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Open Access Rail: A Growth Engine for Britain

Lumo & Hull Trains Social Mobility Impact Report 2026

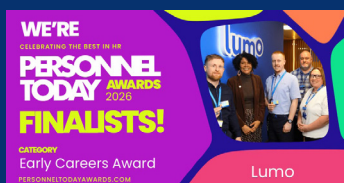






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0. Forewords

Rt Hon Justine Greening, Chair, The Purpose Coalition



When The Purpose Coalition first partnered with Lumo and Hull Trains in 2024, we set out to demonstrate something that had often been overlooked: that rail is about far more than moving people from one place to another. At its best, transport connects people to opportunity. It opens up access to employment, education, healthcare, culture and community, helping people fulfil their potential regardless of where they live.

That first report showed how two ambitious open access operators were already making a significant contribution to social mobility through affordable, sustainable and high-quality rail services. It established a compelling case that investment in connectivity and place can be investment in people.

Two years on, this report demonstrates just how far that journey has progressed.

What is particularly striking is the way Lumo and Hull Trains have embedded social impact into the way they operate as businesses. Rather than viewing social value as something delivered alongside their commercial activities, they have increasingly made it part of how they create value every day. Whether through investing in apprenticeships, strengthening colleague wellbeing, supporting local charities, expanding educational partnerships or improving accessibility, their approach reflects a mature understanding that successful businesses and successful communities go hand in hand.

Importantly, this progress comes at a time when the national conversation has shifted. Economic growth, regional renewal and stronger local communities are once again at the centre of public policy. Across Government there is growing recognition that improving people's lives requires investment not only in infrastructure, but in the connections that enable people to participate fully in the economy and society.

Open access rail has an increasingly important role to play within that agenda.

The evidence presented throughout this report demonstrates that better connectivity creates opportunity in multiple ways. It enables businesses to access wider labour markets, allows young people to reach education and training, supports tourism and local economies, creates skilled employment and encourages more sustainable travel choices. Perhaps most importantly, it widens the horizons of individuals by making opportunities that once felt out of reach both visible and accessible.

The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals provide a practical framework for understanding how organisations can remove barriers throughout every stage of life. This report highlights meaningful contributions across seven of those Goals, demonstrating impact through investment in skills, health and wellbeing, sustainable communities, inclusive workplaces, environmental leadership and long-term partnerships.

What makes this report particularly encouraging is that it is not simply a record of activity. It illustrates an organisation continually learning, strengthening partnerships and responding to the needs of the communities it serves. The evidence shows that Lumo and Hull Trains are creating value that extends well beyond the railway itself.

As Britain considers how best to unlock growth, improve productivity and spread opportunity more evenly across every region, transport will continue to play a critical role. But infrastructure alone is not enough. Opportunity depends on organisations that actively invest in people, places and partnerships.

Lumo and Hull Trains demonstrate what that looks like in practice.

Stuart Jones, Managing Director, First Rail Open Access, Lumo & Hull Trains



At Lumo and Hull Trains, we have always believed that rail should do more than connect stations. It should connect people with opportunity.

Every day our services help thousands of customers travel to work, attend university, visit family, grow businesses, discover new places and experience everything our regions have to offer. That responsibility sits at the heart of what we do, and it is why we continue to believe so strongly in the value of open access rail.

Since the publication of our first Social Mobility Impact Report in 2024, both operators have continued to grow, evolve and invest. We've expanded our network, launched new services, created new jobs and welcomed more customers onto our trains than ever before. Throughout that growth, one principle has remained constant: commercial success and positive social impact should go hand in hand.

This report demonstrates how that ambition is becoming a reality.

Our services continue to make rail more affordable and more attractive, encouraging people to choose lower carbon travel while opening up greater access to employment, education and leisure. The expansion on the West Coast Main Line, with new services to Glasgow and Stirling, means even more communities now benefit from direct connections to some of the UK's most important economic centres.

Growth also creates opportunity beyond the passenger journey. As we expand our operations, we are creating skilled local jobs, investing in apprenticeships and developing career pathways for colleagues from a wide variety of backgrounds. That commitment extends into our supply chains too. With around £500 million being invested in new fleet, we recognise the value of placing orders with British-based companies wherever possible, supporting UK supply chains and helping to sustain skilled jobs and livelihoods in communities across the country. The benefits of that investment reach beyond the

businesses we work with, supporting local workers, their families and the wider economies in which they live. Whether someone joins us as a Customer Experience Ambassador, begins a driver apprenticeship or starts a completely new career after working in another industry, we want Lumo and Hull Trains to be places where people can build long term, rewarding careers.

Equally important are the partnerships we have built across our route network. Working alongside charities, educational institutions, cultural organisations, community groups and local businesses has allowed us to make a broader contribution to the places we serve. From supporting Pride celebrations and science festivals to promoting mental health, improving accessibility and helping local charities reach more people, these partnerships demonstrate what can be achieved when organisations work together around a shared purpose.

We are proud to champion innovation across the railway. Open access operators have repeatedly shown the innovation, agility and determination needed to establish new services, respond to changing customer demand and improve the passenger offer. Competition has delivered better value, greater choice and higher-quality services, while encouraging operators to find new ways to grow the railway. As this report demonstrates, those benefits extend further still, supporting regional growth, strengthening communities and contributing to a more sustainable future.

While we are proud of the progress reflected here, we see this as another milestone rather than a destination.

There remains enormous potential for open access rail to contribute even more to Britain's future by creating new connections, continuing to invest in Britain and support UK supply chains, supporting economic growth, helping more people travel sustainably and strengthening the communities we serve. We look forward to continuing that journey together.

1. An Introduction to Lumo & Hull Trains

Rail plays a vital role in connecting people with opportunity. Reliable, affordable and sustainable transport enables people to access employment, education, healthcare and leisure while helping businesses grow and communities prosper.

As two of the UK's leading open access rail operators, Lumo and Hull Trains are helping to unlock these opportunities every day. Through the provision of high-quality, commercially operated rail services along both the East and West Coast Main Lines, both operators are improving connectivity between communities and widening passenger choice.

Operating without government subsidy, Lumo and Hull Trains are driven by a commitment to deliver excellent customer service while responding directly to passenger demand. Their open access model encourages competition and investment, ensuring that services evolve to meet the changing needs of customers and the communities they serve. By increasing connectivity between major cities, regional centres and underserved communities, both operators help make employment, education, and tourism opportunities more accessible for thousands of people every day.

Hull Trains was the UK's first open access rail operator, launching services in 2000 to provide a direct rail connection between Hull and London. Hull Trains was approved and began operating under the then Labour Government, an important part of the history of open access rail and a reminder that the model has been part of Britain's railway for more than a quarter of a century. Over more than two decades, the operator has established itself as a vital part of the region's transport network, connecting East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire with the capital and supporting business investment, tourism and economic development across the Humber region. In 2026, Hull Trains was also ranked number one for customer satisfaction by Transport Focus, reflecting its continued commitment to delivering a high-quality experience for passengers.

Building on this pioneering approach, Lumo launched in 2021 with a clear ambition to transform long-distance rail travel. Operating all-electric services between London King's Cross and Edinburgh, with stops including

Stevenage, Newcastle and Morpeth, and now extending to Glasgow via Falkirk, Lumo has positioned itself as one of Britain's most environmentally sustainable rail operators. Designed to encourage people to shift from domestic aviation and private car use to rail, the service has demonstrated how affordable, low-carbon travel can support both environmental ambitions and improved regional connectivity. In 2026, Lumo was also ranked number one for value by Transport Focus, underlining its success in delivering affordable rail travel alongside a high-quality customer experience.

Lumo's growth has continued with its expansion onto the West Coast Main Line, marking a significant new chapter for the operator. In May 2026, Lumo launched a new service between Stirling and London Euston, connecting communities including Larbert, Greenfaulds, Whifflet, Motherwell, Lockerbie, Carlisle, Preston, Crewe, Nuneaton and Milton Keynes. The expansion has brought new direct connectivity to communities along the route, including the first direct London services from Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbert, while creating around 100 new jobs and establishing a new operational base in Preston.

Together, Lumo and Hull Trains connect millions of passenger journeys every year, linking communities across England and Scotland with employment opportunities, universities, cultural attractions and visitor destinations. Their services support regional economies by improving access to labour markets, enabling businesses to reach new customers and encouraging tourism across the areas they serve. At the same time, affordable rail travel helps individuals access opportunities that may otherwise remain beyond reach, reinforcing the important role transport plays in reducing barriers to social mobility.

Both operators are united by a shared ambition to deliver more than exceptional rail services. They recognise that businesses have an important role to play in creating stronger communities, and that commercial success should go hand in hand with delivering positive social impact. This means investing not only in rail services, but also in people, partnerships and places.

Today, Lumo and Hull Trains continue to demonstrate the unique contribution that open access rail can make to the UK's transport network. By combining commercial innovation with a strong customer focus, both operators are helping connect people, places and regional economies to support a more sustainable future for rail travel.

2. Lumo & Hull Trains' Social Impact Journey So Far

The publication of the Breaking Down Barriers in Rail report in 2024 marked an important milestone for Lumo and Hull Trains, capturing for the first time how the two operators were using open access rail to improve connectivity, support sustainable growth and remove barriers to opportunity. The report recognised that the impact of rail extends well beyond the journeys it enables, highlighting the important role transport can play in supporting economic development, strengthening communities and improving social mobility.

Over the past two years, Lumo and Hull Trains have continued to build on those foundations, embedding social impact more deeply across their operations and expanding the ways in which they support the communities they serve.

One of the most significant developments since the publication of the first report has been the expansion of Lumo and Hull Trains' community partnerships. Working alongside charities, cultural organisations, educational institutions, tourism bodies and community groups, both operators have broadened the reach of their social impact activity while ensuring it responds to the priorities of the places they serve. These partnerships now span education, culture, health, sport and the voluntary sector, demonstrating how collaboration can create greater and more lasting impact than any organisation can achieve alone.

Recent collaborations have included supporting Pride celebrations across multiple locations on the East and West Coast Main Lines, providing promotional opportunities that raise the visibility of community organisations and encouraging more people to travel sustainably to events. Both operators have also strengthened relationships with charities and community groups, including Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care and P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery, supporting fundraising campaigns, promoting positive mental health, encouraging volunteering and helping local organisations reach wider audiences through their platforms. Support for arts, culture and education has also continued to expand. Partnerships with organisations such as Edinburgh Science,



museums and cultural festivals are helping make learning, creativity and innovation more accessible, while showcasing the important contribution that transport makes to thriving regional economies.

Investment in colleagues has also continued to evolve throughout this reporting period. Lumo and Hull Trains have strengthened opportunities for learning and development, continued to prioritise colleague wellbeing and used regular employee feedback to shape organisational improvements. These initiatives have helped create a workplace where colleagues feel supported to develop and succeed.

