

Responsible Business Report

2023/2024



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Introduction

The actions we take to reduce carbon emissions, support customers, diversify our workforce, strengthen our supply chain, increase capacity and build resilience on our network will have a lasting impact on our region.

In this report, we provide an update on our performance against key commitments aligned with our responsible business framework, showcasing our efforts for our people and partners, our environment, and our communities.

We continue to make progress against our framework objectives, and this year has been no exception. We've achieved amazing progress supporting vulnerable customers, increasing biodiversity, educating those in our community on electrical safety and the energy transition and more. Throughout the year, we continued to deliver against the responsible business framework we shared last year. You can read more about these detailed commitments on page 36. Additionally, this year we enhanced our responsible business framework.

“**We continue to make progress against our framework commitments year-on-year, and this year has been no exception.**”

In April 2023, we entered a new five-year price control period known as RIIO-ED2 (ED2). During this period, we will invest £2bn in the North West – that's £1m of expenditure each day in the electrical infrastructure. This investment will enable the North West to move towards its net zero goals and ambitions. This will also reduce customers' time without power by 20%. Additionally, we will work to improve customer satisfaction to over 93% and support those in vulnerable circumstances. The significant increase in the level of investment is an opportunity for growth including more recruitment, upskilling and supporting our contractors and supply-chain along this journey. As part of our ED2 business plan, we developed an environmental action plan, an education and awareness strategy and a strategy for supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances. Our responsible business framework and commitments are aligned with these strategies, page 34.

The increase in storms and associated power cuts highlight the impact of climate change but also the importance that our customers place on having a reliable electricity supply. By working with partners, we have been able to extend the reach of our Extra Care service and launch the Take Charge campaign (page 27). Our new education programme, which includes workshops in secondary schools, aims to deliver STEM and safety awareness (page 29) whilst raising awareness of job opportunities in the electricity and green skills sectors, helping to build our future workforce. Additionally, our biodiversity and tree planting programme literally grow from strength-to-strength (page 23).

“**This year I am delighted that alongside our investment in the region, we have driven forward a number of key initiatives.**”

I take immense pride in our accomplishments this year, ensuring that we not only fulfil our current commitments but also to position ourselves to respond to future demands. I am optimistic about the future and we are dedicated to fostering positive change and doing the best for our customers while being a responsible business.

I trust that you will find this report both informative and enjoyable, providing valuable insights into the great work we do over and above our license obligation.

Ben Grunfeld
Strategy and Growth Director



Our approach

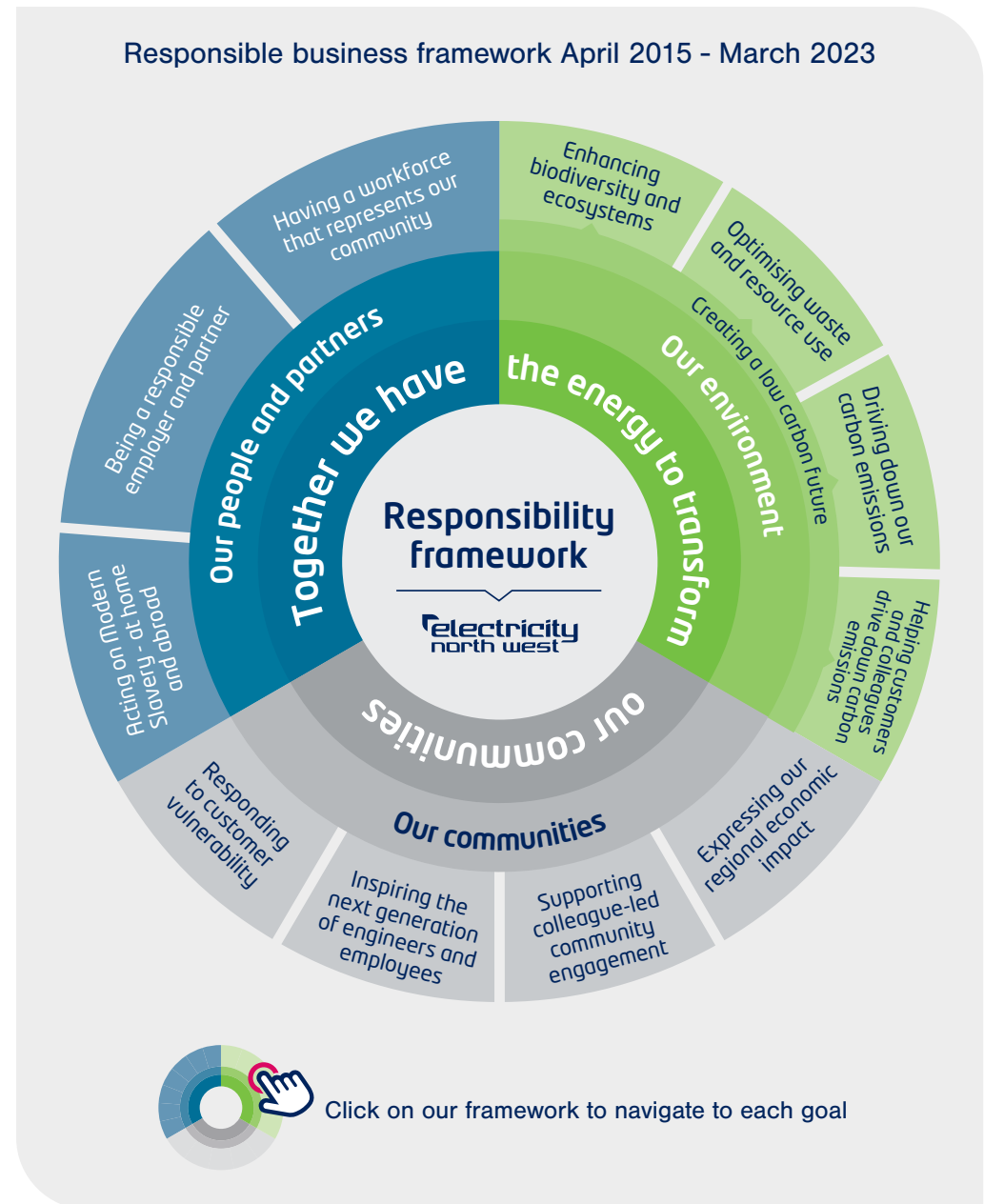
Our commitment to being a responsible business is central to our licence to operate, aiming to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive outcomes. Our responsible business framework aligns to our purpose, ‘Together we have the energy to transform our communities’ while ensuring that we remain switched on, take pride and are adaptable in all that we do.

Our framework brings together initiatives and commitments from across the business. Central coordination helps with reporting, benchmarking and driving best practice to ensure that all areas of materiality and impact are covered. **This years report reflects our efforts against our April 2015 - March 2023 framework. As we enter a new price period from April 2024 - March 2028 we have refreshed and aligned our framework to our new commitments. Read more on page 34 and 35.**

As a regulated business, we regularly report to Ofgem and the public. To avoid duplication, throughout this document we reference additional publications that provide more detail about our activities.



Responsible business framework April 2015 - March 2023



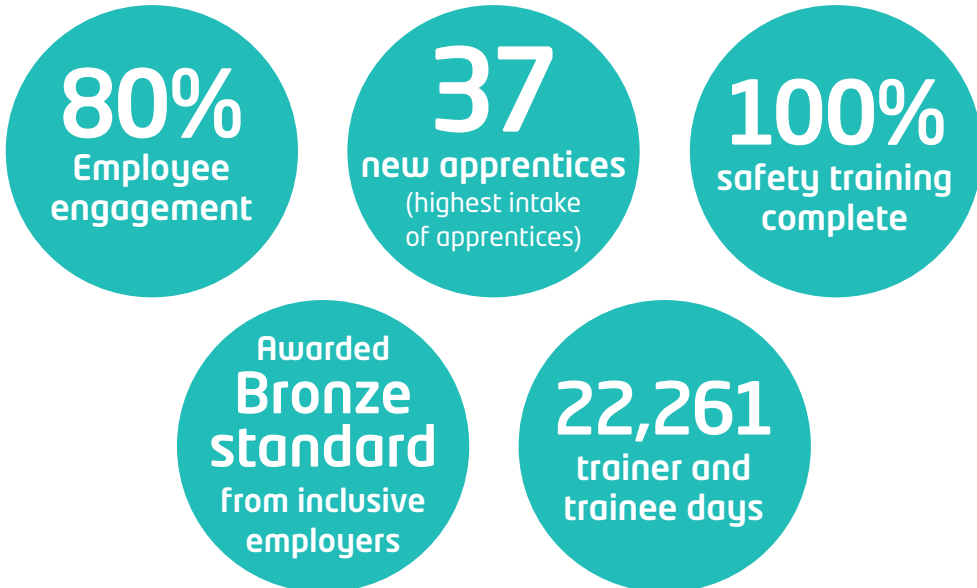
Our people & partners



Linked UNSDGs

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 			

Performance highlights



Our commitments

- Having a workforce that represents our communities
- Acting on Modern Slavery
- Being a responsible employer and partner

Associated links

- [Modern slavery statement](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion](#)
- [Wellbeing advice](#)

Having a workforce that represents our community

We are committed to creating a sense of belonging for our colleagues and truly reflecting the communities we serve. This commitment ensures that we strive to be a diverse and inclusive business regardless of ethnicity, race, disability, age or anything else.

What we achieved

We view enhancing the diversity of our business as a strategic approach to better serve and support our customers and communities. Our focus extends beyond attracting new talent and recruiting the right individuals. It involves fostering an inclusive culture where everyone has equal opportunities to succeed and feel safe. Although improving diversity presents challenges, we are committed to this essential process. Our goal is to create a sense of belonging for our colleagues and authentically reflect the communities we serve. As a member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter we want to continue to raise our employment standard in Greater Manchester and across our region.



We continue to drive our Diversity and Inclusion strategy 'Include Me' which is underpinned by four **key areas: belonging, talent, leadership and community.** These areas provide strategic focus for our business.

Belonging

In November, we conducted our annual climate survey. 87% of our colleagues completed the survey and our overall agreement score increased from 78.7% to 82.8%. Additionally, all six directorates exceeded our target engagement score of 80%.

Climate score achieved an engagement score of **80%**

Our climate survey is a great way to assess the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of our colleagues regarding the working environment. Despite a period of organisational change this result is incredibly positive. This information will now enable leaders to make informed decisions that align with the needs and expectations of our colleagues to ensure we are a high performing business and a great place to work.

Our colleague-led resource groups (CRGs) continue to expand and make significant change within our business. These groups were established as a safe space to share experiences and discuss ways of improving inclusion at work and in our communities. We now have eight groups incorporating LGBT+, menopause matters, women empowered, access-ability, armed forces, ethnicity, neurodiversity and working parents and careers. These groups address topics of inclusion, work policies, health and wellbeing and any concerns or improvements that can be made within the organisation.

▶ View our CRG video by scanning the QR code here.



Inclusivity through collaboration

To continue our support for our CRGs and our colleagues, we collaborated with United Utilities, Growth Co, and THG, to develop CRG lead specific events. Over the past year we have worked together to find ways to support our network leaders. Our discussions arose from the common challenge of assisting leaders who were new to their roles. As a result of these discussions, we created these events as a great opportunity for our CRG leads to network, connect and share best practice with other CRG leads from other businesses. Our network now has over 150 people and continues to go from strength-to-strength.

▶ Earlier this year we ran our first conference hosted at United Utilities. Scan the QR code to watch what our leaders discussed.

Having a workforce that represents our community (continued)

Talent

Our commitment to attracting diverse talent and developing our workforce ensures that our colleagues are well-positioned to contribute to green growth and provide exceptional customer service. We actively foster an inclusive company culture, prioritise responsible business practices, offer continuous learning opportunities, and provide competitive salaries. These factors collectively make us an employer of choice and drive future talent. By focusing on these aspects, we create an environment that supports both our colleagues and our organisation's success.

