

Social Value Report

2023-2024



“

Our Social Value commitment is to work together to secure a thriving future for our railway and the communities we serve.”

”

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Welcome from Steve White, Managing Director

At Southeastern Railway, we are a purposeful organisation. We see ourselves as more than just a transport provider - we are an integral part of the communities we serve. Our network connects people to opportunities, whether for work, education, family, or leisure, and we understand the significant role we play in fostering social mobility, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.

As we reflect on 2023-2024, I am proud of the progress we have made in driving meaningful social value across our network. From supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for disadvantaged groups to reducing our environmental impact and investing in community partnerships, this report highlights the tangible ways in which Southeastern is making a difference.

Our commitment to breaking down barriers to social mobility is resolute. Through partnerships with likeminded organisations in the Purpose Coalition, and targeted initiatives to promote skills, employment, and inclusivity, we are focussing our efforts to give more people the opportunity to thrive.

Sustainability is also at the heart of what we do. Our science-based targets and continued efforts to decarbonise the railway demonstrate our determination to protect our planet for future generations. We have made significant strides in reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency, and promoting sustainable practices throughout our operations and supply chain.

This year's achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our colleagues, the support of our partners, and the trust of our customers. Together, we have proven that when we collaborate and innovate, we can achieve remarkable outcomes.

As we look ahead, our ambition is to continue building a better, more reliable, and sustainable railway - one that not only delivers exceptional service but also contributes positively to society and the environment. As Managing Director, I invite you to delve into this report and join us on our journey towards a thriving and sustainable future for everyone.



What is social value?

Social Value is the value created by an organisation through its financial and non-financial day-to-day activities in terms of the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital created and the environment. By considering social value, organisations can see how their activities can benefit stakeholders and wider society. An example of social value in action is sustainable procurement, buying locally, reducing carbon emissions, volunteering, and hiring locally. It's about building stronger communities and stronger organisations.

We need to ensure that our everyday actions support our communities. Thus, we recognise that the railway provides a significant social value to the UK - these principles are embedded in both our Sustainable Business Plan and our Sustainability Strategy. As a train company operating over a large geographical area in England, we understand that our broader social value comes from how we conduct ourselves as a business – our everyday decisions and responsible actions. There are many important activities and impacts that we (and other organisations) have through the way we operate.

For example, how we ensure our staff's wellbeing and safety, choose to recruit, and procure from our local communities, or how we direct our purchasing spend to our local stakeholders to aid in their socio-economic developmentⁱ.

We are proud that Southeastern colleagues were responsible for creating the Rail Industry Mental Health Charter and the Rail to Refuge Scheme, both of which demonstrate our commitment to a better society.

What is social mobility?

Social mobility is the ability for individuals, or groups, to improve their lives and overcome disadvantages. It is about breaking down barriers to opportunity and is often influenced by factors such as education, economic opportunities, and access to resources. It is commonly viewed as a measure of equality and fairness in a society. By working with the Purpose Coalition, Southeastern is committed to breaking down barriers and making improvements for our people in our business, our supply chain, our community and our customers.

ⁱ Further socio-economic research looks at the core of what a business does; how what is created (products, service etc) provides social value. For example, rail facilitates communities to connect, have economic growth through access to tourism and business connections, and facilitates individuals to commute for work and play. This is out of scope of this report.

Executive Summary

We are proud to serve the people and the communities of the southeast of England. Our ambition is to enable communities to flourish around our railway, connecting them to what is important, be it family, friends, work, education or leisure.

As a responsible business, we want to leverage our community investment and direct value creation to those areas where there is greater social need and where we can make a meaningful difference. We have been working more closely than ever with Network Rail as part of our drive to create social value not least as we know we can achieve more together. This year, we have captured broad and deep social impact in our priority areas of:

1. Our work with the Purpose Coalition

Southeastern has signed up to a Social Mobility Pledge (the Pledge). The Pledge is a commitment by businesses to bear social mobility in mind when considering access to opportunity, outreach, and recruitment; a valuable consideration given the diverse cross-section of society our network serves. As the first train operator to create a Social Mobility Plan, we are focussing on breaking down barriers to social mobility, which is essential for fostering equality, unlocking individual potential, and creating a more inclusive and prosperous community and society, as it enables individuals to rise above systemic inequalities, access opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to economic growth, innovation, and cultural diversity. Working with the Coalition will develop our approach and ability to measure our impact.

2. Promoting local skills and jobs

To promote growth and development opportunities for people within a community and ensure that they have access to opportunities to develop new skills and gain meaningful employment.

3. Supporting growth of local responsible businesses

To provide local businesses with the skills to compete and the opportunity to work as part of public sector and big business supply chains.

4. Healthier, safer and more resilience local communities

To build stronger and deeper relationships with the voluntary and social enterprise sectors whilst continuing to engage and empower citizens.

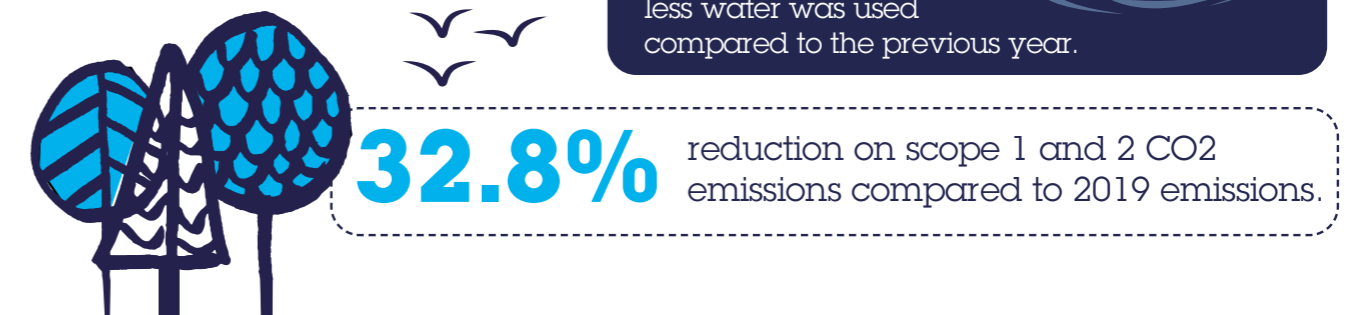
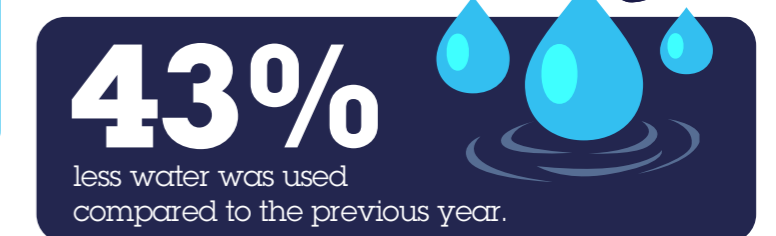
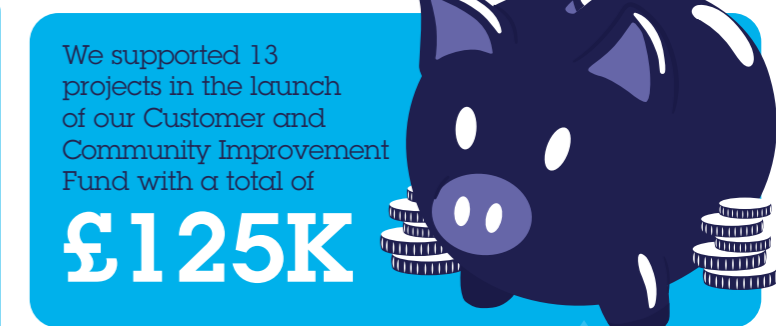
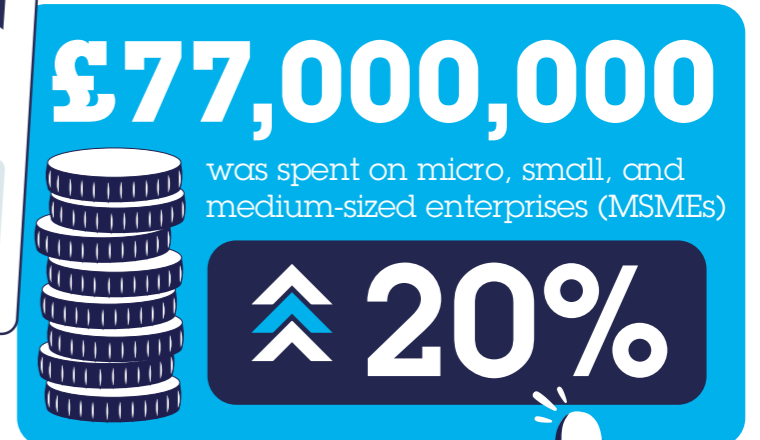
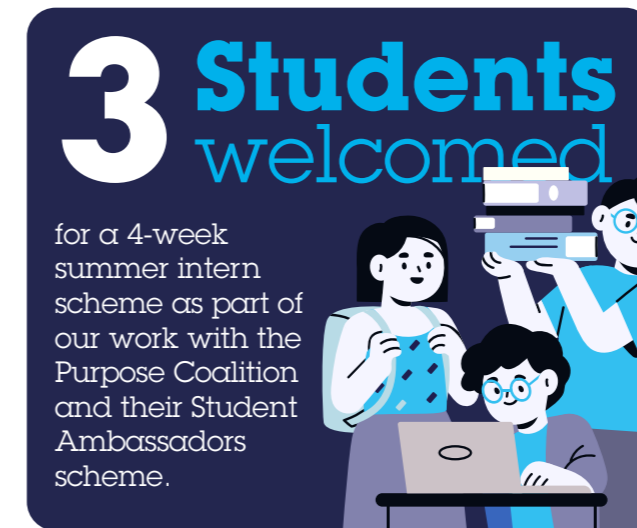
5. Decarbonising and safeguarding our world.

To ensure the places where people live and work are cleaner and greener, to promote sustainable procurement and help secure the long-term future of our planet.