Alongside these developments, Lumo and Hull Trains have continued to reinforce their position as leaders in sustainable rail travel. Investment in lower-carbon transport, together with a continued focus on improving connectivity, demonstrates how commercial innovation and environmental responsibility can work hand in hand to support long-term economic and social prosperity.

The progress outlined throughout this report reflects an organisation that has matured its approach to social impact. What began as a clear commitment in 2024 has developed into a broader, more integrated approach in which investment in people, communities and partnerships forms an increasingly important part of how Lumo and Hull Trains deliver value beyond the railway.



3. Executive Summary

Creating opportunity requires more than transport alone. It requires investment in people, strong partnerships, thriving communities and a long-term commitment to sustainable growth. Over the past two years, Lumo and Hull Trains have continued to strengthen each of these areas, demonstrating how open access rail can contribute to economic prosperity and social mobility far beyond the railway itself.

One of the clearest themes emerging from this report is the increasing breadth of Lumo and Hull Trains' contribution to the communities they serve. Alongside connecting passengers with employment, education and leisure opportunities, both operators are working with charities, educational institutions, cultural organisations, tourism bodies and community groups to deliver initiatives that strengthen places, improve wellbeing and broaden access to opportunity. These partnerships demonstrate how collaboration can amplify social impact and create benefits that extend well beyond the railway network.

Creating opportunity begins within the organisation itself. Throughout this reporting period, Lumo and Hull Trains have continued to

invest in learning and development, health and wellbeing, inclusive workplace practices and colleague engagement, recognising that an empowered workforce is fundamental to delivering excellent customer experiences and creating lasting social value. Regular feedback from employees continues to shape organisational improvements, ensuring the business evolves alongside its people and responds to changing needs. This commitment to continuous improvement has helped foster a culture in which colleagues are supported to develop rewarding careers, feel valued for their contribution and are equipped to deliver the high standards of service for which both operators are recognised.

Partnership working has also become increasingly important to the way Lumo and Hull Trains deliver social value. Work alongside a wide range of community and institutional partners has enabled both operators to expand the impact of their activity across their route networks. These partnerships demonstrate that lasting change is achieved through collaboration that brings together organisations with a shared commitment to improving opportunity.

Underpinning all of this is a continued commitment to environmental sustainability. By encouraging more people to choose rail over more carbon-intensive forms of transport, Lumo and Hull Trains continue to support the UK's transition towards a lower-carbon economy. Importantly, this report recognises that environmental sustainability and social mobility are closely connected, and that the transition to net zero should and must create opportunities that are shared by communities across the country.

The Purpose Coalition's Purpose Goals provide a framework for understanding how organisations can help eliminate barriers to opportunity throughout every stage of life. This report explores the contribution Lumo and Hull Trains are making across seven Purpose Goals that are particularly relevant to their role as transport providers, employers and community partners.



Across the following chapters, the report demonstrates how Lumo and Hull Trains are:

- **Supporting positive destinations for young people** by investing in skills, learning and career development, helping build the workforce of the future.
- **Promoting good health and wellbeing** by creating a workplace where colleagues are supported to thrive while championing positive mental health across the communities they serve.
- **Strengthening infrastructure for opportunity** by improving connectivity between regions and enabling greater access to employment, education and essential services through open access rail.
- **Building sustainable communities** by investing in local partnerships, supporting charities, cultural organisations and community initiatives that strengthen the places served by their routes.
- **Supporting the transition to net zero** by encouraging lower-carbon travel choices and demonstrating how sustainable transport can contribute to a greener and more inclusive economy.
- **Creating opportunity for all** by fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity is valued, barriers are challenged and everyone has the opportunity to succeed.
- **Working in partnership** with organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise social impact and deliver outcomes that no single organisation could achieve alone.

Collectively, the evidence presented throughout this report demonstrates that the impact of Lumo and Hull Trains cannot be measured solely by the journeys they operate. Their contribution is also reflected in the careers they support, the partnerships they build, the communities they strengthen and the opportunities they help create. Through this wider commitment to people, place and purpose, both operators continue to demonstrate how open access rail can deliver lasting social value alongside commercial success.

4. Mapping Lumo & Hull Trains' Activity Against the Purpose Goals

3 Positive destinations Post 16+



4.1 Goal 3: Positive Destinations Post 16+

- **Making rail careers visible:** Hull College curriculum input, visits to Hull Trains' K2 Learning and Development Academy and Lumo's engagement with local colleges give young people direct exposure to the breadth of careers available in rail.
- **Apprenticeships at scale:** As of February 2026, 65 Lumo colleagues have completed an apprenticeship, while a further 16 apprentice Customer Drivers are progressing through training for the new West Coast service.
- **Removing the cost of aspiration:** Complimentary Hull Trains travel is helping prospective students, families and school groups attend University of Hull open days where transport costs might otherwise prevent participation.
- **Turning entry routes into long-term careers:** Colleagues have progressed from Customer Experience Ambassador roles into driver apprenticeships and from frontline positions into operational and leadership roles, demonstrating that entry-level opportunities can lead to sustained progression.



Making the railway visible

A major barrier to entering rail is that many young people have limited understanding of the jobs that exist beyond the most visible frontline roles. Hull Trains is addressing this through its relationship with Hull College, helping to shape rail-focused curriculum content and giving students aged 16 to 18 practical insight into the industry. Visits to the K2 Learning and Development Academy allow students to use the train simulator, meet managers and learn how operational, customer, safety and commercial roles fit together.

This practical exposure matters because it turns an unfamiliar sector into something tangible. The Academy is based in Hull city centre rather than at a remote training site, making it a visible expression of the operator's investment in local talent. Its simulator and learning facilities enable students to experience the standards, technology and decision-making involved in running a modern railway, while conversations with colleagues allow them to hear directly about entry routes and progression.

Lumo complements this approach through engagement with local colleges, including visits for travel and tourism students. Lumo has also signed up to Esh Group's schools programme, further supporting engagement with young people and helping to raise awareness of the range of careers and opportunities available within the rail industry. These sessions broaden understanding of rail as an employer and demonstrate that the sector requires a wide mix of skills, from customer experience and operations to digital technology, planning, communications and sustainability.

Together, this activity helps challenge narrow perceptions of railway employment and gives young people the knowledge and confidence needed to make informed post-16 choices. By bringing students into direct contact with workplaces, technology and employees, Lumo and Hull Trains are making careers in rail more visible, relatable and achievable.



Apprenticeships into skilled work

Apprenticeships are central to the way Lumo and Hull Trains build their workforce. They provide paid, structured routes into employment while combining theoretical learning, practical experience and ongoing assessment. This is especially valuable for people who learn best through work-based training, who want to avoid the cost of full-time higher education or who are changing career later in life.

The scale of Lumo's apprenticeship activity has grown significantly. By National Apprenticeship Week in February 2026, the operator reported that 65 colleagues had successfully completed a Lumo apprenticeship across roles including Customer Drivers and Customer Experience Ambassadors. This represents clear progress from the 18 apprentices recruited in the period captured by the 2024 report and shows that apprenticeships are becoming embedded within the organisation's workforce model, rather than being treated as an early-careers programme.

The launch of Lumo's West Coast service has created a further route into skilled employment. Sixteen apprentice Customer Drivers began their programme in June 2025 and, by March 2026, were moving from classroom learning into practical training on the Class 222 fleet.



The programme combines technical and operational learning with supervised experience, preparing participants for safety-critical roles and giving them a clear route into a long-term railway career. Recruitment for the wider West Coast operation has also included Customer Experience Ambassador apprenticeships in Stirling and London, with many roles open to candidates without previous rail experience. The removal of prior industry experience as a prerequisite helps to widen the pool of people able to access railway careers, placing greater emphasis on potential, transferable skills and the ability to learn.

Hull Trains continues to develop driver apprentices through its K2 Academy. Its most recent driver apprenticeship cohort has been progressing towards qualification, building on earlier cohorts that have moved into fully qualified driving roles. The Academy's simulator supports both initial training and continuing competence, helping apprentices develop safely while reducing the distance between formal learning and the realities of the route.

"Before joining the railway, I worked in the education sector for 13 years, with 8 years as a primary school teacher; and also a brief 3 year stint as an HGV driver. Both teaching and heavy goods driving can take a heavy toll on your personal time, so I sought a career in rail to find a healthier work-life balance alongside excellent career stability and progression options.

I've absolutely loved my time at Hull Trains so far. The structured rosters have completely transformed my day-to-day life for the better. Coming from a non-rail background felt daunting originally, but the quality of the training and the welcoming culture here made the transition seamless. I'm really proud to have passed out, and incredibly grateful to be a member of Hull Trains."

Mike Wells – Hull Trains

Both operators recognise that apprenticeships are not only for school leavers. Their workforces include people who have moved into rail after careers in sectors such as aviation, hospitality and the emergency services. This creates positive destinations for adults as well as young people, enabling individuals to convert transferable skills into stable, skilled work

and showing that career change is possible at different stages of life.

The breadth of this offer strengthens both social mobility and workforce resilience. Individuals gain an accessible route into skilled, sustainable employment, while Lumo and Hull Trains develop the operational capability needed to support future growth.



Case Study:

Joanne Pyman-Smith, Hull Trains

The value of apprenticeships is particularly clear in the experience of colleagues who have used them to move into rail from other industries. Joanne Pyman-Smith joined Hull Trains as an Apprentice Driver after 18 years with Humberside Fire and Rescue Service. Approaching the age of 50, she wanted to explore a new career while building on the skills she had developed in a safety-critical, public-facing role.

Her previous experience provided a strong foundation for train driving, including an understanding of safety procedures, teamwork, responsibility and working with members of the public.

However, moving into rail also required her to adapt to an unfamiliar industry and complete an intensive programme of theoretical and practical learning.

Joanne describes achieving her train driver licence as one of her proudest accomplishments and highlights the support she received from fellow apprentices, colleagues and managers throughout the programme. Her experience demonstrates that apprenticeships can provide positive destinations not only for young people entering the workforce, but also for people seeking to make a significant career change later in life.

This is an important aspect of social mobility. Career opportunity should not narrow with age or be limited by a person's previous sector. By recognising transferable skills and providing structured training, Hull Trains is enabling people from a range of professional backgrounds to enter skilled, sustainable employment and continue developing throughout their working lives.

"The training is both theoretical and practical, well structured but intense, especially coming from a non-railway background. To gain my licence has been one of my proudest achievements, and the support and encouragement from fellow apprentices, Hull Trains colleagues and management has been outstanding."



"I would like to congratulate Jo and Mike on successfully completing the Apprentice Driver Programme and gaining their driver licences. This is a fantastic achievement that reflects their hard work, commitment, and determination throughout the programme, and they should be extremely proud.

From day one, both approached their training with a positive attitude, embraced every challenge, and showed a genuine desire to succeed. They have also drawn on experience from previous careers, combining it with their railway training to become confident, professional drivers and valued members of the Driver Team.

It's been especially pleasing to hear how much they enjoy working at Hull Trains and being part of our close-knit team. Knowing they feel welcomed and supported reflects the culture we work hard to create and the importance we place on developing our people.