We remain focused on driving our attraction strategy to increase women, and ethnic minorities within our workforce. However, we acknowledge that there is still more work to be done in this area, and more support needs to be provided to ensure that we reach our 2023/28 targets. View our targets on page 8.



View our women at Electricity North West video.



This year we participated in the #10,000 Black Intern Programme and continue to host work experience and work placement opportunities for a number of schools, including all-girls schools. We have continued to advertise our roles more widely through social media and career fairs, to attract more diverse candidates and continue to build partnerships to help us increase our impact. We have seen a positive effect as a result of our efforts, with additional applications for our apprenticeship programme, demonstrating that we are inspiring young people into thinking about a career in STEM subjects and a future career at Electricity North West.

Driving work experience

After the successful launch of our work placement scheme in 2023/24, we extended a warm welcome to three different schools this year for a week of enriching work experience. This aligns to improving our workforce, increasing female and ethnic representation in our workforce and inspiring the next generation, see page 29. Penwortham Girls School, Co-op Academy and St Mary's, Wigan joined us for a schedule of events to give them more insight into our business and hopefully inspire them to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We also held 'virtual work experience' sessions with Co-op Academy.



#10,000 Black Interns Programme

To help drive and promote ethnic diversity within the business. We welcomed our first intern, Pracious Nkume who joined our accommodation team as part of paid work experience. She has helped carry out energy audits, lighting and energy consumption trends reviews whilst also being part of vulnerability group engagement.



Our apprenticeship programme continues to go from strength-to-strength. This year we welcomed 37 new apprentices covering roles including operational engineers, design engineers, civil engineers, mechanics and IT engineers. Our apprentices are a key part of our talent pipeline and reaffirm our commitment to creating green jobs, investing in a greener future and acquiring diverse future talent. We continue to increase the number of apprentices each year and have an award winning-programme. So far, our apprenticeship scheme has welcomed over 230 apprentices from 2007 to 2023.

We started hosting apprentice open days at our training academy where young people can come and meet our trainers to learn more. We will be continuing these in 2024 while also hosting our first women career day.



Rachael Parr, Electricity North West's People and Corporate Services Director, said:

Over the next five years, we're committed to upskilling and investing in our workforce and by 2028. We'll be creating 600 green jobs and enhancing the diversity of our current workforce.



Having a workforce that represents our community (continued)

Our efforts to drive change have increased opportunities and resources for females and ethnic minorities within our business, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment. This is something we are constantly driving throughout our business with the help of our colleague-led resource groups.

	Female population	Female leaders	Female engineers	Minority ethnic groups	Minority ethnic leaders
Year ending 2021	24.3%	31.6%	7.4%	4.1%	1.6%
Year ending 2022	24.8%	32.95%	8.92%	4.83%	1.53%
Year ending 2023	24.6%	33.81%	8%	5.5%	2.87%
Year ending 2024	24.6% ↔	33.3% ↓	8.62% ↑	6.35% ↑	2.51% ↓
Goals (2023 – 2028)	30%	37%	12%	12%	5%



Leadership

The foundations for developing a culture of inclusivity starts with our leaders who are custodians of our inclusive culture. We will raise awareness of and diminish unconscious biases that may influence decision making. Our leaders, supported by our CEO and Executive Leadership Team champion our drive for an inclusive and safe culture. We have continued to deliver our robust leadership development program with a key focus on inclusive leadership. We've also developed recruitment training featuring a disability confidence module, which is currently being rolled out to our leaders.

In addition, we have a range of courses and solutions available to develop management and leadership skills for aspiring leaders. This also includes those wanting to develop within wider (WLT), senior (SLT) and executive (ELT) leadership teams.

Our leaders continue to deliver monthly company and safety briefings to their teams. We provide six, specific management events each year to engage with our senior leaders, promote a high-performance culture and provide leaders with the latest business updates face-to-face. The events also provide an opportunity for our leaders to network with other colleagues.

Our apprenticeship team scoop top awards



In February, Sarah Salisbury was named Apprentice of the Year for public services and education in the North West Apprenticeship Awards 2023. Sarah recently completed her business administration apprenticeship and is now a higher-level apprentice coordinator.

In March we scooped two awards at the Lancashire Apprenticeship Awards.

Our apprenticeship scheme was named Diversity and Inclusion programme of the year and Lauren Summers was also recognised as the Higher-Level Apprentice of the Year.

Having a workforce that represents our community (continued)

Community

We embed ourselves in our communities to understand the challenges and opportunities to promote ourselves as a local employer of choice. We use our position in the community to champion diversity and inclusion with our suppliers and other third-party relationships. This year we have increased our engagement with local primary and secondary schools (see page 29) to increase awareness and provide opportunities to the communities we serve.

As part of our commitment, we want to drive fair pay and continue to be a Real Living Wage Employer. This is our fifth year voluntarily ensuring that all colleagues receive a fair wage as we want to ensure that all our colleagues receive fair pay for the work they do. We are also working with our suppliers to ensure that they do the same. Our commitment to gender pay gap reporting has been in place since 2016/17 ensuring we reward and recognise our colleagues equally, regardless of gender and transparently report our progress. Find out more on our gender pay gap [here](#).



We are developing new partnerships within our communities to ensure our brand is recognised and the opportunities for our roles are accessible for everyone. One of these partnerships is One Voice Blackburn, a community charity that champions the development of talent in their community. Last year, we were proud sponsors of the 'Best Apprentice' award at their annual awards ceremony. In the coming year, we will host the One-voice Blackburn women's network, offering insights into our workplace and providing support for women re-entering the workforce after taking a career break to raise children.



Award

We were awarded Gold Forces Friendly award in 2023. Our organisation proudly includes over 60 veterans, offers reservists 10 days of leave and support, and has a colleague resource group dedicated to supporting our internal workforce and communities by raising funds for the Poppy Appeal.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD 2023

Proudly supporting those who serve.



Our Plans by 2028

Increase female diversity to 30%, women in leadership roles to 37% and women in engineering roles to 12%.

Improve ethnic diversity to 12% and increase ethnic minority representation in our leadership team to 5%.

Increase the number of work placements we provide to young people.

Increase apprenticeship opportunities.

Achieve Investors in People's 'Silver' award.

Acting on Modern Slavery

We are ensuring that we play our part in addressing the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking within our supply chain and throughout our business operations.

What we achieved

The nature of our business means that we are in a unique position to spot incidents of modern slavery during our day-to-day operations. Our focus is to stay vigilant to what's occurring in our supply chain and other areas of our business, so that we can recognise the signs of modern slavery and mitigate the risks. We continue to review our policies and processes in this area, with a view to improving our understanding of the risks within our operations and supply chain and the mitigation we need to put in place to address the risks posed by modern slavery.

Electricity North West is a long-standing member of the Slave Free Alliance (SFA), a social enterprise and membership initiative launched by anti-slavery charity, Hope for Justice, which exists to bring an end to modern slavery. The SFA now has over 120 members across many sectors, including 17 FTSE 100 companies. We are a founding member of the Utilities Against Slavery (UAS) working group which is

S | SLAVE-FREE ALLIANCE

Working Towards a Slave-free Supply Chain

co-ordinated by the SFA. The group meets monthly to promote a collaborative approach to combat modern slavery and drive meaningful change within the sector.

During the year, we have engaged with the SFA to obtain a clearer understanding of our supply chain risk. We will continue to work with them to develop the training that we offer within the business, building on previous work to implement a training matrix that covers existing and new colleagues. The SFA has previously conducted a gap analysis to assess our approach to modern slavery. Key areas that we have continued to monitor in 2023/24 following on from the gap analysis assessment can be summarised as:

- We have updated appropriate company policies/ documents (e.g. whistleblowing policy) to provide better reference and visibility to modern slavery. Employees are encouraged to report modern slavery concerns under this policy.
- We continue to promote awareness of modern slavery alongside other areas of customer vulnerability on our external website.

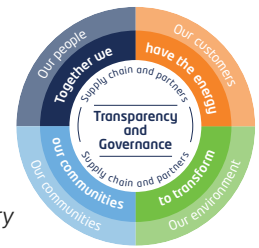
- We work with the SFA to ensure that our modern slavery statement incorporates any newly mandated structure/content.

In addition, we continue to monitor and develop our procurement processes with the help of the SFA.

We focus on risk assessing our supplier base and enhancing our supplier due diligence processes to aid compliance with our commitment to prevent slavery or human trafficking in any part of our business.

Under the revised 2024 Responsible Business Framework, our modern slavery policy will form part of our corporate governance section. We will continue to strive to make improvements to our approach in addressing the risks of modern slavery every year. See page 34.

In line with current best practice / legislation, our Annual Modern Slavery Statement has been updated and approved by the Board on 30 May 2024, and added to the governmental modern slavery statement registry.



Our Plans by 2028

Review training material for our colleagues.	Refresh our risk assessment for key suppliers with the support of SFA.	Continue to work with suppliers to understand the measures that they have in place.	Update our modern slavery statement with the support of SFA to ensure that it follows best practice.	Ensure our supplier base is aware of Electricity North West position on modern slavery.	Continue to work closely with SFA and UAS working group.
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Being a responsible employer and partner

Supporting wellbeing

We are committed to prioritising our colleagues' overall wellbeing, including physical, mental, financial and social health. We offer both immediate assistance and long-term strategies. Our goal is to empower our colleagues, enhance their wellbeing, and raise awareness while addressing stigmas and discrimination.

What we achieved

Over the years we have had a significant focus on wellbeing. With rising environmental concerns, economic uncertainties, pandemics and the energy crisis, prioritising our colleagues, and customers wellbeing is crucial.

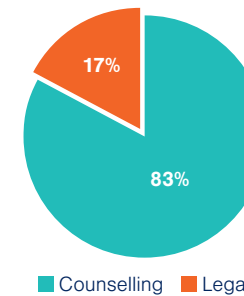
Our vision is for everyone to leave work as happy and healthy as when they arrived - if not better. We focus on reducing stigma and tackling discrimination, empowering colleagues to maintain and improve wellbeing and intervene where necessary to support and rehabilitate. As we aim to continually improve our approach, this year we are reviewing our wellbeing strategy with the assistance of external consultants from 'Investors in Wellbeing.' They are assessing our current practices and wellbeing challenges, and helping us identify any additional risks or opportunities, to ensure a clear wellbeing focus for this next business period. In addition, this year we participated in BITC Work Well Benchmark, a starting point to embark on our journey towards improving, measuring, and reporting on employee wellbeing. We look to launch our new strategy and approach in the new year.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides a comprehensive suite of counselling and support services to our colleagues and their families. We want all our colleagues to feel that they have the support they need. This year we had a total of 217 calls, 83% of which were about counselling with anxiety, low mood and bereavement and 17% relate to legal advice.

In collaboration with our supply chain partners, we actively explore avenues to enhance colleague support. Our wellbeing centre provides education, support and tools to help colleagues and their families live a healthier and happier lifestyle and our wellbeing hub provides advice to support mental, physical, financial and social wellbeing, along with policies and procedures.

We want to ensure that wellbeing support is readily available across the business not only accessible through online platforms but also through our wellbeing champions. We have 29 wellbeing champions across our depots and offices and provide 'start the conversation' training to all our colleagues, which covers recognising and building healthy behaviours. We have a wealth of resources through our Health Assured partner and each month provide a Health Assured newsletter to all colleagues as well as monthly and quarterly focus areas through our different internal communication platforms.

Our approach to health and wellbeing extends further than our colleagues and incorporates all non-permanent colleagues as part of our wellbeing strategy. We provide an Extra Care Register (ECR) for vulnerable customers that provides bespoke services and information to ensure their safety and wellbeing is not impacted by our services during a power cut. Read more on page 27.



