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LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Liverpool City Region

Social Value Annual Report

2025



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Mayors Foreword

When most people think about public spending, they probably imagine roads being repaired, bins being collected, or train services being run. And of course, those things matter – they're part of the day-to-day basics that keep life ticking over.

But in the Liverpool City Region, we're trying to do something more. We're using our spending power to make life fairer, greener, and better for the people who live here.

That's what social value is all about: making sure that every pound we spend delivers something extra for our communities – whether that's supporting a local business instead of one based hundreds of miles away, giving someone their first chance at work, or making our region more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

This report shows what that looks like in practice. Behind every number, there's a story - of someone gaining new skills and finding confidence, of a community space being brought back into use, or of a supplier doing more than just meeting the contract and going the extra mile to make a difference.

The goal is to move beyond just delivering services, but to leave a lasting, positive mark on our communities.

In tough times, people rightly expect their leaders to get the most from every penny. That's exactly what we're doing. We've built social value into the way we work.

In the last year alone, we've supported hundreds of jobs and apprenticeships, created opportunities for young people, and helped local organisations to thrive. We firmly believe this will help build a better, fairer future for everyone in our region – and making sure that the way we spend public money reflects the values we all share.

There's still a long way to go but I'm really proud that we're showing how public money can be a force for good, and that real value comes from putting our people and place at the heart of everything we do.



Steve Rotheram

Mayor of the Liverpool City Region

Chief Executive's Foreword

This year has marked a real shift in how we understand, deliver, and champion social value across the Liverpool City Region. We've moved beyond ambition; we are now embedding best practice, capturing learning, and building a culture of collaboration that's delivering real, measurable outcomes for our communities.

At the heart of this transformation is our Social Value Practitioners Network, a vibrant, cross-sector community that meets every month in local venues to share challenges, spark ideas, and learn from one another. It's a space where innovation is nurtured, and impact is amplified.

As a Combined Authority, we have brought together public services, suppliers, and communities to work together to create solutions that matter. From digital inclusion and skills development to community engagement and fair employment, our case studies show the power of partnership in action.

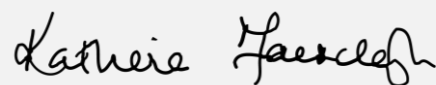
We've welcomed the Procurement Act 2023 as a timely boost to our 2022 Social Value Framework, strengthening our ability to embed social value into every contract, programme, and investment.

The results speak for themselves:

- Over 5,000 digitally excluded residents received digital devices and support
- Nearly 38,000 local people accessed learning opportunities in 2023/24
- Hundreds engaged in volunteering and community-led initiatives
- Over 100,000 workers now benefit from employers signed up to the Fair Employment Charter.

But this is just the beginning. Social value requires us to change our culture. It's a process that is central to how we reduce inequality, drive inclusive growth, support climate action, and build a fairer, more resilient city region.

Let's keep going, together.



Katherine Fairclough
Chief Executive of the
Liverpool City Region

Executive Summary

In 2024-25 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) advanced its mission to embed social value as a core function of our public service. Across contracts, partnerships, and internal programmes, social value has shaped decision-making, strengthened relationships and delivered measurable outcomes for communities across the region.

This report demonstrates how social value is being integrated across directorates, creating opportunities, increasing equity and supporting a more sustainable and connected city region.

Key Achievements at a Glance

- Delivered £17 Million in social value through procurement, partnerships and programme design
- Enabled 800+ care leavers to access free public transport to support independence, employment and social participation
- Distributed 5300 devices and sim cards, with digital support for residents
- Contributed 800+ hours of volunteering, supporting environmental clean-ups, food banks and grassroots projects
- Trained 240+ employees and suppliers in social value planning, delivery and evaluation
- Increased representation of underrepresented groups through targeted engagement
- Established a 55-member Social Value Practitioners Network, meeting monthly to build shared capability and peer learning in the region
- Working in partnership with the UK's largest Digital Inclusion charity, the Good Things Foundation, increased the number of National Databanks in the city region by 375% since 2022. There are now over 100. Over 14,000 sim cards have been issued across LCR
- Embedded social value into capital projects, including Metro Network Improvements, resulting in careers engagement, local partnerships and inclusive consultation.

Shaping a Culture of Social Value

This year marks a clear shift, from delivering isolated commitments to building the infrastructure, relationships and culture required for long-term change.

Social value has informed workforce policies, procurement practices, programme design and community engagement. Insights from equality panels and communities are shaping direction and delivery in the region.

Internal learning and collaboration have been supported through:

- The expansion of the Social Value Hub as a central guidance and resource space
- The creation of tools for inclusive commissioning, training delivery and practical measurement
- Investment in colleague development, supplier support and targeted outreach to underrepresented communities.

This report reflects a commitment to social value that is strategic, measurable and rooted in place and a belief that public investment must deliver lasting, visible benefit for the people of the Liverpool City region.

Introduction

What is Social Value?

Social Value considers social, environmental and economic benefits to capture the difference an organisation or project can make to the communities it operates in. It encompasses a wider definition of value than simply financial outcomes. The principles of Social Value are recognised to provide the building blocks to take this wider definition of value into account. Because value is not just about money, value can mean providing opportunities, increasing equality, improving wellbeing and life chances and tackling the climate crisis. As a public body, we have a duty to consider Social Value as an integral part of procurement processes. This was formalised in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and further strengthened under the Procurement Act 2023, which places greater emphasis on delivering measurable social, economic, and environmental outcomes through public contracts. Our commitment to Social Value goes beyond procurement processes, we will ensure Social Value benefits are realised in all activity across the organisation.

Our Strategic Framework and Commitments

This commitment to maximising positive outcomes for the people and places across the Liverpool City Region is set out in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Social Value Policy and Framework, published in April 2022. The Framework was developed to provide a consistent approach to embedding Social Value across the organisation. Through a range of immediate and longer-term commitments, it details how we will maximise Social Value outcomes in our role as:

- An employer: we are a major employer in the city region, providing direct jobs for more than 1000 people.
- An organisation with devolved powers: we have a significant financial footprint in the city region, spending or investing more than £100m per annum and we have devolved powers as a commissioner, an investor and a service provider.
- A regional civic leader: we have a wider role to play to influence, mobilise, convene and coordinate wider activities of our partners and stakeholders across the city region, especially our anchor institutions.

The Framework committed us to report on our progress and impact annually to hold ourselves to account.

Context: Regional Challenges and Opportunities

Social Value is especially important in the Liverpool City Region. Over the last 10 years, there has been demonstrable improvement in the city region's economy; the population is more skilled, the business base is more diverse, and the city region is better connected. However longstanding inequality, environmental, social and economic challenges are still

persistent across the city region and affect the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our residents and communities.

Ensuring Social Value is considered in decision making helps maximise our impact, support better outcomes for people and places in the Liverpool City Region, and begin to tackle many of the challenges faced across the region. Whether this be where we invest our resources, where or how we spend money, or what outcomes we prioritise to create the best possible outcomes for people across our region.

For the Liverpool City Region Mayor and Combined Authority, this means the delivery of Social Value could drive economic prosperity, reduce health and wellbeing inequalities and increase economic development. Currently, 10% of jobs in the city region are paid below National Living Wage, whilst one in four of our working age residents have limiting health conditions and life expectancy in the region is two and a half years lower than the average across England. Almost one third of our neighbourhoods are impacted by high levels of multiple deprivation. Additionally, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents are more likely to be economically inactive and are paid less on average than white residents. Women continue to be paid less than men across all sectors, are disproportionately represented in low-paid and precarious employment and perform around 60% more unpaid care work than men, reinforcing systematic economic inequality. The impacts of the cost-of-living crisis have also exposed and exacerbated the challenges faced across our region.

By embedding Social Value across our activities, we can:

- Create more high quality, local employment opportunities
- Support people experiencing inequality and deprivation
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes
- Support our net zero ambitions by 2035.

Social Value Framework and Strategic Objectives

Our Social Value Commitment

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is committed to maximising social value across all its functions, as an employer, investor, commissioner, through programme delivery and as a civic leader. Our approach is rooted in the Social Value Framework launched in 2022, which defines social value as the additional economic, social and environmental benefits we create for communities across the city region, through the way we work, invest and engage. Social value is not an add on, it is underpinned by legal duties and aligns with broader strategies such as the Corporate Plan, Equality Strategy, Pathway to Net Zero our inclusive growth agenda to be the best place to grow up, grow a family and grow a business where no-one is left behind.

