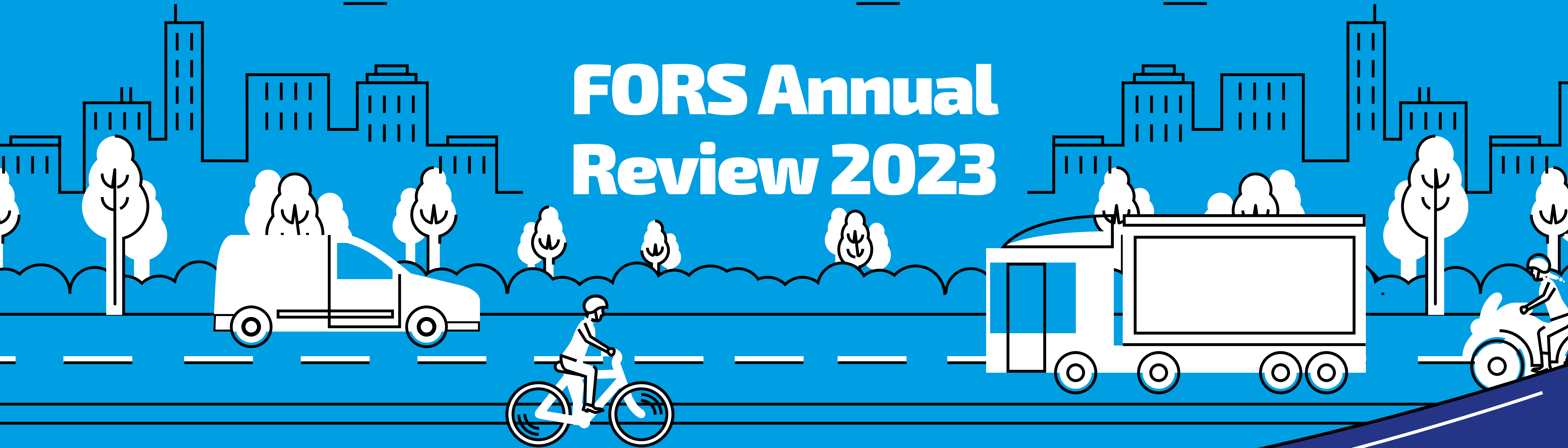


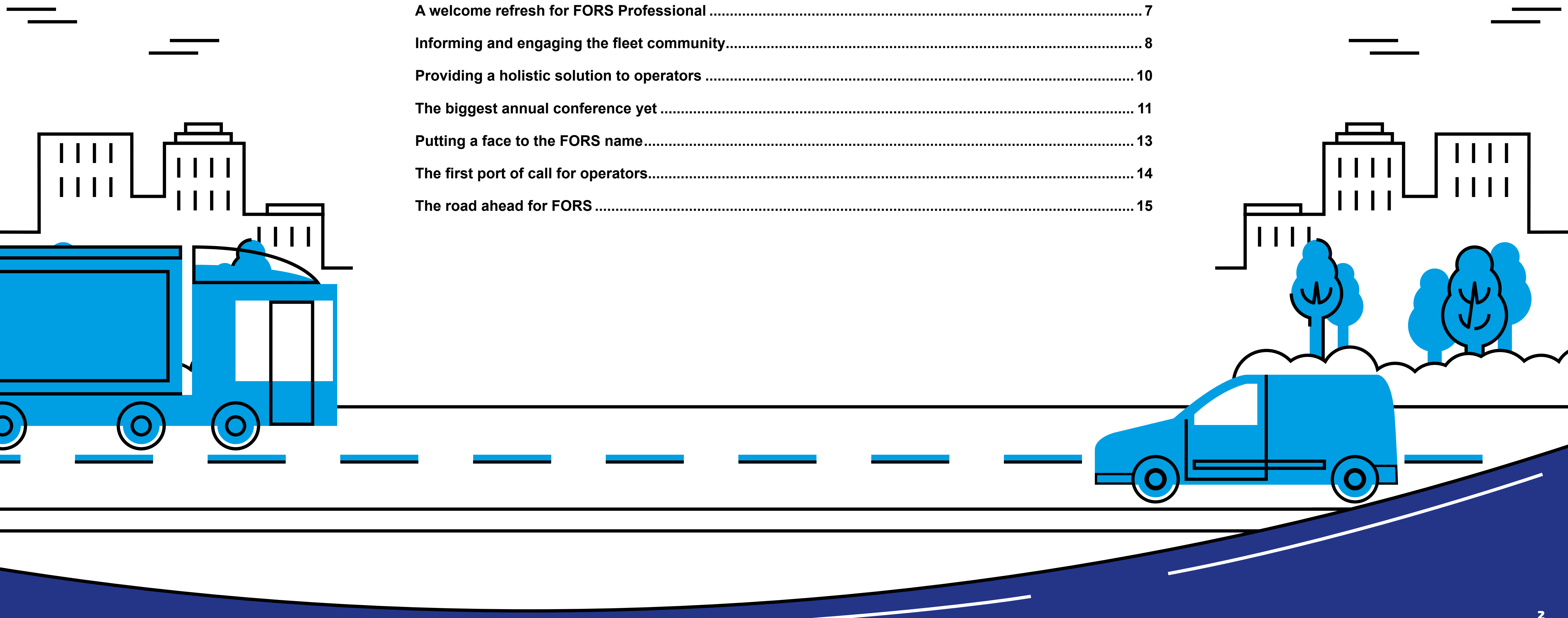
FORS Annual Review 2023



Find out more at
fors-online.org.uk

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Welcome to the 2023 FORS Annual Review.

In 2023, we made headway on several transformational projects. Early in the year we launched a more flexible way to achieve FORS Practitioner alongside offering five new Practitioner courses, followed by the introduction of a new certification: Advanced Practitioner. We had an overwhelming response to the new offering, launched in July 2023, and I'm pleased to say we ended the year with 82 Advanced Practitioners. We also continue to improve the stability and usability of the website, with a new look and feel for FORS online being launched later in the year.

Alongside the improvements to the scheme, the team worked hard to deliver an excellent service to operators and uphold the FORS Standard. We ended the year having completed a staggering 4,617 Bronze audits and 2,821 Silver/Gold audits. Not only that, but you told us the audit service we're delivering is excellent, as 894 operators rated our service 9.4/10 via our Post-audit Satisfaction Survey (which we also introduced in 2023). You told us the FORS Helpline Team has supported you through accreditation too – you can read more about the work they do on page 14.

We held our annual FORS conference in November, going back to our roots of hosting the event in Birmingham. The event was bigger and better than ever – you can read more about the day on pages 11-12.