Our vision is for everyone to leave work as happy and healthy as when they arrived - if not better



Our Plans by 2028

Launch wellbeing strategy in 2024/25.

Achieve we invest in wellbeing' standard by 2026.

Being a responsible employer and partner (continued)

Health and Safety

The safety of our colleagues, customers and communities is vital. Our commitment is to ensure we eliminate harm for anyone impacted by our activities and ensure that all colleagues go home safely at the end of every day.

What we achieved

We operate in a high hazard industry and the safety of our colleagues and customers will always remain our top priority and is non-negotiable. Our safe operation is fundamental to our licence to operate, and we are never complacent about safety. As a business we prioritise safety by ensuring we embed a safety first culture that demonstrates safety as an attitude, perception and priority.

We have continued to embed, incorporate and uphold the 'three Cs' introduced in 2022. **Concentrate, commit and comply** are embedded among our colleagues to minimise distraction, reduce injury and remain vigilant whilst working.

This year we recorded nearly five million hours worked with no fatalities, two lost time injuries, three reportable incidents and 176 recorded near misses. We have seen a major shift in our colleagues' behaviour and attitude towards safety and while it is pleasing to see that lost time and recordable injuries have reduced, we strive for no injuries and want to ensure that we continue to embed our safety culture and take actions on safety observations.

Health and safety performance

	2022/23	2023/24
Fatalities	0	0
Lost time injuries	3	2
Reportable incidents	9	3
Near miss incidents	287	176
Hours worked	4,755,414	4,909,366

Measure	2022/23	2023/24	
	Actual	Target	Actual
Lost time injury frequency rate	0.035	0.035	0.023
Safety observations	15,012	8,000	11,740
Positive challenge reports	2,459	2,000	2,777
Safety training attendance	100%	100%	100%



Concentrate

We can't afford to be complacent in our approach to safety - complacency leads to consequences. Don't take shortcuts - it's not worth the risk.



Commit

A breach of our safety rules could have far-reaching consequences beyond injury or disciplinary action. Consider the long-term emotional and financial affects for you, your partner, children, wider family, friends and colleagues.



Comply

Our policies are there for a reason. No matter how challenging the circumstances - there's no excuse for not following the correct procedure or wearing correct PPE - safety must always be the priority.



Being a responsible employer and partner (continued)

This year we launched a safety culture survey (using HSE's Safety Climate Tool) to assess colleagues' attitudes and perceptions towards health and safety issues within the organisation, and we plan to launch a cultural improvement programme later in 2024 using the results of the survey.

Over 75% of our colleagues completed the survey and took the time to share their views. View the key headlines and areas of improvement below.

This year we also maintained our accreditations to internationally recognised standards ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 which cover safety and environmental management systems. These standards demonstrate our internal and external commitment to workplace safety and environmental improvement.

This year we also maintained our accreditations to internationally recognised standards ISO 45001 and ISO 14001

We have continued our approach to promoting a safety-conscious workforce with monthly safety campaigns and weekly safety calls with our leadership teams. We have introduced more internal communications briefings and all colleagues attend a safety brief each month. Our senior leaders have been doing site visits to share our message of switching on to safety and have launched monthly safety focuses on key issues, including 'nothing left to chance', which looked at the importance of PPE and following procedures, summer safety, stay healthy at work, drugs and alcohol and slips trips and falls.

Our in-house training academy offers comprehensive health and safety training program for all colleagues. Colleagues (and contractors) in relevant roles are responsible for ensuring their accreditations and approvals to work safely on our network are regularly updated. Health and safety training is included in the company induction and training on health and wellbeing is rolled out across the business for both colleagues and managers. The academy hosts a number of annual compulsory training sessions for managers and colleagues. This year we delivered 22,261 training days, both online and practical, with 100% attendance on safety training.



Being a responsible employer and partner (continued)

Ensuring community safety

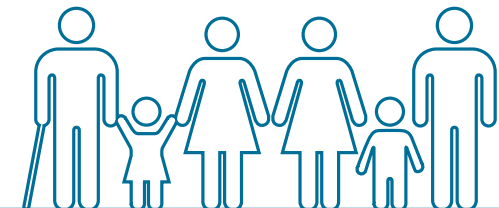
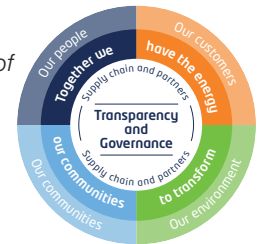
Our research shows that customers and stakeholders consistently emphasise the importance of Electricity North West not only providing a reliable network, but also a safe network. During storm events, we have emphasised safety messages to colleagues, including fatigue awareness and issued messages to customers around staying safe in a power cut, reporting damage to our electricity infrastructure to 105 and promoting our Extra Care Register. This year, we made 47,589 proactive calls to customers during incidents.



These calls helped us identify situations requiring urgent or bespoke extra care, which we then prioritised as part of our safety-first approach. This ranged from deploying generators to customers with a medical need, coordinating with nominated carers, to moving customers to a safe location. Our improved safety culture has instilled that safety is our top priority. We're actively training and mobilising all our colleagues to prepare our communities for storms and weather incidents, ensuring effective response in times of need. Our increased standby capacity and experience with new processes have led to a significant improvement in our preparedness. It's clear that these safety practices have become second nature to our people. Find out more about our support for customers on page 27.

In addition, last year we committed to reviewing and increasing our safety awareness and education with young people. We attended our first Crucial Crew, an event aimed at educating young people around electrical safety. We engaged over 1,500 young people on electrical safety with more planned in the new year. Our new education workshops for primary and secondary now have a key focus on safety. As we launch our new education programs and more colleagues get involved, we can't wait for the year ahead and the promotion of safety and STEM with young people. Read more on page 29.

Under the revised 2024 Responsible Business Framework, we have now included safety as a distinct element of our people goal, ensuring we foster a safety-first culture. Additionally, safety is now a key component of our community goal, aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of our communities and raising awareness. See page 34.



Our Plans by 2028

Continue to embed safety culture and deliver safety campaigns.

Policy improvement programme to improve usability of procedures.

Improve processes, including fatigue management, hand-arm vibration and managing road risk.

Increase safety messages in schools and community groups.

Encouraging a first-class supply chain

Our supply chain plays a critical role in helping us deliver our obligations and commitments to our customers and stakeholders. Our commitment is to ensure that our supply chain is high performing, ethical and safe, while maintaining human rights and promoting sustainable work environments.

A good supply chain is important for several reasons, including efficiency and cost saving, streamlining processes and minimising waste. We rely on our supply-chain to be a part of our commitment to drive a greener future and we recognise the importance of working with our supply chain partners to help support our communities. We work together in an adaptable way to ensure we can deliver a sustainable electricity network. Our approach to responsible business incorporates our partners and the [supply chain charter](#) outlines the expectations of all partners within our supply chain, and you can learn more by downloading a copy of our [charter](#).

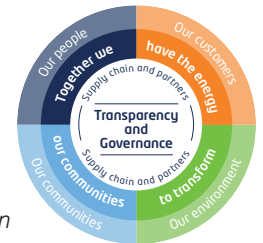
This year, we have continued to work alongside our suppliers to improve current processes rather than introducing anything new. We learnt from ED1 and have used this year to put plans and process in place on how we can work more effectively and efficiently.

Like many organisations we have experienced a number of supply chain challenges in recent years as international unrest has caused delays and increased competition for the availability of many essential products. We continue to work across the industry and with our partners to secure the resources that we need in a timely manner, look for suitable alternatives and embrace innovation. Whilst things are improving, the lead time for some products still remains extremely challenging.

We are continuing to develop our environmental management standards with our supply chain to ensure we are getting the best environmental performance from our suppliers. We are looking at how we can develop our Carbon Literacy programme to collaborate with our supply partners. We are a member of the Supply Chain Sustainability School and actively engage with partners across the industry to share best practice.

As part of our alignment to Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), we want to engage with suppliers to reduce emissions in line with the 1.5°C SBT trajectory. As part of our decarbonisation plans, we are targeting our top 20 suppliers to ensure that our supply chain is doing as much as possible to reduce their carbon emissions and our Scope 3 emissions. This includes looking at operational transport fuel use to see if we can drive down emissions.

Under the revised 2024 Responsible Business Framework we will continue to report activities under our people goal including D&I, wellbeing and health and safety. Our partner and supply chain activities will move into a new business area that will also now include governance and acting on modern slavery. See page 34.



Our Plans by 2028

Further development of our Supply Chain Charter.

Environmental Action Plan goal 8, aims to enhance environmental management standards through our supplier code and target at least 80% of our supply chain to meet this code.

Engage with suppliers to reduce emissions in line with the 1.5°C SBTi trajectory.

Introduce a mandatory requirement for the top 80% of our suppliers (by value) to report on the embodied carbon for materials and equipment that they provide to us.

Our environment



Linked UNSDGs

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	13 CLIMATE ACTION 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	

Performance highlights



11,000
trees planted

£80,000
Community local energy fund

13,999
tCO₂e carbon emissions

96%
of waste diverted from landfill

Our commitments

- Driving down our carbon emissions
- Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions
- Enhancing biodiversity
- Optimising waste and resources

Associated links

[Environmental Action Plan](#)

[Environment report](#)

Driving down our carbon emissions

We are committed to creating a greener future, with the goal of achieving net zero within our own operations by 2038. Our commitments align to our environment action plan and the 21 goals we set out as part of our RIIO-ED2 journey.

What we achieved

As part of this commitment, we aim to lead the decarbonisation of the energy system by transforming our own practices and operations to reduce our carbon footprint. This includes, optimising our fleet, enhancing our building and substation efficiencies, improving innovations and gathering more data on our carbon usage. Our ambitions will further minimise the amount of embodied carbon within new infrastructure and remove assets containing potentially harmful greenhouse gases.

In 2022/23 we committed to include Scope 3 emissions, which we have now done, following a screening exercise. We have reinforced our ambitious net zero targets by continuing to align with the global Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) and look to reduce Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 emissions. Scope 1 emissions are those that are directly controlled by the company, for example from our own fleet. Scope 2 emissions are those that are indirectly caused by the company and include emissions from energy used for our buildings, Scope 3 are those indirect emissions generated in its supply (value) chain.

Our commitments to reduce Scope 1, 2, and 3

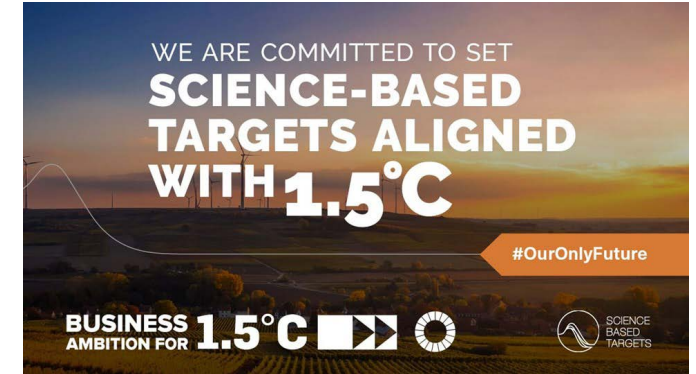
Scope 1 and 2

Reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions 63% by 2035 from a FY20 base year. This includes our SF₆ emissions.

Scope 3

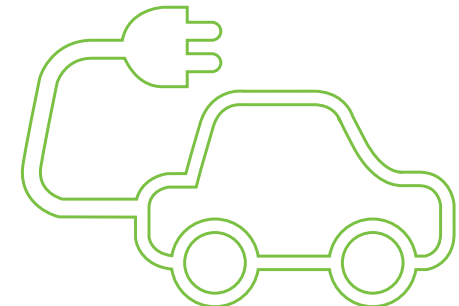
Reduce absolute Scopes 3 GHG emissions 63% by 2035 from a FY20 base year covering business travel, commuting and fuel and energy related activities plus contractor fuel use within purchased goods and services.

