

# Transforming our Communities

Our Responsibility Framework  
Annual Report 2019/20





# Transforming our spaces

Electricity North West is proud to work with our communities to transform our spaces with our Land Beautification Project.

Working alongside councils, residents and local organisations we are creating and maintaining wildflower spaces to help vital pollinating insects and bring more colour and life to our communities.

Find out more [www.enwl.co.uk/transformingcommunities](http://www.enwl.co.uk/transformingcommunities)

Sponsors of the project  
across the North West

**Bolton**  
at Home





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## INTRODUCTION BY PAUL BIRCHAM

**Electricity North West own, operate and maintain the electricity network across the North West. From the busy city of Manchester to the rural towns of Cumbria, we provide a reliable flow of electricity to around 2.5 million homes and businesses and more than 5 million people.**

Our role is becoming increasingly important as demand for electricity increases and the UK starts to embrace low carbon technologies to meet its 2050 pledge of becoming carbon neutral.

Launched in 2019, we have made significant progress embedding our 'Transforming our Communities' framework within the business. In line with our Purpose and Principles, the framework demonstrates our actions to be a responsible employer and how we consider our regions social, economic and environmental issues, ensuring we are accountable now and in the future.

Over recent years the impact of climate change and the role of electricity in all our lives has changed, with all of us becoming increasingly dependent on it to help run our lives smoothly. In 2019 we also launched our 'Leading the North West to Zero Carbon' plan and have made significant progress in our decarbonisation efforts and continue our ambitious plans to invest £63.5 million to drive down our own emissions and help support our colleagues, business customers and partners to lower theirs (see page 16).

Whilst decarbonisation has been a priority for our business we have also made great strides in other key areas including enhancing local biodiversity through our 'Transforming our Spaces' project (page 20) and reducing our environmental impact. We have continued to improve opportunities for our colleagues, particularly around diversity and inclusion, colleague wellbeing and supporting our most vulnerable customers (see pages 7 - 13), all whilst delivering improvements to the essential service we deliver.

I am proud that we have achieved several industry firsts this year and celebrated new milestones across the business which has had notable benefits to our customers, communities and environment. This year we have also embedded an enhanced process to measure Social Return on Investment (SROI) to comprehensively assess the social impact of some of our initiatives (see page 28).

These milestones include, but are not limited to: launching our diversity and inclusion working group (page 08), becoming a Real Living Wage employer (page 10), becoming the first carbon literate Distribution Network Operator (DNO) (page 17) and the growth of our colleague-led fundraising scheme by over 1,000% (page 26).

This year Electricity North West has also been recognised for the third year as achieving green ratings in all performance categories in Ofgem's annual report, demonstrating our leadership as the top network operator in Great Britain.

At the end of this financial year the world was affected by the coronavirus pandemic and we saw a significant change to how we all live our lives and how we interact with our communities as a result. As a critical service provider, we understand how important it is to keep the power flowing to hospitals, key businesses and all our communities as a result of increased home working. By following robust and proactive guidelines we have been able to operate and continue to provide an essential service to our communities. The pandemic has inevitably had a profound impact on some of our business activities, but we have adapted to ensure we continue to support our partners, customers and communities and operate safely.

I am proud of the work our colleagues and partners have done this year. We continue to show progress and growth in all areas of our business, while putting the wellbeing and safety of our colleagues and customers at the heart of everything we do. Looking ahead, I am positive that we will continue to embed our framework and continue to progress in all our activities. With so much uncertainty with the current pandemic, our customers can continue to rely on us to provide a reliable flow of electricity across the network and to support charities and our partners within our region.



**Paul Bircham**

**Regulation and Communications Director**



# TRANSFORMING OUR COMMUNITIES RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

**Our responsibility as a business lies not only with providing an essential service, maintaining the electricity network and investing in the future of the North West, but ensuring we take a responsible approach in everything we do including how we treat our people and partners, our community and our environment.**

Introduced in 2018 and launched in 2019, our 'Transforming our Communities' framework has been developed in line with our company Purpose of 'Together we have the energy to transform our communities', and our Principles of being switched on, adaptable and taking pride.

Our Purpose and Principles sets out what we do, how we do it and how it shapes how we run our business. Our framework supports this and demonstrates how we consider social, environmental and economic impacts in all our activities and ensures that we adopt a responsible approach to everything we do. We want our colleagues to go home safely at the end of the day and to be proud of the organisation and what it does in their community.

Our framework is embedded across our business and is part of everything we do and our decision making process. The framework is divided into three key impact areas: our people and partners, our community and our environment. These are further divided into a number of goals which reflect issues that are important to our business, our customers and our colleagues. The framework outlines our commitments in each area, with each goal sponsored by a member of our Executive Leadership Team and regularly monitored by a cross-business steering group.

In this report we present a review of our activities over the last year, looking at how we have performed against the goals in our responsibility framework and our ambition for the coming year.



# OUR 2019/20 PERFORMANCE AGAINST OUR 2018/19 PLANS

The table below highlights what we said we would do in 2019/20 and the activities and actions from our performance this year against the plans we set out in our 2018/19 annual report.

	Goal/Commitments	What we said we would achieve in 2019/20 in our 2018/19 report	Status	Output
People and Partners	Tackling modern slavery at home and abroad. We will work to eliminate modern slavery	Review and maintain our modern slavery statement and ethics policy	✓	Updated our commitment to modern slavery and closely working with our colleagues and suppliers (page 12)
		Review and develop an action plan based on the recommendations from the SFA threat assessment visit	✓	
		Raise awareness of modern slavery issues with our colleagues and suppliers including the promotion of our 'Speak up' mailbox	✓	
		Set up cross-utility forum to help combat modern slavery further and share best practice with industry colleagues	✓	
	Being a responsible employer - We will encourage a first class supply chain that is high performing, ethical and safe, whilst ensuring human rights are adhered to and supporting a sustainable environment	Embed Supply Chain Charter in our procurement category plans	✓	Updated Supply Chain Charter and Responsible Business requirements included in tender process (page 10)
		Include plastic packaging requirements within the current tender process for waste services	✓	
		Review charter and ensure sustainability is embedded in our tender process	✓	
		Continue to focus on improving our safety culture and to embed positive challenge behaviours and policy compliance at all levels of the business	✓	
	Being a responsible employer and partner - we will strive to eliminate harm from anyone impacted by our activities (Health and Safety)	Strengthen our safety performance through initiatives and further policy	✓	100% of scheduled safety critical training completed and over 8,700 safety performance visits and a number of initiatives to support community safety (page 11)
		Focus on Sentinel Project - public safety posed by low hanging or fallen overhead lines	✓	
		Apply to be Forces Friendly employer to promote and embed military opportunities and encourage wider support	✓	
		Continue to review our work placement fresh-start opportunities and roll out appropriate opportunities	✓	
	Being a responsible employer and partner - we will work with communities to offer 'fresh starts' to talented people	Work with new diversity steering group and our recruitment team to ensure our roles reach as wide a demographic as possible	✓	We became a Friendly to Forces employer (page 10) Embedded of our Diversity and Inclusion group with several significant changes including supporting fresh start opportunities, supporting young people and engaging with ethnic communities (page 8)
		Submit an application to be accredited as a Real Living Wage employer	✓	
		Complete our review of contractor salaries	✓	
		Continue to raise awareness of mental health issues including physical, social and financial wellbeing	✓	
	Being a responsible employer and partner - we will strive to eliminate harm from anyone impacted by our activities (Wellbeing)	Identify and work with external charities who can support the work we do	✓	Increased internal communications and introduction of wellbeing champions (page 11) Provided additional support through partnerships for our colleagues and customers' wellbeing (page 8) Ongoing development, focusing on 2020/21 for launch
		Produce a mental health annual report for internal and external reporting	✓	
		Develop and launch our diversity strategy and a review of our recruitment and attraction strategies;	✓	
		Establish a colleague diversity working group to challenge thinking, build networks, provide support and promote activities	✓	
	Having a workforce that represents our community - we'll take action to ensure our workforce represents the communities we serve	Ensure gender neutrality in role profiles and recruitment advertising	✓	Established and embedded Diversity and Inclusion group (page 8) Look to make significant progress in 2020/21 Became a founding signatory of the Greater Manchester Good Charter (page 15) Developing as part of our Diversity and Inclusion group
		Support the newly launched Greater Manchester Combined Authority Good Employment Charter	✓	
		Continue to review, enhance and promote policies that are diverse and inclusive, such as family-focused policies etc;	✓	
		Review our new unconscious bias training pilot and agree a roll-out programme	✓	
Environment	Driving down our carbon emissions	Transform our estate to have onsite generation and storage to meet as much of our own energy demand as possible. Work with University of Salford to develop carbon neutral depots	✓	Development of exemplar carbon neutral depots in Blackburn and Oldham (page 15) Exceeded our carbon footprint target for the year through a number of initiatives and set a new target for 2020/21 (page 15)
		Make sure we have LED lighting at all appropriate Electricity North West locations and optimise our energy management systems to make sure we are using our energy as efficiently as possible	✓	
		Develop a new losses strategy which will set out how carbon emissions from network losses will be reduced	✓	
		Develop a new programme of initiatives to support carbon reduction activities in our communities	✓	
	Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions including supporting Community and Local Energy scheme	Encourage and enable our customers to connect low carbon technologies to our network at an affordable rate	✓	Development of initiatives for colleagues and customer to start their decarbonisation journey including first carbon literate DNO and the development of the 'top five actions' for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (page 16) Hosted three Community Connect events (page 18) Supported six community projects as part of our Powering our Communities Fund (page 18) Published our annual report ( <a href="#">here</a> on our website)
		Develop and launch a programme of activity to show leadership within our communities to support others to take action to reduce carbon emissions and enhance the delivery of our community and local energy strategy	✓	
		Develop an internal support programme to encourage colleagues to take action to drive down carbon emissions at work and at home	✓	
		Work with partners and stakeholders to understand our role in end-user energy efficiency	✓	
	Optimising waste and resource use	Continue to deliver Community Connects events	✓	Worked on alternatives with suppliers. First DNO to develop award-winning alternative to asphalt (page 19) Continue to research alternative equipment following success of asphalt trial (page 19) We diverted over 1,400 tons of waste from landfills (page 19). Worked with new suppliers to reduce further
		Promote the Powering our Communities Fund to support activity in our communities	✓	
		Publish an annual review to report on our progress and use outcomes to inform the development of our future business plans	✓	
		Include our plastic packaging requirements within the tender process for waste services	✓	
	Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems	Work with our logistics partners and suppliers to understand where single use plastic is introduced into the supply chain and explore alternative options	✓	Enhanced biodiversity through tree felling and restricting invasive species in our communities (page 21) Delivered Bright Sparks to 3,500 pupils (page 25) and participated in two science festivals (page 25) Continue to engage through introduction of secondary school roadshows, apprenticeship programme and career fairs (page 25) Colleague-led fundraising has increased by over 1000% from 2018 (page 26) Colleagues volunteering their time to causes that matter to them (page 26 and 27) Ensuring we are accountable for the value we add to our community, people and partners (page 28)
		Work with our cable joint supplier to find plastic alternatives for joint kitting components	✓	
		Identify a corn starch alternative to heavy duty bags	✓	
		Retender our waste contract, ensuring that we are able to extract more recycling benefits	✓	
Community	Inspiring next generation of engineers and employees - we'll support STEM subjects to create an industry pipeline	Continue to measure and manage recycling and work with our new supplier to identify ways of reducing waste further	✓	Significant milestones reached to support vulnerable customers including social mapping tool, increase in our Priority Services Register and local partnerships (page 23)
		Continue to identify any large volume non-recyclable items and work with our supply chain partners to identify viable alternatives	✓	
		Highlight existing practices, launch policies and principles and share our success to continue to highlight and promote activity in this area	✓	
		Develop further recommendations to enhance biodiversity within our region and develop guiding principles and policies to document our approach and share best practice with our colleagues and communities	✓	
	Supporting colleague-led community engagement - we will develop and promote colleague-led fundraising	Prioritise the existing Bright Sparks programme around business activities and review the way we measure its success	✓	Significant milestones reached to support vulnerable customers including social mapping tool, increase in our Priority Services Register and local partnerships (page 23)
		Review and develop support and materials for secondary schools and bring together colleagues who already support schools and colleges with talks and presentations about our work and industry	✓	
		Participate in science festivals in Manchester and Preston	✓	
		Continue to support school and college recruitment fairs and careers events in line with our people strategy. We will develop our approach to STEM ambassadors in line with colleague volunteering opportunities	✓	
	Supporting colleague-led community engagement - we will develop and promote volunteering opportunities for our communities	Promote colleague-led community fundraising activities internally and externally	✓	Significant milestones reached to support vulnerable customers including social mapping tool, increase in our Priority Services Register and local partnerships (page 23)
		Carry out a review of colleague social group funding	✓	
		Work to identify better ways to support our STEM and school ambassadors	✓	
		Continue to promote and communicate good examples and key messages on volunteering	✓	
	Expressing our regional economic impact - we will better understand and articulate our role in enhancing the economic prosperity of the North West	Develop a network of partners who can deliver opportunities aligned to this framework	✓	Significant milestones reached to support vulnerable customers including social mapping tool, increase in our Priority Services Register and local partnerships (page 23)
		Carry out a review of our strategic partnerships and memberships	✓	
		Continue to review the findings of the VoLL project as part of VoLL 2 and explore how to embed the findings within regulatory mechanisms with stakeholders	✓	
		Undertake 'willingness to pay' research to understand the potential value customers place on future initiatives	✓	
	Responding to consumer vulnerability - we'll take steps to understand and address consumer vulnerability	Undertake social and economic impact and value research to understand our contribution to the region in various scenarios e.g. low carbon etc	✓	Significant milestones reached to support vulnerable customers including social mapping tool, increase in our Priority Services Register and local partnerships (page 23)
		Carry out research to gain a greater understanding of regional vulnerability and social value	✓	
		Use our regional vulnerability and social value data mapping tool to inform partnerships and service development	✓	
		Continue to develop and maintain our Priority Services Register through collaborative partnerships	✓	





