



*Making a difference*

# *Social Value Report 2022-2023*



NORTHERN

*Go do your thing*

# ***Contents***

***Welcome***

***Executive Summary***

***Northern's Social Value Delivery***

1. Customers at the Heart
2. Valued People
3. Operational Excellence
4. Sustainable Growth

***Conclusion***

***Appendix***

# **Welcome Nick Donovan, Managing Director**

**As the UK's largest passenger train operator outside of London, Northern connects people and communities across the North of England.**

**And it's not just about running trains; we have a responsibility to make a positive difference wherever we can and our team of 7,000<sup>1</sup> colleagues are committed to doing just that. This wider ambition is reflected in our vision, which is 'to make a positive impact for the North in all we do and for all we serve'.**

Since Northern began operating under DOHL in 2020 we have worked hard to improve performance, create a better customer experience and support everyone we interact with. We're making progress, adapting to external factors and changing customer needs.

The last few years have highlighted the stark differences in standards of living and access to opportunity that exist in the UK. The impact of the rise of cost of living affects customers and colleagues, and we also know that Northern serves many of the most deprived areas in England. We may be a train operator, but one of our core purposes is about connecting people and opportunities. Through our direct employment, supply chain and wider community engagement we provide much more than just moving people around the North.



This is our first social value report, which provides a detailed look at the wider impact of our business operations on economic, environmental and social wellbeing. We have already undertaken work to understand our true socio-economic impact in the North and delivered action to reduce our environmental impact. This report reflects the broader scope of our activities to support inclusive and resilient communities on our network as well as our responsibility towards effective stewardship of the environment.

It is of course vital that all of this is underpinned by a commitment to providing a culture where our colleagues are supported in every element of their role. Where they truly feel that they can bring their 'whole selves' to work and know that career development and opportunity is available for all.

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<sup>1</sup> Total number of colleagues including apprentices

We recognise that responsible business is vital and this is reflected in our strategies and decision making processes. During the period covered by this report we have begun to define clearly what responsible business means for Northern, putting the weight of strong governance and strategy behind our intentions to ensure we create meaningful and sustainable impact. I am personally delighted that we have formed a Responsible Business Steering Group formed of senior representatives from all key areas of the business. This group will ensure that our responsible business priorities are imbedded at the very heart of Northern as well as providing a golden thread through which we can bring the whole business together in line with our values.

This report will give a flavour of the many and varied initiatives that we undertake as part of our commitment to serving the North. Whilst we are incredibly proud of our achievements during this time, we know this is just the start. We're looking forward to building on our successes as we continue to understand more about our impact and how best to support our colleagues, customers and the communities on our network – working to ensure a better, more sustainable future for us all.



**Nick Donovan,  
Managing Director**

# Executive Summary

'Social Value refers to wider financial and non-financial impacts of projects and programmes including the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital and the environment' UK Cabinet Office



**Operational impacts**  
£568,410,489



**Environmental impacts**  
£2,850,617



**Economic impacts**  
£957,746,703

**Total Social, Environmental & Economic impact breakdown £1,529,007,809**

It is widely recognised that the rail industry plays an essential role for people and communities across the UK and has a pivotal part to play in the UK's transition to Net Zero.

Alongside the economic value that comes from the industry through employment and procurement of goods and services, historically the railway has been the glue that binds the UK. It connects communities to each other and enables access to education and employment opportunities that exist in economic hubs as well as leisure activities which have seen a resurgence in popularity since the Covid 19 pandemic. Northern recognises the vital role we have in delivering social value across our entire network. Our first social value report has provided an opportunity for us to take a holistic look at the difference we are able to make in the context of economic, environmental and social wellbeing.



<sup>2</sup> The value we bring | Northern (northernrailway.co.uk)

This approach builds on previous work undertaken for NTL to measure our economic value<sup>2</sup>. The earlier study focussed on direct and indirect economic impacts from employees and supply chains, as well as the impacts our operations have for customers, places and overall society. It demonstrated that our impacts comfortably outweighed the level of subsidy we receive to operate our services. Our current study maintains some aspects considered in the previous work, but – as set out below – focuses on a set of wider social value considerations. As more factors are in scope, some of the values are different, however a similar positive impact is clearly apparent.

To prepare for this first report, Northern commissioned an independent consultant to work with colleagues across the business. They assessed the social value we are currently delivering and measured this using the Rail Safety and Standards Board's online Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT). Extensive work was carried out with senior stakeholders to define Northern's priorities for social value reporting and future delivery. By doing this we've been able to ensure that they align with our wider business strategy and commitments, and the values that lie at the heart of all we do at Northern. As a result we are reporting on ten of the twelve 'social impacts' that form the measurement framework that sits behind the RSVT. We have addressed the two social impacts linked to the supply chain – resilience and capacity – under the overall heading of 'supply chain'. We have also split RSSB's 'safety, health and wellbeing' social impact category into two separate and distinct areas as this reflects Northern's approach. We have aligned these social impacts with the four strategic ambitions that collectively drive our vision to 'make a positive impact for the North, in all we do and for all we serve'.

Following an extensive audit of existing social value being delivered across the business, it has become clear that while we may not have previously been using the term 'social value' specifically, we have been proactively delivering a vast amount of social value in many areas of

the business. In order to select the most relevant social value measurement indicators from RSSB's framework of over 500, a detailed mapping exercise has been conducted to align the social value being delivered by Northern with the most relevant indicators on the RSVT framework; ensuring the availability of data to evidence this. Each reporting organisation is advised by RSSB to select the social value indicators are most relevant to their business. We have selected 54 indicators to report on, encompassing a mix of both monetised and qualitative (non-monetised) measures to give as broad a picture as possible of our social value delivery and to inform our priorities for future strategy and development.

It is important to recognise that the RSVT is very much still in its development phase with limited guidance to accompany the measurement framework. This has been challenging in terms of defining exactly what should or should not be recorded in some instances. We have consulted with both RSSB and other train operating companies to understand the wider industry approach in these cases and have only recorded the social value delivery whereby we can be entirely confident in our approach and evidence. As we have a wider commitment to effective governance of all areas of the business, a sample of the data we have recorded on the RSVT has been verified by our internal audit team. The report has also been reviewed by Northern's Responsible Business Steering Group and been subject to scrutiny by Northern's Director Group and Board. Due to the size and complexity of the business we acknowledge that capturing everything that Northern is delivering would not be possible for this first year of reporting. We expect this figure will grow organically as we become more mature in this space. We view this year as a baseline and the time and resource committed to preparing for this report has served as an excellent way to understand key areas of current delivery as well as formalising our approach to responsible business; all of which will inform the strategic development and implementation of this area across Northern's operations.



The reporting period referenced throughout is from 1 April 2022-31 March 2023. The delivery figures outlined here are heavily weighted towards economic value in the North. This is because the measurement indicators linked to employment and local spend naturally carry the highest proxy values and Northern has both a significant local supply chain spend and a workforce of over 7000. The RSVT uses monetised values that have been compiled in a manner compliant with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) or UK Treasury Green Book Guidance. We anticipate the growth of delivery across all areas over time, but the nature of our business dictates that the economic value we deliver will always remain highest across the three dashboards on the RSVT. For the purposes of this report, we define 'local' as the regions within which Northern operates.

Over recent years Northern has significantly enhanced its insight and data capabilities, using analytics widely to improve performance both internally and externally. However, alongside the quantitative data outlined here, for Northern it is important that this report is equally focussed on outcomes rather than simply the attributable proxy values. Whilst recognising the importance these values have in helping us to drive strategy and planning, it is the outcomes for colleagues, communities, society and the environment that lie at the heart of our approach to social value. This report therefore includes case studies and highlighted areas of activity that together with the quantitative data, we feel provides a richer overview of the social value we deliver.

The report will highlight our successes in line with each of the social impacts we have chosen to report on as well as our compliance with the statutory regulations we are subject to as a public sector body. Finally we will outline the areas we intend to focus on in the coming year; embracing the opportunity we have to help address specific local need in the North and supporting the wider levelling up agenda.