The Framework in Practice

Our Social Value Framework operates across three dimensions of responsibility:

- As an employer – we commit to fair employment practices, inclusive recruitment, employees' wellbeing and volunteering.
- As a commissioner and investor – we ensure that contracts, grants and investments are set up to deliver measurable social value.
- As a civic leader – we influence and align local anchor institutions and stakeholders to promote collaborative social value delivery.

The Social Value Framework is strategically aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Marmot principles, reflecting our commitment to sustainable development, health equity and social justice across the Liverpool City Region.

Accountability and Governance

Delivery of the Framework is overseen by the dedicated Equalities and Social Value Strategic Board and reported through internal governance structures including the Executive Leadership Team, Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Combined Authority. Performance is reviewed quarterly, with annual reporting to ensure accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

Expectations for Commissioners

We have been working closely with commissioners across the directorates at the LCRCA to embed social value through the lifecycle of programmes and schemes of work. This collaboration has helped identify and address challenges, ensuring that social value is not only considered at the point of procurement but maintained as an ongoing commitment through to delivery.

Best practice includes planning with flexibility, learning from experience, connecting with others and adapting approaches where necessary to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits. By fostering this reflective and responsive approach, commissioners play a pivotal role in delivering meaningful social value outcomes for our communities.

Progress over the past year

Our Social Value Annual report 2024 outlined key priorities to enhance our practice and keep us accountable in embedding social value in our activities and decision making.

They were to:

- Continue to improve understanding and embed measurement approach across organisation through training, communications and sharing of best practice
- Develop and deliver social value in procurement training for suppliers
- Streamline social value reporting mechanisms across the organisation, specifically focused on identifying inherent vs additional social value delivery
- Establish Liverpool City Region Social Value Network with partners across the region.

We have kept these priorities in mind throughout the year. This has included working with partners across all sectors to understand and challenge our practice in social value, maximise the impact we can deliver and avoid duplication with vital services and programmes already running in the region.

Improving our Understanding and Practice

The Social Value Framework 2022 provided a solid foundation for embedding social value across the organisation. We recognise that to do this effectively requires a shared understanding, consistent application and an evolving practice rooted in lived experience, feedback and reflection.

Over the past year, the LCRCA has invested in deepening organisational knowledge and confidence around social value. This work has focused on strengthening capability across the workforce, embedding learning into daily practice, and creating tools needed to support long-term sustainable change. Colleagues have benefitted from structured training sessions on social value, covering the legislative context, use of frameworks, inclusive practice and real-life case studies. Training has been delivered across all directorates, which include Policy & Strategy, Resources, Programmes, Place, Investment & Delivery and Office for Public Sector Innovation (OPSI).

Our internal Social Value Hub now includes a suite of documents and pre-recorded training for colleagues to access in real time when considering social value. This includes case studies and a social value brokerage suite to be able to engage with partner organisations delivering social value in the region. The aim of the hub is to educate colleagues and enable them to plan, deliver and report on social value confidently and consistently.

Bespoke guidance and drop-in support sessions have been provided to Commissioners and Contract Managers embedding social value metrics into projects. These sessions helped translate policy into practice, particularly for colleagues delivering complex funded programmes. Feedback shows that colleagues who have accessed the range of

training sessions have an increased understanding of how to integrate social value into their own work.

Improving understanding isn't just about compliance, it's about building a workforce and culture where social value is embedded, intentional, and part of how we work together to serve our region.

Delivering Training for Suppliers

To strengthen social value delivery across our supply chain, we piloted some training and guidance for local suppliers, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSEs) in 2024-2025. The aim was to build confidence, clarify expectations and support organisations to respond meaningfully to social value requirements in procurement.

Aspiring members of the LCRCA Fair Employment Charter have benefited from an introductory session covering social value frameworks and methodologies, how to design proportionate and reasonable proposals, guidance on evidencing delivery and reporting outcomes and case studies from successful initiatives. There was dedicated time for supplier questions and feedback on the clarity, relevance and practical tools provided. Several participants reported they felt this improved their ability to bid for public sector contracts and strengthened their understanding of how their work can contribute to wider community goals.

Streamlining Social Value Reporting Mechanisms

In 2024 – 2025 we made significant progress in streamlining how social value is tracked, reported and used to inform decision-making across the LCRCA. A key development was the introduction of internal social value dashboards, enabling real-time visibility of commitments, delivery status and key metrics across departments. These dashboards provide:

- Live tracking of social value outputs and outcomes from active contracts
- Clear differentiation between inherent and additional social value
- Thematic analysis of commitments made throughout contracts
- Improved accountability and forward planning.

We also simplified the reporting templates aligned with the Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMs Framework) and Social Value Model and provided training to contract managers to ensure consistent use. These improvements have reduced administrative burden, enhanced data quality, improved decision-making, and increased the organisation's ability to evidence impact.

Looking ahead, we plan to integrate supplier reporting tools and expand dashboard views, ensuring social value data continues to inform investment, programme design and performance management.

LCR Social Value Practitioners Network

This year, LCRCA delivered its commitment from last year's Annual Report and invested in establishing a Social Value Practitioners Network – a regional community of officers, commissioners, delivery leads, and partners working to embed social value in everyday practice.

The network was created to meet a growing need, to move beyond compliance and foster a shared culture of learning, support and advocacy for meaningful, place-based delivery. It brings together practitioners from across the public sector, housing providers, anchor institutions, education, health, construction and VCFSE organisations.



Social Value Practitioners Network at An Hour for Others Urban Garden

Key Aims

- Share good practice, challenges and emerging solutions
- Build confidence and consistency across the region valuing different approaches
- Reflect regional priorities and advocate for change to support local delivery
- Strengthen alignment between commissioners, suppliers and community stakeholders.

Impact

The network meets regularly, mostly in person in community venues across the region and continues to evolve as a strategic platform to shape and influence social value delivery and share what works for communities in the Liverpool City Region.

Practitioners within the Network recognise the importance and value of being part of such a varied and enabling community. Members have changed jobs, received support with applications, shared expertise, built new partnerships, secured donations, and exchanged skills and knowledge that have directly strengthened their work and their organisations.

We've dedicated resource and leadership sponsorship to enable the network to grow because we recognise that peer connection and local relevance are key to making social value real.

Summary of Achievements 2024 - 2025

Workforce Diversity

LCRCA has continued its focus on building a diverse and representative workforce, recognising that inclusive leadership and lived experience are essential to equitable public service delivery.

- Extension of the Reciprocal Mentoring Programme: This initiative pairs senior leaders with colleagues from underrepresented groups to foster mutual learning and understanding. Both participants share experiences and perspectives, helping to challenge assumptions, build empathy, and drive inclusive change across the organisation.
- Rollout of inclusive workplace practices for all colleagues to access
- Introduction of the guaranteed interview scheme for underrepresented candidates.
- 41 colleagues currently completing an apprenticeship qualification.
- Graduate Programme – There are currently 11 graduates rotating through placements across the year, gaining quality experience and broad exposure and developing a diverse skill set.

Knowledge and Training on Social Value

Colleagues and partners accessed core training about social value and inclusive commissioning. All new starters have access to a briefing session on social value in their induction. Developed interactive tools and resources for colleagues to refer to on the internal Social Value Hub. Internal teams are embedding social value targets into team plans and business case more consistently.

Progressive Procurement

Embedding social value in all procurement activity remains a critical delivery mechanism. In 2024-2025 we made strong progress in supplier engagement and consistent application of TOM's based evaluation.

- 52.11% of all contracts awarded had measurable social value commitments included
- 50% had a minimum 10% weighting criteria for social value
- 39.44% of these organisations were SME's based in the Liverpool City Region.

Community Engagement

Strong, inclusive engagement with residents, panels and community organisations has been central to shaping and evaluating programmes, policies and strategies.

- Over 800 hours of employee volunteering logged across community groups
- 4 commissions through the community suppliers network recently for the Local Transport Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Strengthened the role of the Equality panels and Intersectionality panel in co-design and scrutiny.

Environmental Sustainability

Sustainability is now embedded into all major infrastructure, transport and programme investment decisions.

- Work is progressing to understand accurate amount of CO2e savings through delivery design through 2024-2025.
- 1200 school pupils engaged in climate awareness and action
Suppliers increasingly submitting environmental improvement plans as part of procurement responses.

Data and Methodology

To ensure the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) delivers credible, consistent, and transparent reporting of social value activities, a rigorous data collection and measurement methodology underpins this report. This section outlines the framework, tools and processes used to track, evidence and evaluate social value outcomes across the region.