## Our people and partners

Our people and partners are instrumental in the delivery of all aspects of our business and are vital in transforming the communities we work in. It is their pride, passion and commitment that help us transform and provide the best service to our customers and communities in the North West. Health and safety continues to be a key focus area for us and this year we have made significant progress in other areas by becoming an accredited Real Living Wage employer and focussing on diversity and inclusion and our colleagues wellbeing. We have also introduced our supply chain partners to our framework and included requirements within the tender process.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

**Real  
Living Wage**  
accreditation  
achieved

**100%**  
of scheduled safety  
critical training  
completed and **8,700**  
safety performance  
visits carried out

**Diversity  
and inclusion**  
embedded

Renewed our  
commitment to  
**Modern Slavery**

Established  
role of our  
**mental health  
champions**

**1st**  
Diversity  
and Inclusion  
Survey





## GOAL - Having a workforce that represents our community

We will take action to ensure our workforce represents the communities we serve in the areas of attraction, recruitment, retention and legal compliance.

Having a workforce that is representative of the communities in which we live and work is a key part of our framework. Electricity North West serves over five million people from a variety of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds across the North West of England. We recognise that the electricity industry has been typically male-dominated, and we know that there is more that we can do to ensure our workforce is reflective of our diverse regional cultures and the important role we play in providing opportunities through our activities.

This year we have made significant progress and reached new milestones across the business including:

- Signed up as a Disability Confident Employer.
- Founding signatory of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter - a voluntary scheme designed to help deliver good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop.
- Partnered with Business in the Community to help assess and review our diversity policy and the activities we put in place to ensure we are providing the best services and opportunities to our community.
- Established our diversity and inclusion working group to improve our approach to diversity and inclusion and wellbeing.
- Partnered with five local schools to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and our apprenticeship programme providing knowledge, opportunity and growth to the next generation of engineers and employees (see more on pages 24 and 25).
- Completed unconscious bias training with our operational teams to support recruitment. This is a significant stepping stone on our diversity and inclusion journey.
- Promoted National Women in Engineering Day through our social media platforms with the inclusion of eight case studies of our own female engineer employees, with over 60,000 opportunities to see the posts and 1,500 engagements with them.
- Established a strong wellbeing focus across the business working with external partner 'Mates in Mind'.

### Naomi Hutcheon, Control Engineer

"Don't be discouraged - if you want to be an engineer, go for it! If you fear it's out of your comfort zone, push yourself more."

"In all my roles, on site and in the office, I have never been treated as a 'female engineer', just an engineer. I have found the electricity industry to be welcoming, with equal opportunities."



### Nicole Cain, Overhead Lines Worker

"I am an overhead lines worker with the south operations team, my role is to upgrade existing power lines and build new for increased demand."

"The thing I love most about my job is being able to travel and see new places around the North West while learning and doing a job that I love."



### Creating a diverse and inclusive environment

We know that utilities are one of the least diverse sectors in the UK and job applications to Electricity North West from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community are low.

As part of our diversity and inclusion agenda, we conducted our first ever internal diversity and inclusion survey to understand our colleagues view of the workplace and our communities. With over 500 participants, we are able to better understand diversity and inclusion in the business and identify gaps that need addressing.

**76%**  
feel included  
at work

**79%**  
believe in the  
importance of having a  
diverse and inclusive  
workplace

**86%**  
believe having a  
diverse workplace  
helps the success  
of the business

We have taken significant steps this year to engage our colleagues and communities to improve our approach. We recognise this is a journey and next year we will look to educate all our colleagues on the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive workforce, what this means to us and how we can tap into potential ethnic communities. We will continue to promote and engage diversity and inclusion within our business and communities.



**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN  
In ENGINEERING DAY**

**23 June 2020**

### Ellie Chandler, Higher Level Distribution Engineer Apprentice

"I help engineers with a variety of different projects from reinforcing the network, to assisting with service connections. It means that I am able to help improve the network and provide a reliable electricity supply to our customers."

"What I love about my job is being able to see a difference once a job is complete and know I have done something to help improve the network and the electricity supply to my community."



### Dr Geraldine Paterson, Innovation Strategy & Transition Engineer

"As part of the innovation team I am responsible for our Innovation Strategy which sets out the direction we need to take as a business to help meet the decarbonisation targets set down by national and local government."

"Most people think of grease and machines when they think of engineering and there is much more to it than that - there is a wide range of skill sets needed in the industry."







## Working in partnership with local mosques

As part of our diversity and inclusion journey, we recognised the importance of engaging with our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) customers. We wanted to try something different and through the support of our colleagues we reached out to two local mosques to establish a partnership where Electricity North West can support fantastic local charity work, understand more about the prejudices faced by BAME applicants and showcase our career opportunities.

The partnerships were established in July 2019 at the Madina Institute in Oldham and the Mashid E Sajedeen in Blackburn. We are really proud of our achievements so far with the support of the Chairmen and committees at both mosques. Through these partnerships we were able to facilitate events at both mosques showcasing the vast career opportunities at Electricity North West. Over 300 people attended the events which were supported by our Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, HR and Training colleagues and existing apprentices. The events also gave us an opportunity to proactively engage with ethnic minority communities, promoting what we do, our values, our diversity and inclusion agenda and how we build careers and support training and development.

