

## Avanti West Coast teams up with Guide Dogs to highlight charity's work

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Avanti West Coast has welcomed the team from Guide Dogs at its stations and offices to help raise vital funds and awareness of how the charity supports people with sight loss.

The intercity operator hosted local Guide Dogs fundraising groups at Coventry, London Euston, Preston, and Rugby stations, as well as its offices in London and Birmingham. The visits were arranged to help staff as well as customers to gain a greater understanding of how the charity help people living with sight loss to live actively, independently, and well.

Accompanied by ambassador dogs, volunteers were on hand to talk about their important role, highlight the charity's work and inspire others to support the range of services Guide Dogs provide – either by donating their time or fundraising. Individuals being supported by Guide Dogs were also on hand to explain more about sight loss.

The visits were arranged as part of Avanti West Coast's annual Sustainability Week – a week of activities held internally by the operator designed to highlight initiatives that support its 10-year sustainability strategy (Our Responsible Plan). Customers are one of the four pillars of this Plan, under which Avanti West Coast aims to enable everyone to experience independent journeys.

The partnership with Guide Dogs is the latest activity by the train operator to increase awareness and

understanding of accessibility amongst staff and customers. It also came ahead of Avanti West Coast joining partners across the rail industry to exhibit at Naidex - the UK's leading event dedicated to empowering and supporting disabled individuals.

Julie Wood, Regional Community Fundraising Manager at Guide Dogs, said: "We would like to thank Avanti West Coast for the opportunity to visit their stations during Sustainability Week to help raise awareness and vital funds for Guide Dogs. It has been brilliant meeting their staff and customers to share more about our life-changing work, which we couldn't do without our amazing staff and volunteers. It's with everyone's help we're able to reach and support more people living with sight loss live the life they choose."

Theresa Roberts, Social Value and Accessibility Manager at Avanti West Coast, said: "We loved welcoming Guide Dogs to our stations to highlight their work to support people living with sight loss and raise vital funds.

"It was great to learn about the life-changing guide dogs and how we can provide the best support for those who may need extra assistance when making rail journeys, as we want to enable independent travel for all."