

# Social Value Report

November 2024

AVANTI  
WEST COAST



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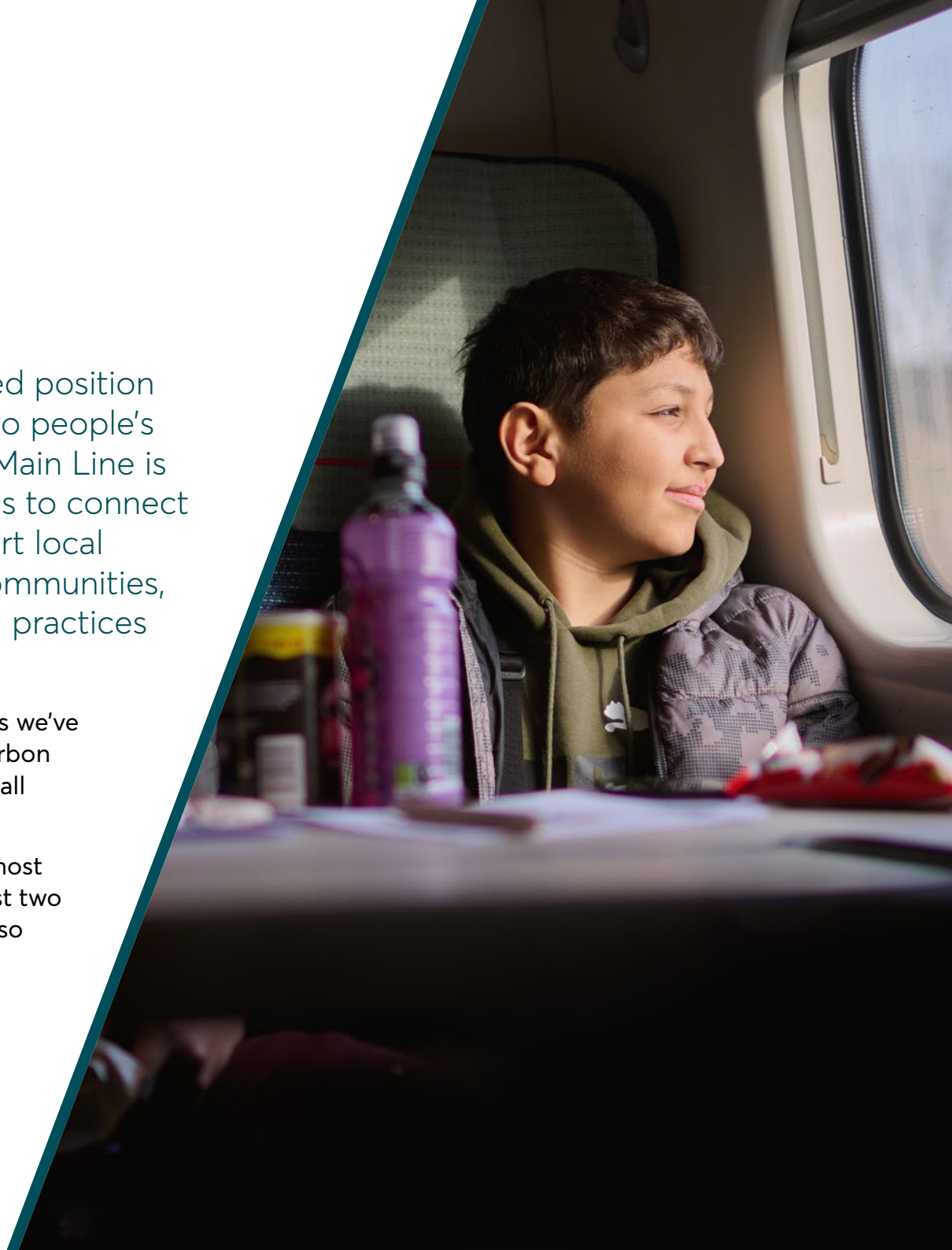
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# Foreword from Andy Mellors

At Avanti West Coast, we are in the privileged position of being able to make a positive difference to people's lives up and down the UK. The West Coast Main Line is the backbone of the UK's railway, enabling us to connect millions of people with opportunities, support local businesses and make a positive impact in communities, while fostering the innovative environmental practices needed to look after tomorrow.

In this, our latest social value report, we detail the progress we've taken towards creating a better world, from cutting our carbon emissions to levelling the playing field for our people and all who want to work with us.

This year we have created £345 million social value, an almost two-thirds increase on last year (£212 million). Over the last two years, we have created over half a billion of social value – so we're well on track to hit our target of £1 billion by 2031.





Key highlights from this year include supporting young people through our schools' programme, improving accessible travel, enhancing health and wellbeing initiatives for colleagues, and driving up the number of small businesses in our supply chain. You can find more information on each of these in the report.

We take our responsibilities to the planet and the people we serve very seriously. As part of our commitment to creating a better tomorrow, we're on a journey to understand how Avanti creates social value, in order to inform and develop our plans to deliver more of it. This effort starts at home. We hired Dr Theresa Robberts as a dedicated lead on social value, which has enabled us to not only accelerate value creation this year, but, critically, also to identify sources of value – so we can grow these at pace over the years ahead. This investment bolsters our existing resources – including Avanti West Coast Community Rail Partnerships, the Sustainability Team and employee Community Champions across our network.

As part of our approach, we're committed to working with industry partners and experts, including the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB). I'm also delighted that we're working with the Purpose Coalition. Created with the express purpose of breaking down barriers to opportunity in the UK, the Purpose Coalition brings together businesses and organisations to drive meaningful change where it's needed most.

Headed by the former Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Justine Greening, the Purpose Coalition provides a blueprint for concrete, measurable improvement. We are also aligning our efforts with Sustainable Development Goals set out by the United Nations.

Avanti West Coast aims to drive meaningful progress in areas such as quality education, career progression, and economic growth, reduced inequalities, and climate action. This collaboration with partners we seek to enhance our corporate social responsibility profile but also delivers tangible benefits for its stakeholders. These include improved service quality, community engagement and long-term business resilience. Ultimately, this sharpens our focus on creating value for customers, employees and the broader community while contributing to national and global sustainability efforts.



*Andy Mellors*

**Andy Mellors**  
Managing Director, Avanti West Coast



## Foreword from Rt Hon Justine Greening

In an era where the role of businesses is more than just the financial results, Avanti West Coast is right in its commitment to creating a positive impact for the communities it serves. This report underlines the transformative power of prioritising wider social value, showcasing significant achievements ranging from educational initiatives and community engagement to environmental sustainability and workforce development.

The work that Avanti West Coast is doing to drive opportunity also highlights what was very evident to me when I was Transport Secretary – that the rail sector has a vital part to play in connectivity and driving wider economic growth. Linking business and leisure passengers along the critical West Coast Main Line route, alongside being one of the greenest ways to travel, will only become more important in the months and years to come.

Informing and inspiring others about its wider social impact is one of the standout aspects of Avanti West Coast's approach. Examples include its comprehensive schools engagement programme, which has already reached over 8,000 children. Similarly initiatives like Feel Good Field Trips not only educate young minds about rail safety and environmental stewardship but also inspire future generations to consider careers in rail. The long-term impact of such programmes cannot be overstated, as they lay the groundwork for a more informed and engaged generation.



Equally important is the company's dedication to enhancing accessibility. The introduction of services like Travel Companion and GoodMaps underscores a commitment to ensuring that travel is seamless and inclusive for all customers, particularly those with disabilities. By facilitating over 76,000 Passenger Assists, Avanti West Coast has made substantial strides in making rail travel more accessible and supportive.

In terms of environmental stewardship, Avanti West Coast's efforts are aligned with the global push towards sustainability. The adoption of the RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint and the use of the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) to measure and improve their social impact are clear indicators of their dedication to responsible and sustainable business practices - what gets measured gets done. The new Hitachi bi-mode trains, which significantly reduce carbon emissions, are a forward-thinking step towards achieving net zero by 2031.

The company's focus on workforce equality and diversity is equally significant and also matters hugely. Initiatives such as celebrating Black History Month and promoting women in rail through the Karen Harrison campaign illustrate a strong commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. It also enables potential employees to see people like themselves achieving in the rail industry. These efforts are crucial in fostering a culture where diversity is not just accepted but celebrated and all employees thrive. The range of community

and charity engagements, from supporting local food banks to organising cultural events, highlight Avanti West Coast's role as a key pillar of support for communities, targeting help where it is needed. The various projects detailed in this report reveal not just a genuine commitment but also a positive plan to making a difference to the lives of individuals and communities along the West Coast Main Line.

This social value report is more than a document. It is a plan to drive positive change, pursued by a company dedicated to making a wider social impact, in a sector that is integral to future economic growth. As we look to the future, Avanti West Coast's commitment to social impact and social value can be part of setting a benchmark for others in the industry. I am looking forward to seeing how they will continue to lead and innovate in creating social value.



