport sector.



Explaining more about GSAG

She told the audience FORS is a great initiative to help clean up the industry and she is a proud FORS Practitioner. O'Donovan Waste Disposal was the first family-run business to achieve FORS Gold, which, said O'Donovan, enabled it to exceed standards. Staff are more skilled and enjoy the training, she revealed, while there has been a cultural improvement within the industry, which enabled her company to engage with the community.

O'Donovan got involved in GSAG because she wanted to play a part in how FORS moved forwards. The operator is the only SME on GSAG, and she said it was important that larger players understand the financial constraints many operators are under and to keep that in mind when looking at the next version of the Standard.

The final speaker was Gordon Sutherland, Traffic and Road Logistics Manager at Tideway, who made a welcome return to the FORS Conference. In 2017 he presented the latest developments with the Tideway Tunnel – a 25km-long and 7.5m-wide route under London. The tunnel was created to help deal with the volume of waste in the capital, because the current system was not big enough.

He told the audience how there are 2,000 vehicle movements a week over 24 sites on the Tideway project. In total, he added, there would be more than 300,000 vehicle movements throughout the duration of the job. However, this figure has been minimised as the close proximity of the River Thames has enabled 700,000 vehicle movements to be made by water.

Sutherland's involvement with GSAG allows Tideway to share knowledge of how to embed FORS in contracts, he said, as well as gaining a better understanding of industry developments and concerns. Continuing, he explained that GSAG is able to shape the content and relevance of the FORS Standard to those in the industry and any other affected parties. He highlighted the ability to keep informed of legislation updates and hearing about best practice as other GSAG benefits.



Concluding thoughts from the new FORS concessionaire

Bringing the official proceedings to a close, Mark Oldfield, Head of Transport at Sopra Steria – and the senior responsible officer for FORS – told delegates he was proud to lead the FORS team within the new management setup.



Oldfield said he and his team recognise fleet is not a 'one size fits all' business and that Sopra Steria wants to be at the heart of the FORS community. He confirmed it is listening and learning to ensure that FORS will be fit for purpose and aligned to the needs of operators and specifiers.

Sopra Steria is a digital transformation company, he explained. Within the Home Office, he revealed, it processes 800,000 visas and nine million passports a year. In addition, it manages over 50,000 apprenticeships for hundreds of companies and has recruited more than 2,500 prison officers for the Ministry of Justice.

In the case of FORS, Oldfield said Sopra Steria wants it to be a customer-centric business that is a leading enabler to the fleet and freight industry. He promised more efforts with different areas of FORS, such as FORS Fleet Management Systems, FORS Vehicle Graphics and FORS Fuel Expert.

Away from HGVs, he confirmed Sopra Steria is determined to reach out to van operators to improve training and skills. Oldfield cited the FORS Driver Handbook, which contained the latest information to help drivers drive legally, safely, and efficiently – saying it was a document that would benefit the whole industry, not just HGV drivers and operators.

Oldfield also announced Sopra Steria's priority of supporting the industry with the wider market changing requirements such as the Government carbon reduction targets and the increase of Clean Air and Ultra Low Emission Zones. He mentioned how GBF, who sell Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, and The Algorithm People, who conduct intelligent fleet analysis, have recently joined FORS and will be crucial to reducing emissions across the industry – demonstrating the commitment to driving positive change in this space. Oldfield also announced that he has been engaging with the Sopra Steria Financial Services team and wider company contracts such as National Highways to support with the reduction of emissions through insights from market engagement, data science and analytics.

Questions from the floor

As in previous years, audience participation was encouraged. The Sli.do app was introduced, allowing delegates to comment on presentations and ask questions to the speakers.

From the first session, there were – understandably – a lot of questions for Ian Henderson about the future of FORS, including one about the latest news with funded training. Henderson replied that the scheme is launching imminently, and he said FORS needs to ensure it is used and applied in the right way. He revealed those operators who had already engaged with FORS through surveys would be given the opportunity to talk about how funded training could work and added it would no longer be as London-centric as it is currently

Galaxy's Wayne Allen was asked how the company had managed to change driver behaviour and acceptance of FORS. He explained how drivers at all company depots had the benefits of FORS training explained to them and recognised how it would make them more wanted and respected by the company. The Galaxy hierarchy had to do the same with the operations managers, he said, to ensure everyone within the company had a proper understanding of FORS.

Andy Rhodes was then quizzed about HS2's rural driving course and possible areas where FORS could be improved. He revealed conversations had taken place between FORS and HS2, adding he would like a Safe Driver Scheme – regardless of rural or urban environment. While there were varying risks in various locations, he believed they should be incorporated into one single training offering.

Following the second session, Graham Holder was asked about auditing procedures, specifically those operators affected by the multi operator centre accreditation (MOCA) process. Holder explained that having the ability to use separate auditors for one operator allows consistency and the highest quality and accuracy standards in place. He added it also allowed independent reviews to be done on businesses' operating centres by separate auditors.

Steven Norris was then asked if the industry had concentrated too much on EV as opposed to hydrogen as a more sustainable power source for commercial vehicles. He responded by saying that while a huge amount of work had been done to reduce the weight of electric HGVs and buses, it still has a significant impact on payload because of the size of batteries required. He posed the prospect of synthetic fuels but admitted that they aren't really a 'green' solution, as opposed to green hydrogen.

Inevitably, given Norris' Westminster background, there was a political question that asked about how the transport industry can get more recognition from the government. He said it was the responsibility of the industry to say to the government that they can help because it has devised standards it believes the industry should operate by. A simple thing would be for DfT/government to make FORS a legal requirement, something Norris said he could see happening in the future.



Closing remarks

Salter brought the FORS Annual Conference to a close by summarising the day's content and highlighting where speakers had potentially helped FORS operators in the quest for safer, greener, and more efficient fleets.

He also reflected on promises made by Sopra Steria to ensure the scheme remains relevant to the needs of operators. He added everyone had an important part to play in driving up standards and developing best practice.

He hailed the members of the audience 'industry beacons' and said doing the right things will enable better business and allow the FORS community to continue to grow.



The FORS Team at the conference

Thank you to our speakers, headline sponsor and exhibitors



Simply Connected



UK Drug and Alcohol Safety Experts



the road safety charity



Construction Logistics and Community Safety

