

# Sustainability Report 2022



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## A note from our founder



Whilst studying geography in the early nineties, I quickly learned that climate change was a major problem and decided to try to make a positive impact.

Since then, we haven't made nearly enough progress as a global community to reduce our impact on the climate, with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announcing in 2022 that we are at "code red for humanity".

I founded First Mile in 2004 as it is my belief that we need a wide and diverse range of solutions to arrest global warming, and recycling plays a crucial role within this.

We're here to help businesses to reduce their environmental impact by avoiding carbon emissions with our range of recycling, waste management and circular economy services.

**Bruce Bratley**

March 2023

## Why we've created this report

We're working to reduce the climate impact of production and waste disposal by moving materials into a circular economy.

We've written this report to summarise how our customers and our team at First Mile have made progress in this over the past 12 months.

We will publish this report annually with a summary of our progress and our plans for the year ahead.





Better waste management



Building a circular economy

## Our approach

To reduce the impact of production and waste disposal our approach is two-fold.

Through providing better waste management and investing in the circular economy we enable our customers to take climate action that is tangible and measurable in avoiding carbon emissions.

## Better waste management

By recycling as much waste as possible in our award-winning sorting facility and diverting it all from landfill we are avoiding carbon and methane emissions through better waste management.

We offer over 25 recycling streams, conduct waste audits to identify the right streams for customers, and offer a free reporting suite for customers to see their achievements.

First Mile helps thousands of customers recycle at a high level, with some even exceeding 90%. Waste that cannot be recycled is sent for incineration to produce energy, with nothing at all going to landfill.



## Building a circular economy

The dominant economic system is based on linear consumption – from the natural resources and raw materials, to the landfill disposal of most items when they reach their end of life.

As a society we need to change our system of consumption and move towards a circular economy of production.

The circular economy is a system whereby everything is designed in a way that can be re-used with minimal environmental impact.

Our approach goes beyond better waste management to invest and innovate in re-use and closed-loop solutions for materials which contribute to building a circular economy.



## Our impact

We believe we can make the biggest impact by focusing our attention on these four areas:



### 1: Customer CO2 avoided

Avoiding CO2 by enabling our customers to recycle more



### 3: Circular economy

Powering the circular economy through higher quality recycling



### 2: First Mile CO2 per tonne collected

Reducing CO2 of our own operation, eventually to zero



### 4: Positive social impact

Contributing to the overall health & wellbeing of people



## 1: Customer CO2 avoided

In 2022, for every **£1 spent** by customers we avoided **2KG of CO2** emissions.

The carbon impact of using recycled materials to manufacture new products is substantially lower than using new “virgin” materials .

Our primary goal is to make it easy for businesses to recycle more and therefore avoid carbon emissions.