Since the engagement we have already seen an increase in applications from ethnic minority groups and continue to build our relationships within these communities. We have agreed with the Chairmen to promote career opportunities to advertise our roles, reaching untapped potential in the BAME communities. We are also working with both mosques as part of our 'Transforming our Spaces' project where Electricity North West colleagues and members of the mosque will work together to transform a local area in 2020/21.

### Wajid Mohammad, committee member from the Madina Institute, said:

"We were approached by Electricity North West who suggested working together as a partnership in trying to get underrepresented groups interested and applying for positions with them. This sounded like a great initiative and agreed to take part.

"We held an open evening at the mosque and the response was very impressive. Feedback from the attendees was very positive and it is refreshing to know that there are employers out there who are taking proactive steps to engage local communities.

"We are proud to be involved in this project and hope that this relationship continues to grow from strength to strength."



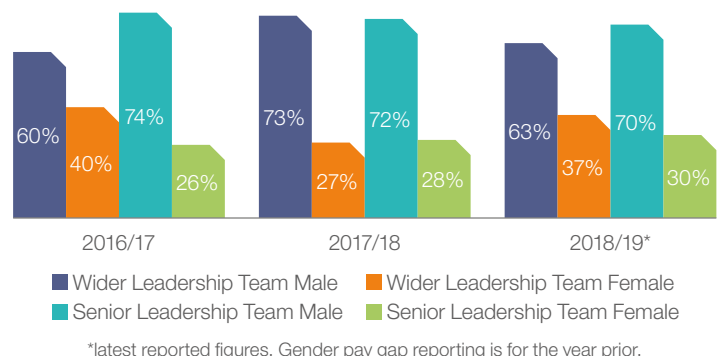
Our colleagues leading a career fair at the Masjid E Sajedeen, mosque in Blackburn.

## Gender pay gap

Although this is only the third year of reporting, the trends suggest we are going in the right direction and we are dedicated to building on the progress we have made to date. The number of women in our business has maintained at 25% in 2018/2019, however we have seen some positive developments, including women moving into more senior roles across the business. Female representation at our senior leadership level has increased by two percentage points to 30% and female representation at our wider leadership level has increased by ten percentage points to 37%. Since April 2018, female representation at senior leadership level has increased and we have met our commitment to have 30% female representation at our senior leadership by 2020, which is line with the North West Business Leadership goal.

We are only in year three of reporting our [Gender Pay Gap](#) and we know we have a long way to go, with women making up only a quarter of our population, but we also believe diversity goes beyond gender. We are on a long journey and we are working hard and we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.

### Leadership representation by gender



## OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Meet requirements for Disability Confident level 2 and potentially level 3
- Continue to meet and build on the requirements of being a Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter signatory in all elements of diversity and inclusion
- Maintain and enhance the work we are doing with our five partnered schools
- Roll out unconscious inclusion training to all leadership population by the end of the 2022 financial year
- Implement new tracking system to measure accessibility standards
- Continue our commitment to reducing our gender pay gap
- Development of our diversity and inclusion strategy
- Continue our engagement in ethnic minority communities
- Increase number of female candidates for engineering roles and candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds by 20%
- Continue to work with both mosques including transforming their local area as part of our 'Transforming our Spaces' project



### GOAL - Being a responsible employer and partner

We pride ourselves on being a responsible employer, ensuring that we put the health, safety and welfare of our colleagues, customers and partners at the forefront of what we do.

We continue to invest in and support our people and partners as we know that we have a vital role to play and without their commitment, passion and dedication we would not be able to provide the best service to our customers, communities and our environment.

#### Accredited Real Living Wage employer

We are delighted that in December 2019 we achieved the Real Living Wage accreditation. Electricity North West have nearly 2,000 employees and work with a number of contractors. In 2018 we reviewed all our colleague's salaries to ensure we were paying them a fair and reasonable salary and the accreditation recognises that a hard day's work deserves a fair pay.

In addition, we want to use our business to improve the earning potential of those within our communities and beyond to those who don't directly work with us. As part of our accreditation we've also developed a three-year plan to work with our suppliers and service providers to guarantee we only work with contractors and service providers who either are already accredited or are working towards the Real Living Wage accreditation.

#### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Review colleague salaries annually and amend where needed
- Retain our Real Living Wage accreditation
- Review apprentice pay
- Review tender process and contracts to encourage contractor pay is in line with the Real Living Wage



Electricity North West CEO, Peter Emery and HR Director Rachael Parr. Appointed HR Director April 2020.

**We will encourage a first-class supply chain that is high performing, ethical and safe, whilst ensuring human rights are adhered to and supporting a sustainable environment**

Our actions are embedded in our [Supply Chain Charter](#) to ensure that we are able to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits. In addition it sets out our expectations for all our partners within our supply chain.

To ensure we continue to operate this way we have embedded our 'Transforming our Communities' framework into the charter. This year we have reviewed our contracts and specifically retendered our waste contract to ensure that we and our partners are aligned to the same goals and commitments. This comes following our first review of the Supply Chain Charter this year.

#### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Perform assurance check for top 20 suppliers to validate that they operate in line with requirements of the Supply Chain Charter
- Conduct a trial to use an alternative to diesel with our generator supplier
- An electric van supplier will be secured through Selectus work
- Increase number of suppliers signed up to be Real Living Wage employers

**We will work with communities to offer 'fresh starts' to talented people**

As part of our ongoing commitment to make Electricity North West a more diverse place to work we are proud to have received accreditation as a Friendly to Forces employer. We are encouraging those that have left or due to leave the armed forces to consider their future career with Electricity North West and recognising their comparable skills, abilities and talent within our business.

Electricity North West realises how daunting it is to apply for work straight out of school and how complicated and technical job applications can be. Working with year 11 pupils at a local secondary school, they helped to review our job adverts and ensured the wording was clear and considered all individual demographics. As a result, we have redrafted our adverts and online wording to encourage engagement and increase applications from younger applicants.

We have also increased our promotion of our apprenticeship programme, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), and Electricity North West by attending 18 career fairs and launching secondary school roadshows. To find out more about our apprenticeship programme and inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees on pages 24 and 25.

#### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Achieve silver accreditation as a Friendly to Forces employer
- Reach out to a charity (i.e. Turning Point) to find out how we can work with them to offer new starts
- Strive to achieve social mobility accreditation
- Continue to target ethnic minorities and women in our recruitment





## GOAL - We will strive to eliminate harm from anyone impacted by our activities

Maintaining an electricity distribution network can be hazardous and we take the health and safety of our colleagues, contractors and customers extremely seriously. We aim to eliminate both physical and wellbeing harm from anyone impacted by our activities.

### Supporting wellbeing

Our overall goal for our colleagues' wellbeing is that each individual should leave work as happy and healthy as when they arrived – if not better.



Since the signing of the 'Time to Change' mental awareness pledge in 2018 we have embedded our pledge within the business, delivering a clear wellbeing vision for our colleagues. There has been a clear focus and a lot of activity to support reducing the stigma and any discrimination of mental health, empowering our colleagues to maintain and improve their wellbeing and ensure we see signs and take the steps to support and rehabilitate.

This year we benchmarked ourselves against other organisations through 'Thriving at Work' standards and Business in the Community (BITC) to identify gaps. This allows us to shape our plans further to better support all employees, including those with mental health problems to remain in work and thrive.

We have also held a number of engagement sessions with our colleagues to understand views, opinions and thoughts on wellbeing and how we could improve our support in the business for managers and colleagues. In response we have a senior leadership steering group that has created a direction of change for the business across four workstreams to help achieve our overall vision, as well as working with key partners such as MIND and Right Steps, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and Mates in Mind.

We have a number of mental health champions across the business who support the vision and provide support to the network. Our aim is to improve our colleagues' overall wellbeing, by focusing on the four key areas, financial, physical, social and mental health.

Since our increased engagement and communication on wellbeing, colleague satisfaction (as reported in our annual climate pulse survey) has increased by 4% and the volume of colleagues accessing our Occupational Health and/or employee assistance programme has increased by 7%. We have also seen an increase in EAP support from 46 – 187 since the launch.

#### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Meet the requirements for Thriving at Work in 2021
- Roll out training across the business to raise awareness of mental wellbeing and support the four key areas of wellbeing
- Establish partnerships with external charities. We have recently become a supporter of Mates in Mind, a recognised expert in this field and will work with them to continue to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues
- Continue to work with BITC on our wellbeing approach
- Increase engagement with our Employee Assist Programme

### Health and safety

Safety is at the heart of everything we do at Electricity North West and we continue to be committed to achieving the highest standards of safety and protection for our colleagues, customers and environment.

This year we have again seen significant improvements across the board and our continued focus on our safety culture has resulted in a further reduction in the frequency rate of our lost time injury of 0.047 and a total recordable injury rate of 0.130. Our injury frequency rate is measured using the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) methodology and is a calculation of the number of injuries sustained per 100,000 hours worked.

Over the past three years we have continued to promote several important initiatives including Golden Safety Rules, High Hazards Life Saving Rules, regular safety bulletins and have recently introduced our safety toolbox talks, designed to keep colleagues as safe as possible in the workplace.

As a result of the support and commitment of our colleagues to embed a positive health and safety culture across the business we have seen an improvement across the board in health and safety performance including over 2,000 positive challenge reports, 100% completion of safety training and 8,700 safety performance reviews.

