



# Acorn Group **ESG Report 2026**





## An Introduction From Our CEO

2025 saw the culmination of a year-long process to develop and launch our refreshed 2030 strategy with colleagues and stakeholders.

The heart of our strategy reaffirms Acorn's focus on non-standard insurance. This focus has remained consistent from our earlier days in 1st floor offices on Chapel Lane in Formby: building our own underwriting capability, insourcing our claims operation, and going onto Price Comparison Sites for van and private car.

Our purpose is simple and unchanged: to deliver non-standard insurance for a non-standard world.

*When insurance doesn't fit, everyday life is disrupted - people cannot get to work, children cannot be taken to school, small businesses cannot trade.*

Young drivers, gig economy riders, multi van operators, taxi drivers, fleets and customers who need short term cover face complexity that standard products do not address. When insurance doesn't fit, everyday life is disrupted — people cannot get to work, children cannot be taken to school, small businesses cannot trade. We exist to fill that gap with products, service and claims support that are intelligent, commercially sustainable and delivered with empathy.

Our biggest contribution to society is our purpose – because we allow people to earn a living as a taxi driver or builder when they might not be able to afford to otherwise; or similarly make it affordable and viable to a first-time-driver to own their own car.

Culture is the core bedrock of our strategy – not least because our culture has been critical to our success in growing from a one-person business to one employing nearly 2,000 people. The behaviours that have fuelled Acorn — speed, courage to back ideas without fearing failure, willingness to go the extra mile, and a commitment to Acorn's people and local community — are the things we must protect as we scale. We call this “staying small to grow big”.

Practically, that means investing where it matters most: in better outcomes for customers, in the development and wellbeing of our people, and in the local areas and communities we belong to.

Nearly a year on from the strategy launch, this inaugural report sets out the progress we have made, the measures we use to hold ourselves to account, and the priorities we will pursue next.

Our initial focus is clearly defined under three areas:

- Customers — championing the non-standard customer
- People — becoming the employer of choice in the North West
- Places — creating a meaningful, long lasting legacy in the places we call home

Looking ahead, we have set ambitious objectives for 2026 that continue to build on the three areas above.

I am grateful for the commitment of our people and proud to be part of an organisation that has a hugely positive impact on the UK.

**Mike Lloyd**  
Chief Executive

# PLACES: 2025 IN NUMBERS

**£1.5m**

INVESTMENT IN THE RENOVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN CENTRAL LIVERPOOL

**£115,596**

MONEY RAISED FOR CHARITY

**6000**

ITEMS DONATED

**60**

COLLEAGUE VOLUNTEERING DAYS

**4**

LOCAL CHARITIES SUPPORTED



**The Bobby Colleran Trust**  
Safer Streets for Children



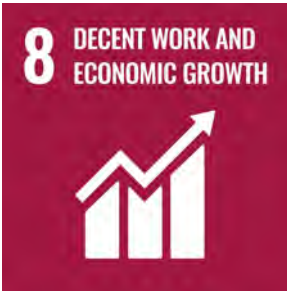
**The Whitechapel Centre**  
Tackling homelessness in Liverpool



**Folly's Wildlife Rescue**  
Protecting local wildlife



**Derian House Children's Hospice**  
Supporting families at Christmas



Related UN sustainable development goals

# IMPACT ON LOCAL PLACES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

## Context and our Ambition

We are a family business – with local roots not least in Formby and Liverpool. We have emerged to become one, if not the, biggest business success story to come out of Merseyside in recent years. We feel an obligation to give back to our local communities from which we have grown.

Liverpool has some truly outstanding grand heritage buildings. However, many of these have fallen on harder times – struggling to find commercial tenants at all, or at best being underinvested in and fading into disrepair.

Our ambition is to step into this area and commit ourselves to investing in offices in historic buildings, rather than new-built glass buildings. This will see us invest in the heritage of Liverpool – retaining and enhancing the splendour of our famous city.

## Activity in 2025

Preservation and sustainability go hand in hand. The sensitive retrofit of historic buildings can deliver strong operational efficiencies when modern systems are carefully integrated with traditional fabric, helping to reduce long-term energy consumption and associated emissions.

In line with this vision, we bought the iconic, grade 1 Atlantic Pavilion – part of the Albert Dock – in January 2025. This new space complements an already significant property portfolio in the wider Liverpool area that includes Mersey Chambers and 12 Hanover Street (both Grade II listed), alongside our purpose-built headquarters, The Lighthouse in Formby.