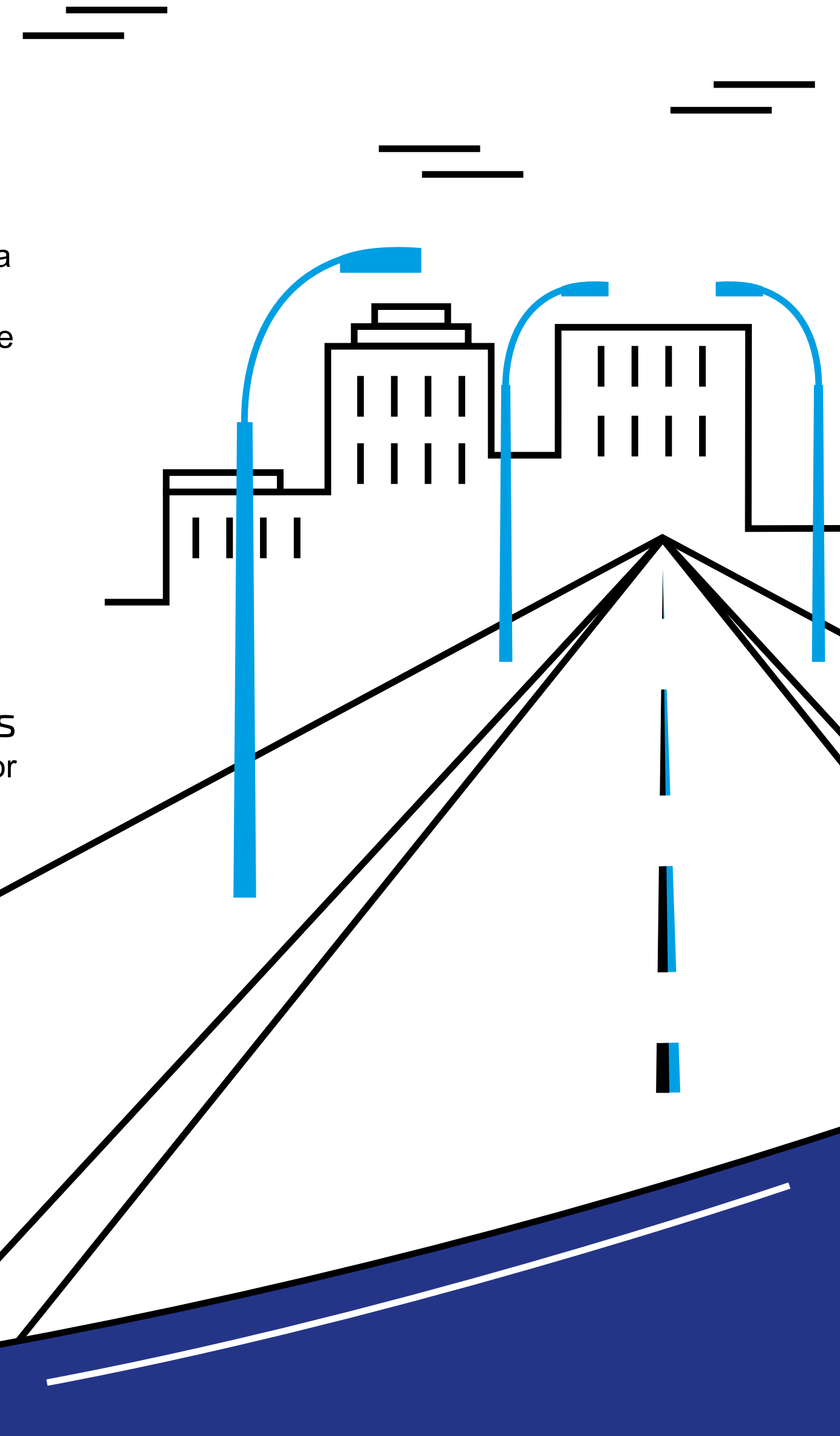
A theme throughout the conference, and throughout the year in fact, was the importance of FORS collaborating with industry stakeholders. In 2023, we strengthened our relationships with CLOCS, Driving for Better Business and Project EDWARD; enabling us to come together in our missions to make the roads safer for all. We held a workshop with key industry players (eg DVSA, Logistics UK and RHA) to look at our Future of Accreditation project, which you can read more about on page 5. Plus, we started working with six new partners that are offering exclusive benefits and services to our operators.

On a personal note, I ended the year at the six-month mark of being in post as FORS concession director. The last six months have flown by, and I'm proud to be working with such a knowledgeable and energetic team. Moving from a FORS Gold operator to the other side of the fence has been eye-opening, and I've witnessed the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to improve industry standards and make the roads safer and greener. Thank you to the FORS team for all that you do.

So, overall, I think it's fair to say that FORS has moved beyond being just an accreditation scheme. Through our expanding training programme, FORS Community events and FORS-branded products and services, we offer a holistic approach to help save operators money and be safer, smarter and greener. In 2023 we've further laid the foundations, with it being the second year Sopra Steria has looked after the concession, to grow the scheme in 2024. You'll hear more about our exciting plans on page 15.

Thank you for your support and for being part of the FORS Community.

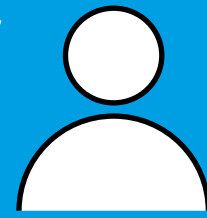
Geraint Davies
FORS Concession Director



The year in numbers

4,625

We finished the year on 4,625 Accredited Operators



4,617

We conducted 4,617 Bronze Audits

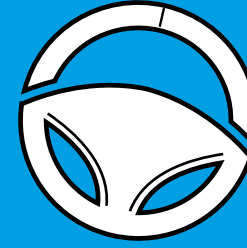


85%

First-time pass rate for Bronze was 85%

15,921

Drivers attended Safe Urban Driving or Safe Driving



3,000

Our social media followers increased by 3,000

20,081

The Helpline team handled 20,081 calls

100,797

Accredited vehicles surpassed the 100,000 mark, totalling 100,797

2,821

We reviewed 2,821 Silver/Gold applications

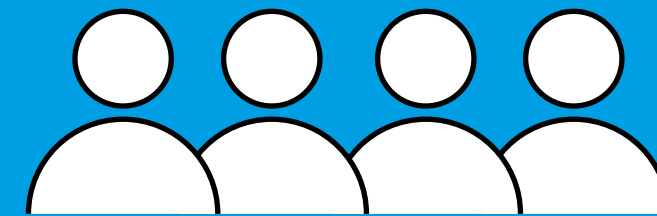


89%

First-time pass rate for Silver was 89%

279

Manager courses were delivered, with an average of 18 managers on each course



6

We introduced six new partners



26,349

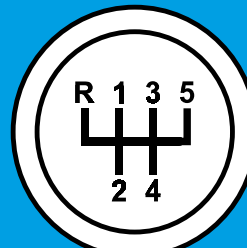
The Helpline team responded to 26,349 emails

