



*Making a difference*

# ***Social Value Report 2023-2024***



**NORTHERN**

***Go do your thing***

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# Welcome

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

**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+ colleagues are committed to doing just that. This wider ambition is reflected in our vision to 'make a positive impact for the North in all we do and for all we serve'.**



This is our second social value report and my final one before I leave the business. I'm proud to hand things over to our new Managing Director, Tricia Williams.

Since 2020 our fleet of trains has been completely refreshed and our stations are becoming more than boarding and alighting points and are developing into hubs and focal destinations for communities.

We're equally proud of being one of the North's biggest and most impactful employers. As you'll see from this report, we're making a difference and adding real value in far more ways than just running trains and operating stations.

Of course, the societal challenges remain, and the impact of the cost of living and the deprivation suffered by many communities cannot be underestimated. We want to ensure we use every resource available to us to make a positive impact for those that are most in need of the opportunities we can facilitate.

Our role is to connect and ensure individuals and communities have access to opportunity. That access is not just through our direct employment but through our vast supply chain and our extensive community outreach.

We have a responsibility to enable independent travel and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the Northern Accessibility User Group for the tremendous work they do in sharing their

lived experience, to make our whole customer experience provision as inclusive as possible.

Whether or not you work for Northern, travel on our services, or live in a community served by us, I am confident our size, reach and importantly commitment to a better society is of great benefit.

We have made tremendous strides in making Northern a great place to work and offering a much-improved service for customers. We are actively delivering strategies that offer internal and external development, grow communities, educate and engage, support the vulnerable, reduce our environmental impact, improve wellbeing and most importantly keep people safe.

Internally we challenge each other and ensure our decisions have an ever-increasing focus on creating meaningful and sustainable impact. We act responsibly because we collectively choose to.

That responsibility will continue. I am proud to have led the team in this approach and I am certain that under Tricia's upcoming leadership that Northern will be the best for our colleagues, customers and communities across the North.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Donovan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

**Nick Donovan**  
**Managing Director**

# Executive Summary

Reporting period 1 April 2023–31 March 2024

Welcome to Northern's second social value report!

Reflecting on the last year, we've improved our understanding of what we deliver in terms of social value. With the 22/23 report as our benchmark, we're now able to start shaping our priorities to take this further.

## Northern's social value contribution for 2023/24 is £1.2bn

The 7,000+ strong team at Northern is committed to having a positive impact. That's why we're incredibly proud to showcase our social value in a way that recognises individual colleague-led initiatives, alongside wider business activities.

As a business, we understand the importance of a holistic approach to articulating value. That's why we set ourselves a new overarching Key Performance Indicator (KPI) this year. We call it our North Star – 'Economic Value'. This includes a number of indirect societal impacts of the service we provide – however, we have only included the areas of social, environmental and economic wellbeing that we have a direct impact on in this report.

Last year, we introduced a Responsible Business Steering Group, reporting into Northern's Director Group. The group has made excellent progress over the last year with oversight and governance of all priority areas, including social value. Their work continues to drive how we embed responsible

business in our culture and processes. It also ensures we review activity against a governance framework that is aligned with the Sustainable Rail Blueprint and utilises Rail Safety and Standards Board's (RSSB) maturity assessment tool.

Each area of the business is beginning to understand more about their potential to deliver impact through their work, and that consideration in planning will be key to our growth in this area. Our focus on the wider impact of running our service continues to develop, with social value intrinsic to new strategies that will take Northern from strength to strength.

We remain committed to collaboration inside and outside the industry, knowing the opportunities this can bring in terms of delivering truly meaningful impact in the North and for wider society. Our colleagues sit on industry working groups that exist to drive both environmental and social impact. Extensive work with our supply chain is already beginning to highlight many

areas of opportunity for collaborative projects. We've also begun work on some pilot projects with RSSB – looking at education outreach, impact measurement, and how we can drive positive impact by working with the social housing sector on shared social value priorities.

Once again, we've used RSSB's Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) to value the social value we deliver. As noted last year, the RSVT is still in development, with a review and substantial changes to reporting metrics and values to align with Treasury Green Book underway. This has and will continue to have some impact on the values we report. The following section sets out the areas affected and other considerations we have made for values reporting this year.

Despite these significant changes, we've once again delivered a huge amount of social value. If we only look at the metrics linked to social wellbeing, our delivery figure has increased by well over £100m. This is due to new, hugely impactful interventions delivered by our colleagues, and improved data collection for this second reporting period. As we continue to refine these processes and further embed social value across the business, we're in no doubt that we will continue to uncover hidden value.

This report outlines our social value progress in line with our strategic pillars. We've shared a selection of case studies that give a flavour of the extensive social value delivered during this reporting period, and the rich scope of those activities. We remain committed to focusing our efforts on the impact of our work, over and above the values that a measurement framework enables us to place upon them. Finally, we'll outline key focus areas for the coming year, in line with our new social value strategy and experience in this space.

## Methodology

Our 2022-23 report noted that the RSVT was still very much in development. This continues to be the case, with substantial changes expected as we move into the next reporting period. Key reporting metrics such as career engagement – one of our strongest areas of delivery – have already been reviewed to reflect the level of impact in line with the nature of an intervention, and to align the RSVT with Treasury Green Book principles. We support this review, but it should be noted that such changes have had a significant impact on the values we are reporting this year.

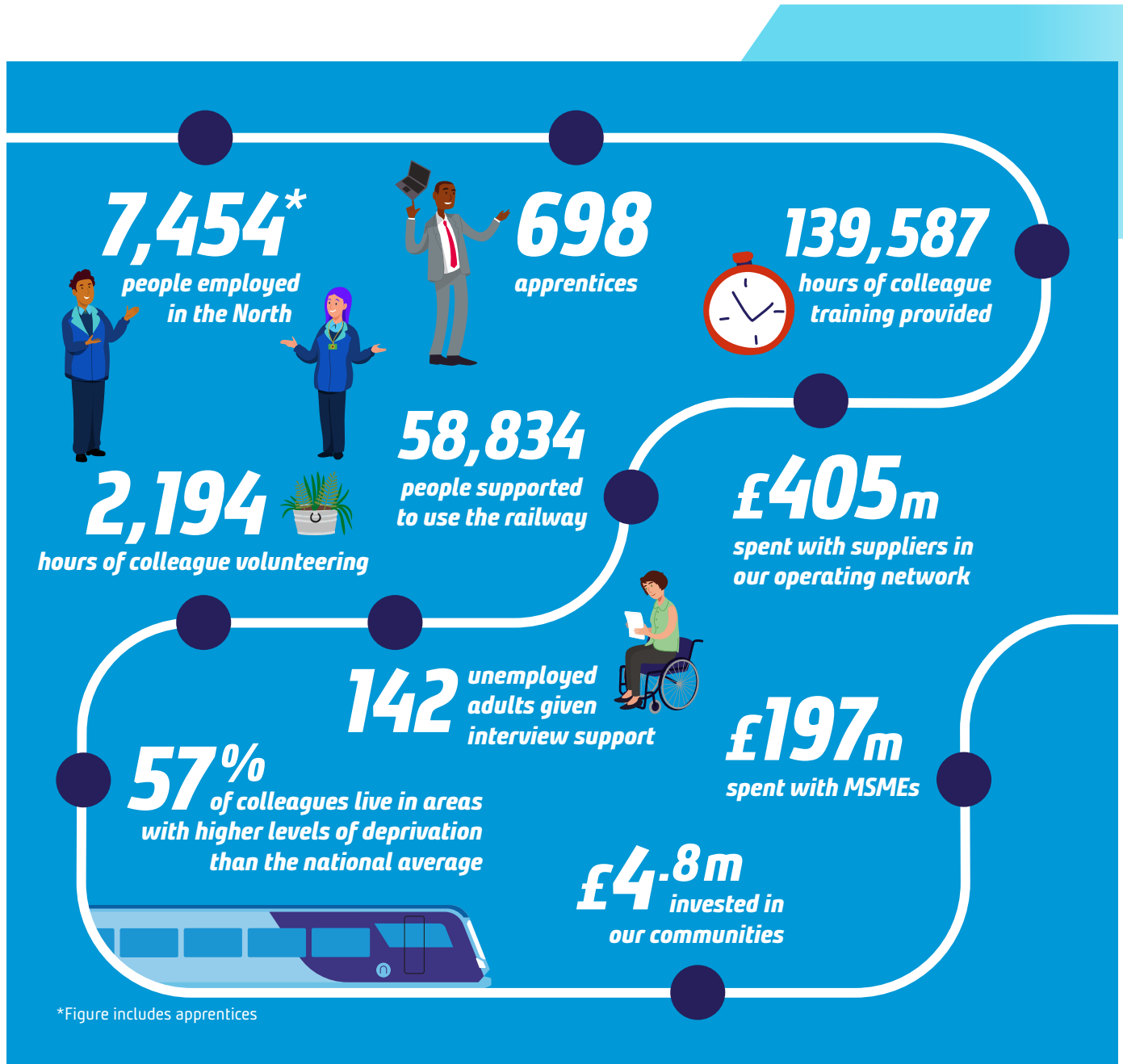
Another notable change is the way we have reported our economic value. The RSVT modelling and associated values for Gross Value Added (GVA) and Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) is undergoing significant review at the time of writing, and it is likely that these will be removed entirely going forward. As such we have chosen not LM3 or GVA within our headline figures for social value, and have included only the employment and spend figures directly attributable to Northern. We are only reporting local spend, in line with the RSVT framework. Our definition of local remains as 'the Northern Trains Ltd operating network'. This has had a significant impact on the value we have reported in these areas but whilst the RSVT remains under review, we want to ensure we take a cautious approach to our reporting.