2023/24 emissions



“ Ben Scott, Electricity North West Environment Manager, said:

Our Science-Based Target commitment requires us to focus on actions that reduce emissions with minimal offsetting until 2035. Beyond this, we will look to consider offsetting schemes to meet our net zero goal by 2038. This commitment is crucial for driving impactful emission reduction strategies across our business. ”



Driving down our carbon emissions (continued)

Our initiatives are strategically organised into four principal categories.

Carbon Literacy

We are the first carbon-literate Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and currently hold silver status. Carbon literacy refers to the knowledge and capacity required to create a positive shift in how people live, work, and behave in response to climate change. Over the past year, we have committed to achieving gold carbon literacy status by 2028. This initiative will involve over 50% of our workforce, undergoing training and certification. Our environmental team will lead the effort, reviewing current training material and ensuring alignment with industry best practices and our broader business commitments. Our aim is to foster a low-carbon culture by helping our colleagues understand the scale of the problem and empowering them to act on climate issues and support others' efforts.

Transport

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on improving our existing assets and infrastructure.

We've now installed 124 electric vehicle charging points across our depots. Currently, 60% of our company car fleet consists of electric vehicles or plug-in hybrids and we are continuing to explore ways to further increase this uptake among our colleagues.

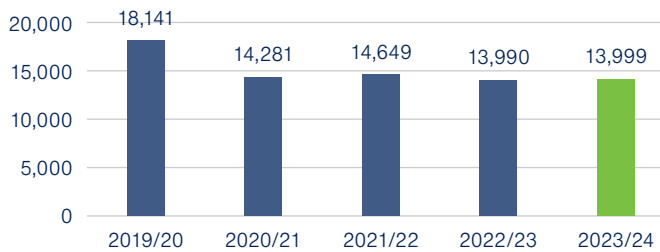
Recent work has focused on transitioning from 2kW to 7kW chargers, whilst trialling a third-party back-office system for optimising data. In 2023/24, we continued to realise the benefits from our investment in fuel efficiency including reduced vehicle weights, installation of engine rev limiters and educating our drivers on the most efficient way to use our fleet.

Accommodation

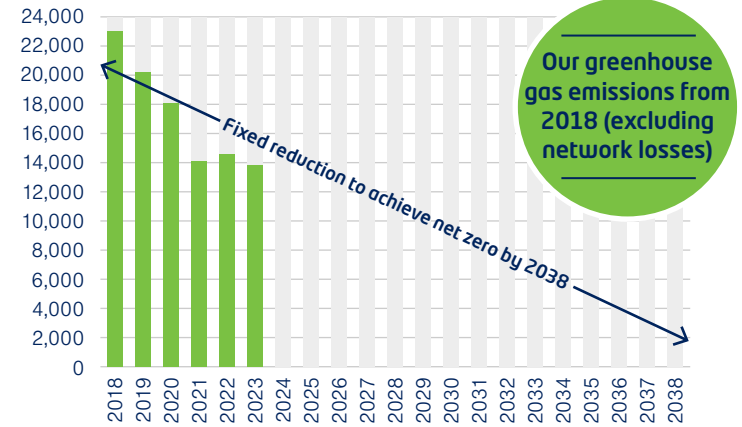
Our strategy to decarbonise our buildings focuses on four key areas - data optimisation, energy reduction, renewable energy generation and electric vehicle charging management.

This year, our overall carbon emissions remained relatively unchanged. With the adoption of a science-based targets to better track our emissions, we anticipate an increase in our total emission values starting from 2025, as we aim to capture all emissions. Our commitment is to reduce emissions by 4.2% annually. Although we did not achieve our goal this year, we are steadily progressing towards our 2038 target.

Yearly comparison on internal carbon footprint (tCO₂e)



How we are performing against our carbon emission trajectory



Driving down our carbon emissions (continued)

This year, we installed a brand new solar-powered car charging port at our Training Academy, making it our first ever net zero site – and putting us on track to achieve net zero by 2038.

- We installed a range of energy control functions on site, including occupancy and window sensors linked to the lighting and air conditioning systems. These helped us reduce our energy consumption enough to provide capacity for 14 x 7 kW charge points.
- The solar system will generate (175.5 kWp, ~150,000 kWh), including a roof-mounted and car port solar system. This will offset the annual energy consumption at the training academy, making it a net zero site. This is a significant step towards achieving net zero, as our buildings account for 26% of our company's GHG emissions.

This transformational decarbonisation plan will serve as a blueprint for future projects, helping us fulfil our commitment in our environment action plan to convert four depots to net zero equivalents by 2038.

We have installed smart environmental monitoring systems across 16 depot sites and in our substations measuring building metrics such as temperature, energy consumption and system operating conditions. We are now able to track monthly consumption against targets at each depot and this has driven a 5.3% reduction in depot electricity consumption as well as control heating in our substations.

We have 21 net zero champions around our depots and offices who are passionate about promoting and achieving a greener future. They advocate for sustainable practices in our offices and depots, influence policies and inspire others to commit to environmental responsibility.



Last year, we completed the transformation of two of our sites. We are currently using our Training Academy and Oldham depot for testing and demonstrating several low carbon technologies to assess their suitability and relative benefits. These energy efficiency programmes have now resulted in an energy reduction of 31% (Training Academy) and 25% (Oldham depot), respectively. At Oldham, an innovative ground source heat pump system has been installed. We have developed a number of case studies, sharing our experiences to assist others in adopting low carbon technologies. Our insights have also been shared and discussed with our environmental and sustainability stakeholder advisory panel.

Take a look at some of the steps we're taking to reduce our carbon footprint and how we're encouraging our colleagues and customers to do the same.



Increasing capacity for a green future

We recognise that the demand for electricity is steadily increasing, and we play a crucial role in managing capacity for the adoption of low carbon technologies. Our commitment to innovation ensures our journey towards net zero. We have now achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first DNO to publish its Embedded Capacity Register for distributed energy resources above 50 kW. This register provides an overview of renewable energy technologies and energy storage connected to the electricity network. Its purpose is to enhance visibility for prospective and existing customers regarding distributed energy resources on the network.

As part of our ED2 regulatory requirements we are required to publish our Distribution Systems Operation Incentive report. The purpose of the DSO Incentive is to drive licensees to more efficiently develop and use their network, taking into account flexible alternatives to network reinforcement. You can read more about the actions we are taking to deliver a just net zero transition, through a commitment to customer value-led innovation, responsiveness, and precision [here](#).



Our Plans by 2028

Achieve 15,313 tCO₂e in line with our Science Based Target approach.

Focus on the delivery of our [environmental action plan](#) 21 goals, 7 of which are focused on our net zero ambition.

Achieve Carbon literacy gold.

Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions

We believe that everyone should have access to affordable, clean energy. That's why we are committed to facilitating net zero at the lowest possible cost to our customers and ensuring we take customers and colleagues on the journey with us.

What we achieved

Our responsibility is to lead the way, assisting the North West in decarbonisation and paving the path for renewable energy. We know that the transition to net zero can be daunting, confusing, costly and a low priority in the current economic climate. We want to ensure that we work with partners to engage, inspire and support.

We have continued to support colleagues to adopt electric cars with 60% of our company cars (including those on order) are full or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.

We continue to work with local authorities to facilitate regional decarbonisation, economic growth and support the development and delivery of their decarbonisation plans. Close collaboration with our regional councils has enabled deeper collaboration around strategic projects enabling network capacity to support regional strategic activity and decarbonisation.

- This year **Lancashire County Council** has seen the completion of a new multi-million-pound substation and 10km of new underground cables to power the ongoing development of the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone which aims to create 4,500 green jobs and supports regional economic growth. The substation itself uses power from 91 solar panels to self-sufficiently run the electrical switchgear and lighting – the first of its kind in Lancashire.

- In **Cumbria** reinforcement work in the Lake District tourist hotspot of Windermere progressed with the support of the local authority and local MP, Tim Farron. The work in Windermere, which is now nearing completion, will help future needs of the area and enable the installation of Windermere's first electric ferry as well as potential new electric charging points for visitors and residents. Additionally, close liaison with Westmorland and Furness Council has enabled the construction of a 2MW solar farm in Barrow in Furness. Early engagement and collaboration ensured the councils needs were understood and network capacity could be made available in phases with necessary reinforcement to enable the scheme to go ahead. The scheme is a key part of the councils Carbon Management Strategy and Climate Action Plan with expected saving of around 500 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum, enough to power the councils five leisure centres.

- We have been a strategic partner in **Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)** electric bus fleet, the Bee Network. We have worked to better manage capacity across the network specifically around electric fleet bus stations and



ensuring that planned works facilitated a smooth launch of the new routes and avoided any delays due to roadworks. The support for the Bee Network, resulted in over 20MW of electric vehicle charging points being integrated into depots across the area.

Greater Manchester Green Summit



Our CEO Ian Smyth joined the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, and other industry leaders, on the question time panel at this year's Green Summit.

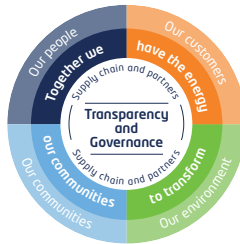
This year we participated in the Greater Manchester Green Summit. This is the sixth consecutive year we've sponsored the annual Green Summit. We shared how we're helping to deliver on the region's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2038, and detailed how we're supporting homes and businesses to make more sustainable choices.

Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions (continued)

Supporting community and local energy groups

We are supporting local communities to reduce, manage, generate and purchase their own energy. This year, community groups and organisations have been given a share of more than £80,000 to help support the region's energy needs through local community schemes. Our Powering Our Communities Fund, now in its sixth year, supports the development of community and local energy initiatives in the region to help make them a reality. We have now awarded more than £500,000 to 39 groups and organisations across the region.

Under the revised 2024 responsible business framework, community and local energy will now be reported under our customer goal aligned to 'supporting customers in understanding future energy and the low carbon transition'. See page 34.



We have now awarded more than £500,000 to 39 groups

CASE STUDY

Oldham Community Wind Power

Summary of project

This project will develop an engagement programme to discuss the potential to develop a previously proposed wind farm on United Utilities land near the village of Denshaw in Oldham. The engagement programme will aim to consult on the proposal, develop the concept of community ownership with the local community and enable discussion on how the project can benefit the local community.

How Electricity North West supported the scheme

Electricity North West is supporting this project with a £15,000 Powering our Communities grant.

Why is the project community energy?

This project will support the engagement of a local community with the potential development of a wind farm in their local area with community ownership and therefore community benefit from the project.

Who would find this information useful?

Communities interested in developing an onshore wind project.

What is the project hoping to achieve?

This project is hoping to achieve the community engagement, business modelling and feasibility work required to inform the viability of developing the wind farm.



CASE STUDY

Cumbria Solar Made Easy

Summary of project

This project aims to support owners of small properties to progress solar panel installations. The idea was initiated in Ambleside and is already being introduced across Cumbria. This project will expand to two new communities in Cumbria to address barriers to solar panel installation. These barriers include households not knowing where to find quality installers and busy installers unable to quote for smaller projects. The project will vet and partner with high-quality installers and aggregate community demand through solar mapping.

How Electricity North West supported the scheme

Electricity North West is supporting this project with a £15,000 Powering Our Communities grant.

Why is the project community energy?

The project is community energy because it brings communities together to work collectively to achieve their outcome which will result in installations of solar panels and the resulting carbon savings.

Who would find this useful information?

Communities who are looking for ideas to take collective action or groups wanting to support their local residents to take action.

What is the project hoping to achieve?

This project is hoping to instigate significant numbers of solar panel installations both in domestic properties and community buildings. It is also hoping to build relationships within the target communities and inspire further action and collaboration beyond the aims of this project.