100%

Emissions to produce a can from raw materials

Mining, transport and processing emissions

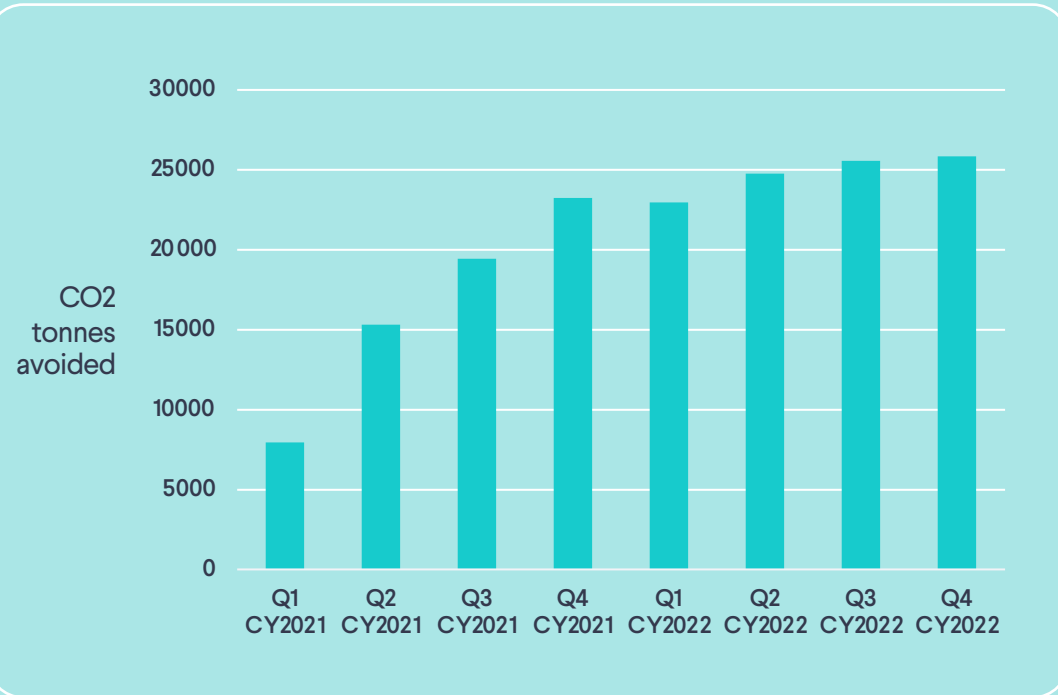
5%

Emissions to produce a can from recycled material

Embedded emissions in bins, direct emissions of collection, transport, sorting from other recyclables and processing

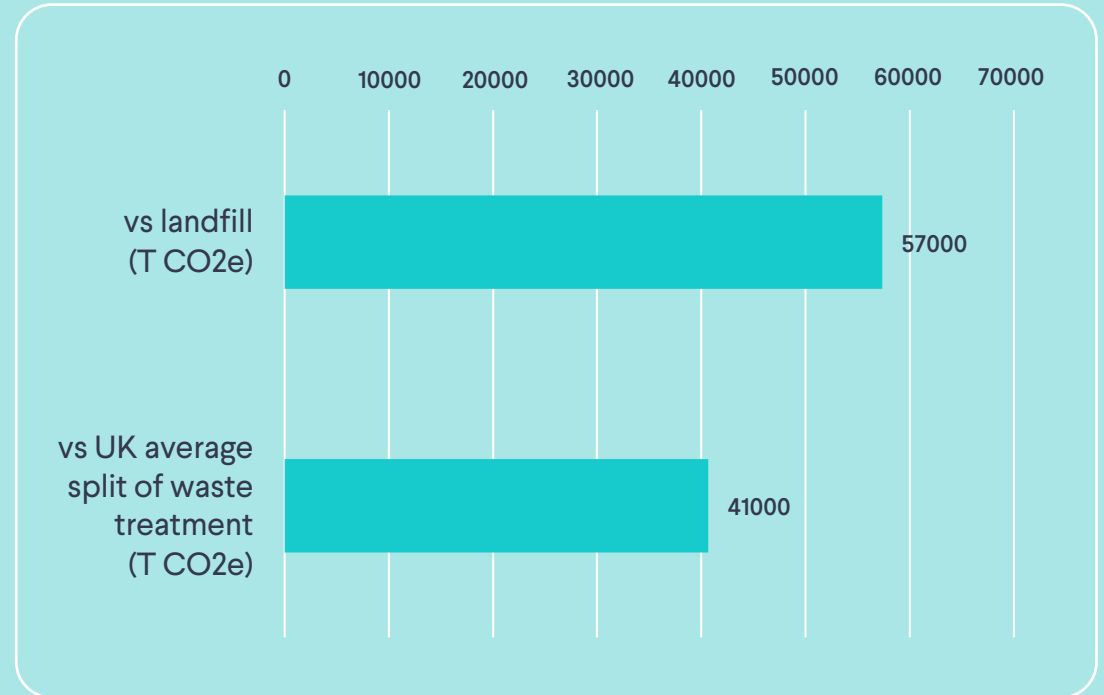
## 11 Our impact: Customer CO2 avoided

### Virgin material CO2 avoided by recycling



Over the last two years, CO2 avoidance through customer recycling has increased quarter on quarter. By driving higher recycling rates and higher quality processing of recyclables, we want to continue to grow this impact in future.

### Lifecycle CO2 avoided by First Mile vs other waste management options



There is further carbon avoided when comparing what would have otherwise happened to material we collected. On average, the UK sends 24% of all waste to landfill. We send 0% of our waste to landfill.

We've compared the carbon avoided from our customers' recycling vs if all the waste had gone to landfill, and vs if the waste had been treated according to the UK average split.

12 Our impact: Customer CO2 avoided



## Data reporting

We provide **robust carbon data** to customers and take careful measures to ensure that the measurement of their impact is verified and accurate.