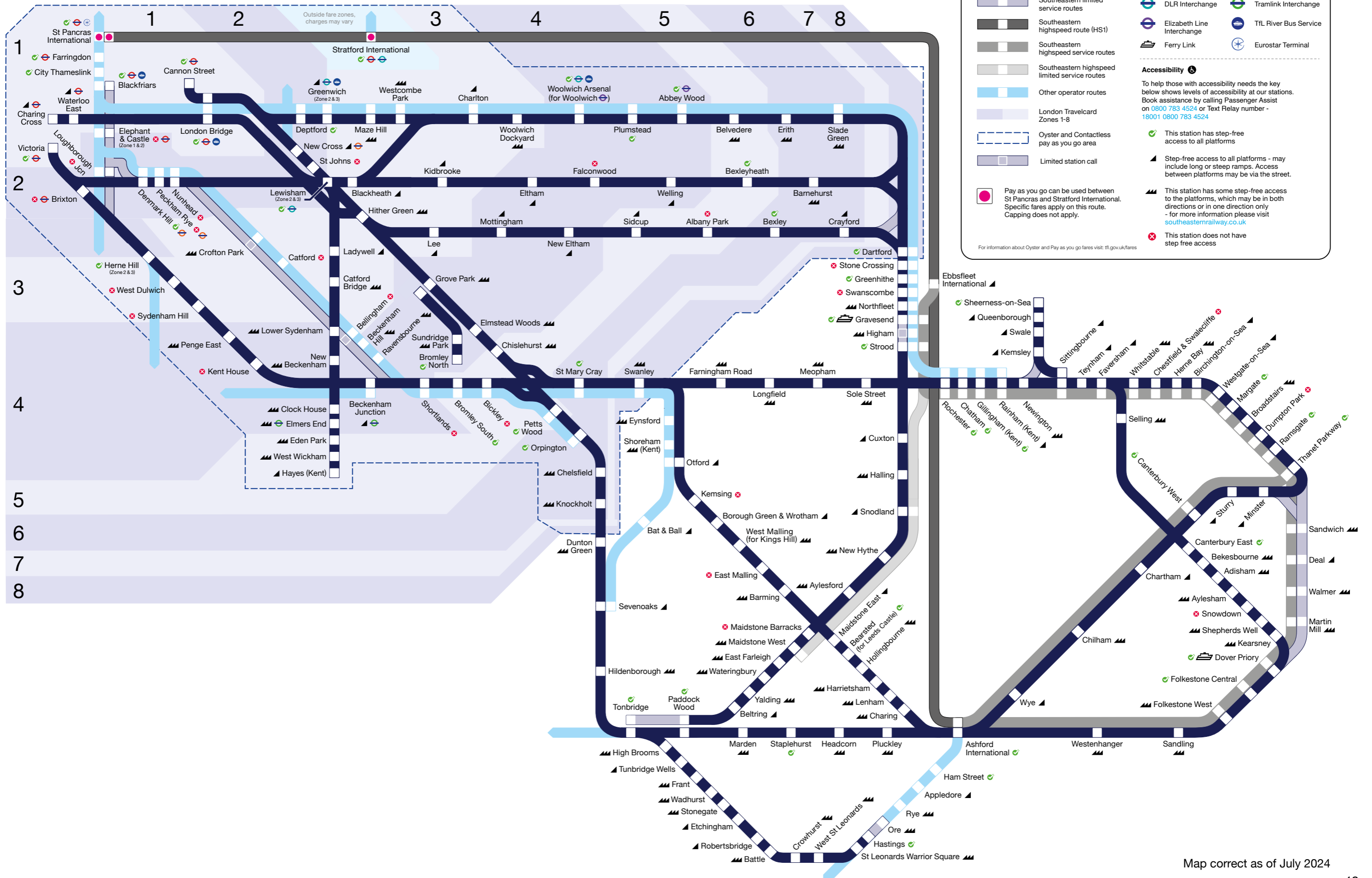
6. Promoting social innovation

To promote new ideas and find innovative solutions to old.

Our key achievements of 2023-2024 at a glance



Our Network



Map correct as of July 2024

Key Achievements 2023-2024

The reporting period referenced throughout is from 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024.

Skills and jobs and our people

During the year Southeastern was recognised externally with multiple accolades including winner of 'Great Place to Work' and 'Customer Service Excellence' at the 2023 National Rail Awards and named 'Rail Business of the Year' at the 2023 Rail Business Awards. Our colleagues have also been recognised for outstanding actions, with Lee Woolcott-Ellis awarded for Outstanding Personal Contribution (Manager), and Mark Barron (frontline colleague) awarded highly commended at the National Rail Awards.

As we move into 2025, Lee Woolcott-Ellis (Mental Health Lead), has also been recognised in HM The King's New Years Honours List and will receive a British Empire Medal (BEM) for his outstanding services to mental health in transport. Lee has been a driving force in changing how mental health is viewed and supported in the workplace. In partnership with the Rail Safety and Standards Board, Lee established the Railway Mental Health Charter – a groundbreaking framework designed to help rail companies promote, manage, and support mental wellbeing. This initiative, which launched in 2021, has now been adopted by over 130 organisations across the rail industry. But Lee didn't stop there. He has also spearheaded the creation of our Mental Health Advocates programme designed to assist colleagues through difficult times, such as traumatic incidents in the workplace. Since its introduction in 2022, this programme has provided much-needed support to over 110 colleagues.

Mark Barron was also recognised as Male Apprentice of the Year at The Women in Rail Awards, and Alexandra Ward was awarded Highly Commended in the Internal Communications Manager of Year category of the Institute of Internal Communications. Southeastern was rated number 68 in the prestigious 'Top 100 Employers for Apprentices', and granted 'Gold Accreditation' for Investors in People for People and Wellbeing, and Apprenticeships

In 2024, Southeastern won the WORK180 Equitable Workplace Award for our leading initiatives in the Transport industry. WORK180 is trusted by millions of women around the world. Their endorsement is synonymous with employers committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Southeastern continued to attend numerous career fayres, develop its work experience programmes and placements, and work with the Prince's Trust (now King's Trust) to host young people at work.



On 5 August 2024, Southeastern welcomed three students for a 4-week summer intern scheme as part of our work with the Purpose Coalition and their Student Ambassadors scheme. The students were all set a business challenge and worked across several departments in Southeastern which included the Kent Integrated Control Centre, HR, Environment and Sustainability, and Safeguarding. They also attended a volunteering day with Network Rail and our Future Labs Programme across the DfT Operator train companies. One of the participants, Olu, stated that 'one of the most memorable experiences was attending the "Pitch Day" event at Future Labs in Yorkshire, where we listened to innovative IT pitches aimed at improving the rail industry'. In an article with the Purpose Coalition, he said 'one of the most remarkable aspects of working at Southeastern Railway was the strong sense of love and unity among the employees. Humility and respect were evident at every level of the organisation, creating an environment where everyone, regardless of their position, felt valued'.

Supporting growth

- Southeastern's addressable spend with micro, small or medium sized businesses (MSMEs⁽ⁱⁱ⁾) rose by 20% (on the previous reporting year) to £77 million as part of our commitment to ethical and sustainable sourcing.
- We have undertaken our second assessment against the best practice ISO standard for sustainable procurement, ISO20400, improving on our previous maturity level.

Healthy, safer communities

- We invested £225,000 in Community Rail Partnerships.
- We launched our first ever Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF) supporting 13 projects with a total of £125K funding.

Decarbonisation

We submitted our short- and long-term science-based targets for the decarbonisation of our business, targets verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative. Our short-term targets are to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions (mostly associated with our energy use) by 70% by 2029 and 90% by 2035 compared to our emissions in 2019. We also set our long-term target to be net zero carbon 2050, which include the emissions associated with our supply chain. More detail can be found in Section 4 of this report.

Our decarbonisation of Scope 1 and 2 emissions is happening at pace, at the end of 2023/24 emissions had reduced by 32.8% compared to our baseline year (2019) emissions.

(ii) Our total spend for the year is approximately £1bn. Our addressable spend refers to those areas where we have a choice over the supplier and does not include charges for station, track and infrastructure charges with Network Rail and High Speed 1, or for rolling stock lease charges.

Our approach to social value

Our aim is to deliver a better, more reliable, and sustainable railway. We operate an essential rail service for a large region of the UK, and as of 2021, we sit within the group of government-owned train operators and are the group's largest train operator. Our purpose and approach to being a responsible business encompasses all our business operations.

Through our social value journey, we are clear that activity we have carried out as business as usual, often falls under other names, therefore as a business we have adopted the broad 2013 Social Value Act Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) framework to unify our work and direct our resources for social value creation.

During 2023, we developed and launched our first Sustainability Strategy aligned with the Sustainable Rail Blueprint (SRB) developed by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) for the UK rail industry. Our Strategy is structured around three core themes of Natural Environment, Emissions and Social Sustainability with 11 Goals to help us realise our ambition of becoming a more sustainable railway. To help us achieve our Strategy ambitions, we have developed a delivery plan for each of the 11 Goals, with each owned by a senior leader in our business and progress reported to a newly created Sustainability Board.

By building our plan around the key principles of the SRB, we know we are focusing actions on the issues which are most important to UK Rail.

Specifically for this report, we are focusing on the social value we create through our operational choices and activities. Our focus is on our regional area – the communities we serve across London, Kent and East Sussex and the local areas around our stations, depots, and large rail hubs and our people.

2023-24 Social Value Themes, Outcomes, and Measures and indicators

Theme	Outcome
Jobs: Promoting local skills and employment	More local people in employment
	Fair work
	More opportunities for disadvantaged people
	Improved skills
Growth: Supporting growth of local responsible businesses	More opportunities for MSMEs and VCSEs
	Ethical procurement is promoted
	Improving staff wellbeing and mental health
	Reduced inequalities
Social: Healthier, safer and more resilience local communities	Crime is reduced
Environment: Decarbonising and safeguarding our world	Carbon emissions are reduced
Innovation: Promoting social innovation	Safeguarding the environment and responding to the climate emergency

Progress update on the 2022-23 report

Our 2021-22 Social Value Report identified four recommended steps to progress. Highlights included:

Recommended steps	Progress
1. Embedding our work with the Purpose Coalition	Green
2. Improve data collection, such as demographics of protected characteristics, and track other educational qualifications completed by staff	Amber
3. Renew certification, e.g., Investors in People, Menopause Friendly employer	Green

Recommended steps	Progress
4. Work to closing the gender pay gap for bonuses and further STEM recruitment activities	Green
5. Continue supporting community partners such as the Prince's (now King's) Trust and the Community Rail Partnerships	Green
6. Expand the safeguarding team and new plan	Green
7. Roll out the new Procurement Social value Charter and embed into new contracts. Start reporting on social value from procurement	Green
8. Launch an action plan to support the implementation of our Sustainability Strategy	Green
9. We will submit our net zero roadmap to science-based target validation in 2023-24	Green
10. Complete air quality plan and EV charging infrastructure roll-out with Network Rail*	Amber
11. Explore circular economy and better separation at source for waste reduction and recycling**	Red
12. Launch the new biodiversity plan. This will focus on lineside biodiversity and long-term ecology connectivity	Green
13. Complete the climate change risks and opportunities assessment	Green

*We adopted our Air Quality Plan in 2022/23. We have selected to adopt ULEZ compliant vehicles for our small road fleet with 53% hybrids rather than adopt EVs currently. Our approach to decarbonisation is evolving as our knowledge and experience develops. Our review of emissions in 2023/24 show that our road support fleet was only responsible for 0.16% of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions. Consequently, we have deprioritised this action.

**We have targeted the development of our first circular economy plan by March 2025 are also currently working on developing options to enhance segregation.

Our work with the Purpose Coalition

Southeastern was the first rail company to work with the Purpose Coalition to break down barriers to opportunity. Our work with them will help boost social mobility in the communities we serve and enable them to thrive. As a member of the Purpose Coalition, Southeastern has signed up to a Social Mobility Pledge ('The Pledge'). The Pledge is a commitment by businesses to bear social mobility in mind when considering access to opportunity, outreach, and recruitment; a valuable consideration given the diverse cross-section of society our network serves. Southeastern has been keen to champion the role of rail in breaking down barriers and is working across the industry to encourage participation amongst other operators including Northern Trains and C2C trains.

Southeastern has been reviewing its approach to schools' engagement and recruitment since the publication of the action plan. Southeastern also used the partnership with the Purpose Coalition to host three summer interns from their student ambassador programme to have first-hand work experience and exposure to the rail industry. Southeastern has been part of the working groups that has helped create the measures for Breaking Down Barriers. Southeastern is now looking to measure its impact across three scopes for these measures. They are:

- Our People.
- Our supply chain.
- Our community and customers.

Southeastern will use these scopes and measures to track the impact that the organisation is having on breaking down barriers.



The following sections report our progress towards the themes, measures, and outcome we have prioritised for 2022-23.

1. Jobs: Promoting local skills and employment

Southeastern is privileged to work with over 4,500 employees. Here is what they help us achieve:

1. More people in local employment
2. Fair work
3. More opportunities for disadvantaged people
4. Improved skills

Southeastern is privileged to work with over 4,500 employees. Here is what they help us achieve:

- 128 million passenger journeys in 2023-24, a 9% year-on-year growth.
- Operating over 1800 train services every weekday.
- Running a fleet of 399 trains.
- Carrying over 500,000 passengers on weekdays.
- Covering 540 miles of track.
- Managing 165 stations and serving 181 stations.
- Operating the UK's first domestic high-speed service, which has a 140mph top speed.

