

Dozens helped by train companies offering free travel to those fleeing domestic abuse

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It's been revealed that 53 people have been helped by train operating companies to escape domestic abuse in less than a month.

It follows the launch of a partnership between train companies and Women's Aid for free travel to refuge accommodation for those needing help during the coronavirus lockdown.

The Rail Delivery Group Tweeted saying that over half of those using 'rail to refuge' say they wouldn't have travelled had it not been for the free train tickets.

The scheme was first introduced by Southeastern in 2019, with Great Western Railway joining in March, before all train companies joining in April.

Speaking following the announcement last month, Nicki Norman, Acting Chief Executive of Women's Aid, said: "Free train travel for women fleeing to refuge anywhere in the country could not come at a more

important time. It could be lifesaving for countless women and children.

“During the pandemic, women and children trapped with a perpetrator are incredibly vulnerable as the lockdown has already shut down common routes to safety and support. When you pair this with increased economic uncertainty being experienced by many, escaping abuse is more difficult than ever but we hope that this initiative can help those most in need.”

Jac Starr, chief operating officer at the Rail Delivery Group, which represents train operators and Network Rail, said: “The railway is much more than trains and tracks – for many it is about connecting people and places, and for some it is a lifeline in difficult circumstances.

“At this time of national crisis, the rail industry is committed to working together not only to keep trains running for key workers and vital freight, but to support the most vulnerable people within communities we serve.”

Click [here](#) for more details about the scheme.

Photo credit: Great Western Railway