

# Greater Anglia leads the way with project to design and install social distancing guidance at all stations

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Staff at Greater Anglia have been credited with guiding the rail industry's strategy on social distancing markings at rail stations aimed at keeping passengers safe during the COVID-19 crisis.

Brand Manager, Jason Brandon, and Head of Customer Services – West, Neil Atkin, gained recognition from senior rail industry figures for their work to plan, design and install social distancing signage and information at every one of Greater Anglia's 135 stations in just a couple of weeks.

Their work was later used to create guidance for other train operators on how to help people adhere to

social distancing guidelines if they needed to travel by train.

Aware of the potential challenges Greater Anglia could face if people returned to work in large numbers after lockdown eased, Jason and Neil started on the project – ahead of the rest of the industry – in April.

Jason explains: “We quickly realised we needed a proper overview of what each station could cater for in terms of how many people it could accommodate and how we could keep people a safe distance apart.

“So we came up with a matrix which showed every station and then all the information about the space – so the size of the ticket office, the number of ticket windows, how big a queue it could facilitate, and whether we could use outside space to help with that, the number of ticket machines, toilets, things we’d have to cordon off – to give us a station by station plan.”

“Then we created a plan for the different signage and messages we would need, their design, how these should be presented and placed, and an idea of the sorts of numbers we’d need to produce to cover all 135 stations.”

In addition, Neil worked very closely with local station management teams to carefully plan how one way systems and potential queuing methods could work.

Initially Jason and Neil focused on the top 20 busiest stations which together cater for 73% of all Greater Anglia’s passengers.

A working group was formed to finalise the plans and approve costs and from the first meeting on 21 April, the first station – Witham – was fitted with social distancing signage such as posters, vinyl stickers on the floor and ticket gates and tape cordoning off seating areas, just three weeks later on 12 May.

The other top 20 stations were then fitted in quick succession and were all completed in just five days on 17 May. **The next 40 staffed stations were completed on 25 May, along with another 67 unstaffed stations thanks to Greater Anglia’s in-house Customer Service Response Team who carried out the work.**

Jason says, “The work had to happen really quickly. It was like doing an entire rebrand – but focused completely on safety and in a short space of time – so it was pretty intense. The support we had from station staff was fantastic and many senior managers helped by being there to oversee and facilitate the work and ensure that the quirks of their stations were catered for.

“Everyone was really pleased with the installation team who worked really effectively to get everything done quickly.”

During this time Jason and Neil were in communication with the Rail Delivery Group, who help co-ordinate the work of all UK train operators. They used Jason and Neil’s work as an example of best practice to inform their social distancing signage specification that was rolled out to the rest of the industry.

Daniela Maki, Campaigns Marketing Manager, at the Rail Delivery Group, said: “Greater Anglia’s work helped us define the types of station signage required to the wider industry and their station environment

designs were used on our National Rail toolkit to illustrate how other TOCs could use the graphics at stations.”

Greater Anglia’s social distancing signage uses the NHS’s blue brand colour to ensure it really stands out from other signage around the station and communicates a clear safety message.

Jason says: “There is a lot of respect and trust for the NHS and people listen to their messaging so by using their brand colour, we hope people will take on board the guidance and comply with it so that we can keep them, our staff and key workers safe if they have to travel with us.”

In just a few weeks the team has installed:

- Over 800 footprint vinyls for station floors to help people queue safely
- 150 floor vinyls showing people where to stand at ticket office windows
- Over 260 vinyls for gatelines to keep a safe passenger flow
- 300 stickers for ticket office windows reminding people to pay using contactless and keep a safe distance apart
- Over 500 ‘way in’ sign, ‘no entry’ signs and directional arrows

Jason is now focused on refining the messaging, checking stations have everything they need and looking out for any changes that might be required as the situation evolves.

Some guidance is now being installed on the trains too in addition to the announcements currently being made by conductors and drivers.

From 1 June, the train operator will play its first ever video on its new fleet of Stadler trains, which advises on how to socially distance on the train, announcements will become automated and seats in the vestibules will be cordoned off to prevent people coming into contact with those who are boarding.

*Photo credit: Greater Anglia*