## ***Number of social value indicators selected for each reporting theme***



- Employment, Training and Skills - 16
- Community and Charity – 9
- Rail Accessibility - 5
- Health and Wellbeing - 5
- Safety - 5
- EDI - 4
- Supply Chain - 3
- Climate and Environment 2
- Educational Attainment - 2
- Stakeholder Engagement and Customers - 1

**Total number of indicators is 54**



## Executive summary overview



**76,021**

Volunteering hours



**£2,202,620**

Investment into  
the community



**11,473 tCO2e**

Carbon reduction



**6,451**

local jobs



**50,688**

customers  
supported to  
use the railway



**29%**

of women  
in leadership  
positions



**£388,920,148**

Local supply  
chain spend



**747**

apprenticeships

# 1. *Customers at the Heart*

**Customers at the Heart is one of our four strategic pillars and it focusses us on delivering the best possible customer service at every level of the business. It also means that we strive to make sure everyone can benefit from rail and the opportunities it brings.**

We work extremely hard to meet our customers' needs. Listening closely to the views of all our stakeholders and responding with practical, and often innovative solutions. We recognise the value that we can bring to those who live and work across our network and do all we can to make a positive difference wherever possible. We invest heavily in community rail and work with organisations that reach far beyond the railway boundary. This approach means our support truly reaches where it's needed in our local communities.

We are proud of all that we do to keep customers and communities at the heart of Northern. It has been a year filled with many achievements which is down to the dedication of our colleagues. We know that this commitment will continue to be very important as communities and individuals continue to face many challenges. We hope this report will serve as an opportunity to highlight the support Northern provides and allow us to build on our approach.



**Carolyn Watson,  
Director of Stakeholder  
and Community Engagement**

# Community and Charity



**Our network reaches right across the North of England and serves hundreds of different communities every day. Each one is different and unique, and we celebrate their diversity.**

We work hard to make sure we are a valuable part of those communities – not only through the provision of our service, but by understanding their specific challenges and doing our very best to respond, giving something back and addressing local need in the most targeted and impactful way possible. We work with communities in as many ways as we are able, often through long term Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and station adoption partnerships, but increasingly our reach goes beyond the railway boundary to support a wide range of projects that are often tackling the most pressing issues facing our society, many of which have been highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic.

During the reporting period we supported 21 incredible projects through our Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF); providing an opportunity for charities and community projects to extend their reach and impact for a wide range of beneficiaries in the communities we serve. Our funding has helped to:

- Reduce social isolation
- Support the elderly and those with disabilities
- Provide employment opportunities for underprivileged young people
- Build confidence and life skills for young people struggling with mental health issues
- Facilitate befriending schemes for the terminally ill
- Enable ex-offenders to reintegrate into the community.

We also launched a small grants fund, giving our colleagues the opportunity to nominate charities or community projects that they feel may benefit from up to £1000 of funding. A panel of self-nominated representatives from across the business has chosen beneficiaries that reflect issues close to the hearts of our colleagues and where a grant of a relatively small size can make a real difference.

## Case study:

# Customer and Communities Improvement Fund

### Woodworking Warriors: Supporting Veterans with mental and physical conditions.

This grant helped to deliver a wide range of woodworking workshops to veterans, their family members and others in the local community that were suffering from loneliness and social isolation. The project has improved health and wellbeing whilst reducing loneliness and social isolation of people in the communities of County Durham, especially that of veterans and those suffering poor mental health. This was achieved by delivering a range of workshops in a variety of woodworking disciplines, fine arts, crafts and heritage skills. The Woodworking Warriors also delivered services and carried out projects in the local community which helped with our clients' reintegration into the local community and progression into work.

### Warrington Youth Zone: Youth project encouraging young people to travel.

Children and young people attend the Youth Zone to explore the themes of safe travel, independent travel on public transport, and broader issues of community safety. Over 200 young people in participated through weekly Junior (7-12), Senior (13-19), and Springboard (young people with disabilities) sessions using activities such as sports, arts, music, interactive workshops, educational sessions, social action, cycle maintenance, and family sessions to explore the themes and achieve outcomes for young people.



The project inspired numerous personal changes in the individuals participating in Young Routes including increased confidence and self-esteem, better social skills and communication, and improved ability to work in a team, negotiate, and compromise. Staff and volunteers regularly observed young people who were very timid at the beginning of the project, really coming out of their shell, becoming more vocal, and contributing well to the sessions. There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and in the long-term this project will increase independence when accessing travel – this can have a significant impact on both confidence and employment aspirations.

### Leeds Dads. Parenting support group for young children and fathers.

Leeds Dads brings together a diverse community of fathers for social interaction and support. The group enables dads to share their experiences, and signpost towards expert parenting support.

Leeds Dads is unique in supporting fathers to actively engage with their children and build lasting relationships. Playgroups and softplays are targeted in areas of deprivation – helping those with limited means to build meaningful connections with their children. Dads report that society doesn't value them the same way as mums. That they're isolated, and often seen as a problem. Vital support is provided to fathers who may be struggling and have limited access to their children. Leeds Dads activities are accessible and support men's mental health, which is extremely socially isolating.

# Community Rail

**Our Community Rail Report<sup>3</sup> celebrates all the amazing work being done with partners across our network. These partnerships deliver a fantastic range of initiatives that keep the rail industry at the heart of supporting sustainable and resilient communities**

We support 21 Community Rail Partnerships and Station Adoption Groups at over 300 stations, all of whom play a vital part in keeping community rail relevant and sustainable and during the reporting period allocated £1,176,000 funding to these groups to support and further their work. We work closely with our community partners, doing all we can to facilitate their work far beyond the provision of funding. The Community Rail Network is helping groups understand the social impact they can and do deliver, although we appreciate that measuring and valuing this is something that will evolve over time. In the longer term we hope to provide ideas and case studies to help shape their annual action plans and enable even wider community outreach. We will also continue to profile the work of our groups through our own communications channels; sharing best practice and inspiring new ways of working. We are immensely proud of the work we do with communities; we know our impact makes a real difference in so many ways and it has been incredibly difficult to choose a small number of case studies. Our Community Rail report provides further detail about the many ways we are delivering social impact in the community.

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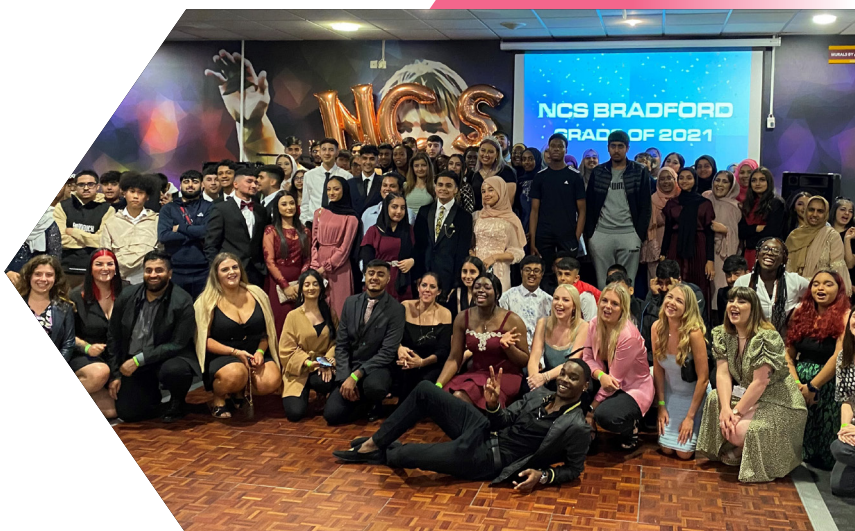
<sup>3</sup> Community Rail Report

## Case study:

# *Regional Partnerships*

**Northern's Regional Community and Sustainability Managers (RCSMs) work tirelessly across our network, building relationships that connect schools, community groups, local government, councils, business owners, religious groups and even the NHS in their efforts to increase impact through collaboration.**

Each of the managers has a deep understanding of the communities in their region and the work they do reflects the local needs of the diverse communities we serve, commonly tackling societal issues such as inclusion, social mobility and social isolation by building rail confidence that opens up all kinds of opportunities that can be truly lifechanging. Our RCSMs provide a golden thread connecting many parts of the business, involving an array of different disciplines in delivering impact and ensuring we extend our reach to as many people as possible. They also work closely with our Energy and Environment Team on station-based sustainability initiatives, often engaging our community groups in providing valuable information - particularly where stations are unstaffed.