*Justine Greening*

**Rt Hon Justine Greening**  
Chair, Purpose Coalition and former  
Secretary of State for Transport

# Foreword from Dr Theresa Robberts

Avanti West Coast is dedicated to making a difference today to look after tomorrow. As a responsible business, we're committed to delivering social value activities that add significant benefits to the communities we serve. To this end, we've given ourselves a target to create over £1 billion worth of social value by 2031.

It was a privilege to compile this report, the second since we produced our Responsible Plan in 2021. We're proud to release this latest account of our progress, which shows an increase of £133 million in social value impact from the previous year. It's great to see how far we've reached into our communities, with over 120 projects logged by our station teams. Our goal is to become the leading train operator in the UK when it comes to measuring and reporting social value.



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"This report celebrates the positive impact that our business activities have on the lives of individuals."

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This report highlights our achievements not only in community engagement, but also in our quest to create sustainable jobs, promote diversity and inclusion and invest in innovation and technology. These combined efforts from our staff and stakeholders clearly demonstrate our commitment to supporting social development and meeting the needs of the wider society.

### Key highlights include:

- Enriching the lives of more than 8,000 children**  
 Our schools engagement programme, Feel Good Field Trips and numerous station-led events focused on children within our communities, educating them about rail safety, equality and diversity and environmental issues. They were also encouraged to consider a career in rail.
- 76,633 customers supported through Passenger Assist**  
 We have bolstered this service with the introduction of Travel Companion (an online message platform that puts customers directly in touch with staff ready to help) and GoodMaps (a wayfinding indoor GPS that helps customers find their way inside our stations).
- Station-led events supporting the communities we serve**  
 In comparison to the previous year, we have more than doubled our social value impact in communities by supporting local organisations and charities. Our stations have played a key role by producing more than double their community events and programmes.

This report celebrates the positive impact that our business activities have on the lives of individuals. From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, we contributed a total operational, environmental and economic impact worth £345,907,324.00.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Robbarts'.

**Dr Theresa Robbarts**  
 Social Value and Accessibility  
 Manager, Avanti West Coast

# Introduction

## What is social value?

Caring for the environment involves looking after our planet, social value is all about looking after our people. It's the positive experiences that affect our overall wellbeing.

Measuring social value matters because it helps us on our journey towards being a responsible, sustainable business that benefits the communities we serve. It also enables us to understand the impact the railways have on the people and places around us, from environmental, social and economic perspectives.

As a leading rail operator in the UK, we have a duty to make a positive difference to the wellbeing of our customers and communities on the West Coast Main Line. We've come a long way in the last year, but there is always more we can achieve. We look forward to building on our progress to date to make even bigger contributions to society in the future.

## Our approach

This report is guided and informed by:

- The Rail Safety and Standard Board's (RSSB) Sustainable Rail Blueprint
- The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)
- Our Responsible Plan
- The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- The Purpose Coalition's 15 Purpose Goals

Please see Appendix A for more descriptions and explanations of the above mentioned frameworks and guidelines.

## The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)

The Rail Social Value Tool provides a practical way to forecast, monitor and measure social value. It also helps us to find new areas where we can improve our impact on communities and the environment.

We've used the RSVT to calculate our social impact. Our report also includes case studies and other on the ground evidence on top of these calculations. This provides a deeper understanding of how rail impacts communities and people's lives. It also enables us to demonstrate our contribution to the wider society beyond just providing rail services. Using the RSVT highlights our dedication to measuring and reporting our social impact and our commitment to continuously improve our contribution to society.

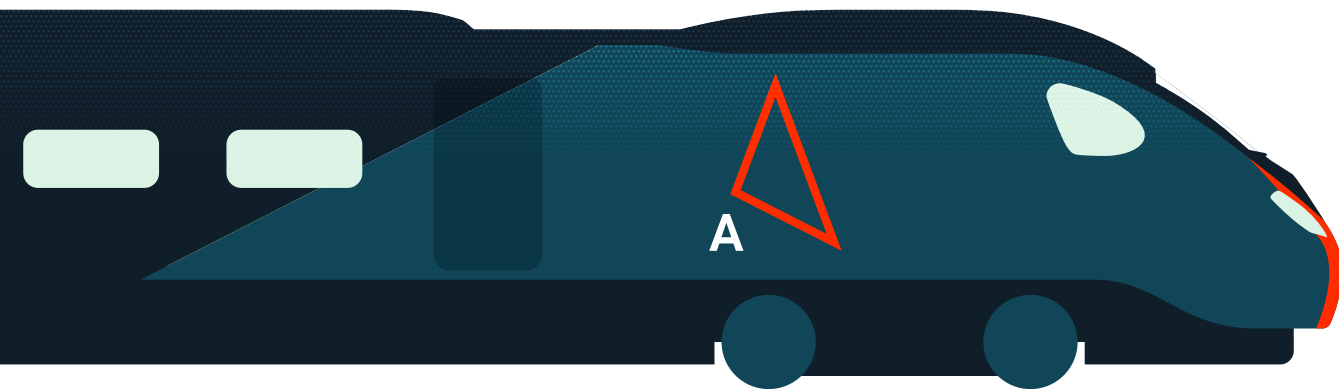


The social value indicators of the RSVT provide a framework for measuring and reporting the social, economic and environmental impact of rail services. Transparent and consistent reporting enables all rail companies to communicate their social value performance to customers, stakeholders and investors. For the purposes of this report, we use the following indicators:

- 01 Employment, training and skills
- 02 Educational attainment
- 03 Supply chain resilience and capacity
- 04 Rail accessibility
- 05 Workforce equality and diversity
- 06 Community and charity
- 07 Stakeholder engagement
- 08 Safety, health and wellbeing
- 09 Economic development
- 10 Climate and environment



# Avanti West Coast Social Value Impact:

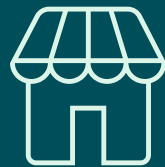


Total social,  
environmental and  
economic impact:  
**£345,907,324.00**



**76,633**

customers supported  
through Passenger Assist



**72%**

of our 615 suppliers  
classed as SMEs



**8,000**

school children taking part in our  
schools engagement programmes  
and Feel Good Field Trip initiatives



**696**

staff participating  
in health and  
wellbeing initiatives





**205**

apprentices on  
apprenticeship  
programmes



# 01

## Employment, training and skills

Social Value Impact : £10,323,760.48

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:

<p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> 	<p><b>4</b> Right advice and experiences</p> 	<p><b>5</b> Open recruitment</p> 	<p><b>6</b> Fair career progression</p> 
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Our employees are our most valuable asset. Our Responsible Plan links with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and one of its four pillars is 'Our People'.

Our Responsible Plan also encourages us to listen, empower and inspire colleagues and, by talking more, encourage each other to take positive action. Our goal is to create a supportive and inclusive work environment that empowers our employees to reach their full potential.

### Apprenticeships

We understand the importance of investing in the future of our workforce. During the past financial year, we placed 205 people into apprenticeships.

We continue to work with the Prince's Trust, delivering two 'Get into Customer Service' programmes through which we not only provide work experience, but also one-to-one mentoring and potential employment for successful participants.



Karen Broad, our Talent Development Manager, explains:

"This initiative aims to improve the lives of young people who have faced disadvantage and adversity by providing them with work experience and opportunities for learning leading to a positive outcome. This proposal is a Business Plan Commitment, supporting our mission statement to connect people with opportunities, and providing a chance to work with local communities and other train operating companies to create programmes that build young people's confidence and motivation and increase employability."



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At Avanti West Coast we believe that the railway should be open to all. In line with this, we offer work experience placements to people of all abilities.

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## Work experience

At Avanti West Coast we believe that the railway should be open to all. In line with this, we offer work experience placements to people of all abilities. One such example is Tom, who joined our team at Stockport station on a work experience placement. Tom has autism and always wanted to work in the rail industry. Stockport Team Leader Lisa Magee said her 'heart was full' after hosting him.



# 02

## Educational attainment

Social Value Impact: £21,423,917.90

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:

<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> 	<p>1 Strong foundations in Early Years</p> 	<p>2 Successful school years</p> 	<p>3 Positive destinations Post 16+</p> 	<p>4 Right advice and experiences</p> 
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Avanti West Coast runs an exceptional schools engagement programme led by Engagement Consultant, Rachel Jones. With the help of Avanti West Coast colleagues, the programme engages with both primary and secondary schools and delivers the following benefits:

- Connecting young people to their local railway
- Raising awareness of the rail industry, encouraging young people to consider it as a career option
- Promoting safety and raising awareness of the potential dangers of the railways

Our schools engagement programme, in collaboration with several of our Community Rail Partnerships, has engaged with at least 40 different schools along the West Coast Main Line. It has reached at least 5,399 children during the past financial year, focusing on those from poor socio-economic backgrounds.




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We've joined hands with the Primary Engineer Programme to support the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) part of our schools engagement programme.