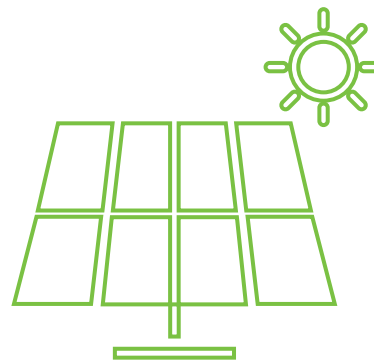
Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions (continued)

In November 2023, we launched our Take Charge campaign in partnership with Citizens Advice and Energy Savings Trust (EST). The campaign helps customers and colleagues manage their bills and energy costs. Our campaign launched with the initial focus on supporting customers in fuel poverty, providing debt advice. In 2024/25 we will expand the campaign to include 'Go Low' initiative. Moving to net zero will mean major changes to the way we all use energy. From updating heating systems in our homes and switching to electric vehicles, Electricity North West want to be a trusted partner to help customers understand these new technologies, by providing a free expert advice service. Read more about our campaign on page 27.

We continue to lead by example and have published more detailed [case studies and factsheets](#) on our efforts surrounding our own assets and buildings on our website. Our aim is to provide customers with the information and evidence to help them adopt low carbon technologies.

We are tackling the challenge to provide capacity for new connections head on as we continue to innovate and expand our network to meet the needs of our customers. Despite being the smallest of the distribution network operators, we have successfully enabled an additional 2.4GW of network capacity, providing more opportunity for connections in the region.

As the UK embraces a net zero future, the way energy is generated, stored, consumed and traded is changing rapidly, and Flexible Services are a smart and efficient way of facilitating this transition. This year we had two requirements for customers, stakeholders and businesses, in spring we requested 1097 MW of flexibility from 32 locations and in autumn requested 413 MW of flexibility in 29 locations. Our Distribution Systems Operations (DSO) team continue to support customers and stakeholders including local authorities to understand and calculate capacity forecast in their area. Our [Distribution future electricity scenarios \(DFES\)](#) provides a view of the North West's future energy requirements. DFES considers local characteristics (including plant development, connection activity, and national policy) and is the best source of information for local forecast.



Award

We're delighted to have won the Whole Energy System Innovation award at the Regen Green Energy Awards, alongside colleagues from Kelvatek for our use of AI technology to accelerate the rollout of low carbon technologies for customers. The awards are a leading national celebration of the innovative technologies that pioneering companies use to deliver a zero carbon future for all.



Our Plans by 2028

Provide support and guidance to domestic customers to drive down carbon emissions.

Promote flexible services to communities across our region to encourage participation.

Launch £100,000 energy fund for community and local energy groups.

Enhancing biodiversity

Our network and operations extend across national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and both rural and urban areas. Our commitment is to protect, manage and improve biodiversity across our sites by not only preserving what is already there but enhancing areas where we can. Enhancing biodiversity around our sites is crucial for fostering ecosystem resilience, ensuring sustainability of natural resources and maintaining healthy ecosystems.

What we achieved

Whilst there are clear local and national drivers to move towards net zero, we must not lose focus on the wider natural environment. Our environmental action plan consists of 21 goals, 14 of which are committed to improving the natural environment.

These goals will ensure that we reduce the wider environmental impact of our activities during ED2. We will replace cables that have the potential to leak oil into the environment, replace equipment that has the potential to leak harmful persistent organic pollutants, further enhance our focus on biodiversity and natural capital across our operations, and further embed a circular economy throughout our organisation. To attain these commitments, we will provide environmental awareness training to our wider leadership team so that each team within our organisation is equipped with a sufficient understanding of how their actions can impact the environment.

This year we have delivered against our commitments set out in 2022/23 and continued to make progress around improving our biodiversity as well as ensuring we embed the right tools to measure our impact. We know that continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies are essential for effective biodiversity conservation and delivering our commitments.

Last year, we committed to enhancing biodiversity and natural capital across 100 sites. We adopted best practice and began using a natural capital baseline tool. This tool has allowed us to assign a value to the benefits and services provided by our natural assets, taking into account the surrounding environment and significantly enhancing our decision-making and environmental management within our business.

We have now identified 100 sites where we can make significant biodiversity improvements. The sites are largely grassland and woodland and we've carried out surveys using the natural capital tool to assess their current state so we can track the level of upliftment we provide. Going forward, we'll:

- cut the sites bi-annually and leave the cuttings on site in a dedicated area to promote wildlife habitats.
- take care to look for nesting birds and protected species and
- the cuts will be completed at specific times of the year to help the native wildflowers and grasses flourish.

The uplift programme is being done in collaboration with Electricity North West Services. The programme has been designed in line with the government's 25-year plan which requires a biodiversity net gain of 10%.

Additionally, this year, we developed a field application tool that allows us to report different species of plants, animals, and birds on our sites. This data will help us build a comprehensive profile for better assessment, maintenance, and improvement of our sites.



Enhancing biodiversity (continued)

Over 11,000 trees planted in Carlisle

In March, of this year, we embarked on our largest biodiversity project by planting a new forest in Carlisle. Over 11,000 trees were planted on our land fostering richer and more diverse wildlife, cleaner air, reduced flood risk, enhanced climate resilience, and improving aesthetics around our assets. This initiative is part of our broader ED2 commitment, where we pledge to plant 10,000 trees annually across the North West until 2028. The project was executed in collaboration with Cumbria Coastal Community Forest, which secured funding through Trees for Climate—a vital component of the government-led Nature for Climate Fund.



In ED2 we have continued our commitment to support the three National Parks and four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in our region. Our undergrounding for visual amenity program aims to enhance the landscape by relocating overhead lines underground. This year, we successfully completed the undergrounding 3.34km with 4.49km of underground cabling for visual improvement in Arnside, Silverdale, Solway coast and the Lake District. Our commitment for ED2 is to underground over 35km by 2028.



Our Plans by 2028

Plant 10,000 trees per annum (50,000 over ED2).	Develop and implement biodiversity awareness training.
Underground over 35km of overhead cables.	Enhance biodiversity and natural capital across 100 sites.

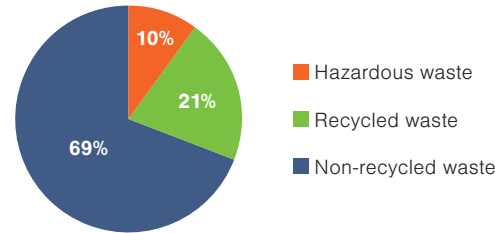
Optimising waste and resources

Our commitment is to minimise waste at every stage of our operations whilst implementing innovative solutions and sustainable practices that reduce our environmental footprint.

What we achieved

We generate waste from a range of our activities and sources, including office and depot activities, asset replacement and network maintenance. This could include anything from paper, plastic, metal or oil to hazardous materials. It is our responsibility to recycle and dispose of this waste responsibly, adhering to the correct standards and procedures.

Our commitment in line with goal 10 in our Environment Action plan states we will divert 95% of our waste away from landfill by the end of 2025 and reuse or recycle 70% of our waste by 2028. As we continue our efforts to achieve zero waste to landfill, we recognise that there is more work to be done to achieve this and we will not become complacent. This year, our total waste amounted to 1,356 tonnes, and we successfully diverted 96% of it away from landfill. Full breakdown provided on the right:



Hazardous waste	137 tonnes
Recycled waste	295 tonnes
Non - recycled waste	924 tonnes

Our Central Oil Reprocessing Department (CORD) remains the only one of a kind in our industry. We take used, dirty oil from our network and assets, reprocess it into clean oil, and reuse it within our network. This year, we have recovered 81% of the oil we collected. Not only does this reduce environmental impacts, but it also provides significant savings. New oil currently costs around £1.80 per litre, whereas our reprocessed oil costs approximately £0.86 per litre, resulting in a savings of £0.94 per litre and ultimately benefiting our customers by reducing costs.

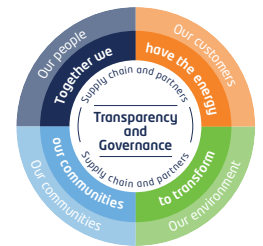
Collected dirty oil ltrs	753,409
Clean oil delivered in ltrs	612,208
Our recovery rate in percentage	81%
Average cost per litre saved	0.94

We reprocess **28** road tankers worth of oil a year



As part of our focus to reduce single use plastics in our business and the implementation of our buckets for life (as reported in 2022/23 responsible business report), we will continue to collaborate closely with our suppliers to explore alternative approaches to reduce our environmental impact. By fostering innovative solutions and sustainable practices, we aim to enhance our overall environmental performance.

Under the new responsible business framework we will continue to report our environmental impacts. However we have refined the goals to reflect reducing our environmental impact and better align to our environmental action plan. See page 34.



Our Plans by 2028

Deliver environment action plan goals.

- Goal 9, being responsible consumers of resources and reduce the amount of waste produced.
- Goal 10, divert 95% of our waste away from landfill by the end of 2025 and reuse or recycle 70% of our waste by the end of R110-ED2.
- Goal 11, reuse and recycle at least 85% of waste excavated for installation and repair.

Continue to work with suppliers to find alternative ways of working and reducing our environmental impact.

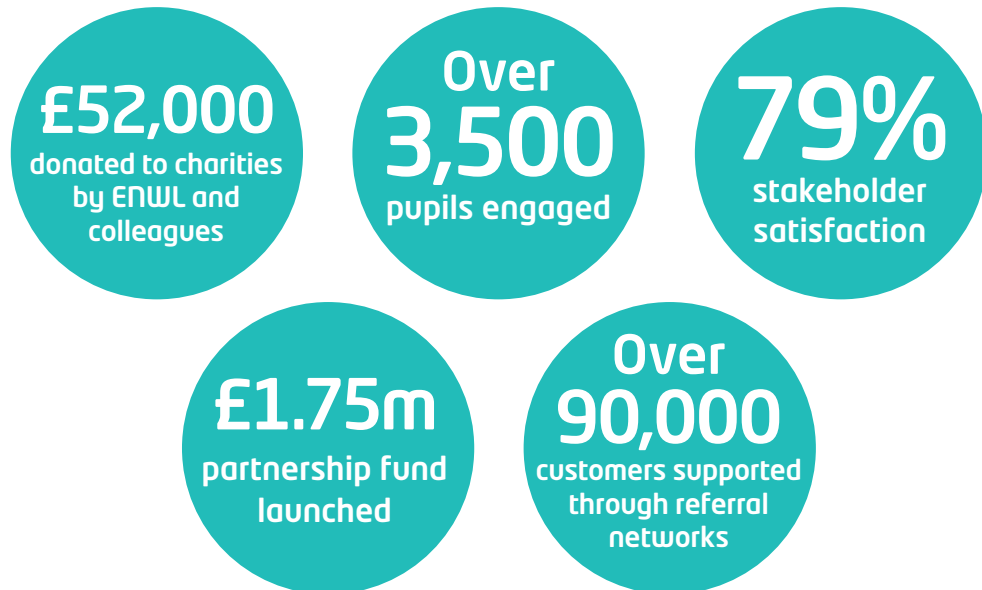
Our communities



Linked UNSDGs



Performance highlights



Our commitments

- ✓ Responding to customer vulnerability
- ✓ Inspiring the next generation of engineers and employers
- ✓ Supporting colleague-led community engagement
- ✓ Expressing our regional impact

Associated links

- [Ofgem Annual Vulnerability Report 2023/24](#)
- [Stakeholder Engagement Report](#)

Responding to customer vulnerability

We are committed to supporting our customers and ensuring that our services are available and accessible, regardless of their personal circumstances and location, ensuring no one is left behind in the energy transition.

What we achieved

We prioritise our customers by consistently delivering high-quality services. We ensure our services are inclusive, supportive, and accessible to all electricity users, regardless of their personal circumstances or location.

As we enter ED2 we have updated our four strategy pillars, which are central to informing our decisions about how to deliver our stakeholder-led action plans.