Our Measurement Framework: National TOMs

The Combined Authority uses the National Social Value Measurement Framework - Themes, Outcomes, Measures (TOMs) as the standard approach to evaluating social value.

TOMs enable us to:

- Categorise and value a broad range of social, economic, and environmental outcomes
- Distinguish between inherent value (delivered through core functions) and additional value (delivered as a result of deliberate planning and procurement incentives)
- Translate qualitative impact into monetised social value, where applicable with standardised proxy values.

Key TOMs Themes include:

- Jobs – employment and skills opportunities for local people
- Growth – support for local SME's and VCFSE organisations
- Social – health, wellbeing, volunteering and community engagement
- Environment – carbon reduction, biodiversity, and climate resilience
- Innovation – improvements in service delivery and inclusivity.

Data collection process

From project design to contract management, colleagues can identify relevant TOMs outcomes and social value related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for specifications. Bidders propose how this will be delivered in their submission. This is evaluated through the tendering stage and captured through supplier performance reports in contract management meetings. All commissioned services over £100k are required to include social value delivery and reporting. For lower value contracts, streamlined reporting is encouraged using freely available social value measures.

Data Sources

Social value data in this report has been compiled from a variety of sources:

- Procurement data provided supplier commitments and delivery updates
- Contract manager reports highlight contract management and monitoring, including lessons learned
- Workforce and HR systems include recruitment, retention and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) indicators
- Community engagement feedback from focus groups, and panel notes
In case studies where monetised values are used (e.g. value of volunteer time, job creation or local supply chain spend), we apply the TOMs proxy values.

Inherent Vs Additional Social Value

To provide a clearer picture of what is intentionally created through policy, commissioning or partnership design, we distinguish between:

- Inherent Social Value – Impact naturally resulting from standard operations (e.g. ongoing employee volunteering, organisational sustainability targets)
- Additional Social Value – Impact specifically generated through targeted social value clauses, incentives or co-designed interventions (e.g. supplier commitments in contracts)

For example, maintaining and providing access to a public park provides **inherent social value** by offering a free, accessible place for recreation, exercise, and community gatherings, which contribute to health and wellbeing without requiring any additional investment or contractual commitment.

Additional social value would be funding and running a community gardening scheme within that same park through a construction contract. This scheme could include providing tools and training for local residents, creating volunteering or paid opportunities, and enhancing biodiversity. These benefits go beyond the inherent value of maintaining the park itself.

This distinction enhances accountability, supports innovation and targeted action, and improves understanding for employees, commissioners, and bidders by clarifying which social outcomes are delivered through everyday operations and which are deliberate, additional effort.

Data Quality and Assurance

We are committed to improving the reliability, comparability and transparency of social value data across all reporting cycles.

To that end, we have implemented:

- Quarterly data reviews
- Supplier audits
- Internal data validity checks.

Limitations and Areas for Development

We know there are some gaps and areas we need to improve in how we collect and use data.

- It's hard to tell exactly what difference we have made, especially when several organisations are involved or when communities lead the work.
- We don't always follow up over time, so it is difficult to assess long term impact.
- We don't always have consistent starting data, particularly when it comes to individual's wellbeing.

To improve, we're strengthening our commitment to working with partners and community groups to understand the data they hold and we're planning more follow up surveys and interviews after projects finish.

Case Studies and Success Stories

Case Study: Aspire Discover – Positive Action Programme

Themes: Skills Development | Mutual Benefit | Positive Action | Inclusion | Employability | Partnership

Overview

Launched in March 2025, the LCRCA's Aspire Discover Training Programme offers six trainees from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds the opportunity to take their first step into public service through a 12-month structured training experience. No previous experience was required to apply, making the recruitment process highly accessible and focused on individual potential, interest in public service, and commitment to personal development.

Trainees are placed in host teams across the LCRCA including People Policy, Housing Retrofit, Mersey Tidal Power, Delivery and Assurance, and Transport, and come together weekly as a cohort for tailored training sessions centred on soft-skills development and professional growth.

The programme is designed to build confidence, provide networking opportunities, and remove barriers to accessing meaningful career pathways into public service. It is the first positive action initiative of its kind within the LCRCA and has attracted interest from partner organisations across the region.

Key Figures & Impacts

- 6 trainees placed across key LCRCA teams
- 84 applications received from Liverpool City Region residents
- 37 initial interviews conducted
- All unsuccessful applicants were offered the option to receive future opportunities, with 23% expressing interest in finding out more, 4% receiving employability training, and approximately 9.5% attending an LCR Race Equality Hub Careers Fair, demonstrating continued engagement and the broader support provided by the programme
- 100% of trainees funded to complete a project management qualification
- Weekly cohort training sessions focused on soft skills development
- Increased diversity and inclusion within LCRCA teams
- Positive feedback from trainees on increased confidence, communication, and professional development
- 100% satisfaction rate overall ¼ of the way into the training programme

Social Value in Action

The Aspire Discover Training Programme is a strong example of how public service can demonstrate social value through innovative local employment and skills development initiatives. From the outset, the programme was shaped to remove barriers to participation and enhance the skills of, and opportunities for, residents. No experience was required to allow for a more accessible recruitment process where the focus was on individual interest and personal development.

Trainees receive monthly bursaries and free travel passes, ensuring that location and cost are not obstacles to opportunity. Participants are also funded to complete the Association for Project Management's Project Fundamentals Qualification, equipping them with versatile skills applicable across public service and beyond.

While trainees make meaningful contributions to projects that matter, the benefits extend beyond the participants. For the LCRCA, the programme brings in strong talent, diverse perspectives, and valuable lived experiences that strengthen teams and shape a more inclusive organisation. It also helps embed social value into recruitment and workforce development, aligning with the LCRCA's broader strategic goals.

All unsuccessful applicants who agreed to be contacted for future opportunities were invited to a tailored employability workshop. This offered practical and personalised support with job applications and CV writing, helping residents improve application techniques and feel confident and more prepared for future opportunities. Where applicable, unsuccessful applicants were also signposted to professional contacts within their area of interest, helping them expand their networks and explore alternative pathways aligned with their career goals. One example includes connecting an LCR resident, seeking a career in spatial planning, to two internal planning colleagues, who embraced the opportunity to network and offer industry-specific advice, and guidance.

Giving an individual a meaningful paid placement with qualifications has a social value proxy of £309.73 per week.

6 Trainees x 52 weeks x £309.73 = £96,635

Community Engagement and Application Support

To maximise accessibility and engagement, the LCRCA worked closely with our Race Panel over a 12-month period to help shape the programme's development. The Panel's recommendations, including the importance of proactive, community-based engagement, were embedded into the design and delivery of the recruitment process. In response, 13 information and guidance sessions were delivered both online and in community organisations across the Liverpool City Region, helping to raise awareness of the programme, build trust, and reach underrepresented groups.

A dedicated programme coordinator supported these sessions, providing tailored advice to potential applicants. This community-rooted approach directly contributed to the strong response, with 84 applications received and 37 candidates invited to initial interviews, demonstrating the programme's wide reach and resonance across the region.

What's Next

Building on the success of the current cohort, the LCRCA will explore the long-term scaling of the programme as a gateway to careers in public service for underrepresented communities. The ambition is to make public service more accessible to residents across the Liverpool City Region and to embed social value into the very heart of how we engage with, develop, and retain talent.

As the training programme progresses, we will continue to monitor the personal and professional development of each trainee, with the aim of supporting them into employment in the public service and beyond.

Trainee Feedback

"I have taken part in a training session on effective communication, which gave me a lot to think about around leadership styles, communication, and team dynamics. It was useful to reflect on how I work with others and the kind of leader I might want to become in the future."

"I have gained a better understanding of how to present my ideas with conviction and receive constructive criticism effectively, which has helped me feel more confident in meetings."

"What I've learned about the Combined Authority is that everyone is hard working, each person takes pride working for the region, and it inspires me to do more."

Supervisor Feedback

"He has already added so much value, and his work ethic is really good! So far, he has just jumped at everything we have asked him to do and wants more!"

"He has integrated into the team well. He is hardworking, very polite and conducts himself well in the office. Feedback from across the team has been very positive in terms of his attitude and learning, his ability to pick-up new skills and his interactions with the team."

“I have been impressed by her ability to integrate with the wider team, and I am pleased with her progress. We have discussed a few practices, and she has been able to apply them very quickly.”