We use a mixture of sources to ensure high levels of certainty:

- Privately commissioned Trucost data to calculate carbon and other environmental factors of recycling (vs other forms of disposal), which is publicly available
- Carbon WARM data (from Defra/WRAP) on the carbon impacts of recycling and comparison to other disposal methods
- MOBA: bin weighing hardware and software to verify weights of customer savings
- Published and credible lifecycle analyses on specific materials e.g. coffee grounds
- UK Government GHG protocol conversion factors carbon data

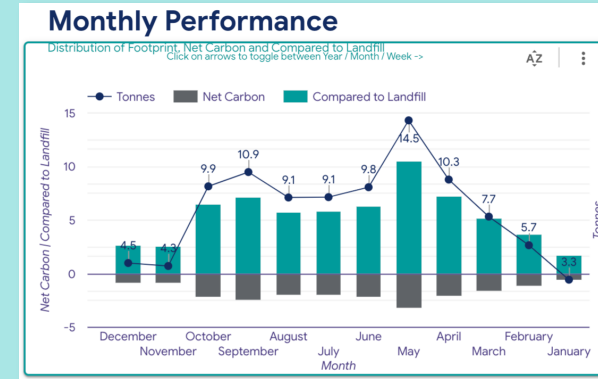
### 13 Our impact: Customer CO2 avoided

# Customer recycling achievements

We provide our customers with reporting tools to support their sustainability goals, and we continue to improve these to further enable businesses to increase their recycling rates.

We also know it is important to celebrate achievements each year and to reflect on the fantastic efforts of our customers to avoid carbon emissions.

All our customers received an award for their Recycling Standard in 2022. They could then celebrate their achievements and share with their own customers via a certificate, social media posts, an embeddable website widget and even a window sticker.



Customer portal: Monthly performance data

**First Mile Recycling Portal**  
Scope 1, 2, and 3 Emissions - Gov. Reporting (BETA)

Name: [Dropdown] | Select date range: [Dropdown]

Total KG's Collected	233,728.5	Scope 3 Emissions (UK Gov)	4,747.11	Scope 1 Emissions (First Mile)	8,927.17	Scope 2 Emissions (First Mile)	234.56
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All emissions displayed in KG's. Scope 3 emissions multiply KG's collected by the 2022 UK Government waste disposal CO2 conversion factors in line with official reporting. For the purposes of official GHG reporting, you only need to use this number.  
Separately, First Mile's Scope 1 and 2 emissions relating to your collections are displayed. This is calculated by applying the customers' % of total First Mile tonnes collected by First Mile's total Scope 1 and 2 emissions.

first mile

Customer portal: Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions data

**RECYCLING STANDARD 2022**  
Paddington Marmalades

Recycling rate: 99% | Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved: 100

**GOLD AWARD**

first mile

**Gold Recycling Standard 2022**

first mile

**GOLD RECYCLER**

2022

**GOLD RECYCLER**

2022

Gold Recycling Award | 100% Recycling Rate | ZERO to landfill | 10.2 Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved | 0 kW Energy Produced | 0 Tonnes Diverted from Landfill

Verified Recycling and Environment Achievements 2022 - Powered by first mile

Celebrating customer achievements (from top left): Certificate, window sticker, social media post & embeddable website widget with recycling data

“

Back in March 2017, we made a conscious decision to start using First Mile.

Last year, we recycled 49% of the waste we generated across our two London Bridge sites - avoiding 6.1 tonnes of CO2 from being released into the atmosphere.

Using First Mile was one of the first positive changes we made to reduce our environmental impact as a company. Today, we've continued to implement changes across our sites in an effort to be a sustainable business, whilst still learning about the areas we need to improve on.



**FIRST MILE**  
**FULLY CHARGED**

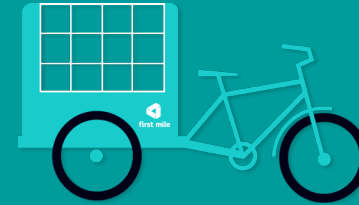
## 2: First Mile CO2 per tonne collected

The main impact from our own operations is from our fleet of HGV diesel vehicles, which collect and compact customer waste.

We have a detailed plan to decarbonise our operations over the next five years.

In 2022 we avoided 281.7 tonnes of carbon emissions with more electric cargo bikes and vehicles and making routes more efficient.

Any carbon emissions we are unable to eliminate will be offset through carbon capture projects.



### Introduction of more cargo bikes

This led to the avoidance of 50.7T CO<sub>2</sub>e in our combined scope 1 and 2 emissions, which is equivalent to reducing our emissions intensity by 0.7kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per tonne of waste collected.

