

Sustainability Report

Go North West
2021



local bus services from  North West

Go North West is an integral part of the Greater Manchester economy.

The business was founded in 2019 when it took ownership of the bus operations based at Queens Road bus depot. Our bus services connect some of the region's most populated areas with the heart of the city with routes across Manchester and Salford, to places including Bury, Rochdale and the Trafford Centre.

The network carries over 15 million journeys per year (pre-COVID-19) underlining the importance of buses to the people who live, visit, and do business in the city.

Go North West is a subsidiary of the Go-Ahead Group plc, one of the UK's largest transport providers.

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Find out more...

Twitter:

@gnwbus

Facebook:

Go North West

Instagram:

@gnwbus

Website:

gonorthwest.co.uk

Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our buses in a way which helps to put our services at the heart of the communities they serve. This report is split into five sections:

Safer working

To continue to work safely throughout the pandemic and beyond.

→ [Read more on page 4](#)

Stronger communities

To support the region through a number of activities and initiatives.

→ [Read more on page 5](#)

Happier customers

To gain more happy customers and reward colleagues for receiving positive feedback.

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Better teams

To perform all job roles and tasks competently to allow further growth.

→ [Read more on page 8](#)

Cleaner environment

To improve air quality and encourage fuel efficiency at all locations across the business.

→ [Read more on page 10](#)

Managing Director's message



2020/21 highlights

- £16.8m revenue
- 8.3 million customer journeys across Greater Manchester the North West
- 6.3 million miles operated
- Simplification of our adult fares and tickets
- 2 new brands - CrossCity and Middleton's Minis
- Launch of our new website and app
- Investment in our fleet, with 23 Mercedes-Benz Citaros joining this year

"Welcome to Go North West's Sustainability Report for 2021, released alongside our Climate Change Strategy. Key highlights in this year have included investment in newer vehicles for our fleet, alongside a host of other activity to prepare for Manchester's incoming Clean Air Zone."

Nigel Featham
Managing Director

It's been a challenging year for the UK bus industry and wider transport sector, and Go North West has not been immune to the effects of either the pandemic nor the widespread national labour shortages. From a personal point of view, it has been extremely heartening to see the progress we have made as a business even whilst battling through these difficult circumstances, a lot of which you will read about throughout the pages in this report.

This year, we celebrated Go North West's second anniversary. On 2 June, we marked two years since the Go-Ahead group took over the reins from the Queens Road depot's previous owners, First Group. As we said at the time, we weren't merely buying a set of buses, some bricks and a handful of drivers, but were instead investing in an opportunity - to enter a vibrant marketplace at the heart of the city of Manchester, with aspirations to grow with a proven team.

Without doubt, Queens Road has seen more change, uncertainty, and external pressure in the past 12-18 months than in its entire 120 year history. A global pandemic, a three-month long strike and a UK-wide driver and engineer shortage and individually massive challenges. To have faced all three of these challenges in quick succession is

nothing short of astonishing, and I am incredibly proud of the way in which our team has pulled together to not just overcome these challenges, but to come out of the other side of them stronger and more passionate than ever before.

Each of these challenges were unprecedented, and the business will not recover fully from them overnight. It will take time, but the resilience our team has shown has resulted in customer numbers approaching 80% of their pre-COVID-19 levels, more positive industrial relations between the Union and management, and a whole new wave of drivers coming into the business - and staying.

In amongst facing these challenges, we have been doing a lot of work 'behind the scenes' to ensure that our bus fleet will be compliant with the requirements for Manchester's Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which comes into force in Spring 2022. 106 buses in our fleet are being retrofitted with new exhaust technology to bring them up to Euro VI emissions standards, at a cost of just under £1.68million, for which we received funding from Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM). This is in addition to a previous round of retrofits, in

which we fitted 33 buses with the new kit. We've also invested heavily in the fleet this year, with 23 high-spec, greener Mercedes-Benz Citaros now providing a step change in levels of luxury and comfort for our customers. They'll be joined by 20 low emission hybrid electric double deckers in the first quarter of 2022, further improving our fleet profile and emissions standards.

We've also been making big changes to our depot infrastructure in order to lower our carbon footprint. All of the old sodium lighting has been replaced with new, low energy LEDs. 95% of the old fixtures and fittings were recycled, and we are already seeing energy savings of around 76% - a significant saving. As well as being much more efficient, the new lighting is also far brighter, improving our safety standards in key areas of the depot, such as the engineering inspection bays.