Jo and Mike have settled into their roles exceptionally well and are already respected by their colleagues. I have no doubt they have bright futures ahead, and I look forward to seeing them continue to grow and make a positive contribution to Hull Trains."

Tom Guthrie, Interim Head of Driver Operations,
Hull Trains

Removing practical barriers to higher education

Positive destinations also depend on whether young people can access the places where decisions about their future are made. Open days are an important part of choosing a university, but rail fares for a student and accompanying family members can be a significant cost, particularly for schools and households with limited disposable income.

Hull Trains is using its core service to reduce this barrier through a partnership with the University of Hull. Complimentary travel has enabled prospective students and their families to attend university open days, including most recently around 15 prospective students and family members. The operator has also supported an entire school class from Kent, of approximately 30 pupils, to visit the university.

The partnership is particularly focused on schools in disadvantaged areas where the cost of travel could otherwise prevent a visit, with the aim of helping young people experience a university environment, ask questions, compare courses and imagine themselves studying in a different place. Enabling family members and teachers to travel can also strengthen the support around a student at the point when they are making a major transition. In this way, Hull Trains is using its position as a transport operator to use its existing assets to create opportunity, rather than designing a separate intervention.

Long-term progression

A positive destination should not end when someone secures their first role. The long-term social value of employment is greater when people can continue to learn and progress into higher-skilled and better-paid work. Internal progression is consequently an important part of the Lumo and Hull Trains approach.

Across Lumo and Hull Trains, there are multiple examples of colleagues who have moved into roles with greater responsibility, including Apprentice Customer Experience Ambassadors moving into Customer Driver apprenticeships, frontline colleagues progressing into senior operational posts and long-serving employees advancing through several grades into leadership. Driver cohorts have also moved into instructor, mentor and performance roles, allowing experienced colleagues to share knowledge while creating new pathways for themselves.

This progression culture is supported by structured development activity. Personal Development Reviews are intended to reach colleagues across the workforce, including frontline teams, while learning programmes cover operational decision-making, leadership, conflict management, occupational wellbeing, customer service and assessor qualifications. Additional support on technical, managerial and interpersonal skills also helps colleagues build the broader capabilities required for progression.

The impact of this approach is twofold: individuals gain greater agency over their careers, while Lumo and Hull Trains retain experience and build a pipeline of people who understand the businesses from the frontline upwards. Visible internal progression also sends an important signal to new recruits that an apprenticeship or entry-level role is not a destination in itself, but the beginning of a career with multiple possible routes.

Creating opportunity through growth

The expansion of open access services is creating new positive destinations directly. Lumo's new West Coast operation has led to the opening of a permanent base in Preston and the creation of around 100 local jobs, including Level 3 Train Driver apprenticeships, instructor roles, qualified driver positions and approximately 50 Customer Experience Ambassador roles across the route. The use of Preston as a main assessment and operational centre locates employment within the communities served by the railway and creates entry points for people who may not previously have considered the sector.

This link between commercial growth and social mobility is significant. When route expansion is accompanied by open recruitment, apprenticeships and local training, new connectivity creates opportunity on both sides of the passenger journey: for the people who use the service and for the people employed to deliver it.

Lumo and Hull Trains are building a more complete pathway into rail careers, beginning with awareness and continuing through experience, apprenticeship, employment and progression. Their work with colleges and the University of Hull helps young people make informed choices and removes practical barriers to participation, while investment in apprenticeships gives school leavers and career changers a paid route into skilled work.

The strongest feature of this approach is continuity. Young people can experience the industry, before entering it and developing within it. As both operators grow, maintaining this connected pathway will be central to ensuring that the opportunities created by open access rail reach people from a wide range of backgrounds and translate into sustainable, long-term careers.

8 Good health and well-being



4.2 Goal 8: Good Health and Wellbeing

- **A comprehensive wellbeing offer:** Mental Health First Aiders, Employee Assistance Programmes, digital support, trade union health and safety representatives, specialist referrals and immediate post-incident care provide multiple routes to help.
- **Listening to colleagues:** Regular employee feedback helps Lumo and Hull Trains understand colleagues' experiences, assess how wellbeing support is working in practice and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.
- **Prevention is part of everyday culture:** WorkWell Wednesday, menopause and men's health awareness, stress management, fatigue training and social activities encourage earlier conversations and healthier routines.
- **Wellbeing impact extends beyond colleagues:** the Moving Minds podcast, hosted by Gemma Oaten, support for The Big Commute and partnership with Daft as a Brush use the operators' journeys, audiences and communications platforms to promote mental health and access to care across communities.

Good health and wellbeing are essential foundations for opportunity. Poor physical or mental health can limit a person's ability to enter work, sustain employment, progress in a career or participate fully in community life. For a railway, wellbeing is also closely connected to safety and service: colleagues work in public-facing, safety-critical and sometimes emotionally demanding roles, often across shifts and at times when support services outside the workplace are less accessible.



Lumo and Hull Trains approach wellbeing as both a people-focused priority and an operational responsibility. Its wellbeing offer has developed over the past two years through a combination of formal support, preventative awareness, fatigue and trauma management, colleague listening and community-facing activity. The result is a broader model that supports people when they are struggling while also creating conditions that can help prevent problems from escalating.

Colleague support framework

Both Lumo and Hull Trains provide colleagues with several routes into health and wellbeing support, rather than relying on a single service. The offer includes Employee Assistance Programmes, digital wellbeing resources, Mental Health First Aiders, trade union health and safety representatives and referral to specialist mental health services where appropriate. This range recognises that people seek help in different ways: some may prefer confidential external advice, while others are more likely to speak first to a trained colleague, manager or representative they already know.

Hull Trains has strengthened this framework through the development of a network of trained Mental Health First Aiders. The operator has funded Mental Health First Aid England training for 11 colleagues and line managers from across the business. Volunteers included train drivers, onboard managers, office colleagues and heads of department, helping make support visible and accessible across different roles and working environments.

The programme equips colleagues to recognise possible signs of poor mental health, listen without judgement, respond using appropriate language and encourage people to access professional or specialist support where needed. Participants are also taught to maintain appropriate boundaries and protect their own wellbeing while supporting others.

Feedback from those who have completed the training indicates that it has increased both knowledge and confidence. Colleagues spoke about wanting to understand how to approach someone who may be struggling, how to create a safe and trusted environment and how to avoid language that might unintentionally cause harm. Several also highlighted the importance of learning about local and national support services that they had not previously known were available.

The diversity of those volunteering for the training is a particular strength, meaning that a colleague seeking help may be able to approach someone who understands the pressures of their role or whom they already know and trust. This is especially valuable in a railway environment, where colleagues may work shifts, spend long periods away from office-based teams or experience safety-critical and emotionally demanding situations.

Hull Trains has reinforced this peer-support network by training frontline managers in mental health and wellbeing and making round-the-clock guidance and support available to colleagues. Managers are often the first people to notice changes in behaviour, attendance or performance, so equipping them to respond appropriately can support earlier intervention. The organisation's wider learning activity also includes stress management, coaching and occupational wellbeing, helping embed health considerations within day-to-day leadership rather than treating them solely as an HR responsibility.

Lumo similarly provides organisation-wide access to an Employee Assistance Programme, mental health training and occupational wellbeing support. Its learning activity includes first aid, fatigue risk management, occupational health and wellbeing and leadership development. Taken together, these measures create a support network that is both professional and accessible, helping colleagues find the right level of assistance for their circumstances.





Supporting people in a safety-critical environment

Railway work presents particular wellbeing risks. Drivers and frontline teams may witness or be involved in distressing incidents, while shift work can affect sleep, family routines and long-term health. Lumo and Hull Trains have therefore placed significant emphasis on fatigue management, shift pattern design and immediate trauma support.

When serious incidents occur, colleagues can be offered welfare contact, temporary adjustments and specialist support. Hull Trains offers Drivers' Trauma Support training delivered with Samaritans, alongside fatigue risk management and human factors training. Meanwhile, Lumo's learning programme includes fatigue risk management and occupational wellbeing for operational and customer teams.

The impact of this work is powerful, protecting people's ability to remain in skilled employment after difficult experiences. A supportive response can reduce the risk that trauma, fatigue or ill health leads to disengagement or departure from the industry, while at the same time strengthening safety by recognising that wellbeing and operational performance are interdependent.

Prevention, awareness and everyday wellbeing

Formal services are most effective when they sit within a culture where people feel able to talk about health before reaching crisis point. Lumo's WorkWell Wednesday programme provides regular, low-pressure opportunities for colleagues to focus on different aspects of wellbeing. Recent activity has included a nutrition session and healthy lunch with SarahLous Kitchen, as well as short massage sessions covering head and shoulder, facial and hand massage.

The programme has also linked into Rail Wellbeing Live, using daily themes – nutrition, movement, mental wellbeing, financial wellbeing and connection – alongside small daily challenges. This framing is valuable because it makes wellbeing practical and achievable. It encourages colleagues to take manageable steps, while recognising that health is shaped by a number of physical, mental, social and financial factors.

The wider awareness calendar has included menopause sessions, prostate cancer and men's health awareness, Samaritans suicide prevention training and Samaritans Awareness Day. Men's Health Week activity drew attention to the reasons some men delay seeking advice, including discomfort discussing health in public settings and the perception that asking for help signals weakness. Menopause awareness and related learning help managers and colleagues understand experiences that have historically been under-discussed at work.

At Hull Trains, a Social Committee, charity fundraising, community volunteering, Walk the Route initiatives, beach cleans and charity golf days support connection across departments. These activities are not substitutes for professional support, but they help build relationships and belonging – important protective factors for wellbeing – while creating opportunities for colleagues who work in different roles and locations to spend time together.

Listening to colleagues

Regular colleague feedback is an important part of the way Lumo and Hull Trains approach health and wellbeing. Through Your Voice and other listening channels, both operators seek to understand colleagues' experiences, identify areas of strength and recognise where further support or action may be needed.

This feedback complements the operators' wider wellbeing activity, helping ensure that initiatives continue to respond to the changing needs of colleagues. Importantly, listening is treated as an ongoing process: feedback provides a basis for discussion, informs organisational priorities and supports continuous improvement across the employee experience.

Championing community wellbeing

Lumo and Hull Trains are increasingly using their public profile to extend wellbeing impact beyond the workforce. A pioneering example is Hull Trains' Moving Minds podcast, hosted by Gemma Oaten and launched on Time to Talk Day in February 2026. Recorded during real journeys between Hull and London King's Cross, the series invites guests to discuss personal experiences of mental health and the practical steps they use to look after their wellbeing.

The series turns an everyday rail journey into a platform for reducing stigma. It also links external communications with internal practice: every frontline manager at Hull Trains has completed mental health and wellbeing training and colleagues have access to round-the-clock support. The operator's partnerships with P.A.U.L For Brain Recovery and The Big Communitia further connect awareness with organisations providing practical support.

