

GWR scoops award for making train travel more accessible

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The [National Autistic Society](#) has recognised [Great Western Railway \(GWR\)](#) for providing an autism-friendly environment.

The award recognises GWR for a host of autism-awareness initiatives being trialled at stations in the west of its network.

Since June last year GWR has created several autism-friendly products specifically designed to help autistic people to be able to travel by train. This includes:

- A sound-series that allows autistic people to understand the sounds they may experience when travelling by train, available [here](#)
- Created virtual video tours of stations to better allow people to navigate the station prior to arrival, available at [GWR's YouTube channel](#)

- Created sensory packs that provide coping tools to allow travel more comfortable, details can be found [here](#)
- Provided awareness training for more than 700 frontline colleagues between Plymouth and Penzance
- Made available ear defenders, put in place to support passengers who experience over-stimulation or sensory overload (available at staffed stations in the list above). Ask staff for details.
- Continued and further advertised the '[Try a Train](#)' programme which supports individuals/groups in developing their travelling confidence.

Dan Pearce, GWR Senior Accessibility Mentor, said:

"We at GWR are committed to our customers, helping all those who wish to travel by train to be able to do so. This includes working to provide as accessible and supportive environment as we are able to – recognising everyone has different needs and expectations.

"This award recognises the work we have done to better accommodate the needs of autistic people, and we will continue to look for opportunities to extend these tools across our network and make the railway accessible for all."

The suite of tools available in the west and at some central parts of the GWR network is part of a two-year trial. For full details and a list of stations please click [here](#).

Does this sound like you?

GWR is looking for feedback from customers. If you like the packs, please let them know and tell them how they have helped your journey!

Autistic people tend to communicate differently from neurotypical people and can have unusually high (or low) sensitivity to sensory inputs such as noise, light and smell.

The National Autistic Society, the UK's leading charity for autistic people and their families, awards certificates to service providers that meet set criteria:

- That employees understand how to effectively communicate with autistic people
- That spaces are made more accessible and less overwhelming for autistic people
- That information about venues is easily available to help autistic people plan their visit.

The National Autistic Society established the Autism Friendly Award to encourage and help businesses to create more welcoming environments for autistic people throughout the UK.

Christine Flintoft-Smith, Head of Autism Accreditation at the National Autistic Society, said:

"We'd like to congratulate GWR on achieving our new Autism Friendly Award. Every organisation that gains

the Autism Friendly Award will be helping to make the UK a more autism-friendly place and make a difference to the lives of autistic people and their families.

“There are lots of small changes which businesses can make to better support autistic people, and just a little understanding can go a long way. We’re looking forward to working with as many businesses as possible to help create a society that works for autistic people.”

Photo credit: Great Western Railway