The world is getting used to new ways of working and an increased focus on climate change and adaptation. We are proud to be in a position to come through these challenges and emerge stronger, and more sustainable than ever before.

N. Featham



This year saw the launch of our bright pink 'CrossCity' brand for service 41, which runs from Sale in the south of Manchester, through the city centre to Middleton in the north of the city.

Safer working

Even before the pandemic one of our major focuses for our first year of operation has been safety. We have implemented enhanced safety protocols in engineering, and our operations are certified COVID-19 secure by Visit Britain.

On board our buses

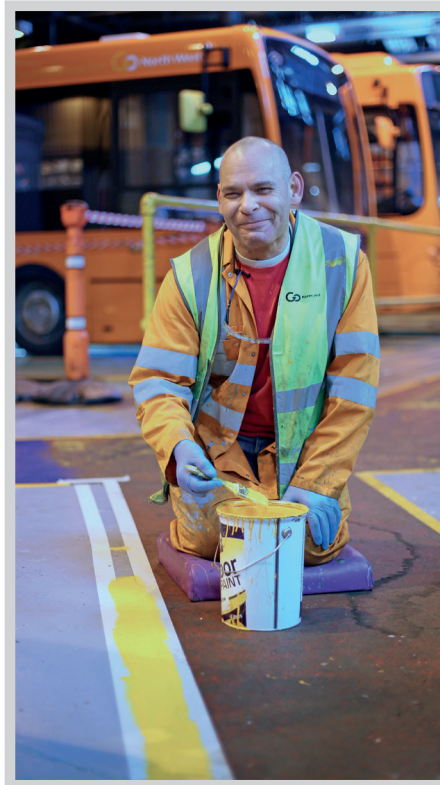
Safety remains paramount on our buses, and we are trialling new systems to help improve safety even further. A 'low bridge alert' system is being trialled on one of our vehicles, providing an audible and visual warning when the double decker bus comes within the vicinity of known low bridges. If successful, it is planned that this technology will be rolled out across our full fleet.

At our depot

A range of social distancing measures were introduced at our depot throughout the pandemic. One-way systems and queuing protocols were implemented, and certain areas were closed off. We have increased the size of breakout and rest areas, and hired more cleaners to ensure that our depot is in tip top condition. Each week throughout the various lockdowns, a 'COVID Review' took place to ensure our measures are evaluated and continuously improved.

Enhanced safety protocols

We have adopted enhanced safety protocols within our engineering department. The system focuses on putting everything where it belongs and keeping the workplace clean and tidy, making it easier and safer for employees to do their jobs without wasting time or risking injury. The Ministry of Transport (MOT) inspection bay



Much work has taken place around the depot to create safer work environments, particularly in our engineering workshops

has been repainted, new lighting installed, and each pit assigned with wheel chocks, bonnet protectors and steering wheel covers. New 'shaker plates' have also been installed within our MOT preparation area.



New shaker plates installed in our MOT bay

Stronger communities

Manchester, We've Proper Missed You

As coronavirus lockdown restrictions were gradually removed in the summer, we mounted a campaign to celebrate everything the city had to offer, featuring a whole host of businesses, individuals and organisations from across the city. We are proud to be at the heart of life in our community, and the 'Manchester, We've Proper Missed You' campaign was all about recognising the role of our buses in bringing people together.



MANCHESTER,
WE'VE PROPER MISSED YOU

Activities

The key comes home

Keen to recognise our history, we joined forces with our neighbours, the Manchester Museum of Transport, to bring home a ceremonial gold key which was used to open our depot - Queens Road - as the city's first electric tram depot over 119 years ago. We are proud of our heritage, and we are keen to share this with our community.

Queen's Birthday Honours

On 2 June North West celebrated its second birthday, marking the event with a round of 'Queen's Birthday Honours' for colleagues. Five of our colleagues were honoured for their hard work over the past year, particularly in light of the difficult circumstances created by the pandemic.

Happier customers

We have invested heavily in our fleet this year, with better, cleaner, quieter and more feature-packed buses now running on many of our routes.