We have continued to put our customers first and our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of our customers and communities. Through our internal employee climate survey, it revealed that there is a collective readiness to serve and contribute even more to our customers and driving a greener future.

This year we have continued to rise to the challenge and become the leading DNO for fuel poverty support. In partnerships with The Energy Saving Trust and Citizens Advice we have launched 'Take Charge' a free energy advice service to enable those in or at risk of fuel poverty access the advice, support and financial grants they need.

The aim of the campaign is to provide help to customers to reduce energy bills, provide support with debt, access benefits and financial support, and even secure funding for energy efficient home improvements. The first phase of the campaign focuses on supporting customers in fuel poverty, providing advice on bills and energy. We've delivered £8.55 million in benefits to 25,072 customers in just 12 months and achieved a satisfaction rating of 95.3%, surpassing our target.



By identifying and overcoming barriers, we've achieved remarkable growth. From 50 in-depth fuel poverty referrals in 2019, we've surged to an impressive 25,072 by the start of 2024. This trajectory confirms that we're on the right track. The second phase of the campaign is due to launch in 2024 and will focus on helping customers understand low carbon technologies with our free expert advice service.

We've been focusing our efforts on expanding the reach and increasing awareness of our Extra Care Register (ECR) to ensure that households have extra help and support during a power cut. We have now made additional funding available for charities and organisations with £1.4m available over the next five years. We've increased the funding after research revealed a gap of more than 250,000 people who are eligible for ECR, but have not yet signed up. In the first quarter of this year, we welcomed applications from North West based charities, groups and organisations and from partnerships that will help support customers across the region in the event of a power cut. In addition, our reach increased from 73% to 82.4% of eligible customers this year and trained 100% of colleagues to recognise vulnerabilities.

Our four strategy pillars are key enablers to the action we take

1

Inclusive information:

Increase accessible support and prevent vulnerable situations, raise awareness of opportunities, and ensure inclusion for all, leaving no one behind.

2

Community Intelligence:

Use demographics, segmentation, feedback, and open data to recognise changing needs and continually improve for electricity users.

3

Collaborative network:

Work with trusted experts and partners to grow the network, maximise reach, and ensure no one is left behind in the rapidly changing world.

4

Service to electricity users:

Build accessible communication channels, raise awareness, while delivering a reliable supply to minimise vulnerable situations.

Responding to customer vulnerability (continued)

We understandably can't do this on our own and value our partnerships and collaborations. We have continued to maximise our partnerships to deliver a wide range of support this year. We now have a network of 87 trusted partners against an original target of 60. These partners have delivered support to over 90,000 customers in vulnerable circumstances, out performing our target of 58,000. In addition, we have a £500k annual fund available to understand and design services to meet the needs of our communities through a network of partnerships.

Our commitment is to increasing our Extra Care Register and our partnerships are crucial in times of power cuts and storms. Between November 2023 and January 2024, our network faced a series of weather-related incidents. In just three months, we encountered seven named storms and a major snow event in Cumbria. Severe weather is becoming more common and we are taking a more active approach to winter preparedness and storm response to support customers. In September we contacted our most vulnerable customers, 3,625 through door knocking and 27,621 by phone. This is up from 23,000 contacts last year and will continue to take this approach every year to ensure our data is correct and that customers are prepared for the adverse weather.

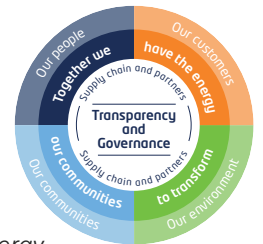
To improve our support during these incidents we work with our stakeholder advisory panels and partners, including the Local Resilience Forums, undertake customer research and analyse learning from previous storm events to develop new processes and improve our storm preparedness. This includes:

- Creating colleague storm roles – including mobilising over 600 colleagues for direct contact, 400 upskilled to handle customer calls and 140 trained to visit customers at their doorsteps
- Colleagues received customised training while our door knockers completed a trial in September 2023 covering 700 properties in just three hours
- Launched a new portal that streamlines call allocation and automatic updates to call records, contact information and household vulnerabilities on our Extra Care database
- Our partner, One Voice Blackburn created essential information videos in Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and English to promote safety during winter
- The Royal Association for Deaf People developed equivalent formats using British Sign Language

- We have learnt to start customer outreach earlier, beginning in the summer, to better prepare for early storms. Rather than when our 'winter working' rules come into force in October.
- A cross-business team is working on a Focused Improvement Project to enhance our incident management ensuring a more efficient and collaborative approach.

We are incredibly proud of the work we are doing to support customers and the progress we are making. Our focus on customers has grown significantly year-on-year and we continue to acknowledge how vital our contribution is to our customers' safety and wellbeing. As part of ED2 our regulator, Ofgem, now mandates publication of an [annual vulnerability report](#), where we detail our progress and performance against each of our strategy pillars.

Under the new 2024 responsible business framework our customer goal will now be made a standalone goal, recognising its importance. In addition, our customer goal will now include community and local energy as we have a commitment to support customers in understanding future energy and the low carbon future. See page 34.



Scan the QR code to read more about how we support our customers during a power cut.



Our Plans by 2028

Providing cost effective, resilient essential energy supplies now and investing for the future.

Supporting customers in understanding future energy and the low carbon transition.

Treating all customers fairly and supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances.

Providing responsible customer services.

Inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees

We play a vital role in driving STEM by supporting the national curriculum, providing work opportunities, promoting women in engineering and community safety. Our commitment is to inspire the next generation of engineers and employees.

What we achieved

Last year, our goal was to inspire young people throughout their educational journey. Since then, we have established a new partnership with STEMfirst to review and enhance our primary school programme. This programme formerly known as Bright Sparks, has been relaunched as 'Switched On'. The program covers the statutory KS2 requirements including electricity circuits, aiming to spark students' curiosity about electricity and includes vital electricity safety messages. Developed and trialled in 2023/24 the new programme will start in September 2024, and we will run approximately 90 sessions engaging more than 2,000 pupils. Additionally, we are excited to have launched our first educational workshops for secondary school pupils. In collaboration with Science Made Simple, our aim is to help students understand key connections in the curriculum related to electricity while inspiring them to become confident, creative thinkers and problem solvers. This links to our recruitment programme, which aims to inspire future employees. As part of the workshop, we discuss career opportunities and introduce them to our apprentice programme. The programme launched in September 2023 and we have so far delivered five workshops, engaging nearly 2,000 pupils. We continue to roll out these workshops and look to engage 10 schools and more than 3,000 pupils per year.

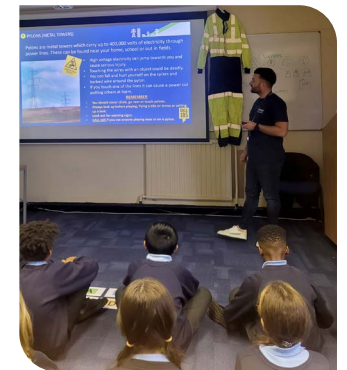


Our education programme, designed to inspire the next generation, integrates with our wider business including, our people and partners segment of our responsible business framework. We are committed to building a pipeline of talent through focused recruitment and our apprenticeship programs. At the same time, we prioritise community safety by offering comprehensive training and engagement initiatives. By collaborating with schools, colleges, and organisations across the North West, we aim to create more opportunities for young people.

Our award-winning apprenticeship programme supports the development of green skills, and we also host work placements and provide work experience. Through these efforts, we play a significant role in nurturing the next generation and enhancing diversity within our workforce. Find out more on page 6.



Following our goal to reach 21,000 Girl Guides with our 'Girl Power' badge it has now made its way to The Gambia in Africa. A group of girls in The Gambia completed our 'Girl Power' badge joining 10,000 guides in the UK to date.



As part of our commitment to community safety we have significantly enhanced our efforts to educate young people about electrical safety and safety around our assets. Our new primary and secondary programmes now incorporate additional safety messages, and we have partnered with Child Safety Media to take part in Crucial Crew. In October, we took part in our first Crucial Crew event, which offers an interactive educational experience by delivering hands-on sessions in collaboration with other emergency services. During our first-ever session, 23 colleagues volunteered over 160 hours to engage with pupils, discussing the dangers of electricity and providing advice on how to stay safe. Overall, we reached over 1,500 pupils from more than 32 schools over the 10 days.

Inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees (continued)

We are doing more around the business to get our colleagues involved through volunteering and becoming a STEM ambassador. We aim to have 25 registered STEM ambassadors by 2028, with more than a quarter of these already registered.



Three colleagues from our Kendal and Morecambe depot visited Staveley Primary School to talk about electrical safety and female careers in engineering. They spoke to 55 children across years 3-6 and even took our kit along for them to try out. The session came about after some of the boys at the school talked about stereotypically 'female' careers, suggesting girls could be nurses but not doctors.

Ellie said:
It was great to be asked to speak to the children. It's lovely to get involved in the local community and encourage future engineers.



Our education strategy also supports regional science festivals and STEM activities organised by others. 16 colleagues from across the business played their part in inspiring the next generation at the Lancashire Science Festival at UCLAN in May. Colleagues participated in the exhibition and delivered nine workshops to local children to teach them how electricity works, how it powers their lives and how to stay safe around electricity and our assets.



Our Plans by 2028

Engage 5,000 pupils annually.

Attend 2 science festival annually.

Supporting colleague-led community engagement

Our commitment is to support colleague-led community engagement and stems from the passion, dedication, and goodwill of our colleagues who are dedicated to giving back to communities and charities through fundraising or volunteering.

Over
£20,000
donated by
our business

Over
£32,000
raised/donated
by colleagues

77
colleagues
supported

43
individual
charities
supported

40
colleagues
volunteered

320
hours
volunteered

We support our colleagues' passion for giving back to communities and charities that matter to them. Along with our donation fund that replenishes annually, we offer all colleagues two days volunteering leave per year to allow them to donate their time to things that matter to them and benefit the local community. We know that community engagement and giving back offers a number of benefits for both individuals and organisations including social impact, networking and employee satisfaction.

Charity events

17 colleagues from our control office took part in the Great Manchester 10k and raised over £1,000 for the mental health charity, Samaritans.



This year, members of our apprentice team and other colleagues from across the business tackled their annual 400km depot-to-depot cycle from Carlisle to Salford for charity. The team of 20 colleagues raised almost £5,000 for Teenage Cancer Trust and National Energy Action.



Jim Hallas was joined by 10 others to walk 100km in under 24 hours from Leeds to Hull to help raise £100k for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

mnda
motor neurone disease
association



Brad Gorman joined forces with 13 friends to tackle the three peaks to raise money for Bone Cancer Research Trust. The team raised just under £10,000.



Our Plans by 2028

Increase number of colleagues taking two days volunteering leave.

Donate over £20,000 to charities and organisations.

Increase number of colleagues supported through our colleague-led fundraising scheme.

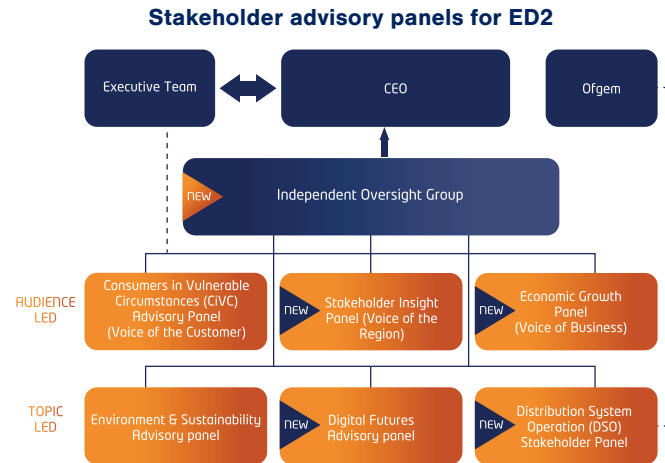
Expressing our regional impact

We are committed to showcasing our regional impact through robust engagement with stakeholders and customers. We strive to emphasise our contributions to economic growth and our ambitions to support a greener future, aligning with key accreditations and partners.