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## Initiatives include:

- Attending careers fairs and supporting employability skills sessions such as mock interviews in secondary schools
- Providing rail safety sessions and early careers information to primary schools and facilitating visits to stations
- Funding two sets of 100 books for children about diversity and inclusion from The Little Box of Books for community rooms at Runcorn and Preston stations
- Funding 1,200 children's rail safety books in collaboration with North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership, which are distributed to children who engage with our programme
- Organising a full day in a secondary school in Crewe, co-delivering sessions about rail safety, sustainability and careers to four groups of Y10 students with our Network Rail colleagues. We also gave the students careers information from Network Rail and provided sustainability workshops for the teachers to deliver at a future date
- Hosting a World Book Event at Crewe station in partnership with North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership, attended by three local schools. The programme funded eight sets of Little Box of Books for these schools and for five other local schools who engaged with the programme
- Commissioning 1,500 educational packs, which were given to schools across our network. The packs included a colouring book, Avanti train ruler, seeds and a pouch to keep it all in
- Building relationships with Cheshire company, The Pledge, with the aim of co-hosting a digital work experience programme in the future
- Engaging with the Platforms for Change programme and encouraging our station colleagues to consider running this programme locally

## Primary Engineer Project

Avanti West Coast funded a new Primary Engineer Project for 23/24. We've joined hands with the Primary Engineer Programme to support the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) part of our schools engagement programme. The project funds and nurtures mentoring relationships for children and is focused on primary schools in Liverpool.

## Feel Good Field Trips

These are a unique opportunity for children to broaden their horizons by taking the train to places they would not normally have access to. They were launched in 2022 in partnership with Community Rail Lancashire. During that financial year, 600 children enjoyed hands-on learning at places such as art workshops, recording studios and Manchester's famous Curry Mile. In the last financial year 2,176 children took part. We have now set ourselves a target of taking 5,000 children on our Feel Good Field Trips, which we're on track to reach by early 2025.

### What's included in a Feel Good Field Trip?

- A rail safety talk
- Train travel
- Lunch for students and staff
- A unique experience at a destination along the West Coast Main Line
- A Feel Good Field Trip activity booklet, pen and a copy of 'Arlo's Adventures' rail safety book

## 03

# Supply chain capacity

Social Value Impact: £50,266,043.42

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



The international standard for sustainable procurement: BS ISO 20400:2017 states the following:

"Every organisation has environmental, and economic impacts. Procurement is a powerful instrument for organisations wishing to behave in a responsible way and contribute to sustainable development and to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. By integrating sustainability in procurement policies and practices, including supply chains, organisations can manage risks (including opportunities) for sustainable environmental, social, and economic development."

Avanti's sustainable procurement and supply chain strategy is central to our goal of making sustainable procurement business as usual. The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) measures the social value impact of sustainable procurement in four areas. These are defined in the table below.

## 'Local' supply

The impact of participation of 'local' suppliers and sub-contractors in supply chains. Local is user-defined.

## SMEs

The impact of participation of small and medium enterprises (SME) suppliers and sub-contractors in supply chains, as defined by UK law (enterprises with fewer than 250 employees).

## Start-ups

The impact of participation of start-ups suppliers and sub-contractors in supply chains.

## VCSEs

The impact of participation of voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE) suppliers and sub-contractors in supply chains.

We aim to use local suppliers (companies based in the communities we serve along the West Coast Main Line). This allows us to support local businesses, which in turns contributes toward building sustainable communities. Sourcing from local suppliers also means we reduce our environmental impact by cutting transportation emissions and supporting sustainable farming practices.

As part of our commitment to sustainable procurement, we are always looking for opportunities to build relationships with small and medium sized businesses (SMEs). Here are some examples

### Change Please

We are delighted to serve Change Please coffee on our trains. Change Please, our longest standing coffee supplier, was founded in 2015 with the mission of tackling homelessness through selling great coffee. 100% of profits go towards fighting homelessness. Their pioneering model puts employment first, empowering people to get back into the workforce through barista training. As part of this, people experiencing homelessness are supported with everything they need to turn their lives around – a living wage job, housing, therapy, bank account and onward employment opportunities.

### Estate Dairy

The Estate Dairy is a collective of young people passionate about producing the finest quality dairy products. They supply us with cultured butter and yoghurt. A family business owned by husband and wife team Rebecca and Shaun Young, the Estate Dairy only works with farmers and suppliers that share its commitment to sustainability and high quality produce. The cultured butter served onboard our trains is churned on the Cholmondeley Estate in the heart of the Cheshire countryside, a stone's throw away from the West Coast Main Line and Crewe station. All milk produced and used in their products is British and is 100% traceable back to the farm it came from.

### Soffle's pitta chips

We use Soffle's pitta chips in our regional first class lounges. They are vegan which helps offer dietary choice for our customers too. Sophie remembered hearing from a friend about oven roasting pitta so whilst in the local grocery shops of Stoke Newington, Hackney, she purchased the pitta, the chillies and the garlic and made her first batch of extremely wild pitta chips. This combination together with olive oil, salt and pepper just so happened to be the perfect ingredients for a tasty beer snack of oven roasted pitta chips.

Soffle's shares "we are absolutely delighted to have our chips in lounges. Being a very small business it's a huge opportunity for us to work with Avanti. Being able to have a new environment for customers to snack on is extremely exciting. We have seen our sales grow over the past year since introducing to Avanti and are sure the exposure has contributed to this. Being a London brand and having our product head out onto the West Coast is brilliant for us."





# 04

## Rail accessibility

Social Value Impact: £6,496,436.89

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:

<p><b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p> 	<p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> 	<p><b>11</b> Infrastructure for opportunity</p> 	<p><b>14</b> Achieve equality, through diversity &amp; inclusion</p> 
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We have a responsibility to prioritise accessibility so all our customers can enjoy a seamless end-to-end journey. Brandon Peat, our Accessibility & Inclusion Manager, works tirelessly with internal and external stakeholders to enable customers with disabilities and special needs to connect with their local communities and beyond.

To support this commitment, we've completed 76,633 Passenger Assists in the past financial year.

### Travel Companion service

In 2022 we launched our Travel Companion service, a WhatsApp messaging service to assist disabled customers prior, during and after their journey. The service is the first of its kind in the UK rail industry. It's designed to build a stronger relationship with disabled customers and give them the confidence to make journeys independently.



Our Travel Companion service has been welcomed by both internal and external stakeholders and, during the past financial year, was used by 306 customers. The team at Avanti are working hard with key stakeholders to promote the service further by attending conferences such as Naidex and other related events.

We are delighted that the service won gold in the Best in Travel & Tourism category in the Shortys Awards, which recognise innovation and creativity.

## GoodMaps

The GoodMaps app helps customers who need additional support to navigate train stations. Very useful for customers with visual impairments, the app provides wayfinding directions that guide people safely around stations. It has audible and visual directions that provide clear location details of places such as platforms, Passenger Assistance meeting points, toilets and shops.

During the past financial year 308 customers benefited from the GoodMaps app. We are now rolling out this service across our stations.

## Stakeholder engagement

Together with key stakeholders, we strive to continually improve our service to customers with special needs. As part of this, we organise national online panels and host a Facebook group where customers can find advice and support when travelling with us. The Facebook page also shares key service updates and accessibility related news.

Our accessibility team also attend key conferences and events to promote our services, including Travel Companion and GoodMaps. One such conference is Naidex, the UK's largest disability expo, where we worked in collaboration with the Rail Delivery Group and other train operating companies to listen to, and learn from, our customers.

## Accessibility training

Our accessibility training is part-provided by people with lived experience, as well as those with a training background. This has given our staff extra confidence in their ability to assist customers with accessibility requirements. Introducing guiding technics and use of correct language has also helped.

## Disability awareness training

At Avanti West Coast, we believe our service should be accessible by all. By enabling people with disabilities to travel on our trains, we contribute towards their independence and quality of life. This is why we continually strive to enhance disability awareness for all our teams. During the past financial year, we upskilled over 2,500 staff in this area. Where possible, we aim to provide training by people with lived experience of a disability.

We also joined hands with the charity Guide Dogs for the Blind. We raised awareness of their services and are working with them to train staff on sighted guiding techniques and ways to enable isolated visually impaired people to get out more. As part of this collaboration, we achieved the following:

- One-to-one training for staff, helping them to understand and assist customers with a visual impairment
- Awareness of sighted guiding volunteering opportunities for members of the public and family and friends of visually impaired people
- Special awareness-raising events for our staff and customers at selected stations and at our head office

# 05

## Workforce, equality and diversity

Social Value Impact: £8,206,503.70

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



We're committed to ensuring that our workplace is accessible and fair to all individuals, no matter what their background or circumstances. As part of our Responsible Plan, our goal is for all departments to be representative of society with zero pay gaps by 2031. Our Responsible Plan encourages us to listen, empower and inspire colleagues. By talking more, we can encourage each other to take action. It also states that we can develop our culture of diversity even further and attract the best talent from all walks of life.



### Celebrating Black History Month

We recognise the importance of Black History Month and are committed to honouring and celebrating the achievements and contributions of Black individuals.