**2022 saw the return of our summer Community Railway Challenge with the National Citizenship Service (NCS) which supports social mobility, cohesion and engagement for young people.**

During the reporting period, 2000 young people aged 15-17 participated in social action projects on our network. They learnt new skills while developing independence, responsibility and a greater understanding of their local communities and how they can make a positive difference to them or seek support should they need it. For 80% of participants this was the first time they had ever used the railway. We take this opportunity to educate the young people in overcoming their concerns around tickets, routes and timetables as well as delivering projects involving safety, anti-trespass, sustainability and unwanted sexual behaviour. The NCS Community Rail Challenge has shown itself to be an invaluable opportunity which leads to increased confidence, team building, and leadership skills; all of which contribute to these amazing young people feeling a sense of achievement and self-belief that carries into their aspirations for the future.

## Case study:

# Flimby Primary Station Adoption Group

Our adoption groups vary significantly in their approach and some of the greatest successes have been with groups of students. We have been delighted to see them keeping the railway at the heart of the community by taking ownership of stations, creating stunning artwork and instilling a sense of pride that has often led to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and an increased feeling of safety for rail users. Flimby Primary School is one such group; proud adopters of their local station, they provide beautiful artwork including their annual Christmas banner that brings the station to life and reinforces the connection between the railway and local community.

Flimby is an area with extremely high levels of deprivation; through our partnership the children have been able to access opportunities that sadly wouldn't be available otherwise such as visiting their local library – something all children should be able to access, and which so many of us take for granted.

*“Since our adoption of Flimby Railway Station we have worked with Northern & Community Rail Cumbria on different initiatives and have had the opportunity to take our children on the train along the coast. It has now become a tradition for us to display a new Christmas banner every year wishing all those that travel by train a Merry Christmas.”*

**Tanya Peers, Head Teacher**



## Case study:

# YABA

**Northern is delighted to be collaborating with the Yorkshire Asian Business Association (YABA) on a number of community projects.**

In November 2022 YABA took senior Northern colleagues on Faith Trail around Bradford, raising awareness and cultural understanding of the different faith groups represented within our local communities. Together with our friends at YABA and local schools, we are focussed on building rail confidence amongst young people from the South Asian community and inspiring them to consider a career in the rail industry. We are now working with YABA to support their wider networks, reaching many people who would otherwise be unlikely to use the railway; missing the enormous benefits that brings on so many levels. We are excited about the future of this partnership and the opportunities it brings for us to better understand how we can meet the cultural and religious needs of our colleagues and communities.

## Case study:

# *Community Swap Shop at Brinnington*

Brinnington station straddles two sides of a large council estate in one of the most deprived areas on our network. At a time when the cost of living crisis is impacting so many, our station colleagues wanted to do something to help local residents.

Together with our RCSM they have created a Community Swap Shop; utilising unused space within the ticket office so that members of the local community can donate and swap items such as books, toys, DVDs and much needed children's coats – all for free. The Swap Shop has proved to be hugely popular, providing access to things that would otherwise be unaffordable at this time, whilst also making the station environment a buzzing hive of community cohesion.



## Case study:

# *Student Artwork takes centre stage*

Students from Clarendon Sixth Form college at Ashton-under-Lyne brought the recently refurbished station to life with a stunning photography project featuring iconic locations throughout the town, and scenes of nature in the surrounding countryside.

The students' incredible photography takes centre stage on the passenger route to the platform. We were delighted that local MP Angela Rayner came to unveil the students' work. We look forward to collaborating with the college in the future and giving these young people more opportunities to showcase and celebrate their talent.





## Case study:

# *School engagement on the new Northumberland Line*



**As we prepare for the reopening of the Northumberland line, we are taking a tailored approach to engaging school children of all ages. With six new stations to be opened, this line will make an enormous difference to communities, bringing opportunities for education, work and leisure whilst supporting sustainable economic growth across the route.**

It's never too early to learn about rail safety and a group of reception age children from Havannah First Primary School were excited to do just that. The children enjoyed an interactive safety session which ended with Arlo's Adventures – a rail safety storybook written by train driver Bessie Matthews and shared with Northern as part of a project led by the Community Rail Education Network, one of our long term partners.

### **Our first Northumberland Line travellers:**

A group of school children were the first to experience the future of travel on the County's railway as they boarded a special train service between Newcastle and Morpeth. Children from The Dukes School Rail Club, The Dales School, New Hartley First School and Newcastle YMCA Mother and Toddler group took part in the event, getting a first hand look at the route which promises to bring so many opportunities for individuals and whole communities.

With females currently under-represented in the railway, it is vital for us to engage young women as they begin to consider their future career paths. Our work with Duke's Academy in Ashington has led to students forming an 'All Girl Rail Club' with attendance from key stage three and four students who come together to share their interest in the industry, with females from Northern delivering engagement sessions to highlight their experience and inspire the girls to explore career opportunities available to them across the industry. Successful work with this small group has led to Northern being part of the Academy's 'World of Work' day, a career fair open to all 953 students.

### **Volunteering**

An area we are currently exploring and hope to develop going forward. While operational challenges currently prevent us from implementing a business wide policy for external volunteering, our RSCMs engage numerous colleagues from across the business in supporting our communities. Our colleague volunteers go into schools, delivering inspiring sessions that demonstrate the true scope of careers in the industry.

We intend to continue reviewing opportunities for colleagues to volunteer, recognising the many benefits this brings.



## Case study: *Sonia Johar*

**During the reporting period, one of our colleagues used her passion for a local charity – St George’s Crypt in Leeds – bringing together different parts of the business in a collective and innovative approach to community support.**

The charity provides an array of help to homeless and vulnerable adults as well as a programme for recovering addicts. As a Senior PA to our Director Team, Sonia saw an opportunity to do something truly meaningful as a team building activity and some of our Executive and PA team spent a day helping with donations and cooking for service users in one of the most deprived communities on our network. Inspired by the day, the group were keen to do more and Sonia has brought colleagues together in delivering a range of support – from free travel to remove a major barrier for those wanting to attend Narcotics Anonymous, to working with our learning and development team on potential opportunities for training and work experience which could be truly life changing. Sonia’s work represents the heart of Northern’s commitment to our communities; bringing the business together to make a difference.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Customers



**Stakeholder engagement is an important part of enabling Northern to achieve the four strategic ambitions that underpin our vision.**

During the reporting period Northern launched a new Stakeholder Engagement plan, setting out how we continue to work towards building the company's reputation, fostering trusted relationships and facilitating the path towards becoming a partner of choice. Our engagement strategy is built on the principles of honesty and transparency and wherever possible acting on the insight and feedback we receive. We have a broad stakeholder base and our engagement plan rests on a measured and targeted approach to each group.

Despite the operational challenges we have faced during the reporting period, our annual stakeholder survey returned excellent results. Stakeholders showed a considerable degree of empathy with the position we have found ourselves in with the impact of industrial action and other factors, frequently describing Northern as resilient, knowledgeable and impressive. The survey results indicated that Northern builds strong stakeholder relationships and stakeholders are satisfied with their personal relationship with Northern.

Our annual stakeholder conferences are key engagement events, providing an opportunity to bring a range of stakeholders together to hear about the work we are doing across the business to drive improvement and build on success. With speakers including our Managing Director and Regional Directors, it is an opportunity to impart information and provide answers to our stakeholders' most pressing questions. They are also an opportunity for us to hear more about stakeholders' priorities and gather insight to help inform future plans. The events support our ongoing programme of bilateral meetings and wider engagement activities with stakeholders. They are well attended and feedback has been extremely positive.

**“(Northern) has a vision to bring social and economic value to the communities of the North and a strategy to deliver it.”**

**Quote from stakeholder survey, 2022**

We have listened to stakeholder suggestions and are focussed on more effective collaboration going forward, providing a range of communication channels that will enable ease of engagement with each of our stakeholder groups. Shortly before the reporting period (February 2022) we launched a new Stakeholder Hub on our website, bringing all our engagement tools together in a more informative and accessible way. We will continue to review the use of each part of the hub, using this data to inform further development in areas that prove to be most useful for our stakeholders.

Northern is continually looking for new ways to ensure customers can use our service with the greatest of ease. During the reporting period we have begun the transition to 'shared service'; bringing together a number of customer-focussed support functions under the single management of our Customer Experience Centre (CEC). Extensive training is being provided to upskill colleagues, enabling individuals to respond quickly and effectively to multiple needs of customers.

As well as delivering a far greater level of efficiency in terms of Northern's business resource, this will ensure the best possible customer experience across a broad range of potential needs. During the reporting period Northern's CEC has been awarded the ServiceMark Accreditation based on excellence in both customer service and employee engagement. We are proud to have gained this following an independent review of our work and hope to build on this success across other relevant parts of the business.