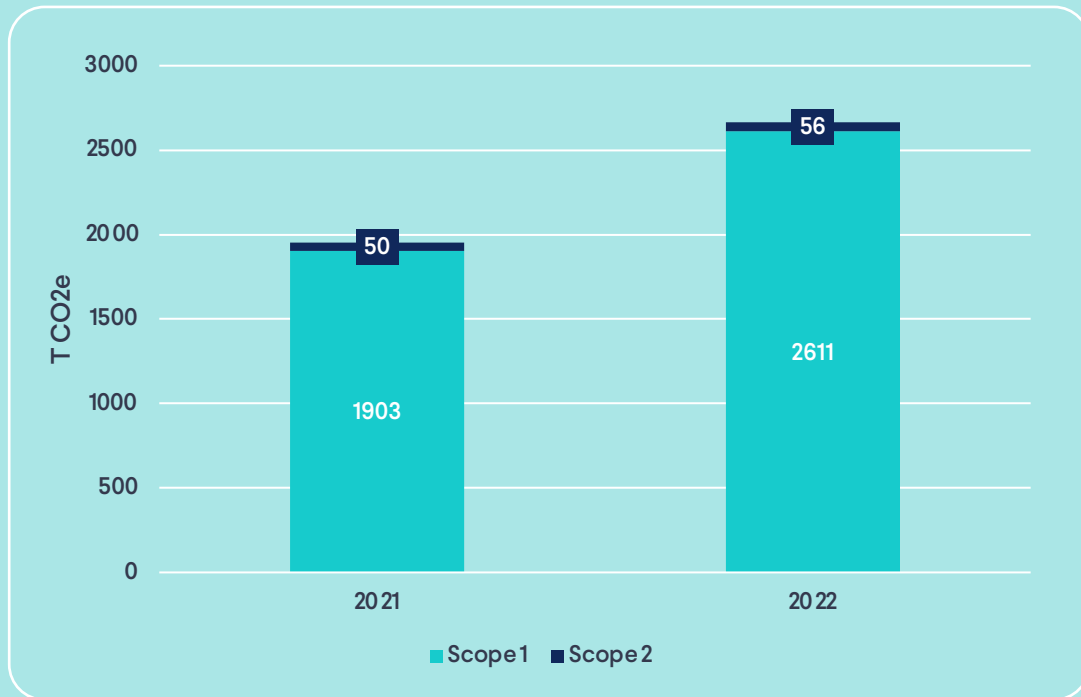


### Customer density and route improvements

This led to the avoidance of 231T CO<sub>2</sub>e in our combined scope 1 and 2 emissions, which is equivalent to reducing our emissions intensity by 3.1kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per tonne of waste collected.