### Celebration event at Euston station

We organised a celebration event at Euston station for Black History Month for our colleagues. The event aimed to bring people together to share their lived experiences and talk about their heritage. Over 200 colleagues attended. While the event itself provided a platform to foster inclusivity and diversity at Avanti West Coast.



## Windrush display at Coventry station

To mark Black History Month, we partnered with the Museum of Youth Culture to share striking images of the Windrush generation arriving in the UK. The images were taken at Waterloo station by photographer Howard Grey in 1962 as people were greeted by friends and family, after making the journey from the West Indies via Southampton. The collection of photos went on display to mark Black History Month in October 2023 but will remain on show permanently.



Scan the code to watch the video.



"These are such beautiful images of people arriving at the train station, dressed up and wanting to start a new life for themselves."

Jamie Brett, Creative Project Manager, Museum of Youth Culture



## The Karen Harrison campaign

Historically, the rail industry has been male dominated and there are still relatively few female train drivers. By actively promoting train driving as a career option for women and encouraging them to apply for driver roles, the industry can break down gender stereotypes, increase the representation of women and benefit from a more diverse workforce. Additionally, it can help to address the skills gap and staffing shortages, which will improve services for customers.

In collaboration with Network Rail, we commissioned a giant mural to celebrate Karen Harrison, one of the UK's first female train drivers.

The mural now has a permanent home at Euston station. Our driver recruitment campaign saw record numbers of female applicants, with over 1500 women applying for the 100-120 new driver roles.

Since the launch of the campaign, we have seen an increase in the number of women who passed the recruitment process.

As well as raising awareness, we also took practical steps to support women. For example, as research shows that women take longer than men in deciding to apply for jobs, we ran a campaign to raise awareness of our upcoming recruitment drive. This gave women extra time to consider the opportunity. We also had a chatbot on Facebook to enable women to find out more about the driver role and so feel more confident in their suitability for the job.

Our driver recruitment process is, necessarily, rigorous. However to support those who would not normally consider applying, we signposted candidates to case studies and websites that would help them prepare for their assessments and interviews.

We aim to keep the momentum from the Karen Harrison campaign running. Though we don't currently have confirmed plans for recruitment next year, we will be running smaller campaigns for specific depots. Before these launch, we will be showcasing all our roles at careers events and will encourage women to register for notifications so they can apply when we are next recruiting for train drivers.

## International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated across the Avanti network and at our offices in London and Birmingham. Laura Warwick, one of our station managers, hosted school children at Stoke-on-Trent station and gave an inspirational talk about the opportunities for women in rail, talking about her career progression. The children then went to Alstom's Longsight depot in Manchester on a Feel Good Field Trip. The team at Stoke-on-Trent station got involved, supporting International Women's Day by taking part in photo opportunities, where they posed making hearts with their hands.



## All aboard the Avanti West Coast Eurovision Pride Express

We were delighted to transport dedicated Eurovision Song Contest 'Superfans' to Liverpool on a special service on our Pride Train for the start of the competition.

More than 100 excited international fans boarded Avanti West Coast's Pride Train at London Euston. They were treated to a Eurovision themed journey as they sped their way to Liverpool, the city hosting 2023's event on behalf of the people of Ukraine. Guests also enjoyed a surprise visit from music producer Pete Waterman, who joined the train at Crewe and regaled fans with tales of Eurovision and his career in pop.

Looking after the fans was train manager Jan Fuller-Green, himself a member of the Eurovision fans' group The Organisation des Amateurs de l'Eurovision (OGAE) and a veteran of two Eurovision events in Stockholm and Lisbon. He said: "Having travelled around Europe it's amazing to have the competition on our doorstep. It's such an honour for me to look after the Superfans today. Such amazing tales, all united by the love of Eurovision and music."

Guests, with the help of Network Rail and Liverpool City Council, were welcomed at Lime Street station by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Roy Gladden and drag queen Jonny Woo, along with Simon Bennett, President of OGAE International. They said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be partnered with Avanti West Coast and to give our members a chance to travel to Liverpool in style. The atmosphere in Liverpool is already fantastic but this means our members can get the party started even before they arrive in the city."





# 06

## Community and charity

Social Value Impact: £41,039,797.52

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



At Avanti we are fortunate to have a team of Community Champions based at our stations who coordinate projects and events. These initiatives form a tapestry of social value impact in the communities we serve and are supported by Community Rail Partnerships. In this report we can only celebrate a small sample of these projects. It is however important to note that we have more than tripled the amount of community projects we logged this year in comparison to the previous financial year. With the support of Jo Buckley, Community Manager and station colleagues, we have logged 132 community initiatives using the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT).

As set out in the introduction of this report, we divide our social value impact into 10 different avenues in line with the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT). It is interesting that our community and charity project permeates most of these areas.



“The community room is now a hub for the community, and we have seen a significant increase of visitors, which is fantastic. All the support groups are having a positive impact on the community and help people to get the support that they are in need of.”

Laura Warwick, Station Manager, Stoke-on-Trent

## Health and wellbeing

Through the use of facilities like our community rooms, our stations have become a community hub for mental health support and education. This has been achieved by collaborating with local and national charities like Samaritans, It's Good 2 Talk and Andy's Man Club.

Samaritans visit our stations to raise awareness about the work they do and their support groups in the community. They also do 'walk and talk' sessions with customers on our platforms. It's Good 2 Talk host support sessions at the Runcorn station community room and some of these are now live streamed for members of the community that cannot get to the station. At times these sessions are attended by over a thousand online guests. Andy's Man Club is a suicide prevention charity who offer peer to peer support groups at Macclesfield station.

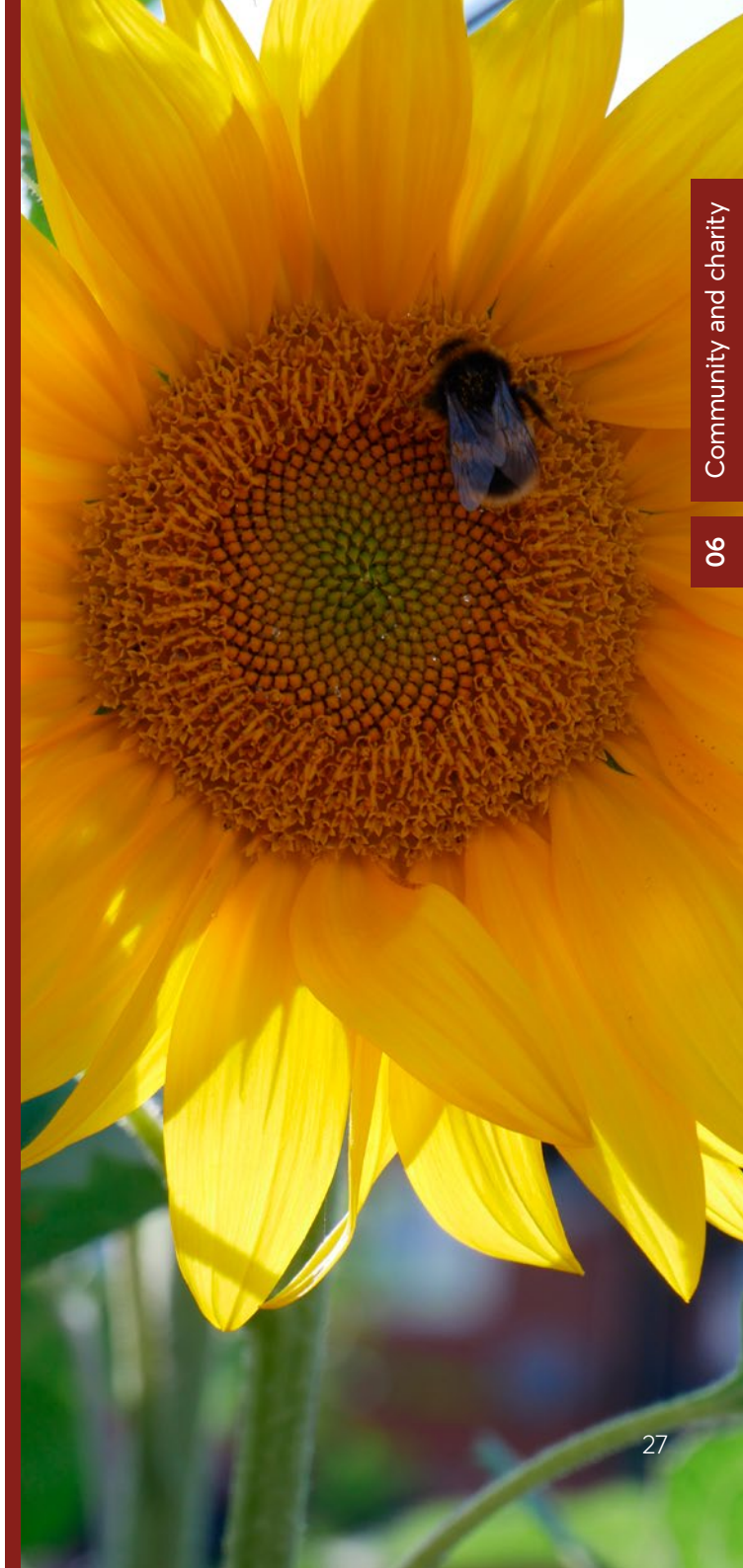
Charities promoting good health also use our station facilities to reach out to local communities. Age UK, HIV North West and Healthwatch UK use our community room at Runcorn station to host regular support groups.