A significant change we have chosen to implement is in the way we approach the social value delivered by our Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs). In our first year, along with other Train Operating Companies (TOCs), we reported the number of volunteering hours delivered by our CRPs and station adoption groups. While many other TOCs have continued to report in this way, we have chosen not to. We anticipate that in future, CRPs will increasingly look to report their own value. To avoid any future duplication and to ensure attribution of social value is accurate and transparent, we felt it appropriate to make this change early on in our reporting. Therefore, we have only included the financial contributions that we make to Community Rail in the figure we report here.

We have reviewed our approach to carbon reporting this year, noting that other TOCs had chosen to include carbon reduction data resulting from modal shift. New guidance for this RSVT metric is coming in the next reporting period and this will help to ensure consistency across the industry in how it is applied. Therefore, we have chosen to remain consistent with last year's reporting. This means our figures are much lower against this metric than some TOCs. We have maintained the same approach, on the basis that this report focusses specifically on the areas we can impact. This approach is consistent with TransPennine Trains – the only other TOC in the DOHL group using the RSVT. With further RSVT guidance on expected in the coming year, our carbon reporting may change for 2024-25.

Some of our delivery data and accompanying values have been lower this year, mainly due to the need for financial efficiencies that the whole industry has faced. Our investment in areas such as the Customer and Community Improvement Fund was significantly impacted, plus our recruitment of 'Year In Industry' students and graduates.

Overall, the changes in financial values that we have reported this year are not reflective of a reduction in our actual delivery, but of progress in the industry in terms of how to report social value. It is important to note that further progression and changes should be expected for some time to come, as the industry matures in its approach to measuring social value.



# Northern's Social Value Delivery

## 1. Customers at the Heart



£268.7m

**Customers at the Heart is one of our four strategic pillars. It focusses on delivering the best possible customer service at every level of the business.**

**An impactful railway is not just about moving tonnes of metal from one location to another – it's about supporting individuals, organisations and our communities to live their lives in an easier, safer and happier way.**

At Northern, we're committed to making every one of the 100m+ yearly journeys on our services as positive as possible. We recognise our influence in enabling positive change across the whole of the North.

We're deeply embedded in the communities we serve, we recognise our customers' needs, and listen and react to their representatives and stakeholders to help us make a difference.

We're proud of everything we do to keep customers and communities at the heart of Northern. It's been a year full of achievements, all thanks to the dedication of our colleagues. We know this commitment will continue to be important, as communities and individuals continue to face many challenges. We hope this report will 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 stretches across the North of England. With nearly 500 stations and over 30 routes between Derby, Carlisle, Liverpool, Hull and everywhere in between, we're part of thousands of local communities.**

Our job isn't only to run trains between these locations. It's about creating opportunities in education, work and life - and for many people, our rail services are the key connector and a fundamental enabler.

It's estimated that the North of England has a population of around 10 million people, with a diverse range of age, demographic and circumstance.

We work closely with rail-based community groups, including station adopters and 22 Community Rail Partnerships. We support them with annual funding (£1.1m in 2023), grants, resources, time and connections. In return, these organisations not only help to make our locations look better, but make a difference everyday by:

- Bringing people together
- Supporting vulnerable individuals and groups
- Providing education, training and confidence
- Increasing tourism and local spend
- Working tirelessly to improve the safety of all and reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour

Find out more about [Northern's community work](https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/about-us/community) by visiting <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/about-us/community>

We know our responsibility doesn't stop at the station entrance. We actively work with organisations and charities not associated with the railway, aimed at improving lives and building a better society.

Our colleagues are part of the communities they serve, and we welcome their nominations where our support can benefit causes close to their heart - where even a small grant can make a big difference.



## Case study

# Northern depot team repair railway classroom



Colleagues from Northern's Heaton Train Care Centre have helped repair a school's railway classroom and built the pupils a level crossing.

The Dales School in Blyth is a specialist primary school providing education for children with a variety of additional needs. They needed some urgent maintenance to their retired pacer, which they affectionally call their 'STEM lab on wheels' – and called in Northern.

The team helped spruce up the classroom, fixing a leak in the roof and replacing some window seals.

The former Northern train was donated by rolling stock owner and asset manager Porterbrook and placed on a short length of track donated and installed by Network Rail in 2021.

The Northern team also installed a 'level crossing' walkway and safety signs for the children, to help them understand and practice railway safety.

## Case study

# Arts to Heal

**Blackburn station subway has been transformed with the installation of some amazing community artwork, bringing colour and brightness to an otherwise drab area.**

Created by local Blackburn charity Arts to Heal, the artwork was funded by community grants including Northern's Station Adoption Fund.

Arts 2 Heal's mission is to provide transformative creative interventions in a warm, welcoming, and supportive environment. They are dedicated to empowering individuals who are navigating the challenges of mental health issues.

The Art installation at Blackburn Railway Station aims to connect individuals, alleviate feelings of isolation and enhance overall wellbeing through the wonder of travel.

At the grand unveiling event, speakers included Banu Adam of Arts to Heal, Shahiesta Raja of Community Rail Lancashire and Northern's own Euan Hilton. A poem for the occasion was read by David Tebb, one of the artists.

## Case study

# Northern colleagues swap ASB for community spirit



**Stewart Hall and Darin Astbury, customer service assistants at Brinnington station, have been singled out for leading the community's fight against anti-social behaviour.**

They are credited with turning around the fortunes of the station, which welcomes over 100,000 customers a year and had previously been a hotspot for anti-social behaviour.

Stewart and Darin set up a swap shop 12 months ago. It provides a service for those in the local community in need of food, clothes, books and other household items.

The scheme is incredibly popular, with more than 1,000 members of the local community joining the Facebook group and 20 volunteers now helping

to co-ordinate donations. They have even helped fully-furnish houses for people that have moved into the local area with no possessions.

Stewart said:

*"For us, the 'Swap Shop' was about providing practical help to people living close to the station that were most in need. As word spread throughout the community about what we were doing at the station, we saw a steady reduction in anti-social behaviour, which makes the station itself a more valued resource for the community who need to use the railway to get about."*



# ***Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF)***

**Our Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF) gives community groups across the North of England the opportunity to apply for a slice of £50,000 in funding, to help combat cost-of-living issues.**

The rise in the cost of living is affecting many of our customers and communities. Our CCIF considers proposals that bring local benefit, with no requirement for projects to be linked to our stations or the railway.

Northern's CCIF specifically looks to support projects that improve or reduce:

- Social mobility, education, mentoring, skills, training and employment
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Social isolation
- Financial inclusion
- Digital inclusion
- Poverty

Grants of up to £10,000 were made available in 2023, for projects to be delivered by 31 March 2024.

There were 12 successful applications which were internally assessed and then approved by Rail North Partnership – who manage our franchise on behalf of Department for Transport and Transport for the North.

# Case study

## *Selby CoderDojo*

**Selby CoderDojo provide coding and digital making activities to young people, free of charge, removing as many barriers as possible to STEM activities. They also set out to engage girls, young people who have additional needs or are educationally under-served, or those who are disadvantaged or underrepresented in STEM.**

Thanks to Northern's CCIF, Selby CoderDojo have improved their infrastructure and safety equipment, significantly upgraded the laptops used by families without a device at home, and secured Raspberry Pi Pico's and BBC Micro:Bits and provided branded clothing to volunteers. This allows young people to get hands on with electronics projects, helping them feel part of the Dojo team.

As a result, they've seen young people massively develop their coding, problem solving and interpersonal skills.



The funding allowed for six coding sessions for 240 young people between 7-17. They were given the opportunity to take their first steps into programming. The breakdown of spaces booked was:

- People with a declared additional need – 16%
- Girls and women – 25%
- People without a device – 47%
- People who live in the 50% overall most deprived communities – 19%
- People who live in the 50% most deprived communities for education and skills – 26%
- People from the 50% most deprived communities for access to housing and local services – 31%

## Case study

# Little Y Family Support Project

At a time when families are struggling with the cost of living, YMCA Barnsley has delivered a holistic programme of support for families with children aged 5-11 years, with funding from Northern's CCIF.

They have delivered regular health and wellbeing workshops including:

- Family cooking sessions with a focus on healthy eating and budgeting
- Health and fitness activities
- Family play
- Arts and creative play to support children's development
- Imagination gaming, supporting development with games to take home
- Money management and financial awareness

So far, the project has delivered 16 weekly sessions with additional support and mentoring for parents and carers, three holiday provision sessions, five monthly workshops and 10 hours of advice and guidance sessions.

This has resulted in the support and upskilling of 27 families including 34 children and parents. Carers have built trusted relationships with youth workers and other professionals, as well as support networks with other parents, reducing feelings of isolation.



The family cooking workshop helped participants to learn practical life skills and role model healthy eating habits while having fun. They prepared and ate shared meals as a group and were given ingredients to take home.

YMCA were also able to provide slow cookers to families that didn't have one, meaning they were leaving with knowledge, ingredients and much needed equipment.

A workshop attendee commented:

*"I learnt to let my child do more when helping me cook. I also learnt how to use a slow cooker, never had one... so nice to have one to prepare tea for when we get home and it saves money. My son is able to be social with his peers and we have had family time together."*

# Case study

## **Westhoughton Hub**



**The Hub at Westhoughton provides warm spaces to community residents and offers the opportunity to learn healthy, fresh ingredient cooking on a budget – using air fryers and slow cookers.**

Courses were run over four days and participants received their own air fryer and/or slow cooker where needed, along with recipe cards to help them put what they learnt into practice. Most importantly, they developed social networks and have been sharing other ideas and further recipe information.

Thanks to Northern's funding, The Hub has been able to support 60 residents and provided a total of 80 air fryers and slow cookers.