Aspire Discover Trainees 2025

Case Study: LCRCA Employee Volunteering

Overview

The Employee Volunteering Scheme at LCRCA empowers all colleagues to give back to their local communities by contributing up to two days per year of paid volunteering time. Offered as a core employee benefit, the scheme reflects the CA's values and place-based leadership.

Colleagues support a wide range of causes from mentoring young people and planting trees to assisting with community events and local charities. The programme builds civic pride, strengthens connections to the region and supports personal development, while also delivering measurable social value.

Importantly because volunteering is a built-in benefit for employees, any volunteering included as part of LCRCA's social value commitments in procurement or programme delivery is treated as additional time, ensuring true added value to the community.

Key Figures

- 93 colleagues used their full entitlement last year.
- 551 hours were volunteered with local causes
- Volunteering took place across all 6 Local Authority areas - Liverpool, Halton, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens and Wirral
- Volunteering aligned to community priorities including environment, youth inclusion, health and food insecurity
- £9290 is estimated in additional social value
- 100% of participants plan to continue volunteering



Colleagues organised a community litter pick - 2025

100% of participants have encouraged their friends and family to volunteer. The scheme was co-designed with input from employee networks and local Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations. Flexibility is key, employees choose causes that matter to them, and the programme adapts to support both individual and group opportunities.

Volunteering has a positive ripple effect, employees feel more connected to their communities and colleagues; charities gain skilled and committed support and benefit from a vast array of expertise. Evaluation shows volunteering improves employee's wellbeing, morale and empathy, while extending the CA's social impact across the region. Time is one of the most powerful things a person can give. By recognising volunteering as a paid benefit, not a perk, LCRCA models the behaviours and values it asks of others.

What's Next?

Looking ahead the CA will:

- Promote the scheme more widely to increase take-up and accessibility
- Build long-term partnerships with key VCFSE organisations
- Track the additional social value generated through external commitments



Volunteer hours in action: helping deliver vital support for Southport Lifeboats

Case Study: Widening Access to Training and Learning

Overview

As part of its commitment to inclusive growth and cross-sector collaboration, LCRCA has opened its learning and development programmes to external organisations. This initiative provides free access to professional training, shared office space, and a collaborative learning environment - supporting skills development and knowledge exchange across the region.

By offering places to employees from nonprofits, social enterprises, local authorities, and SME's, the initiative has delivered 103 hours of training across 12 courses to over 400 colleagues across the region, delivered by 9 trusted providers. The result: stronger networks, shared knowledge and equitable access to upskilling that supports an inclusive and better-connected region.

Key figures

- 107 organisations accessed the training
- 459 colleagues from across sectors and organisations participated
- 104 hours of training delivered across 12 topics
- Content delivered by 9 expert providers
- Office and learning space made available at no cost
- Sectors reached: health, housing, education, culture, infrastructure, digital and VCFSE.

Organisations were invited through partner networks to access courses tailored to current challenges from climate literacy to digital innovation. Providers also worked closely with participants to adapt content to real-world needs.

Courses helped bridge skills gaps, improve internal capabilities and reduce costs for organisations that may not otherwise afford professional development.

The initiative positions LCRCA as a learning partner, not just a host. By sharing space, content and opportunity the CA has extended the reach of public investment and skills development and enhanced regional social value at no extra cost.

What's next?

- Building a shared regional training calendar with anchor partner organisations, local authorities, VCFSE and Small Medium Enterprises
- Using feedback to co-design content on equity, innovation and sustainability
- Embedding access principles into all new learning initiatives.
- Publishing participation data annually as part of social value reporting.

This approach shows that when we open the doors to learning, we open doors to inclusion, impact and growth.

Case Study: Building Pathways: Social Value Through Active Travel

Themes: Employment & Skills | Inclusive Commissioning | Active Travel | Tailored Social Value | Strategic Partnership Working

Overview

As part of a commission to develop an Active Travel Plan, to identify the missing links in our active travel network, including CAD design and transport modelling, SCP Transport Planning and Infrastructure Design won the bid and committed to delivering social value alongside the core brief. What followed was a standout example of how thoughtful facilitation, local insight, and delivery partner flexibility can transform a social value offer into real community impact.

Working closely with the Combined Authority's Households into Work (HiW) team with their data and insights, SCP tailored their social value activity to meet the real needs of underrepresented job seekers in the Liverpool City Region.

Delivery Highlights

SCP designed and delivered a 12-seat workshop course focused on skills development in the transport planning and infrastructure sector. With Combined Authority support, the offer was shaped to:

- Condense delivery into two full days (rather than spread over several weeks)
- Run sessions within school hours to support accessibility for parents and carers
- Provided a free lunch each day to remove cost as a barrier
- Collaborate directly with HiW advisers, ensuring the right clients were supported and prepared to attend

The course was completed, with 10 participants, and resulted in 7 individuals putting themselves forward for interview for a paid internship, in addition 2 already had the qualifications to apply for a graduate opening that was available, and a partner organisation also handed out expression of interest forms for their paid internship opportunity.

Impact and Beyond

Initially designed to result in one 6-week paid internship, the programme exceeded expectations. The organisations involved were so impressed by the calibre and confidence of participants that they began exploring options for a second paid internship, showcasing the talent pipeline emerging from this inclusive approach.

Why This Matters

This project illustrates what's possible when social value is tailored rather than templated.

The success was not down to generic commitments, but to:

- Clear facilitation and localised insight from the Combined Authority
- A delivery partner willing to be flexible and responsive
- A support service (HiW) embedded in the design to shape, promote, and sustain access

This is social value as it should be: driven by need, shaped by place, and responsive to opportunity.



Participants taking part in a surveying session with SCP - 2025

Case Study: Asset Management: Social Value Through Infrastructure

Overview

Through the LCRCA £64million Investment Programme, contractors are expected to deliver more than infrastructure, they are expected to deliver impact. One recent example of this is A E Yates Ltd., who demonstrated what it truly means to embed social value within project delivery.

As part of their work to remove the Kingsway gantry, A E Yates went beyond the core brief by directing the value of recycled steel into a £3000 donation for Foxfield SEND School in Wirral. But they didn't stop there, the team also organised a digger experience and sensory construction activities tailored to the needs of the schools pupils. Importantly, the visit offered early exposure to careers in construction, delivered in a way that was inclusive, adapted and inspiring. Pupils explored real equipment, wore PPE and engaged in imaginative play, that introduce them to engineering, building and teamwork. It was a small but incredibly powerful step in opening up the world of work to all learners.

Key Figures:

- £3000 donation made through proceeds from recycled gantry steel
- 1 specialist SEND school supported through inclusive engagement
- Tailored experience for approx. 70 children including a real digger interaction
- Sensory activities included Lego construction, foam bricklaying and bridge-building
- Delivered as part of the LCRCA investment programme and contractor social value commitments
- Emotional and educational impact for children, parents and staff.

The initiative was developed in close collaboration with Foxfield School staff, ensuring activities were inclusive, engaging and appropriate for children with complex and additional needs. For pupils, the visit sparked excitement, pride and confidence. It also planted seeds for future career aspirations, with several students engaging deeply in activities designed with their needs at the forefront of design.

The presence of real construction professional and machinery brought the sector to life, making it accessible, tangible and non-intimidating, especially for children who may not see themselves represented in the sector. The decision to donate the value of the recycled steel and design a bespoke experience reflects the commitment to genuine, not performative, social value.

This is a case of a contractor using its resources, expertise, creativity and relationships to deliver benefits that money alone couldn't achieve.

Strategic Context

The £64million CA investment programme aims to not only improve regional infrastructure but also ensures that public investment benefits local communities in meaningful, measurable ways.

The project highlights how:

- Social Value is not a bolt-on but a core part of the commissioning process.
- Recycled materials and routine project assets can be redirected into value for communities
- Social value should be visible, felt and community focused.

“The photo of the children with the digger is more than a picture, it’s the outcome of social value in practice.”

Sven Till, Chief Executive Officer, A E Yates Ltd. said:

“During our recent visit to Foxfield School, we were deeply touched by the welcoming environment created by the leadership team and pupils. At A E Yates Ltd., we are committed to building long-term partnerships within our community. With that in mind, we’re excited to be planning another visit to Foxfield. Our core values are collaboration and inclusion; that’s why we are working with pupils to design and build sensory walls for classrooms. We hope this project will inspire young people to consider a career in construction, as we believe our industry is for everyone.”

What's Next

A E Yates Ltd. have built a successful relationship with the school and are planning another educational visit with sensory construction activities and real construction machinery to inspire more pupils at Foxfield. A E Yates Ltd. are also planning to upgrade the schools outside forestry school by improving wheelchair access. This will be an example of a partnership to watch for in our legacy section for our next annual report in 2025-2026.