In 2025, we invested over £1.5m into a comprehensive refurbishment programme of Mersey Chambers. The building had its wet/gas heating system converted to a fully electric solution through a complete renewal of the air-conditioning infrastructure, enabling us to source energy from green providers and eliminate on-site gas use. In line with the building's heritage status, we are refurbishing, rather than replacing, all windows. This minimises material use while improving thermal performance and overall energy efficiency. New meeting rooms have been fitted with low-energy LED lighting and motion sensors to reduce electricity consumption, and washrooms now feature water-efficient fixtures. New shower facilities support active travel, allowing us to expand the cycle-to-work scheme for everyone based at Mersey Chambers, reinforcing the link between sustainable buildings, colleague wellbeing and lower-carbon commuting.

## Focus in 2026

As the business grows, we will continue to prioritise adaptive reuse opportunities where we can unlock environmental savings, strengthen communities and safeguard the historic environment.

2026 will see the completion of our investment in Mersey Chambers, and the final stages of our £10M refurbishment of Atlantic Pavilion.



# IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITIES

## Context and our Ambition

In our refreshed strategy, we committed to investing a lot more resources and effort to support our local communities.

We founded a Charity Committee in 2024, but our strategy called for a lot more. It focused that support on local charities either close to our offices or where we as Acorn could add a lot of value beyond simply donating money. Essentially supporting causes highly connected to our business where we could make a broader difference.

In addition, our strategy called to support recruitment from the broadest catchments in our local areas – including offering internships and apprenticeships across schools in less advantaged areas.

## Activity in 2025

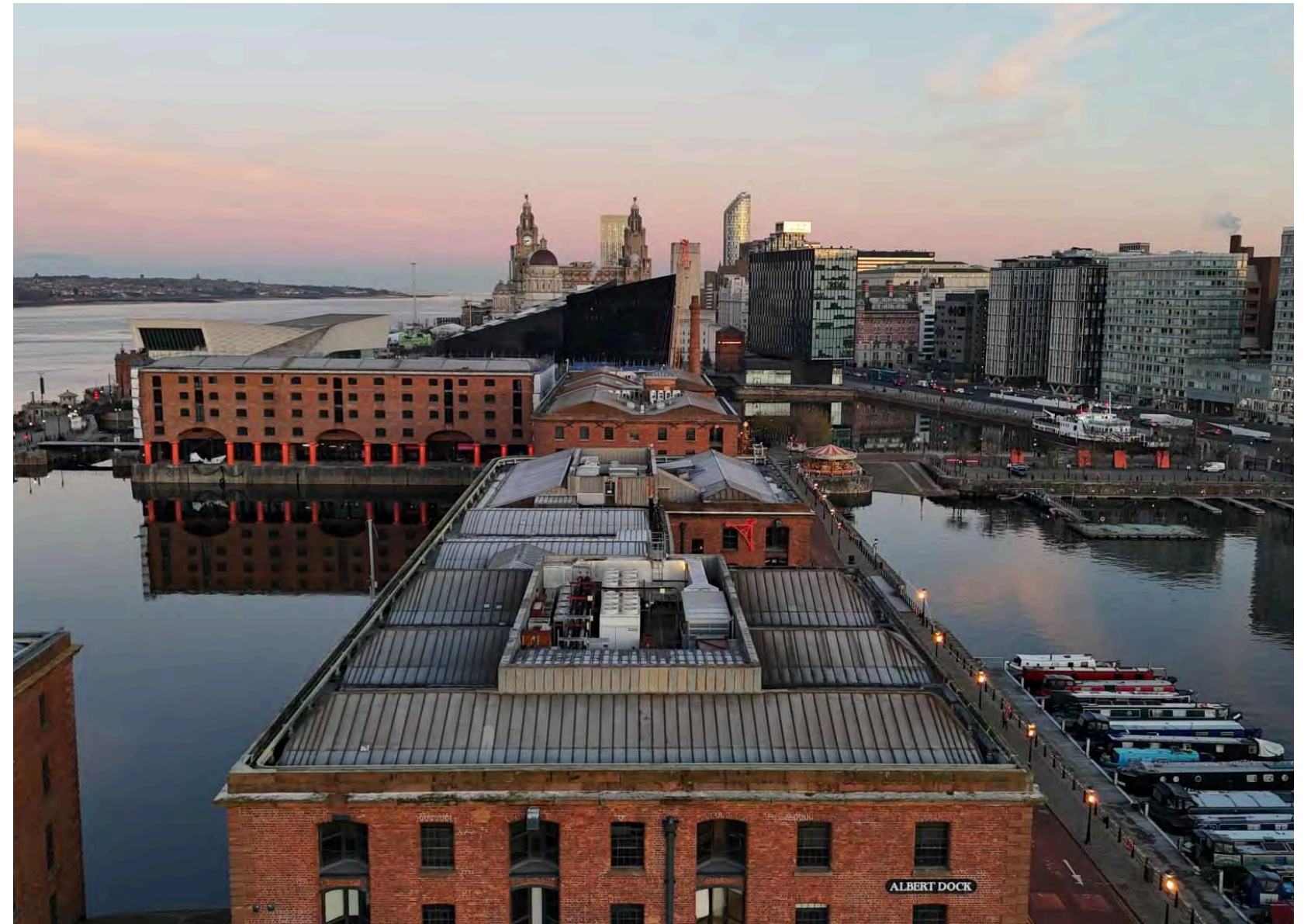
Commitment to local communities is a defining feature of the Acorn Group culture. The Acorn charity committee – a now 23-strong team drawn from different locations, roles, backgrounds, and group companies – ensures our community activity reflects the breadth of our business and the communities we serve. United by a shared commitment to positive social impact, the committee identifies causes, shapes fundraising activity and encourages colleague participation throughout the year.