The courses have shown residents that it's actually cheaper to use fresh ingredients to feed their families - rather than buying processed foods. Participants now understand that batch cooking is a good way of saving money. In surveys, residents have reported reducing food bills by 25% a week.

The building itself has provided a warm space and respite for 300 people who were either homeless, sofa surfing or staying in temporary accommodation. This support has mainly been provided to residents who are 30+ years old.

The Hub are planning on continuing the project and supporting residents who are on the waiting list.

One of the organisers said:

*"We've thoroughly enjoyed working with Northern. The opportunity your funding has provided us with has been outstanding, and the residents have loved every minute of it."*

## Case study

# Humber Job Hub



**The Community Employment and Wellbeing Group project aims to support Hull residents out of income poverty and into new employment.**

30 participants have attended three six-week programmes, offering support with:

- CV and letter writing
- Job search techniques
- Completing application forms and
- Interview preparation and practice

Participants learned to identify new employment opportunities and have been given personal support to help raise confidence and reduce job anxiety, depression, and stress – addressing common mental health issues.

Practical training has helped to increase computer literacy and individual skill sets, including language support for those with English as a second language.

Access to computer equipment has also been provided, along with guidance on how to apply for government grants aimed at tackling the cost-of-living crisis.

The project delivery was a success, and there is currently a growing waiting list for future Community Employment and Wellbeing Groups.



As a result of the Group's work and Northern's funding:

- 6 participants have moved into employment
- 8 participants have moved onto training for a future job role
- 11 participants have gained interviews
- 1 participant has gained a volunteering role

Ages have ranged from late 20s to over 50s, and the project has provided participants with the tools and support to enable them to gain new employment and gain an income.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Customers



**Stakeholder engagement is a vital part of our work and is essential if we want to achieve our vision to serve communities. We value our stakeholders and aim to develop good, long-term relationships built on openness and trust.**

Stakeholder engagement is key to improving our business performance. Over a challenging period from a performance perspective, we've sought to be open and honest about the challenges and have welcomed stakeholder feedback.

While stakeholders understand our operational challenges, through our survey they have stressed that operational performance should continue to be the industry's focus going forward, followed by passenger growth.

Survey results are strong in many areas including personal relationships, helpfulness and ease of contact, and stakeholder comments highlight the strength of ongoing collaborations.

However, we recognise that there are areas that we need to work on further. Areas such as decisiveness and understanding the needs of other organisations, which we have fed into our future approach to ensure that we are acting on stakeholder feedback.

Quotes from stakeholder survey



*"Northern offer open frequent engagement and try and provide honest feedback to emerging situations."*



*"Focus on customer experience and accessibility - progress in recent years has been very impressive."*



*"Northern aren't offering customer service, because they are not running trains on time."*

Our stakeholders cover a wide range of sectors and organisations and we've continued to work closely with them throughout the year. Alongside day-to-day meetings and interactions, we held several stakeholder events over the reporting period, including our annual community rail and stakeholder conferences in October and January.

The conferences were extremely well attended, with a 45% uplift in numbers compared with the previous year and higher satisfaction levels. The stakeholder conferences included an overview of regional challenges and priorities, plus updates from our Managing Director, Chief Operating Officer, and several other directors from across the business.

We've also held two parliamentary drop-in sessions during the year which were attended by 45 MPs from across the North. The events support our ongoing engagement with MPs on constituency issues and allowed them to find out about our apprenticeship programme and how we assess new drivers entering the industry.

We continue to update our dedicated Stakeholder Hub and issue regular newsletters and bulletins to an audience of 500+ stakeholders. We have also started using Salesforce, a new system for managing stakeholder engagement, with the aim of enhancing our communications in the longer-term and ensuring consistency.



# *Building the Transpennine Route Upgrade together*

The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) is a major, multi-billion-pound programme of railway improvements to deliver better journeys across the Pennines between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York.

TRU will transform the Transpennine main line into a high-performing, reliable railway, bringing more frequent, more reliable, faster, greener trains. The size of the project does mean that there will be planned disruption to services so the work can be delivered, and the transformation is expecting to take at least 10 years to complete.

We hold twice yearly full day forums with affected customers, who have supported us in:

- Defining new requirements for the signage and posters
- Improving the consistency and simplifying language we use
- Guiding on journey planning
- The rail replacement experience
- Accessibility
- Station facilities
- Best communication methods

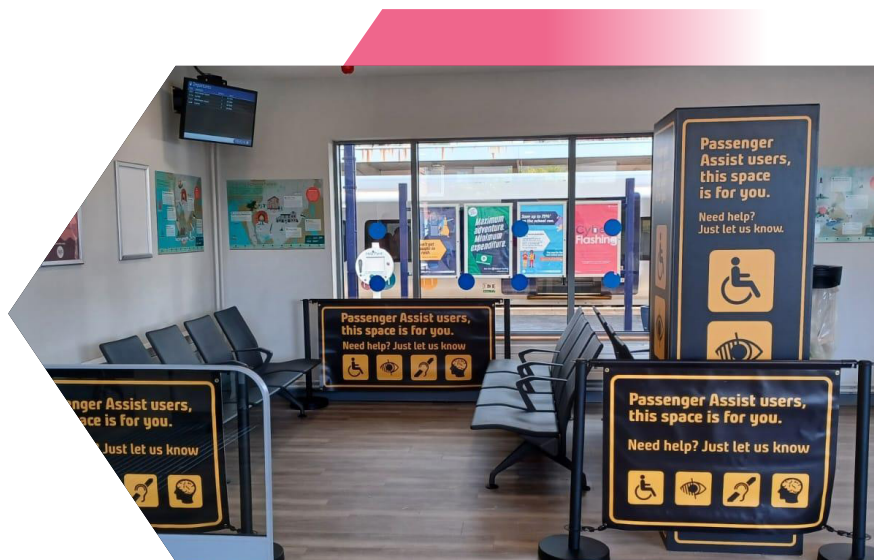
# Rail Accessibility

**Our aim is to create a 'Northern for Everyone' by responding to the many varied needs of our customers with a range of highly innovative, never before seen, interventions.**

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. As such, 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 from user groups into Northern's policies and initiatives, including consultation on new train designs, accessible ticket machines and station developments.

We believe train travel should be easier for everyone. We take a holistic approach to accessibility, responding to the needs of those with both visible and less visible 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 customers that need them most.

During the consultation for the future of ticket offices at our stations, we ensured that all documents were available on our website in easy read, large print and audio format, while Braille versions were available on request.



## Some highlights from our Rail Accessibility work include:

- Northern has appointed an accessibility campaigner to chair its independent user group which focuses on empowering people to use public transport – no matter their circumstances. New chair Mark Cutter, from Lancaster, has been a member of Northern's Accessibility User Group (NAUG) since its inception.

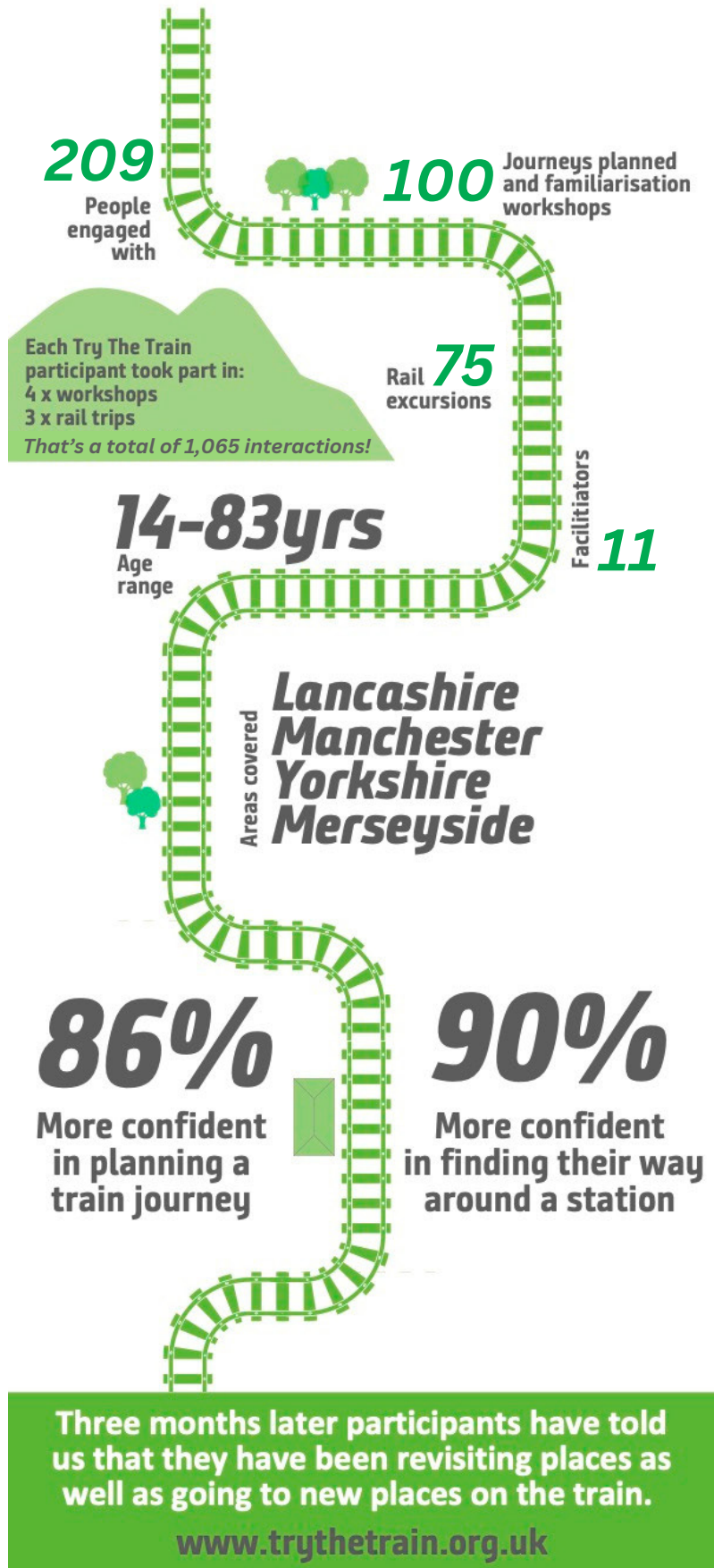
NAUG is a pan disability user group whose membership represents lived experience of a very wide range of disabilities on a personal basis. They share the perspective of disability groups and organisations reflecting the communities served by Northern. Since launching in 2016, NAUG has played a vital role in supporting Northern's accessibility strategy and has offered a lived-experience-of-disability perspective to many of our projects.