As we continue to deliver investment across the LCR, this case sets out some excellent principles:

- Practical, people centred
- Value led, not just cost led
- Co-designed with communities, not done to them.

LCRCA encourages all suppliers and bidders to work with their own expertise to develop their social value plans and remember the most powerful outcomes are the ones you can see on people's faces.



AE Yates donation to Foxfield School

Case Study: Engaging Underrepresented Groups

Overview

To strengthen inclusive decision making and ensure diverse voices are heard in regional planning, LCRCA recently commissioned £15'000 worth of consultation activity through the community suppliers' network.

This investment supported four grassroots organisations to engage communities often excluded from formal processes, including:

- People aged over 55
- Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities
- People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage
- Digitally excluded adults in Halton, St Helens, Knowsley and Wirral
- Children and young people aged 11 to 25, through the Youth Combined Authority.

The consultation supported two key policy areas, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Local Transport Plan, ensuring that both reflect lived experiences, local priorities and future aspirations from across the region's demographic.

Key Figures:

- £15,000 invested in local consultation
- 4 Community organisations commissioned through the Community Suppliers Network
- 5+ priority groups engaged, with a focus on inclusion and equity
- Activities delivered across all boroughs
- Supported major regional strategies: Local Nature Recovery Strategy & Local Transport Plan
- Youth Combined Authority facilitated engagement with young people aged 11-25.

Rather than relying solely on traditional consultation methods (e.g. surveys), the LCRCA invested in trusted community organisations who already work closely with underrepresented groups. This built trust and improved the depth, relevance and reach of feedback. By understanding the gaps in previous engagement and specifically targeting these groups.

Insights gathered are now shaping policy and reflect the needs and wants of marginalised voices. Including those with mobility barriers, cultural insights, intergenerational views and digital access challenges.

This commissioning approach shows that community led engagement is fair and how effective it can be. By enabling authentic conversations in safe, relevant settings and kept the money circulating in the VCFSE sector.

What's Next

- Embedding community commissioning as a standard practice for consultation and co-design
- Sharing learning and outcomes through the Community Suppliers Network
- Continuing investment in youth-led engagement through the Youth Combined Authority
- Feeding this approach into future strategies

This model is a blueprint for equitable participation and practical example of how commissioning choices can drive both engagement and economic activity.

Case Study: Work Experience through the Careers Hub

Overview:

In 2024-2025, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) deepened its commitment to inclusive employment by expanding and standardising its work experience offer across multiple departments, creating genuine, high-quality placements for young people from our region. The LCRCA worked to ensure placements were accessible, engaging and tailored to the individuals' interests and aspirations.

LCRCA Commitment to Meaningful, Inclusive Work Experience

The LCRCA created placements across a wide range of functions, reflecting the breadth of the work and showcasing the different routes into public sector careers:

- Human Resources, shadowing the different roles in recruitment, learning and operations
- Policy and Strategy, assisting with research and insight gathering
- Asset Management, learning about the strategic work that supports our major infrastructure
- Transport, exploring customer insights and experience, operational delivery.

Each placement included structured time with managers, informal chats with colleagues in different roles, and a focus on confidence to build relationships, network and complete meaningful tasks.

A New Resource Hub:

To make work experience truly welcoming and effective, the Combined Authority launched a new internal web page and toolkit designed to help colleagues host placements with care and purpose.

This Hub includes:

- Planning templates and suggested induction activities
- Guidance on inclusive hosting
- Tips for making placements enjoyable
- Reflective tools to help participants identify their strengths and interests
- Resources to help managers deliver inspiring, low-pressure engagement

This investment was to ensure that all departments feel equipped and encouraged to open their doors to our future workforce.

Impact and Learning:

- Placements delivered across all directorates
- 32 Students completed placements at the CA
- Positive feedback from young people, citing increased confidence, better understanding of careers, and feeling welcomed
- Colleagues reported increased satisfaction and motivation from mentoring
- Created a pipeline for future internships and early career roles
- One young person commented they had *“never stepped inside an office before”* and left feeling *“less anxious about work”* and *“more interested in jobs where I can help people.”*

Case Study: Liverpool City Region Equalex Pilot

In alignment with our work, February 2025 marked the launch of the Liverpool City Region equalex pilot - a pioneering initiative focused on improving the quality and accessibility of work experience for young people across the region.

Liverpool City Region was selected as one of four national areas to pilot a framework developed by The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) and delivered locally through the Liverpool City Region Careers Hub. The equalex pilot aims to modernise work experience by providing equitable, meaningful, accessible, and high-quality opportunities for all learners.

This framework adopts a structured, multi-year approach that, with support from the Careers Hub, fosters collaboration to build strong and sustained partnerships between education providers and employers. This, in turn, enables young people to develop essential skills and make informed career decisions. Moving beyond ad hoc placements, it offers a tailored and inclusive approach designed to effectively prepare young people for the world of work.

What's Next

In 2025–26, LCRCA aims to:

- To work closely with the LCR Careers Hub, through the LCR Employer Network, to support modern work experience opportunities in line with equalex framework and desired outcomes
- Expand placements through partnerships
- Embed feedback from participants into an updated Work Experience Framework
- Share the internal hosting resource with partner organisations across the Liverpool City Region
- Develop targeted placements for care-experienced young people, neurodivergent individuals, and those not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Why This Matters

By demystifying the workplace and welcoming young people with purpose and care, we're building a future workforce that is more representative, more confident, and more connected to public service.

Case Study: Volunteering Pathways through Households into Work

Overview

Volunteering continues to be a powerful tool for personal and community transformation across the Households into work Programme. Over the last 12 months, clients have participated in over 150 volunteering placements across all six boroughs of the Liverpool City Region, supporting a wide range of community, charitable and public sector organisations.

Volunteering plays a critical role in rebuilding confidence, routine and ambition, particularly for clients who have been out of work for extended periods and face multiple barriers to employment.

Client Volunteering Activity:

- 150+ placements participated in
- All six boroughs engages
- Estimated time per placement: 6 hours
- Assumed hourly value: £17.48 (National TOMS)
- Estimated Client Social Value Contribution = 150 placements x 6 hours x £17.48 = £15,732



Central Waste organised a volunteering day for HiW colleagues at Everton Brow

Given we are currently working with average volunteering hours, collection of actual volunteered hours in an ambition for future delivery. Improving how we capture time spent volunteering will help us more clearly articulate the full impact of these efforts going forward.

Why it Matters

For Households into Work clients, volunteering isn't just about giving back, it is a powerful tool to move forward.

Volunteering provides:

- A gentle flexible reintroduction to the working world
- Real experience for CV's, references and job interviews
- A way to connect with others, grow in confidence and reduce isolation
- Opportunities to explore new interests or explore career directions.

Placements ranged from large organisations like the British Heart Foundation, Claire House, and Oxfam to local community cafes, schools and environmental initiatives. Many were sourced through informal networks and local contacts, demonstrating the role of trust and flexibility in client engagement.

Team-Led Volunteering: Everton Brow Clean Up

Importantly, the value of volunteering is also embedded in the ethos of the Households into Work delivery team.

In 2025, 27 team officers volunteered their time to a large-scale clean-up of Everton Brow, in partnership with Central Waste and local community stakeholders.

- Direct Contribution: 7 hours x 27 officers x £17.48 hour = £3303.72
- Wider social value (estimated) £2.4 million, based on improvements
- Access to green space
- Working with community groups
- Environmental wellbeing
- Community pride and cohesion
- Reduction in fly-tipping and improved recycling.

This event shows the team's proactive and values-driven approach to supporting clients and shaping and sustaining community spaces. The clean-up of Everton Brow was chosen deliberately for its accessibility, visibility and community relevance. Officers continue to identify volunteering opportunities that are local, inclusive and linked to wider regeneration goals.

The Households into Work programme have understood and demonstrated that volunteering is a pathway to purpose. Whether its clients giving their time to local communities or officers rolling up their sleeves, these activities reflect the commitment to growth, inclusion and civic pride.

Case Study: Empowering Colleagues to Act on Climate

Themes: Net Zero | Workforce Development | Behaviour Change | Climate Leadership

Overview

Over 150 colleagues across the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have now completed Carbon Literacy training, deepening their understanding of climate science and empowering them to take action both at home and at work.