91%

First-time pass rate for Gold was 91%

293

Managers became a FORS Practitioner or FORS Advanced Practitioner



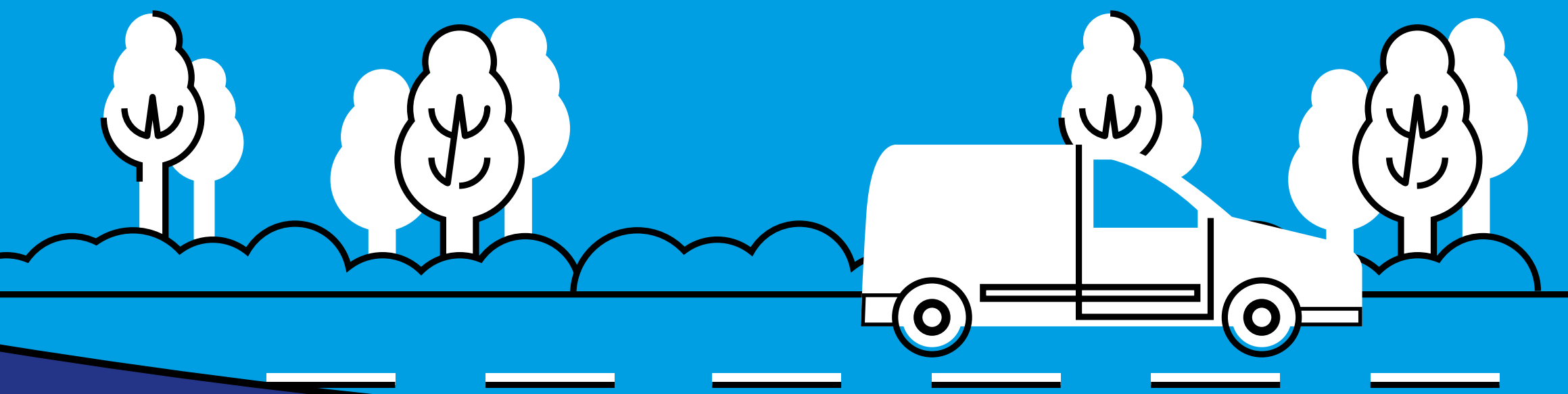
20

We sent out 20 press releases to the media



3

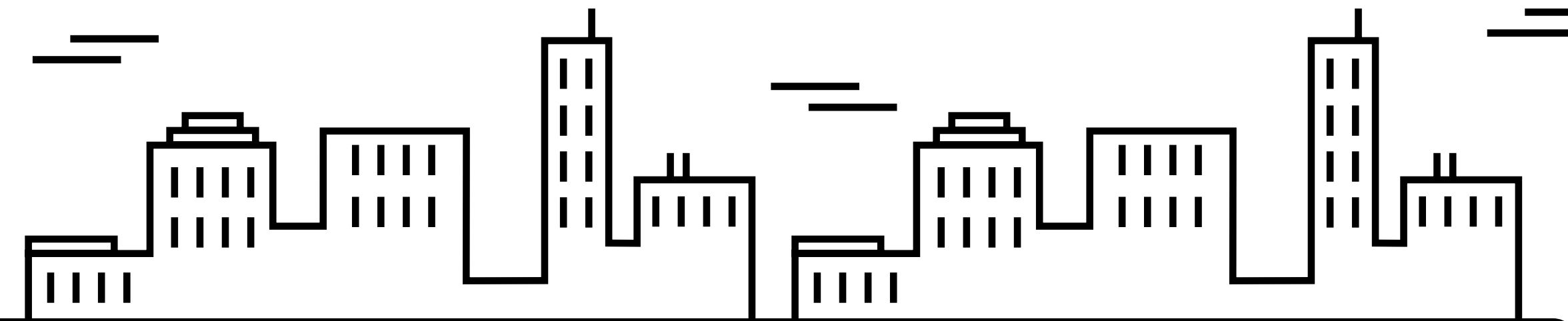
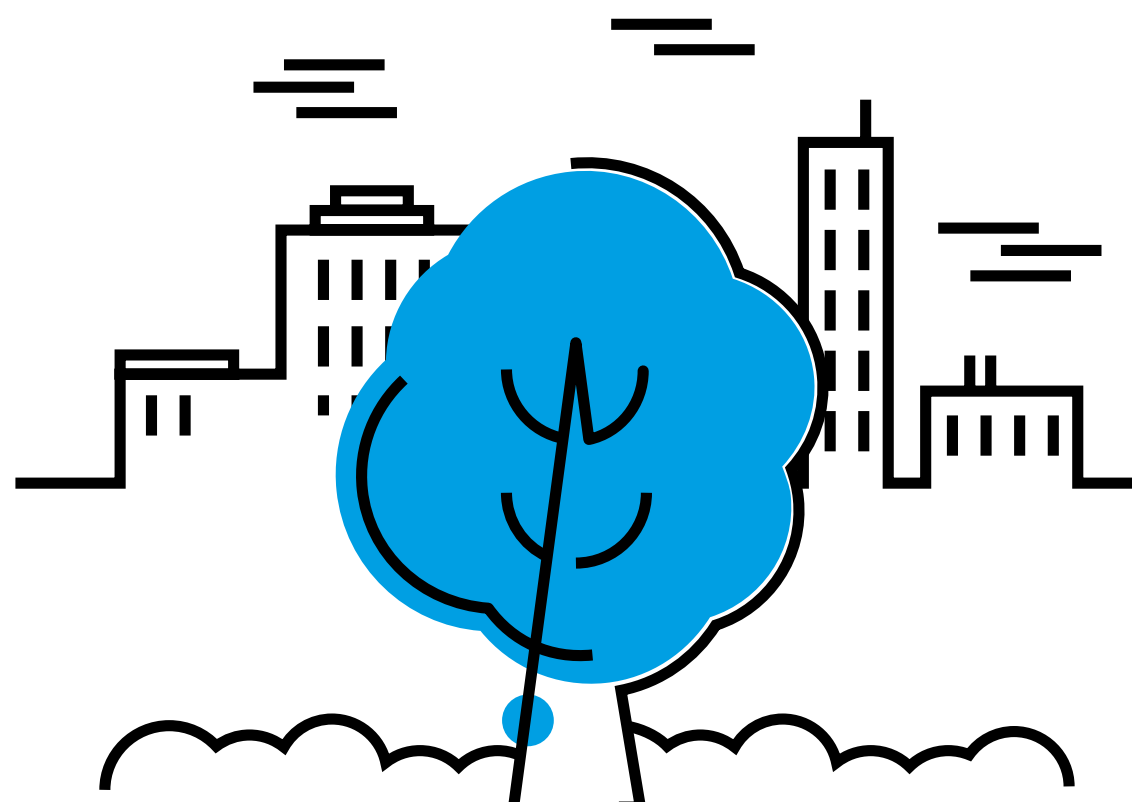
We were shortlisted for 3 awards



Upholding the FORS Standard

Quality checking audits, providing expert advice to operators and training auditors are just a few of the tasks completed by the FORS Quality & Assurance (Q&A) Team. In 2023, the team continued to maintain the highest standards of quality assurance and uphold the FORS Standard, whilst expanding their remit and offering more assistance to operators.