In 2025, Acorn Group contributed over £115,000 to charitable causes, alongside more than 6,000 items donated and 60 volunteering days. We prioritise partnerships with charities rooted in the communities where our colleagues live and work, creating opportunities for long-term, relationship-based support rather than one-off donations.

## 2026 Objectives

In 2026, our focus is on scaling our impact. We will double our annual charitable contributions, ensuring that as we grow, the communities around our offices benefit directly from our success.

We are also looking to expand our volunteering efforts and in early 2026 we announced a new partnership with an organisation called Neighbourly. Together we are building a more streamlined programme of volunteering available to our colleagues during working hours.



# PEOPLE: 2025 IN NUMBERS



**87%**

OF COLLEAGUES AGREE THAT 'I CAN BE MYSELF HERE'

**92**

COLLEAGUES ENROLLED IN AN APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

**40%**

ENGAGED IN FORMAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**180**

OVER 180 NEW PIECES OF ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR OUR COLLEAGUES

**80%**

MORE THAN 80% OF ALL FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS APPROVED



Related UN sustainable development goals

# PEOPLE: VISION

## Context and our Ambition

Our objective is to be the employer of choice in the North-West. We deliver this through targeted investment in leadership, robust apprenticeship and career pathways, comprehensive wellbeing support, and practical steps to ensure diversity and inclusion are embedded in everyday management.

## Leadership and Internal Progression

Strong, capable leadership is central to Acorn Group's ability to grow without losing the culture that defines us. We run Your Future, our aspiring leaders programme, twice a year to equip colleagues with essential leadership skills. Of the first cohort, 55% secured promotions within six months. The programme is now in its third cohort. In addition, anyone appointed to a leadership role completes a comprehensive leadership curriculum designed to build capability in people management and performance delivery. In 2025, 157 leaders completed this development course.

## Apprenticeships and Early Careers

Our apprenticeship programme is a core pillar of talent development. We offer nationally recognised qualifications across customer service, IT, compliance, HR, finance, fraud investigation, insurance and AI, and we partner with local schools to provide mock interviews and work placements that feed into full apprenticeships. The programme extends beyond entry-level recruitment to support

long-term career progression: in 2025, more than 92 colleagues enrolled on apprenticeship programmes. The scheme is highly regarded by participants and holds a 9.5/10 rating on RateMyApprenticeship.

## Wellbeing and Benefits

We take a holistic approach to colleague wellbeing. Our Learning & Development team provides more than 100 self-study wellbeing modules and the People team runs a quarterly "How to Support Colleague Wellbeing in the Workplace" programme to maintain consistent managerial support. In 2025 we launched a flexible benefits platform offering a core package plus more than 15 voluntary options, including a base life assurance of 1x salary and a £100 annual flex pot. During 2025 colleagues purchased 534 benefit items — from technology to health screenings — representing a total value of £197,387.12.