- Northern customers travelling between Manchester, Leeds and York will be able to see some of the train operator's announcements in British Sign Language (BSL) thanks to a trial using A.I.

We have worked with software and accessibility experts on the scheme, which knits together individual words signed by a BSL interpreter and displays the complete sentences on customer information screens onboard.

The announcements currently focus on station names, but we hope to increase their functionality based on customer feedback.

- Northern will be supporting the training of Guide Dogs for the Blind across the network. Our aim is to support the training of guide dogs, helping them get used to the sights and sounds of the railway.
- At The Forum Awards in April 2023, we picked up the Inclusivity title, for using the lived experience of our passengers to co-create practical solutions to make travel more accessible to all. The awards recognise organisations that are leading the way in raising standards for customer operations – shining a spotlight on a variety of activity, including digital channels, face-to-face, back-office operations and contact centres.
- Eight Passenger Assist Points have been installed at some of our busiest stations, with more to follow – helping make travel easier and more accessible for people with accessibility needs. These new designated areas at key stations across the network will feature clear and accessible signage, as well as seating to make it easier for passengers to get the assistance they need when travelling on Northern services. Passengers will be able to wait in these areas or ask for help when they book train travel through 'Passenger Assist' - a national scheme for any passengers who require assistance to travel on the rail network.
- We are focused on internal education and winning our colleagues' hearts and minds. We have invested in a VR training game which helps colleagues to see, hear and feel what it might be like for those with disabilities on our stations and some of the unknown barriers they might face. This training includes a hard hitting video (developed by Network Rail) which aims to increase understanding and empathy and the use of more appropriate language.
- In the past year we have trained over 500 colleagues, ensuring that they feel entirely confident in enabling customers with a range of needs and disabilities to feel assured and supported as they make their journey with us.
- We are pleased to continue supporting Community Rail Lancashire (Education) and Community Rail Cumbria with their outreach programmes 'Beyond the Home' and 'Soulful Days Out', which aim to provide confidence and reduce anxiety when using the rail network for those that need additional assistance.
- We have continued our 'Try the Train' programme, 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 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 targets towards those who have protected characteristics, are from low socioeconomic backgrounds and/or are at risk of social isolation. The below infographic details the success of the programme in 2023.
- We are a member of RaifN (Rail accessibility and inclusion forum for the north) where we work with Network Rail, other operators and Transport for the North to make our network in the North more accessible.



# 2. Valued People



£286.4m

**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 we will only be able to achieve our ambitions with a truly diverse workforce, including people from all backgrounds.

We have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy in place, sponsored by Lisa Leighton, People 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, with over 1,300 responses - which may be partly due to a commitment from the business to pay £1 for every completed survey to Andy's Man Club.

We know from the annual survey that communication is important to colleagues. That's why we offer a multi-channel approach, including a colleague intranet (The Hub), app, Yammer page and a quarterly newspaper. We hold regular 'Ask me Anything' sessions with leaders and experts in our business on a whole variety of issues, ranging from performance, union discussions, uniform, revenue and safety.

We are absolutely committed to our colleagues. We offer lots of support for physical and mental well-being and provide all sorts of additional perks and job benefits.

**Lou Mather**  
**Employee Experience Business Partner**

# Employment training and skills



**At Northern, we are committed to continually upskilling our current employees and providing access to development opportunities for all.**

We want to enable our people to go do their thing and to become a destination employer. This means listening and responding to our colleagues and candidates, creating a high performing business environment where achievement and aspiration are supported, developing our current and next generation leaders, and ensuring we are as inclusive as possible.

Our new People Strategy is about building a place where people can perform at their best and be the best. We strive to:

- Embed inclusive culture throughout Northern
- Have an evolving strategic work force plan that delivers the skills and capabilities needed for the future

- Provide clear, visible and accessible career paths from frontline to leadership
- Transform our training programmes to ensure opportunities are created for everyone

We are proving that our talent attraction is not just focused on candidates we know and who understand our industry. Our latest intake figures are positive, as we pull innovation and experience from outside of the railway.

Only 12% of new entrants into Northern come from the rail and transport industry, with our recruitment now becoming more diverse. We have realised great success in attracting new colleagues from the retail, civil service, education and healthcare sectors. 21% of our external recruitment includes scientists, firefighters, accountants, tradespeople, engineers and even entertainers now helping to run the second biggest train operator in the country.

Plus, we have made substantial efforts in providing opportunities for early careers and those without employment.

Apprenticeships, graduate programmes, year in industry and student work placements make up well over 10% of our 7,000+ strong team.



We have revolutionised how we attract new talent. We promote Northern by adopting a marketing-based approach, with targeted recruitment campaigning on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and even TikTok, using our people to tell their story. Of course, we also embrace more traditional methods and attend numerous job fairs and support wider employability and community schemes, often in areas of high deprivation and higher than average unemployment.

There are examples throughout our business of colleagues starting on early career paths or entry level roles and working their way through to senior leadership and directorial positions.

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 have training schools across our network that are equipped with cutting-edge technology, including simulators, virtual reality and AI. We continue to invest significantly in transforming our learning experiences.

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

Northern is also accredited by Ofsted as a 'Main Provider' for the national Apprenticeship Scheme, a status that enables us to offer our industry-leading training services to other train operators and rail industry organisations. OFSTED rated Northern's quality of education for Apprentices as 'Outstanding.'

In the last six years, more than 2,500 colleagues have graduated from our trainee and apprenticeships schools, including 1,500 conductors and nearly 1,100 train drivers entering service.

We provide a range of opportunities to support job seekers in gaining interview and CV writing skills, through workshops that are aligned with specific local employment opportunities that we are recruiting for. Through the sector-based work academy programme (SWAP) scheme, we continue to offer employability and customer service training, work experience and an opportunity to interview for a role with Northern following successful completion of the programme.

Increasing social mobility in the North is a priority for us. We already support our colleagues' social mobility through our extensive training and career development programme, as well as mentoring that takes place both formally and informally.

Currently, 34% of each cohort of Conductor and Driver Trainees come from an area that the Department for Education would classify as 'disadvantaged' and 20% and 30% of our cohorts also join us having no formal qualifications in English and mathematics. These trainees go on to gain jobs that respectively are above the median average wage in the UK - in the case of Drivers, significantly above the national average wage.

We are proud of what we're already doing, and excited to implement our new strategies that will only serve to grow this impact through our plans for early careers, inclusive employment and further enabling our current colleagues to 'Go Do Their Thing'.

## Case study

# Skills for life for railway apprentices

**Northern is one of the largest providers of apprenticeships in the north of England. We proudly offer opportunities across our business, including in engineering, customer service and back-office support – plus every new driver and conductor recruit will be supported through an apprenticeship qualification.**

We currently have more than 700 colleagues on apprenticeship programmes across our driving, conducting, engineering and business support operations. In 2024, we're planning on enrolling a further 467 onto an apprentice qualification.

Apprenticeships are a great way for young people to start their career at Northern, and for a more experienced candidate to change direction, embrace new opportunities and gain the equivalent of a university qualification.

The Northern engineering apprenticeship scheme is always oversubscribed, and more and more roles are offered every year.

Jamie Woods and Kyle Martin both started as engineering apprentices in 2023, learning the skills needed to help maintain our 368 trains.

Kyle, who works at Allerton depot in Liverpool, said:

*"I have always had an interest in finding out how and why things work, and I love having the support I need to improve and grow my own knowledge and skillset."*





## Case study

# Inspiring the future – Women in engineering awareness days



**For a long time, there have been many directives and programs to attract more women into engineering and STEM subjects at school and university. A report in February 2023 from Engineering UK called “From A-levels to engineering exploring the gender gap in higher education” found that in the UK, of all first-year undergraduates in all subjects, 57% were women. However, of first year undergraduates studying engineering and technology, only 18% were women.**

This is in spite of the fact that the 2018 report from Engineering UK showed that in all STEM A-Levels (except chemistry) more girls received A\*-C grades than boys.

It is clear that, despite the high levels of girls studying these subjects at secondary education level, the numbers drop off sharply when reaching tertiary education. In the most part because of the lack of awareness of the opportunities available within sectors like ours.

To fully access a diverse, balanced, and inclusive workforce – and the talent and skills that will bring – the importance of supporting women into engineering cannot be overstated. While women continue to be an underrepresented cohort the rail industry we continue to work with Higher Education providers, youth groups and women’s groups to fulfil our commitment to attracting more women into engineering.

If you cannot see it, you cannot be it therefore visibility and engagement and promotion of the women working in our industry is key to encouraging all young women to study STEM subjects, and to consider engineering as a viable career option.

In November our engineering team did just that making women in engineering visible to future female engineers from in Calderdale, Wakefield, Rotherham and Bradford by opening our Neville Hill Train Care Centre (TCC) in Leeds for a tour and lived experience talks from female colleagues.