Cleaner buses

We inherited a dated and tired fleet in Manchester which we are improving quickly. Much of the fleet has now been replaced, and our entire fleet will meet the Euro VI emissions standard in time for Manchester's Clean Air Zone launching in Spring 2022. A programme is currently underway to retrofit 106 of our buses with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) exhaust technology, in addition to a previous round of retrofits.

Upgrading our fleet

This year, 23 high-specification Mercedes-Benz Citaros entered our fleet, allowing us to remove the very oldest buses from the road. They feature a luxury interior, with leather seats, free WiFi and USB power as standard on board. 11 of these vehicles wear our striking bright pink 'Cross City' branding for North-South route 41, with the rest carrying our blue and grey livery enabling them to be used on routes across our network.



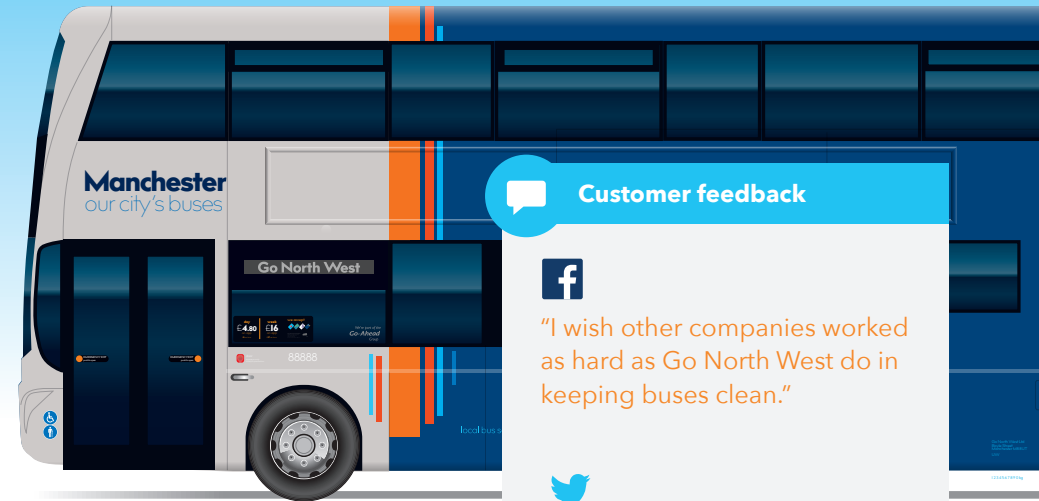
Introducing Flexi tickets

Recognising that the way our customers commute has changed, we have launched a new range of 3, 5 and 10 Day 'Flexi' bundles to cater for occasional travellers and home workers. These Flexi tickets are bundles of 3, 5 and 10 'Day' tickets, which are cheaper than buying single day tickets and can be activated whenever the need to travel arises. These were heavily discounted for Black Friday.

New brands and tender wins

We have launched two new brands this year - Cross City and Middleton's Minis, bringing a range of improvements to not only vehicles themselves but in service delivery too. Each brand launch has been accompanied by a package of marketing and PR activity to boost the profile and grow the market for our services. Our bright pink 'Cross City' buses feature free WiFi, and USB power at every seat, and are a vast improvement on the previous fleet of buses found on this route.

Middleton's Minis was created as a minibrand off the back of a TfGM tender win, for the 129



Customer feedback



"I wish other companies worked as hard as Go North West do in keeping buses clean."



"Just passing on some positive feedback about your driver of the 98. He was wearing a hat, and he was great!"



"The driver of the 52 bus this morning is fabulous! He was so friendly and fun upon entering the bus and buying my ticket. I'm not a morning person at all but he even managed to crack a big smile from me!"

and 415 routes centered on Middleton. We are committed to growing customer numbers on all of our routes, and raising the profile of bus travel more widely across the city. Middleton's Minis feature messaging on their rears to entice car drivers and let them know about onwards connections available at the town's bus station.

Newer buses

20 Volvo/MCV EvoSeti hybrid double decker buses are due to join our fleet in 2022. At just 5 years old, these will become the newest buses in our fleet, representing a step change for customers with an upgraded travel experience, and cleaner air due to their low emission engines.



Connect with us on social media:
 Twitter: @gnwbus
 Facebook: Go North West
 Instagram: @gnwbus

Better teams

We've made recruiting and training our people our top priority this year, set against a backdrop of a national driver shortage.