What we achieved

We recognise that actively engaging with our stakeholders leads to improved long-term outcomes for both our organisation and the region. Stakeholder engagement is essential to our operational approach, enabling us to deliver the ambitious plans outlined by our regulator, customers, and other stakeholders. Our collective efforts aim to achieve the greatest regional impact.

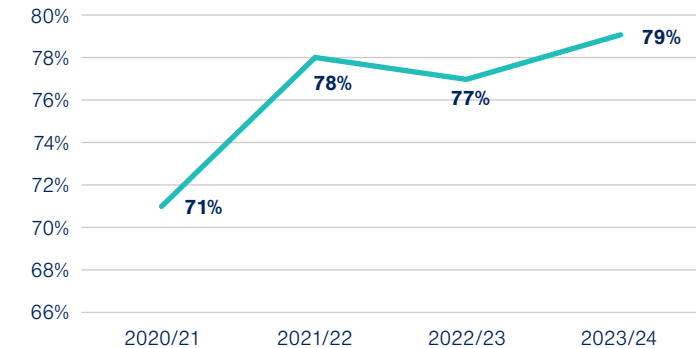
This year, we have enhanced our stakeholder engagement by expanding our advisory panels. We've transitioned from three to eight panels, adopting a fresh structure and approach. Each panel now has an independent chair, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and expertise. This restructuring is part of our commitment to fostering meaningful conversations and collaboration with our stakeholders. Our stakeholder advisory panels are an integral part of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. The panels are made up of key organisations and individuals that provide insights into our stakeholders' priorities and also influence and shape our business decisions. Whilst the panels meet regularly to discuss specific topics and represent key audiences (i.e. customer, digital, environment etc), our chairs also represent their stakeholder groups within our Independent Oversight Group (IOG). Read more [here](#).



Our stakeholder satisfaction survey provides insight into our stakeholders priorities and values. Since the launch of our stakeholder satisfaction survey in December 2020, stakeholders have highlighted several areas for improvement. As a result, we have listened to and updated our approach, as set out on our website [here](#). 176 stakeholders took part in this year's independently administered satisfaction survey. On average, 79% of stakeholders are satisfied with the relationship they have with us, rising to 87% among those engaging more often, which is an increase of 2% on both scores from the previous year.

The survey revealed that stakeholders in Local Authorities would like to speak to us more frequently about the topics that impact them, so there are plans in place to enable us to have more bilateral meetings with them in the future. The results made it clear that everybody's time is precious, so we are going to be mindful of meeting lengths, prioritise online meetings, where appropriate, and ensure we issue pre-release material in a timely fashion. We will work hard at evidencing a line-of-sight between feedback loops and action taken.

Overall Stakeholder Satisfaction



To ensure we maximise our engagement and research in business decisions we are proud to have embedded triangulation as an ongoing discipline over recent years. Triangulation, a way of interpreting and prioritising feedback, is carried out regularly and independently across our organisation. Research and insights from a variety of internal and external channels is assessed, combined and then shared with leaders across the business to inform business planning and decisions.

Outputs are reviewed by our:

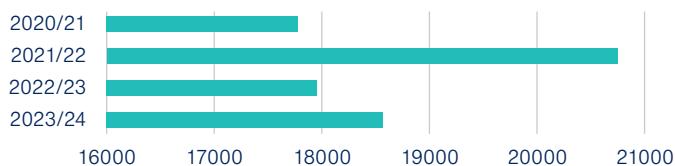
- **Internal Stakeholder Engagement Challenge Group** - SECG membership spans senior leaders across the business. It is a key forum in reviewing emerging insights, identifying gaps and opportunities and advising our senior management on actions to address stakeholder priorities.
- **Board and executive** - annually as part of the stakeholder needs and wants paper that feeds into our business planning process, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.

Expressing our regional impact (continued)

- **Externally with advisory panels and IOG** – providing an independent view on our understanding of key topics, risks and opportunities featured in our triangulation reports, with many incorporated into our annual stakeholder workshops for further deliberation.
- **Wider colleagues** – colleagues in our leadership team told us that key insights should be made available to all colleagues, not just decision makers, and this would help 'put ourselves in our customers shoes'. In response we have embedded Insight, a quarterly companywide bulletin where insights are shared, alongside a clear call to action. Our recent sixth edition featured customer video blogs describing the impact of a power cut to their life, including some customers who had a medical dependency and neurodiverse children.

Stakeholder engagement continues to be a vital aspect of understanding the needs and wants of both our customers and stakeholders. To monitor our progress and level of engagement, we use Tractivity, a stakeholder management software system. This year we have used 23 inclusive engagement mechanisms to reach 18,553 stakeholders (excluding market research and our customer voice panel) and 900 engagements across the 53 interested and influential stakeholder groups we serve. We also conducted 60 meetings and site visits with MPs and Parliamentary stakeholders including visits from Energy Security and Net Zero Select Committee and, now Business Secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, educating and showcasing innovation.

Number of stakeholders engaged



We submitted our final stakeholder engagement consumer vulnerability submission in 2023/24. Going forward we will now publish a voluntary stakeholder engagement report. Our first report will reflect our activities in the first year of the RIIO-ED2 price control period (2023-28). Over the last 12 months we have continued to deliver robust stakeholder engagement. This report explains our strategic approach and goes on to provide case studies and examples of where engagement has informed business decisions and delivered tangible change.

We welcomed members of parliament's Energy Security and Net Zero (ESNZ) committee to our offices and control room. As part of the visit, members of the group, which included chair Angus MacNeil MP and Preston's Mark Hendrick MP, were shown how the company is enabling economic growth and the increase in electricity use for heating and transport through innovation and technology.

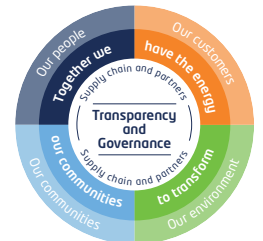


Scan the QR code to read our latest stakeholder engagement report and other stakeholder publications.



Last year we published our green financing framework which outlines how we will use green financing to power future investments in projects with clearly defined environmental benefits. In January 2023, we published our first green bond report and invested £141m in sustainable initiatives. We are also in the process of preparing our first impact report under the green bond, which will be a publication subject to external assurance confirming the level of eligible green investment made since 1 April 2021, and also confirming the performance against certain sustainability KPIs. This report is expected to be published in June/July this year. You can read more about our green financing framework [here](#).

Under the revised 2024 responsible business framework we will now also include corporate governance within our framework. This new area will demonstrate how we operate with integrity, transparency, and strong governance everyday. See page 34.



Our Plans by 2028

Stakeholder satisfaction survey.

Increase Green Financing Investment.

Stakeholder annual report.

Our performance

Strategic Review

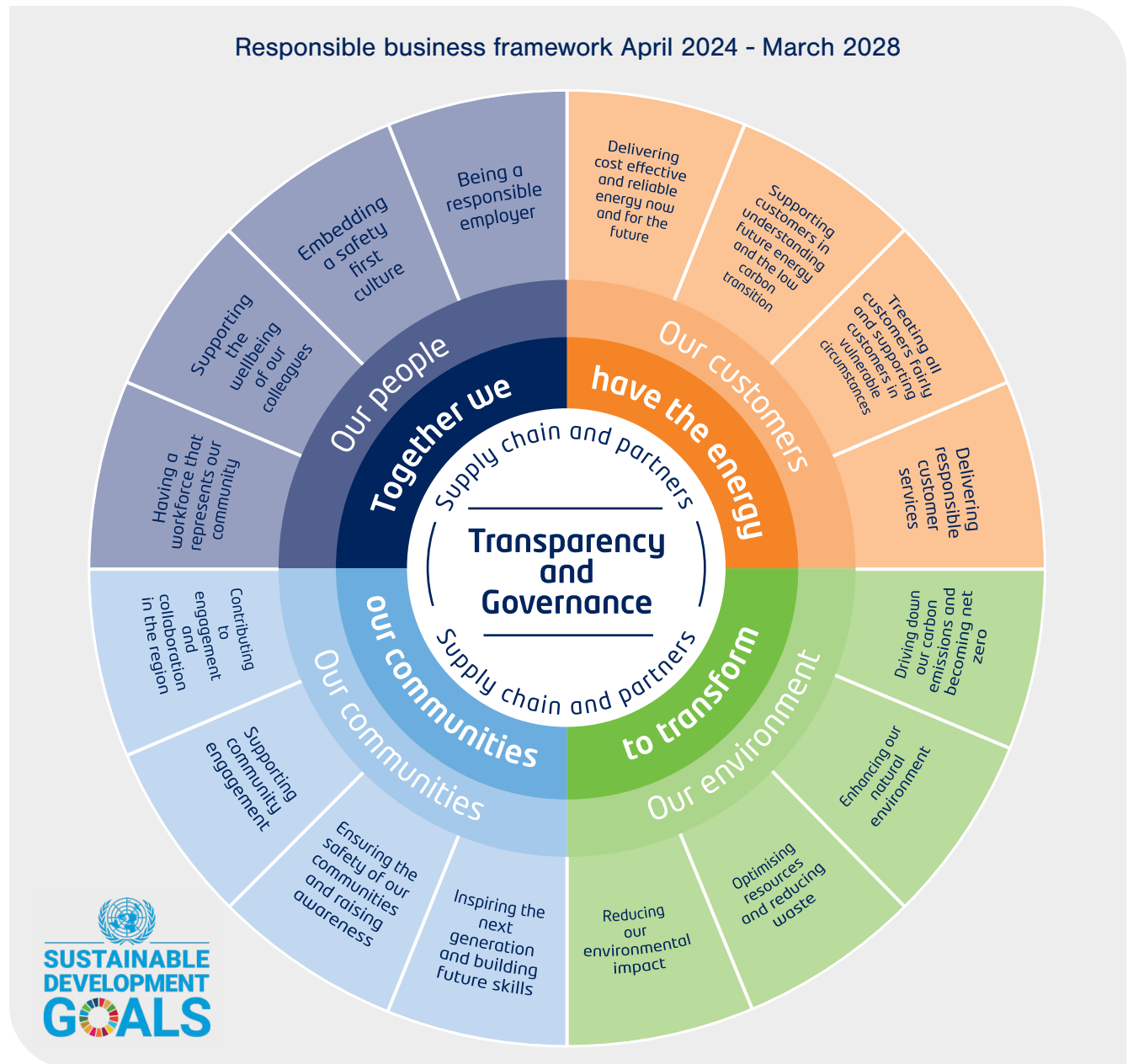
As we embark on our ED2 journey, it is crucial that we further enhance our responsible business practices and ensure we maximise impact in all our activities. With the support of our stakeholders, we aim to deliver real benefits to our customers, partners, and the environment.

This year, in collaboration with Business in the Community (BITC), we conducted a comprehensive review of our existing framework and internal strategies related to responsible business activities. Additionally, we performed a competitor analysis and reviewed external benchmarks. Following the BITC review, we undertook a significant piece of work to align our approach with the new business plan commitments, the strategic review recommendations and the United Nations Sustainable Global Goals (UNSDG). We mapped our activity as an organisation against all 17 UNSDGs and their individual targets. The review highlighted new opportunities in customer, corporate governance and supply-chain which are reflected in our revised framework (as shown on the right). We are dedicated to using the UNSDGs to guide our actions and have aligned our activities to significantly contribute to 14 of these goals. Additionally, we are committed to aligning our reporting to Environment, Society, and Governance (ESG), which involves transparently disclosing our environmental impact, social responsibility initiatives, and governance practices. This commitment ensures that we are accountable to our stakeholders and continuously strive to improve our sustainability and ethical standards.