# Rail Accessibility



**Our aim is to create a ‘Northern for Everyone’ by responding to the many and varied needs of our customers with a range of interventions – many of which are highly innovative and not seen before in the industry.**

We want to ensure all our customers feel confident in every aspect of their travel with us and that their journey is seamless and enjoyable. The railway provides invaluable independence to our disabled customers and we consult widely on our planned improvements with user groups, bringing lived experience to design and infrastructure changes and continually improving accessibility on our trains and at stations. Our motto ‘nothing about us, without us’ reflects the input we have from user groups into Northern’s policies and initiatives.

We take a holistic approach to accessibility, responding to the needs of those with both visible and unseen disabilities, across all age groups. Everything we deliver is supported by our outstanding disability awareness training, ensuring that all our customer facing colleagues are confident in supporting the customers that need them most.

**Some highlights from our Rail Accessibility work include:**

- The Northern Accessibility User Group (NAUG), a unique industry group of pan disability specialists that guide the business with their lived experience of disability. The ethos of “Nothing About Us Without Us” has carried through our work with these critical friends and enabled us to make the right decisions for our customers. Members carry out some voluntary work within subgroups such as mystery shopping, disability hate crime and mobility scooters to work with us to help improve services.
- The success of our mobility scooter permit scheme has been fantastic to see; we have added another 38 ‘mobility scooter friendly’ stations to the scheme – bringing the total to 160 stations across 28 routes.
- Continued support of the Sunflower scheme, providing customers with unseen disabilities with a lanyard and priority seat card
- The launch of Northern’s ‘Accessibility Hub’ – a focal point for customers to find all the information they need about routes and facilities as well as forthcoming accessibility projects.
- A pilot of ‘dementia friendly signage’ involves fewer signs to avoid ‘information overload’, strategic placement of signs at important decision points and wider use of symbols. We look forward to reporting on the pilot scheme, with a view to rolling it out more widely on the network.



## *Try the Train*

This pilot programme is focussed on increasing confidence in accessing rail travel, by providing practical and emotional support to people of all ages facing a range of barriers to travelling independently. This project is being delivered by Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) and a company called PWLC Projects and will support those who live, meet, work or access education within a 0.5 mile radius of rail stations that are served by Northern. The project will be targeted towards those who have protected characteristics, are from low socio-economic backgrounds and/or are at risk of social isolation. Participants will work with trainers who will deliver a variety of information and planning sessions, as well as practical experiences that incorporate visits to local community hubs and events.

There will also be an opportunity to work with trainers through 'pop up' sessions, giving participants a chance to receive ongoing advice and support. Northern is supporting this pilot through the Northern Accessibility and Innovation Fund. We are delighted to have launched the Northern Accessibility Innovation Fund again in 2022, with £250,000 available for projects to be delivered by the end of 2023. Previously we have supported a range of amazing projects including the 'Better Journeys' scheme targeted at reducing social isolation and a MIND initiative to introduce children with additional needs to travel.



# Case study:

## ***Brand new accessible toilet pods***

**Northern has collaborated on a ground-breaking project to design brand new accessible toilet pods with the Northern Stations Accessibility Group (NSAG), a group of interested disabled customers, with lived experiences of a whole host of disabilities.**

A disused room at Bolton station was the space where the architects brought the group's vision to life, taking on board all their requirements and building a live mock up that those whose vision had been brought to life could see in 3D. There are a number of unique features that have been designed into the unit, that eventually will be delivered into a pod that can be accommodated in as little as a parking space on a station carpark.

### **Features include:**

- An intercom system managed from a central location, where the customer can gain entry, and be contacted for support from the inside of the toilet – this provides a place of safety for anyone who may need it.
- The placement of the physical toilet, so that customers using a wheelchair can transfer from both the left and the right.
- A verbal description of the layout of the room for visually impaired customers.
- Additional emergency cords for added security
- Baby change facilities accessible for a parent/carer who may be in a wheelchair.
- Extra-strong arm rests at the side of the toilet.

This project is a leading example of how our collaboration with external user groups delivers the most innovative and beneficial solutions for our disabled customers.



# CXA Gold Awards



During the reporting period Northern won the Gold Award for Innovation at the UK Customer Experience Awards. For those with disabilities, travelling can feel overwhelming and even impossible to undertake without the right support. Northern partnered with Chrome Angel, Angel Trains, Totem Learning and Community Rail Lancashire to develop a game that takes users on a virtual reality journey through the station, on board the train and on arrival at their destination. By giving users a chance to find familiarity in surroundings and interactions, this game will significantly increase vulnerable customers' confidence to travel by train, reducing social isolation and providing new opportunities for work and education. This work has also led to a Rail Business Award for Customer Service Excellence for the Accessible Travel Simulation; we were delighted to once again be category winners for this trail-blazing project.





# 2. Valued People

**Our ambitions are to make Northern a great place to work for all our colleagues, and to have a workforce that represents the communities we serve.**

The rail industry has been known for employing a less than diverse workforce over the decades. We recognise that the industry is changing and that only by having a truly diverse workforce, including people from all backgrounds, will we be able to achieve our ambitions. We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy in place, sponsored by a Director and supported by our colleague-led Northern Crowd group members who represent the business at a wide variety of events from our annual EDI calendar. Our listening strategy includes an annual employee satisfaction survey which all colleagues are encouraged to complete. Despite challenging times within the industry, the response rate of the most recent survey increased, which may be partly due to a commitment from the business to pay £1 for every completed survey to November.

We know from the annual survey that communication is important to colleagues and have recently launched The Hub – a brand new communications app giving all our Northern colleagues access to companywide news and information. The Hub has been developed with a team of colleagues to ensure the app meets the needs and expectations of our colleagues. One of the main pieces of feedback we received was that it should be mobile friendly, so The Hub is available as an application download on mobile phones. In addition to the latest Northern news, The Hub is also home to information about benefits, careers, health and wellbeing, and learning and development.



**Lou Mather,  
Employee Experience Business Partner**

# Employment, Training and Skills



£242,964,349

**At the start of the reporting period, we published a detailed assessment of the socio-economic value Northern delivers in the North.**

We wanted to understand where we deliver the greatest value both directly and indirectly to inform our future strategy based on our ability to have the greatest possible impact for the North. We are a major employer in the North, covering multiple areas with some of the highest levels of deprivation in the UK. Whilst the RSVT allows us to report the value of our direct employment, we know that our economic impact reaches far beyond this, supporting thousands of jobs through our supply chain which are currently not recorded in this context.

At the start of 2023 we launched a major recruitment campaign for trainee drivers and conductors; we hope this will be an opportunity to go a step further towards our workforce reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve, by actively encouraging applications from women and ethnicities currently under-represented in our workforce.

Northern is committed to continually upskilling current employees, providing access to a wide range of development opportunities.

Our e-learning platform provides access to a wealth of training resources, allowing colleagues to pursue development in areas of specific interest or aimed at career progression, as well as those that enable them to carry out their current role to the highest standard. We want all colleagues to be able to fulfil their full potential; equipping them with skills that will enable career progression whether at Northern or outside of the business.

We are an approved training school for the Institute of Environmental Management (IEMA), delivering IEMA courses with professional qualifications.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE | Gold

## External training opportunities include:

- Professional qualifications with the Chartered Institute of Railway Operators (CIRO)
- Globally recognised National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) courses
- Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) courses
- Masters Degrees
- Apprenticeships including Horizon Management training - an apprenticeship in the principles of leadership and management to help non-manager grade colleagues progress into a management role.

## During the reporting period:

- We were officially recognised by OFSTED as a 'Main Provider' of apprenticeships. We are training the next generation of drivers, conductors and engineers – benefitting not just Northern but the entire railway industry.
- We have increased the use of virtual reality technology to take our apprentices as close to real life experience as possible within their classroom-based learning.
- We launched 16 brand new engineering apprenticeships, specifically targeting school and college leavers. These opportunities are promoted to many schools and colleges that we work with through our community partnerships and support our commitment to social mobility in the North.
- We recruited 5 graduates into the business.
- We have provided 11 'Year In Industry' placements. This is invaluable work experience for students from Universities in the North. A unique element of our programme is the opportunity to work with our Community Rail Partnerships. Each year the students and the CRP work together to create a new project that helps to promote and sustain the more remote and rural part of the Bentham line.



We are extremely proud of our industry leading disability awareness training which ensures a holistic understanding of both visible and non-visible disabilities. It provides our colleagues in-depth knowledge of how our customers' disabilities impact their ability to travel feeling safe and how best to ensure they have the help and support they need.