Measure	2017/2018 Target	2017/2018 Actual	2018/2019 Target	2018/2019 Actual	2019/2020 Target	2019/2020 Actual
OSHA lost time injury frequency rate	0.100	0.036	0.075	0.047	0.075	0.024
Near miss reports	7,500	14,293	8,000	12,250	8,000	11,261
Positive challenge reports	750	1,257	1,000	1,580	1,000	2,048
Safety training attendance	95%	96%	95%	97%	100%	100%



### Going the extra mile for our customers and community safety

We continue to help manage community safety through proactive initiatives. In July 2019 heavy rainfall caused damage to the dam wall at Whaley Bridge which had the potential to devastate an entire community. We worked with local resilience forums to protect electricity supplies in the local area from flooding while emergency efforts took place to secure the dam wall.

We regularly work closely with the National Farmers Union (NFU) to ensure farmers safety when working around our network, promoting the '[look up, look out campaign](#)'. We also promote public safety messages across our social media channels and website for parents, guardians and children and their safety around our equipment, especially during school holidays.

In 2017 the Grenfell tragedy brought greater scrutiny to safety in high rise multi-occupancy buildings (MOBs). Since then, Electricity North West identified 120 potential high-risk buildings and introduced their Rising and Lateral Mains programme which utilises a technology called a 'weezap' to remotely monitor the electrical distribution system in high rise buildings 24/7. We are now able to detect early signs of faults and remotely disconnect the building from supply when a fault is detected to ensure no further damage.

Since then we have embedded our approach across 5,265 homes we serviced this year in MOBs. We have invested £675,000 in the development of innovation of weezap circuit breakers and in January this year our technology helped to avert a major fault at a tower block in Trafford, where a water leak had caused a fire in the electrical riser. Based on this isolated incident alone our intervention delivered a Social Return of Investment benefit of £1,201,021 (see page 28).

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Strengthen our safety performance including updating HSE policy and standards in line with ISO 50001
- Continue to improve our safety culture and implement policy compliance at all levels of the business with a focus on high-risk activities
- Deliver safety behavioural training course to all colleagues
- Report full health and safety performance in our annual Health and Safety report



## GOAL - Acting on modern slavery - at home and abroad

### We will work to eliminate modern slavery

As a customer-facing business we visit both domestic and business properties throughout the North West of England and recognise the role we play in helping protect our communities and having the ability to identify and report potential instances of modern slavery.

This year we renewed our [Modern Slavery Statement](#) to ensure it appropriately describes our developing approach to addressing modern slavery. We are a founding member of the Slave Free Alliance (SFA), a social enterprise and membership initiative launched by anti-slavery charity Hope for Justice, which exists to bring an end to modern slavery. The SFA now has over 70 members across many industries. This year we have worked with the SFA to use best practice to improve our approach to mitigating modern slavery risks. In addition, we have helped set-up a cross utility forum, the Utilities Sector Modern Slavery Working Group, which looks to bring a consistent and collaborative approach to addressing modern slavery risks across the utilities sector.

As part of our 2018/19 commitment to raise awareness amongst our colleagues and suppliers, modern slavery training has been embedded in several e-learning packages and supported by Hope for Justice who have helped to identify the signs of modern slavery.

We have also put the necessary processes and mechanisms in place for our colleagues to report any potential modern slavery infringements safely and anonymously through our 'Speak Up' mailbox and continue to promote this through our internal communication platforms.

Our focus this year has also been to further enhance our supplier due diligence processes to aid compliance with our commitment to prevent slavery and human trafficking being present in any part of our business. This year we contacted over 1,000 suppliers to ensure they are clear on Electricity North West's stance on ethical matters including Modern Slavery.

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Continue to work with SFA to provide refresher training for our procurement and commercial teams to understand risk areas within our supply chain relating to modern slavery
- Perform a threat assessment review with SFA on our approach to modern slavery
- Support suppliers and vendors to ensure they recognise modern slavery
- Re-issue modern slavery training to over 2,000 colleagues





# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Our response to our people and partners during the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic started to affect the UK in March 2020, and like many organisations we have had to make significant changes to how we operate and how we support our colleagues, customers and partners. Following government guidance, we have put the necessary social distancing measures in place for our colleagues and customers. At the start we quickly put in place processes to allow half our workforce to work from home and for those colleagues who could not, we ensured the correct policies and guidelines were in place to ensure they were kept safe. We have provided additional sanitisers and PPE and increased cleaning regimes across all of our depots and offices.



Our colleagues volunteering time to support our partner The Bread and Butter deliver food parcels to customers during the pandemic.



We have kept our colleagues updated, of the often fast changing situation with regular communications across multiple platforms of any changes to regulation or policies. In the first four months of the pandemic we provided more than a hundred updates to colleagues and had over 14,000 visits to the dedicated internal intranet site. We have provided a number of wellbeing platforms and communications to our colleagues and continue to contact thousands of customers on our Priority Services Register (PSR) to ensure their details are up to date and where additional support is required, putting them in touch with partner organisations and promoting our 105 emergency service number.

Electricity North West carried out work at the purpose-built Nightingale Hospital and increased reinforcement work on other hospitals, health care and essential manufacturing infrastructure to ensure a consistent, reliable electricity supply throughout the pandemic and beyond. As we introduced our Empowering our Communities fund this year, we paid our partners up front to ensure they could continue to provide their essential service to our vulnerable customers and communities during this time without worrying about financial implications. In addition, we have continued to provide additional time, equipment and monetary donations to our partners to continue their support throughout the pandemic.

We will continue to work closely with our colleagues and partners to ensure their safety and wellbeing during this time.





## Our environment

Rapid decarbonisation is critical if we are to limit global warming. Through investment and innovation, as the regional network provider, we play a major role in helping the North West meet its carbon reduction targets.

Our role is significantly changing, electricity distribution is no longer one directional (from generator to consumer). It has become increasingly multidirectional and with the inclusion of generation and low carbon technologies such as electric vehicles it has become a lot more complex than before. To be a responsible business we not only have to change the way we operate but also influence and challenge the behaviour of our colleagues, stakeholders and customers and ensure they have the necessary tools, skills and information to reduce their own environmental impact.

We have committed to invest £63.5 million between 2019 to 2023 to ensure we drive down our own carbon emissions and help businesses, our customers and our colleagues to do the same. However, our commitment to the environment extends beyond our carbon emissions performance and recognises our role in optimising waste, including plastic and resource use and increasing our commitment around biodiversity and ecosystems.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

**1st**

Carbon literate  
DNO

**Nine**

Sites transformed  
as part of our  
'Transforming our  
Spaces' project

**100%**

renewable  
energy powering  
our depots and  
offices

**2,458 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

reduction on  
2018/19





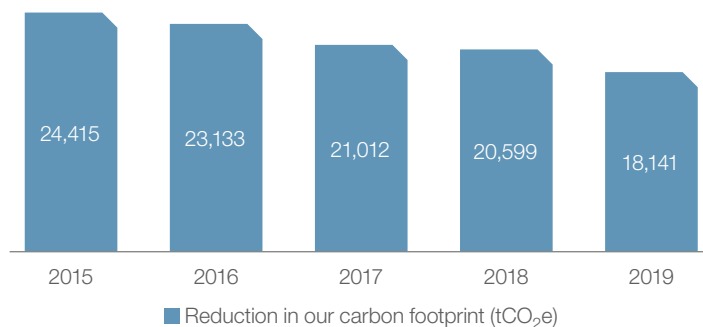
## GOAL - Driving down our carbon emissions

### We will drive down our operational carbon footprint and emissions related to network losses

Electricity North West is leading the transition to net zero by example. Following the launch of our 'Leading the North West to Zero Carbon' plan we have made significant improvements to decarbonise how we operate and maintain the network, alongside decarbonising our own offices and depots.

We are striving to reduce our carbon footprint year-on-year and this year has been no exception with a reduction of 2,458 tCO<sub>2</sub>e compared to 2018/19 making this year's total 18,141 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and successfully reducing our carbon footprint by 26% from our 2015 baseline.

#### Our yearly carbon footprint (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)



We are leading the way in the region's transition to a low carbon economy and have agreed with our Sustainability Advisory Panel that from our next regulatory price review period, RIIO-ED2 covering 2023/28, we will adopt a glidepath to become carbon neutral from our own operations by 2038. To do this we are putting in the necessary plans that will support this goal and have already implemented a range of initiatives and industry firsts.

### 100% renewable energy

Previously we purchased approximately 19,401 MWh of energy which is equivalent to 5,492 CO<sub>2</sub> tonnes. In 2019 we changed our energy source to Walney Wind Farm off the coast of Cumbria. The wind farm now provides Electricity North West offices and depots with a 100% renewable energy.



### Carbon neutral depots

Our research has indicated that other businesses want support and guidance on which low carbon technologies to implement. We are investing over £1 million to create two net zero carbon exemplar depots in Blackburn and Oldham. We will use these depots as case studies to help other businesses reduce their buildings emissions. Changes to the depots include installing solar panels, ground source heat pumps, enhanced insulation, mechanical systems and electric vehicle charging points.

### Reducing emissions from equipment

This year we also became the first DNO to purchase four state-of-the-art JCB electric mini diggers. These diggers are fully electric with zero exhaust emissions and are five times quieter than our diesel counterparts. Alongside this we have trialled alternative fuel tools and introduced the use of battery chainsaws in the vegetation management team which has an approximate saving of £450 on fuel per annum. We are constantly looking at greener alternatives to our current operations.



First DNO to purchase JCB electric mini diggers.