## Diversity, Inclusion and Manager Capability

Inclusivity is part of our founding ethos. We operate a dedicated leadership training programme to ensure managers understand the measurable benefits of diverse perspectives and can attract, develop and retain colleagues from different backgrounds. Training topics include neurodiversity, addiction recovery, menopause support, family-friendly policies, and managing sensitive disclosures such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and racial abuse. These sessions are complemented by practical investments in reasonable adjustments and adaptive technology to support colleagues with differing needs.

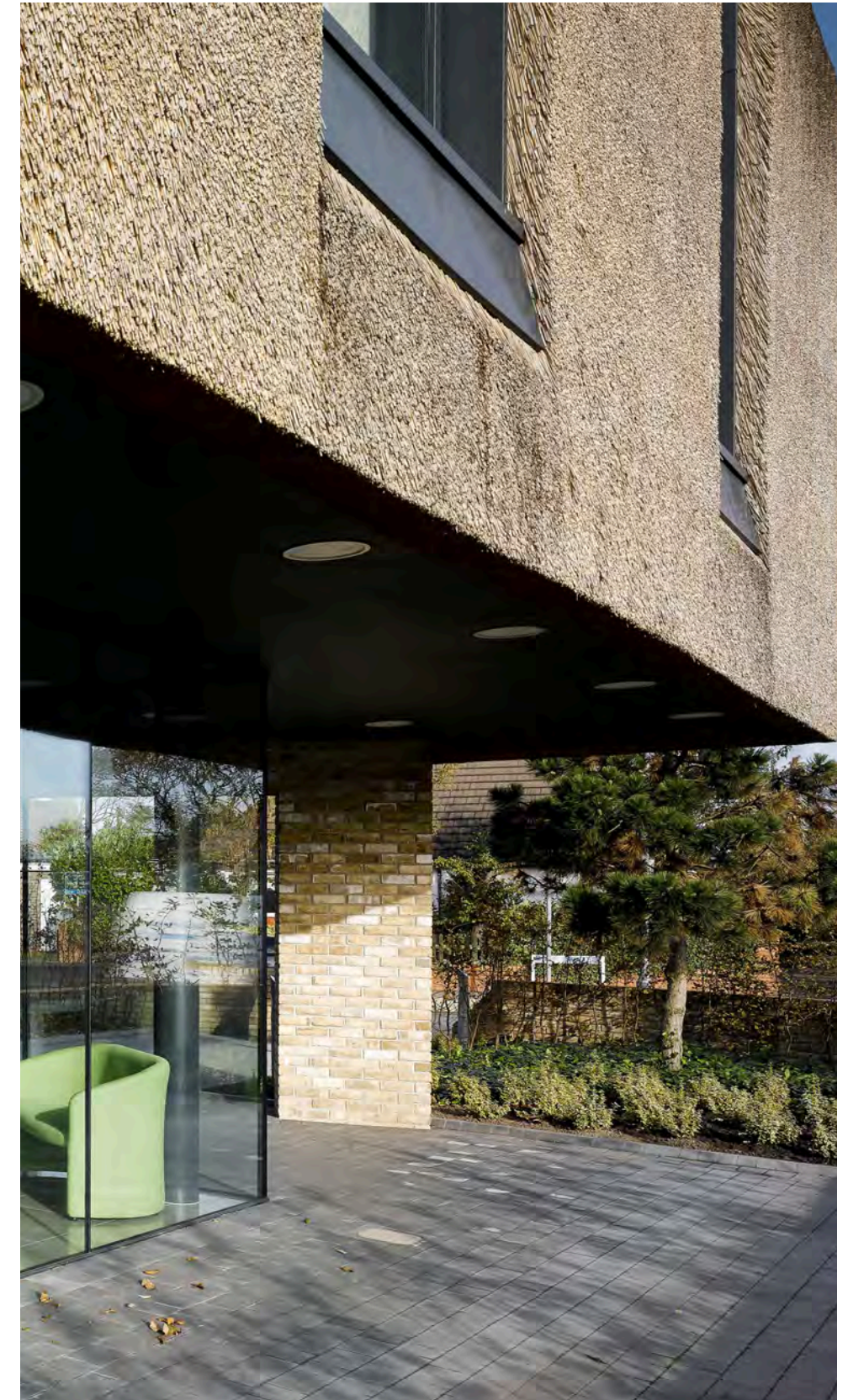
## 2026 Objectives

In 2026, our people agenda is focused on measurable progress against three clear objectives.