This year, set amongst the backdrop of a national bus and haulage driver shortage, a lot of our external activity has focussed on the recruitment of new drivers and existing Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) licence holders.

Driver Recruitment

Like most bus operators nationally, 2021 has been marked by a severe driver shortage in the UK, and as a result this has affected the running of our operations. We have invested heavily in recruitment and retention, conducting a series of Recruitment Roadshows, amongst display and print advertising, newspaper ads, and more. We have also invested in our training team, with capacity to run four 'training schools' at any one time with the addition of a fourth training vehicle.



The Qi

As the COVID-19 pandemic kicked in, a large proportion of our staff were placed on the government's furlough scheme in order to protect our business and reflect the decreased staffing requirement. To keep those furloughed members of staff in the loop, we introduced a new email newsletter, The Qi, featuring news and content from across Queens Road. The Qi is delivered to all colleagues, every Monday morning.



Blink

Our colleague engagement app, Blink, enables real-time communication from the management team to our workforce, and enables our colleagues to interact directly with each other, for example to arrange shift swaps. Drivers can access their rotas and request holidays, as well as view information about diversions, health and safety, and more. To date, 495 colleagues are registered on Blink, with 100% of registered users logging in at least weekly.

Go North West Gateway

This year, we launched another new colleague app, Go North West Gateway. Powered by Hapi, the Gateway app gives our colleagues access to a wide range of discounts at high street retailers, and money off at top attractions and leisure. Colleagues can also view and download their payslips electronically, eliminating paper waste and speeding up our processing. There's also a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme for all colleagues, now available to access through the Gateway app, providing on demand mental health support.



Get Up & Go

We have introduced our 'Get Up And Go' internal colleague philosophy this year, which is creating a strong performance culture and paying dividends already. Key to the initiative are monthly meetings amongst the management team to monitor performance against strong KPIs, and a new strategy for communicating and engaging with our colleagues has been put into place.



Key highlights

£8.52

training spend per employee

10.6

average length of service (years)

All employees



Colleagues Stey Shaw (left) and Marc Tarbuck (right), both ex-forces, stand outside The Fusilier Museum, Bury to commemorate Remembrance Day. Marc served with 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, and Stey with The Royal Corps of Signals.

Cleaner environment

We've invested heavily this year in our fleet and facilities to reduce carbon emissions and energy costs.

LED lighting

All of the lighting at our Queens Road depot has been replaced with energy efficient LED lighting. This has resulted in a substantial reduction in our energy consumption, with electricity bills reducing by 76% since the installation. 95% of the old fixtures and fittings were recycled during the upgrade.

76%
lighting energy reduction

Manchester's Clean Air Zone

There is an upgrade programme underway to prepare our fleet for Clean Air Zone compliance, including retrofitting emission systems. 9 Wrightbus micro-hybrid Streetlites, 9 ADL Enviro400s, 14 Wrightbus/Volvo B5LH hybrids, 52 Volvo B9TLs, 18 Volvo B7RLEs, 22 ADL Enviro200s, 3 Optare Solos and 11 Mercedes-Benz Citaros are being converted to Euro VI standard using emission busting exhaust technology. This means that these buses now emit up to 96% less harmful Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), and are as clean in terms of emissions as a brand-new diesel bus.

This work means our fleet will be fully compliant with Manchester's Clean Air Zone before the deadline of Spring 2022.

Fleet investment

Further upgrades for our fleet are taking place, with 20 Euro VI MCV EvoSeti / Volvo B5LH hybrids due to join our fleet from January 2022. These buses are just under five years old, and will allow some of our oldest buses to leave the fleet for pastures new.



We hosted the Manchester leg of the SSE Road to Renewables tour in partnership with Alexander Dennis, BYD, SSE and Swarco

Net Zero by 2045

In keeping with The Go-Ahead Group's commitment to reaching Net Zero by 2045, we are committed to replacing our entire bus fleet with electric or hydrogen-powered buses by 2035, to help us to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions.

The Go-Ahead Group aims to reduce its emissions by 75% by 2035 and be a net zero company by 2045. This strategy is ambitious but deliverable. It helps plot our route to the clear destination of 2045 and sets out key milestones along the way.