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Complete our two carbon neutral depots
- Continue the roll out of carbon literacy training to our leadership team
- Continue to look for greener alternatives to our equipment
- Roll out LED lighting across our non-operational sites
- Continue the roll out of electric vehicle (EV) charging points at our depots and incentivise colleagues to change to an EV
- Continue to develop a plan to minimise losses from our network
- Carry out research into the embodied carbon in our substation design
- Achieve a carbon emissions target of 18,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e pa



## GOAL - Helping customers and colleagues drive down carbon emissions

### We are working with customers and colleagues to encourage efficiency

Our responsibility not only sits with our own actions but with supporting our customers and colleagues to reduce their own carbon emissions. This year we have enhanced our engagement and introduced several resources to help guide and support our customers and stakeholders to adopt low carbon technologies including:

- Broadening our business to business and local authority (LA) engagement around low carbon, which has informed how we position ourselves in this area across the region.
- Developing an energy balance sheet for the 10 LAs in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to show energy consumption and what needs to be done to meet demand with locally-connected renewable energy.
- Support the replacement of older street lights with LEDs in Cumbria.
- Provide energy efficiency advice and information on our website.
- Joined the Manchester Climate Change Partnership.
- Conducting research and developing plans for the North West, collaborating with Cadent Gas to provide decarbonisation pathways, which will stimulate adoption of low carbon technologies by providing near to mid-term certainties around the future of energy.
- Conducted research into the barriers to adoption of solar PV and electric vehicle charging infrastructure by industrial and commercial customers.
- £18 million allowance granted for our Smart Street project from our regulator, Ofgem. This key network voltage optimisation project is set to deliver lower electricity bills for thousands of our customers and significantly help to reduce carbon emissions across our region.

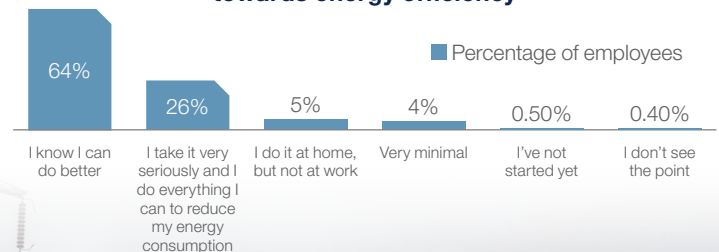
### The Big Carbon Survey

We conducted 'The Big Carbon Survey' with colleagues to understand their carbon footprint and knowledge of energy efficiency. We asked colleagues to rate their behaviour towards energy efficiency at home and at work. Through the survey we were able to identify possible opportunities and gaps where Electricity North West could provide additional support to colleagues in reducing their carbon footprint. This includes providing energy efficiency advice, promoting other means of transport (electric vehicles, car sharing or public transport) as 80% of our colleagues drive to work, 58% of which have diesel vehicles and promoting renewable energy (heat pumps, solar panels) as 93% of colleagues do not have renewables in their home.

We are currently reviewing how we can support our colleagues and change behaviour and have already achieved the following:

- Adding electric vehicles to our internal car scheme
- Increasing the financial limit of our cycle to work scheme to enable electric bicycles to be purchased
- Promoting more online meetings to reduce travelling
- Regular energy efficiency advice for colleagues
- Regular internal reminders regarding turning off devices when not in use (air conditioning, lights, computer screens)

### How colleagues rate their behaviour towards energy efficiency







## Supporting Small Medium Enterprises to reduce their carbon emissions

In partnership with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research we have produced the 'top five actions' for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to help them start their decarbonisation journey. The reports provide detailed guidelines on the immediate steps that different types of businesses can take to help tackle climate change by reducing their carbon emissions from direct energy use associated with buildings, indirect energy use in buildings and emissions associated with commuting, business and customer travel.

The report recommends best practice interventions for specific business areas including the maximum potential carbon reduction.

To view all five reports visit our website [here](#).

### Warehouse and factories

Maximum potential carbon reduction: 24-34%

### Non-food retail

Maximum potential carbon reduction: 27%

### Hotel

Maximum potential carbon reduction: 36%

### Food retail

Maximum potential carbon reduction: 25%

### Air-conditioned offices

Maximum potential carbon reduction: 30%

Measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the non-food retail sector



Measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for the food retail sector



Measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for warehouses and factories



Measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for hotels



Measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for offices



## First Carbon Literate DNO

We are delighted to be the first DNO to receive a Bronze award from the Carbon Literacy Project. We are committed to developing a carbon literate workforce and we are proud that 64% of our colleagues said they wanted to be more energy efficient. We are in the process of rolling out carbon literacy training to all of our leadership team, which will help us to achieve our silver status. All colleagues who take part in the training develop actions plans for how they will reduce their carbon footprint by 10%.

**Carbon Literate Organisation**  
Bronze



**These actions will deliver a socioeconomic benefit of £109,945 – a multiplier of x1 for every £1 investment this year.**

Our momentum to silver status has been delayed by the recent coronavirus pandemic, however plans are now being developed to deliver the rest of the training virtually.

## OUR PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Achieve Silver Carbon Literacy training award
- Deliver a business-to-business engagement campaign to enable them to take action to decarbonise
- Continue to engage with local authorities to support their decarbonisation ambitions
- Understand the role we can play in removing the barriers to the adoption of solar PV and electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Deliver two carbon neutral depots and work with the Manchester Climate Change Partnership to deliver exemplar carbon neutral buildings as case studies for others
- Roll out innovative technology to help the adoption of low carbon technologies and reduce emissions i.e. Smart Street
- Develop activity to support rural communities in Cumbria with EV charging infrastructure to show leadership in this area
- Continue our collaboration with Cadent Gas on decarbonisation pathways for the region. Our decarbonisation pathways provide energy blueprints to inform decision making and investment planning for the adoption of low carbon technologies for Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria



## We will support community and local energy schemes to address network constraints and other business priorities such as vulnerable customers and communities

We recognise the key role community-led energy projects play in decarbonising energy systems and the transition from Distribution Networks Operator (DNO) to Distribution System Operator (DSO). However, community and local energy groups are facing unprecedented challenges to grow their projects across the UK and therefore require professional support and funding tools.

This year we hosted three Community Connects events which are designed to support community groups increase capacity and skills within the sector and provide us with an opportunity to engage. We published an annual Community and Local Energy Strategy which outlines our commitment to the top three stakeholder issues which include, access to Electricity North West, finance and regulation.

We have been working closely with Community Energy England and value our ongoing partnership with them as they play a vital role in representing and supporting those committed to the community energy sector. In partnership we have developed a State of Sector report which gives us vital information and how we can develop and support the sector going forward and have also sponsored their annual conference.

In 2018/19 we supported six projects through our Powering our Communities fund. Following that success, we created our Empowering our Communities Fund in partnership with Vulnerable Customer grants. This again helped to support six community and local energy projects with a share of over £75,000 towards their projects.



Our colleagues and local partners at our 'Empowering our Communities Fund' celebration event.

Community and local energy projects supported in 2019/2020	Location	Summary of project
<b>Zero Carbon Electric Homes</b> – Lune Valley Community Land Trust	Lancashire	The project looks at the feasibility of providing electricity from 100% community-owned renewable energy schemes to 20 affordable rented and shared ownership homes and 20 homes for people over the age of 55.
<b>Community energy start up project</b> – Cumbria Action for Sustainability	Cumbria and Lancashire	This project will work with three communities across Cumbria and Lancashire to undertake solar PV mapping and carbon footprinting to support businesses and residents to identify opportunities for energy efficiency, solar PV and community energy.
<b>POSH Bites</b> – Youth Focus NW Ltd	Regional	The project will bring together groups of at least three young people from 11 local authority areas who are interested in protecting the environment and improving and promoting energy efficiency.
<b>GMCR Energy Savers</b> – Greater Manchester Community Renewables	Greater Manchester	Support Greater Manchester Community Renewables to work with three schools in Salford where they have already installed solar panels and provide opportunities for pupils and parents to learn about the climate emergency and how they can play their part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
<b>Community Centre – Energy Reduction Action</b> – Dalton Community Association	Cumbria	The project will deliver the final steps of a low carbon retrofit of a community hub in Dalton-in-Furness in Cumbria. The story will be promoted via short videos and leaflets to inspire action in the local community.
<b>Power in the City</b> – Carbon Coop	Greater Manchester	The project will produce three podcasts, exploring the past, present and future of energy in the Manchester region.

To find out more about the fund and successful projects [click here](#).

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Refreshed Community and Local Energy Strategy to demonstrate our commitment to community and local energy stakeholders
- Community Energy State of the Sector report
- Powering our Communities Fund to support local projects
- Continued stakeholder engagement to ensure we develop our understanding of the issues our customers are facing and ensure our response is appropriate
- Track metrics of individuals engaged and number of community and local energy projects supported
- Track total amount of community owned generation connected to our network





## GOAL - Optimising waste and resource use

### We will work to reduce waste and increase recycling from our offices and operations

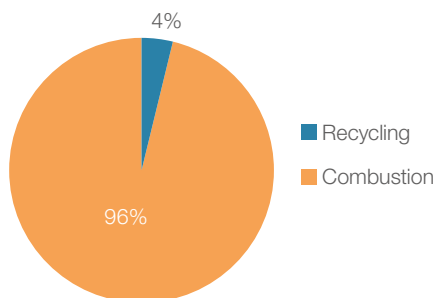
We continue to minimise the waste generated by our activities and measure and manage both our office and operational waste and work with colleagues, suppliers and partners to identify improvements. All office waste is sorted centrally to maximise recycling and we are also the first DNO to operate our own oil reprocessing plant, recycling and regenerating all the oil collected from our network.

#### Our office and operational waste

We are a zero to landfill business, which means that all our waste is diverted from landfills. In 2019, we diverted over 1,400 tonnes of waste from landfill in the North West, this is reported through Biffa our waste management company.

Sending waste to landfill is more detrimental to our environment and therefore we combust more than 96% of our waste with the remaining waste going to recycling including but not limited to glass, metal, paper and card and plastic.