Our colleagues are adept at delivering opportunities for those most in need in the North. In collaboration with external stakeholders we are part of the SWAP scheme, supporting job seekers in gaining skills and experience, providing employability and customer service training, alongside hands on work experience with the opportunity to interview for a role with Northern following successful completion of the programme.



# *Northumberland Line to Reopen*

The reopening of the Northumberland Line in 2024 is a fantastic opportunity to stimulate and support economic growth, regeneration and community development in Northumberland and the surrounding regions by providing new and improved transport links for local people and businesses; opening up new opportunities for leisure, education and travel. It will also provide a real incentive for potential employers to relocate to and invest in the local area.

Having established a social value working group with representatives from Network Rail, the county council and Department of Work and Pensions; our Regional Community and Sustainability Manager has delivered a series of engagement sessions to support job seekers including CV writing skills, confidence workshops, customer service and an introduction to careers in the railway.



# Educational Attainment



**£26,334,707**

**Engagement with schools and colleges is a fantastic way for Northern to deliver social value in the North. We connect with a broad range of age groups, providing curriculum enrichment as well as facilitating a variety of opportunities for young people to find out about the routes to employment within the railway.**

Our colleagues use their knowledge of specific local need to tailor these talks wherever possible, providing much needed opportunities to engage with young people from areas of high deprivation and marginalised groups currently under-represented within our workforce. As part of a broader commitment to increasing the number of women in the industry, Northern has delivered a series of STEM initiatives specifically for females. We know there is a huge pool of future talent in the North and we want to make sure we play our part in levelling up by ensuring we remove any perceived barriers around race, gender or socio-economic background. Wherever possible we facilitate opportunities for colleagues from different backgrounds to talk to young people about their career paths, dispelling misconceptions and inspiring young people to become part of the future of the railway family.





# Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



**We want our colleagues to feel assured that Northern has a culture where everyone is equal and welcomed members of our railway community. A place where they can be completely confident about bringing their whole selves to work, knowing they will face no barriers to inclusion or opportunity.**

We have a number of policies in place that relate to key areas of EDI and reflect the needs of the workforce and industry. The policies are easy to access for all colleagues and detail our commitment to EDI as well as outlining the support that colleagues can expect from us should they find themselves encountering anything less than the high standards of inclusion we expect from everyone on our workforce.

It is our intention that our workforce should reflect society. While we know that currently minority groups and women are massively under-represented in the industry generally, we are working hard to play our part in changing this. Northern has a range of measures that aim to attract and recruit candidates from all backgrounds, for example advertising all our vacancies on BAME Jobs. Blind recruitment helps our hiring teams to assess applicants exclusively on their suitability for the role and limits the risk of conscious and unconscious bias. We anonymise candidates' personal details from applications (e.g. name, age, area of residence) to drive fairer representation at interview and offer stages. Our work with external partners such as the Multicultural Apprenticeship Alliance provides an opportunity to work and share best practice with inclusion leads from other businesses and industries.

Internal communications channels are utilised to celebrate and recognise key diversity events annually, including Black History Month, World Mental Health Day, Men's Health Awareness Week and Disability Pride Month. We are long-time supporters of Pride, attending events and decorating our stations across the network to show our support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Northern has a number of accreditations and commitments including:

- Level 2 Disability Confident Employer
- Investors in Diversity
- Signatories of the Women in Rail Diversity Charter
- Signatories Mental Health Charter for the rail industry.

Here at Northern we recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans, Adult Cadet Force Volunteers and military families contribute to our business and our country. Northern actively promotes being a Forces friendly organisation at industry level, recently partaking in national recruitment efforts and conferences. Managing Director Nick Donovan is a proud sponsor of the Northern Covenant Pledge. We have nearly 100 members in our Armed Forces Community group across all grades from Entry Level to Senior Executive. In 2022 we attained Silver Award status under the Employer Recognition Scheme for our dedication to all those who serve both past and present and their families.

We are delighted to support the annual National Inclusion Week events and in 2022 our Employee Experience Business Partner, Lou Mather, was part of a panel of experts sharing knowledge and insight into how the industry can do more to make our workplaces more inclusive.

We are delighted that Northern has been recognised for its work to address the gender imbalance in the rail industry. Northern Power Women, a leading equality campaign group, shortlisted Northern as the 'Large Organisation of the Year' at its 2023 awards. It is the second year running that Northern has been shortlisted for the award. Northern was praised for its commitment to developing an inclusive culture in the workplace by demonstrating a forward-thinking approach to recruitment, development and retention of talent.

*"We feel very strongly that equality, diversity and inclusion is not limited to the work of our HR team - it's a journey everyone at Northern needs to take together. As such, we work closely with colleagues from across the business, at all grades, to ensure progress made is visible to all. Despite an increase in the number of female employees by over 30% in recent years, women still only account for 18.72% of our workforce - so there is still much more to be done."*

**Tricia Williams**  
Chief operating officer at Northern

We continually review the ways in which we support and enable EDI within our workforce, ensuring that we evolve our practices in line with our learning and in response to what colleagues, the industry and wider society calls for. During the reporting period Northern was shortlisted for best Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at the Engagement Excellence Awards for the second time in concurrent years. Our annual EDI audit and colleague survey give us a chance to keep learning and responding to what colleagues need and want. We highlight our actions with a series of internal communications entitled 'you said, we did' to ensure colleagues know their views are heard and that we are committed to making the changes they need to see. During the reporting period, the annual survey highlighted that while we are making improvements and changes, there is still much to be done in ensuring colleagues' experience of life at Northern is everything we would want it to be.

As part of our EDI progression, we are working on providing more flexible working opportunities – recognising this as a key opportunity for attracting more women into the industry by providing work patterns that enable flexibility around the needs of the family. We are also working on plans for a new development scheme specifically for BAME colleagues.



# Health and Wellbeing



 **£14,372,659**

**Northern is committed to a culture that promotes wellbeing and a positive work-life balance. We want Northern to be “A Great Place to Work, for Everyone” and this ethos underpins our commitment to supporting employees’ health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally.**

Aligning all areas of the business with a common interest in promoting a culture of wellbeing is key to the success of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy that has been put in place during the reporting period. The strategy aims to bring together current initiatives supporting and maximising the health and wellbeing of staff while identifying further opportunities and leading to an action plan to consolidate existing work and support further progress.

All the health and wellbeing support we provide is promoted regularly through internal communications channels. ‘The Hub’ enables colleagues to easily access everything that is available to support their health and wellbeing and our ‘20 days of Health and Wellbeing’ campaign led to many colleagues publicly commenting on their own experience of engaging with support for both mental and physical health.

In 2022-23, we had the highest ever level of engagement with our health and wellbeing initiatives; a clear sign that we are providing the right support. ‘Interactive Health Kiosks’ travelled across the business, giving a full ‘Health MOT’ through 5 core tests. Over 2500 colleagues made use of the kiosks, with individual results providing the business with a profile of colleagues’ health which has led to 4 key areas for us to focus on going forward:

- Tackling obesity
- Blood pressure
- Body fat content
- Hydration

# Make it yours

## Northern colleague benefits



### PERKS

**Big discounts**  
and cashback on utility bills and shopping

**Buy vouchers**  
for major retailers at a discount

**Get advice**  
on fitness, nutrition, finance and mental health

[northernperks.co.uk](http://northernperks.co.uk)

### HUSSLE

SAVE on membership at gyms across the North

**£10 PHONE CONTRACT**

Unlock your work phone for personal use, for just £10 a month

### FREE eye tests

FREE tests for identified DSE users and colleagues in safety critical roles who need to visit an optician for a new or altered prescription

### cycle to work

Get up to **42%** off new bikes and equipment

### Employee Assistance Programme

Get **FREE**, confidential support and guidance **24/7** from qualified counsellors

### health shield

Claim back health and wellbeing costs by joining the health cash plan

### Electric car scheme

Save when you lease a brand new electric or plug-in hybrid car through salary sacrifice with Car Benefit

### Rail Wellbeing Live

- Annual wellbeing conference
- Monthly Wellbeing Wednesdays
- Access to wellbeing library of resources

### #ANDYSMANCLUB

### Transport Benevolent Fund

Access to grants, therapies and advice for £1.25 per week

### FREE flu vaccines

First-come first-served flu vaccine vouchers  
\*this benefit is reviewed annually