The training, open to all colleagues and managers, includes:

- The science of climate change and its social impacts
- Global, national, and local policy contexts
- How to measure and interpret carbon footprints
- Understanding local challenges and opportunities
- Tools for prioritising impactful actions
- Communicating ambitions with key stakeholders and teams

To complete the course every participant makes a pledge for their work or personal lives to support the Combined Authorities ambitious Net Zero 2035 target.

This training builds awareness and drives measurable change, with a proxy value of £101.86 per trained employee. Beyond the numbers, it contributes to a growing culture of climate leadership within the organisation.

“The training changed the way I think and talk about climate with my team, and how I make everyday decisions at work.”

– Training participant

Next steps

To build on the momentum of Carbon Literacy Training, we plan to develop a next phase to focus on capturing the impact of the learning through:

- A short follow-up survey to assess knowledge retention, confidence levels and practical application of training.
- Monitoring and reviewing employee pledges, including whether changes have been implemented at home or in the workplace.
- Identifying high-impact examples that can be shared internally as case studies

These steps will help ensure the training leads to long-term impact, not just awareness, and supports delivery of our Net Zero 2035 ambition.

Case Study: Liverpool City Region Social Value Practitioners Network

Overview

Delivering social value effectively across the city region requires more than frameworks and KPI's, it demands relationships, shared learning and spaces where practitioners can reflect, challenge and grow together. In response to this need, the LCRCA invested in the development of a Social Value Practitioners Network, which has quickly become a powerful platform for connection, trust and change.

Launched in July 2024, the network now includes 55 active members from across local authorities, housing associations, anchor institutions community organisations, contractors, socially trading organisations charities and CICs.

Members work in procurement, social value delivery, communications and frontline roles. Their common thread: a shared commitment to embedding meaningful, place-based social value across the region.

A Growing Community of Practice

The network has met monthly since its inception in 2024, usually attracting between 20-25 members in person, with regular communication, resource sharing and engagement across all members in between sessions. Meetings rotate across venues in the region, enabling members to see social value in practice and develop stronger inter-organisational understanding.

These sessions are not formal presentations, they are conversations, often sparked by open, honest questions:

- *“What's working for you?”*
- *“How are you measuring success?”*
- *“What is the art of the possible in your area?”*

Each session is facilitated by a different partner organisation, with recent hosts and contributors including:

- The Combined Authority, Social Value Lead
- The Rotunda, a community anchor in Kirkdale
- An Hour for Others, Community hub in Tuebrook
- Amey, a tier 1 contractor bringing social value into infrastructure projects
- The Croissant of Inequality, a community organisation using creative mediums to explore inclusion and equity.



SVPN at Edge Hill University - 2025

What we've achieved:

- Strengthened peer connections between 50+ professionals across sectors
- Built confidence in social value delivery and monitoring
- Embedded informal mentorship and resource sharing between experienced and emerging practitioners
- Generated positive feedback
- Identified cross cutting regional themes, including mental health, racial equity and fair access to opportunity
- Created a space for shared accountability- practitioners feel empowered to reflect on gaps and act on what they learn.

“Meeting new people from different organisations with the same aims and aspirations for social value has helped me further my experience and knowledge in social value. It is a safe space to meet, share thoughts, challenges, barriers and successes. I love meeting face to face and in our community organisations to find out what they do has been great too.”

Looking ahead to 2025-26, each member organisation will begin to present their own social value journey, sharing stories of change, barriers faced, and the differences made in their own context. This shift marks a move from learning about social value to owning it as a practice and culture.

There is a growing interest in:

- Co-creating regional tools and guidance, shaped by lived experience and frontline expertise.
- Developing the shared repository of templates, case studies and metrics accessible to all members.
- Using the network to influence CA social value initiatives

Reflections and Strategic Value

The Social Value Practitioners' Network is more than a meeting; it's a growing infrastructure for culture change. It's a reflection of what happens when people are given permission to ask questions, share honestly and build together.

By investing in coordination time, space and relationships the CA has helped to build a foundation for shared language, consistent practice and collective ambition across the LCR.

Case Study: Embedding Social Value Strategically

Overview

The Equalities and Social Value Strategic Board (ESVSB), established by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, brings together senior leaders, practitioners, and lived experience representatives across the organisation to oversee the implementation of the Equality Strategy and Social Value Framework.

ESVSB has strengthened how equality, inclusion, and social value are embedded across the organisation by actively shaping strategic direction and influencing day-to-day practice. It challenges officers to think critically, interrogates key topics through an inclusive lens, and ensures that policies, programmes, and services are designed with accessibility and equity at their core.

Through strong governance, visible leadership, and a culture of shared learning, the ESVSB drives meaningful change, resulting in more inclusive decision-making, fairer outcomes, and a deeper organisational commitment to social impact

Key Figures and Outcomes

- Strategic oversight of the Equality Strategy to ensure delivery of actions
- Social Value Framework 2022 is actively being embedded in all areas of work
- Disability Confident Level 2 has been achieved by the LCRCA
- Reciprocal mentoring piloted with leaders and minoritised colleagues
- Workplace Reasonable Adjustment Passports introduced as a best practice model
- Socio – Economic Duty voluntarily adopted, influencing decisions across policy and investment
- 50+ leaders and officers engaged in Board-led learning and challenge sessions
- Shared learning embedded across the Fair Employment Charter, policy procurement, HR and investment teams.

Social Value in Action

The board comprises of senior colleagues across the organisation and representatives from our Employee-led Networks. This has created a space for lived experience to shape strategy and delivery from the inside out.

Board members actively review impact, listen to employees and community voices and provide constructive challenge. This has driven visible changes, improving accessibility standards, and more equitable decision making.

The ESVSB ensures the organisation's policies are grounded in dignity, equity and systematic fairness, from racial equality to socio-economic inclusion. Shared learning from the board has strengthened internal practices, such as reciprocal mentoring and reasonable adjustment passports.

Case Study: Free Public Travel for Care Leavers

Themes: Youth Equity | Inclusive Transport | System Leadership | Design for social value | Commercial Partnership

Overview

Launched by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in 2025, the Free Travel for Care leavers scheme offers free bus, ferry and train travel across the region for young people leaving the care system aged 18-21.

The scheme removes one of the biggest barriers faced by care leavers, the cost of getting from A to B. It supports access to work, education, health appointments, and social activities – and empowers young people to move around the region confidently, independently and with dignity.

At the start of July 2025 there were more than 630 users and over 27,000 journeys made showing very early impact, its transforming daily life for these young people while delivering wider benefits for the transport network, community connectivity and the environment.

The CA played a convening role, facilitating commercial and operational alignment between multiple transport providers.

“We didn’t ask operators to deliver social value later – we built it into the core design. That’s what we wanted for these young people a simple straightforward pass they could use to access opportunities” – Combined Authority Officer.

Key Figures to 31st July 2025:

- 1500 care leavers are eligible in Liverpool City Region
- 876 users have registered on the scheme through their personal advisor
- 50,745 journeys made since the launch
- 46,246 journeys by bus
- 4499 journeys by train
- Over 1/3 of users use the travel pass daily
- A single, streamlined pass usable across all public transport models in the region.
- Majority of journeys are linked to employment, training or support services.
- Improved confidence, reduced isolation, and enhanced wellbeing reported by users.

Social Value in Action

The scheme was co-designed with care leavers, support workers and youth support teams to ensure it met real world needs and built trust through direct engagement. Young people report that the scheme gives them freedom, choice and opportunity. It makes it easier to attend job interviews, sustain employment, visit friends and family, or simply explore the region.

Free travel helps care leavers build confidence, routine and resilience, all of which are vital for successful transitions into adulthood. It also reduces anxiety around travel costs and helps people stay connected to their communities.

The scheme supports social inclusion, public transport use and low-carbon transport, shaping lifelong travel habits that reduce emissions.

Behind this straightforward offer for the young people is a story of complex coordination, commercial partnership and intentional social value design. Unlike other concessionary schemes this pass was delivered without operator reimbursement, reflecting a deep commitment from local transport providers, including Merseyrail, to embed social value into their services without financial compensation.

What's next

Building on the success to date the Combined Authority and partners will:

- Continue promotion of signing up through Personal Advisors
- Explore targeted wraparound support (e.g. digital access)
- Work to ensure consistent quality of access to travel in the region.

The long-term ambition is that no young person leaving care is limited by travel costs, and that this model of support becomes part of the region's social infrastructure.

"I love the travel pass. It's amazing to have the freedom to get around whenever I need to, whether it's for college or just spending time with my friends."