## Environment

Our Green Champions at our stations play a key role in helping us to do the right thing for a better tomorrow.

Together with our Environmental Team, they use station facilities to champion green projects like installing and looking after planters and creating and cultivating community gardens. For example, during Sustainability Week planters were donated to Stafford station. Our Sustainability Week took place during March 2024 and was a huge success. More details can be found in this report in Section 9, Climate and Environment.

Penrith station has an area for customers with plants, displays and planters. Every two weeks volunteers visit the station to care for the plants. Members of the public are also encouraged to take part by watering the plants.





### Bee Proud

In 2022 Avanti West Coast's Community Champions at Manchester Piccadilly and Stockport stations held a successful event celebrating World Bee Day. Joining hands with local charities and local government organisations, local young people learned about creating habitats for bees to thrive. It was another enjoyable event in our partnership with the Bee Sanctuary Movement, supported by our Community Champions, which is going from strength to strength.

Following the success of this project, the Community Champions held two key events to continue support the Bee Sanctuary Movement.

The Relaunch Bee Sanctuary Day event took place in April 2023, supported by local leaders and volunteers. Visitors to the Sanctuary took part in activities such as pond dipping, making bee bombs and talks and walks. They were also introduced to the revamped visitor centre which included new accessible video conferencing facilities. Avanti Community Champions were in charge of the colouring table, litter picks, making the bee bombs and providing ticket rolls for bee hotels.

In September 2023, the Bee Sanctuary Wine, Cheese and Bees Night took place to raise awareness about the sanctuary and encourage members of the local community to sign up as volunteers for the centre. It also served as a 'thank you' to all current volunteers and members of the Sanctuary. The wine, cheese and charcuterie boards were supplied by Avanti West Coast.

The event resulted in new volunteers signing up to support the sanctuary including two retired professional gardeners.







## Arts and culture

Avanti West Coast service a community rich in diversity and culture. Our stations hosted events celebrating diverse cultures, religions, art and history. We've highlighted just a few below.

### Coronation Day

Several stations celebrated the King's Coronation. Runcorn station hosted a coronation party organised by Age UK in their community room which was decorated by our staff. The event was attended by senior members of the local community who had a very good time.



## Ramadan

Stations across our network held events to celebrate and to educate customers and staff about Ramadan. The Community Champion at Stoke-on-Trent station helped customers observing Ramadan to break their fast by providing bags of snacks and water. This kind gesture was very well received.

## Eurovision

Eurovision is very popular at Avanti West Coast. Stations and platforms are decorated, creating a festive atmosphere. This year staff from across Avanti created a dance video, 'Making your mind up', which was used to raise funds for the charity Railway Children.



Scan the code to watch the video.



## Meet Philip, the Penrith station clarinet player

There are many characters on the West Coast, but perhaps none so lively as 79 year-old Phillip Lowe.

He turns up at Penrith station with his clarinet to entertain our customers and staff with his wonderful repertoire of songs. "My wife's got Alzheimer's and sometimes I get a bit lonely," he says.



Scan the code to watch his story.

## Dalemain House Marmalade Awards

Avanti West Coast station staff helped Dalemain House with logistics and support for this year's annual Marmalade Awards at the Marmalade Festival. We made life easier by enabling entrants to leave their jars of marmalade at Penrith station for us to deliver to Dalemain House. As part of the festivities Penrith station was renamed 'Home of the MarmaLake District', while the route was dubbed 'The Marmalade Express'. The event raised vital funds for hospices in the local community. Discover more about the event here.



Scan the code to discover more about the event.

## Stakeholder engagement

Our stations create millions of pounds worth of social value impact. One of the reasons they are so effective is that they collaborate with local government, community organisations and charities and other departments at Avanti.

Supporting the mayor's charity auction at Carlisle and hosting mental health stakeholder events and business networking events at Runcorn, are just some of the examples. For more information, see the stakeholder engagement section in this report on page 32.

## Fundraising

Avanti West Coast has a proud history of supporting staff and charities with their fundraising activities. During the last financial year staff donated over £30k via our Give as You Earn (GAYE) facility. We have also seen a substantial increase in the support given to charities in the communities we serve. From cake sales at Head Office to bookcases on platforms, our staff are continually finding ways to fundraise for charities close to their hearts. There has been a focus on supporting local hospices from some stations, as these vital resources get minimal government funding.



## Christmas events

During the festive season our staff go out of their way to organise fund raising events to help organisations looking after the most vulnerable during this time. From Christmas Jumper Days and Secret Santa events to raffles and concerts, the team effort is remarkable.

## Food banks

Food bank collections have become commonplace at some of our stations. This seems like such a small gesture to collect some tinned food, but the impact is immense. It also links into the first two sustainable development goals of combating poverty and hunger.

## Bookcases on platforms and in waiting rooms

Penrith station blew us all away with their fundraising initiative in aid of the local Mountain Rescue group. They raised thousands of pounds by installing bookcases in their waiting areas, where customers can donate books and take second hand books for a donation.

The idea spread like daisies across our network. Community Champions and station staff have set up bookcases on platforms and in waiting rooms up and down the line raising thousands of pounds for good causes.



Scan the code to find out more about this brilliant initiative.



# 07

## Stakeholder engagement and customers

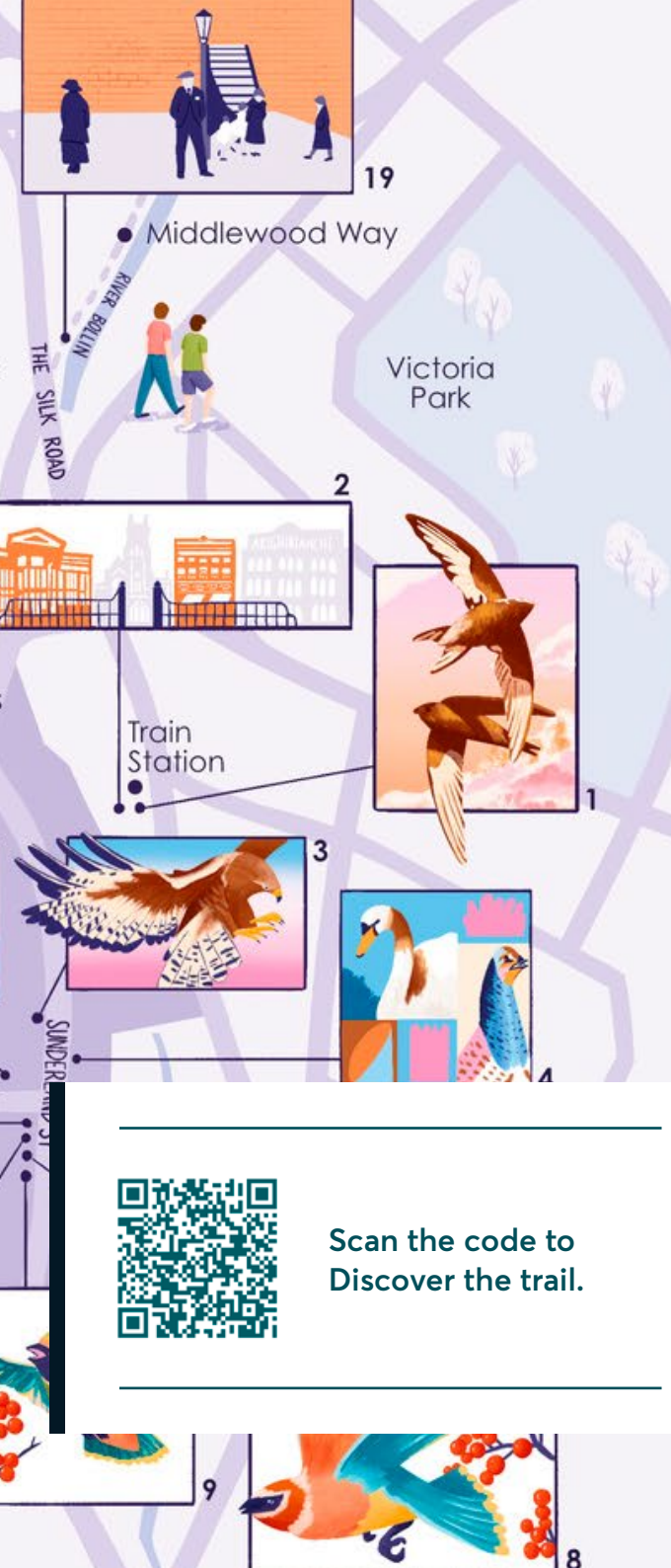
Social Value Impact: £8,091,230.16

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:

<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p> 	<p>11 Infrastructure for opportunity</p> 	<p>15 Working in Partnership</p> 
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At Avanti West Coast, we facilitate millions of customer journeys each year, connecting people across England, Scotland and Wales. Doing so successfully would not be possible without collaborating with a wide group of stakeholders. We're committed to hearing the views of those who matter most to our operations and to ensuring we provide the best possible service to our customers. Through engagement events we gain valuable insights into the needs and priorities of these stakeholders, which helps us to make informed decisions about our services and infrastructure. To bring together our external and internal stakeholders, we both attend and host many conferences and events. During the past financial year, we hosted events for Sustainability Champions, Community Rail Partnerships, Senior Leadership team, Human Resources and Marketing to name but a few.