Southeastern is continuing to employ apprentices. As of 2023/24 the company consistently have close to 10% of the workforce now in apprentice-training. Apprenticeships are normally two years in length and in the year 2023/24 Southeastern saw 276 colleagues start an apprenticeship programme, and 159 colleagues complete their programmes, which was represents our biggest, busiest year yet. However, 2024/35 will be even busier. As at the end of 2023/24, 25% of apprentices were female and 14% were from a Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic background. Whatever people's current perception of rail, we want and need to recruit people, with the right skills, from a diverse range of backgrounds, as well as ensuring our workforce reflects the communities we serve.

To address the perception of rail and attract more diverse applicants Southeastern undertook significant research to launch our biggest ever recruitment drive in 2024/25, which actively focused on diversity and lower socio-economic backgrounds to better reflect the communities we serve. The campaign focussed on roles including train drivers, onboard staff, revenue and railway enforcement officers, and engineering. Further detail and information on this campaign will be made available in the 2024/25 report.

Southeastern continues to be awarded the Gold Standard by respected workplace performance assessors, Investors in People. We are now one of only three large employers in the country to hold gold in three areas of assessment:

- We Invest in People.
- We Invest in Wellbeing.
- We Invest in Apprentices.

The overall experience of apprentices has been rated as exceptional as part of this process, with high satisfaction rates and a strong commitment to the programme throughout the organisation. This follows Southeastern being listed in the top 100 Apprenticeship Employers and achieving 5% Club Gold, which underlines our commitment to developing our people.

Our work in 2023-24

Work commenced to improve the data collection and information about our people. Requesting data is often a sensitive subject so the focus was on reviewing data from engagement surveys and improving the information that is collected during recruitment. This information then transfers to our main system (Oracle) at point of hire.

Data collection and insights allows the company to tailor its offer and make Southeastern a better place to work. In 2023/24, Southeastern maintained all of its accreditations including Investors in People and Menopause Friendly employer.

Our Colleague Network Groups (CNGs) have been growing since 2018 when we facilitated the set up of three groups; Mind the Gap (support and inclusion for mental health), LGBT+ sOUTheastern and WIRE (Women in Rail Empowerment). Since then, we have seen the introduction of CultuRail, AccessAbility and our Armed Forces CNG. Each group is supported by our Colleague Experience team and Executive Sponsor. These colleague-led groups have a mission, objectives, and action plan and workstreams that help deliver and achieve those. One such workstream is FASE; families at Southeastern, who are a sub-group of WIRE led and formed by its members and working to create a safe space for people with families to be able to share their concerns, issues, and experiences and to provide support for them where needed.

As well as colleague led campaigns the company delivered:

Insight Programme (Reverse Mentoring)

After the pilot of the reverse mentoring programme, a revamp of the programme has taken place to create a more insight lead approach. Participants will be "Insight Learners" and "Insight Experts" so as to develop the relationship and share experiences. Colleagues who are interested in being part of the programme will need to apply, stating the reasons for being either an Insight Learner or Insight Expert and what they are hoping to get out of the experience.

Female Leadership Group Coaching

An eight-month programme was set up in 2023/24 to support female leaders at Southeastern. The purpose of the programme was to help female leaders share experiences, develop their skills and share ways to support one another. Whilst confidential, the appropriate outputs are being shared to make Southeastern a better place to work help female career progression.

High Potential Group Coaching (with LNER)

Recognising the opportunity to work across the DOHL operators, Southeastern lead a joint programme. This was a joint programme with LNER with some attendees travelling from Edinburgh to London to attend. Like the female coaching programme – feedback has been excellent with colleagues sharing experiences and finding new ways to develop their careers.

Work Experience, University Partnerships and Prince's Trust

Three new colleges and one fostering agency are signed partners for the work experience programme. These are East Kent College, Gravesend Grammar, North Kent College, and Diverse Care. Southeastern is also due to finalise a 'memo of understanding' with Canterbury Christ Church University and Greenwich University in order to put a structure in place for our relationship.

The Prince's Trust (now known as the King's Trust) supports young people who face disadvantage and adversity to develop the confidence and skills they need to move forward in life. Southeastern continued to support the Prince's Trust by hosting two groups of 10 (one in the North and one in South) for two weeks. The participants attended end of placement celebration events to share their learnings and highlights.

Apprenticeships

This year we saw 276 colleagues start an apprenticeship programme, and 159 colleagues complete their programmes, which represents our biggest, busiest year yet.

The celebrations continued with us moving up 25 places on the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer Rankings in June 2023; hosting our first celebration event since COVID in October 2023; and running our most successful National Apprenticeship week in February 2024.

Southeastern was rated number 68 in the prestigious 'Top 100 Employers for Apprentices', and granted 'Gold Accreditation' for Investors in People for People and Wellbeing, and Apprenticeships

Engagement, recruitment and attraction

Against a backdrop of change and continued industry wide uncertainty over the year (in which we dealt with ongoing industrial action, pay restraint, and a national consultation concerning the future of station ticket offices), we have seen a slight fall in our employee engagement score. However, our inclusion score has remained stable at 59% throughout the year with aspects of Inclusion (equality of opportunity).

At the end of 2023/24, industrial action ended for grades (excluding drivers) and the company was able to focus on recruitment opportunities. Southeastern developed partnerships with Working Mums, Evenbreak and JobOppo to promote opportunities at Southeastern to female, disabled and veteran candidates. The company also launched our offer of interview scheme linked to disability confident and armed forces covenant schemes.

In 2023/24, Southeastern doubled the number of female appointments to manager grades, maintained the increase in BAME appointments at the 2022/23 level (which was double 2021/22). Southeastern also had real success in taking the first steps to attract Generation Z to the railway, with a record number of new joiners aged under 24. This was achieved through significant work to partner with schools, attend recruitment fairs and work with partners who can spread awareness amongst the 18-24-year-old group.

Southeastern has not paid management bonuses.

2. Growth: Supporting the growth of responsible regional businesses

We pride ourselves in working fairly and transparently towards a sustainable future. This means we source goods, works and services in a fair, transparent, and responsible way. It is important to us that our current and prospective suppliers align to our core values and strategy and support us in delivering outstanding service for our customers, team members and the communities that we serve.

We published our new [Procurement Social Value Charter](#) in Summer 2022, which outlines our ambitions to integrate social value into our procurements and outline the minimum expected requirements from our supply chain. This charter includes a wide range of elements including economy, diversity and inclusion, health and wellbeing, sustainable communities, environment, and ethics. Our tender evaluation process will incorporate relevant social value factors and we will be seeking a proactive approach from suppliers working with us on supporting these objectives.

We recently refreshed our Procurement Policy, outlining how we operate fair and transparent sourcing processes which demonstrate value for money for our stakeholders and comply with relevant regulatory requirements, our Procurement Policy is available [here](#). As a member of the rail community, Southeastern utilises two main routes to market for high value requirements: the ['Rail Industry Supplier Qualification Scheme' \("RISQS"\)](#) and the UK Government's ['Find A Tender Service' \("FATS"\)](#). RISQS requires a subscription and applicable audits for the relevant categories of supply. FATS is an open portal and requires no subscription.

The vast majority of our new sourcing requirements will be via these sources and, to ensure transparency, we are unable to accept unsolicited approaches to apply for tender opportunities with for high value or safety critical goods, works or services outside of these methods.

We are always keen to engage with local suppliers in our regions or those with new, innovative products or services to develop our supply chain. If you would like to get in touch, please contact: procurement@southeasternrailway.co.uk

Our work in 2022-23 - Growth

Our approach to social value is to also look at the positive impact we can have through decisions and investments we make; how we procure and the quality of the jobs we create is a real opportunity to support our region. The investment and initiation of regional growth through the goods and services we ask our regional business to make can generate local business and jobs growth.

We are therefore prioritising supporting the growth of responsible regional businesses through:

1. Nurturing opportunities for local businesses, and SMEs and voluntary community and social enterprises (VCSEs) in our supply chain and ecosystem.
2. Ethical procurement standards and managing modern slavery.
3. Building social value in the supply chain.
4. Ensuring our regional jobs are managed responsibly through good wellbeing and mental health support.
5. Ensuring our regional jobs are dispersed fairly through reducing inequalities.

This year we are pleased to report that:

- We saw significant growth in our measurement of Social Value being delivered via our supply chain, continuing our work with the Social Value Portal and continuing our journey to promote the importance of this during procurement activities.

- We directed over £77m of our procurement spend to micro, small or medium sized businesses (MSMEs). This figure is an increase of 20% from the previous year and is representative of 34% of our addressable spend (i.e. our spend which does not include charges for station, infrastructure or rolling stock leases).
- We have undertaken our second assessment against the best practice ISO standard for sustainable procurement, ISO20400, improving on our previous maturity level.

Opportunities for local, SME and VCSE organisations

Procurement spend

This is the first year we have analysed our data for local spend, despite having for years made efforts to include local and small businesses in our supply chain where we can.

- With an annual addressable procurement budget of around £220m, £77m was identified as spend with MSMEs ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.
- This represents a 20% increase on the 2022-23 figures.

This spend included procuring services for recruitment, consultancy services, electrical maintenance, air components, alarms and security, and engineering services. As our Procurement Social Value Charter is now established, we will in future be able to track data on outcomes of procuring locally, such as numbers of local people employed, and apprentices hired for our contracts.

In 2023-24, we recorded data showing 24 full time positions going to local employees, with £1.2m being spent with local MSMEs in the downward supply chain. We believe that this figure is much higher in reality and through promoting the status of social value in our supply chain and providing a webinar series to our supply chain partners, we are seeking to increase this.

We also recognise that smaller suppliers are more sensitive to cash flow, and where we can (e.g., some invoices have issues to resolve before being paid) we aim to pay invoices within 30 days. This year we paid an estimated 54% of invoices within 30 days.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs)

Across all our operations, we work with many Voluntary and Community Sector Enterprises (VCSEs), from the Community Rail Groups (to whom we

⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ Our total spend for the year is approximately £1bn. Our addressable spend refers to those areas where we have a choice over the supplier and does not include charges for station, track and infrastructure charges with Network Rail and High Speed 1, or for rolling stock lease charges.

provide £200,000 a year) to charity partners such as Shelter, the Samaritans, The Princes Trust, Visit Kent, Work180 and the consultancy services of VCSEs, such as RSSB and the Wildlife Trust. Please find information on these projects throughout this report.

Tourism support

Southeastern has developed strong relationships within businesses and communities in Kent and East Sussex. This will continue as we work to build further collaborations with independent retailers, businesses, stakeholders, and tourist attractions. Sharing of opportunities and ideas on tourism recovery plans, together with the development of joint initiatives that encourage rail travel to these destinations, will support growth of resilient and healthy communities.

- Work will continue to secure Southeastern's ticket booking widget and updated information about our services on partner websites, allowing us to target greater numbers of potential customers when they are in consideration/ purchase mode.
- We have ongoing collaboration with Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and tourist bodies such as London and Partners, Visit Kent, Visit Canterbury, Visit Thanet, Visit Greenwich, and Visit 1066 Country.
- We also pay an annual fee to Visit Kent. This has been in place for several years and is a successful opportunity, allowing us to benefit from being part of their marketing and promotional communications throughout the year and helping to drive visitors to Kent by train.
- We continue to work with and support key organisations such as Creative Folkestone, Turner Contemporary, Creative Estuary, and the Medway Cultural Strategy maximising opportunities to drive rail travel and journeys.

Ethical procurement

Ethical procurement is core to how we procure, and we expect our suppliers to adhere to ambitious standards.

We have a dedicated Modern Slavery policy, available to suppliers and on our website as well as to other interested parties. We intend to continue to mitigate as much risk as possible by procuring in compliance with the Utilities Contract Regulations 2016, developing our knowledge in readiness for the UK Procurement Act and utilising frameworks where it is commercially viable and legislatively possible to do so.