- The number of Bronze audits conducted was 4,617, with a first-time pass rate of 84 per cent.
- Looking at the data, the most common requirements that operators did not meet at Bronze were V1, D4 and D6.
- The number of Silver/Gold applications submitted was 2,821, with an average first-time pass rate of 90 per cent.
- Looking at the data, the most common requirements that operators did not meet at Silver/Gold were S2, S5/G5 and S8.
- The first-time pass rate for Enhanced Audits was 56 per cent, with 16 Enhanced Audits completed in the year.
- There were 14 Accredited IAFA companies, and we completed 286 audit QAs, four auditor QAs and 14 system checks on those companies.
- Quality assurance checks were completed on 2,214 audits/applications.



Future of Accreditation

'Future of Accreditation' is our **flagship programme** that aims to **demystify and simplify accreditation**. It was introduced in 2022 and looks at how we can ensure the end-to-end FORS audit and certification process is conducted in a way that provides a quality experience for operators, and accreditation is meaningful.

During 2023, the programme has made great strides. We **completely rewrote** key accreditation documentation and have transformed what was 'Rules and Procedures' and 'Compliance and Enforcement' documents into the new 'FORS Accreditation Guide'.

For the new document, we have used less punitive terms, more customer-centric language and reduced the total page count by over 60 per cent.

Plus, 2023 saw the **redesign of the Bronze audit question set and grading criteria** to ensure that it adequately audits regulatory requirements. The most significant change is the move away from a spreadsheet audit to an online platform audit, which will be launched in 2024. It will provide real-time insight, reporting and management of the FORS core service.

To improve our auditing service, we strengthened our relationships with FORS Audit Providers. Monthly meetings were introduced to evaluate performance and quarterly Audit Provider on-site meetings were held to ensure everyone was informed about recent and upcoming changes. We were pleased to welcome one new Audit Provider in 2023, Logistics UK, with the team providing training, guidance and support throughout the process.

Communication with FORS Auditors was bolstered too, with the Q&A Team delivering six training sessions for 63 new auditors, introducing a quarterly newsletter and hosting Auditor drop-in sessions. Alongside this, unannounced random audit spot checks were introduced in September.

A priority for the Q&A Team for 2023 was to be seen as engaging and approachable to operators. We recognise that some may feel nervous about having an audit, so we want to show operators we are here to support them and only want them to succeed. Plus, we want to ensure the knowledge we have within the team is shared with the operator community. We introduced workshops and webinars to make the team actively available to operators, which you can read more about on page 13.

Lastly, to help support operators further, an Operational Performance Action Plan template was developed by the Q&A Team. The template supports Silver applicants in satisfying Silver requirement S2 Performance Data.

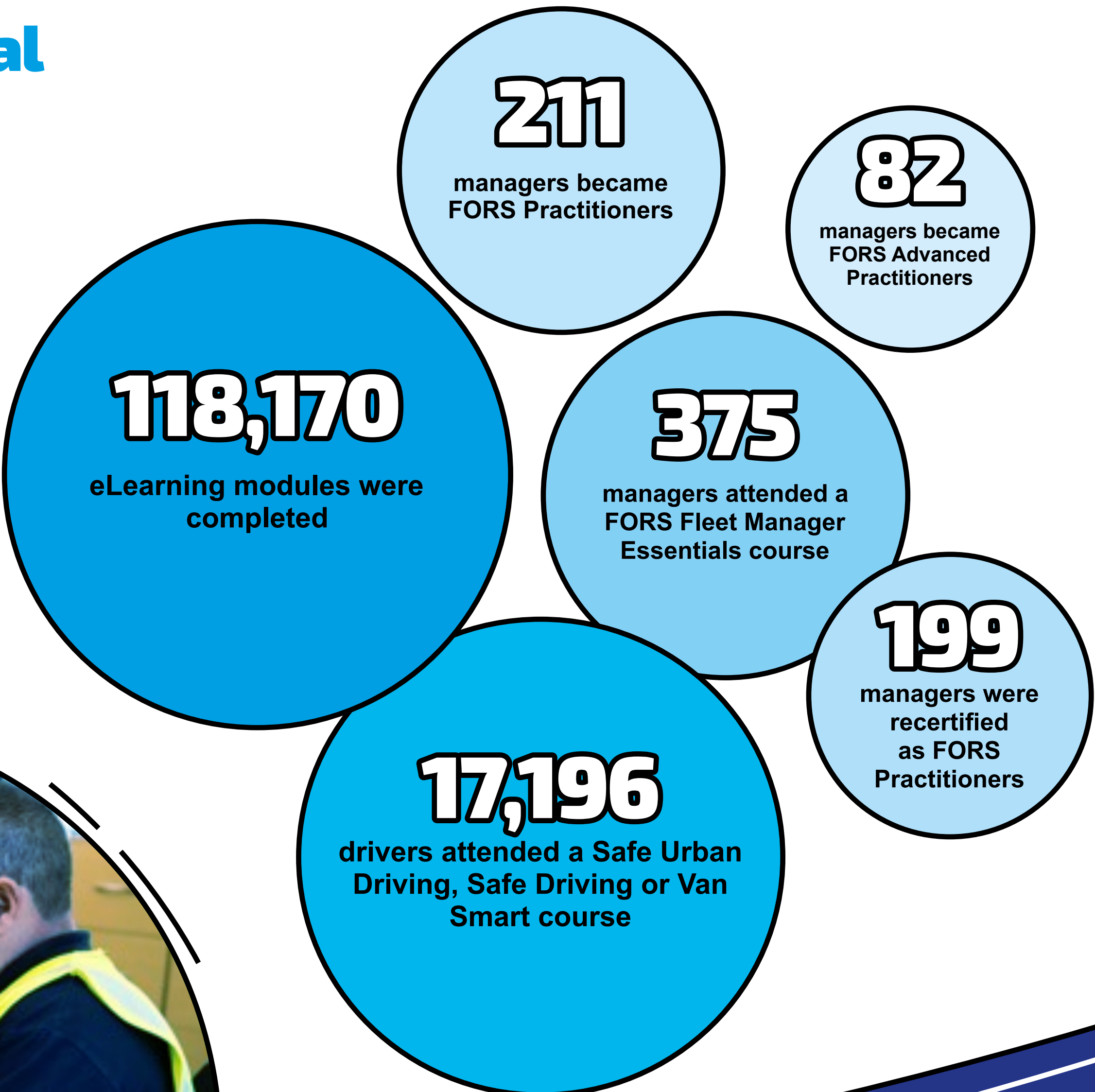
“We have undertaken all these tasks and so much more so that our operators can display their FORS badge with pride, our specifiers can have a peace of mind knowing they have the safest and greenest supply chain, and our auditors have the confidence they are representing a reputable scheme.”