Colleagues were able to dispel many myths and hopefully sow the seed of future career inspiration.

A similar event was held at Newton Heath TCC in Manchester which gave us the opportunity to show a group of women around the depot and introduce them to Northern. We gave presentations and hosted a Q&A on all the different engineering roles available.

The feedback we’ve received has been amazing – attendees loved seeing ‘behind the scenes’, seeing our team culture and also the support and opportunities offered by Northern to colleagues.

We have also been holding some internal focus groups to understand a bit more about what attracts women to work here, and what we can do to encourage more applicants to our roles.

# Educational Attainment



**Engagement with schools and colleges is a fantastic way for Northern to deliver social value in the North.**

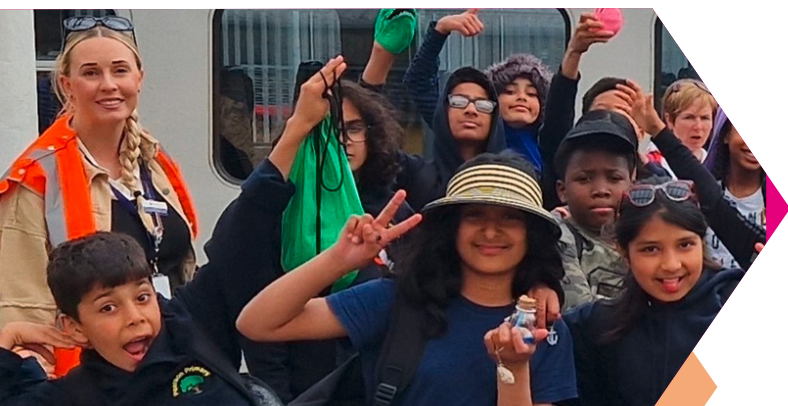
We know there is a huge pool of future talent in the North. We want to make sure we play our part in levelling up by removing any perceived barriers around race, gender or socio-economic background.

We connect with a broad range of age groups, providing curriculum enrichment, safety awareness and railway confidence. We also support opportunities for young people to find out about the routes to employment within the railway.

Our colleagues use their local knowledge to tailor these talks wherever possible, engaging with young people from areas of high deprivation and marginalised groups currently under-represented in 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.

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.



## Case study

# Hull Driver Fiona Moss - Proud to be Northern

**Over the last two years, Northern has been engaging with young people from inner-city Hull and the Wolds Coast to raise awareness of rail safety, due to the high number of trespass issues in the Hull area.**

After close work with Pearson Primary School and one of our sixth form National Citizenship Service students, we found out that a favourite place to hangout for some of the children was near the line into Hull Station.

Fiona Moss, a driver from Hull, immediately put herself forward to get involved. Despite being heavily pregnant, she was keen to support the school - and as an experienced driver she was acutely aware of the value of engaging with young children to raise awareness of rail safety.

Working with the school Northern turned one of its lightly loaded services as a mobile classroom, with Fiona acting as a teacher for the day. Fiona delivered a real time learning experience on Hull Station and on the service to Bridlington.

The feedback from the school was fantastic from both teachers and students. Fiona spent an impromptu second day with children at the school, particularly girls, to talk about her job as a train driver.

A small action by one of our team in Hull will have a huge impact on these children in one of the most deprived communities in the North.

## Case study

# Educator of the Year Nomination

**We were absolutely delighted to be short listed as Educator of the Year by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.**

In 2023, we worked in partnership with Bradford Metropolitan District Council Skills House Careers and Technical Education Team, to engage with a range of primary and secondary schools and colleges to promote opportunities in the rail industry.

This was a monumental team effort, with dozens of staff volunteering to deliver events and talks in schools and colleges across the district.

There is a job for everyone on the railway. We have talked about everything from the role of a conductor through to a data analyst, highlighted female train drivers and encouraged pupils to think about roles in engineering and railway apprenticeships as great alternative route options. We have created lessons linked to the national curriculum and broken down barriers for women from the South Asian community, while also bringing pupils into our business, station and maintenance depots to see what the railway is really like.

Bradford is the youngest city in the UK and 13th most deprived local authority. Providing employment and skills is key to the district improving and communities growing, and it is great for our work to be recognised as making a difference to such a young and ethnically diverse population.

## Case study

# Digital Trains attract talent

**The University of Bradford are recognised as an exemplar for bringing about transformational diversity, inclusion, and social mobility through all its educational and research activities.**

This makes them an ideal partner for Northern as we strive to bring opportunities to all the communities we serve in the North.

Working in partnership with the University, Bradford College, and Secondary Schools in the Bradford District we attended a first event of its kind bringing together all those looking for a career in the industries that drive the Northern economy forward.

Education leavers, graduates and postgraduates attended to learn more about the opportunities available including those within Northern.

The event was delivered by volunteers from the digital rail team Sonia Johar and Gavin McAuley who made a huge impact on the students they engaged with.



# Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



**We want Northern to be a great place to work, for everyone. We know people want to work somewhere welcoming, where they feel they belong and can truly be themselves. Diverse and inclusive organisations are more innovative, more resilient and are better places to work. We want Northern to be like this and our new, colleague Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy has been developed to help us get to where we want to be.**

**In our plan we have shared our three priority areas for 2023-2026: men, women and ethnic diversity.**

As well as putting the focus on these three colleague groups, we'll continue to champion and celebrate other under-represented groups, making the difference for as many colleagues as possible.

We know we have an issue with turnover when it comes to women, and we've already begun work to understand the challenges women face to work towards a better gender balance. To help inform our current position we dedicated a whole month to acknowledging women in Northern and used internal communications as an opportunity to celebrate, recognise and support all of the women that work here, and encourage more to join the rail industry.

Throughout the month we ran our #GoDoHerThing challenge on Yammer, asking colleagues to recognise female colleagues that make a difference and those that go the extra mile to support greater female involvement in the rail industry.

Through the month, People Director Lisa Leighton shared regular updates and also hosted listening sessions with colleagues across the business, learning about the things that matter to them, as well as the challenges some of the women working at Northern face.

We also attended external events focused on sparking female interest in our interest and ran a dedicated recruitment campaign to attract more female applicants to driver roles – where currently there is only a 10% applicant rate.

You can check out our female driver recruitment video at <https://www.northernrailway.co.uk/careers/our-roles/train-driver>

The reality however is that men make up around 80% of our workforce and November was dedicated to 'Go Do His Thing' which was about listening to men and identifying the things we could be doing to help everyone feel more included and supported.

We wanted Go Do His Thing to be a celebration of our male colleagues and the great work they do, so we ran #RecogniseTheGuys as a way of celebrating their contribution.

Men's health continues to be a key focus and we offer regular support for wellbeing and were delighted to begin a partnership with mental health charity Andy's Man Club and support the national Men's Health Month.

The North of England has amazingly rich and diverse communities and we need to do a better job of representing the people we serve. We believe we can grow the number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds that work at Northern.

Additionally we have piloted a rail Industry first career development focused on Ethnic minorities called 'Activate your Potential'.

The course consisted of workshops and inspirational guest speakers and was supported by mentoring relationship and coaching sessions. The purpose of the programme was to provide tailored approach to career and talent development to our Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues.

To bolster diversity within our workforce, we have adopted a focused recruitment approach to demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunities. In 2023, we rolled out a robust outreach plan, collaborated with local education institutions and community organisations to engage with diverse talent pools, this initiative has and will continue to extend into 2024.

Our teams are actively connecting with communities we serve, especially in underrepresented areas, to champion careers with Northern and the wider Rail Industry.

Simultaneously, direct marketing campaigns span across social media platforms and paid media, aiming to connect with potential candidates from various backgrounds for our critical roles.

That's not to say we're not interested in improving representation for LGBTQ+ colleagues, or for neurodiverse colleagues, or for those with disabilities, or for anyone else. In reality, it's quite the opposite. We recognise that the challenge in front of us is huge and we want to do more than pay lip service to making things better.

To help us drive the inclusive culture we have at Northern, we've introduced various policies to support our work. These include:

- Becoming a Parent
- Sexual Harassment at Work Policy
- Domestic Violence Support Policy
- Dignity at Work
- EDI Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy
- Transgender Support Policy

and much more!

FREDIE is a term our colleagues hear lots of at Northern. FREDIE stands for Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement, and when we talk about colleague experience, it is core to everything we do.

All of our colleagues take part in a Diversity and Inclusion induction workshop when they join Northern and we provide additional training – as part of our Leadership Track programme – for all colleagues in manager grade roles.

We believe it is important that colleagues regularly take part in FREDIE training to raise their awareness, learn about different cultures and ways of life, and keep up to date with changes in legislation.

We are accredited by the National Centre for Diversity and a proud Disability Confident Employer. Recently we were also awarded gold standard by Investors in People. In addition to this, we are members of Women in Rail and Young Rail Professionals and have signed the Women in Rail charter and Menopause pledge.

We have been shortlisted for several awards; Northern Power Women in Large Organisation of the Year category. Greater Manchester Good Employment awards under Best of Inclusion category and Yorkshire Post Excellence in business awards for Diversity and inclusion award.

We were also highly commended during Women in Rail awards as Top Employer of the Year in 2023.

## Case study

# Championing neurodiversity at Northern

**Northern is working with more than 40 of our colleagues to come up with the best way to support neurodiverse employees.**

Around one in seven people (more than 15 per cent of people in the UK) are neurodivergent, meaning that the brain functions, learns and processes information differently.

We have set up a new working group alongside a new policy to support people with conditions such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, and Tourette's syndrome.

The policy pledges to provide support and guidance for our colleagues with neurodivergent conditions. The working group has been set up to understand people's needs and how best we can support them.