A Fair economy

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Workforce Pay (NT41, NT10)
- » Supply chain payment (NT61)
- » Local employment (NT1)
- » Local, SME & VCSE spend (NT14, NT19)

B Diversity & Inclusion

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Workforce development (NT3, NT6, RE58)
- » Diversity & Inclusion (NT21)
- » Gender equality (RE57)

C Sustainable Communities

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Local, SME & VCSE support (NT17)
- » Community projects & integration (NT28)
- » Supply chain development (NT23)
- » Cyber security (NT62)

D Ethics

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Modern Slavery (NT43, NT59)

E Environment

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Greenhouse gas emissions (NT82, NT44)
- » Transport & logistics (NT46, NT65)
- » Climate change & biodiversity (NT49, NT67)
- » Waste & Plastic (NT88)
- » Air quality, EPDs & Noise (FM73)

F Health & Wellbeing

Subcategory (TOMs reference):

- » Safety
- » Mental health & wellbeing (NT20, NT26, NT39)

For example, we use the Crown Commercial Service frameworks, which are tendered under Public Contracts Regulations 2015 procurement rules and perform extensive due diligence when vetting prospective suppliers. We will continue to monitor our supply chain to assess ongoing risks and develop measures to further reduce the risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place within our supply chain. This year we integrated modern slavery compliance into our selection process for tendering, with bidders being asked to confirm their compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.

This year we were reassessed and maintained our accreditation against ISO20400. ISO20400 is the international standard for Sustainable Procurement aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and achieving sustainability integrated into procurement practices and managing risks and opportunities well. We achieved a score of 3.16 out of 5, which is considered good ('Mature approach') for the stage we are at in our journey.

Our Procurement Social Value Charter and Procurement Policy promotes ethical procurement and clearly communicates the standard we expect and how further/ best practice from our suppliers will contribute to higher awards in our tendering process. To balance adhering to ambitious standards with supporting SMEs to bid for contracts, the inclusion of social value in tender scoring is for contracts over £100,000, and for large contracts (over £355,000) social value is a minimum 10% of the scoring, and we are commencing a programme to provide access to skills and resources for SMEs to improve their opportunities on these tenders.

Building social value in the supply chain

In our 2022-23 report, we confirmed the release of our Procurement Social Value Charter which outlines our commitment to generating social value in a set of priority impact areas across six key pillars:

1. Fair Economy
2. Diversity, Inclusion and Training
3. Environment
4. Ethics
5. Sustainable Communities
6. Health and Wellbeing

A bidder's proposed social value targets are included in contracts in a performance schedule, which includes a service credit mechanism that incentivises suppliers to complete their achievement of these targets. Once a contract is awarded, we actively manage our suppliers to ensure they are reporting on their social value delivery and seeking opportunities to improve throughout the life of the contract.

Our standard contract terms and conditions require our suppliers to maintain a subscription with the Social Value Portal (SVP) and complete periodic reporting of their social value achievements. SVP will continue to be involved by validating and interrogating the information provided by the supplier and tracking delivery throughout the contract term. Since the launch of the Charter, we have awarded four contracts which include target Social Value in excess of £5m. In addition, we continue to engage with suppliers on existing contracts, such as cleaning and facilities maintenance, to explore incorporating social value into their existing contracts as part of variations. We estimate in the future this will increase our social value generation by at least £3m a year.

We ran an exercise to see retrospectively how many contracts would have met our new Charter and estimate that over 70% of previous contracts would meet our Charter's higher standards.

Developing our Procurement social value charter

We have continued our partnership with the Social Value Portal (SVP) and have agreed a process whereby we direct bidders to their portal to submit their social value tender response and delivery plan against our set of priority chosen KPIs. This ensures a structured and best in class methodology for assessing, calculating, and validating bidders' responses, and creating a target social value level which is then included in the successful bidder's contract.

SVP complete the evaluation for us, and we have also received training so that our own staff are upskilled and able to undertake evaluations on the portal themselves.

- We developed our set of national Themes, Objectives, and Measures (TOMs) from which we will choose on tenders above £100K (where relevant). These were linked to the key pillars, split into core, and focused aspects.
- On any procurement where we include Social Value in the evaluation, we committed to using the seven core KPIs, and up to eight additional focused KPIs (based on contract complexity and opportunity) from a list of 21.
- We set this approach based on what was thought to be reasonable to expect our supply chain to report on and ensuring that we had a targeted approach as opposed to a one size fits all.
- We utilise a heatmap which identified the key social value areas for each purchasing category, helping us to identify how we could focus the supply chain attention to key aspects (e.g., mental health in construction, climate change in building and rolling stock). This links into the previous point and how we would select our focused KPIs for each procurement.

Case Study: Rail Replacement Bus Services

The provision of a reliable rail replacement bus service is essential for Southeastern, and in 2022-23, we completed a tender exercise to award a contract to Go-Ahead London to work with us. This procurement was one of the first to utilise the 10% weighting for social value and allowed us to ensure that the benefits of the contract are wider than the service provision alone.

As part of the tender process, suppliers provided proposed contractual commitments against the Themes, Objectives and Measures (TOMs) that we have selected in our Procurement Social Value Charter. We specifically challenged the bidders to focus on local employment, fair pay and spend with local SMEs.

Following the award of the contract, we have continued to track progress against the commitments made and through our partnership with SVP have recorded and validated this progress. To date £1.2m has been spent via this contract to support local MSMEs, and four employees that are from the local communities have been employed on a full-time basis.

We believe that the targets set at the beginning of the contract will be exceeded by the end of the term and are pleased that our supplier has continued to recognise and value the importance of social value generation in the supply chain.

In addition to our use of SVP, we have continued and developed our relationship with Action Sustainability. Action Sustainability are leaders in the field of sustainable and ethical procurement and will provide training to our employees in key areas such as modern slavery, sustainable procurement and carbon reduction. We are also working together to refresh our heatmap, and to develop a new, standardised and clear set of tender questions that will be used to allow bidders to more clearly showcase their expertise and achievements when seeking to work with us.

We will also be commissioning a series of webinars to promote the importance of social value in our supply chain, providing access to knowledge and resources to make social value requirements more accessible to SMEs.

The Charter will help us to better identify and report our social value creation from our procurement. However, we already know we are creating social value from our procurement practices; see the case studies below for examples of partners helping us on this journey.

In 2023-24, we have begun gathering data and have validated £1.35m of social value delivery, with a further £2m in delivery and validation.

Southeastern prioritises employee wellbeing, focusing on mental health support through initiatives like the Railway Mental Health Charter and a colleague mental health advocate programme. Southeastern also champion menopause support with dedicated training and accreditation. Furthermore, Southeastern actively promotes diversity and inclusion, evidenced by their various employee networks, inclusion campaigns, and completion of relevant training modules. The company's commitment is demonstrated through numerous accreditations and partnerships, showcasing their dedication to creating a fair and supportive workplace for all employees.

The company uses data-driven approaches to identify areas needing improvement and tailor support accordingly. The data has helped us to identify areas where colleagues need support. For example, supporting colleagues through menopause and with mental health.

- Comprehensive Mental Health Support: Southeastern is a founding member of the Railway Mental Health Charter (RMHC), demonstrating a proactive commitment to mental health within the industry. The RMHC provides a framework for:
 - » Reducing mental health stigma.
 - » Changing workplace behaviours.
 - » Cross-industry collaboration.

3. Social: Healthier, safer, and more resilient communities

We are proud to support the local communities in our network through partnerships and outreach.

Southeastern is committed to providing a safe and comfortable journey for everyone, and we have continued to put in place measures to support that aim. Southeastern, along with the rest of the rail industry, has kept vital train services running for everyone who had to travel for work, education, shopping, or medical appointments. During this year we are seeing passenger numbers picking up again, we want to be sure that we are doing everything that we can to make our services equally accessible to everyone in the communities that we serve.

Southeastern is proud to support the local communities in our network through partnerships, sponsorships, and community outreach. We are currently finding new ways to extend our service beyond our stations and transform lives.

Our community initiatives include:

- Local gardening schemes at stations.
- Adopt-a-station initiatives.
- Community noticeboards.
- Rail safety talks and tours for schools and nurseries.
- Book clubs to raise money for local charities.

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) exist to bring together widely varied partners to provide social, economic, and environmental benefits to the communities served by rural and secondary rail services. We work with 5 CRPs over 7 lines. To find out more about the Community Rail Partnerships and their activities visit www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/about-us/company/our-community

Our work in 2023-24 – Healthier, safer, and more resilient communities

We have a presence in over 181 communities across the areas we serve, and with 1,800 trains a weekday connecting people across the region, we touch the lives of many residents, businesses, tourists, school children and commuters. We focus on achieving four key social impact outcomes:

1. Reducing crime.
2. Supporting healthier communities.
3. Facilitating our staff working with local community groups.
4. Leverage our financial resources to further community projects, including the Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

Across these four outcomes, we invested in our communities in various ways this year:

- We continue to run welfare support while at the same time are upskilling and increasing our colleagues knowledge of Safeguarding and Suicide Prevention and have seen 259 interventions in the 2024/25 year alone. With intervention rates since September 2024 (Period 6) running between 74% and 93% at locations where colleagues are present.
- We provided and invested in some local areas as community hubs, station community centres and supported community groups develop places to be proud of.
- We invested £225K in five Community Rail Partnerships. We worked with local community groups to refurbish local amenities and beautifying local spaces on and around our stations.

Our work is made possible by the time and passion our colleagues give, as well as many impactful partnerships with voluntary and community and social enterprises (VCSEs) and public services to collaborate on achieving better social value and outcomes. For example, The Prince’s Trust (now King’s Trust) for young people skills and job development, the Samaritans for suicide reduction, Shelter UK for homelessness, and various policing institutions such as the British Transport Police and Kent, Metropolitan and Sussex police – to name just a few of our partners.

Reducing crime

Given the diverse range of criminal activities on and around the railway, we invest heavily in effective management strategies. These include not only revenue protection, bike crime, anti-social behaviour, theft, and violence against our colleagues, but also critical issues such as unwanted sexual behaviour, suicidal actions, trespassing, mental health crises, and the exploitation associated with County Lines.

We have multiple teams that collaborate to reduce crime and enhance safety across the network for everyone. Our internal teams work diligently to connect data and implement safeguarding actions, while we also maintain strong partnerships with external organisations, including Kent Police, British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police, and Network Rail, we have moved beyond this by working with the Prison service, Probation and Mental Health Care teams to name just a few. This comprehensive approach ensures that we address all facets of safety, safeguarding and crime prevention.

Safeguarding strategy

Our Safeguarding team was increased (an industry first), taking the team to seven, with four members joining between October 2023 and January 2024. The team now has the following fulltime roles focused on Harm and Vulnerability, plus knowledge enhancement of our 3,500 frontline colleagues, the roles are as follows:

- Trespass and Suicide Reduction Manager (Network Rail funded)
- Workplace Violence Reduction Manager (Seconded British Transport Police, Police Sergeant)
- Safeguarding Liaison Manager (Metro routes)
- Safeguarding Liaison Manager (Mainline routes)
- Youth Safety Manager (Metro routes)
- Youth Safety Manager (Mainline routes)

In line with the strategy, safeguarding ambassadors (all volunteer roles) were recruited in August 2024 to support messaging and knowledge enhancement of our frontline colleagues, as well as supporting safeguarding events across the network targeted to engage colleagues and customers alike. The ambassadors cover the full scope of the strategy (see below) and we have over 20 in number from across all grades and network. Considered part of the safeguarding ambassadors since the introduction of White Ribbon but very much independent with its own chair, lead, action plan and steering group which safeguarding sit upon, we have over 20 White Ribbon ambassadors since its introduction in October 2023, resulting in a new Southeastern Domestic Abuse policy in introduced at the start of 2024.