Waste diverted from landfill



#### Oil processing

Central Oil Reprocessing Department (CORD) is an innovative and cost effective way Electricity North West recycle and regenerate valuable transformer oil from our operations. Oil is used to keep key equipment safe and cool as 132,000 volts of electricity passes through and is reduced to a safe voltage for use in millions of homes and businesses.

With millions of litres of oil used across our network, the environmental impact of replacing aged oil is significant. We have developed an innovative approach to recycling our oil at our CORD. This facility opened in the early 1980s and since opening we have processed over 50 million litres of oil from our operations.

This year we recycled over 400,468 litres of oil from our network. This is an 82% recycle rate through our CORD. It is a core aspect of the overall strategy of the company and reducing our impact on the environment. Reprocessing our own oil ensures efficient and effective oil maintenance which will help minimise risk of service failures and it can considerably extend asset life reducing unnecessary operational waste into the environment, reduce cost and prevent huge amounts of used oil being exposed.

### We will work to remove unnecessary single use plastic from our office and operations

We are pleased with our results this year and the significant improvements we have made in the reduction of our single use plastics from our offices and operations. We have previously removed all plastic cups from our depots and offices and replaced our quarterly internal magazine's plastic wrapping with a biodegradable alternative. However, this year we identified pallet stretch wrap as a large plastic waste stream. Working with our logistics supplier we trialled and replaced our pallet stretch wrap with reusable heavy duty pallet covers. To further the impact, we also included our sustainable packaging requirements within our tender process.

In addition, we have also been trialling a number of alternatives including corn starch as an alternative to heavy duty plastic bags, alternatives to jointing components and working with our partners for alternative packaging options.

#### Using plastic sustainably

This year we became the first DNO to develop an award-winning alternative to asphalt which is used for hand-laid reinstatement. Non-recyclable waste plastics, originally destined for landfill or incineration, are used with each tonne of this new reinstatement including the equivalent of 1,285 single use carrier bags. We will now roll out this product to all suitable reinstatement work across the business and with our contractors which will reuse 50.6 tonnes of plastic waste and lead to an 18,000kg reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually.

#### OUR PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Continue the investigation and trials for the removal of plastics from around the business
- Develop a table that confirms the weight of plastic packaging used in our supply chain and whether it is primary, secondary or tertiary
- Continue to work with our logistics and resource partners to understand their approach to single use plastics and find alternatives



Our CORD collection tankers, collect used oil from across the North West and deliver it to our oil reprocessing facility in Blackburn.



## GOAL - Enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems

Newly introduced to our framework last year, we recognise the role that we play in maintaining our sites responsibly and our role in managing the change to biodiversity and ecosystems on the land impacted by our network operations.

In 2019 we selected nine substations sites across our region to receive a biodiversity makeover as part of a new 'Transforming our Spaces' project.

Identified by our own grounds and maintenance teams, our colleagues saw an opportunity to improve the land around our substations and in turn improve the biodiversity and ecosystem of that area as well as their appearance to local residents. All nine sites have now received their makeover including wildflower planting, flower beds, installation of bird feeders, herbs and bug hotels.

The work also supports our biodiversity priorities with plants and wildflowers to help reverse the national decline in pollinating insects, by introducing wildflower seed mixtures containing the best species for pollinators while also delivering high visual impact. We have observed an 85% success rate in transforming these sites into low-maintenance, self-pollinating, attractive spaces.

It has delivered a socio-economic benefit of £189,290 – a multiple of x 18 for every £1 invested, benefiting a total of 6,885 customers living within 1km of the substation.



The transformed substation on Adamson Street, Burnley.



Substation on Selkirk Road, Bolton.



Substation in Egremont with our colleagues and local MP, Trudy Harrison.



Local Burnley MP Julie Cooper, councillors, police and residents visited the site in Burnley to see the transformation.





## Biodiversity and invasive species

In addition to our work at our substations, we continue to manage and identify invasive species at our sites for the safety of our environment, infrastructure colleagues and customers.

**Rachel Travers, ENWS Biodiversity and Weed Control Specialist, said:**

**“Unfortunately across our properties there will occasionally be non-native invasive plants which can cause problems for UK species and reduce biodiversity. We train and support all our operations colleagues to recognise and take appropriate action to avoid any unintentional spread. Should any species such as giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed be identified we take action to secure the area and manage them as soon as possible.”**



We have also been working alongside Forest England to remove trees that the Forestry Commission had placed a disease control order on, demonstrating robust biosecurity procedure to ensure notifiable tree disease.

Managing trees adjacent to overhead power lines may at first not seem a particularly obvious way of enhancing overall biodiversity. However through our efforts removing layers of trees it allows a much higher level of light and warmth to reach the ground, leading to an explosion in the population of wildflowers and shrubs providing an important food source for invertebrates, such as ringlet butterflies, day flying moths and pollinators such as bees. The insect population also acts as prey for predators such as birds, helping to support a healthy local ecosystem.

As part of our work with vegetation management, where possible we encourage customers to retain arisings. This helps provide habitats for wildlife, eliminates removal of any nutrients from the area and reduces risk of spreading disease. If we do remove arisings from locations, our second preference is to donate to local charities such as animal refuges or donate to schools for natural areas.



Ensuring we use tree felling's for the benefit of our wildlife, ecosystems and communities.



Arisings create wildlife habitat's.

## OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Identify and prepare an additional nine sites for our 'Transforming our Spaces' project (impacted by coronavirus)
- Continue to monitor wildlife and biodiversity at the previously transformed sites
- Maintain and ensure the sites continue to be a benefit to customers and the environment
- Draft and issue green waste management code of practice
- Develop our biodiversity policy in conjunction with colleagues and stakeholders
- Research and initiate partnerships with local authorities, charities and environmental organisations within our region aligned with the aims and objectives of our biodiversity plans
- Review and revise environmental risk assessments for all sites
- Transition from ISO 18001 to ISO 14001 to ensure continued effectiveness of our environmental management system



## Our response to our environment during the coronavirus pandemic

The pandemic has inevitably postponed or cancelled some of the work we are doing including the postponement of our carbon literacy training roll out, completion of our two carbon neutral buildings and the spring wildflower planting of our Transforming our Spaces' project. However, we hope to get these back on track as soon as possible. We continue to monitor our network with our arborists ensuring no intrusions on our overhead network. With an increase in plastic-based PPE it is important that we ensure we recycle as much as our waste as possible to prevent it reaching landfill. However, with more than half of our workforce working from home and a rapid increase in regional, national and international online meetings we hope to see a reduction in travel based emissions. As policies and regulations develop over the next few months Electricity North West will ensure we are putting all the necessary activities in place to reduce carbon emissions and support customers and partners.



## Our communities

Central to our Purpose and Principles is our role in 'Transforming our Communities'. It is important that our activities support our customers, especially those in vulnerable circumstances and contribute to a healthy and successful North West by supporting our local charities and organisations that are important to our business and colleagues and inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees.

This area of the framework sets out our approach to our customers, colleague-led fundraising and charity donations, supporting volunteering in work time and outside of work, in addition to our approach to educate and inspire the next generation.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

**88.5%**

highest customer satisfaction score to date

**Over 1,190%**

increase in colleague-led fundraising

**Over 3,600**

pupils received Bright Sparks education workshops

**Over £200,000**

invested in partnerships to address customer vulnerability

**933,617**

customers registered on our Priority Services Register

**1st**

DNO to introduce Business Priority Services Register







## GOAL - Responding to customer vulnerability

### We will take steps to understand and address consumer vulnerability

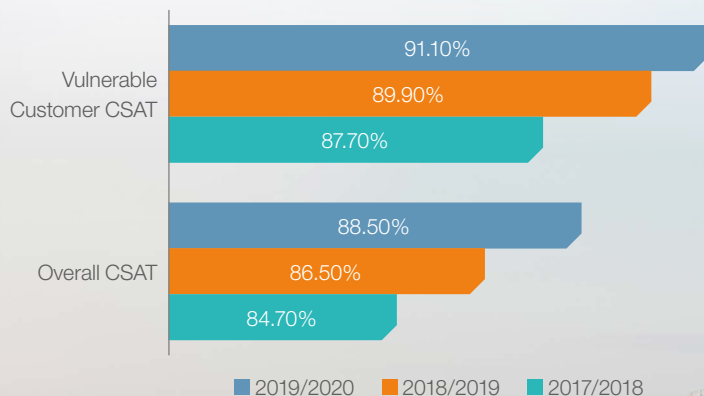
Since the development of our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy in 2016 we have provided enhanced support to our customers who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances and who need additional help during a power cut. Our independent Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panels helps to review and implement this strategy which meet at least twice a year.

Jenny Wills, Independent Panel Chair:

**“Electricity North West’s Consumer Vulnerability Strategy has achieved a number of great things for the region. It’s an exciting time to join the panel and help oversee the implementation of their strategy, in particular focusing on fuel poverty and understanding vulnerabilities across the North West and identifying ways and new partnerships to support those most in need during a power cut.”**



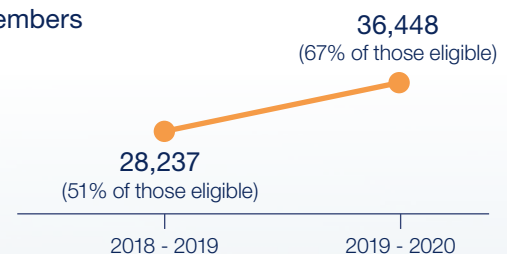
Every day we strive to deliver outstanding customer service and for 2019/20 we achieved an overall Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) score of 88.5%, a 2% increase on the previous years score. This year we have achieved the overall business target for the first time. This is a massive achievement for the business and our colleagues who are dedicated to providing the best customer service to all our customers and those who need additional support. The improvement came from a number of new initiatives which saw a positive impact on performance including the establishment of our Customer Care Team.