A welcome refresh for FORS Professional

Providing esteemed professional development options to fleet managers and drivers is a key part of the FORS service. Enhancing the FORS Professional offering was a big focus for FORS in 2023, with many exciting advancements taking place:

- We launched five extra FORS Practitioner modules: Managing Driver Fatigue Risk, Managing Drivers Hours and Records, Managing Abnormal Indivisible Loads, Introduction to Fleet Auditing and Road Traffic Collision Investigation.
- Following operator feedback, we changed how FORS Practitioner works. Instead of the requirement to complete 10 mandatory modules, managers can now take six mandatory courses and are able to choose the remaining four from a selection of nine optional modules.
- 'FORS Advanced Practitioner' was introduced, giving those managers who want to go above and beyond the opportunity to demonstrate their skillset and commitment to the role. At the end of 2023, there were 82 FORS Advanced Practitioners.
- The Safe Urban Driving and Van Smart courses were revamped and merged into one Work-Related Road Risk driver training course: Safe Driving.
- We incorporated the training upload for licenced and approved training providers on FORS online, instead of Freight Portal.
- LoCITY Driving was redesigned and prepared for a 2024 launch.



Informing and engaging the fleet community

The Marketing & Communications Team wanted to build on the success of 2022; improving the perception of FORS and increasing operator engagement through targeted, relevant communications. The team also supported the business in growing the scheme through engaging and benefits-led marketing.

Notable achievements include launching a new guide that informs and educates operators on hot topics in the industry. The first edition of 'FORS Focus on Transport Trends' explained how technology is shaping the road safety landscape and features insights from operators, leading technology providers and FORS' legal partner.

The team also created case studies with several operators to promote the benefits of FORS and inspire other operators to join the scheme. One highlight was creating a video with the team at FORS Gold operator MTS Cleansing Services Ltd, who told us how the training provided by FORS has helped to change driver behaviour and their accreditation has helped them to win more work.

A case study with MTS Cleansing Services Ltd

"After becoming FORS Bronze accredited," said Charlotte Taylor, "we realised FORS was able to provide **a consistent and reliable audit service**. This ensured all our vehicles running out of Rochester, and our fleet operations generally, were **legally compliant, safe and efficient**. This provided the impetus to go on the FORS journey to achieve even higher levels of best practice. Then," she said, "our HS2 work presented us with a contractual requirement to attain FORS Silver, and this has **certainly led to new business wins elsewhere**."

"Very soon after, and though there was no specific business requirement, we set our sights on FORS Gold – to hit **the highest quality levels of fleet management** – and this is where the **FORS training has become fundamental to fleet efficiency**, especially helping drivers become even safer and even more productive."

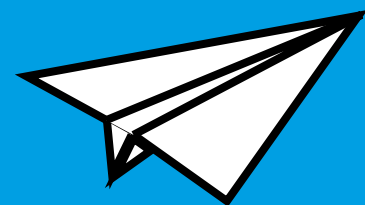


The FORS website has seen significant changes too. During 2023, we moved hosting provider to Amazon Web Service (AWS) to improve security and stabilise the platform. The web interface has been redesigned into the new branding with more visibility of FORS services and benefits. This has improved the operator experience with easier navigation and improved usability. A new feature has also been introduced, where operators can amend their fleet details and vehicle numbers via self-help, saving time for both operators and FORS administration.

Finally, the team continued to shout about new initiatives, partnerships and operator successes via the media and FORS social media channels.