## Macclesfield Treacle Art Trail

We're proud to be part of numerous community projects including networking and fundraising events at our stations. We also collaborate with key stakeholders to develop, plan and manage regional projects. One example is the Treacle Art Trail in Cheshire.

This is a tour of artworks in Macclesfield town centre, via a map created by Cheshire East Council to enable visitors and residents to locate key points of cultural interest across the town.

As our trains serve the town, we were delighted to support the new Macclesfield Treacle Art Trail. This helps people discover innovative outdoor public art works in unusual places, some of which were funded by a £50,000 grant from our Customer and Communities Investment Scheme.

All ages can also enjoy the bespoke kerbstones along the revamped Castle Street, which incorporate extracts from A Love Letter To Macc; a poem compiled from words written by Macclesfield residents to celebrate everything they love about the town. It also features the mural of the former Joy Division frontman, Ian Curtis, which was unveiled in March last year.

Councillor Nick Mannion, vice chair of Cheshire East Council's economy and growth committee, said: "Working on these projects has been a truly collaborative experience – the input of local residents and the Macclesfield Cultural Forum especially, has been integral to the final works we can all now enjoy."

**"We're proud Macclesfield station is home to beautiful artwork that features in the town's art trail, as we want to champion the people, places, and communities we serve."**

Laura Harper,  
Station Manager, Macclesfield



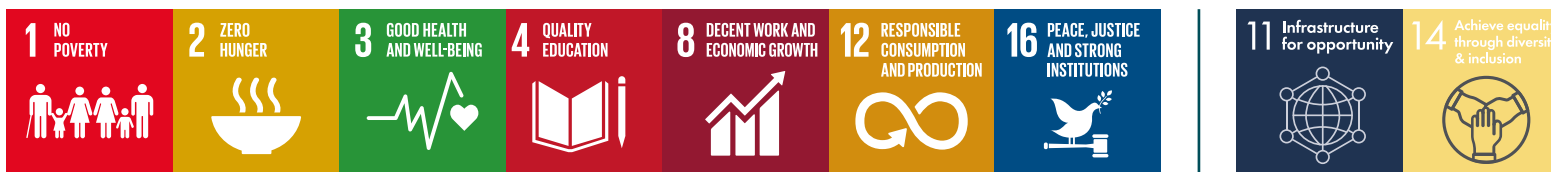
Scan the code to  
Discover the trail.

# 08

## Safety, health and wellbeing

Social Value Impact: £181,626,376.11

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



### Safety

At Avanti West Coast, safety is our top priority. That includes the safety of our staff, our customers and vulnerable members of the communities we serve.

### Railway Children Champions training

We're actively upskilling frontline colleagues to enable them to be safeguarding champions for vulnerable children across our network. This gives them the ability to recognise and respond to incidents and to support colleagues involved in incidents too.

### Passenger safety awareness event/Day of Action

Passenger safety awareness events took place at both Preston and Crewe stations. These events bring industry partners and customers together to raise awareness of safety measures across our network, with the aim of helping people feel safe when travelling on our network. The events brought together the following organisations: Network Rail, British Transport Police, Amulet, The Samaritans, The Railway Children, Vital UK, The Railway Chaplain, and the Rail Delivery Group.

### Missing People

We've signed up to Missing People's Safeguarding Briefing Network (SBN). The SBN is a network of organisations that this charity can send missing person briefings to, when there is reason to believe that staff there may come into contact with the person. These briefings come through to the Safeguarding and Crime Manager and are shared with the relevant stations and routes.





## White Ribbon Choir

Members of the Avanti team joined forces with other train companies to form a choir. The choir was brought together to support the charity White Ribbon UK, who campaign to end violence against women and girls. Footage of the choir was shared across media channels on 25 November, White Ribbon Day.



Scan the code to watch the video.

## Managing suicidal contacts – Samaritans training course

This course was provided for our frontline colleagues and those that act in a frontline capacity. It gave them the tools they need to recognise when a customer is potentially about to harm themselves and how to intervene if that happens, including signposting to organisations that can help.

## Staff health and wellbeing

Kelly Burton, our Health and Wellbeing Partner, prioritises the health and wellbeing of our staff. The railway can be a challenging environment for our workforce due to demanding schedules, shift patterns, challenging working conditions and exposure to potentially distressing events.

To further support our workforce, we run mental health training courses and health and wellbeing days, as well as offering flu jab vouchers and health checks, to name but a few of our ongoing initiatives. By prioritising the health and wellbeing of our employees, we aim to build a happier and more productive workforce, which ultimately benefits our customers and our business.

## Health and Wellbeing Day

This event provides health checks and holistic therapies for staff. It also raises awareness of the support available to staff and the benefits that we offer, plus useful tips for taking care of your health and wellbeing.

## Safety Week

This was a week long initiative to focus on safety within the business that also covered the wellbeing of our colleagues. Wellbeing events were held providing health screening, holistic therapies, plus access to a sleep therapist, nutritionist and menopause expert.

## Stress Shop

April is Stress Awareness Month. We took part by providing Stress Shops across our network, where staff could talk about stress and learn how to recognise and manage the symptoms. Events included a quiz and stress relief massages as well as handouts detailing the support available.

## Know Your Numbers

Know Your Numbers is a national campaign with a focus on blood pressure and the health conditions related to this. Blood pressure checks were provided for all employees, as well as literature around maintaining healthy blood pressure. We also facilitated discussions to raise awareness of the factors impacting blood pressure and the actions you can take.

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By prioritising the health and wellbeing of our employees, we aim to build a happier and more productive workforce, which ultimately benefits our customers and our business.

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## Winter Wellbeing campaign

To help our staff stay well in the winter months, we offered Boots' flu jab vouchers to all staff. These were allocated to everyone who asked for one and could easily be redeemed at participating Boots stores in the UK. We also provided support for other seasonal illnesses such as SAD and looked to raise awareness of the mental health impact festivities like Christmas can have on some people. Health checks and holistic therapies were also made available to our staff.

## Healthy Hearts session

February is Healthy Hearts month. We provided health screening as well as information around lifestyle habits that can affect heart health. We also gave staff useful leaflets for future reference.

## Stress and resilience session

Managing our social media can be a very stressful job as staff have to react quickly to events and also have to deal with the online abuse that is unfortunately prevalent in this space. At the request of the team, we provided special sessions to help them manage stress and build the resilience they need.

## Fatigue and wellbeing drop-in session

We held a session for all staff with a focus on fatigue and the implications that this has on wellbeing. The event included mini health checks as well as access to a sleep therapist and a psychotherapist.

## 'Closed Door' grief and bereavement session

These sessions were delivered as part of our Mental Health Charter Action Plan to provide appropriate training for managers. We are committed to providing managers with both the tools and the confidence needed to help them support team members.

The online sessions were hosted by Kelly Burton, our Health and Wellbeing Partner, and Mike Roberts, our Railway Chaplain, and were aimed at managers supporting colleagues during bereavement. The sessions focused on the grief process and how to support and manage people during difficult times.

## Menopause for Thought drop-in session

We provided a safe space for colleagues to learn about the menopause support available at work and elsewhere. It was also a great opportunity to share experiences with others in the same boat and to have questions answered.



## Mental health education support and interventions

### Mental Health First Aid Champions refresher training

Mental Health First Aid Champions were introduced to the business in 2020. They had a challenging time raising their profile within the business due to the pandemic. They have remained competent since 2020 and are committed to refreshing their skills by completing the training. It is a requirement from Mental Health England that all Champions refresh their competency every three years.

We currently have 26 Mental Health First Aid Champions across the business who receive training from New Leaf Health. This ensures they remain competent in their roles.

### RSSB mental health training

This training came about after Avanti signed up to the RSSB Mental Health Charter in 2023. As part of this we are actively training our managers in ways to support the mental wellbeing of their team members.

### RSSB mental health e-learning

An e-learning package provided by RSSB was made available to all people managers. This focused on awareness of mental health issues and how they can impact people.

### RSSB face-to-face mental health training

Face-to-face sessions of mental health awareness training were delivered to people managers by the RSSB. These were interactive sessions to discuss signs and symptoms and included practical advice on how to support employees who are experiencing poor mental health.