First, we aim to become a top-20 UK Great Place to Work organisation, building on the established methodology used by Great Place to Work®, where rankings are driven primarily by colleagues' own feedback on trust, leadership, values, wellbeing and the ability for everyone to reach their full potential, regardless of role or background.

Second, we will establish at least two new local partnerships to support the development of local talent, drawing on proven regional models that connect employers, schools, colleges and training providers to address skills gaps, improve social mobility and create clearer routes into growth sectors for under-represented groups.

Third, we are committed to equality of opportunity. In the longer-term this will reduce our gender pay gap and widen the diversity of our senior teams. Our aim for 2026, is for 97% or more of our colleagues to state that people at Acorn are treated fairly regardless of their gender, race or sexual orientation (as surveyed annually by Great Places to Work).



# CUSTOMERS: 2025 IN NUMBERS

**500,000**

POLICY HOLDERS

**20%**

INCREASE IN LIVE POLICY COUNT YOY

**4.5 stars**

ACORN INSURANCE - TRUSTPILOT

**4.6 stars**

CARROT - TRUSTPILOT

**4.9 stars**

GRANITE FINANCE - TRUSTPILOT

**97%**

ACORN INSURANCE CSAT

**97%**

HAVEN CLAIMS CSAT

**3**

NEW LAUNCHES: TAXI APP, STREET COVER GIG ECONOMY INSURANCE AND MOTORCADE NON-FINANCE APPROACH



Related UN sustainable development goals

# CUSTOMERS: VISION

## Context and our Ambition

Acorn Group exists to serve customers the mainstream market overlooks. Many of these non-standard motor customers — taxi drivers, young drivers, van operators, gig-economy workers and people with complex histories — face practical and financial barriers when buying insurance. These customer segments frequently include people with vulnerabilities, whether that is limited financial resilience, language or comprehension challenges, or unusual work patterns.

Our ambition is to be the champion of these customers; recognising one-size-does-not-fit all; and allowing these customers to get to work, pick their children up from school, or their job – when they might not be able to without us filling the voids in the insurance market.

## Activity in 2025

Over the past year we have focused on improving product fit, accessibility and the ways customers can interact with us. Product innovation that meets real needs.

We have prioritised product design that reflects customers' lived realities rather than forcing them into mainstream journeys. Two recent launches illustrate this approach.

- **Street Cover:** Many delivery drivers who use their own car to make deliveries find buying car insurance confusing and may unknowingly be underinsured, putting themselves at significant risk. Street Cover addresses a critical gap in the market, providing tailored cover for individuals using their personal car for "hire and reward"

activities, whether delivering food for platforms like Uber Eats and Deliveroo, parcels for online retailers, or goods for businesses such as independent takeaways and florists.

Because the brand is solely focused on the delivery space, we are able to provide a targeted and clear customer purchase journey with lots of support and advice. Drivers can purchase either an annual or a 30-day policy, offering flexibility to suit their needs. Street Cover is also entirely agnostic to the delivery platform or employer, meaning a driver is covered whether working for one or multiple services.

- **Motorcade Non-Finance:** This new payment model allows customers to spread payments monthly without taking on credit-style loans or interest charges. It is a pragmatic response to affordability pressures, reducing the trade-offs customers make between staying on the road and meeting household bills. By removing complex finance checks and interest, Motorcade Non-Finance lowers barriers to retaining cover and sustaining livelihoods.

We recognise that the best customer outcomes rely as much on how we deliver services as on what we sell. In the last year we have broadened and improved customer touchpoints to match customers' preferences and capabilities:

- **Short-term taxi app:** A purpose-built app that simplifies purchase, renewal and proof-of-cover for taxi drivers needing short durations of cover.
- **Enhanced customer portal:** Upgrades to self-service functionality let more customers make policy changes online at times convenient to them, reducing friction and time spent on calls.

- **Improved chatbot and digital assistance:** Expanded conversational AI and scripted support to resolve routine queries quickly, while ensuring seamless escalation to human agents when needed.
- **WhatsApp support:** Providing a familiar, low-friction channel for customers to ask questions in real time.