In May 2026, Lumo and Hull Trains supported a Selby fundraiser beginning a 1,200-mile walk from John O'Groats to Land's End for

The Big Communitia. The operators provided the journeys needed to reach the start of the challenge and used their communications channels to amplify the charity's work, which includes a mental health support line and community drop-in centre. This demonstrates how relatively simple support can strengthen a community-led initiative and help it reach a much wider audience.

Lumo's partnership with Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care combines fundraising, travel and communications support. The charity provides free transport for cancer patients travelling to chemotherapy and radiotherapy appointments. Volunteers raised £2,250 in customer donations on Lumo services by late March 2026 through joint pin badge sales, while customers can also donate Delay Repay compensation. Lumo has also committed £2,500 of outdoor advertising to promote the charity, extending the partnership from fundraising into public awareness.

Lumo and Hull Trains' wellbeing model combines formal assistance, trained peer support, prevention, operational risk management, employee listening and community advocacy. The Mental Health First Aider network at Hull Trains demonstrates how wellbeing capability can be embedded across roles, while survey findings from both operators provide evidence that colleagues increasingly understand what support is available and feel respected by their managers.

The evidence also shows that wellbeing remains an area requiring continuous attention. Work-life balance, confidence in speaking openly and the visibility of leadership should remain priorities alongside counselling, awareness activity and post-incident support. By acting on this evidence and sustaining a culture in which colleagues can seek help early, both operators can protect wellbeing, safety and long-term participation in work.



4.3 Goal 11: Infrastructure for Opportunity

- **New routes are widening the geography of opportunity:** Lumo's Glasgow extension and new Stirling-London service connect communities across Scotland, the North West, the Midlands, the North East and London, including first-ever direct London services for Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbert.
- **Open access is growing the railway:** Independent analysis estimates that Lumo has helped generate more than six million new rail journeys, while in 2026 Hull Trains is carrying over 50% more customer journeys than in 2018/19.
- **Affordability and quality reduce barriers to travel:** Lumo ranked first in the UK for value for money in 2026, with a 90% overall satisfaction score, while Hull Trains achieved 94% and ranked first across the industry.
- **Capacity, digital access and inclusive infrastructure and improving journeys:** A record 10-coach Lumo service carried 772 customers in each direction; Starlink is scheduled across the East Coast fleet, while investment at Howden and planned work at Beverley support more accessible travel.



Infrastructure for opportunity is about more than physical track: it includes the routes that are available, the frequency and capacity of services, the affordability of fares, the quality of digital connectivity and whether stations and trains can be used independently by people with different needs. When these elements work together, transport expands the area within which people can realistically access

jobs, education, services, family and leisure.

Open access rail gives Lumo and Hull Trains a distinctive role in this agenda. Both operators identify underserved markets and respond directly to passenger demand. New services, lower fares and better customer experience can generate additional rail travel and make the network useful to more people.



New routes as opportunity infrastructure

Since the publication of its 2024 report, Lumo's route expansion has significantly increased the range of communities connected by its services. In December 2025, the operator launched an all-electric extension linking Glasgow Queen Street and Falkirk High with Edinburgh, North East England and London King's Cross. The service has created a new direct, low-cost connection between Glasgow, Newcastle and London, widening options for work, education, tourism and family travel across the border.

In May 2026, Lumo launched a second route between Stirling and London Euston. The service calls at Larbert, Greenfaulds, Whifflet, Motherwell, Lockerbie, Carlisle, Preston, Crewe, Nuneaton and Milton Keynes. For Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbert, it provides the first direct rail services to London. This matters because direct connectivity changes the practical experience of a journey: it reduces interchange risk, makes travel easier for people with mobility needs and gives places greater visibility within national labour and visitor markets.

The opportunity created by these expansions is broader than simply access to London. The Glasgow extension links Scotland with North East England, while the West Coast route creates

new connections between central Scotland, Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire. These inter-regional links allow people and businesses to reach a wider range of destinations and help distribute the benefits of long-distance rail beyond major city centres.

Generating demand in a growing railway

A central test of open access is whether it creates additional value for the network, rather than simply moving passengers from one operator to another. Analysis published by FirstGroup in 2025 estimated that Lumo had helped generate more than six million new rail journeys. In 2026, Hull Trains is carrying over 50% more customer journeys than in 2018/19, demonstrating sustained growth in demand for open access services.

FirstGroup's 2025 results recorded 2.9 million passenger journeys across Lumo and Hull Trains, 9% higher than the previous year, while seat miles increased by 2%.

This is significant because a growing railway broadens the case for further investment. New passengers generate revenue, help sustain services and demonstrate unmet demand. When that growth comes from people switching from car or air, it also supports decarbonisation and reduces pressure on other transport systems.



Affordability and customer experience

A route only creates opportunity when people can afford and trust it. Lumo's open access model is designed around simple, low-cost fares. The Glasgow launch offered advance fares from £33.10 between Glasgow and London and from £10.90 between Newcastle and Glasgow. On the West Coast, advertised fares started at £29.90 between Stirling and London, £23.90 between Preston and London and £14.90 between Preston and Stirling, before Railcard discounts.

Independent customer research provides evidence that affordability has not been achieved at the expense of quality. In the 2026 Rail Customer Experience Survey, more than three quarters of Lumo customers said the service offered value for money, the highest score of any UK operator. Lumo also achieved 90% overall satisfaction and ranked among the top three long-distance operators. Hull Trains achieved 94% overall satisfaction and ranked first across the industry.

These results are important to social impact. High-quality, affordable rail gives people greater confidence to use the service for essential and discretionary journeys. It can expand the distance over which someone is willing to consider a job, make university and cultural visits more feasible and reduce the financial penalty of living outside the largest employment centres. This is also an important part of the modal-shift story. By introducing competitive open access fares, Lumo and Hull Trains have helped make rail a realistic alternative to car and air for passengers making choices on price as well as convenience.

Increasing capacity where demand is strongest

Lumo and Hull Trains have continued to test how open access can add capacity to a constrained network. In July 2026, Lumo operated a 10-coach service between Edinburgh, Newcastle and London – the highest-capacity domestic intercity train operated in the UK that weekend. The sold-out return carried 772 customers in each direction, more than 1,540 passenger journeys in total.

The trial showed how existing units can be combined to respond to peak demand and provide additional capacity when it is needed. Lumo is assessing the potential to use longer formations more regularly, while FirstGroup has committed substantial investment in new rolling stock for future open access growth. Hull Trains also uses 10-car formations at times of high demand and, in 2026, worked with Lumo to provide additional capacity for East Yorkshire sports supporters travelling to London.

Hull Trains has demonstrated the same flexibility in responding to major peaks in demand. In 2026, the operator provided additional 10-car services and extra capacity for supporters travelling to London for both Hull City's play-off final and Hull KR's Challenge Cup final at Wembley. Working with Lumo to make additional rolling stock available, Hull Trains was able to increase the number of passengers who could travel by rail for two major sporting occasions for the region.

Capacity is a social issue as well as an operational one. Crowding and sold-out services can exclude passengers who have less flexibility over travel time. Adding seats during major events or periods of exceptional demand helps more people participate and reduces the risk that access is determined by who can book earliest or pay most.

Digital connectivity

Modern transport infrastructure also includes the ability to remain connected while travelling. Lumo plans to introduce Starlink Wi-Fi across its fully electric East Coast fleet in autumn 2026, working with Hitachi, Icomera and Beacon Rail. The low-earth-orbit satellite system is intended to provide more consistent connectivity across rural and urban sections of the route where traditional mobile coverage can be unreliable.

The new West Coast service already offers 5G-enabled Wi-Fi. Reliable connectivity allows passengers to work, study, access services and stay in touch during long journeys. This is increasingly important for hybrid workers, students and small businesses, turning travel time into productive time. Digital improvements therefore widen the practical value of the railway beyond the physical connection between stations.

Accessible infrastructure

Lumo and Hull Trains recognise that connectivity is not meaningful if passengers cannot use it safely and independently. Hull Trains' £1.2 million redevelopment at Howden has raised platform levels to reduce the stepping distance, added tactile paving, improved drainage and introduced new non-slip surfaces and safety markings. The work was delivered with Northern, Network Rail and TransPennine Express, reflecting the shared responsibility involved in making an end-to-end journey accessible.

Hull Trains also participates in the Rail Access and Inclusion Forum for the North and has been developing plans for accessibility improvements at Beverley. Onboard teams support Passenger Assist, and colleagues were early adopters of the staff Passenger Assist app. Website improvements have focused on older and disabled users and people using assistive technology such as screen readers.

These changes can appear modest compared with a new route, but their impact on independence is substantial. A smaller step, clearer tactile guidance, reliable assistance or an accessible website can determine whether someone is able to travel alone, take up employment or participate in education and community life.

Infrastructure investment to anchor jobs locally

The opening of Lumo's new Preston base demonstrates how transport infrastructure can create opportunity within the places it serves. The city-centre office supports the West Coast operation and has created around 100 jobs, including apprenticeships, Customer Driver roles, instructors and Customer Experience Ambassadors. Preston is also one of the main assessment centres for the route, bringing recruitment and training activity into the local economy.

Locating operational bases in city centres helps connect employment to existing public transport and local services. It also reinforces the operator's role as an anchor institution: a railway is not only passing through a place, but investing in people, premises and long-term capability there.

Lumo and Hull Trains are showing that infrastructure for opportunity is created through a combination of reach, affordability, capacity, quality, accessibility and digital connection. New routes to Glasgow and Stirling are bringing previously underserved communities into direct national networks, while high customer satisfaction indicates that these connections are usable as well as available.

By treating the passenger journey as a complete system – from booking and station access to onboard connectivity and destination – both operators can continue turning transport infrastructure into wider social and economic opportunity.



4.4 Goal 12: Place – Building Sustainable Communities

- **Greater participation in community life:** Free and additional rail services help residents take part in major cultural, sporting and civic events, strengthening belonging and shared identity.
- **Wider access to learning and culture:** Support for Edinburgh Science, Locomotion and North East Museums is helping families, schools and community groups engage with science, engineering, heritage and creativity.
- **Transport growth is supporting local economies:** Affordable connections and destination promotion bring visitors to communities across Hull, East Yorkshire, North East England and Scotland, supporting hospitality, tourism and retail.
- **Local procurement and UK manufacturing create regional value:** Relationships with local food and drink suppliers sit alongside major investment in Hitachi trains built at Newton Aycliffe, supporting employment, skills and industrial capacity.

Sustainable communities are places where people can build secure lives, access services, participate in culture and benefit from economic growth. Transport is central to this picture. It determines whether people can reach employment, education, family, leisure and essential services, while also shaping the ability of places to attract visitors, investment and new opportunities.

The contribution of a railway to place, however, extends beyond the journeys it operates. Rail services influence local employment, tourism, procurement, civic identity and participation in community life. Through their operations and wider social-impact activity, Lumo and Hull Trains are increasingly using their presence along their routes to help strengthen the places they serve.

