

Ambulance service, teachers and supermarket staff make railway station safety announcements to be heard across country

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Five London Ambulance Service (LAS) staff are joining teachers, supermarket staff, and other key workers in making announcements in train stations, to help encourage people to travel at quieter times, wear a face covering and follow public health advice.

This is the first time that a programme of announcements will be made by passengers, rather than by rail station staff or using automated technology. The messages will be broadcast in stations across England and Scotland.

The LAS staff involved in the campaign include staff working in its 999 control rooms and on the ambulances. They are Emergency Call Handlers Joshua, Zeynab, William and Madison, and Emergency Ambulance Crew Troy.

Troy, who has been commuting to work since the start of pandemic, spoke about how excited he is to be part of the campaign: "It has been such a great opportunity to be part of these rail announcements,

though I'm sure it will feel quite surreal hearing my voice at stations! We have all worked so hard during this pandemic to keep everyone safe, my colleagues and the public too.

"I hope that these announcements encourage people across the country to keep following public health advice and continue to play their part in protecting others and themselves."

The new station announcements coincide with the reopening of non-essential retail businesses in England and the introduction of mandatory face covering rules when travelling by train from Monday.

To help people travel safely, together with government, rail companies are encouraging people to plan ahead by checking before they travel and to use eTickets or contactless cards; consider others by wearing

a face covering; and stay safe by washing their hands regularly and using hand sanitiser.

Emergency Call Handler, Zeynab, who works in our 999 control room and commutes in for her 12 hour shifts, said: "I'd like to thank the public for staying alert and observing government guidelines. It has been such a challenging time for my NHS colleagues and key workers around the country, but knowing that we have had the support of the public throughout has made it feel that much easier.

"I really enjoyed taking part in this campaign and playing a part in trying to beat the virus – my family and friends are so proud of my involvement in this too."

Advice for people who need to travel

The rail industry is advising people to:

- **Plan ahead:** check before you travel. Buy tickets online, on mobile or on Smartcard and avoid travelling at busy times. If travelling on a long-distance service, you are strongly advised to make a reservation beforehand as capacity will be limited and you may otherwise not be able to travel. Please use eTickets and use contactless if you need to.
- **Consider others:** people should wear a face covering to prevent spreading the virus. Respect our staff and be considerate to those less able as we all navigate a different way to travel.
- **Stay safe:** maintain social distancing where possible and pay contactless where available. Protect yourself by using hand sanitiser and washing your hands frequently.

Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions at the Rail Delivery Group said: "We're delighted to have frontline workers and school children helping with our announcements. We hope people listen to their advice by only travelling if it's necessary and, if they do, to travel at quieter times and wear a face covering. This is more important than ever as non-essential retail businesses prepare to open.

"Keeping safe at this time is a real team effort, with rail companies, our people and passengers playing their part to help keep themselves and others safe. We thank rail workers for their continued dedication to keeping the country moving and thank passengers for wearing face coverings and planning ahead."

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: "Putting the voices of our incredible key workers and their families on our railway announcements, for the very first time, underlines just how important it is that we all work together to beat this virus.

"People should continue to avoid public transport wherever possible, and I urge those who do need to travel to listen to our new station announcers, and stagger their travel times to avoid crowds or use other forms of transport wherever possible.

"While respecting social distancing and maintaining good hand hygiene remain the most important steps we can all take to stay safe, wearing a face covering can also play an important role in helping us to protect each other."

Hannah Sperry, who recorded an announcement and is a care home worker in Glasgow who travels to and

from work with ScotRail, said: “Travelling by train during the pandemic has been very unusual, with thankfully very few people around, helping to protect me and make my life easier, particularly after a 12 hour shift. I jumped at the chance to record these announcements, which allows me to ask others to help me and to thank them for their continued support, which has really kept me going over the last few months.”

Photo credit: Rail Delivery Group/ London Ambulance Service