

A cut above your usual barber shop visit...

January 12, 2022



Newton Abbot station hosted a pop-up barbershop on Monday, where men could get a free haircut and discuss their mental health at the same time.

The event was one of the first pop-ups to be hosted by The Lions Barber Collective following a £25,000 grant from Great Western Railway.

Barbers trained to recognise signs of poor mental health in their clients were on hand to cut hair, trim beards and provide a listening ear.

They were joined at the station by South Devon Samaritans volunteers. They handed out cuppas to passengers ahead of the charity's annual Brew Monday campaign on Monday, 17 January.

Torquay-based barber Tom Chapman founded The Lions Barber Collective in 2015 following the death of a close friend.

The clinically-backed BarberTalk programme gives barbers the skills to direct questions to trigger conversation and to signpost clients to the support they need.

Tom said: “We’re fully trained to make people look and feel amazing and most importantly listen with empathy and without judgment to those in the chair. We’re using this as a vehicle to connect with the community and start conversations around mental health.”

GWR was able to provide a grant from its Communities and Education Programme. As part of its franchise agreement with the Department for Transport, the train operator has funding to assist schools, colleges, communities and other not-for-profit organisations.

GWR Community Manager Emma Morris said: “The Lions Barber Collective carries out vital work in helping to open up conversations around mental health, and we believe these pop-up barbershops could be of real benefit to some of our customers and colleagues.”