

Brighter Journeys campaign gets underway

May 9, 2022



Mental Health Awareness Week sees the Brighter Journeys campaign grace the concourses of Britain's railway stations as a way of making them brighter, happier community hubs. The joint campaign between the rail industry and mental health charity, Chasing the Stigma, aims to support passengers' wellbeing as people return to the railway since the lifting of Covid restrictions.

The Brighter Journeys campaign will bring the outside to stations, with bursts of colourful flowers in bloom greeting passengers as they embark on their journeys. The aim is that these sensory installations act as a pleasant surprise which lift people's spirits and put smiles on their faces as they head to work, or for days out with their family.

Research shows that interacting with nature puts people in a more positive mindset and makes them feel more grounded and calm. This campaign uses the power of nature to make people feel happier and more connected to their local railway station, while raising awareness of the Hub of Hope app, which signposts people to support services if they are struggling with their mental health.

The campaign comes as new data from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) reports nearly three quarters of UK adults (70%) say their mental health has been negatively impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with nearly a fifth (19%) describing their mental health as poor*.

Rupert Lown, chief health and safety officer at Network Rail, said: “We recognise that life since the pandemic is difficult for many people, with many challenges yet to be overcome. We hope that by running this campaign, we are bringing happiness and cheer to many passengers as they go about their daily lives, reminding them to take a pause and have a moment to connect with nature. And if they are struggling, the Hub of Hope is a great resource which offers a range of support services in their local area.”

Jake Mills, founder of Chasing the Stigma and Hub of Hope app, added: “It is great to be working with Network Rail and the wider rail industry on the Brighter Journeys campaign. Nature is really important for mental health, so we hope commuters enjoy seeing these floral installations and they put a smile on people’s faces.

“We also hope that this acts as a reminder that no one is ever alone, and mental health support is available at any time, you don’t have to be in crisis to get help. If anyone is struggling or knows someone who needs help, please download the Hub of Hope app.”

Dr Lisa Marzano from Middlesex University works with the rail industry to support passengers’ wellbeing. She is an expert in mental health and is supporting the Brighter Journeys campaign. **Dr Marzano said:** “Interrupting someone’s routine with a vibrant, positive display could contribute to their wellbeing if they are having a tough day – especially something which centres around nature as research shows this can really lift someone’s mood. Although restrictions have been lifted, we are still dealing with the after-effects of the pandemic and the mental health of many people up and down the country will still be in a fragile place. This campaign aims to direct those who are in need to support services no matter where they are, while sparking some positivity among those travelling by train.”

Brighter Journeys will signpost people to share and download the Hub of Hope app if they, or someone they know, are struggling with their mental health. The Hub of Hope – provided by Chasing the Stigma – is a free app that connects people to more than 4,000+ mental health support services and groups across the UK.

The Brighter Journeys campaign is also being supported by station retailers (at Liverpool Street Station only). Pure will be providing vouchers for free coffee on Monday 9 May, and Neal’s Yard Remedies will be handing out free samples of some of their best-selling products on Tuesday 10 May, 4-6pm.

The sensory installation will be available to visit on the following days:

London Liverpool Street, 9-11 May

Leeds, 13-15 May

Edinburgh Waverley, 17-19 May

Birmingham New Street, 9-10 May

Stevenage, 12-13 May

East Croydon, 15-16 May

Cardiff, 18-19 May