Their activity reflects the different identities and priorities of those places. Hull Trains has a particularly strong connection with Hull, East Yorkshire and communities along its route, while Lumo's footprint spans North East England and Scotland. Instead of applying a single programme everywhere, both operators are supporting activity that responds to local cultural, economic and social circumstances.





Connecting people to culture and shared experiences

Community life depends on people being able to reach the events and experiences that create a sense of identity, pride and belonging. Rail can play an important role by reducing the practical and financial barriers to participation.

Hull Trains supports major events including Pride in Hull, Humber Street Sesh and Freedom Festival. In 2026, the operator offered complimentary travel from Doncaster, Selby, Howden and Brough on selected services, helping people attend while encouraging lower-carbon travel.

This support widens the geographic reach of events that might otherwise be experienced primarily by people living close to Hull city centre. It enables communities along the route to participate in the cultural life of the region and helps make major civic events more inclusive.

The Pride in Hull relationship is particularly significant because Pride contributes not only to the city's cultural calendar, but also to a wider

sense of visibility and belonging for LGBTQ+ residents and visitors. By making attendance easier and promoting the event to its passengers, Hull Trains helps strengthen its role as an event for the wider region.

Sport can create a similarly powerful connection between people and place. In May 2026, Hull Trains supported approximately 8,500 fans travelling to two major Wembley fixtures, representing around 17,000 additional journeys. The operator added almost 20% more capacity – approximately 3,000 seats – for Hull City supporters and more than 14% additional capacity – over 2,000 seats – for Hull KR supporters.

This activity allowed thousands of residents to participate in major moments for their city and clubs and supported local hospitality and activity around stations, demonstrating the role transport can play in enabling shared civic experiences and allowing communities to come together around occasions that carry significant local meaning.



Widening access to science, heritage and learning

Strong communities provide opportunities for people of all ages to learn and explore. Lumo's support for cultural and educational organisations is helping make high-quality experiences more accessible to families, schools and community groups.

As a funding partner of the 2026 Edinburgh Science Festival, Lumo supported Science Festival Favourites at the National Museum of Scotland. The programme attracted 10,668 visitors and included hands-on activities and interactive experiences intended to build curiosity and confidence in science. Edinburgh Science's wider schools and community programmes provided free and subsidised access, helping ensure participation was not limited to families already able to pay for cultural experiences. Lumo's contribution supported both the scale and accessibility of the Festival's public engagement.

The value of this activity extends beyond individual visits. Access to science and innovation can influence how children and young people understand their own abilities and future possibilities. Bringing these experiences into accessible public settings helps make science feel relevant and available to a wider range of communities.

In County Durham, Lumo has supported the free pop-up beach at Locomotion in Shildon as part of the museum's summer festival. Locomotion is free to enter, and the programme combines family activity with railway engineering, heritage and hands-on exhibits. This helps create an affordable school-holiday experience, encouraging families to engage with the industrial and railway history of the region.

Lumo is also North East Museums' Early Years partner and supported the fundraising appeal for Tiny Tyneside at Newcastle's Discovery Museum, agreeing to match public donations. The free space is designed for children under five and uses themes including transport, engineering, inventions and bridges.

This investment connects early learning and play with the North East's industrial heritage and helps families see museums as welcoming community spaces, allowing young children to encounter engineering, creativity and local history from an early age.

Together, these initiatives contribute to sustainable communities by widening access to cultural and educational assets. They ensure that museums, festivals and public learning experiences are not available only to those with the greatest financial resources or prior confidence in engaging with them.

Supporting tourism and local economic activity

Better transport connections create economic value when they lead to actual visits, spending and participation in local economies. Lumo and Hull Trains use their routes and communications platforms to raise the visibility of the destinations they serve and encourage passengers to explore them.

Hull Trains works with Visit Hull and East Yorkshire to promote the city and surrounding region, including advertising at London King's Cross and across London's transport network. Activity has also included Yorkshire Day campaigns, support for the Hull Maritime programme and participation in local tourism and advisory structures.

This work helps position Hull as a destination for short breaks, culture, heritage and events. It supports local hotels, attractions, hospitality businesses and retailers by connecting national audiences with reasons to visit.

Lumo similarly promotes destinations across North East England and Scotland. Activity involving destination bodies such as Experience North East England, Visit Northumberland and Visit County

Durham helps connect affordable rail travel with local attractions, visitor experiences and regional campaigns.

The growth of Lumo's services to Glasgow and Stirling strengthens this opportunity. New direct connections make it easier for visitors from England to reach Scottish cities and communities, while giving Scottish residents greater access to destinations across North East England, the North West and the Midlands.

Transport connectivity and destination visibility reinforce one another. A service provides the physical connection, while effective promotion helps passengers understand what a place offers and gives them the confidence to make the journey.

This is particularly important for communities that are well connected by rail but may receive less national attention than established visitor destinations. By helping those places reach larger audiences, rail operators can support a broader distribution of tourism and its associated economic benefits.



Strengthening local supply chains

Place-based impact is also created through purchasing decisions. Work with local and regional suppliers allows Lumo and Hull Trains to retain more commercial value within the communities along their routes while bringing regional products to passengers.

Their supplier relationships include local water, bakery, brewery and catering businesses. Lumo's relationship with Big River Bakery in Newcastle is one example of how onboard procurement can support a local social enterprise with an inclusive approach to employment.

These relationships may be modest in comparison with major fleet investment, but they demonstrate how routine operational spending can contribute to local economic resilience. They also allow passengers to experience products associated with the regions through which they travel, strengthening the connection between the service and the places it serves.

At a much larger scale, FirstGroup's investment in new open access trains has significant implications for the North East manufacturing economy. An approximately £500 million investment will fund 14 new five-car Hitachi trains, manufactured at Newton Aycliffe in County Durham, together with a maintenance contract for the new fleet. Delivery of the trains is expected from early 2028.

The order has played an important role in safeguarding the future of Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory, protecting skilled manufacturing employment and supporting thousands of jobs across the wider North East supply chain. By providing greater certainty for the factory, its workforce and the businesses that depend on it, the investment is helping to retain specialist rail-manufacturing capability, skills and expertise in a region with a proud railway heritage.

This is an important example of how transport investment can create value beyond the routes on which new trains will operate. The benefits extend into manufacturing communities through jobs, apprenticeships, supply chains and long-term industrial capability.



"Lumo and Hull Trains' commitment to invest hundreds of millions in new British-built trains is a powerful example of the wider impact that private investment in our railways can have.

"This order provided the certainty needed to safeguard the future of Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory, protecting hundreds of highly skilled manufacturing jobs here in the North East. But its importance goes far beyond the factory gates. Hitachi sits at the heart of a significant regional supply chain, supporting businesses, skills and livelihoods across the North East and beyond.

"For me, this is exactly what economic growth should look like: private investment creating good, skilled local jobs, supporting British manufacturing and giving communities confidence in their economic future. Lumo and Hull Trains should be incredibly proud of the role they have played in securing such an important part of the North East's industrial future."

Ben Houchen – Mayor of the Tees Valley



Creating employment within route communities

Operational growth can help anchor employment and investment within the places served by the railway. Lumo's new West Coast operation has led to the opening of a city-centre base in Preston and the creation of around 100 roles, including Customer Driver apprenticeships, instructor positions, qualified driver roles and Customer Experience Ambassador jobs. This builds on the employment already supported by Lumo's East Coast operation and Hull Trains, with colleagues based in communities across their respective routes and working in a wide range of operational, customer-facing and professional roles.

Across all three operations, locating jobs, training and career development within the communities served by the railway helps ensure that the benefits of open access growth are felt locally. In Preston, the new city-centre base brings employment opportunities directly into the local economy and makes them accessible through existing public-transport connections. Lumo East Coast and Hull Trains similarly provide skilled employment and progression opportunities along their established routes, demonstrating the wider role that open access operators can play as long-term local employers.

This strengthens Lumo's role as an employer within the community, rather than an operator simply passing through it. It also demonstrates how route growth can create benefits on both sides of the passenger journey: improved connectivity for customers and skilled employment for residents.

Recognising volunteering and community contribution

Volunteers play an essential role in sustaining charities, events and community organisations. Hull Trains' work with HEY Volunteering includes the annual Blue Mondays initiative and complimentary London journeys recognising the contribution of local volunteers.

Using rail travel as a form of recognition allows the operator to reward people whose time and commitment support community life, as well as raising the visibility of volunteering and reinforcing the message that community contribution is valued.

Colleague-led activity provides a further connection with place. Beach cleans, fundraising, Walk the Route initiatives, social events and charity challenges bring employees into direct contact with local communities.

These activities are valuable in helping to build trust, local knowledge and a stronger sense that Lumo and Hull Trains are part of the communities they serve.

Lumo and Hull Trains are contributing to sustainable communities by connecting transport with the wider elements that allow places to thrive: culture, sport, learning, tourism, local enterprise, employment, volunteering and inclusive participation.

The strongest examples create several forms of value simultaneously. Additional and complimentary travel can widen participation while reducing car journeys; cultural investment can support learning while bringing visitors into a place; local procurement can improve the customer offer while sustaining community businesses; and fleet investment can improve rail services while supporting regional manufacturing and skills.

This approach helps ensure that the growth of open access rail is experienced through stronger local economies, richer community life and wider access to the assets and opportunities of each region.



4.5 Goal 13: Harness the Energy Transition

- **Low-carbon rail is creating an affordable alternative to higher-emission travel:** A journey on Lumo's fully electric East Coast service can save around 96% of CO₂e compared with flying, while Hull-London travel with Hull Trains can save around 92% compared with driving.
- **Growing capacity multiples environmental benefit:** Lumo's record 10-coach return carried more than 1,540 passenger journeys and was estimated to save around 189 tonnes of CO₂e compared with the same journeys by domestic air.
- **Future investment is moving towards battery-electric operation:** FirstGroup's open access plans include five new battery-electric trains for the Stirling route from 2030, subject to regulatory approval, alongside major investment in UK-built rolling stock.
- **Sustainability extends beyond traction energy:** Paperless processes, lower-plastic catering, plant-based options, energy management, sustainable offices, environmental volunteering and colleague awareness embed lower-impact choices across operations.

The transition to net zero is both an environmental necessity and an opportunity agenda. If it is managed well, it can create skilled jobs, strengthen supply chains, reduce household exposure to high-carbon travel and improve access to cleaner transport. If low-carbon choices are unaffordable or unavailable, however, the benefits of transition will be distributed unevenly.

Lumo and Hull Trains are well placed to contribute to this agenda because rail already offers a lower-

carbon alternative to many long-distance car and air journeys. Their open access model adds a further dimension: by using commercially driven fares, route growth and customer experience to attract new passengers, the operators can make lower-carbon travel competitive on cost and convenience, rather than relying only on environmental concern.

