

British Transport Police's Railway Guardian sees 337 per cent jump in downloads

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In the wake of research showing that more than a third of women have been victim to sexual harassment or sexual assault when commuting by rail, the **British Transport Police's** specialist reporting app, **Railway Guardian**, powered by **imabi**, has seen a jump in downloads – with a 337 per cent increase across the festive period and into the New Year.

Following November research that found half (51 per cent) of those who have been victims of sexual offending say that other passengers tried to help them, yet only one in five (18 per cent) people who have witnessed sexual harassment reported it to police, the British Transport Police called for more incidents to be reported.

The increase in Railway Guardian downloads indicates a greater willingness to do so, with more people now able to access its reporting functions. Commenting, Sarah White, Detective Superintendent of the British Transport Police, said: "The fact there's been a significant increase in downloads is a good sign the public is becoming more inclined to engage with reporting, especially if we give them the means. Wherever you see antisocial behaviour take place, please report it. Reporting incidents helps us to build a picture – allowing us to conduct intelligence-led policing that allocates resources most effectively."

Alongside 61016 SMS Message reporting, Railway Guardian allows for anonymous reporting via

Crimestoppers, which means those who wish to be anonymous, stay anonymous.

Sarah White added: “For serious incidents and emergencies, people should always dial 999. However, Railway Guardian offers an alternative reporting function for incidents of antisocial behaviour that they don’t think makes that threshold. And if you don’t want to share any personal details you can report via Crimestoppers, which is always 100 per cent anonymous.”

The research conducted on behalf of **imabi**,* the provider behind the technology for the Railway Guardian app, looks into the specific incidents of antisocial behaviour that people find the most intimidating.

The top reported behaviours that made people feel uncomfortable or intimidated centred on unwanted physical contact (65 per cent), invading personal space (64 per cent) and inappropriate comments (56 per cent). Other behaviours that were found to be intimidating included shouting (54 per cent), staring (49 per cent), swearing (41 per cent) and wolf whistling (30 per cent).

With 40 per cent of those who were questioned saying they expected to encounter incidents of this nature on public transport, Railway Guardian allows for these to be reported.

Mark Balaam, safeguarding expert and the founder and CEO of imabi, added: “Railway Guardian, as well as providing travellers with useful guidance and information, is designed to help people report inappropriate behaviours as we look to make rail travel safer. By reporting, users will be giving the British Transport Police clear and actionable insights to help them deliver more informed policing.”

To download Railway Guardian, please visit the Apple or Android app stores.

*Survey of 2,000 UK residents conducted by **OnePoll** in October 2023.