## 15 Our impact: First Mile CO2 per tonne collected

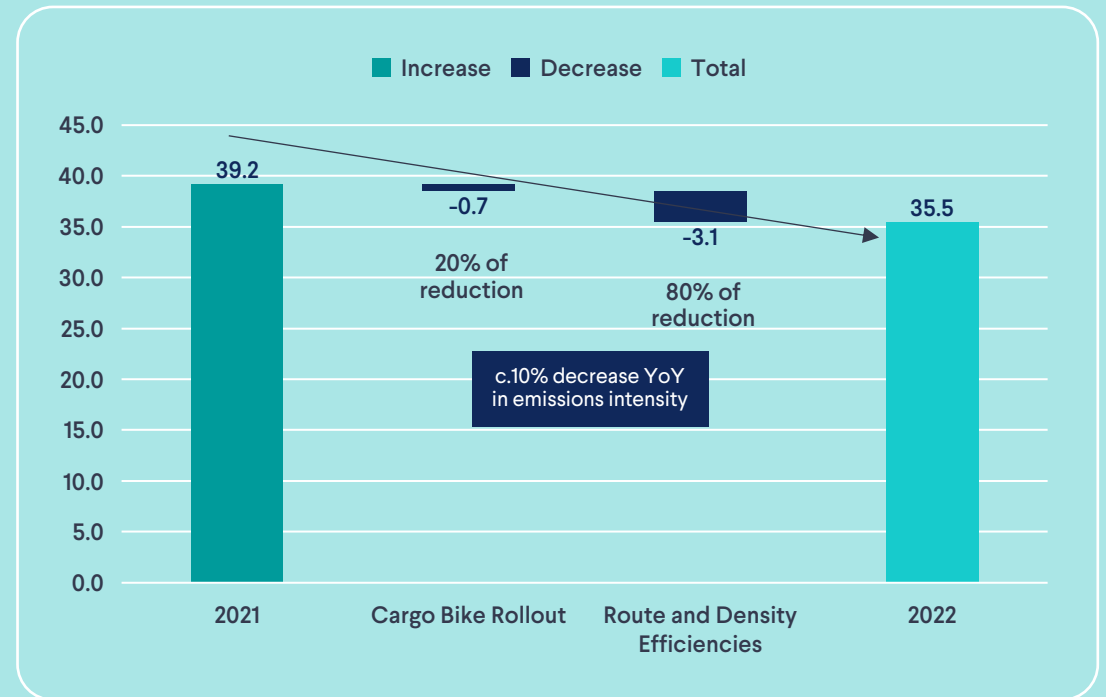
### Absolute scope 1 and 2 emissions



Sources: GHG protocol emissions factors, internal data

In absolute terms, our total scope 1 and 2 emissions have increased from 2021 to 2022 as we have emerged from Covid lockdowns and grown our customer base...

### Scope 1 and 2 emissions intensity (kg CO2e per tonne waste collected)



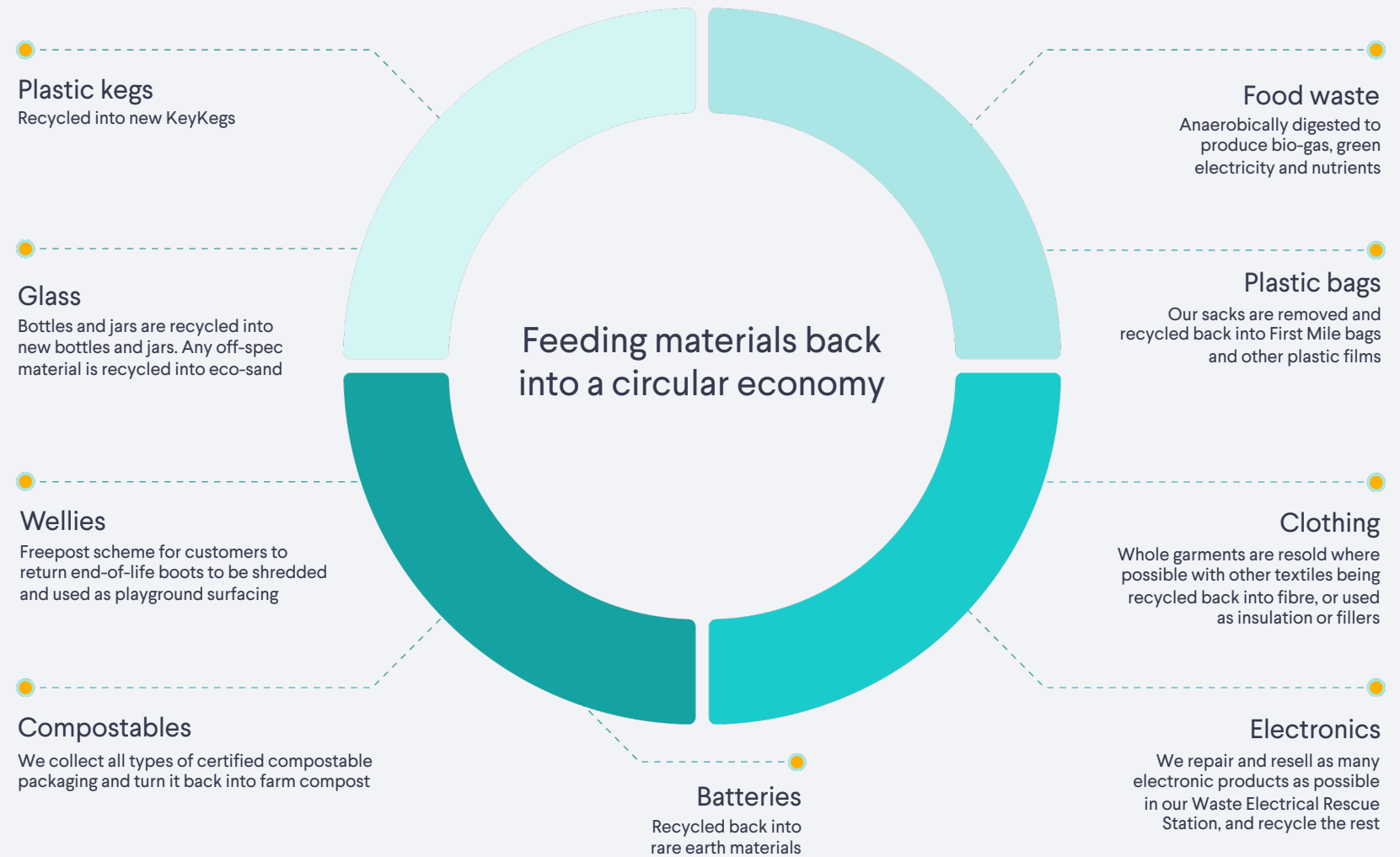
Sources: GHG protocol emissions factors, internal data

...however, our emissions intensity (a measure of our CO2e emissions per tonne of waste collected) has fallen by 10% as 2022 has seen the rollout of cargo bikes, routing improvements and higher customer density.