Making modal shift measurable

Lumo's East Coast operation uses a fully electric fleet between London King's Cross, the North East, Edinburgh, Falkirk and Glasgow, with operator analysis estimating that travelling on these services can save approximately 96% of CO₂e compared with flying. Hull Trains operates bi-mode trains, using electric power under the wires and diesel where electrification is not available. Travelling from Hull to London on Hull Trains is estimated to produce around 92% less CO₂ than driving, rising to 96% for a Doncaster-London journey.

These figures show why passenger growth is central to the environmental impact of the operators. A low-emission train delivers its greatest value when it displaces journeys that would otherwise be made by car or air. FirstGroup's 2025 analysis estimated that Lumo had helped generate more than six million new rail journeys, with a significant share of growth on the London-Edinburgh corridor associated with modal shift.

Affordability is crucial to this outcome. Lumo's low-cost fare model and Hull Trains' competitive pricing make rail available to passengers who might otherwise choose a car, coach or flight on price. High satisfaction and reliability scores strengthen the proposition further. Social and environmental goals therefore reinforce each other: better value expands access to travel, while also increasing the number of people able to choose a lower-carbon mode.

Using capacity to multiply carbon savings

The 10-coach Lumo trial in July 2026 demonstrated how additional rail capacity can convert demand into substantial emissions savings. The sold-out service carried 772 customers from Edinburgh to London and the same number on the return, more than 1,540 passenger journeys in total. Lumo estimated that the return avoided around 189 tonnes of CO₂e compared with the equivalent journeys by domestic air.

This example is important because modal shift requires enough seats at the times people want to travel. If lower-carbon services are full or inconvenient, passengers may return to higher-emission alternatives. Testing longer formations, increasing fleet capacity and introducing new routes are therefore part of climate action as well as commercial growth.



Hull Trains' use of longer trains at peak times and the two operators' joint response to major sporting events reflect the same principle. Flexible capacity enables the railway to absorb exceptional demand and makes collective travel a realistic alternative to thousands of individual car journeys.



From today's fleet to future technology

The two operators have different fleet profiles. Lumo's East Coast trains are fully electric, while Hull Trains' bi-mode fleet can take advantage of electrified infrastructure for most of its route and continue beyond the wires without requiring passengers to change. Lumo's new West Coast service currently uses refurbished Class 222 diesel trains, reflecting the electricity capacity constraints on the West Coast and conditions of its access agreement.

The next phase is intended to reduce that remaining diesel dependence. FirstGroup has submitted plans to extend the Stirling track access agreement and deploy five new battery-electric trains on the route from May 2030, subject to approval by the Office of Rail and Road. Battery-electric operation would allow trains to use overhead power where available and battery power on unelectrified sections, reducing emissions without waiting for complete route electrification.

The proposal sits within a wider open access rolling-stock programme. FirstGroup, Angel Trains and Hitachi have agreed a circa £500 million order for 14 new five-car electric, battery-electric or bi-mode trains, with options for further units if additional routes are approved. The trains will be built at Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe facility, linking decarbonisation with UK manufacturing and skills.



Sustainability across the customer journey and workplace

Traction energy is the largest part of Lumo and Hull Trains' decarbonisation story, but the operators have also worked to reduce environmental impact across daily operations. Lumo has developed as a digital-first business with paperless ticketing and office processes. Its onboard offer includes sustainable alternatives to plastic bottles and a menu with a substantial plant-based component. Its Newcastle office has been recognised as being among the top-performing new non-domestic buildings for sustainability.

Hull Trains has trained drivers in energy-efficient techniques, moved its headquarters to improve energy performance and continues working on pollution prevention and resource conservation. Colleague-led beach cleans, including activity with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, connect environmental goals with local volunteering and help make sustainability visible within the workforce.

The 2024 social impact report recorded a 61% reduction in equivalent greenhouse gas emissions from the 2019/20 baseline and the use of ISO 50001 energy management. Lumo and Hull Trains are now building on that foundation by scaling electric services, extending route choice, developing future battery-electric plans and strengthening the link between sustainability and customer behaviour.

Employee perception suggests that the environmental purpose is understood internally. In Lumo's 2026 Your Voice survey, 85% of respondents agreed that Lumo is an environmentally conscious organisation. This matters because long-term decarbonisation depends on thousands of everyday decisions – from driving technique and procurement to waste, catering and how colleagues explain sustainable choices to customers.



Skills and regional value

The energy transition creates opportunity when investment supports people and places as well as technology. The Hitachi order helps sustain specialist manufacturing capability at Newton Aycliffe and provides certainty for a regional rail supply chain. Similarly, new electric and battery-electric fleets will require skills in operations, maintenance, digital systems and energy management.

Lumo and Hull Trains can support a fair transition by linking fleet and route investment to apprenticeships, local recruitment and supplier development. The new Preston base and the K2 Academy show how operational growth can create training infrastructure in the communities served. Partnerships with science museums, colleges and Edinburgh Science help build interest in engineering and innovation among future generations.

This connection between decarbonisation and opportunity is central to the transition to net

zero. Instead of being presented only as a technical target, net zero is a chance to create accessible travel, skilled careers, resilient local economies and a transport system in which the environmental benefits are shared more widely.

Lumo and Hull Trains are making their strongest contribution to the energy transition by giving more people a practical alternative to higher-carbon travel. Fully electric East Coast services, predominantly electric Hull Trains journeys, competitive fares and growing capacity turn modal shift into measurable emissions savings.

The next stage is to sustain this growth while reducing residual diesel use, particularly through planned battery-electric investment on the Stirling route. By connecting low-carbon technology with UK manufacturing, apprenticeships, local employment and affordable fares, the operators can help ensure that the transition to net zero is faster and more economically inclusive.



4.6 Goal 14: Opportunity for All

- **Representation is continuing to improve:** At the end of reporting period P04, women made up 54% of Hull Trains' 134 colleagues. Eleven of its 35 drivers were women, representing 31% of the driver workforce and demonstrating continued progress in a role that remains male-dominated across the wider rail industry.
- **Inclusive culture is receiving external recognition:** Hull Trains won the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion award at the 2025 Spotlight Rail Awards, while Lumo achieved Clear Assured Bronze and was named Best Small Employer at the 2026 Proud Scotland Awards.
- **Development is being widened across roles:** Personal Development Reviews, leadership and confidence programmes, succession planning, apprenticeships and extensive technical and interpersonal learning support progression for frontline and office-based colleagues.
- **Employee voice informs improvement:** Regular colleague feedback helps both operators understand employee experience and continue strengthening inclusive, supportive workplace cultures.

Opportunity for all means ensuring that background, identity, age, disability or previous career does not determine who can enter an organisation, progress within it or contribute to decisions. In sectors with historically narrow workforce profiles, this requires active work across recruitment, development, leadership, culture and employee voice.

Lumo and Hull Trains have a strong platform from which to contribute. Both are relatively young, agile businesses with the ability to challenge traditional assumptions about what a railway worker looks like and how careers should develop. Since the 2024 report, progress has been particularly visible in gender representation, apprenticeships and the breadth of learning available to colleagues. Regular colleague feedback provides an important source of insight as the operators continue their work to create cultures in which every individual can thrive.

Representation that challenges industry norms

Hull Trains continues to challenge traditional workforce patterns within the rail industry. At the end of reporting period P04, women accounted for 72 of the operator's 134 colleagues, representing 54% of the overall workforce. Within the driver population, 11 of 35 drivers were women, equivalent to 31%.

This represents continued progress from the position recorded in the 2024 report, when women made up 49% of the workforce and 27% of drivers. The increase is particularly significant because train driving remains a role in which women have historically been substantially underrepresented.

The figures are strengthened by the routes through which women have progressed. All of Hull Trains' female drivers have moved into driving from other positions within the company, with many beginning in catering or customer-facing roles before progressing through Onboard Manager positions and into driver apprenticeships. This demonstrates that representation is being supported not only through external recruitment, but also through visible and sustained internal career pathways.



These pathways allow colleagues to build confidence, experience and operational knowledge over time. They also provide tangible examples for other employees who may not initially see themselves in a safety-critical or technical role. When colleagues can see that people from similar starting points have progressed successfully, ambition becomes more credible and opportunity more accessible.

Opening careers to those with different starting points

Apprenticeships are one of the most important mechanisms through which Lumo and Hull Trains widen opportunity. They allow candidates to enter without an established rail background and develop the qualifications and competence required for skilled roles. Lumo reported 65 apprenticeship completions by February 2026 and recruited 16 apprentice Customer Drivers for the West Coast service, alongside Customer Experience Ambassador apprenticeships.

Recruitment has included school leavers, mid-career applicants and people displaced from other industries. This demonstrates that

transferable skills – customer care, judgement, communication, resilience and safety awareness – can be as important as previous railway experience. The new Preston base has reinforced this approach, with many new roles explicitly open to people from a wide range of backgrounds.

Lumo has also achieved the Clear Assured Bronze Standard, recognising that diversity and inclusion are reflected in policies and processes and are moving beyond compliance into everyday practice. The operator is a signatory to the rail industry Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter and has introduced gender-neutral uniform options for Customer Experience Ambassadors. Lumo was named Best Small Employer in Scotland at the Proud Scotland Awards 2026

These measures help remove both formal and cultural barriers. Inclusive recruitment is not only about where a vacancy is advertised; it also depends on the language used, whether adjustments are available, whether candidates can see people like themselves in the organisation and whether the working environment supports them once appointed.

Fair development and progression

Opportunity for all must continue after recruitment. Lumo and Hull Trains use Personal Development Reviews, talent management, succession planning and one-to-one support to identify aspirations and development needs across the workforce, including frontline colleagues who can be missed by office-based learning models.

Leadership development includes programmes for women, with attention to confidence, imposter syndrome and readiness for progression. These interventions recognise that underrepresentation can be reinforced by unequal access to networks, sponsorship and confidence-building opportunities. Succession planning and transparent internal recruitment help convert development into real movement through the organisation.

The scale and variety of this activity is significant. Between January and July 2026, Hull Trains recorded 133 learning participations involving 81 colleagues. These included 46 conflict management places delivered with Hull College, 19 places on Thrive stress management, seven Deaf Awareness places, leadership seminars, coaching, human factors, fatigue risk management, trauma support and Microsoft skills.

Lumo has recorded 40 course participations in 2025/26, across topics including reasonable adjustments and inclusive workforces, decision-making and accountability, first aid, occupational health and wellbeing, assessor qualifications, leadership, performance management and fatigue. This breadth is important: fair progression requires technical competence, but also the confidence, communication and management skills needed to take on wider responsibility.

Creating a culture of belonging

An inclusive workplace is one in which colleagues can be themselves and see that difference is valued. Lumo's recognition as Best Small Employer at the 2026 Proud Scotland Awards reflects its work on LGBTQ+ inclusion, including gender-neutral uniforms and support for Pride organisations across Scotland and North East England. Hull Trains' Pride partnerships and DEI recognition similarly connect external advocacy with internal culture.