### Samaritans' trauma support training for frontline staff and drivers

Sadly, our front line staff and drivers may have to deal with vulnerable people seeking to harm themselves on the railway. Working with the Samaritans, we provide essential training on how to deal with trauma before and after it happens.

### Mental health awareness podcast

A podcast was recorded to highlight the importance of talking about mental health. This involved two employees who volunteered to share their stories with our Managing Director Andy Mellors. The session was facilitated by The Railway Chaplain and made available to all colleagues.

### Small Talk Saves Lives

We supported this Samaritans' campaign across our network and social media channels, helping to ensure its vital message reached our customers. Since launching in 2017, Small Talk Saves Lives has successfully raised awareness at railway stations about the need for small talk and starting conversations if you think someone might need help. Samaritans' Small Talk Saves Lives was delivered in partnership with Network Rail, British Transport Police and the wider rail industry. The campaign ran from 22 February to 19 March 2024.



We currently have 26 Mental Health First Aid Champions across the business who receive training from New Leaf Health. This ensures they remain competent in their roles.





## 09

# Economic development

Social Value Impact: £3,166,327.15

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



Dedicated Regional Growth Managers from Avanti West Coast are working in collaboration with our communities and partners to develop and deliver projects to increase rail use. The Regional Growth Managers work with local and national government, businesses, the wider rail industry and communities to provide services that support economic vitality, growth and quality of life.

By working with the Department of Transport the Regional Growth Managers maximise opportunities for third party funding, supporting schemes that promote economic development.

Below are some examples of projects that have recently been completed or will be in the near future.

- Lancaster station Changing Places toilet – a toilet which caters for all disabilities and includes an adult changing facility, shower and hoist
- Station accessibility improvements
- Manchester Piccadilly station secure bicycle unit
- Electric sub-meter reading system
- Drinking water fountains







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Avanti West Coast awarded the local council £100k of Customer and Communities Investment Scheme (CCIS) funding to deliver a Courtyard Conversion Project.

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A great example of the work done by our Regional Growth Managers is the contribution to the £82 million Coventry Station Masterplan, a council led scheme which took place throughout 2020 and 2021 before opening to the public in March 2022. During the past financial year Avanti West Coast secured match funding to deliver replacement tiling in the stairwell and high footfall areas, a power upgrade for retail units so that commercial tenants can take occupation and secured £400k of external funding to deliver a skylight replacement programme that will be completed by the end of this year (2024).

We also awarded the local council £100k of Customer and Communities Investment Scheme (CCIS) funding to deliver a Courtyard Conversion Project. This renovated a redundant space into an attractive feature is open for customers to enjoy.

**The total allocated budget is: £664,607**

The breakdown is as follows:

- Rail Heritage: £205k
- Network Rail: £230k
- Avanti West Coast: £229k

# 10

## Sustainability, climate and environment

Social Value Impact: -£3,816,883.13

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals linked to this section:



Climate change is a global challenge that affects all stakeholders in the transport and travel industry. Train companies are faced with the impact of severe weather events such as heavy rainfall, floods, high winds and extreme temperatures, all of which can damage infrastructure and cause landslips, resulting in delays and cancellations.

In line with government objectives, our target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2031 is a significant step towards our ultimate goal of achieving absolute zero carbon emissions by 2050. While we're looking to decarbonise our operations as quickly as possible, we recognise that it will take time and commitment to achieve this goal.

We have increased our carbon footprint from the previous year. This is due to an increase in our services as we ran more trains and had fewer cancellations.







In our journey towards our carbon goal, we achieved the following in the financial year 2024:

- Verification of our science-based targets and a refining of our decarbonisation pathway
- Waste segregation sites at four stations
- Installation of customer facing recycling and general waste bins
- Ongoing gains from voltage optimisation systems
- Surveys at selected stations to better control heating systems
- Behavioural change encouraging the switching off of equipment
- Surveys to identify water efficiency measures
- Biodiversity net gain surveys







## Our new Evero fleet – a forward thinking approach to achieving net zero

New Evero trains have been introduced in the financial year 2025 which will have a significant impact on our carbon emissions.

Our new fleet will replace our diesel powered Voyager trains. The new fleet comprises both electric and bi-mode versions, the latter can switch between electrical power from the overhead wires and diesel power where the railway isn't yet electrified. As nearly all of our network is electrified, the new hybrids will run mainly on electric power, cutting our diesel consumption and reducing our carbon footprint.

## Building management system (BMS)

We've completed our project to install BMS at all our stations. BMS enables us to optimise the energy efficiency of our stations by monitoring and controlling various buildings energy use. This includes systems such as lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning. It's enabled us to reduce energy consumption, reduce our operating costs and cut our carbon footprint.

## Sustainability week 2024

The theme for this year's Sustainability Week was: 'Have you got your ticket for a better future?' The Sustainability Team and our dedicated Green and Community Champions organised a week filled with over 40 events and activities for our staff and local communities including:

- Seed swaps
- Food bank collections
- Book swaps
- Litter picks
- 'Get to know your role in sustainability' drop in sessions
- Guide Dogs UK meet and greet session
- Art can recycle workshop
- Crafts groups (using recycled materials)
- Bug hotel building

Our Sustainability Week inspired people to take action, working towards a more sustainable future. Litter picking events formed part of our Sustainability Week activities, however these events are often part of our green calendar. It seems like a small gesture, yet it has a huge impact and is in line with the United Nations Strategic Development Goals contributing towards a greener planet. The events hold other benefits too as participants get to stretch their legs and connect with fellow participants.

# Summary and future opportunity

Starting with this social value report, we are enhancing our collaboration with external partners and AWC colleagues. This is an important part of our commitment to go even further in both generating and measuring social value.

Looking ahead, we are determined to ensure that social value is front and centre of policy discussions. We are dedicated not only to delivering for our passengers, our colleagues, and the wide range of communities we serve, but to interact right across the political spectrum to address the challenges so many are facing right across Britain.

As a sector leader, we will work with partners to create a blueprint of best practice for the sector on tracking, measuring and upscaling the delivery of social value to key stakeholder groups.

We will build on all that is set out in this report. We will work with leaders right across sectors and industries to break down barriers to opportunity and deliver social value to the people and places that need it the most.

## Leading the way

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each staff member who contributed to our social value impact over the past financial year. We have grown in our understanding and measuring of social value.

With our goal to become the leading train company in social value impact measurement, we are looking forward to a year with an abundance of opportunities to build sustainable communities and a resilient workforce. We are also looking forward to working with key stakeholders to improve our social mobility.







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We will work with leaders right across sectors and industries to break down barriers to opportunity and deliver social value to the people and places that need it the most.

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This year we plan to increase our social value impact by:

- Promoting social value to internal and external stakeholders
- Migrating to the updated Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)
- Influencing future RSVT metrics by forming part of the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) steering groups
- Empowering key staff members to become users of the RSVT
- Supporting charities within the communities we serve, helping them to measure their own social value impact to attract third party funding
- Working closer with Network Rail and other stakeholders and train companies to deliver more projects with a high social value impact
- Empowering our supply chain to measure and maximise their social value impact



# Conclusion from Rt Hon Justine Greening

Reflecting on the wider social value efforts and impact detailed in this social value report, it is clear that Avanti West Coast sees itself beyond purely its role as is not just a rail company, and recognises that it can be a positive force for social change.

The impact it has sought to have over the past year – from enhancing educational opportunities and improving accessibility, to advancing environmental sustainability and fostering workforce diversity – illustrates a real commitment to creating value that goes far beyond the financial bottom line. Whilst every business is on a journey, the work by Avanti West Coast is a powerful demonstration of how businesses can challenge themselves to steadily become real drivers of societal development.

Looking forward, the organisation's partnership with us at the Purpose Coalition presents an exciting opportunity to see Avanti West Coast continue it's journey further and faster. It can help it deepen and expand this impact by working with other like-minded companies to learn from and share best practice. Avanti West Coast can clearly define its mission to break down barriers and promote social mobility across the communities it serves in a way that is easily accessible for everyone to understand.



It should never be overlooked that the rail sector has a unique role to play – connecting communities and businesses, whether that is our major cities, our commuter towns or our rural villages. Combined with its green credentials, it can also spearhead a journey to net zero that can help ensure no communities are left behind.

The time is now for businesses to harness their resources, influence, and innovation spirit to address the pressing challenges faced by society. So many have already rightly focused on sustainability and planet. Now the similar journey on social impact must be fast-tracked. Avanti West Coast has already set a high standard with its comprehensive and impactful approach to social value. By continuing to align its strategies with key partners, and by leveraging this new political momentum, Avanti West Coast can be a central part of even greater progress.