# 3: Circular economy

Through a circular economy approach, we enable high recycling rates, more reuse, and closed-loop solutions for specialist materials.

Here are just some of the examples of our work in building the circular economy.





## 4: Positive social impact

It's fundamental to First Mile to create an inclusive workplace where every employee can be themselves and feels valued, respected, and heard.

We strive to be a place where everyone's input is acknowledged and nurtured, so they can reach their potential and work to achieve their personal and business goals.



## 19 Our impact: Positive social impact



### Excellent eNPS

We proudly have an excellent employee net promoter score (eNPS) and have won awards for supporting staff mental health and wellbeing. We constantly get feedback from our employees to make sure we're doing everything we can to meet their needs.



### Creating more jobs

We opened our Birmingham office in late 2020 and have since built a team of 27 customer services staff, who consistently go above and beyond to amaze our customers with their fantastic service.



### Living Wage accredited

We're proud to be an accredited Living Wage Employer. The Living Wage Foundation accredits Living Wage Employers for their commitment to paying their staff according to the cost of living.



### Driver Academy

Getting your HGV licence is a long and expensive process. We decided to make this qualification more accessible to people by creating our Driver Academy. We support people to get their CAT C licence whilst working with us. In the last 2 years we've had over 35 drivers qualify with us.

## 20 Our impact: Positive social impact



### Charity work

We care about our local communities. We provide Crisis with free recycling, donate to the Small Steps Project and fundraise every Movember. We've taken part in the Winter Run for Cancer Research and have also collected Christmas gifts for the Salvation Army Appeal for children in need.



### Accreditations

We're committed to the safety of our staff. Our accreditations include ISO 9001 & ISO 14001, SafeContractor, and Fleet Operation Recognition Scheme: Silver.



### Purpose-led business

Our company values are woven through all we do; everyone at First Mile has a carbon target to contribute to our environmental goals, reflective of our mission to Love the Planet.



### Continuous learning

We often have speakers visit our offices to expand our team's knowledge. Subjects we've covered include avoiding burnout, new eco-friendly packaging ideas, environmental policies, and waste-free cosmetics. We believe this learning helps us to come up with the best recycling solutions.

## Diversity

Collaboration and valuing difference builds an inclusive internal and external community which is essential to being a great business and, just as importantly, a great employer.

We appreciate and welcome diverse people and thoughts to deliver our customers the best and most innovative experiences and products.

As a very operational business, we are making it a priority to hire more women and people with disabilities into operations roles, as a response to the lack of representation of these groups in the sector.



25 nationalities,  
30 ethnicities



Hiring more women  
in operations



Hiring more people  
with disabilities

## Awards

### **3x Winner**

National Recycling Company of the Year  
National Recycling Awards

### **3x Winner**

1,000 Companies to Inspire Britain  
London Stock Exchange

### **Winner**

Contribution to Achieving Net Zero  
Awards for Excellence in Recycling & Waste Management

### **Winner**

Commercial Team of the Year  
National Waste & Recycling Awards

### **Winner**

Innovator of the Year  
CBI Awards

### **Winner**

SME of the Year  
CBI Awards

### **Winner**

Green Infrastructure of the Year  
BusinessGreen Leaders Awards

### **Shortlisted**

Best Health and Wellbeing Strategy  
National HR Awards



Love the planet



Amaze customers



Be one team

## 2023 and beyond

Our values underpin everything we do: **love the planet, amaze customers, and be one team.** With these in mind, here's what we have planned for the next year:

- Avoid more carbon by enabling higher customer recycling including more hard-to-recycle streams
- Roll out more cargo bikes and invest in tech to make rounds more efficient; further reducing our impact
- Become B Corp Certified
- Roll out new reporting suite for customers to include wider carbon analysis and scope reporting
- Add further environmental data points, such as biodiversity impact and methane avoided to our reporting tools



Thank you for taking the time to learn more about First Mile. Follow our progress on our platforms:



[thefirstmile.co.uk](https://www.thefirstmile.co.uk)