Free-to-attend peer-to-peer support groups with men's suicide prevention charity ANDYSMANCLUB

### Wellbeing Champions

Our trained Wellbeing Champions can offer a listening ear and give guidance on all aspects of wellbeing

### Interactive health kiosks

Look out for the touch screen interactive health kiosks in your workplace, so you can do your Health MOT

### Menopause support group

A private group giving a safe environment to discuss menopause

# Make it yours

## Northern colleague benefits



Get more info at  
The Hub > Pay and benefits

Go to [thehubnorthern.co.uk](http://thehubnorthern.co.uk) or scan the QR code




**FREE TRAVEL FOR YOUR FAMILY**  
Spouse, partner and family passes for free travel with Northern

Reciprocal travel benefits  
**FREE TRAVEL ON**



### Rail Staff Travel

- PRIV cards for you and your family for **75% off** travel with other UK rail companies
- **2 for 1** entry to attractions across the country
- **FREE** travel on London Tramlink and Windemere Lake Cruises
- **Reduced-rate tickets** at many heritage railways and ferry companies



**Friends and Family discounted travel**  
£7 adult and £3.50 child flat fares for your family and friends



### International rail travel discounts

FIP international discount cards and free travel vouchers  
\*available after 12 months' service



**10% OFF**

10% off entry, food, merchandise and more for you and 10 others

**FREE home use of Office365**

Use Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and more at home – saving up to £60



### Support for out-of-work activities

Flexible time off for volunteers and Armed Forces reservists.



### Enhanced annual leave

All roles offer above the statutory levels of annual leave



### Enhanced HR policies

- 9 months maternity leave on full pay
- 2 weeks paternity leave on full pay
- \*these are subject to qualifying periods



### Generous pension contributions

- Northern contributes **1.5 times** your own contribution to your pension
- Additional savings can be made by paying your contribution through salary sacrifice (flexi-pension)

**FREE e-learning** • More than 300 online training courses through the Learning Management System

### Loyalty award scheme

At least **£165 vouchers**

As you reach 10, 20 and 30 years' service, and every 5 years thereafter



### Psychological trauma support

Anyone can experience trauma - we have expert services in place to help you get the support you need



### Rail industry bereavement support group

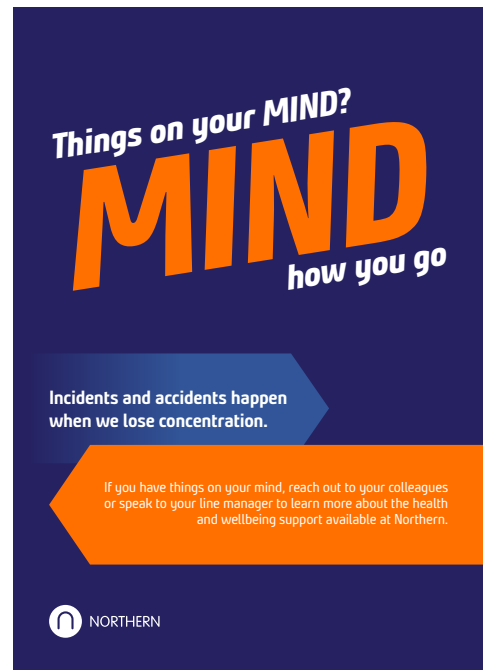
Join informal coffee mornings or formal sessions for a safe environment to discuss and get support for loss and grief



### Railway Mission

Get support from the four chaplains on our network

Northern has trained 18 Wellbeing Champions during this period. These individuals are given mental health awareness training to help them identify signs of negative wellbeing and engage with colleagues who may not even realise they are struggling, offering a listening ear and encouraging them to talk about any struggles they are experiencing. In a heavily male dominated industry we are proactively trying to change the culture of men feeling unable to open up about both mental and physical health concerns. We regularly promote our association with Andy's Man Club and during Men's Health Awareness week we released a video highlighting the key conditions affecting men; raising awareness of common symptoms and encouraging male colleagues to seek medical advice for any concerns.



During the reporting period data showed an increase in the number of colleague accidents reported, with distraction and lack of attention cited as a cause in a high proportion on incidents. In response to this we launched our 'Things on your MIND?' campaign, reminding colleagues of the support available to them during what we know is a particularly challenging time for many.

We will use the data available to us to drive our progress in meeting the needs of our colleagues, providing early intervention and ongoing support. Our aim over the next reporting period is to continue to reinforce the importance of good physical and mental health with ongoing awareness and engagement campaigns for all colleagues, with the ultimate aim of ensuring our colleagues feel confident in every aspect of getting help when they need it.

# 3. *Operational Excellence*

**Safeguarding the security of Northern customers underpins everything else that we do. We work closely with the British Transport Police (BTP) to address crime and security risks and to create a safe environment for all, particularly vulnerable individuals.**

A well as improving CCTV coverage across our network we ensure our colleagues are prepared to respond effectively in the event of incidents (including terrorism). Body-worn camera use by our colleagues and a plan to mitigate the risk from cyber-attacks further support our safety and security goals. Our ongoing work around Climate and Environment is outlined with the Sustainable Growth section of this report, below.



**David Gray,  
Head of Energy and Environment**

# Social Impact: Safety



£134,826,168

**Northern has selected six indicators to report on that are specifically linked to safety. The safety of both staff and customers is naturally of paramount importance to Northern and whilst these indicators reflect some of the excellent work being done in this space, Northern is continually looking at new and innovative ways to further ensure that the railway is a safe place for all. Outlined here are just a small number of the many ways in which Northern seeks to address the associated issues for both staff and customers.**

The Crime Reduction Team regularly works with outside agencies such as Network Rail, the British Transport Police (BTP) and Community Rail Partnerships to reduce crime and position Northern as an industry leader in rail safety.

Alongside training received during their induction period, Northern provides access to safety courses which are regularly updated. These cover a broad range of topics including:

- Counter terrorism awareness
- Reducing accidents on stations
- Assisting customers in situations where there may be increased safety risks.
- Safeguarding vulnerable customers – identifying risks, assessing situations and responding appropriately to protect vulnerable people.



LOW RES IMAGE  
SHUTTERSTOCK  
IMAGE



Northern is also part of the 'Rail to Refuge' scheme whereby colleagues have the authority to provide free travel to victims of domestic abuse, enabling them to reach safety where the cost of travel may otherwise have prohibited them from doing so. This scheme has been in place since the Covid-19 pandemic saw a significant rise in domestic violence. Northern's community team is working with a range of external partners to raise awareness of what has already been a lifeline for many victims. During the reporting period the British Transport Police awarded Northern the 'Safeguarding on Rail Scheme' accreditation after an audit of all the work being done to safeguard customers. Only three operators in the country have this accreditation – a great achievement in recognition of an industry leading safety team and everyone in customer facing roles who make a real difference supporting vulnerable people on the network.



## Case study: ***Rail to Refuge***

One of our conductors in Leeds gave a talk to Women's Health Professionals on accessing our services and support for those escaping domestic violence.

Her talk resulted in over a dozen requests from Domestic Violence Teams from across the North, requesting more information on the Rail to Refuge Scheme.

*"A huge thank you to your conductor Charlotte for making my team aware of Rail to Refuge Scheme, I have worked with women escaping domestic violence for over 14 years and was totally unaware of this scheme."*

**Nicole Stott**  
Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Manager Bradford  
Metropolitan District Council

The safety team at Northern is continually reviewing ways to make our stations more secure and mitigate the risk of trespass, accidents and fatalities. All customer facing colleagues receive intervention training and we work closely with the BTP, Network Rail, Samaritans and local community organisations in an attempt to reduce instances of suicide and attempted suicide. During the reporting period **87 lives were saved** thanks to the inventions of our colleagues; one of whom was recognised with a Lifesaver award at the National Rail Awards in 2022.

Northern is actively participating in the wider effort of the industry to reduce unwanted sexual behaviour on the railway and steps have also been taken to tackle this issue in the workplace. A combination of mandatory training courses and workshops was introduced in December 2022 for all staff alongside the introduction of a new sexual harassment policy.

Our Travel Safe Officers (TSOs) provide a visible, high-profile presence on stations and support both colleagues and customers. 60 TSOs are based across four key locations and every officer is fully trained and vetted by the BTP under the Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme. All Northern conductors have the option to use a body-worn camera. A trial of these prior to the report period showed that they are most used at weekends and at times when events such as football matches can prove particularly challenging. Our conductors have cited that they feel safer and are more likely to report incidents to the BTP due to a higher likelihood of conviction.