The safeguarding strategy implementation continued in 2024 with key strategic partnerships to align with the scope of the strategy, the partnerships include:

Missing People CIC	Homelessness, Suicide Reduction, Missing People and Child Runaways
White Ribbon CIC	Violence Against females, Unwanted Sexual Behaviour (USB) and Domestic Violence
Dads Unlimited CIC	Suicide Reduction and Domestic Violence against males
Youth Unity CIC	County Lines
Switch Youth Outreach CIC	Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and County Lines
Dame Kelly Holmes Trust CIC	Youth mentoring, not engaged in education, employment, training or in care

Our Youth Safety Managers objectives have been to engage and educate young people predominantly under 18s but up to under 25s who travel on the network for education purposes and leisure, addressing behaviours and safety issues. Their work has seen current partnerships develop and new partnerships formed working side by side at events across our network, onboard our trains and within educational establishments, youth centres and scout groups. Examples of this include:

Rail Safe Friendly

The introduction of a partnership with Rail Safe Friendly, a project that delivers rail safety via live or on demand rail safety broadcasts using the Learn Live channel delivered digitally into the classroom or assembly halls. This has expanded our safeguarding reach across the Southeastern network that are beyond our local footprint. The project has reached over 90,000 young people in over 100 schools creating significant social value.

Medway Council Youth Outreach

A Youth Outreach Programme partnering up with Medway Youth Team, focusing on a route where Southeastern had received reports of antisocial behaviour. The aim of these sessions was to build positive relationships with students on their journey home from school. By building a rapport - and a consistent one - we can then have open and honest conversations with young people and profoundly influence behaviour and create change. From running rail safety quizzes to educate in a more engaging and fun way, which was a remarkable success, with 50 participants entering by the time we left the train one afternoon and even more joining afterwards. Our Youth Safety Manager said, "It was especially rewarding to have one student approach us in a coffee shop before we started, eager to scan the QR code to participate, remembering us discussing it from the previous week".

Dame Kelly Holmes Trust

This social action project with the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust's (DKHT) On Track to Achieve programme, young people from St George's School in Kent partnered with Kent Police, Southeastern Railway and Lent Community Foundation. Students chose to share messages of hope with those struggling with their mental health and who may be considering suicide. Working with their gold medal athlete mentor, Claire Bennett and Southeastern Youth Safety Managers, they created a board at Broadstairs railway station displaying their messages. Our partnership with the DKHT Programmes makes a difference to young people's lives. This is explained within their Impact Report 23-24 which includes a direct quote from a young person who was part of the DKHT initiative: "Everything about the programme has been useful to me. Communicating with new people as well as planning goals and doing regular exercise has been very encouraging when it comes to my own confidence and ability to do things I thought I couldn't."

Switch Youth Outreach (Maidstone)

Over the past 12 months, our Safeguarding team has partnered with Switch Youth Services (SYS) to support their critical work. We have provided SYS with train passes to facilitate interventions across our network, enabling them to safeguard highly vulnerable children through this supported travel. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving Kent Police, with both our Safeguarding team and SYS working closely together to ensure the best outcomes.

Trespass and Suicide Reduction

Op Safer and Pass it On

Our Safeguarding team has been selected as an Award Winner for the Pass it On Campaign in the Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2024. Pass it On is a campaign designed to reach out to practitioners across the Southeastern route who work with vulnerable people. Suicide is a social issue and must be tackled in collaborative way. This campaign is designed to engage councils and other organisations at a local level to tackle issues which are created in communities and presenting as suicidal issues on the railway. The objective is to undertake a deeper level of community activity, with the focus being multi-agency outreach work and formation of multi-agency group activities.

Practitioners in other agencies are encouraged to always call 999 if the risk of suicide is imminent. In cases outside of this, practitioners can contact our Safeguarding team about anyone they are worried may try to harm themselves on the railway. This will enable us to pro-actively work with other agencies to develop safety plans around individuals considered to be at risk before they get to the railway.

The Pass it On campaign supports and feeds into the lifesaving Operation Safer, which continues to grow and holds, on average, 80 images of individuals presenting or suggesting they will take their own life on the network. This year, we have seen 259 interventions by our colleagues, with intervention rates since recording commenced in September (in rail period 6) running between 74% and 93% at locations where colleagues are present.

Building on our colleague interventions, Operation Safer data confirms that since October 2024:

- 173 Colleagues have accessed the OP Safer Section of our Eyewitness Information System.
- 319 Unique 'hits' of OP Safer from the 173 colleagues.
- 128 Vulnerable Profiles have been viewed.

Colleague Safeguarding and Managing Suicidal Contacts training

Building on the creation of our industry leading digital safeguarding training in 2023 (which was estimated to have taken over 1,000 hours to create), its initial soft launch pre mandated in 2024 had seen a limited uptake of 108 colleagues (approx. 4%), with an ambitious target of 80% of all Passenger Services colleagues to have completed by April 2025. In April 2024, the Southeastern Executive board supported this training being mandatory - by November 2024, 85% compliance has been reached with over 2000 colleagues completing the training and achieving Level 1 Safeguarding accreditation. This training covers key subjects with interactive scenarios including but not limited to use of Body Worn Video, Suicide Prevention, Domestic Violence and Workplace Violence.

In 2022/23, Southeastern's internal record of their colleagues who had received externally provided Sarmations Managing Suicidal Contact training was limited, therefore in 2023-24 our Safeguarding team, with the support of HR, now keep a complete record internally and are driving this non mandated training forward by supplementing the training for all current colleagues who have not undertaken it via their initial induction or beyond the recommend three year refresh period. As of November 2024, Southeastern stand at 1441 (44%) frontline colleagues trained.

Eyewitness Information Systems (EIS)

Since the role out of EIS, we now sit at approximately 80% usage across all grades of staff and in 2024, we have an average of 12,700 Fare Evasion reports per four-week period and 2,250 EIS information reports submitted per four-week period.



Reducing workplace violence

In 2024, to support and develop our focus on reducing workplace violence and our strategy linked to this, a new role was created within our Safeguarding team and in January 2024 a seconded British Transport Police Officer started as our Workplace Violence Reduction Manager. This industry first has provided fast time access and updates to all physical assaults of Southeastern colleagues a review of non-physical assaults to assess and progress where relevant, in such cases as threat to life. Beyond this the role has allowed for fast time reflective practice, learning reviews to be conducted in person, a revision of our workplace violence strategy and the development and revision of our workplace violence training.

As a wider team, since January 2024, our safeguarding team have completed 330 colleague engagements, accounting for 473 hours of engagement across 69 key station locations to raise awareness of Body Worn Video and Violence in the workplace.

Child safety

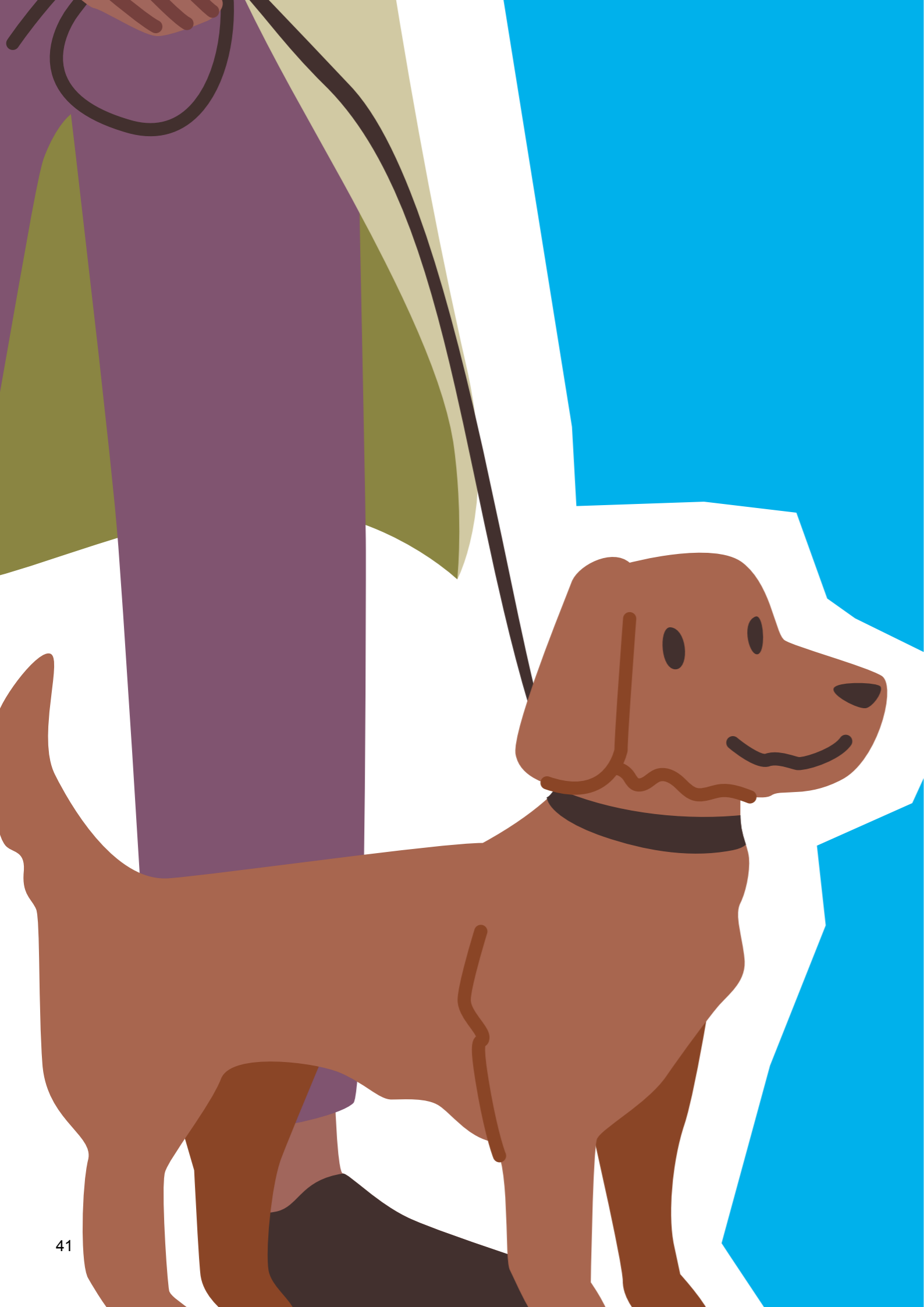
Young people's safety and education plays a vital role with Southeastern and between January and November 2024 over 10,000 young people have been engaged by our Youth Safety Managers but also by our wider Safeguarding team and ambassadors. These engagements have been within school assemblies raising awareness of rail safety, behaviour on the railway and societal dangers faced, such as crime, child sexual exploitation, plus educational awareness of how to be an active upstanding bystander and using the British Transport Police Railway Guardian app while on the railway network.

Missing persons

Our safeguarding team continued their partnership with the Missing People CIC allowing our EIS app to be populated with images of Missing People who may be using our network so that all our frontline colleagues can access and assist with reuniting missing people with their families. Missing People report that three people a day speak to volunteers at the helpline saying they are at a train station or already on a train, proving the vital link, all train operating companies play.

Modern slavery

Southeastern has a modern slavery e-learning course principally aimed at senior managers, human resources, customer service and procurement. We're currently at 87% compliance on this, with 273 of 314 colleagues having completed the course, which must be completed every two years.



Supporting better health outcomes through CRP

Through our Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs), we support local initiatives to improve health outcomes of local residents:

- Supporting mobility: keeping people moving and active is important for good health outcomes. In 2023-24, in partnership with the Kent CRP we arranged for cycle rails to be installed on steps at five stations along the Maidstone East Line - this makes it easier for cyclists to access, cross the stations/ climb the stairs, and use their cycle routes to the full.
- This year, 12 guided walks have been organised by both the Kent and White Cliffs CRPs, to encourage activity and reduce ill health.
- Our Community Relations Manager regularly attends multi-agency meetings hosted by Kent County Council to develop a whole systems approach to tackling obesity. He also assisted Kent CRP with their stall promoting sustainable and healthy travel at the Faversham Festival of Transport.