Our climate change strategy

In July 2021 we launched our first Go-Ahead Group Climate Change Strategy detailing how the Group as a whole is reducing our impact on the climate and also how we are managing the impact of climate change on our operations. As a public transport company we have an exciting opportunity to help the transport sector decarbonise; a full bus can take on an est. 75 cars off the road and so modal shift is critical to decarbonise the transport sector.

go-ahead.com/sustainability/climate-change

Our Group Climate Change Strategy addresses 5 priority areas:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: identify how climate change is affecting us and plan how we are managing those impacts and opportunities.
- 2 Decarbonisation: of our premises, ancillary and bus fleet. Our Group target is to reduce our carbon footprint by 75% by 2035 and achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2045.
- 3 Air quality, from our fleet but also cleaning air via our innovations such as air filtering bus. We have a series of ambitious reduction targets for carbon monoxide (17%), hydrocarbons (49%), nitrogen oxide (63%) and particulate matter (50%) by 2025.
- 4 Water, including our use, leaks and sourcing. As a Group we are aiming to reduce water use by 25% by 2025.
- 5 Waste, including recycling and waste to landfill. As a Group we are aiming to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2025.

Here at Go North West, our strategy focuses on adapting our building environment, reviewing our supply chains and increasing efficiencies in our water and fuel consumption. Given the context of our historic building, our mid-life bus fleet and our immediate environment, our strategy highlights include:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: developing our risk register and mapping our supply chain
- 2 Decarbonisation: retrofitting our existing bus fleet and making use of technology to encourage greener driving
- 3 Air quality: replacing our oldest, most polluting buses with newer, green electric hybrid buses
- 4 Water: monitoring and reducing usage, and fixing our aging infrastructure
- 5 Waste: setting targets, automating tasks and reducing paper use

Our climate change strategy



Climate change adaptation

1. Identify risks and vulnerabilities
2. Quantify costs and source funding
3. Identify risks to properties
4. Work with suppliers to identify and reduce exposure and vulnerabilities
5. Develop business cases for adaptation measures
6. Work with partners

We are:

1. Conducting risk assessments
2. Identifying mitigations
3. Developing our risk register

Group targets:

1. Risk assessment, mitigation plan, and measures embedded by 2023
2. Identify mitigation activities for critical suppliers by 2022
3. Identify local extreme weather predictions, develop premise safeguarding plan, assess high-risk areas, and embed actions and reviews by 2022



Mitigation: Decarbonisation

1. Bus fleet decarbonisation
2. Ancillary fleet decarbonisation
3. Decarbonisation of properties
4. Develop net/carbon zero commitment

We are:

1. Becoming full Euro VI by 2022
2. Monitoring bus telemetry
3. Converting lighting to LED

Group targets:

1. Net zero business by 2045
2. Zero-emission bus fleet in the UK by 2035
3. Non-diesel rail fleet by 2035 Non-diesel rail fleet by 2035
4. By 2035 reduce carbon emissions by 75%



Mitigation: Air quality

1. Improve bus fleet by procuring electric vehicles
2. Purchase new buses at the latest emissions standards
3. Remove older lower emissions standards vehicles from the fleet
4. Work on bus priority solutions with local authorities

We are:

1. Buying hybrid buses
2. Raising awareness
3. Improving training

Group targets:

By 2025, reduce:

1. Carbon monoxide (CO) by 17%
2. Hydrocarbons (HC) by 49%
3. Nitrogen oxides (NOx) by 63%
4. Particulate matter (PM) by 55%



Mitigation: Water

1. Address leaks better
2. Reduce third party use of our water
3. Reduce water use
4. Improve water sourcing

We are:

1. Fixing dripping taps
2. Recording & reporting
3. Monitoring usage

Group target:

1. By 2025, reduce water use by 25%



Mitigation: Waste

1. Improve waste management contracts
2. Increase recycling rates
3. Behaviour change programmes for customers and colleagues
4. Reduce waste in supply chain and operational activities

We are:

1. Setting targets
2. Rolling out apps
3. Automating processes

Group target:

1. By 2025, increase waste recycling rate to 60%

Summary

Our first priority is to establish a risk register that identifies the key risks that could be detrimental to the operation of the business, and in turn, our customers and stakeholders. In creating our risk register we will also establish those within our supply chain who could have a direct impact on our operational capability.