"Before, I would be saving each week to have enough to go and visit friends on the other side of the city, now I can get there for free whenever I want – I have so much freedom. I can even go on the Mersey Ferry."

"I'm excited, as I've never been on a ferry before."



Celebrating the launch of the Care Leavers Travel Pass

Case Study: Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter

Overview

The Fair Employment Charter is driving a cultural shift across Liverpool City Region. Through it, local employers are committing to secure, fairly paid and inclusive work, creating better jobs and fairer outcomes across sectors. From SME's to large anchor institutions, 160 Organisations have now signed up – to the Fair Employment Charter and collectively they employ 108'920 workers in the region, which is 16% of the LCR workforce.

Charter members are improving contract security, diversifying recruitment and embedding employee voice. Together they are making good employment the norm, not the exception, in the region's economy.

“The Sovini Group proudly signed the Fair Employment Charter because it resonates with our mission of creating opportunities and changing lives. As an EDI-focused organisation, recognised as the Best Purpose-Driven Workplace by Investors in People, the Charter provides a framework that aligns with our values to ensure a healthy, fair and inclusive working environment for all which strengthens both our internal culture and our positive impact on the Liverpool City Region.”

- Chloe Ellison, Group Head of Organisational Development, Sovini

Key Figures (as of June 2025)

Since the charter launched:

- 149 joined at Aspiring and 11 at Accredited level
- Covers over 108'920 employees across the city region
- 100% are committed to the living wage
- A monetised wellbeing value of £4300 per employee, who experiences an improved workplace quality for a year can be attributed to the organisations who have committed their time and resources to join the Fair Employment charter and improve their employee's wellbeing through secure and fairly paid employment, prioritising inclusive work practices and a supportive culture.
- Since January 2025 there have been 7 events specifically delivered to members of the Fair Employment Charter. With a further 5 sessions planned until December 2025.
- Social Value in Action

Each level of the charter is designed with an input from Fair Employment Charter Panel Members which are made up from ACAS, CIPD, Trade Unions, Combined Authority and VOLA. Members of our different networks are also consulted for their feedback on each level of the criteria along with Key Stakeholders and Internal Colleagues. The Senior Fair Employment Charter Officer works closely with HR leads and business owners to tailor support, align with sector norms, build employer networks for peer learning and collaboration.

Early data shows measurable improvements in recruitment, pay, retention and morale. For employees the charter leads to formal contracts, progression opportunities and reduced in-work poverty. For Employers, benefits include lower turnover, higher productivity, and enhanced reputation.

The charter focuses on job quality, not just numbers – recognising that secure, fairly paid work with voice creates wider economic and social benefits.

What's next

The authority will build on the momentum by:

Deepening evaluation using SROI and well-being metrics

Supporting Aspiring employers to progress to Accredited level – there are currently 11 formally approved Accredited Level Organisations, Panel Members are currently reviewing a further 7 Accredited Level Applications and a further 42 Organisations are busy working on their Accredited Level Applications.

Launch the final level of the Fair Employment Charter

Introduce an Ambassador Level which we hope will be available to accept applications from Winter 2025 / 2026. This final level is currently being scoped, and Organisations will choose one pillar of the Charter from either Fair, Inclusive, Just and Healthy and showcase why their Organisation is an exemplar within this pillar of the Charter as they will demonstrate not only how they have met the Ambassador Level Criteria but how they have exceeded it.

Link the Fair Employment to local procurement and investment

As part of the formal procurement process a question has been included as to whether Organisations are already part of the Fair Employment Charter or they would like to commit to find out more information on becoming a member.

Link the Fair Employment Charter with the BeMore Platform

This alliance between BeMore and Fair Employment Charter helps to strengthen the principle of fair day's wage for a fair day's pay which has been enshrined within the social contract between employers and employees for a long time.

Deliver the Ambitious Targets which have been set in place for 2025 / 2026 which includes the following:

- 200 Formally Approved Aspiring Level Applications
- 60 Formally Approved Accredited Level Applications
- 10 Ambassador Level Applications
- 200,000 Employees benefitting from FEC across the LCR

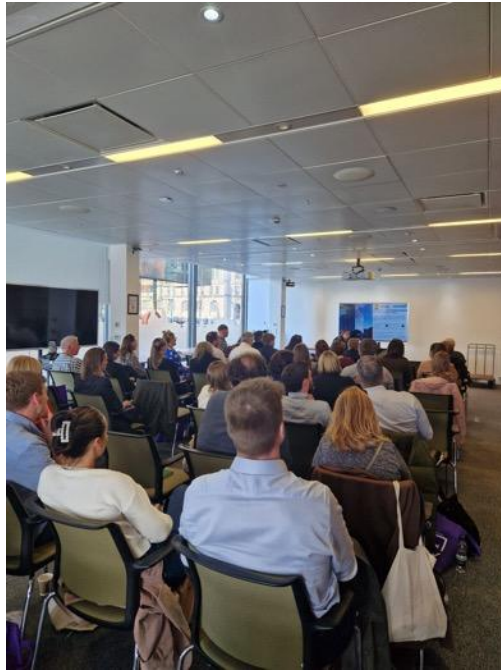
Quotes

“As the Senior Fair Employment Charter Officer, I am extremely proud of the work which has been developed and delivered as part of the Charter. The Fair Employment Charter has championed Businesses of all sizes and from all different sectors to showcase the good and fair work practices which Organisations already have in place, and to build upon them. I’m exceptionally lucky within my role to meet so many amazing Organisations based right across the City Region and to help to nurture and grow a local cohort of Businesses, who will collectively contribute towards the city region being the best place to grow up, grow a family and grow a business.”

- Colette Kennedy, Senior Fair Employment Charter Officer, LCRCA

“At Realise, fairness and opportunity aren’t just words they’re the foundation of how we work. Supporting the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter feels like a natural fit for us because we believe that good work should be accessible, inclusive, and meaningful for everyone. The Charter reflects our own commitment to creating better futures through high-quality training, apprenticeships, and real career opportunities, especially for those who might otherwise be left behind. Through our Realise behaviours, we embed social value into everything we do, from supporting local communities and driving social mobility, to championing inclusive employment and tackling inequality. Whether it’s helping care leavers gain confidence, supporting learners with wraparound wellbeing support, or encouraging employers to adopt fairer recruitment practices, our values are deeply aligned with the Charter’s mission. We’re proud to stand alongside other organisations who want to build a fairer, more resilient region.”

- Sarah O’Connor Head of HR, Realise Training



Social Value masterclass for Fair Employment Charter Member Organisations

Case Study: Office for Public Sector Innovation: Aspiring Leaders Workshop

Overview

In June 2025, the Combined Authority supported the development and delivery of an immersive leadership event for aspiring changemakers across the Liverpool City Region. Delivered by the Innovation Unit and hosted in partnership with the Office for Public Service Innovation (OPSI) and Inner Circle Consulting (ICC), the session brought together 22 participants from local authorities and the VCFSE sector for a day of collaboration, personal development and shared system thinking.

The session formed part of a wider effort to build a connected and empowered cohort of public service leaders across the city region, those who are already delivering outcomes for their communities and are now being supported to scale their impact through networks, reflection and shared practice.

Outcomes and Impact:

- The event marked a first formal gathering of emerging leaders across the public and VCFSE sectors, offering time and space to build trust and share challenges.
- Key themes raised by participants like data sharing, cross borough collaboration, and access to equitable funding, aligned directly with the systematic aims of OPSI.
- Participants identified practical actions they could implement immediately, such as.
- Contacting peers in equivalent roles across boroughs to build relationships
- Following up with new contacts to share tools and insight.

Civic Role and Social Value contribution

This event reflected the LCRCA's enabling role, creating conditions for connection without centralising ownership. It positioned LCRCA as a convener of people, ideas and shared purpose, central to the long-term delivery of social value across the region.

Over 60 hours were committed to planning and facilitation by ICC. The event was described by attendees as “exactly the kind of thing the CA should be doing more of.”

Some key takeaways from the event:

- Leadership should be defined as the ability to enable others to act together towards a shared purpose
- Effective collaboration means resisting top-down replication of national power dynamics
- Participants voiced strong support for double devolution, greater power and voice for neighbourhoods and communities in the city region.

Quotes

“I didn’t really think of myself as a leader before today.”

“There’s a sense that something is starting here, we’re being given permission to act together.”

This event lays the foundation for a more connected and collaborative public service leadership culture, one that is relational, place-based and driven by shared values. It models the Combined Authority’s long-term commitment to social value as leadership in action.