## *Classical Music trial on Northern Stations*



Northern has trialled the use of Classical music to reduce anti-social behaviour. Northern's Customer Experience team has led a pilot of classical music installation at a number of stations on the network with excellent results including:

- **83%** reduction in reported antisocial behaviour and trespass
- Customers and colleagues report feeling safer
- Reduction in BTP attendance to stations
- Reduction in graffiti and vandalism meaning that costly Facilities Management resources can be allocated elsewhere on the network.

Funding has now been approved for a network solution that will be made available to 397 of Northern's **467 stations** and eventually to the entire network as necessary system upgrades take place across the remaining stations.



# 4. *Sustainable Growth*

**Northern's Sustainable Growth ambition seeks to help the North grow and ensure that our operations bring substantial socio-economic value.**

We are committed to optimising and enhancing our wider contribution to the economy in the North, its environment, and social value through proactive collaboration with partners to ensure these objectives are met.

Significantly, we've started the journey to achieve Net Zero carbon by 2050, working not only on what we can directly control but seeking to influence others, including Northern's large supply chain, to bring them along on the journey and ensure they embrace social value.



**Neil Bowen,  
Head of Procurement**

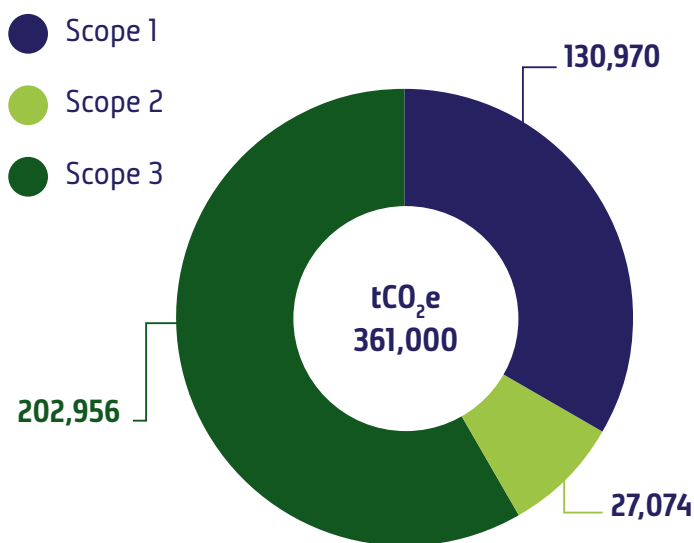
# Climate and Environment



**Northern is committed to reducing its impact on the environment and where possible delivering interventions that enhance the world around us; driving efficiency and minimising environmental impacts wherever possible.**

We continually improve our environmental performance through an Environmental and Energy Management System certified to ISO 14001 and ISO 50001<sup>4</sup>.

**Northern has established a baseline of emissions using its 21/22 carbon footprint:**



As a train operator Northern gets people to where they need to be using much less carbon than other forms of transport commonly used for interurban travel. We are committed to continuing to reduce our carbon emissions till we achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050; measuring our carbon emissions in line with ISO 14064<sup>5</sup> which is verified by an independent 3rd party annually. We maintain a full inventory of scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 emissions so accounts for all our direct and indirect emissions as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

<sup>4</sup>ISO 14001 provides guidelines for developing a management system that helps an organisation understand the risk it poses to the environment and the risk the environment poses to it. The system enables an organisation to deliver action that reduces this risk and ensures that it adheres to all legal and other stakeholder requirements. ISO 50001 focuses on how organisations can reduce energy use through developing a deep understanding of its energy consumption and delivering interventions that drive down energy use. Both systems provide a framework for setting objectives and monitoring improvement with the ultimate ambition of achieving continual improvement.

<sup>5</sup>ISO 14064 is a standard that provides a framework for accounting for an organisations Greenhouse Gas emissions and is key to developing and reporting our carbon footprint.

Northern is creating a Net Zero Strategy that focuses on reducing emissions across its fleet, buildings and supply chain which make up 99% of its total emissions. As an operator, Northern leases its infrastructure and trains from 3rd parties, so key to Northern’s success in reducing its emissions is the formation of strong partnerships and aligning its own interventions with the actions of others. This can pose a risk as Northern cannot deliver the actions it needs to decarbonise without investment and action from others. Our strategy sets out a realistic and flexible approach to decarbonisation that forms clear synergies with our partners to achieve Net Zero by aiming to achieve as rapid and deep reductions as possible in the meantime.

During the reporting period the team has begun promoting ‘Planet Saving Rules’ to focus colleagues on aligning with Northern’s business wide effort to minimise environmental impact. Initial trials will take place in the North-East with all station based colleagues being offered e-learning and how-to guides to increase their understanding of how changing behaviours will help the environment.

Recycling customer waste has proven to be one of the hardest environmental challenges across the industry. In a bid to improve segregation rates and recycling efficiency a waste segregator was recruited for a 6-month trial at Bradford Interchange. This resulted in a 32 percentage point increase in the recycling rate and reduced the number of general waste collections overall. We are currently developing a plan with our facilities management contractor to apply this initiative more widely across the network with the potential to increase our waste recycling rate by over 7% - providing a significant step towards our 2026 target of 74% across the network. Smart sensors are also being trialled, improving the accuracy of data associated with waste removed from our sites.

The installation of water loggers has significantly reduced the risk of undetected leaks across our assets, providing live data that enables us to identify and resolve issues swiftly. Improved accuracy in data and speed of reporting will enable us to react quickly to leaks, reducing the amount of water we lose. The data loggers have already proved to be invaluable, notifying us of a major leak which was rapidly investigated and repaired, saving 2500 litres of water wastage every hour that would previously have gone undetected.



**Planet saving rules**

**Switch it off** **ENERGY** Make sure equipment is being used efficiently, and is switched off when not in use.

**Be water wise** **WATER** Report leaks quickly so they can get resolved fast, reducing water wastage.

**Right waste right bin** **WASTE** Use signs on bins to check that what you're throwing away is going to the right place.

**See it report it** **POLLUTION** Fault all forms of pollution with ISS.

**NORTHERN** **Go do your thing**

Over the past year Northern has been working on a Geographic Information Systems model with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) to establish our biodiversity baseline from satellite data, covering landscapes, species, and habitats. DWT is now prepping station management plans for all of Northern's station sites using the GIS model as a data led approach. This will ensure that when we come to implementing the plans at chosen sites in the next 12-24 months, the implementations are sustainable. During the implementation phase from these plans, Northern and DWT plan on engaging with station adopters/ friends of groups to develop the community aspect of the project by going through the plan and providing training on creation and management of the biodiversity improvements.



The end goal is to achieve a biodiversity net gain at our chosen sites, which can be established through pre and post habitat surveys.

We have chosen not to report on nitrogen oxide emissions. Whilst we could demonstrate an overall reduction in emissions, this would not show any specific change in areas where the need for a reduction is greatest and people are most impacted. Therefore we feel this would be a misrepresentation of social value delivered through environmental impacts. In this and other key areas we continue to measure and monitor our impacts, utilising the data available to us to understand baselines and set targets.

# Supply Chain



**During the reporting period we have undertaken a significant amount of work towards embedding Responsible Procurement and social value into our procurement processes. Alongside the steps we have taken to ensure our compliance with Procurement Policy Notes 06/20 and 05/21, we continue to make progress towards embedding the principles of ISO20400 (International standard for sustainable procurement) into our ways of working as part of our commitment to sustainable procurement.**

We recognise the importance and value that can be achieved with our supply chain and are committed to driving and delivering sustainable outcomes. In July 2022 we worked with Action Sustainability to undertake a Gap Analysis to benchmark our sustainable procurement practices against ISO20400. The analysis was supported by members of the Procurement, Energy and Environment, Stakeholder and Community and Corporate Governance teams. Action Sustainability used their framework based upon the standard to score us against 'fundamentals, policy and strategy, enablers and procurement process', with our overall score rating us as 'established' in the field of sustainable procurement.

We scored highest in terms of engagement with our supply chain and other external stakeholders to deliver sustainable procurement goals, with areas for improvement identified in measuring and improving performance.

The Gap Analysis supported what we had already viewed to be our key areas of strength and opportunity for improvement, whilst also helping to clearly define our next steps. Our initial priorities following the review include:

- A refresh of the sustainable procurement foundations
- Developing greater alignment between the Annual Business Plan and our procurement policy and related documents
- Building a greater level of capability internally and engaging further with our supply chains.