20

Press releases



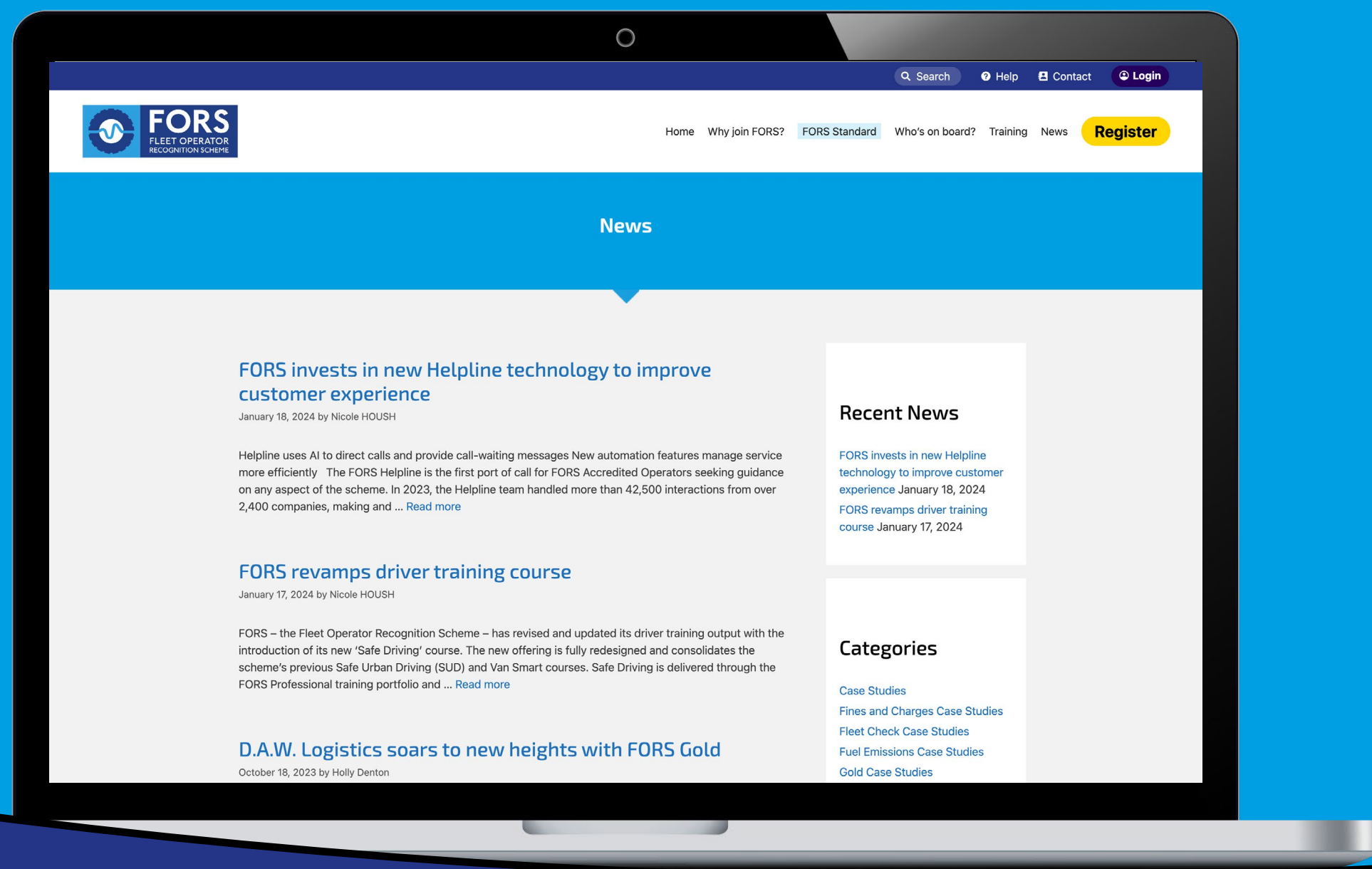
62

News articles generated by FORS



315

News articles FORS is mentioned in



Social media statistics

LinkedIn

944,485

Impressions

2,904

New followers

843

Shares

22,849

Clicks

9,926

Visitors

525

Posts

Twitter/X

112,511

Impressions

96

New followers

156

Likes

Providing a holistic solution to operators

During 2023, we established a number of new partners and reviewed current offers to ensure we are providing operators with real value. Our partner offerings help operators be safer, smarter and greener, and highlights of our partnership activity in 2023 include:

- We launched an exclusive FORS insurance offering that recognises the adoption by operators of best practice. It provides opportunities for operators to save costs, receive additional benefits and enjoy an improved claims experience.
- We introduced a range of new Affinity Partner offerings:
 - Penalty Charge Notice Management Service, provided by Logistics UK
 - Fuel Analytics, provided by Portland Fuels
 - Vehicle Safety Solutions, provided by Fleet Sense/Durite
 - Vehicle Inspection Service, provided by Lloyd Morgan
 - Electronic Proof of Delivery ePod, provided by Podfather
 - Driver Fatigue and Distraction AI Solution and Support Service, provided by Seeing Machines
- We reviewed our existing Affinity Partners and we are working with them to ensure their offerings are relevant and of value to the FORS Community.
- We established third-party training offerings that help operators train and develop their employees. These offerings give operators access to discounted pricing, saving money and time that would be spent sourcing quality training providers.
- We put in place unique employee benefit offerings, such as retail discounts, gym membership and personal tyre offers. We are continuing to develop and refine these offerings to enable the FORS Community to access additional value from their FORS subscription.



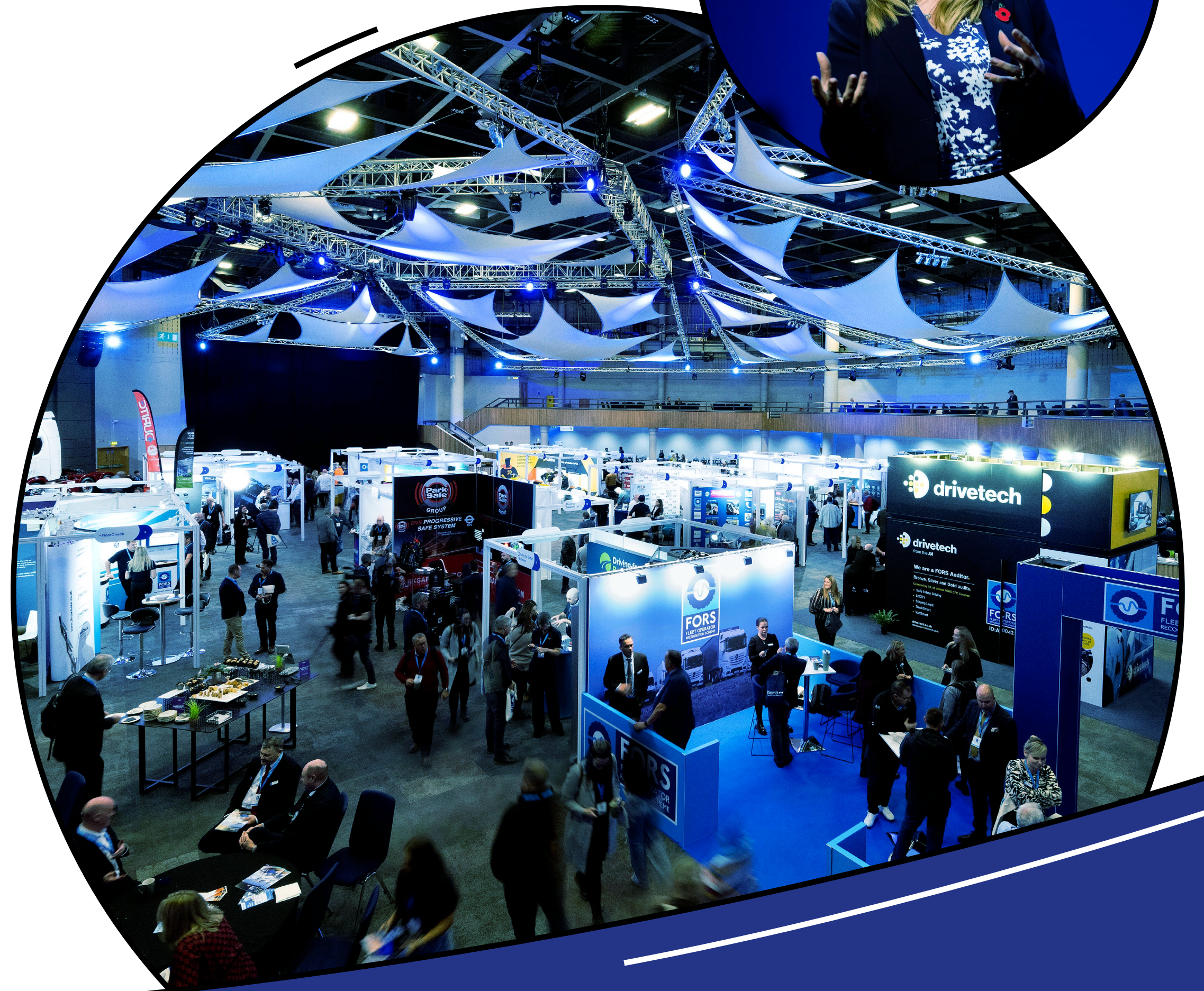
The biggest annual conference yet

Back in Birmingham and with the promise it would be the biggest event yet, the FORS Annual Conference returned for its sixth chapter on 2 November 2023.

