

London Bridge station marks International Day of Persons with Disabilities with special umbrella installation celebrating neuro-diversity

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Network Rail's Southern region is raising awareness of accessibility and marking the International Day of Persons with Disabilities today at some of its London stations, with the centrepiece being a special installation celebrating neuro-diversity at London Bridge station.

The 'umbrella' theme installation will be one of 20 Neuro-diversity umbrella installations across the UK, with hundreds of brightly coloured umbrellas suspended above the streets and public spaces.

Flash-mob dancers are performing at Victoria, London Bridge and Waterloo stations and station staff are handing out 3,000 packets of sunflower seeds. It's all part of the Umbrella Project which celebrates the gifts, talents and employability of those who are neuro-diverse. It forms a wider education project to celebrate neurodiversity, raise awareness and challenge stigma and discrimination.

Lucy McAuliffe, Stations Director, Network Rail, said: "At Network Rail we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for our people and passengers and are committed to improving access and inclusion. We are delighted to partner with the ADHD foundation on this unique installation at London Bridge, to promote and celebrate neuro diversity with hundreds of brightly coloured umbrellas, an uplifting and atmospheric display which will enhance the station environment."

Tony Lloyd, CEO ADHD Foundation, said: "We will premier our 2022 neurodiversity Umbrella Project early with a unique installation in partnership with Network Rail Network Rail at London Bridge.

"The Neurodiversity Umbrella project shines a light on the hidden 'abilities' of those with naturally occurring differences in human neurology such as dyslexia, ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, autism, dysgraphia and sensory processing differences. The spectrum of traits often overlap under the umbrella of 'neurodevelopmental conditions' and can be found in as many as 1 in 5 human beings who 'Think Differently'."

Alan Cox, Managing Director of BAM Nuttall's Transport Division, who sponsored the installation said: "We're delighted that the ADHD foundation have chosen London Bridge station as their first installation in the 2022 Neurodiversity Umbrella project. BAM has been a Disability Confident Employer since the summer and it is our ethos to support all our employees to reach their potential with us, while championing inclusion.

"It's fantastic to see neurodiversity celebrated in this way and we hope it empowers neurodiverse individuals as they pass the installation when using the station."

Rays of purple light will beam from Waterloo station (as well as many other railway stations across the country), as the rail industry joins the global #PurpleLightUp movement and celebrates the contribution of disabled people around the world.

In recent years, the colour purple has been increasingly associated with disability, symbolising a new positive narrative about the contribution of disabled people in the workforce and the wider community.

Just as the rainbow flag has created a new conversation and increasingly vibrant LGBT movement, the use of the colour purple can help in the effort to build communities, challenge outdated perceptions and prejudices and inspire others.

Network Rail is a Disability Confident leader and aims to show disabled people that we are serious about leading the way and helping other businesses to become Disability Confident. It is partnering with the ADHD foundation to celebrate the intelligence, ability and talent of every human being- including every neuro-diverse individual, empowering and enabling the next generation of children and young people.

The umbrella installation will be at London Bridge station till Christmas.

Photo credit: Network Rail