

Back to basics on decency



everyone
home safe
every day

Dear all,

I'm glad to be getting back to some form of normality after 3 weeks off sick. Writing these messages to you, and the subsequent conversations we have when you reply - which you can do [here](#) - is a big part of what I enjoy about this job.

It's okay not to be okay; whether that is your physical or mental wellbeing, we all have days or periods where we are not on our 'A game'. On any given day our entire workforce is a mix of people who are on their A game and those who aren't.

It's important we recognise that, and we support our colleagues, meeting them where they are.

My recent illness, and ongoing conversations about decency, highlight that looking out for each other now more than ever, is paramount. It hammered home that the absolute basics are non-negotiable; **everyone home safe, every day**. That's what I mean when I talk about decency and as leaders, we have to nail these basics and make sure everyone knows it's fine if they're not okay sometimes.

In a complex railway, people just want clear objectives and clear communication; what is my job, what is required of me, why does it matter, and how do I fit in? They want to use their skills, get support, and be recognised. Respect, fairness, and talking openly builds trust, and trust makes us all work better. **This is how we build a railway we can all be proud of – where everyone feels valued and has a voice**. It's not just the right thing to do, it makes good business sense too.

Decency also means we talk openly. I want you to feel free to call out bad behaviour without fear, knowing that some days you'll be on form and others you won't. Valuing every person and listening to different ideas is crucial, especially if we're building a culture where it's okay to not be okay. I am having these conversations in my day-to-day too, challenging what basic decency looks like. Some chats have been tough, but completely necessary.

Being decent is also about fairness, opportunity and listening to people from different backgrounds and different ways of thinking. I want to build a culture where everyone feels safe to speak up, even if their idea isn't popular. Shutting down different views isn't just rude, it's risky. We need to be open to new



Rob Cairns,
Regional Managing Director

ideas, question our own thinking, and actively seek out fresh perspectives. That's how we build a truly safe and inclusive place for everyone, where it's okay to not be okay, and we support each other's journey.

Everyone's contribution counts and as leaders, we need to learn from you. I want the leaders in this region to be visible, understand what you, their teams and colleagues do, and really listen. Some days you'll feel great, other days not, and that's fine. During those vulnerable moments, our collective responsibility to pitch in and lift each other up becomes even clearer.

Thanks for all your hard work. Let's keep decency, understanding and supporting each other, as our top priority.

Stay safe,

Rob