It had been 16 months since the last event, due to operator feedback that an event in the autumn season is preferable. The location returned to its Birmingham roots, being hosted at the ICC Birmingham, with the Midlands being best placed to serve operators based in the North and South alike. The venue was also the perfect place to host the 400+ transport professionals, thanks to its spacious layout and modern fittings – not to mention the blue décor in the auditorium, synonymous with the famous FORS blue. A personal thank you from the FORS Team to all the delegates who made it to Birmingham despite the challenge of Storm Ciaran.

When deciding the theme ‘Building a resilient FORS Community for the road ahead’, the FORS Team aimed to curate a line-up of talks that not only gave practical advice to operators on how they could overcome the many challenges facing the industry but also instil a community spirit within delegates. After all, we are stronger together, and the creation of new networks, as well as familiar faces bumping into one another, could be witnessed across the exhibition hall throughout the conference breaks.

As in previous years, there was a well-supported exhibition featuring a wide range of FORS supporters. Headline sponsor Drivetech had a stand within the expo area and was represented on the programme by UK Commercial Consultant, Anthony Marcou.



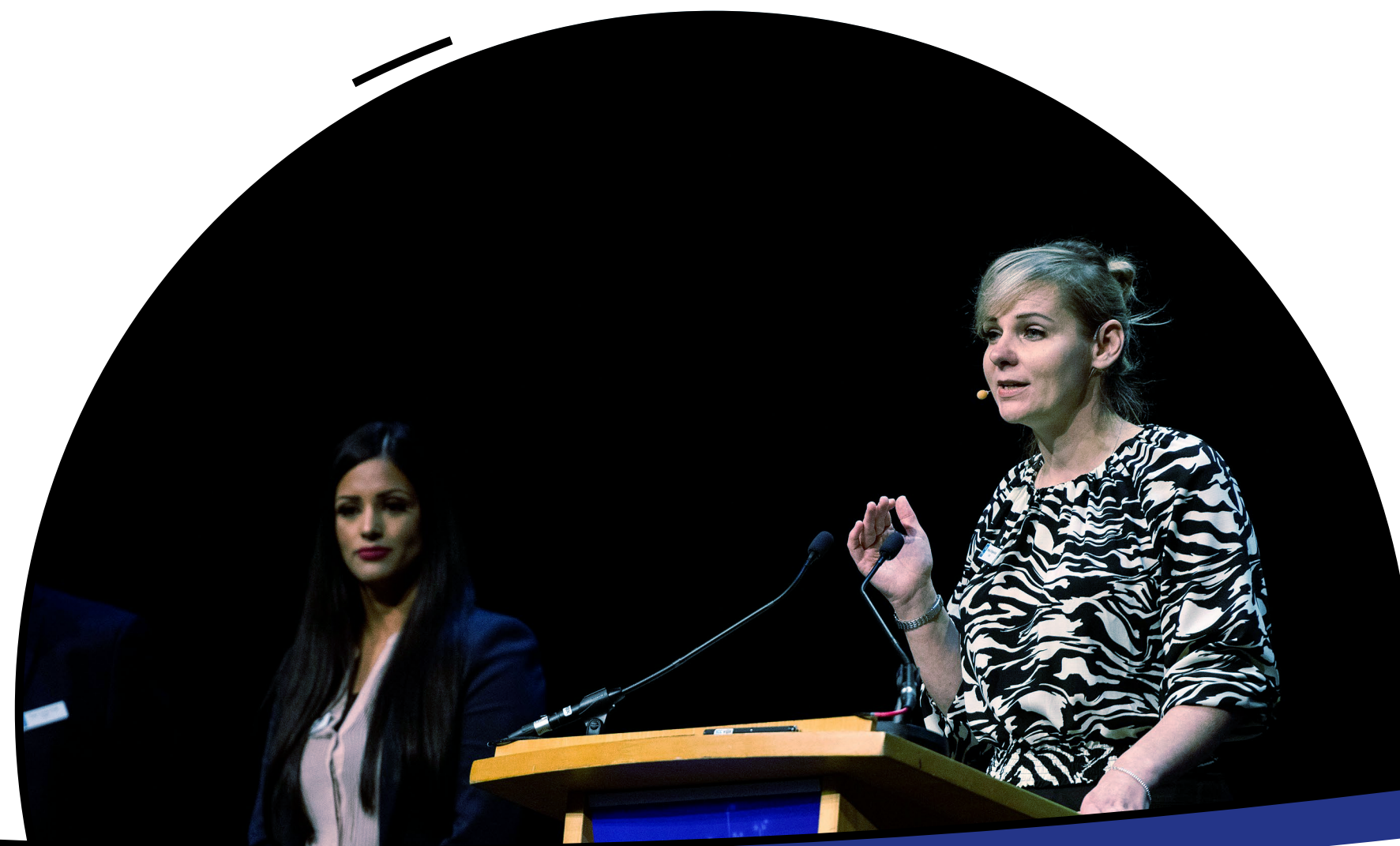
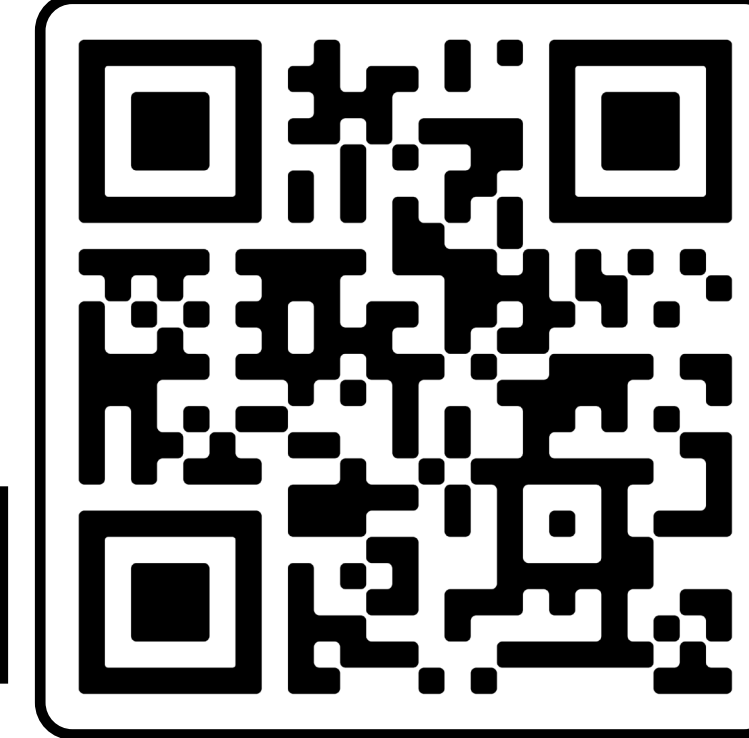
Representing FORS, Concession Director Geraint Davies and Technical Adviser Glen Davies opened the proceedings with a rundown of what has been happening at FORS since the last event. They also covered what operators can expect in 2024 and beyond.

