

Reinventing rail compliance: how SWR kept obligations under control through re-nationalization.

CHALLENGE

When business changes, compliance systems either adapt or they break.

Rail compliance is not theoretical. It is constant delivery, reporting, and public accountability. SWR's role includes managing the contractual relationship with the Department for Transport and **making sure all obligations are met.**

Before nationalization, SWR had a long, detailed contract and a structured way to manage obligations in CoreStream GRC since 2017. Obligations were stored with **owners, evidence, and visibility** into where things stood. Then when the business changed, the contract changed also. SWR had a transition period internally trying to map out and understand the changes, where they went back to manual work for the new contract.

That **"nothing gets dropped" problem is the real risk**, and one we see often at CoreStream GRC. When obligation management becomes spreadsheet-led, 2 things happen fast:

1. The work becomes fragile and dependent on a small number of people holding it together.
2. Senior stakeholders get overwhelmed with noise, and the signal gets missed

SOLUTION

Purpose-built technology streamlined compliance requirements and provided assurance

Working with the CoreStream GRC's implementation and customer success team, **SWR was able to adjust and design their existing instance around the new contract and its many obligations.** The key theme of the sessions was not "more features." It was **day-to-day usability.**

1) The admin load dropped, and the chasing stopped

In most organizations, compliance teams waste time doing the same 3 things on loop: nudging, collecting updates, and rebuilding reports. SWR cut that cycle. Instead, obligation owners update directly in the system, and because many users only log in once per rail period, the system has to be obvious, not fragile.

2) Leadership reporting became fast, visual, and value-driven

The truth is that when reporting is complex, it often becomes slow, and then inevitably there are delays, and it becomes late. And when it's late, leaders stop trusting it. CoreStream GRC helped SWR show progress quickly, in a format directors actually engage with.

3) Legacy obligations were archived properly, so the live contract stays clean

SWR separated the old contract from the new one. It stayed accessible when needed, but stopped weighing down day-to-day work, that change removed overload immediately.



ABOUT SWR

Industry: Passenger rail transport

Staff: over 5,000 full-time employees

Demand: Approximately 165.6 million passenger journeys according to 2025 stats

CoreStream GRC customer: 9 years

"I've used other systems before when I've worked in other places, and this is by far the best and most intuitive one I've used."

James Ball

Head of Government Partnership
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OUTCOME

Fewer points of failure, better continuity, and real capacity back

SWR'S OUTCOMES WERE OPERATIONAL. LESS ADMIN. BETTER GOVERNANCE. MORE RESILIENCE.

Better continuity and less "single point of failure" risk

If compliance depends on fragile spreadsheets, you are one mistake away from losing trust and losing control. CoreStream GRC gave SWR **confidence** that the record would hold up even under disruption.

Clearer risk control tied to business objectives.

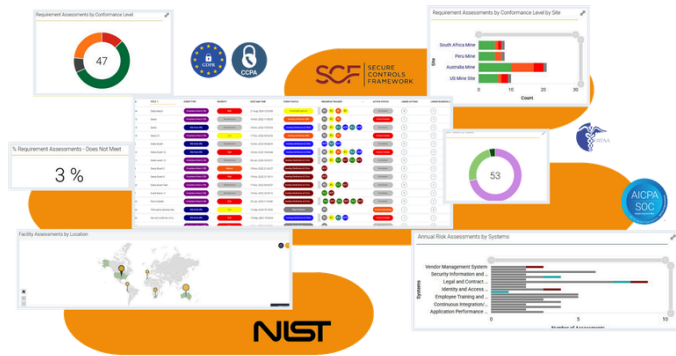
When risk control operates in a silo and does not have the overall business values embedded within it, it becomes a burden to organizations and their staff. People see it as extra admin, leadership gets noise instead of insight, and the work drifts back to spreadsheets and inbox chasing.

SWR's experience with CoreStream GRC is the opposite. For them, contract and compliance management is **directly tied to how the business runs**: staying on top of obligations, avoiding missed deliverables and accurately proving what's been done without burning time.

At a practical level, which meant the platform became a **control mechanism** that the business could actually operate day to day, not a repository that only a specialist team understands. The efficiency points matter in a public service context. **When admin effort drops, the organization can focus on resources where they actually belong.**

Want to see how the CoreStream GRC platform would work in your environment?

If you **manage large volumes of obligations, deal with contract change, or want effective GRC leadership reporting** without inbox overload, this is the exact problem pattern CoreStream GRC can solve.



"A lot of the business now can just self-serve... put an update in themselves. We've never had an issue with anyone not being able to use the system. People do seem to work it out for themselves. I've never had formal training on it."

James Ball

Head of Government Partnership
 South Western Railway

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