Adaptation

Climate change is already upon us. Here at Go North West, we have already experienced hotter summers, impacting on our drivers and passengers; and wetter winters, affecting road flooding and accelerated vegetation growth which has increased bus strike incidences.

We have started to develop our risk register, aiming to define our top strategic and operations risks - which are likely to include factors such as extreme weather-related events (such as strong rainfall and heavy winds) and hotter temperatures - and predict its potential impacts on our business on the short, medium and long term.

When onboarding new suppliers, we are taking into account their resilience to climate change. For existing suppliers, we aim to carry out a review as and when their operational significance has been assessed.

Decarbonisation

As a bus company, our biggest carbon impact is from our bus fleet. We will transition our fleet to EV/hydrogen over the next 15 years, in line with Government targets. This will mean working together with TfGM, especially in light of their franchising proposals, in order to meet their likely specifications when franchises are awarded.

While the transition is ongoing and we still operate diesel buses, GreenRoad telemetry is currently in use to monitor driver performance and will further be used for targeting reductions in engine idling and smooth, efficient driving.

Air quality

We have procured 20 Euro VI hybrid vehicles which will allow us to dispose of 20+ Euro 4 and 5 diesel vehicles and will bring us in line with Manchester's Clean Air Zone requirements. Further procurement will be dependant on the requirements of franchising.

Water

A data logger is in place for monitoring flow through the main meter. Internal meters exist for both our bus & chassis wash; these are read weekly to monitor & measure usage. Awareness of reporting methods and process to be reinforced with all colleagues speeding up response to any leaks or misuse.

Waste

A data wall is being developed to include waste streams and the volume of waste generated, so that it is visible to everyone in the building. The information on the data wall will then be used for awareness campaigns and employee engagement.

We will work with Group procurement to ensure they are notified of particular supplier concerns in relation to excessive use of packaging and when looking to procure locally we will ensure that single use plastics, packaging and the use of packaging return schemes are all taken into consideration.

Over the coming 12 month period we plan to automate a number of our engineering related processes including the removal of clocking in/out cards, automating vehicle inspection checks and use of the Go Check app which will remove the need for defect cards.

Key data: Go North West

Key numbers from this year

	2021	2020
Better teams		
Average number of employees	595	650
Average length of service (years/months)	10.6	10.8
Turnover (%)	23.7	15.6
Absenteeism (%)	6.9	5
Training spend per employee (£)	8.52	156.53
Female employees (%)	5.2	4.5
Happier customers		
Customer satisfaction (%)	n/a*	84
Regional bus punctuality (%)	75.9	55.3
Stronger communities		
Total contributions (£)	17513	6000
Community spend per employee (£)	29.43	10
Leverage - total spend on payroll giving (£)	2201	2860
Safer working		
Bus accidents per million miles	37	62
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	2	6
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (%)	100	100
Total UK Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) public service vehicles (PSV) bus test pass rate (%)	100	100
Cleaner environment		
CO ₂ total from all scope 1&2 sources (tonnes)	10561	10722
Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (all energy) (kg)	1.66	1.8
Total waste generated (tonnage)	165.2	132
Waste - landfill diversion rate (%)	97.81	81.5
Recycling rate (%)	58.6	45.4
Amount of water consumed (m ³)	7597	1283
Average fleet diesel efficiency (MPG)	7.1	6.61

*Results from Transport Focus independent customer survey. Due to the impact of COVID-19, surveys were paused for this year.

Key

RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations at workplaces
 DDA/PSVAR - Disability Discrimination Act and Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations



For information on the full Group data, please visit our corporate website: go-ahead.com

More information

You can find out more about Go North West by visiting our website gonorthwest.co.uk and more information on how Go North West manages sustainability can be found by visiting: go-ahead.com/sustainability

If you have any comments, views or ideas on how we might improve, or have any thoughts on other issues that we should address in this report, please write to:

Nigel Featham, Managing Director
Go North West
Boyle Street
Manchester
M8 8UT

E: nigel.featham@gonorthwest.co.uk

Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Limited (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group Sustainability Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 28th June 2020 to 3rd July 2021.

The full verification statement including Bureau Veritas' verification opinion, methodology, recommendations and a statement of independence and impartiality will be released alongside the Group Sustainability Report and can be found on the Go-Ahead Group website:

go-ahead.com/sustainability