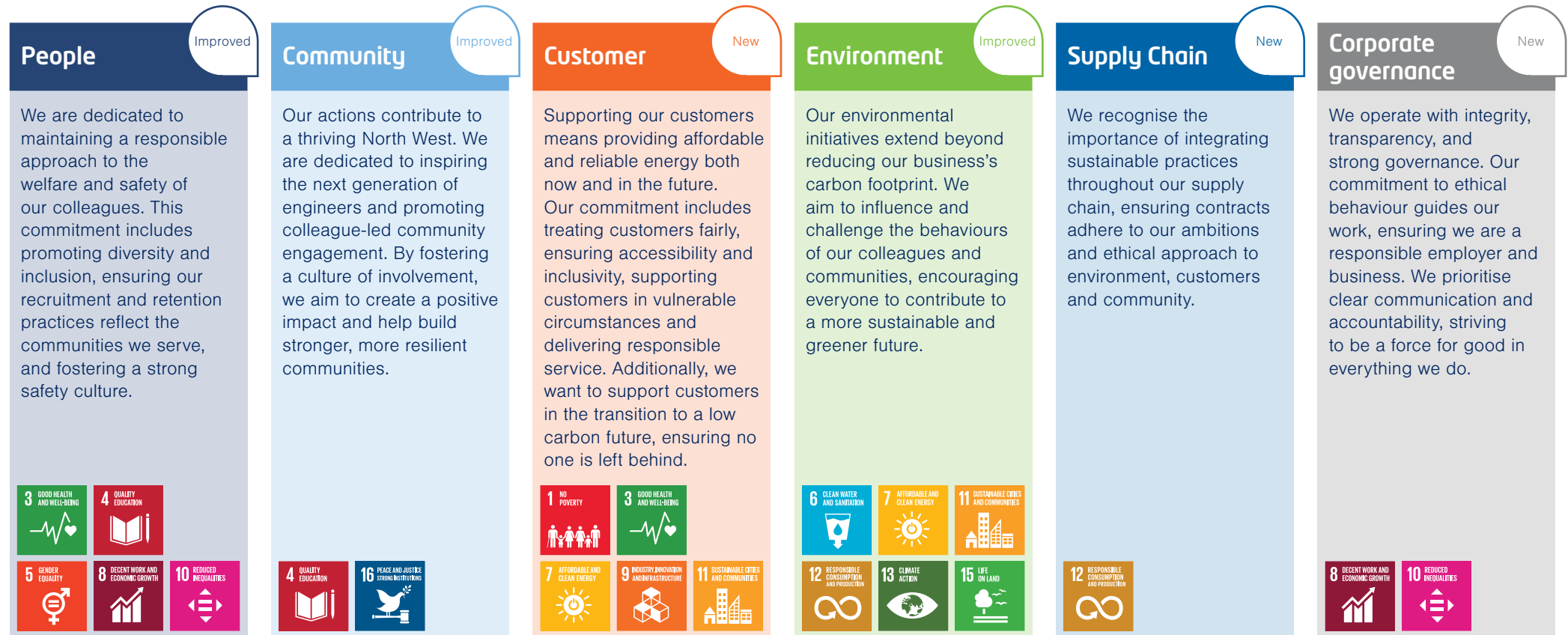


Our new approach and framework, created in collaboration with our internal responsible business steering group, was launched in April 2024. This framework, has been shared and discussed with stakeholder advisory panels and focuses on six key areas detailed on page 35.

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New Responsible Business framework



Benchmarking our performance

Electricity North West has scored **83% in the BITC Responsible Business Tracker against a cohort average of 43%**. This is an increase of 6% since 2021/22.

The tracker is a cross-sector, UK-wide benchmarking tool based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and replaces the former BITC Index. We have seen increases across the tracker including the inner map that looks at what makes a healthy business and the outer map that looks at what makes a healthy community and healthy environment.

The tracker provides an assessment of Electricity North West performance and helps identify areas of improvement. The responsible business steering group along with our senior leaders will now review the findings and develop appropriate improvement plans for the coming year.

Our overall performance 2023/24

Our overall performance has been assessed using RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status to quickly and visually communicate the progress against our 2023/24 commitments.

Our people & partners			
Framework	Our plans 2023 - 2028	Status	Outcome
Having a workforce that represents our community	Increase female diversity to 30%, women in leadership roles to 37% and women in engineering to 12%	R	We have increased the number of women in engineering roles and are continually striving to enhance female diversity and women in leadership positions. Learn more about our efforts on page 8.
	Improve ethnic diversity to 12% and increase ethnic minority representation in our leadership team to 5%	G	Successfully increased the representation of ethnic minorities within our business. Page 6 - 9.
	Continue work placements and partnership with #10,000 Black Intern Partnerships	G	Welcomed our first intern as part of #10,000 Black Intern Partnerships. Page 7.
	Increase apprenticeship opportunities	G	Welcomed our highest intake of apprentices to date. Page 7.
	Achieve 'Gold Forces Friendly' award	G	Achieved. Page 9.
Acting on modern slavery	Ensure suppliers confirm their stance on modern slavery	G	Suppliers have confirmed Electricity North West stance on Modern Slavery. Page 10.
	Develop communication plan with SFA and Utilities Against Slavery (UAS) members	G	Published Anti-Slavery week with support of SFA. All tender exercises have Modern Slavery within the assessment criteria.
	Deliver training identified within the training matrix	G	Induction material reviewed and enhanced for all new starters. Work ongoing with SFA to create eLearning package.
	Conduct gap analysis with SFA to assess approach to modern slavery	G	Completed. We are now looking to enhance rigor around our supplier risk and are working with the SFA on this.
	Work on the UAS Supply Chain subgroup to create supply chain best practice that UAS members can align to	G	Working on an initiative with Hope for Justice to perform an in-depth review on a supplier's approach to modern slavery to understand where it can be strengthened.
Being a responsible employer and partner - supporting wellbeing and driving health & safety	Take part and pledge our support to BITC work well benchmarking assessment.	G	We participated in BITC Work Well Benchmark. Page 11.
	Increase our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) usage	A	Our EAP received 217 calls. Page 11.
	In 2023/24 achieve an employee engagement stretch target of 80%	G	We achieved an engagement score of 80%.
	Continue to embed safety culture and deliver safety campaigns	G	86.6% of colleagues agree we have good communication. Page 12.
	Conduct safety climate survey with colleagues and customers	G	Over 75% of our colleagues completed the survey. Page 12.
	Policy improvement programme to improve usability of procedures	G	Achieved and ongoing.
	Improve processes including, fatigue management, hand-arm vibration and managing road risk	G	New policies implemented.
	Review and increase safety awareness and education	G	Engaged over 1,500 pupils on safety around electricity. Page 29.
Achieve Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate stretch target of 0.075	G	Achieved 0.023. Page 12.	
Encouraging a first-class supply chain	Further development of our Supply Chain Charter	A	Supply chain charter updated annually.
	Environmental Action Plan goal 8, aims to enhance environmental management standards through our supplier code and target at least 80% of our supply chain to meet this code	A	We are continuing to develop our environmental management standards with our supply chain. Page 15.
	Engage with suppliers to reduce emissions in line with the 1.5°C SBT trajectory	A	Targeting our top 20 suppliers to ensure that our supply chain is doing as much as possible to reduce their carbon emissions. Page 15.
	Introduce a mandatory requirement for the top 80% of our suppliers (by value) to report on the embodied carbon for materials and equipment that they provide to us	A	Currently in development.

Our overall performance 2023/24 (continued)

Our environment			
Framework	Our plans 2023 - 2028	Status	Outcome
Driving down our carbon emissions	In 2023/24 we want to achieve a carbon emission stretch target of 13,500 tCO ₂ e in line with our Science Based Target approach	A	13,999 tCO ₂ e.
	We will include the Scope 3 emissions that are the largest contributors to our overall business carbon footprint in this boundary of our SBTs	G	Completed. Page 17.
	Increase focus on distribution system operation including new incentive implemented by Ofgem, our regulator	G	Published Ofgem Distribution System Operation Incentive. Page 22.
	Focus on becoming net zero	G	We have continued to target our transport and buildings for a greener future. Page 17 -19.
Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions	Provide support and guidance to domestic customers to drive down carbon emissions	G	Supporting local area plans and providing case studies to customers on LCT adoption. Page 20 - 22.
	Promote flexible services to communities across our region to encourage participation	G	Promoted two flexible services tenders.
Supporting community and local energy schemes	Publish update to Community and Local Energy Strategy that covers ED2	G	£80,000 awarded this year to local energy groups. Page 21.
	Invest £500,000 to further continue our support to community groups	G	
Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems	Deliver and embed natural capital and biodiversity GIS mapping tool across the business.	G	We are now able to assign a value to the benefits and services provided by our natural assets. Page 23.
	Plant 10,000 trees per annum (50,000 over ED2)	G	Successfully planted 11,000 trees. Page 24.
	Begin the uplift management of biodiversity within 100 Electricity North West sites	G	Surveys were conducted on all 100 sites to evaluate their current state, allowing us to track the improvements we implement.
	Comply with biodiversity net gain legislation by November 2023	G	Completed.
Optimising waste and resources	Develop and implement biodiversity awareness training	A	Ongoing commitment as part of ED2.
	Achieve 0% landfill, 80% combustion and 20% recycle	G	We have reviewed our waste strategy and amended our targets going forward, aligning to our environmental action plan. See page 25 for our current activities.
	Continue to work with suppliers to find alternative ways of working and reducing our environmental impact	G	Continue to collaborate closely with our suppliers to explore alternative approaches to reduce our environmental impact.

Our overall performance 2023/24 (continued)

Our communities			
Framework	Our plans 2023 - 2028	Status	Outcome
Responding to customer vulnerability	Implement new regulated incentive requirement from Ofgem	G	Published first Annual Vulnerable Report .
	Increase enrolment to the business priority service register	G	We continue to promote our business priority register.
	Support 125,000 customers in fuel poverty in ED2	G	25,072 fuel poverty referrals achieved by the start of 2024. Page 27.
	Train 100% of colleagues in vulnerability training	G	Completed 100% of colleagues training.
	Create an innovation fund to ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a greener future	G	£150,000 has been made available to support customers. Launched 'Take Charge' campaign. Page 27.
	Expanding the reach of our Extra Care Services to 90% of those eligible to be registered	G	Our reach increased from 73% to 82% of eligible customers this year. Page 27 and 28.
	Increase referral network by 20% in ED2. Details of our ED2 commitment can be found in our Electricity users in vulnerability circumstances	G	Completed. Page 27.
Inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees	Deliver primary school engagement to 3,500 pupils per year	A	Over 1,500 pupils engaged through Crucial Crew. Page 29.
	Continue to drive STEM in primary and secondary	G	New programs developed for primary and secondary school. Page 29.
	Increase career awareness and apprenticeship opportunities	G	Highest intake of apprentices to date. Page 7.
	Develop curriculum linked secondary education material	G	Launched our secondary school workshops in partnership with Science Made Simple. Page 29.
	Develop safety awareness and education	G	Attended our first crucial crew and have now included safety awareness as part of our primary and secondary school programmes. Page 29.
	Continue to participate in a minimum of two science festivals per year	G	We attended UCLAN and Sustainability conference science festivals and attended school visits. Page 30.
Supporting colleague-led community engagement	Increase number of colleagues taking two days volunteering leave	A	40 colleagues volunteered over 320 hours. Page 31.
	Donate over £20,000 to charities and organisations and increase number of colleagues supported through our colleague-led fundraising scheme	G	£52,000 donated to charities by Electricity North West and colleagues. Page 31.
Expressing our regional economic impact	Stakeholder satisfaction survey to continue biennially	G	Achieved 79% stakeholder satisfaction
	Restructure our stakeholder advisory panels to align with commitments made in ED2	G	Increased stakeholder advisory panel to seven. Page 33.
	Increase Green Financing Investment	G	Issued our first green financing bond. Page 32.

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