

# Greater Anglia's Land Sheriffs focus on improving performance

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Train operator Greater Anglia is undertaking a trial with its team of Land Sheriffs that has so far prevented hours of delays on rail lines in East Anglia.

The train operator has invested in an additional 18 sheriffs to further improve safety and security for passengers whilst travelling by train.

They have now been grouped into nine 'Performance Enhancement Teams' to see if an increased focus on certain types of anti-social behaviour can reduce delays.

The teams focus on controlling and preventing anti-social behaviours that could lead to delayed trains at 'hotspot' locations such as London Liverpool Street, Tottenham Hale, Cheshunt Broxbourne, Norwich and certain intercity trains between Norwich and London.

One specific focus is to ensure that trains depart at exactly the right time from Liverpool Street station by preventing things like doors being held open when the train is ready to depart.

Greater Anglia's Revenue Protection, Crime & Intelligence Manager, Mark Burgess Lawrence, said, "Passengers are compromising their own safety by holding the doors open. Not only is this type of behaviour extremely dangerous, but it delays the departure of the train as the entire dispatch procedure must be started again.

"We are utilising the Land Sheriffs and bright yellow safety barriers to prevent late running from things like interference with the doors prior to departure at some stations.

"This has been really valuable in helping trains to get away on time, preventing a considerable amount of delays."

The Land Sheriffs are also boarding and patrolling selected trains to look out for disruptive passengers – e.g. those who may be abusive, threatening, intoxicated, violent or behaving in a way that endangers the safety of other passengers and staff.

In extreme circumstances they can remove someone from the train at the next station where they can then wait to be met by the police, rather than having to hold the train at the station until the police arrive to remove the person.

Between 16th September and 13th October 2018, Greater Anglia's conservative estimate is that these actions prevented over 17 hours of delays to their services.

Land Sheriffs are also deployed at busy events such as football matches, and patrol at Audley End and Ingatstone to keep the large numbers of schoolchildren who use those stations safe in the mornings and evenings.

They aim to provide a reassuring presence and additional support to railway staff and the British Transport Police in keeping rail travellers safe and secure.

They also enforce the railway bylaws and have helped prevent numerous potential suicides this year.

Greater Anglia's General Manager of Customer Service, Neil Grabham, said, "Rail travel is generally a very safe and secure mode of transport, but we want passengers to feel safe when they travel with us and the Land Sheriffs do a great job of deterring crime and dealing with anti-social behaviour on our network.

"I recently went on patrol with the land sheriffs during one of their evening shifts until 2am and every passenger we met was very happy to see the Land Sheriffs out and about, providing a reassuring presence on trains and at stations."

In total, the company has invested in 30 dedicated Land Sheriffs who patrol trains and stations in East Anglia.

Greater Anglia's annual average punctuality figure was 87% up to 15 September 2018.