We have continued to develop our procurement documents to support our compliance with PPN 06/20 and provide bidders with clear guidance for their social value submissions. We are undertaking a significant review of social value measurement and monitoring processes in order to support our contract managers and suppliers with social value reporting. We work with colleagues in the DOHL group Train Operating Companies to share knowledge and learning too.

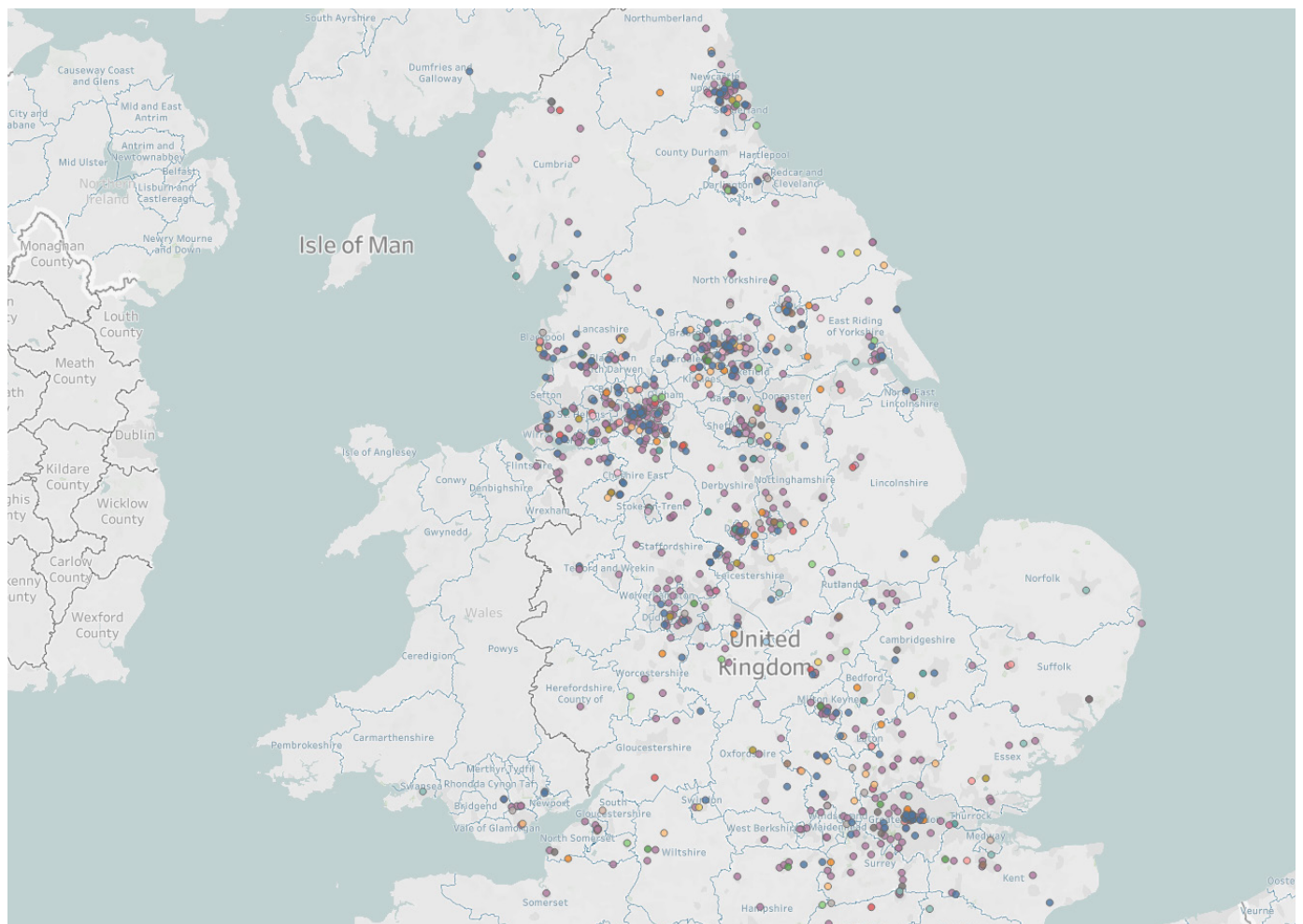
We are currently reviewing the options available to us for our supply chain to report their delivery. Whilst the RSVT provides the option to do this, we are also considering more established frameworks and tools, our primary objective being the ease and transparency of reporting which we believe will underpin progress in delivery. Our next report will include a detailed overview of the social value additionality attributable to our supply chain.

We continue to work closely alongside our colleagues in the Energy and Environment team to support the delivery of Northern's Net Zero strategy through supply chain engagement and measurement and management of scope 3 emissions.

Alongside this we continue to build our contract management framework and strategy, ensuring that suppliers align to our Supply Chain Code of Conduct, and minimum standards including ethical, sustainability and environmental standards.

As we become more mature in our approach to sustainable procurement we anticipate providing tools and resources as well as training for internal teams, supporting them to understand the relevance of social value to their project planning and the associated opportunities to make a positive impact and demonstrate value for money. During the reporting period we are refreshing our corporate website to provide suppliers with access to key documents and case studies as well as information to enable Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) to access opportunities to win contracts with Northern.

In line with the more formalised governance of responsible business at Northern, our aim is to ensure our approach to social value in procurement supports the wider responsible business priorities, effectively engaging both internal and external stakeholders in order to utilise what we know is a huge opportunity to make an impact both in the North and for wider society.



Geographical representation of Northern's total supply chain

# Conclusion

**We are delighted to be reporting such a wealth of value delivered across the North but also benefitting wider society.**

We now have a greater depth of understanding around where our strengths lie and where we can do more. It is exciting to be at the start of our social value journey – knowing that we can take lessons from our successes and challenges and turn them into tangible impact. Over the next 12 months we will focus on:

- Embedding responsible business priorities across Northern
- Sharing our plans and further engaging our workforce in delivering more impact
- Best practice – ensuring we build on our successes with schools, colleague volunteers and community engagement to increase our impact
- Continuing to create long term relationships with a range of community partners
- Creating resources to support understanding and application of social value best practice at Northern
- Developing our social value reporting processes
- Increasing opportunities for SMEs and VCSEs to win contracts with Northern
- Engaging our supply chain in delivering and reporting on social value through our contracts
- Collaborating with industry peers to further our shared goals and increase impact

This is the first Social Value report that Northern has produced and it will serve as a baseline from which we can build. The report highlights the dedication and achievements of the amazing people that support our social value themes both within our business and through our external partners. It is a privilege to work alongside such an inspiring team whose dedication to 'do the right thing' shines through in this report.

The progress we are making is highlighted by the Awards we have achieved, such as the Rail Business Award for Customer Service Excellence, and achievement of relevant Industry Standards, such as Environmental and Energy Management Systems (ISO 14001 and ISO 50001) that we have worked hard to attain. These milestones provide a firm foundation on which we can build and further progress.

As one of the largest Train Operating Companies in the UK, we have a responsibility to ensure a sustainable future for our people, our customers and the communities we serve. We are committed to making Northern a more socially responsible business and whilst we are incredibly proud of the work we have done so far, we recognise that there's more to do. Our social value strategy will remain a priority for Northern and we will continue to develop our business around the fundamental principles identified within this report to positively benefit our stakeholders.



**Emma Yates,  
Programmes Director**

# Appendix: Northern's Responsible Business Steering Group



**Emma Yates,**  
Programmes Director (Chair)

**Carolyn Watson,**  
Director of Stakeholder and  
Community Engagement

**Neil Bowen,**  
Head of Procurement

**Catherine Craig,**  
Senior Procurement Manager  
– Strategy

**David Gray,**  
Head of Energy and Environment

**Kyle MacNeill,**  
Energy and Environment Business Partner

**Lou Mather,**  
Employee Experience Business Partner

**Joe McTigue,**  
Senior Economist

**Sarah Barton,**  
Head of Internal Audit

**Governance of Responsible Business  
consists of two tiers:**

**Tier 1**

The Responsible Business Steering Group  
– this group feeds into Northern's Director  
Group and Board

**Tier 2**

This tier comprises of the tactical working groups  
and priority leads that support the Responsible  
Business Steering Group through the provision  
of performance evaluation information, business  
intelligence, identified best practice, risks.

**Figure 1 shows how the governance  
structure will interact.**



Figure One