Lisa Leighton, people director at Northern, said:

*"Around one in seven people in the UK are thought to be neurodivergent, which means of our 7,000 colleagues, as many as 1,000 could be affected."*

*"With this working group of colleagues, our aim is to continue to develop a culture where everyone feels included and valued and make Northern a great place to work for everyone, recognising understanding, and appreciating individual needs."*

Thomas Case, who works as a train presentation operative at Northern and has autism, said:

*"The neurodiversity policy is so incredibly important to have. The workplace can be a scary place for those with neurodiverse issues and the policy helps managers and colleagues gain an understanding of the neurodiverse issues a colleague may have, and why it's important that they get the right support."*

# Health and Wellbeing



**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 our colleague Health and Wellbeing Strategy. 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 we regularly run campaigns to highlight specific issues relevant to our employees and where they can seek support.

We have introduced a new Occupational Health provider into the business. Optima were selected to be our new provider after conducting a comprehensive procurement exercise where our emphasis was on the quality of the service being provided to our employees and the support offered to our managers.

Optima provide new entrant medicals, they support our health surveillance process for our engineering team, support with our periodic programme as well as management referrals. Each element of the service concentrates on assessing the fitness and wellbeing of our employees at different junctures of their employee journey with us.

As part of the tender process, they have made clear commitments to deliver social value that will support our colleagues and the wider communities we serve.

## Case study

# ANDY'S MAN CLUB – offering support for Northern men

Every Monday at 19:00, thousands of men meet across the UK with ANDYSMANCLUB.

ANDYSMANCLUB is a men's mental health charity with more than 170 peer-to-peer support groups across the UK, with many on our Northern network. They offer men the chance to open up about the things affecting their lives and talk to others in a safe, judgement-free environment.

In November, Northern started a partnership with ANDYSMANCLUB, holding a number of drop-in sessions. These sessions are designed to give colleagues an opportunity to find out more about the charity, the support they provide, and to talk about mental health and wellbeing issues that may be affecting them.

The sessions will run in a similar format to other ANDYSMANCLUB peer-to-peer support groups across the country and are open to anyone who identifies as male.



FREE TALKING GROUPS IN OVER 170 LOCATIONS NATIONWIDE  
AND ONLINE - MONDAYS AT 7PM EXCLUDING BANK HOLIDAYS

**GOING THROUGH  
A STORM  
OR JUST BEEN  
THROUGH ONE?**

ANDYSMANCLUB  
are talking  
groups for men to  
**HELP YOU** through  
those storms.

**FIND OUT  
MORE** [info@andysmanclub.co.uk](mailto:info@andysmanclub.co.uk)  
[www.andysmanclub.co.uk](http://www.andysmanclub.co.uk) #ITSOKAYTOTALK



# 3. *Operational Excellence*



**£226.1m**

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

As well as improving CCTV coverage across our network, we enable colleagues to respond effectively in the event of incidents, including terrorism. Body-worn cameras used 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Gray'.

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

# Safety

**The safety of both colleagues and customers is of paramount importance to Northern. We're continually looking at new and innovative ways to further ensure that the railway is a safe place for all.**

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.

Along with induction training, Northern provides access to regularly updated safety courses, covering 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.

Safeguarding is critically important and in 2023 we further advanced our work and engagement in this area.

Working with our Customer Experience Team, we've created a Rail Safety Workbook and Colouring Sheet for young people. We've shared real life stories internally and externally of safeguarding in practice. We ran a safeguarding escape room event at Preston with our partners the Railway Children, highlighting how to spot and help young vulnerable people using our network. We've also continued our internal training programme, which has now seen 175 colleagues complete the course.

We've run roadshows at stations and included safeguarding messaging on our TVM digital screens, reminding everyone to be aware and speak up when there is concern.



We've also been re-accredited with the BTP for Safeguarding for the second year which makes us only the second TOC in the country to date to be accredited twice. The assessment activities included planned visits to Manchester Victoria and Oxford Road stations, interviews with a cross section of colleagues and partners, and a review of key policy documents.

The safety team at Northern is continually reviewing ways to make our stations more secure and mitigate the risk of trespass, accidents and fatalities.

An additional 600 new CCTV cameras are being installed across 85 of our stations, raising the number of CCTV cameras on station to 1,076. This is in addition to the 7,000 on trains and 1,350 body worn cameras available for all our frontline teams.

Tricia Williams, chief operating officer at Northern, said:

*“The safety of our customers and colleagues is paramount and we are doing all we can to provide them with the safest possible environment.”*

*“CCTV helps discourage anti-social and criminal behaviour and, when problematic behaviour persists, can be crucial in providing evidence to the police that enables offenders to be brought to justice.”*

All customer facing colleagues receive intervention training and we work closely with the BTP, Network Rail, Samaritans and local community organisations to reduce instances of suicide and attempted suicide.

During the reporting period, 148 lives were saved thanks to the inventions of our colleagues. 162 customers were assisted with medical issues, and there have been 296 safeguarding interventions including 82 child interventions.

We are actively participating in the wider industry effort to reduce unwanted sexual behaviour on the railway and the workplace.

Mandatory training courses and workshops have been introduced, and hard-hitting campaigns and internal communications have been launched alongside external awareness events and messaging.

Northern is helped by 60 dedicated rail security officers (Travel Safe Officers). Each are issued with state of the art body worn CCTV, accredited under the BTP’s Rail Safety Accreditation Scheme (RSAS) and as a consequence are subject to co-tasking with BTP colleagues. All deployments of both TSO and BTP are intelligence led.

We continue to support Rail to Refuge, offering free travel and support to those escaping domestic violence and we are proud that since the scheme’s launch in April 2020, to 1st October 2023, Northern has been part of a national contribution that has helped 7432 survivors, including 2146 children over five to safety. On average, this means over five survivors use the Rail to Refuge scheme each day.



## Case Study

# Tackling unwanted sexual behaviour

**We've joined forces with students from Bradford City Community Foundation to raise awareness of unwanted sexual behaviour in society.**

Alongside British Transport Police and Network Rail, we've supported the creation of a short film by the students, to highlight the types of activity that are unacceptable. This includes cat calling, staring, up-skirting, cyber flashing, exposing, touching and pressing.

The film was released to coincide with the British Transport Police relaunch of their 'Railway Guardian' app - an all-in-one safety app that allows users to report crimes or concerns on the rail network, share journeys with trusted contacts and get access to news, guides and support.

Kerry Peters, Regional Director, said: "Unwanted sexual behaviour can happen anywhere and people need to feel empowered to report it. Like all public areas, the railway is not immune to this behaviour - which is why we wanted to support the students with this project. We need to look out for one another and the British Transport Police's 'Railway Guardian' app helps get information about 'unwanted sexual behaviour' to the police quickly and simply."

Everyone should be free to work without feeling unsafe, violated, or intimidated.

To highlight issues we've shared shockingly high statistics with colleagues that show how sexual harassment continues to be a regular issue in workplaces across all different sectors, including the rail industry.



We talked to colleagues about what unwanted sexual behaviour is, our non-tolerance policies and how we will protect and support colleagues.

As a first point of contact for any colleague that has concerns about unwanted sexual behaviour, we introduced a team of 16 Sexual Harassment at Work (SHAW) advisors.

The advisors are colleagues who have volunteered and received specialist training to be able to listen and support colleagues with their experiences. As well as being someone to talk to in confidence, they will be able to signpost colleagues to available support. They're also able to help report an issue more formally.

They will not get involved in investigating any issues themselves, but can provide support for managers who are investigating a report of unwanted sexual behaviour - all in the strictest confidence.

**Watch the short film online by scanning the QR code**



## Case Study

# Travelling Safely with Amulet

**Amulet's work with Northern is to safeguard the travelling public and those working in and around stations. Threats and vulnerabilities range from anti-social behaviour and criminal damage to medical emergencies and suicide attempts.**

Amulet is a security organisation that provides Northern with uniformed Travel Safety Officers operating across its network and on its trains.

Travel Safety Officers (TSOs) are safeguarding 'Champions' under Northern Trains' safeguarding accreditation and Amulet officers also serve as representatives at safeguarding action groups.

Every officer is certified via the Railway Safety Accreditation Scheme (RSAS) – which ensures our officers can tackle low level crime and anti-social behaviour, while improving opportunities for intelligence gathering and maximising public confidence.

Amulet TSOs were hand selected by Northern Regional director Kerry Peters to take part in a groundbreaking experiment targeting violence against women and girls. This six-month long study, the first of its kind, was in collaboration with Dr Barak Ariel, Professor of Experimental Criminology at the University of Cambridge.

Amulet and Northern identified and increased patrols in hot spot areas, providing a safer space for vulnerable women and increasing broader public assurance.



The campaign has now completed, and the academic paper is under review – with early indications suggesting a 66% reduction in offences at identified locations. Selected officers will now be working with Rail Delivery Group on a similar campaign commencing in Summer 24.

Dr Barak Ariel said:

*"The initiative you led, aimed at reducing violence against women and girls in your stations, was nothing short of exemplary. Through your hard work, dedication, and innovative approach, the hot spots experiment study achieved its goals and set a new standard in public transportation security. The success of this randomised controlled trial has resonated far beyond our expectations, capturing the attention of industry peers and international counterparts, including notable interest from Canada, the United States, Hong Kong and other train operating companies across the country. Your achievements have demonstrated exceptional expertise and a deep commitment to making public spaces safer for women and girls."*

The success of the Northern Trains TSO programme stretches far beyond having highly professional, RSAS-accredited officers working in tandem with the British Transport Police. Although delivering on safety metrics are critical, it is the softer skills which ensure our TSOs stand out. We operate in the firm belief that our officers need to be approachable and act as a calming presence, providing essential security services with a human touch to secure the trust of the public.