Aspiring Leaders Workshop

Legacy project updates

Legacy and Ongoing Impact: Metro Network Improvements

The Metro Network Improvements programme continues to generate lasting social value impact beyond its core infrastructure improvements as ongoing partnerships with schools and community organisations are strengthening the programme’s legacy.

Following successful Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers outreach and mock interview sessions within schools across the Liverpool City Region, Mott MacDonald has continued to support social value initiatives by helping to build relationships with local schools.

At Kirkby Church of England Primary, funding for an outdoor playground was secured through Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) and their supplier, Tarmac. Mott MacDonald’s role focused on facilitating introductions to the school and volunteering time to attend the school’s summer fair, with a follow-up visit planned for September 2025. Additionally, Mott MacDonald is working with The Brain Charity to ensure inclusive design through consultation with neurodivergent service users and carers.



School Equipment in place at Kirby Church of England Primary School

These activities show that social value isn’t a one-off commitment, but a sustained relationship with communities—and a model for long-term, inclusive regeneration.

Legacy and Ongoing Impact: Digital Inclusion

Our commitment to digital inclusion continues to deliver long-term benefits beyond device distribution. The programme creates strong relationships, provides vital infrastructure and support skills development, creating a lasting foundation for digital equity in the Liverpool City Region.

The Combined Authority's early leadership through 5300 device donations, SIM distribution, and Digital Champion training has now become a civic model, with partners continuing to expand access via National Databanks and local community networks.

Impact:

- Working collaboratively with the CA's ICT Team, Households into Work and Housing First – supported over 650 participants with access to a repurposed CA phone and free connectivity from the National Databank.
- Since February 2024, the CA has donated over 800 retired digital devices into the National Device bank, and recently signed the Government's IT Reuse for Good Charter, establishing our commitment to tackle digital inclusion and support net zero through the reuse of digital devices.
- Delivered training to upskill over 230 Digital Champions who in turn have gone on to support thousands of individuals online.

Former participants have gone on to support others, with Digital Champions sharing skills in libraries, job centres, and housing schemes. Internal teams now routinely design programmes with digital accessibility in mind.

Looking ahead, our focus will shift to sustaining these networks, expanding digital pathways into work and training, and closing remaining gaps in access for the most marginalised residents.

Legacy and Ongoing Impact: Farm Urban

Our relationship with Farm urban – a pioneering organisation using urban farming to drive community health, sustainability and education - has evolved into a valuable space for shared learning and storytelling.

In 2024-2025, we hosted a Social Value Practitioners Network meeting at Farm Urban's inspirational space, deepening our understanding of their journey and impact. The visit led to meaningful connections across organisations, with introductions made to explore new opportunities in skills, environment, and public health.



SVPN meeting 6 hosted at Farm Urban - February 2025

To capture and amplify this work, Lucy Bridge, Social Responsibility lead at the LCRCA participated in a **podcast conversation** with Farm Urban's Innovation Manager, where they reflected on the role of social value in the city region. This partnership reflects the long-term potential of investing in community-rooted organisations and creating platforms that celebrate and scale impact.



Social Responsibility Lead recording for Farm Urban's Podcast

Challenges and Learning

Delivering social value at scale across a complex organisation with a variety of responsibilities presents both structural and cultural challenges. While 2024-2025 saw progress in measurement, engagement, and delivery, several systematic and operational barriers remain. This section reflects on key challenges encountered, the lessons learned, and strategic recommendations to build resilience, improve practice, and maximise impact.

Challenges

Data Consistency and Depth

Where variation in data quality and reporting practices between departments and suppliers hinder real-time impact monitoring and limit the visibility of long-term value.

Embedding at Early Stages

Crucial to delivering social value in programme design. Failure to do so limits opportunities for co-production and strategic alignment with community need.

Workforce bandwidth

Competing pressures on internal teams, especially in delivery and commissioning roles limit the focus and time available for social value and reporting.

Key Learning

Early Integration is Critical

Social value delivers greatest impact when considered at the project conception stage, not as a post-design add-on. Departments that embed social value into early scoping documents achieved more tailored, meaningful outcomes.

Co-Design Elevates Impact

Programmes that involve local residents and organisations and key stakeholders such as LCRCA Equality Panels in design and delivery are more inclusive, accessible and better aligned with community priorities.

Simple Tools Improve Uptake

Employees and suppliers identify improved engagement, confidence and compliance where we use clear guidance, inclusive templates, and accessible measures.

Peer Learning Works

The introduction of internal peer-led workshops and social value champions helps share best practice effectively. Regular and informal sharing is key to support improved confidence, understanding and inclusion.

Measurement Must Evolve

Rich qualitative insight, such as case studies and user journeys, helps to reflect the lived experience of social value outcomes, building on the strong foundation of measurement we have already developed through the national TOM's framework.

Future Priorities and Action Plan for 2026

As we look ahead, the LCRCA remains committed to increasing the impact of our social value activities. Our 2026 priorities build directly on the progress, challenges, and learning identified throughout 2024-2025 with a renewed focus on equity, transparency, and partnership.

Strategic Objectives for 2026:

1. **Impact Management:** Fully embed TOMs across all commissioned activity and capital programmes by delivering advanced training for commissioners and contract managers.
2. **Supplier Development:** Improve supplier readiness and capacity to deliver social value by supporting training and continuing to deliver social value workshops and support for VCFSE and SMEs.
3. **Data quality and transparency:** Strengthen reporting processes and public transparency by creating internal dashboards with live contract data.
4. **Workforce Equity:** Progress continues to diversify our workforce through inclusive and accessible approaches. This includes the development of apprenticeships, internships, and early career opportunities to be accessible for individuals from a wide range of backgrounds.
5. **Environmental Integration:** Embed environmental and climate outcomes in social value plans by requiring all new contracts over £500k to include environmental outcomes. Integrate Net Zero goals into the Social Value Hub resources to support this ambition.
6. **Community-Centred Design and Delivery:** We are committed to recognising and responding to community needs by embedding inclusive engagement practices throughout project design and delivery. This includes deepening local participation through the launch of structured feedback frameworks for major projects, enabling communities to shape outcomes that reflect their lived experiences. We are also strengthening collaboration with the LCRCA Equality Panels and the LCRCA Youth Combined Authority to ensure that diverse voices are heard and integrated into decision-making processes from the outset.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress against these priorities will be tracked and reported through our 2026 Annual Social Value Report. Oversight will be provided by the Equality and Social Value Strategic Board, with regular updates presented to the Executive Leadership Team and Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

A mid-year review will assess delivery progress and recalibrate where necessary, especially in response to evolving community needs, policy developments or economic conditions.

Our Commitment

We recognise that social value is not a fixed outcome but a continuous collaborative process. The next year offers an opportunity to consolidate what we have learned, build new relationships and demonstrate leadership in public investment as a catalyst for fairness, wellbeing and sustainability, underpinned by a commitment for accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

Our priorities reflect a deepening commitment to equity and place-based resilience – ensuring every action we take contributes meaningfully to the lives of our 1.6 million residents across the Liverpool City Region.

Contact Information and Acknowledgements

Contact us

If you would like more information about this report, the Social Value Policy and Framework, or how to get involved in shaping Social Value in the Liverpool City Region, **please get in touch:**

Social Responsibility Lead
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority,
Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP

Email:

SocialValueLead@lcrca.onmicrosoft.com

Website:

[Liverpool City Region Combined Authority](https://www.liverpoolcityregioncombinedauthority.gov.uk)

We welcome feedback, collaboration opportunities and new ideas for advancing social value across the region. If you would like to fill in this Microsoft Form, we will collate responses and share action points in future reports.



Share your feedback by scanning the QR code

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the collective efforts of a wide range of individuals, teams and partners. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority would like to extend sincere thanks to:

- LCRCA colleagues and departments. Specials thanks to those in Transport, Procurement, Housing, Adult Education, Investment, HR & Digital Inclusion for their ongoing commitment to embedding social value into their work.
- Contractors, suppliers and delivery partners who continue to deliver meaningful outcomes in our communities through innovative and values-driven work.
- Community Organisations, Charities and Voluntary groups whose partnership and insight help ensure our work is inclusive relevant and community led.
- Members of the LCRCA Youth Combined Authority, LCRCA Equality Panels and LCRCA Intersectionality Panel who provide powerful, lived experience perspectives that shape policy and practice.
- Residents of the Liverpool City Region whose engagement, ideas and trust drive us to do better every year.

Together, we are creating a region that is the best place to grow up, grow a family and grow a business, where no-one is left behind.



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