Visibility matters: pride branding on trains, partner logos and colleague participation send a public message that LGBTQ+ people are welcome as customers, employees and community members. This value is strongest when that visibility is backed by year-round relationships and workplace practice rather than limited to a seasonal campaign.

Inclusion also requires understanding disability and different communication needs. Hull Trains has invested in Deaf Awareness learning with Hull and East Yorkshire Centre for the Deaf, while both operators provide reasonable-adjustment and inclusive-workforce training. Accessibility work through Passenger Assist and industry forums helps ensure that inclusion is reflected in the customer experience as well as the workforce.





Employee voice

Creating opportunity for all also means ensuring colleagues have meaningful opportunities to share their experiences and help shape the organisations in which they work. Lumo and Hull Trains use regular employee listening, including Your Voice, to understand colleague perspectives and inform ongoing improvements to the employee experience.

This feedback provides valuable insight into how colleagues experience areas such as inclusion, development, wellbeing and day-to-day working relationships. Rather than viewing employee listening as a standalone exercise, both operators use it alongside other forms of colleague engagement to understand what is working well and where continued focus can strengthen the employee experience.

This approach supports a culture of continuous improvement, complementing wider investment in inclusion, development, wellbeing and leadership. By continuing to listen and respond to colleagues, Lumo and Hull Trains can build on their progress and strengthen workplaces where people from different backgrounds feel supported to contribute, develop and succeed.

Customer experience

The operators' inclusion work also shapes who can benefit from the railway. Accessible station investment, Passenger Assist, website improvements, Deaf Awareness, inclusive menus and collaboration with disability experts reduce barriers for passengers. Free travel to Pride and community events and the use of trains to amplify inclusion organisations extend the principle of belonging into the places served.

This broader perspective is important, as a diverse workforce and an inclusive passenger experience reinforce each other. Colleagues with different lived experiences can identify barriers that might otherwise be missed, while a railway that welcomes a wider range of customers creates a stronger commercial and social case for continued inclusion.

Lumo and Hull Trains have made measurable progress towards creating opportunity for all through improved representation, inclusive recruitment, expanded learning and development, and external recognition for their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Hull Trains' continued progress in gender representation, apprenticeship-led entry routes and industry recognition demonstrates how targeted action can broaden access to careers and create a more representative workforce.

Together, the operators have built strong foundations for an inclusive culture where colleagues are supported to develop, progress and contribute. Investment in leadership, apprenticeships, accessibility, employee wellbeing and inclusive practices, combined with positive employee feedback on respectful management and support, provides a strong platform for continuing to strengthen opportunity for colleagues and customers alike.



15 Working in Partnership



4.7 Goal 15: Working in Partnership

- **Partnership is a core delivery model:** Lumo and Hull Trains maintain 39 active relationships spanning communities, education, inclusion, health, tourism, culture, charities and the rail industry.
- **Rail assets are used as shared resources:** Travel, train branding, passenger communications, podcasts, onboard fundraising, advertising and colleague participation help partners reach audiences and deliver activity that might otherwise be difficult or expensive.
- **Collaboration improves the railway itself:** Joint work involving operators, infrastructure owners, technology providers and accessibility specialists is improving safety, connectivity and the end-to-end passenger experience.
- **Partnerships connect people to opportunity:** Education, health, culture, employment and community organisations contribute specialist knowledge and trusted relationships, while the operators provide connectivity, visibility and practical support.

No single organisation can remove complex barriers to opportunity on its own. Transport, education, health, safety, culture, employment and community development depend on organisations combining their assets, experience and relationships.

Working in partnership enables activity to reach more people, respond more effectively to local needs and produce outcomes that would be difficult for one organisation to achieve independently.

Partnership is particularly important for Lumo and Hull Trains. As open access operators, they may not possess the scale or resources of the largest national institutions, but they have assets that are valuable to other organisations. These include trains and routes, passenger audiences, communications channels, staff expertise, operational capability, trusted brands and a visible presence within the communities they serve.

Their partnership model increasingly involves combining these assets with the specialist knowledge, local trust and delivery capability of community, public, charitable and commercial organisations.

A growing partnership network

Lumo and Hull Trains have 39 active partnership relationships: 23 associated with Lumo and 16 with Hull Trains. These span community and cultural organisations, Pride groups, educational institutions, tourism bodies, charities, sports clubs, accessibility organisations and rail-industry stakeholders.

The portfolio includes highly local relationships in Hull, East Yorkshire, North East England and Scotland, alongside partnerships operating across several regions or at national level.

This range allows the operators to respond to different needs across their routes and reflects the breadth of outcomes that transport can support, from education and mental health to tourism, culture, employment and accessibility.

The quality and purpose of those relationships matter more than the total. By working closely with partners, Lumo and Hull Trains are able to support activity that responds to local priorities and creates meaningful benefits for the communities they serve.

Using rail assets as shared platforms

One of the most distinctive features of the operators' approach is the use of railway assets as platforms for partner organisations.

Lumo's redesigned Pride train carries the identities of Pride Radio, OUT North East, Edinburgh Pride and Glasgow's Pride, giving those organisations visibility across the East Coast Main Line. The operator has also committed funding for outdoor advertising to Pride-related activity in 2026, with a particular focus on Newcastle.

The value of this support lies in the audiences it opens up. Community organisations that may

have limited promotional budgets gain access to passengers, stations and public spaces across several regions.

Lumo's support for the Newcastle Frontrunners 5K Pride Run demonstrates how different assets can be combined. The operator sponsored the event, supplied water for participants and provided travel for Dame Kelly Holmes between London and Newcastle to start the race.

The sold-out event attracted 450 runners, with more than 60 young people participating in the junior run. By combining funding, travel and practical support, Lumo helped a volunteer-led organisation deliver its largest event since before the pandemic.

Hull Trains similarly uses complimentary travel and customer communications to help local cultural events reach people along its route. In this way, the railway contributes something distinctive that an event organiser or community organisation may not be able to provide independently.

Hull Trains' Moving Minds podcast offers another example of the railway as a shared platform. Recorded during working journeys between Hull and London King's Cross, the podcast gives charities, campaigners and individuals a space to discuss mental health and personal experience.

Lumo's relationship with Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care uses several assets in a similar way, with each element supporting a different part of the charity's work. Volunteers can fundraise onboard services, customers can donate Delay Repay compensation and the operator has committed advertising support to increase public awareness.

Bringing specialist expertise into social-impact activity

The operators' partners often contribute expertise and trusted relationships that Lumo and Hull Trains do not possess themselves.

For example, Hull College understands curriculum design, student needs and technical education, while the University of Hull can identify prospective students and schools for whom travel costs may create a barrier. Edinburgh Science and museums can design high-quality learning experiences, tourism organisations understand visitor markets and local destinations and health charities know how to support people experiencing illness, trauma or poor mental health.

The role of the operators within these partnerships is to enable specialist organisations to extend their reach by contributing connectivity, communications, funding, staff participation or operational support.

The relationship with Edinburgh Science illustrates this division of roles. Edinburgh Science develops and delivers credible public-engagement activity, including programmes for families, schools and communities. At the same time, Lumo contributes funding and visibility that help the organisation broaden participation. The value comes from alignment around a shared objective – making science and innovation more accessible – rather than from either organisation trying to perform the other's role.

The same principle applies to education partnerships. Hull College brings knowledge of students, teaching and qualifications, while Hull Trains provides access to its K2 Learning and Development Academy, simulator, managers and operational environment. Together, they can make rail careers visible in a way that neither classroom teaching nor employer outreach would achieve as effectively in isolation.



Partnership across the rail system

Partnership is essential to the day-to-day operation and improvement of the railway. Passengers experience rail as a single system, even though responsibility for their journey may be divided between train operators, station operators, Network Rail, technology providers and other organisations.

Accessibility illustrates why collaboration is essential. Hull Trains' £1.2 million platform redevelopment at Howden was delivered with Northern, Network Rail and TransPennine Express. Each organisation held different responsibilities and capabilities, meaning the physical improvements could not have been delivered by one party acting alone.

Hull Trains also contributes to the Rail Access and Inclusion Forum for the North, which brings operators together with disability experts and other stakeholders. This helps organisations improve policies, share good practice and address inconsistencies across the passenger journey.

Work involving Passenger Assist, the staff application, website accessibility and proposed improvements at Beverley similarly depends on coordination across organisational boundaries. This collaboration matters because a passenger's independence can be affected by a failure at any stage of the journey. An accessible train cannot compensate for an inaccessible platform, while an improved station is of limited value if booking information or assistance is unreliable.

Partnership therefore helps close the gaps between separate responsibilities and encourages the railway to operate more consistently as one system.

Working together on safety

Rail safety benefits from collaboration between operators, schools and specialist organisations.

Work with Rail Safe Friendly has supported rail-safety resources in 45 schools and generated an estimated social-value impact of more than £700,000. The programme enables schools to access appropriate education and awareness activity, while the railway contributes expertise and support linked to the risks faced by children and communities near rail infrastructure.

Rather than expecting train operators to design and deliver school-based safety education independently, the collaboration allows each organisation to focus on its area of strength.

Commercial and technology partnerships

Innovation and service expansion also depend on strong commercial and industry relationships.

Lumo's planned introduction of Starlink Wi-Fi across its East Coast fleet involves collaboration with Hitachi, Icomera and Beacon Rail. Integrating satellite technology into an operational fleet requires expertise in rolling stock, onboard connectivity, installation and asset management. The partnership is designed around a clear passenger outcome: more reliable onboard internet across rural and urban sections of the route.

New open access routes require an even wider network of relationships. Their development involves Network Rail, station operators, regulators, local authorities, national and regional transport bodies and other train operators. Lumo's services in Scotland, for example, depend on cooperation involving organisations such as Transport Scotland and ScotRail as well as infrastructure and station partners.

Lumo and Hull Trains also collaborate directly with one another. During the 2026 Wembley finals, Lumo rolling stock helped Hull Trains provide additional capacity for supporters. Sharing assets allowed the operators to respond to exceptional community demand more effectively than either might have managed alone.

Developing pathways into employment

Partnership has the potential to help people who face significant barriers to entering work. First Rail is developing an initiative intended to provide employment opportunities for people leaving prison after completing their sentences, and Hull Trains has offered to engage with the local prison through careers talks.

People leaving prison can experience substantial barriers to stable work, despite employment being an important part of successful reintegration. Collaboration between prisons, employers and support organisations could help candidates understand available careers, prepare for recruitment and receive appropriate support during the transition into work.

The potential value of this work lies in the different contributions each organisation could make. Prisons and specialist services can support preparation and rehabilitation, while employers can provide realistic career information, recruitment opportunities and workplace pathways.

Working in partnership enables Lumo and Hull Trains to turn their operational footprint into much wider social impact. The operators contribute connectivity, platforms and practical assets, while their partners contribute specialist knowledge, trust and local reach. Together, they are improving safety, accessibility, wellbeing, learning, inclusion, tourism and community participation.