This underpins our approach to hiring and training TSOs, with soft skills forming an essential part of the recruitment and induction process. We do not simply look to employ a bouncer – if necessary, security skills can be taught, so we seek people with the personality to help us win the hearts and minds of people, be they passengers, the police or rail staff.

This softer approach to security provision is having an impact on public perception. Over the past 12 months, there have been 48 occasions where members of the public and Northern Trains staff have gone out of their way to formally report positive feedback and praise towards TSOs.

# 4. Sustainable Growth



£427m

**Northern's ambitions and plans for operating in a sustainable manner have taken significant steps forward. We are now realising untapped value and establishing new working partnerships.**

Northern has worked extensively to implement key pillars of its approach to enable continued sustainable growth. Crucially, the adoption of repeatable practices which are ethically and responsibly sourced remain key to achieving our 2050 Net Zero carbon target.

We have demonstrated our continued commitment to the social wellbeing of the North through our extensive work with our large and diverse supply chain. This has been supported through the progression, development, measurement, and monitoring of social-economic value through the Social Value Portal.

**Neil Bowen**  
Head of Procurement

# Climate and Environment



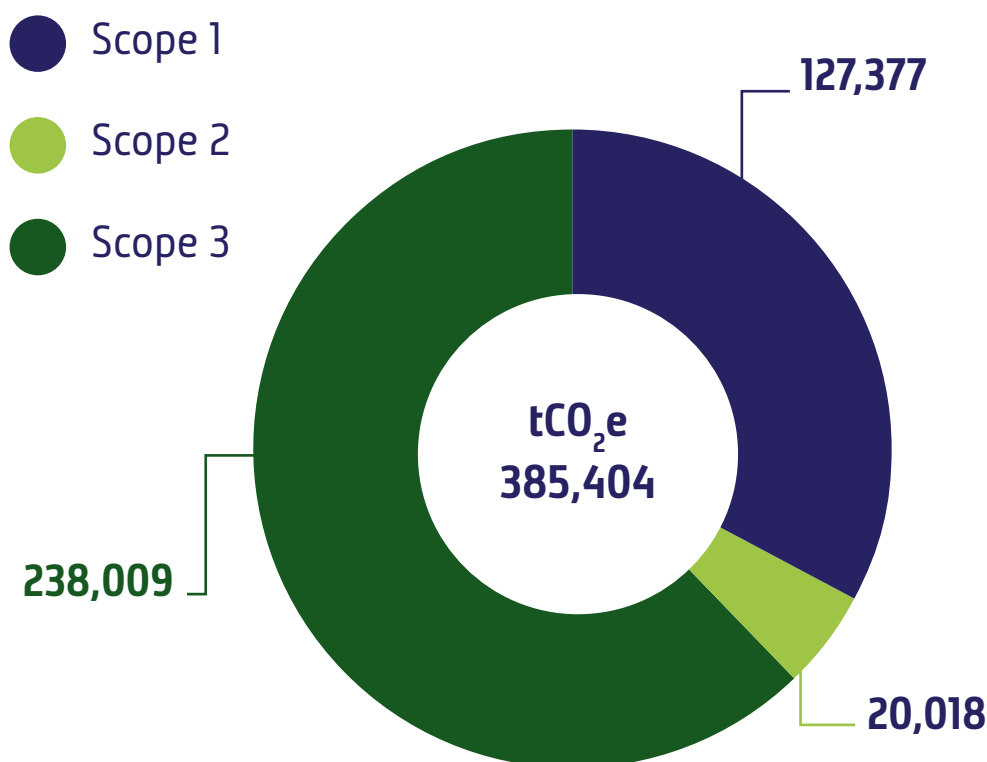
**Northern is committed to reducing our impact on the environment and delivering interventions that enhance the world around us - driving efficiency and minimising environmental impact wherever possible.**

We continually improve our environmental performance through an Environmental and Energy Management System, certified to ISO 14001 and ISO 50001.

As a train operator Northern gets people to where they need to be using much less carbon than other forms of transport. We're committed to reducing our carbon emissions until we achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050 - measuring our carbon emissions in line with ISO 14064 which is annually verified by an independent third

party. We maintain a full inventory of scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3 emissions, accounting for all our direct and indirect emissions as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

Northern has created a Net Zero Strategy that focuses on reducing emissions across our fleet, buildings and supply chain which make up 99% of its total emissions. As an operator, we lease our infrastructure and trains from third parties. Forming strong partnerships and aligning our interventions with the actions of others is key to successfully reducing emissions. This can pose a risk, as we cannot deliver the actions we need 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.





## Biodiversity

We have been running a project focussed on Northern's biodiversity index, collaborating with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) and have introduced the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.

We had a lack of understanding of our own biodiversity levels and index, and therefore we wanted to establish a biodiversity baseline.

GIS mapping will provide us with information obtained by DWT containing biodiversity data for every Northern station. Working with individual station managers and their station plans, we have been able to make suggestions for areas to focus on, from making sure our operations suit the local habitat, ensuring sustainability and longevity.

This information is based on habitat, landscape, and species data for each site within a 500m buffer of zone the station lease area.

These directly link to the station management plans, which each have priority areas shared between habitat, landscape, and species data of suggestive focus for any proposed BNGs.

This ensures any changes made are suitable for local habitats and will last. Each of the priority areas also has a highly detailed management plan. For example, if wildflower planting is a suggested priority focus to achieve BNGs, a detailed wildflower implementation and management plan will be provided with many differing methods of implementation.

We have provided DWT with our initial list of stations to focus our Biodiversity Net Gains (BNGs) on, which align with our stations as a place initiative.

- Bolton
- Hebden Bridge
- Buxton
- St Helens Central
- Worksop
- Harrogate

We've begun to involve 'Friends of' groups from the six stations in this project, by sharing their sites' proposals with them. Online meetings and site visits will take place so that members of these groups can provide further feedback on the plans before they are implemented. Following this input, Northern will solidify which interventions for BNG will be chosen for each site.

DWT will conduct pre-habitat surveys and once complete, the implementation days for these interventions can commence.

The implementation phase will incorporate upskilling from DWT (or other local Wildlife Trusts depending on station choice), where they will attend site and provide a training day to community groups involved in the BNG works.

They will also collaborate with RSCMs (Regional Community and Sustainability Managers) and station groups on the ongoing management of the biodiversity initiatives.

Pre and post habitat surveys will be conducted before and after a station's BNG works have been completed, to capture the data improvements. This will then feed into the GIS model.

## Case Study

# ***Diesel Fuel Consumption Modelling***

**Over the past year, our Energy and Environment team has been collaborating with Chrome Angel Solutions to develop a Fuel Consumption Modelling tool. This simulates the operation of a Class 156 train, so that we can model different driving styles and calculate the theoretical fuel consumption and CO2 emissions along our routes.**

The project was originally funded by The DfT, as part of the Transport Research and Innovation Grant Programme delivered by Connected Places Catapult. It was delivered in collaboration with Angel Trains, Smart Rail Services and Auticon.

Northern has continued to support this project beyond the DfT competition, as we recognise the potential impact on carbon emissions and fuel consumption. This has also given us the opportunity to continue our collaboration with Auticon, an award-winning social innovation company dedicated to improving the social and economic conditions of the autistic community. We have a diverse team of colleagues and suppliers working on this project, reflecting our high standards of inclusion and diversity.

The project has highlighted the immense value that industry collaboration can provide. Our Energy and Environment team and Driver Training Managers from the North East have worked closely with subject matter experts from the industry to develop this tool, which models the complex relationships between all the variables which impact train performance and operation. We are testing this with the Driver Training Team to determine how the data insights may be used to facilitate discussions about reducing our CO2 emissions and fuel consumption.

## Case Study

# Northern's Carbon Task Force

**In partnership with Qsustain and The University of Manchester, Northern launched our Carbon Task Force (CTF) in August 2023, an internal governance group made up of key functions to facilitate delivery of our Net Zero Strategy. This is Northern's long-term strategy to Net Zero by 2050 that includes short-term plans, actions, targets and commitments.**

The task force's main objectives are to ensure the delivery of its Net Zero ambition by:

- Enabling carbon reduction opportunities
- Identifying and mitigating risks to reducing carbon
- Tracking Northern's targets and commitments in achieving our Net Zero ambition

Representatives from teams across Northern are part of the task force, including Strategic Planning, Engineering Projects, Property, Infrastructure, Business Change, Procurement and Energy and Environment.

The CTF meets quarterly to progress and develop Northern's Net Zero Strategy, timelines, challenges, and justification on the targets and commitments made. The key emphasis is on the need to make deep carbon reductions within the business by 2030's to make our Net Zero goal of 2050 realistic.

Led by a carbon specialist Chair, the CTF ensures the Net Zero Strategy remains up to date against internal and external developments, and that it is fully aligned to our wider sustainability governance structure, represented by the Responsible Business Steering Group (RBSG).

The taskforce has received an initial specialist Climate, Carbon and Net Zero training from Qsustain to enable the best understanding for participants on climate change and the critical link to carbon emissions, including the impact on the railway.

The CTF emphasises Northern's commitment to decarbonising by seeking funding and promoting internal projects and schemes that can have a material impact on our pathway to achieving Net Zero.

For example, behavioural programmes such as our Planet Saving Rules that ensure heating and lighting are not used unnecessarily, or our collaborative project at Neville Hill Train Care Centre. If the Heat Network Project is approved, it will involve collaborative work with Leeds City Council and Network Rail to rapidly reduce building carbon emissions, utilising the already established district heating network at Leeds, near the depot.

Most of our carbon emissions come from powering our fleet and it's important that we look to reduce these wherever possible. In the future, we hope to replace our existing fleet with a much lower carbon option, but until this is possible we must focus on the things we can do now.