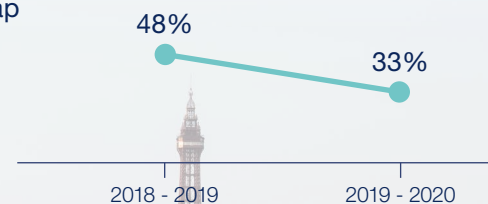
Our strategic goal is to ensure no customer or community is left vulnerable by barriers to the service Electricity North West and our trusted partners provide during a loss of electricity now and in the future. This year we have embedded our approach delivering several industry firsts to our customers and delivered outstanding customer service. We have enhanced our offer with a key focus on understanding vulnerability challenges in the North West. We recognise that some of our customers become increasingly vulnerable during a power cut and we have [Priority Services Register \(PSR\)](#) and Welfare Team to offer additional support during a power cut. This year we introduced our social mapping tool which enabled us to identify key areas of vulnerability within our region and helped us to close the PSR gap (the amount of people eligible to be on the PSR vs the amount of people signed up).

The tool has allowed us to rank 34 local authorities within our region according to need and vulnerability indicators. By identifying the gaps in PSR sign-ups across the North West, we have been able to focus our efforts and have increased those registered by 88,905, taking our PSR total to 933,617 customers. This has closed the PSR gap across the region, but most notably in Blackpool where our approach has had a transformational effect by reducing the PSR gap from 48% to 33%.

### PSR Members



### PSR Gap





Our PSR provides reassurance, safety and comfort to vulnerable customers during a power cut. We have also introduced a register to protect and prioritise small businesses in our region. We are the first Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to offer a business PSR to ensure we support and notify businesses of planned interruptions with enough time, so they can prepare and reschedule any activities for a planned power cut.

We continue to develop a culture where everyone who works at Electricity North West is actively involved in supporting our vulnerable customers. Our consumer vulnerability champions have inspired behavioural change within the business and our Contact Centre Ninjas influence outstanding priority service call quality.

This year we have taken a more joined-up and targeted approach to collaboration and partnership by introducing 42 new partners. This new approach allows Electricity North West to get to the heart of our communities and work with those who are closest and trusted by our vulnerable customers. We have delivered over 19 activities this year to support our vulnerable customers and these activities have delivered a SORI benefit of over £11 million to customers across the North West (for more details on these activities [see our website](#)).

Our activities have included investing £200,000 in our partnership network through our Consumer Vulnerability Fund, eliminating social isolation with our [befriending scheme](#) and alleviating cold homes in Lancashire and Cumbria with 2,028 vulnerable customers provided with access to affordable warmth.

Towards the end of the year the coronavirus pandemic impacted the majority of our partners. We have worked with our partners to ensure they can continue to provide our customers with the best support during these uncertain times.

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Continue to improve our overall customer satisfaction score
- Invest over £190,000 through our Empowering Communities Fund to support local partners and our vulnerable customers
- Increase partnerships and collaborations with various referral and fuel poverty schemes
- Improve energy efficiency advice to customers
- Use data mapping to identify key hot spots and aim to close the PSR gap in the top five local authority areas, identifying the volume of 'hard-to-reach' and collaborate with trusted partners to close this gap



## GOAL - Inspiring the next generation of engineers and employees

At Electricity North West we recognise the national shortage of engineers and the role we play as a key employer in our region to inspire the next generation of engineers and colleagues. We continue to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to create an educational pipeline into our industry and business.

We take pride in our apprentice programme and as part of our recruitment we attended 18 career fairs across the North West. In 2019 the National Skills Academy for Power (NSAP) awarded our apprentice programme 'Best learning and development initiative'. Over the last 13 years we have recruited 200 apprentices who have trained and developed within our business. We have committed to recruiting over 50 new High-Level Apprentices (HLAs) and Craft apprentices over the next three years. This year we recruited 18 HLAs (our future engineers) and craft apprentices (our future cable jointers and overhead lines people). Our three-year apprenticeship programme provides on the job training, practical career development and the necessary qualifications for our apprentices to apply for a role within Electricity North West.

We began the recruitment for our 2020 apprentices in 2019 however with the recent pandemic we have been unable to recruit craft apprentices and for the coming year we will only be recruiting HLA apprentices. We have therefore taken on additional HLAs and will look to take on craft apprentices next year. We adjusted our approach to meet the current situation.



NSAP People in Power Awards 2019 – our apprenticeship scheme won 'Best learning and development initiative'.





Matthew James, a first-year higher-level apprentice, said:



**"I knew joining a company as big as Electricity North West would be thoroughly challenging, yet the support and guidance offered makes it a really enjoyable experience and one I'd recommend to anyone."**

**"The development opportunities are brilliant, and I am constantly given opportunities to accrue new skills. For instance, on the very first week I became first aid trained!"**

**"The apprenticeship programme in my opinion is a no brainer. Through completion you gain professional experience, professional qualifications and best of all, a career for life."**

In 2019/20 our Bright Sparks key stage 2 primary education programme in partnership with Cumbria and Manchester STEM delivered the national curriculum for electricity circuit and safety to 122 schools and over 3,600 pupils across the region. This year we have been able to benefit 66 new schools with the programme. Aspects of the Bright Sparks programme were also delivered at the UCLAN Science Festival with over 88 schools in attendance and at the Museum of Science and Industry Science Festival which welcomed over 4,400 children and families over two days. Electricity North West continues to participate in science festivals across the region, providing volunteering opportunities for our colleagues and apprentices to help support and deliver key STEM messages.



Our Bright Sparks team at the Manchester Science and Industry Museum inspiring the next generation of engineers.



Electricity North West attended 18 career fairs this year across the North West.

Having focused on primary education for a number of years, this year we have put significant focus on improving our engagement with secondary schools. We recognise that it is important that we engage with pupils throughout their schooling career and at the end of 2019 we trialled secondary school roadshows with two of our five chosen secondary schools identified as part of our commitment to having a workforce that represents our community (see page 08). Delivered by Science Made Simple, a partner of the UCLAN Science Festival, these roadshows raised awareness around engineering in general. We also invited our apprentices to talk to the pupils about different roles and our apprenticeship programme for future consideration when they leave school. Plans to deliver the programme in further schools in 2020 were halted as a result of the coronavirus restrictions.



Our apprentices visiting Witton Park secondary school in Blackburn to talk about our apprenticeship programme.

#### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Deliver Bright Sparks to 3,500 pupils
- Develop a STEM ambassador programme
- Continue to develop our secondary programme to ensure it aligns with diversity and inclusion and recruitment priorities
- Review and develop online resources to support primary and secondary school curriculum following our identification of a gap in the market during the coronavirus pandemic
- Continue to participate in science festivals across the region
- Identify schools in key Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) areas using social mapping
- Increase engagement with schools on career and apprenticeship opportunities. Including attending ten career fairs per year



## GOAL - Supporting colleague-led community engagement

### We will develop and promote colleague-led community fundraising

We recognise that our colleagues already do a lot of great work with charities and groups within their local communities and we want to continue to support the causes that matter to them. At the beginning of 2019 we refreshed our colleague-led community fundraising scheme by introducing 11 localised depot teams. Since the launch and introduction of the localised teams we have seen a significant increase with over 143 donation requests made by our colleagues, an increase of 1,191% from 2018/19.

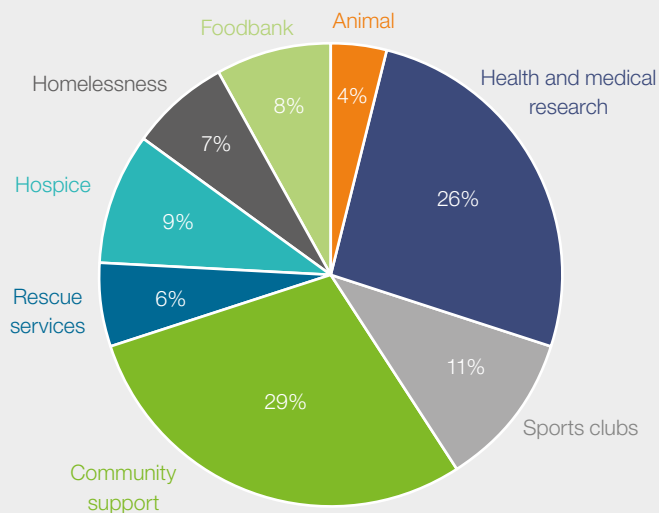
Since the launch this year, Electricity North West has donated over £19,000 to 99 different charities and our colleagues have raised an additional £35,800. Every year we will renew the fund, so colleagues can continue to apply for donations to support the charities and organisation that they are involved with.

In addition, we have received platinum status with the Christies Trust as nearly 100 colleagues pay towards 'Give as you earn' (GAYE). This year our colleagues donated over £8,700 in this way.

### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Continue to support colleagues and the charities and organisations that matter to them
- Continue our support to charities and organisations across the North West

### Charities and organisations we have supported



Michael Hughes, Electricity North West groundworker donated over £600 to Doctor Kershaw's Hospice in Oldham. Michael put his skills to good use turning tree cuttings into christmas gifts, donating all the money raised to a cause that matters to him.

Our Apprentices took part in a 'sleep-out' to raise awareness and funds to support the Booth Centre, a charity that helps the homeless in Manchester.



Members of our customer team taking part in the 'Use your senses' 5km run around Heaton Park to raise money for Guide Dogs.



Kind-hearted colleagues from across the organisation have donated more than 200 coats to help keep people in our local community warm this winter.



