

Impact report highlights importance of Railway Benefit Fund

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Demand for **Railway Benefit Fund (RBF)** services has nearly tripled in the past five years. In 2023 more than 500 applications were received resulting in more than 1,000 railway people receiving direct financial support and many more receiving advice and signposting.

Jo Kaye, Chief Executive Officer, said: "It is heart-wrenching to see that people are working so hard in the industry that I love and yet still, for reasons way beyond their control, they are struggling to make ends meet and that is what really brings home the value of what we do."

The charity, which provides support to current, former and retired railway staff and their families across the UK has found that the average age of those seeking help is younger than previous years, with nearly 70 per cent of applicants under 50 years old.

Its latest **Impact Report**, released today at the Railway Industry Association's Innovation Conference, has found that there is an increased prevalence of those in their 20s, with younger people coming to the charity for help with debt support, with some struggling to feed themselves or their families.

Tim Shoveller, RBF Chairman, said: "We've seen a huge increase in demand for our services over the last few years. Most of our services are around financial support, whether that's direct financial assistance via grants to people in need, or providing advice and guidance about how to manage financial issues to

prevent people falling into crisis.

“We are expecting demand for our services to remain high. There doesn’t seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel in terms of the economic situation with food and fuel prices continuing to rise. As we know, while some people are able to manage for a while in difficult circumstances, eventually their resources can run out. We have to plan for the demand for financial support to increase and continue to promote financial wellbeing and the importance of early intervention before situations reach rock bottom.”

In true railway fashion, the industry has rallied around to support the charity. Among some of the highlights in a challenging year to raise funds has included Railway Family Week which raised more than £35,000; the Heart of Gold Awards raising £15,000; the Annual Golf Day raising £15,000; sporting and personal challenges raising £5,000; and rail industry awards and dinners with charity raffles making more than £22,000.

Tim added: “We need the whole industry to get behind us so we can continue to be here for railway people who need us. We cannot continue without the donations and fundraising so, on behalf of the Board, our sincere thanks to you all.”

[Click here to read the report.](#) Visit www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk or you can get in touch on 0345 241 2885 or email info@railwaybenefitfund.org.uk