Supporting our Vulnerable Customers

Ensuring that vulnerable individuals can travel by rail is essential for promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and social equity. For many, rail travel is a lifeline that enables access to essential services, employment, education, and social connections. Without adequate support, barriers such as physical disabilities, age-related challenges or mental health conditions may exclude these individuals from benefiting fully from public transport.

In 2023-24, our Customer Relations Team supported 23,971 customers to book assistance and a further 64,463 customers received support across our network on a 'turn-up-and-go' basis. Providing assistance, such as step-free access and staff support, not only empowers vulnerable passengers to travel independently but also enhances their confidence and dignity. It demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunities and aligns with societal values of compassion and fairness.

Feedback from our customers includes:

"All the staff were amazing and supported me throughout. I will always recommend this service to other disabled people, they need to know that travel is accessible to all. A fantastic service... please don't stop offering this service to the disabled community."

"I have told friends and family about the efficient, kind and helpful service. It made such a difference to my journey and to consider for future journeys by rail. The assistance was exceptionally helpful. It was the first time I had used assisted travel and I was so impressed by

the prompt kindly efficient service by everyone. I will definitely use it again. It is a very enabling service. It has made all the difference to me being able to travel by rail independently. Thank you."

"Excellent service; from booking and onward and return journeys. We got the impression that everyone enjoyed their job. This is an excellent, very valuable and much appreciated service. Accessibility is so important to the quality of life when someone is disabled and as a carr, I was reassured that I would be assisted when travelling by train."

Homelessness initiatives

There are existing multi-agency working groups across the network addressing safeguarding needs of numerous vulnerable individuals who present at stations. We work with Shelter UK to help address issues of homelessness, which we often see across our premises.

Our research into Homelessness continues, with the attendance at the Southern Stations Outreach Programme Board, led by Network Rail and Shelter UK.

Staff supporting local community groups

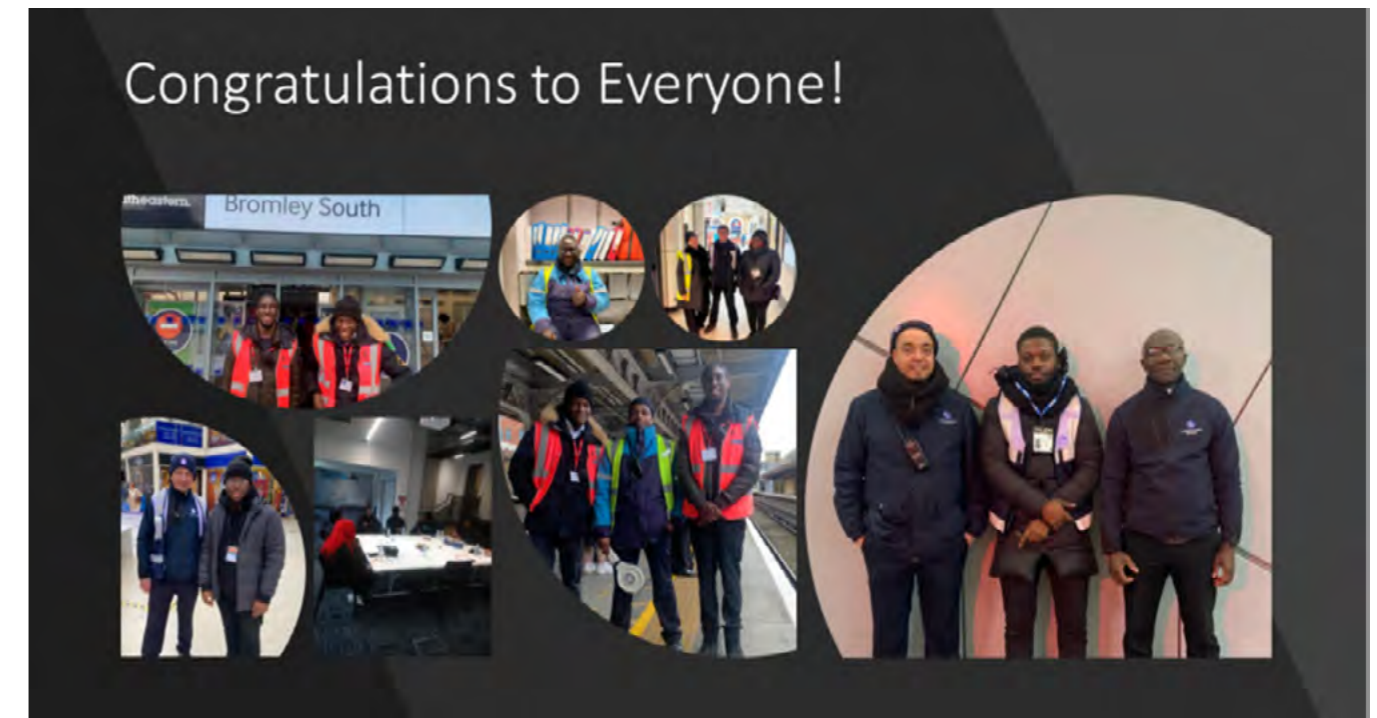
As we are embedded in, and part of, the local communities we serve, we support our local community groups in various ways: schools' outreach, volunteering, leveraging our premises for community spaces, and the CRPs.

Schools outreach

Engaging with and supporting regional schools is important for developing the next generation of local talent, as well as supporting efforts to encourage diverse populations into rail. Our outreach strategy sees Southeastern undertake several initiatives across the organisation. For example, the Recruitment Team manage the Schools Outreach Company partnership, the Safeguarding Team undertake safeguarding visits to tackle anti-social behaviour, the People Team lead on the Purpose Coalition partnership and Graduate Scheme, and the Engineering Team host open and career events. There are 84 schools on the Schools Outreach list. The schools are selected each year, based on recruitment activities in target areas where we traditionally get a lower uptake in applications. Three of the schools on this list are also on the list of schools published in the Purpose Coalition.

Southeastern's work experience programme now sees the company focus on developing key partnerships. Southeastern is working with four schools and one foster care organisation. 44 placements have recently taken place which is a 69% increase on the 2023 numbers. There has been increased visibility on Social Mobility resulting from our Partnership with Diverse

Care Foster group. Members of Southeastern have been guest speakers at an industry wide Social Mobility Panel (Rail Unites for Inclusion) Southeastern continues to partner with The Prince's Trust to deliver a 'Get into Work' programme, where we host young people coming through their charity who need a helping hand getting a taste of what employment at Southeastern looks and feels like. Many of the participants have struggled to gain employment due to personal circumstances, neurodiversity or for other reasons.



Colleague volunteering

Southeastern does not have a formal volunteering policy in place that allocates a set number of days colleagues can volunteer. Instead, this is managed locally and where possible colleagues swap shifts or get cover so that they can support causes that they care about. This is often facilitated via the Colleague Network Groups, whilst focusing on our organisational partners and programmes, such as the Schools Outreach Programme.

- For example, this year our Colleague Network Group members celebrated Pride (by taking place in the parade and hosting a recruitment stall at Canterbury Pride)
- Colleagues and our Community Team also give time to support the Community Rail Partnership events. For more information, please see the next sub-section.
- The finance team held an away day in Margate and in the afternoon undertook a giant litter pick to clean up the beach.

Leveraging our space as community spaces

The Hollingbourne Community Hub which opened last year after Southeastern invested over £131,000 in restoring the station is now thriving. A cafe is now in operation four days a week and is staffed by one paid employee and a team of volunteers. This provides a much-needed social hub in the village. The space is also let out to village groups, and regular activities such as film nights are held to raise funds for the project. A similar project is underway in Battle which will open its doors in early 2025.



We also leverage the use of our premises for local groups seeking better health outcomes, such as:

- Organising free parking at Charing station for staff at the local medical practice whilst large scale covid booster and flu vaccination sessions were taking place.
- Making our car parks available to the Sussex Outreach Project who bring medical and social support into the more rural areas on our network.

Supporting community projects via donations and contributions

Community Rail Partnerships

The Department for Transport's latest Community Rail Strategy sets out priorities for community investment, which we consider when allocating our yearly funding allocation of £225K through CRPs.

Our service contract agreement requires us to use, develop, and implement CRP initiatives to increase the use of passenger services by non-users and tourists, including the development and implementation of marketing strategies. In this reporting year, the funds were allocated to:

- Kent Community Rail Partnership - £100,000
- Southeast Communities Rail Partnership - £35,000
- Darent Valley Partnership - £30,000
- White Cliffs Partnership - £30,000
- Creative Isle Community Rail partnership - £30,000

Four key impact themes emerge from this investment:

1. Identifying, refurbishing (often with our support) and managing new community spaces for residents. These support local community activities, health, and community cohesion. Often this is through using our stations as community hubs.
2. Engaging with local schools and colleges, often for social cohesion, but also inclusion and experiential learning.
3. Beautification of local areas, from green spaces to public routes near the railway, and stations via 'Station Adoption' programmes. At the heart of the intent of 'Station Adoption' programmes is the recognition that stations are valuable community spaces, and in many small communities are the main hub for community activity. Use, and beautification, of these valuable community spaces is what drives these station adoption programmes.
4. Promoting their local area's natural beauty and walks, supporting tourism and local engagement in the wonderful nature on their doorstep.

We have a separate annual Community Rail Partnership impact report detailing the activities. In this report, we provide a summary here of relevant impact of our largest CRP.

Kent CRP

Kent CRP has historically worked at a consistently high standard and this year is no exception. They lead in collaborative working, fundraising, and running joint events with other community groups. In this year, they recorded a total of 2350 volunteering hours for their activities.

Their impact includes:

- Youth engagement, especially with Schools and Colleges. Sheppey College and secondary school have jointly adopted all stations on the Swale Line.



Case study: Sussex Outreach One You

1066 CRP have worked with Sussex Outreach to help deliver health and social support to rural parts of our network and have provided this case study.

Concept and aims: We have been working with Sussex Outreach Support to provide space for their community services. Off the back of the opening of the station community space at Battle we discussed the possibility of using that space along with the car park to provide services to local rural communities that are usually only available in larger towns. Services like, NHS health scans, Citizens Advice, rehab support, NHS Primary care.

As discussion progressed, we also looked at other rural stations. The aim was to encourage residents to attend but also to promote the future presence of the services.

What happened: We had six nights planned for the scanning unit to attend three rural station for two evenings at a time. A poster and social media campaign led to numerous bookings in advance. The events took place at Robertsbridge, Etchingham and Battle station. The "ONE YOU" vehicle was able to park in reserved spaces at the station car parks with the pop-ups from Citizens Advice, East Sussex Recovery Assist.

Over the three weeks they attended on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings at each site and were situated at the "down-side" station exits to be visible to the returning commuters.

Results: Over the six nights the team engaged with numerous customers and undertook 9, forty-minute, health consultations and two future bookings. The CAB and ESRA services also had numerous conversations and were visible to a couple of hundred returning commuters.

Impact: It is planned that Sussex Outreach Support will bring numerous services to the rural communities. This three-week project was designed to prepare the way for future events. Dr Sarah Jaques has a wealth of experience and is lining up numerous support services to appear at the rural stations. Many returning commuters were in a rush upon returning to the station, but the pop-ups and vehicle were positioned where they could clearly see their presence. We were able to establish that future events may well do better by being present in the morning to promote the evening events later in the week.

- Engaging with the Scout Association to help deliver training for the “Platforms for Change” badge.
- Supporting local health programmes, mainly via cycling and walking. Kent CRP’s line officers are trained ride leaders and in 2022 became North Downs Way Ambassadors, allowing them to lead walks and rides along the route.
- We continue to engage with Grow 19, a college for 19–25-year-olds with special educational needs, who in the past have provided gardening support at locations including Watlingtonbury and Cuxton. The college has formally adopted West Malling station.
- Working with Network Rail, an area of overgrown land at Charing has been cleared for ongoing work with Heath Farm School to create a learning garden for their students with special educational needs.

Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF)

In 2024, we launched our first ever Customer and Community Improvement Fund, through which we have invested £125,000 in 13 projects. This has been a gamechanger for charities, organisations and local community groups. This investment supports projects that deliver social value and reduce inequality and is part of a wider commitment to advance social mobility across Kent, south-east London and East Sussex.

The projects range from a choir tackling isolation and promoting community cohesion to schemes designed to give disabled and socially excluded people more confidence to use public transport by allowing them to “try a train” in a supported environment, as well as suicide prevention focused on making railway stations safer and offering mental health outreach activities.

Charity Donations Via Delay Repay

As part of our Delay Repay compensation scheme, customers have several payment options including the option to donate their compensation to charity. During 2023-24 we were pleased to have paid our nominated charities a total of £8,965.80, thanks to 1,189 customers generosity.

Among the charity options are two Southeastern chosen charities; Railway Children and Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, as well as Great Ormond Street Hospital, Cancer Research UK and Samaritans, who were chosen by our customers following survey research.

Supporting Charity Collections

We proudly support numerous charities that request collection opportunities at our stations. In 2023-24, we received 47 charity collection requests. These were organised across our entire network, benefiting a diverse range of causes.

4. Environment: Decarbonising and safeguarding our world

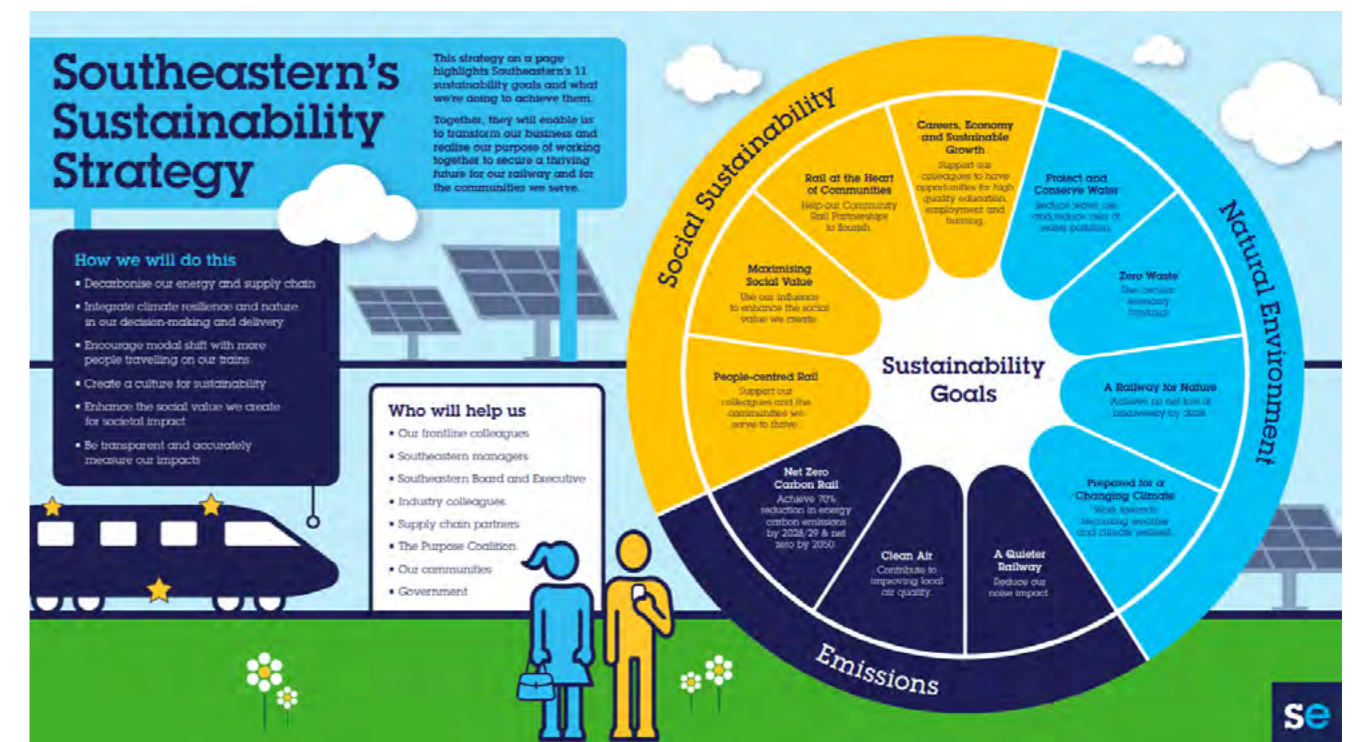
Operating in a socially and environmentally responsible way is part of our DNA with all-electric passenger train fleet supporting the communities we serve to decarbonise.

We know that travelling by train is one of the most environmentally sustainable ways of travelling – particularly on our all-electric railway.

Introduction

During 2023, we created our first Sustainability Strategy aligned with the Sustainable Rail Blueprint (SRB) developed by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) for the UK rail industry. Our Strategy is structured around three core themes of Natural Environment, Emissions and Social Sustainability with 11 Goals to help us realise our ambition of becoming a more sustainable railway. To help us achieve our Strategy ambitions, we have developed a delivery plan for each of the 11 Goals, with each owned by a senior leader in our business and progress reported to a newly created Sustainability Board.

By building our plan around the key principles of the SRB, we know we are focusing actions on the issues which are most important to UK Rail.



The changes we have delivered in 2023/24

Although our Strategy was only adopted in November 2023, we have already made rapid progress in delivering actions against many of our Goals.

To help communicate the ambitions of our Strategy, we redesigned the Environment pages of the Southeastern website to set out our ambitions and progress across our 11 Sustainability Goals. In this section, we set out the progress we have made across the Natural Environment and Emission themes of our Strategy.

Protect and conserve water

Our Goal – Reduce water use and reduce risk of water pollution.

We use water to clean our trains, engineering depots, stations and offices and to operate toilets and mess rooms. Water is an important and limited resource across the area we operate, so taking action to reduce our consumption is important to our business.

Our performance – During 2023/24, we reduced our water use by 43%, compared to the previous year.

Our achievements – During 2022/23, we installed large numbers of water meters across our estate. These water meters are now helping us to accurately measure our water use. They also assist us to identify where water use is higher than usual so we can investigate if there are leaks. Together these actions helped us to significantly reduce water use.

We use the framework provided by our Environmental Management System (EMS) to manage our sites and operations and minimise the risk of pollution events. Our EMS has been assessed as meeting the requirements of ISO 14001 since 2016.

Zero waste

Our Goal – Use circular economy thinking.

Our waste is created through maintaining and operating our stations, depots offices and trains and from the passengers we carry.

At Southeastern, we have targeted the high diversion of waste from landfill by using energy from waste alongside recycling.

We are also developing thinking to reduce the resources we need to operate our business by adopting circular economy thinking. This is an exciting inclusive economic model that aims to minimise pollution and waste, extend product life cycles, and promote the sharing and repurposing of physical and natural assets that will help us to reduce the resources we need to operate our business. We are working towards the adoption of a circular economy plan by the end of 2024-25.

Our performance – During 2023/24, we diverted 99% of waste from landfill and recycled 25% of our waste.

Our achievements – We continued to segregate a range of materials for recycling at our Engineering depots, including metal from maintaining train wheels, oils and glass. We also avoid waste by returning key parts of our trains such as wheel sets to industry suppliers so that they can be refurbished before being used again. This is an example of how our business uses circular economy thinking to reduce waste.

A railway for nature

Our Goal – Achieve no net loss of biodiversity by 2028.

At Southeastern, we love the green spaces across our network which nurture a wide range of plants, insects, and animals. Our ambition is to have even more biodiversity across our network, enabling nature to thrive. We want to enhance biodiversity by collaborating with our colleagues and communities.

We manage a large estate of stations, train crew and engineering depots and offices across Southeast London, Kent and parts of East Sussex. Many of these sites have small natural areas that support biodiversity, often connected to natural track side areas on the routes we operate and to green spaces adjacent to our stations and depots.

Our achievements – During 2023/24, we commissioned the Kent Wildlife Trust to help us develop our first Railway for Nature Plan. This Plan is focused on creating long term biodiversity improvements.

Our vision is to enhance biodiversity across the estate we manage by working with our colleagues, partners, communities, and suppliers. The delivery of our vision will be guided through actions that support the following three strategic objectives:

- Objective 1: No Net Loss of Biodiversity by 2028
- Objective 2: Biodiversity Net Gain by 2035
- Objective 3: Southeastern is recognised as contributing to regional biodiversity objectives by 2035

To enable us to start to deliver progress against these objectives, we created a plan for 2024/25 to enable us to develop:

- Southeastern in Bloom, a competition to support the development of gardens across our stations and depots.
- A small programme of biodiversity events at stations.
- Biodiversity surveys at 25 sites.

We will report on progress in our next social value report.

Prepared for a changing climate

Our Goal – Work towards becoming weather and climate resilient.

Preventing the worst impacts of climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Across our railway, we're already feeling the effects of changing weather patterns. We know we need to prepare for more extreme weather in the future and to find ways to minimise the impact on our people, the services we provide, and the communities we serve.

The physical impacts of climate change on our operations, along with our transition to net zero carbon, will create both risks and opportunities for our business. We believe that public transport, and particularly rail, has a vital role to play in securing the transition to a low carbon economy. We want to offer our customers reliable and good quality services, that are resilient to climate change impacts.

Our most recent assessment (2024-25) has defined our principal risk areas to be

Precipitation changes that may bring more intense and frequent rainfall and drier summers. Shifts could result in flooding, landslips, and strain on drainage systems, leading to service disruptions, higher maintenance costs, and reputational challenges.

Extreme weather, including heavy rainfall, heatwaves, storms, and high wind speeds. These events are expected to become more intense and frequent due to changing weather patterns, such as rising temperatures and stronger winds.

Increased temperatures could pose a significant risk to rail operations, with hotter days becoming more frequent and heatwaves more intense due to climate change. Higher temperatures can affect rail infrastructure, rolling stock, and colleague and passenger thermal comfort.

Interdependencies – Systems Thinking, our train operations are deeply interconnected with infrastructure, other train operating companies, supply chains, and external systems. This interdependence means that risks, such as extreme weather, power outages, or public health emergencies, can cascade across the network, amplifying their impacts.

Our achievements – During 2023/24, we:

- Published our second Climate Financial Disclosure, that sets out the risks and opportunities associated with the projected impacts of climate change.
- Held our first weather and climate resilience conference attended by around 140 colleagues and industry partners.
- Supported the Department of Transport with wider rail industry programmes to establish climate resilience.

A quieter railway

Our Goal – Reduce our noise impact.

Our business is part of and serves communities throughout Kent, southeast London and East Sussex. At times the operation of our stations, depots and trains can cause unwelcome noise for the communities closest to us.

We seek to be a good neighbour by managing the noise that comes from our operations and investigating the complaints we receive.

Our achievements – In November 2023, we adopted our first Environmental Noise Management Strategy which provides an overview and outline of Southeastern's strategic approach for addressing environmental noise. The Strategy provides a framework for Southeastern to proactively manage potential and emerging noise issues across our network. It outlines the main noise issues affecting Southeastern and proposes actions to reduce noise impacts from its operations.

Our Strategy objective is to deliver our noise management strategy which supports our goal of reducing our noise impact.

Clean air

Our Goal – Contribute to improving local air quality.

Our all-electric passenger train fleet has no direct tailpipe emissions, which is great for local air quality. We believe we can drive wider air quality improvements by encouraging people out of fossil fuel powered cars onto our trains. A community centric approach can allow us to support the communities we are part to reduce local air pollution.

We intend to minimise our air quality impacts by delivering our Air Quality Plan.