The rest of the line-up featured the following speakers and talks:

- Senior Traffic Commissioner Richard Turfitt reported on 'Taking Responsibility', with the key message that operators should take a risk-based approach to management.
- Managing Director of Fox Brothers Paul Fox spoke about how being FORS Gold helped his business on the road to net zero.
- Head of Commercial Vehicle Incident Prevention Team at National Highways, Mark Cartwright, addressed the audience on the matter of improving road safety and how we can influence others in the industry.
- 'DVSA Vision to 2030' was delivered by Director of Enforcement Marian Kitson, as she spoke about the importance of data, improving air quality and the educational resources provided by the DVSA.

- Shireen Ali-Khan, engagement specialist at Women in Transport, took the audience through how to build a workplace community for the road ahead.
- Former MD of a logistics business, Rebecca Jenkins, spoke about how to create a thriving business in an unpredictable world.
- Anthony Marcou from Driveteq outlined the benefits of training when looking to improve driver safety.
- Members of the Governance Standards and Advisory Group (GSAG) hosted a panel, outlining what to expect for Version 7 and the general role of GSAG.
- Darren Lindsey, director of Project Zero, delivered a speech on how improving safety can enhance operational resilience.

Scan for more information about the conference



Putting a face to the FORS name

- 12** Industry events
- 7** Q&A session with FORS Specialists
- 6** Associate and Affinity Partner webinars
- 4** Prepare for Bronze workshops
- 3** Award shortlists

Increasing our support for operators and offering more digital events was a focus for the Events Team for 2023. We launched two new online webinar series: ‘Q&A session with FORS Specialists’ and ‘Prepare for Bronze workshop’, with over 200 operators attending in total. Both events were led by our Q&A Team and gave operators the opportunity to ask questions directly to FORS experts.

We also introduced webinars, in collaboration with our specialist partners, that focused on topical challenges operators may be facing. Getting the right insurance deal, navigating the EV transition and keeping fuel prices down were all subjects discussed with subject matter experts through our six Associate and Affinity Partner webinars. On average, the webinars were rated 4.5 out of five by participants when surveyed.

The FORS Team represented the scheme at 12 events, spreading the FORS message far and wide. FORS exhibited at key industry events: Commercial Vehicle Show, Road Transport Expo, Multimodal and Microlise, as well as presenting at smaller, more sector-specific events. Plus, as part of our partnership activity, FORS Head of Service Delivery, Livia Gergely, and FORS Technical Adviser, Glen Davies, attended Project EDWARD’s parliamentary reception in December.

Finally, the team attended ceremonies for three award shortlists we received during 2023:

- ‘Contribution to Achieving Net Zero’ at the Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management awards, in collaboration with O’Donovan
- ‘Excellence in Customer Service’ at the Export & Freight awards
- ‘Customer Service’ at the WhatVan awards



The first port of call for operators

The FORS Helpline was busy in 2023 assisting operators with their queries or reaching out to operators to check if they need further assistance. In the 2023 Accredited Operator Survey, 85 per cent of respondents that have used the helpline rated it positively.

The outbound calls conducted by the team are focused on moments in the accreditation process where operators may require more assistance, e.g. an operator coming up to their expiry date or one that has not booked their Bronze audit yet. The feedback has been excellent, and we have been able to use the insights provided to make further improvements to the scheme.

The Helpline Team has also assisted in producing useful resources. For example, the FORS Welcome Pack was launched in the middle of the year and now has over 300 downloads from recent joiners to the scheme.

26,
349

Emails responses sent

15,
441

Inbound calls

4,640

Outbound calls

670

Calls that went from a 0 to +5 call sentiment

643

Operators provided feedback

2.97 mins

Average handle time was 2.97 minutes

34 secs

Average wait time was 34 seconds

'The **FORS Helpline is one of the best**, you actually **speak to a human** and not a virtual assistant. Call waiting is at a minimum or answered in seconds. Staff are so helpful and knowledgeable, they will always respond to any question.'

'FORS Helpline staff are **always brilliant**.'

'Since the **takeover** FORS staff have become **more customer focused and helpful**.'

The road ahead for FORS

Firstly, a big announcement for 2024 will be the launch of Version 7 of the FORS Standard. The Standard is updated by the Governance and Standards Advisory Group (GSAG) every two years to ensure it reflects industry best practice and aligns to any changes in legislation. Whilst most changes are minor, the next version of the Standard will see notable change within the requirements relating to environmental protection. We will be providing lots of resources to help operators get to grips with the changes.

Alongside this, we will be launching a new digital auditor platform that will bring more transparency about how we audit, as well as improve the audit experience for operators.

For training, we will be building upon the success of the FORS Professional refresh this year, launching a new Practitioner module and reviewing our eLearning requirements.

On the events front, we will be launching a new event, where we will bring together key stakeholders for FORS to review proposed changes to how the scheme is administered, discuss progress for our flagship 'Future of Accreditation' project (page 5 for more information) and explore how we can continue to make roads safer and greener, together.

Underpinning all the exciting activities we have planned, we will have operators' interests front of mind and continue to deliver a service that is cost effective. I'm acutely aware the freight and fleet sector are under immense pressure, with margins being eroded and significant economic headwinds. So, we will keep expanding our benefits and offers; keep growing and proving the need for accreditation; and keep listening to operators and transforming the scheme.

Geraint Davies
FORS Concession Director





Find out more at
fors-online.org.uk