By continuing to build strong, long-term relationships across the public, private and voluntary sectors, Lumo and Hull Trains can ensure that partnership remains a core part of how open access rail creates opportunity.



5. Analysis

The evidence presented across this report shows that Lumo and Hull Trains' social impact is increasingly embedded within the way they operate, rather than sitting alongside their core business activity. Across the selected Purpose Goals, a consistent pattern emerges: the greatest impact is created when commercial growth, investment in people and engagement with communities reinforce one another.

This demonstrates a broader role for open access rail. The value created by a new service is not limited to the number of passengers it carries. New connectivity can widen access to employment and education, stimulate visitor economies, create jobs within the railway itself and encourage lower-carbon travel. Similarly, investment in colleagues strengthens individual career prospects while building the skills and capability needed to support future growth.

This evidence all points to a model in which growth and social impact are mutually reinforcing.



Growth can widen the geography of opportunity

Perhaps the clearest theme is the relationship between connectivity and opportunity. Lumo's expansion to Glasgow and Stirling has brought new communities into direct long-distance rail networks, including first direct London services for Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbert. At the same time, passenger growth across Lumo and Hull Trains indicates that open access services can generate additional demand, rather than simply redistribute existing rail journeys.

The social value of that connectivity lies in what passengers can access at either end of the journey. A wider rail network expands the realistic geography within which people can consider employment, education, business, culture and leisure. It can also strengthen the visibility of places themselves, making regional centres and communities more accessible to visitors, employers and investment.

The report also demonstrates, however, that connectivity alone is not enough. A service creates meaningful opportunity when it is affordable, reliable and accessible. Competitive fares, strong customer satisfaction, investment in station accessibility, increased capacity and improvements to onboard digital connectivity all influence whether the existence of a rail connection translates into genuine access to opportunity.



Commercial growth can create opportunity on both sides of the journey

A second important finding is that the benefits of growth are not limited to passengers. Expansion also creates employment and skills opportunities within the communities from which services operate.

Lumo's West Coast expansion provides the clearest example. The creation of a new Preston base and around 100 roles demonstrates how route growth can translate directly into local employment, including apprenticeships, frontline positions and skilled operational roles.

Importantly, the evidence suggests that the quality of these opportunities matters alongside their number. Apprenticeships, internal progression and recruitment from outside the rail industry create routes into skilled careers for people with different starting points. Across both operators, colleagues have moved from customer-facing roles into driving, from apprenticeships into qualified positions and from other industries into rail careers.

The strongest feature of this model is therefore the continuity of opportunity. Engagement with schools and colleges can create awareness; apprenticeships provide an accessible point of entry; structured development builds skills; and internal progression allows an initial job to become a long-term career.

Social impact is strongest when it uses the assets of the railway

A further theme of this report is that Lumo and Hull Trains do not always need to create standalone social programmes to make a difference. Some of the strongest examples in the report involve using assets the operators already possess in a different way.

Those assets include seats on trains, connectivity between places, advertising space, customer communications, operational expertise, relationships with passengers and colleagues themselves. Complimentary travel can enable a prospective student to attend a university open day; additional capacity can allow thousands of supporters to participate in an important sporting occasion; train branding can give a community organisation national visibility; and onboard fundraising can connect a charity with an audience it might otherwise struggle to reach.

This represents an important evolution in the operators' approach to social impact, with partnership activity increasingly embedded within the everyday capabilities and reach of the railway. This helps create distinctive and sustainable community benefit while strengthening the relationship between the operators and the places they serve.



Place matters

The report also shows why the impact of rail needs to be understood at a local as well as a national level. The communities served by Lumo and Hull Trains have different economic strengths, social challenges and cultural identities, and the operators' activity increasingly reflects those differences.

Across Hull and East Yorkshire, North East England and Scotland, partnerships with cultural organisations, tourism bodies, charities, educational institutions and community groups are connecting the railway with the wider life of the places it serves. Support for festivals, museums, sporting events and destination promotion helps increase participation and visitor activity, while local procurement and employment allow more of the economic value associated with rail to remain within regional economies.

This suggests that the contribution of open access rail to place is broader than simply connecting one city to another. Operators can become part of the economic and social infrastructure of the communities along their routes, particularly when their investment and partnerships are deliberately connected to local priorities.

Environmental and social value can reinforce one another

Sustainability emerges as another area where different forms of impact intersect. Lumo's fully electric East Coast services and Hull Trains' predominantly electric journeys provide lower-carbon alternatives to domestic air and car travel, while increased capacity and passenger growth can multiply those benefits by enabling more journeys to shift to rail.

Crucially, the evidence suggests that modal shift depends on more than environmental awareness: passengers are more likely to choose lower-carbon transport when it is also affordable and reliable. The environmental case for open access rail is therefore closely connected to its customer and social proposition.

The same is true of investment in future technology. New electric and battery-electric rolling stock has the potential to reduce emissions and support UK manufacturing, supply chains, skilled employment and future technical capabilities. The transition to lower-carbon transport can consequently create economic and social opportunity alongside environmental benefit.

People and culture underpin delivery

The report also highlights the importance of what happens inside the organisations themselves. Lumo and Hull Trains' ability to create opportunity externally depends in part on whether they create it for their own colleagues.

Investment in apprenticeships, development, wellbeing and inclusion is contributing to workplaces in which people can enter from different backgrounds, build skills and progress. Hull Trains' improving gender representation, particularly among drivers, provides one example of how visible career pathways can challenge traditional patterns within the industry. Employee feedback across both operators also points to strong relationships with line managers and high levels of awareness of wellbeing support.

At the same time, the evidence shows the importance of continued listening. Employee surveys identify areas of strength alongside areas requiring further attention, demonstrating that a mature approach to social impact depends on measuring experience and responding to what the evidence shows rather than treating individual initiatives as endpoints.

Partnership as a multiplier

Finally, partnership runs through almost every area of impact identified in this report. Lumo and Hull Trains currently maintain 39 active relationships spanning education, health, inclusion, culture, tourism, charities, communities and the wider rail industry.

Partners bring specialist expertise, trusted community relationships and delivery capability, while the operators contribute connectivity, audiences, assets and operational expertise.

This allows each organisation to concentrate on what it does best.

Partnership therefore acts as a multiplier across the other themes in the report. It strengthens skills pathways through colleges and universities, supports wellbeing through specialist organisations, makes cultural experiences more accessible, improves railway accessibility and allows local organisations to reach much larger audiences.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that Lumo and Hull Trains are developing a distinctive model of social impact: one in which commercial growth creates the platform for wider social value, and social purpose strengthens the value of that growth.

The recurring lesson across the Purpose Goals is that the strongest interventions rarely deliver only one outcome. A new rail service can improve connectivity while creating jobs and reducing emissions. An apprenticeship can address a skills need while enabling social mobility and strengthening workforce resilience. A cultural partnership can increase participation while supporting tourism and regional identity. Affordable fares can support household budgets while widening access to employment and encouraging modal shift.

This interconnectedness is arguably the most important finding of the report. Lumo and Hull Trains' impact is best understood as a network of relationships between people, connectivity, place, sustainability and partnership.

As the operators continue to grow, the challenge is therefore to understand where these connections can be used most effectively to widen opportunity.



"Lumo is a great example of a North East-based business investing in the future of our region and the wider UK. As well as creating jobs and supporting major investment in British rail, they are building strong partnerships with local organisations and communities. It's fantastic to see a company rooted here in the North East continuing to grow while making a positive contribution to the places it serves."

Kim McGuinness – North East Mayor

6. Looking Ahead

The analysis in this report demonstrates how commercial growth and social impact can reinforce one another across Lumo and Hull Trains' operations. The next phase is to build on that evidence by identifying where their distinctive role as open access operators can make the greatest additional contribution.

The next phase of this work should focus on four areas that are increasingly important to communities across Britain and to the wider national growth agenda: Skills, Jobs, Place and Cost of Living. These themes are closely connected – better skills create pathways into good jobs; good jobs strengthen local economies; stronger places connect people with opportunity; and affordable transport helps ensure those opportunities are genuinely accessible.

Skills

The growth of open access rail creates an opportunity to develop the skills Britain needs for the future. Existing apprenticeships, education partnerships and career pathways provide a foundation from which to go further.

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to consider how this activity can go further: widening awareness of rail careers, strengthening pathways from education into employment and ensuring that investment in new routes, fleets and technology translates into opportunities for people to develop valuable, transferable skills.

Jobs

Growth in open access rail has the potential to be a direct engine of employment, creating opportunities both within the operators themselves and across the wider economies they serve. The evidence in this report provides a basis for considering how that employment impact can be made more deliberate as the operators expand.

As both operators continue to develop, there exists the potential to deepen this connection between growth and employment. This means considering how new services and investment can support good jobs in the communities they serve, how recruitment can continue to reach people from different backgrounds and previous careers, and how entry-level opportunities can translate into long-term progression.

Place

Rail has a powerful role to play in shaping the prospects of places, but the next question is how the benefits of growth can be captured more deliberately within the communities served. Connectivity provides the starting point, but employment, procurement, partnerships and the operators' wider assets can help translate it into stronger local outcomes.

As their networks grow, Lumo and Hull Trains have an opportunity to explore how they can maximise the impact of that growth in the places they serve: connecting more communities to opportunity while using partnerships, procurement, employment and their communications platforms to ensure the benefits of improved connectivity are felt locally.



Cost of Living

For connectivity to create opportunity, people need to be able to afford to use it. The open access model therefore creates an important area for further exploration: not simply whether fares offer value, but how affordability affects people's practical ability to access jobs, skills, family, culture and leisure.

That distinctive role also involves a willingness to take commercial risk: identifying underserved markets, backing new routes and investing ahead of proven demand. Maintaining that ambition will be important if open access is to continue reaching new customers, opening up new markets and extending the social and economic benefits of rail.

Looking ahead, there is an opportunity to better understand and demonstrate the relationship between affordable rail and wider economic opportunity. This could include exploring how lower-cost travel supports access to jobs and skills, how it encourages more people to use the railway and how the open access model can continue to provide passengers with greater choice and value.

The next phase

These four areas provide a framework for the next stage of Lumo and Hull Trains' social impact journey. Turning them into priorities for action will require continued engagement with the people and places affected by their growth.

Lumo and Hull Trains should therefore use Skills, Jobs, Place and Cost of Living as the basis for further engagement with stakeholders, partners and communities across their routes. This will provide an opportunity to listen to local priorities, understand where barriers to opportunity remain and identify where the operators' connectivity, employment, expertise, partnerships and wider assets can make the greatest difference.

That engagement can inform the next phase of action, building on the approach already evident throughout this report: listening to what communities and partners are trying to achieve and identifying the distinctive contribution that open access rail can make.

As Lumo and Hull Trains continue to expand, their potential impact will grow with them. By maintaining a focus on skills, creating good jobs, strengthening places and helping make travel more affordable, they can ensure that the continued growth of open access rail translates into wider opportunity for the people and communities it serves.



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