I would urge all partners across industries and sectors, and across the country, to recognise the transformative potential of integrating social value into the core operations of businesses. It's time to learn from the best practice of others and collaborate on innovation for ever greater impact. Avanti West Coast's journey illustrates that, by committing to such principles, companies can play an ever greater role contributing to building a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justine Greening". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Rt Hon Justine Greening**  
Chair, Purpose Coalition and former  
Secretary of State for Transport

# Appendix

## Our approach

This document serves to provide more information on our approach to social value. We mentioned that our report is guided and informed by the following frameworks and guidelines:

- The Rail Safety and Standard Board (RSSB) Sustainable Rail Blueprint
- The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)
- Our Responsible Plan
- The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- The Purpose Coalition's 15 Purpose Goals

## RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint

The RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint is a strategic plan for the rail industry that provides a framework for making cleaner, more sustainable rail travel a reality. As part of this, all rail companies are required to create and maximise social value and to measure the impact of this on society. We are, of course, totally onboard with this.

## The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)

The Rail Social Value Tool provides a practical way to forecast, monitor and measure social value. It also helps us to find new areas where we can improve our impact on communities and the environment.

We've used the RSVT to calculate our social impact. Our report also includes case studies and other on the ground evidence on top of these calculations. This provides a deeper understanding of how rail impacts communities and people's lives. It also enables us to demonstrate our contribution to the wider society beyond just providing rail services. Using the RSVT highlights our dedication to measuring and reporting our social impact and our commitment to continuously improve our contribution to society.

## Our Responsible Plan

As part of the introduction to this report we set out the four pillars of our Responsible Plan:

- Our Planet (we're developing and refining our decarbonisation roadmap to track our progress towards net zero)
- Our People (our schools engagement scheme is a great example and continues to go from strength to strength)
- Our Customers (we continue to engage with our accessibility panels and support disabled customer)
- Our Communities (we increased our social value impact by more than £100 million in the past financial year)

At Avanti West Coast we aim to advance our four pillars of sustainability to keep up with the wider industry ambition. The RSSB launched their Sustainable Rail Blueprint in 2023 that sets out the rail industry's view on how to make the railway even more sustainable. Our Responsible Plan contributes to the Blueprint's three key pillars of emissions, natural environment, and social sustainability.

## The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals provide a shared blueprint to make the world a better place for everyone. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In this report we link each section with the relevant Sustainable Development Goal. This allows us to analyse our performance over a set time period and compare it to other organisations in the rail industry.



## The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals



1. **No Poverty**  
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. **Zero Hunger**  
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. **Good Health and Well-Being**  
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. **Quality Education**  
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. **Gender equality**  
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth**  
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
9. **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**  
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.
10. **Reduced Inequalities**  
Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities**  
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
12. **Responsible Consumption and Production**  
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. **Climate Action**  
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. **Life on Land**  
Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
15. **Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**  
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. **Partnerships for the Goals**  
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.



Scan the code to find out more about The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

## The Purpose Coalition's 15 Purpose Goals

The Purpose Goals identify the key barriers to opportunity in the UK, giving businesses the guidance they need to focus their efforts. The 15 Purpose Goals cover a broad range of societal and economic issues, from early childhood development to workplace inclusivity. They identify and clarify the many faces of inequality and the need for a comprehensive approach by responsible businesses.



### 1. Strong foundations in Early Years

A lack of strong foundations in Early Years is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Getting the best possible start in life is crucial. A strong foundation in early years education is the cornerstone of social mobility.

### 2. Successful school years

A lack of successful school years is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Successful school years are a crucial part of not only a young person's academic development, but also their wider personal development.

### 3. Positive destinations Post 16+

A lack of positive destinations Post 16+ is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Everyone is different, so making the right choices as a young adult is key – that's why we want to make sure that everyone has a positive destination post 16 and after GCSEs.

### 4. Right advice and experiences

A lack of access to the right advice and experiences at the right time is one of the major barriers to opportunity. There is an adage "you can't be what you can't see". Getting great access to career advice and wider experiences that broaden horizons and set schoolwork in context are vital. Working out how we can consistently provide high quality careers advice, support, mentoring and access to work experience is an essential step in improving social mobility.

### 5. Open recruitment

We need open opportunities and open recruitment so that our nation's talent can make the most of its potential. The chance to keep developing once in work and progress in a career isn't just important from the perspective of increasing your earnings, it's also about how you can continue to feel challenged and learn even once you've left your school years behind.

### 6. Fair career progression

A lack of fair career progression is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Businesses that provide employees the opportunity to keep developing and progress in their careers will do better.



### 7. Widening access to savings and credit

A lack of access to savings and credit is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Whether it's being able to afford day to day essentials and housing or putting money aside to have a decent retirement, being able to manage money and getting good financial advice can make all the difference when it comes to people making the most their potential.

### 8. Good health and well-being

A lack of good health and well-being is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Tackling health and wellbeing inequalities are central to driving levelling up and improving social mobility. Good health and wellbeing are often a precursor to a person being in a position to make the most of their talents and in work, feel they can consider taking the next step in their career.

### 9. Extending enterprise

A lack of private enterprise and entrepreneurship is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Enabling people and communities to create their own jobs is perhaps the most powerful way of really driving opportunity on the doorstep. If we can embed a social norm of entrepreneurship across our country, and in communities where setting up a business is less usual, then we'll have a powerful lever to help talent and ideas thrive wherever they are.

### 10. Closing the digital and AI divide

The digital and AI divide is one of the major barriers to opportunity. The digital and AI divide is a gap we have to close if we're really to enable equality of opportunity. The internet revolution is an opportunity for a level playing field, but it also poses a growing inequality threat for those who can't take advantage or cope in an online world.

### 11. Infrastructure for opportunity

A lack of good infrastructure is one of the major barriers to opportunity. For communities with less opportunity on the doorstep, being able to travel to where opportunities are is absolutely essential. That's why investment in the roads and railways matters so much. It's an enabler that can unlock people's chances to go for roles that might not be on the doorstep but can turbocharge their careers.

### 12. Building homes and sustainable communities

A lack of good homes and safe, sustainable communities is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Communities that are safe, with a good quality of life and homes people can afford are communities that are sustainable in the long run. Those that aren't risk losing their talent and driving away the very opportunities from business investment that could transform their fortunes. It's why place-based approaches matter so much, from the government but also from businesses.

### 13. Harness the energy and net zero

A lack of a fair energy transition is a major barrier to opportunity. The transition to net zero is a unique opportunity to create new careers and roles in the places where they can make the most difference. People and the planet are two sides of the same coin. Investment in the green economy is already bringing brand new opportunities to areas across the country and it's crucial that the energy transition is equitable for people and communities everywhere.

### 14. Achieve equality through diversity and inclusion

A lack of equality, diversity and inclusion is one of the major barriers to opportunity. Diversity matters. The research is clear; more diverse companies make better decisions because they have a wider perspective and avoid groupthink. Diversity extends beyond gender and ethnicity to sexuality, disability and other characteristics that can lead to disadvantage. Britain will not succeed unless and until its leadership roles, wherever they are found in our society, better reflect the wider society at large.

### 15. Working in partnership

We need organisations to work in partnership to boost opportunity. By fostering strategic alliances with unions and citizens assemblies, organisations can harness diverse talent and perspectives and ensure their initiatives are grounded in the needs of real-world communities.

## The journey to the Purpose Goals: Tackling the UK's biggest challenges in partnership with the Purpose Coalition

The Purpose Coalition measures organisations against a set of sector-relevant social impact criteria. The Purpose Goals outline 15 interconnected impact barriers to opportunity. By drawing on expertise provided by academia and business, the goals are designed to specifically address some of the unique challenges facing the UK.

The Coalition's cross-party work brings together the UK's most innovative leaders, Parliamentarians and businesses to improve, share best practice, and develop solutions for improving the role that organisations can play for their customers, colleagues and communities by breaking down barriers to opportunity.

The Purpose Coalition is chaired by Rt Hon Justine Greening, the UK's former Secretary of State for Education, Transport and International Development. It is led by Nick Forbes CBE, who served in Sir Keir Starmer's Shadow Cabinet when in opposition, who now leads the Purpose Coalition's work with the Labour Party and chairs the Breaking Down Barriers Commission; and Rt Hon Anne Milton, former Minister for Apprenticeships and a Minister in the Department for Health and Social Care.

The Goals were designed following Justine's experience - as Secretary of State for International Development - leading the UK's delegation to the convention of the United Nations (UN) that established the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Purpose Goals apply the SDGs in a UK context.

The SDGs as interlinked goals emphasise the interdependent environmental, social, and economic aspects of development and centralise the role of sustainability.

At the time, Justine recognised how transformative a common set of accessible but ambitious goals could be in spurring action to effect change. After leaving Government in 2019, Justine established the Purpose Coalition and Social Mobility Pledge with the intention of galvanising UK economic and social actors to improve social mobility in the UK.

The Purpose Goals focus on key life stages and highlight the main issues that need to be resolved to break down barriers to opportunity in the UK. The Goals are intended to guide ambition, provoke action and measure progress.

As a large-scale organisation, we are active across all 15 Purpose Goals but are specifically focusing in this report on 12 areas most relevant to our area of expertise - running a railway that creates prosperity and pride, linking together towns and major cities to create a vital economic artery for the UK.

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