Foodbanks play a pivotal role in supporting families during difficult times and colleagues support a number of foodbanks across our region all year round with food and financial donations.





## We will develop and promote volunteering opportunities for our customers

Many of our employees support local community organisations with their own time and skills; to give back to the community or for personal development and team building and many more could do so. We support our colleague's endeavours by allowing two volunteer days for colleagues each year.

Over 30% of our colleague-led donation requests, worth £4,000, went to supporting colleagues who volunteer their own time in their local community.

The volunteering scheme has also supported our education programme enabling colleagues to participate at the science fairs and as STEM ambassadors providing vital support to schools and colleges in the region. This year teams from across the business volunteered their time to carry out essential work transforming two gardens at a care home in Blackburn and a disability service facility in Preston. Colleagues specifically selected the two charities after identifying that both sites needed assistance with their outdoor areas to transform them into a safe and attractive area for residents to enjoy.

Angie Thornton, Delivery Manager said:

**"These are real transformations, both sites had areas that were badly overgrown with weeds and ivy, we want people to be able to enjoy being outdoors and after learning of the projects, it was a no brainer.**

**"We want to play a major part in the communities we power 365 days a year and that's why we love to assist with projects such as these where possible."**



## OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Promote volunteering and the utilisation of two days volunteering to support our partners and charities
- Develop volunteering opportunities with our existing partners



## Our response to our community during the coronavirus pandemic

The pandemic has affected all of us but especially the communities that we serve. During the final few months of the financial year we donated over £4,500 from our colleague-led fundraising scheme to support those charities and organisations impacted by the pandemic and who continue to provide support during these uncertain times. These included foodbanks, hospices and NHS to name a few.

We are working closely with our partners during the pandemic to ensure they continue to provide the great work to our customers and communities. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing funding from our Empowering our Communities fund in advance and changing our processes to enable them to continue the great work with our vulnerable customers and providing volunteers to help support their efforts
- Developed a designated [coronavirus webpage](#) to inform, advise and support customers
- Identified partners who need additional help in delivering their services by providing colleague support and Electricity North West vans.



Our colleagues volunteering in Preston. Angie Thornton, Talony Williams, Vincent Cranny, Paul Taylor, Matt Kelsall, Mark Hayhurst, Lewis Blood and Barry Smith.





## GOAL - Expressing our regional economic impact

As a business we know our role is more than just providing a reliable and safe network for years to come, it is about the value we can add to our community, people and partners and our environment. We work alongside a number of regional organisations including Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), North West Business Leadership Team (NWBLT) and many other organisations to ensure we add value in a coordinated way across the North West.

This year we have introduced Social Return on Investment (SROI) to identify additional benefits of our activities and projects by looking at their social, economic and environmental factors. We believe that using this to identify our activities and projects going forward will have a greater positive impact on our business, our communities, our environment and our customers.

In partnership with Economic Insight we have developed a benefits measurement and tracking model to calculate the benefits attributable to the activities we undertake which have resulted from engagement. This year we have started to measure the impact of some of our activities and the table below shows the social benefits of 48 activities for the financial year 2019/20. To read more about how we have used this SROI tool in this year's SECV submission, [see our website](#).

Time period	Activities	Benefit £m	Cost £m	Multiplier
Benefits delivered this year	42	£26.1	£5.2	19.2
Future benefits enabled	6	£98.1	£31.6	2.1

To evidence that we have measured the outcomes of our activities and the degree to which customers value them we conducted joint willingness to pay research with other DNOs.

This research allows us to understand the needs of our customers and their willingness to pay for the services we provide. The research covered customer support, education, smart networks and sustainability and what customers would value the most and least. The table below shares the highest valued initiatives and the additional cost customers would pay towards having the service.

This information will be considered throughout our business planning process and now and in the future.

Service Initiative	Highest Value initiative
Customer Support	<b>During power cuts increase proactive contact with customers.</b> This was also the highest overall value out of all service initiatives at £2.04 per household per year.
Education	<b>Delivering safety education and information initiatives in school's</b> - overall value at £0.67 per household per year.
Smart Networks	<b>Increasing understanding of and opportunity to participate in more flexible electricity services</b> - overall value at £0.48 per household per year.
Sustainability	<b>Reducing company carbon footprint</b> - overall value at £0.73 per household per year. Closely followed by <b>Reducing plastics waste</b> - overall value at £0.69 per household per year.



### OUR PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- Review SROI model to increase usage within business to help with decision making
- Continue stakeholders mapping and prioritisation work to benefit our current and futures goals
- Continue our RIIO-ED2 engagement for our future business plan including willingness-to-pay research, youth engagement and prioritisation of stakeholders needs



# DEVELOPING AND BENCHMARKING OUR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY STRATEGY

## Developing our corporate social responsibility strategy

We recognise the importance of reviewing our performance and activities each year, ensuring we continue to improve and be a responsible business for years to come. This year we continued to review and benchmark our activities against leading external indicators including Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark (GRESB) and Business in the Community (BITC).

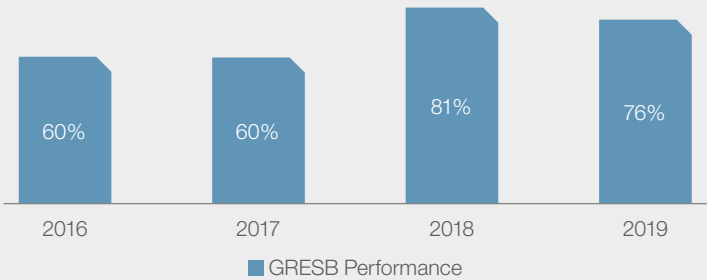
We have also attained key accreditations recognising our business commitments and performance against best practice and sharing best practice with others.



The international GRESB standard assesses the environmental, social and governance performance. Electricity North West has completed this benchmark for a number of years.

Each year GRESB improve the assessment measure, working closely with members and industry stakeholders to refine the criteria to improve data quality and reflect changes as measured by the benchmark in the last three years. Despite these changes affecting some of the categories, this year we are delighted to have maintained our five star rating and achieved an overall score of 76% and outperformed the GRESB average of 45% and our peer group average of 67%.

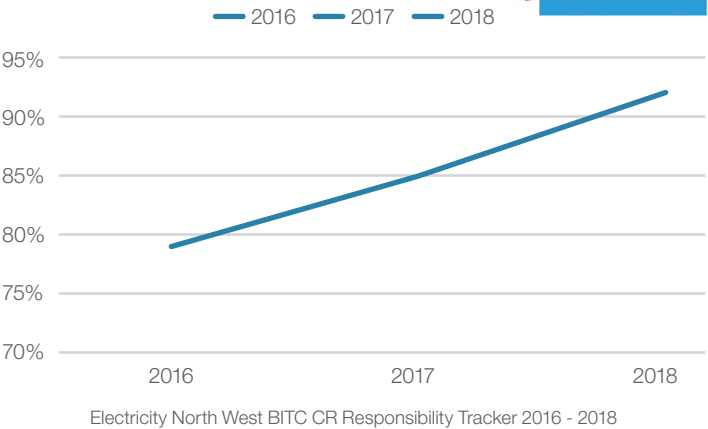
### GRESB Performance



Electricity North West is proud to be a member of BITC and has participated in the BITC CR index for a number of years.



### BITC CR index performance



In 2019, BITC launched their new BITC Responsible Business Tracker. The new tracker will be used as a measurement tool to assess businesses performance and progression against BITC's responsible business map, which was developed using the UN's Global Goals. This will allow Electricity North West to benchmark against sector peers and overall participants of the tracker and, through a scoring mechanism provide the opportunity for recognition of leading practice, improvement and innovation within our business and sector.

Based on the material sections answered this year Electricity North West's overall score for 2019/20 was 69%, this is 8% higher than other utility companies and 26% higher than the cohort average. The tracker reviews a number of areas to assess business responsibility. This year Electricity North West completed the full tracker including an in-depth review of good work and inclusive growth and health and wellbeing to benchmark against other utilities and organisations following work we have been doing with BITC in improving our wellbeing and diversity and inclusion. Read more about this work on page 10.

### GOOD WORK AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH



### HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## ACCREDITATION AND BENCHMARKING



**Time to Change** – We have embedded our mental health awareness pledge by delivering a clear wellbeing vision for our colleagues which has been supported by our Executive Leadership Team. See page 11



**Institute of Customer Service** – Ensuring our customer contact team have the right skills and resources. We have been awarded the ServiceMark and TrainingMark accreditation. The accreditation recognises an organisations achievement in customer service and customer satisfaction



**Real Living Wage** - We were accredited as a Real Living Wage employer acknowledging we pay a fair and reasonable salary to all our colleagues. We are also working with our contractors who have been accredited or working towards an accreditation. See page 10



**Bronze Carbon Literacy accreditation** – We have achieved a Bronze accreditation for Carbon Literacy training for our management team. See page 17



**Good Employment Charter** – We became a founding signatory of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. It is a voluntary scheme designed to help deliver good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop. See page 8



**We became a Friendly to Forces employer** – We became a Friendly to Forces employer, supporting the integration of Reservists and Veterans back into the workplace and the transfer of their skills and qualities into a career. See page 10



We're a disability confident employer. See page 8

## AWARDS



**Street works award for Asphalt** – Following a joint venture with Gallaghers, Cumbria Country Council and manufacturer MacRebur. Electricity North West have developed a more sustainable form of asphalt made with recycled plastic, developed for use in our reinstatement work.



**NSAP People in Power Awards 2019** – Our apprenticeship scheme won 'Best learning and development initiative'.



**The UK Customer Satisfaction Award** – Our Customer Team claimed best application of technology award for our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.









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