CTF will look at initiatives that can have a material impact on our pathway to reducing carbon and achieving Net Zero by 2050 i.e. fleet, building, supply chain, customer and employee. This includes helping facilitate any initiatives to become live or accelerated via the Responsible Business Steering Group and / or the Northern executive.

Our commitment to carbon reduction is one of the major ways we our making a positive impact in all we do and for all we serve.



# Supply Chain



**During this reporting period we have made exciting progress in embedding social value across our procurement processes. We now explicitly evaluate social value with a minimum weighting of 10% on all contracts over £100,000. By going significantly beyond the statutory requirement, we are demonstrating our commitment to social value and as a public sector body, ensuring that we get the greatest value and impact possible for the taxpayer £1.**

By using the specialist services of the Social Value Portal in our tender, evaluation and contract management processes, we can ensure that bidders understand our social value priorities and the expectations we have around reporting and delivery. All our procurement managers have been fully trained in using the portal and social value has been completely built into all our tender processes and documents.

We have selected two sets of social value measures – with a smaller set that reflects the strengths of SMEs bidders, being applied to tenders with a lower contract value. In order to ensure SME bidders are fully supported in making and delivering social value commitments, we have planned a ‘supplier social value hub’ which will be launched in Q2, at the start of our next reporting period. This will include key guidance, signposting and a bank of case studies outlining the social value that Northern and our supply chain are already delivering.

It has been exciting to discuss social value with many of our existing suppliers. Our conversations are uncovering incredible work already being undertaken by our suppliers, as well as some exciting opportunities for creating impact together in the future. We are proud to be working with so many businesses that are as committed to driving positive impact as we are.

Looking ahead we are hoping to see more ‘social suppliers’ winning contracts with Northern. We know that there are opportunities within our supply chain for Social Enterprises to deliver goods and services that rival other suppliers’ price and quality but drive phenomenal impact through their business models.

Within Procurement at Northern we are also working hard to drive the wider Sustainability agenda, acting as a responsible business we recognise the importance and value that can be added and driven by our supply chain.

We previously undertook a gap analysis with Action Sustainability to benchmark our procurement practices against ISO20400 – Sustainable Procurement framework and we have been working to build upon the foundations we have in place.

As well as the exciting work to develop Social Value delivery we are also continuing to work closely with our colleagues in the Energy & Environment team and work with them to engage our supply chains in Northern’s Net Zero strategy.

We have started on the path by sharing our goals and challenges with our supply chain partners and understanding where they are in their carbon reduction journeys. We are now developing further engagement plans and exploring new opportunities to better understand our supply chains emissions data and engage our key supply chain partners to support them to set and manage meaningful carbon reduction plans.

We have planned in our next assessment for July 2024.

Alongside this we continue to move forward with improving our contract management activity and continue to manage our supply chain assurance assessments and due diligence ensuring that suppliers align to our Supply Chain Code of Conduct and meet the minimum standards including ethical, environmental and sustainability standards.

## Case study

# Arriva Road Transport

**Arriva Road Transport Services (ARTS) support our movement of customers and colleagues at times of disruption. They provide planned rail replacement vehicles and unplanned coach, bus and taxi vehicles.**

Arriva has demonstrated significant social value add in a number of areas:

- Unemployment support for the most deprived communities across the North - with specific job search, mentoring, CV and interview training, and workplace preparation programmes.
- Expert business advice to help VCSEs and MSMEs achieve net zero carbon by 2030. This includes:
  - Retrofitting vehicles with Euro 6 emission standard engines
  - Purchasing only hybrid, gas-powered or electric vehicles between now and 2030
  - Engine idling policies and environmentally friendly driving techniques
  - Recycling schemes for all staff
  - Environmentally friendly vehicle wash procedures (i.e. using rainwater harvested from buildings)
  - Cycle to work schemes
- Switching to a 100% renewable energy suppliers for most of its depots and offices in the UK, reducing CO2 emissions by 27,000 tonnes per year.

arriva road transport services

### CV WORKSHOP

BFRS working in association with Arriva Road Transport Services are delighted to be able to offer members of the Armed Forces Community the opportunity to attend a CV Writing and Interview Skills Workshop at the Catterick Leisure Centre on Wednesday 10th April 2024

**WEDS 10TH APRIL**

**1 PM - 4 PM**

Catterick Leisure Centre,  
Gough Road, Catterick, North Yorkshire DL9 3EL

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- Inclusive recruitment policies to support the delivery of the Northern contract and provide opportunities for candidates with visible and less visible disabilities.
- Supporting youth engagement with school visits for career talks, curriculum and literacy support and safety lessons. For the Northern contract and specifically in the York area, Arriva have committed to a minimum of 20 2.45 hour sessions annually, or 49 hours per year.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion training for staff and supply chain staff. Arriva's training ensures all c110 direct contract employees and an additional 500 people from their supply chain attend EDI training every year throughout the contract term.
- Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) enabling eight Arriva colleagues to volunteer (in working hours) as General Advisors providing individuals with support on topics around housing, asylum, access to healthcare, education and employment, filling in forms and providing information about social services. Arriva have made a commitment of 256 hrs per year over the course of the contract.

Arriva share Northern's commitment to social value and are a fantastic example of how our supply chain can and are supporting communities in the North as a result of winning work with us.

## Case study

# Social Value at Consortia

**Northern Rail Limited are proud to be working with Consortia, an SME that has social value at the heart of its business. They demonstrate how a small company can deliver truly meaningful social value – making a positive impact for communities on our network.**

Craig Barton, Managing Director Construction and Transport, says:

*“At Consortia, social value is not about ticking a box, it’s about doing the right thing and giving back. We see it as our duty to build a better society, starting with our local communities here in Liverpool.”*

Consortia offer a wide range of examples of how they deliver social value, but the important thing for them is supporting the local community. Not only do members deliver talks to schools, meeting with groups or 1-1 and offering advice and opportunities – they have also donated funds to the Thrive Careers Hub, which provides up to 20 young people with interactive, in-person and online careers sessions.

Consortia understands the importance of providing training and skills and aims to hire two to three apprentices each year. This is fundamental to the construction industry in acquiring hands-on experience not found in educational settings, increasing employability through nationally recognised qualifications.



Consortia also donate toys and volunteer their time to charities such as Give a Child a Chance, supporting children with physical and psychological conditions, as well as those from deprived areas. Support ranges from sending them to a football game with some vouchers to use in the shop, or even decorating their rooms. Consortia also donated toys to the Leeds Hospital for children that would have been spending Christmas on the oncology ward. These were delivered by the Leeds Rhino’s Rugby team, which boosted morale all around.

As well as the more formal company efforts, the team at Consortia enjoy taking part in events to raise money for charity. Beneficiaries have included Marie Curie, The international Huntington Association, An hour for others, Genes for Jeans, Water Aid, Zoes Place Baby Hospice, Cancer research and many more!

Every Year Consortia will work alongside Northern Rail and donate time, services and funds to some of our stations that need a touch of love, this can range from fixing/ providing new planters and plants, painting the platform, weeding, filling potholes and even delivering/ collecting Christmas trees.

Together with Consortia we’re committed to making a positive difference wherever we can. We look forward to collaborating further on our shared ambitions for social value in the North.

# Conclusion

**We're delighted to report great value delivered across the North and benefiting wider society.**

All the evidence and the fantastic case studies presented in this report demonstrate that Northern is making a difference. We've come a long way fast, and it's clear that our aim to always act responsibly is well embedded within our business.

Our people and our strategies for delivery are not just about moving trains. We recognise the role we play, and the progression of our business connects with our wider role of helping to better society and delivering opportunity for all.

Over the next 12 months, we will focus on:

- Expanding and replicating our established, successful initiatives
- Implementing social value in key areas – procurement, Stations as a Place, the re-opening of the Northumberland line and other infrastructure developments
- Collaboration with the DOHL group and wider industry partners, to share best practice, avoid the replication of work and identify shared goals and opportunities
- Align our social value initiatives with key social agendas such as 'Levelling Up' and Net Zero – as well as industry specific priorities such as the Northern Powerhouse Partnership's 5 point plan and Transport for the North's work on Transport Related Social Exclusion
- Improving our place led approach by better use of data and local insight, to ensure we are making the most social, economic and environmental impact we can with the resources we have
- Targeted recruitment of those facing a range of barriers to employment
- Education and employment interventions that will raise aspirations and change outcomes for those most in need

- Creating an inclusive and accessible railway
- Value creation through our supply chain – directing their delivery to areas on our network where the greatest impact will be

Social Value reporting is still relatively new. While this is only our second annual report, it is extremely satisfying that there is positive momentum and much greater recognition of the impact and responsibility we have.

This 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.

Acting responsibly is more than ticking a box for Northern, and the work we are doing has real impact. Responsibility means creating a sense of purpose, goodwill and positivity among our colleagues, communities and customers we serve. We're making a difference and making people happier at the same time.

The progress we are making is highlighted by the awards and nominations we have achieved. These include at the Railway Innovation Awards, where we were highly commended for Passenger Experience for our Customer Accessibility Game - and for Operational and Performance, this time for a game practicing unit coupling. The big win at this event was for our Intelligent Trains in the Engineering and Safety category, where our market leading onboard technology helps to monitor the infrastructure we operate on. We were also delighted to be nominated for 'Top Employer of the Year' at the 2023 Women in Rail Awards.

As we plan for the future of social value, we will continue to keep colleagues, customers and communities at the heart of our plans, taking an 'outcomes over values' approach. At the heart of our strategy is the intention to continue making meaningful, sustainable impact for the North and wider society, rather than simply generating the largest proxy financial values.

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 all.



**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

**Matt Wilson,**  
Travel Integration & Accessibility Manager

**Rachel Kent**  
Social Value Lead

**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.