Our achievements – During 2023/24, we developed a Modal Shift Strategy that seeks to promote modal shift from cars to rail for all, or significant parts of passenger journeys. This Strategy will help us deliver our business ambitions of creating a better, more reliable and sustainable railway, helping us to grow passenger numbers and support economic growth. It will also support local and national policy goals of delivering a greener transport network and help to reduce local air pollution by encouraging people to choose rail over petrol- and diesel-powered cars. In 2024, we employed an Integrated Transport Manager to oversee this exciting new agenda.

We also continued to introduce our new small company road fleet of which 53% are now hybrid vehicles, and all ULEZ compliant. The roll out was completed in the summer of 2024.

Net zero carbon rail

Our Goal – Achieve 70% reduction in energy carbon emissions by 2028/29 and net zero by 2050.

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint guided by science-based carbon reduction targets. Our energy related carbon emissions have significantly reduced since our baseline year (2019). Our work will focus on reducing our direct carbon emissions, and those associated with our supply chain

Our achievements – In 2023/24, we set science-based targets which provide a clearly defined pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, helping us to prevent the impacts of climate change. Our targets have been approved by the Science Based Targets initiative and are in line with the latest climate science to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

We have committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions from our operations by 2035, with an extended ambition to become net zero across our entire supply chain by 2050.

Agreed science-based targets:

- **Overall Net-Zero Target:** SE Trains Limited commits to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across the value chain by FY2050.
- **Near-Term Targets:** SE Trains Limited commits to reduce absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by 70% by FY2029 from a FY2019 base year. SE Trains Limited also commits that 74% of its suppliers by emissions covering purchased goods and services, fuel and energy related activities and upstream transportation and distribution, will have science-based targets by FY2029.
- **Long-Term Targets:** SE Trains Limited commits to reduce absolute scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by FY2035 from a FY2019 base year and maintain at least 90% reductions through FY2050.

** SE Trains Limited also commits to reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions 90% by FY2050 from a FY2019 base year. The targets boundary includes land-related emissions and removals from bioenergy feedstocks.*

As well as setting targets, we delivered several projects to reduce our energy use and associated carbon emissions:

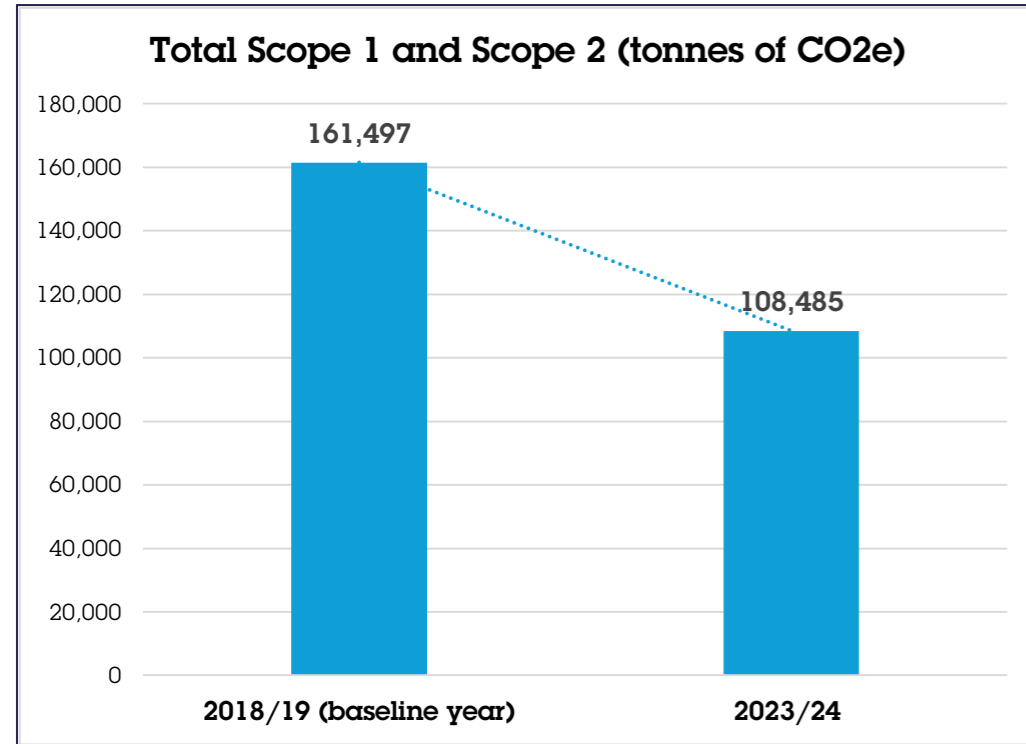
- LED lighting was fitted to 24 units of our Class 375 trains, completed in June 2023, a programme we had started in 2022/23. We estimate that across all 112 units in this fleet energy consumption will reduce by approximately 1,626,000 kWh and carbon emissions by approximately 343 tonnes of CO₂e* per year.
- LED lighting was fitted on our Class 395 trains, completed in March 2024, a programme we had started in the 2022/23. We estimate that across this fleet of trains energy consumption will reduce by approximately 284,000 kWh and carbon emissions by approximately 59 tonnes of CO₂e⁽ⁱ⁾ per year
- The first year of a 4-year LED investment programme was completed at our stations, it is estimated that the first year of this programme will reduce energy consumption by 665,000kWh and carbon emissions by approximately 150 tonnes of CO₂e⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ per year.

- (i) The estimated carbon savings presented in this section were calculated based on the approximate kWh of energy savings and the greenhouse gas reporting conversion factors for 2022 published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. They include transmission and distribution losses associated with our electricity consumption.
- (ii) The estimated carbon savings presented in this section were calculated based on the approximate kWh of energy savings and the greenhouse gas reporting conversion factors for 2023 published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. They include transmission and distribution losses associated with our electricity consumption.



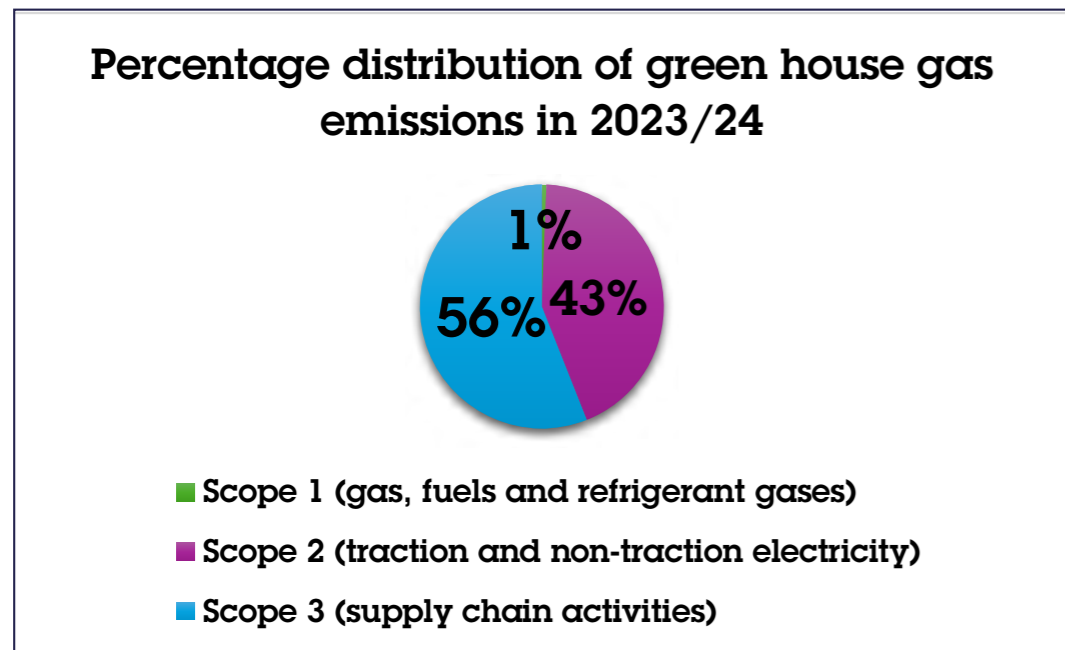
Our progress

In 2023/24, we reduced our Scope 1 and 2 emissions (mainly associated with energy use) by 32.8% compared to our baseline year of 2019.



The primary source of our emissions is associated with our supply chain (Scope 3), at 56%. In response, we have started to engage our supply chain partners in 2024/25, as we recognise that sustainability is a challenge best tackled together.

We will share the progress we have made through collaboration with our supply chain partners in our next Social Value Report.



5. Innovation: Promoting social innovation

Modal shift to trains

During 2023-24, we adopted our first Modal Shift Strategy that aimed to encourage more people to travel by our all-electric passenger trains. We believe that by encouraging people to switch to our train services, we have an opportunity to help communities reduce emissions of carbon, reduce local air pollution and noise otherwise produced by petrol- and diesel-powered cars.

The Plan is focused on five key areas:

1. Marketing and journey planning information that encourages more people to travel by train.
2. Continuing to improve the quality of our services.
3. Supporting seamless journeys that integrate first and last mile travel.
4. Building infrastructure that creates local opportunities.
5. Exploring opportunities for high value freight services.

Integrated Travel

In recognition of the role modal shift plays in reducing carbon emissions, Southeastern has created and appointed a new role for an Integrated Travel Manager. The aim of this role is to make the entire door-to-door journey as seamless as possible for passengers:

- By better connecting to other modes of travel across our region, we can make rail more inclusive, broaden access to opportunities and services, and reduce reliance on private vehicles, helping to alleviate road congestion and improve air quality.
- Work to date has focused on:
 - » Building a picture of active, shared and public transport provision across the Southeastern network and how well our trains connect to it.
 - » Engaging with colleagues, stakeholders, and shared transport operators to understand passenger needs and potential opportunities.
 - » Beginning to shape our comprehensive Integrated Travel Strategy.

We report further on this activity in our next report.

Carbon Offset added to journey planners

We all know that rail is a sustainable travel option and is a greener mode of transport than the car. Since early 2024, when Southeastern customers are booking tickets via our website or our app, they'll now automatically see the CO2 emissions they will save by choosing to travel with us rather than drive.

It will also put that saving into the context of day-to-day activities; like the number of times they could use the washing machine, boil the kettle and hours of TV they could watch instead. In the example journey below, between Tunbridge Wells and Hastings, 3.58kg of CO2 emissions are saved. Our new feature tells us that we could fully charge a smartphone 437 times with that amount of energy. That's more than a whole year of the usual overnight charge!



6. Next steps

This report serves as benchmark for Southeastern to build upon for future years. We recognise this is possible only with a commitment to and understanding of our goals. We will share this report with our colleagues and stakeholders.

Southeastern will continue to identify and act upon opportunities to deliver social value. We will work with our stakeholders, partners, and communities to create positive benefits and achieve our social purpose.

We have identified a series of actions for the 2024-25 reporting year. These include:

1. Further embed our work with the Purpose Coalition by championing the breaking down of barriers across rail and completing the Social Scopes Measurement Standard.
2. Produce periodic reports and insights on protective characteristics (including socio-economic background), qualifications and community work.
3. Renew certification, e.g., Investors in People, Menopause Friendly employer.
4. Break down barriers to promotion and access to employment to close the gender pay gap and promote careers in STEM recruitment activities.
5. Continue supporting community partners such as the King's Trust and the Community Rail Partnerships.
6. Launch an action plan to support the implementation of our Sustainability Strategy, over seen by a new Sustainability Board
7. Develop and deliver Southeastern in Bloom, and competition for stations, depots and offices to create gardens that encourage biodiversity.
8. Produce our first Adaptation Reporting Power submission to Defra setting out our assessment of the weather and climate change risks faced by Southeastern.
9. Develop our first Circular Plan that will focus on creating a pathway to reduce the resources we need to operate our business.
10. Deliver an industry leading sustainability focused SME engagement programme focused on three webinars.

Winston Churchill once said,

“

**We make a living
by what we get, but
we make a life by
what we give.**

”