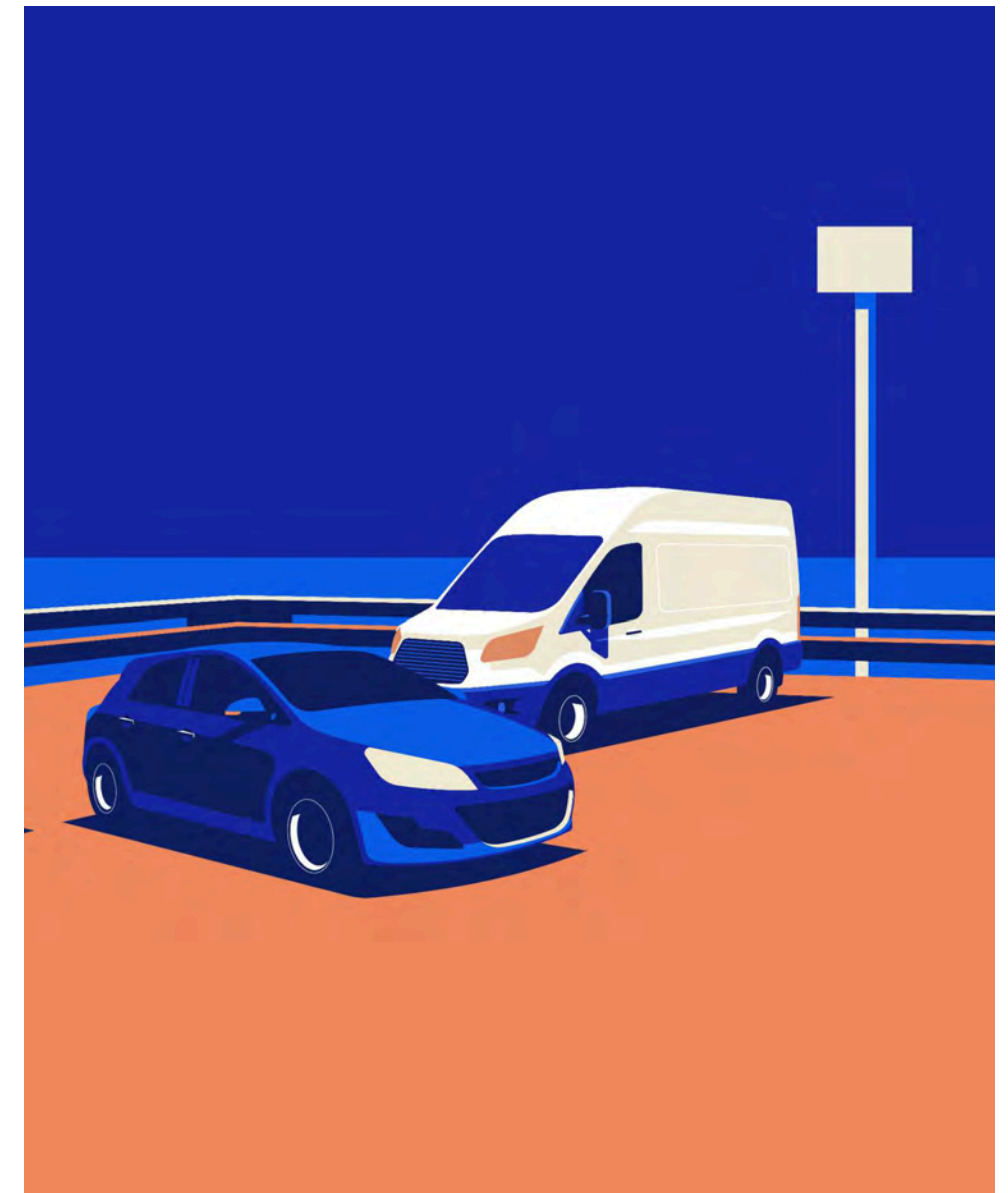
## 2026 Objectives

In 2026, our customer agenda will focus on three priorities:

We will further improve our written customer communications, making them clearer, more accessible and easier to act on for all customer groups.

We will continue to launch new products specifically designed to support the non-standard market, ensuring that customers who are often underserved by mainstream insurers can access cover that reflects their real needs.

Alongside this, we will maintain continuous investment in our digital products and customer touchpoints, so customers can engage with us in the channels and at the times that work best for them.





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