

Network Rail and housing charity Shelter expand pioneering rough sleeping pilots

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Some of Network Rail's busiest London stations have teamed up with housing and homelessness charity Shelter to help people sleeping rough.

Network Rail and housing charity Shelter are teaming up again to help tackle rough sleeping on the rail network. Following the success of the partnership's rough sleeping pilots in Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly station, two more outreach services have been launched at London Charing Cross and London Victoria station.

Network Rail station staff are working alongside Shelter to connect and refer people they encounter sleeping rough with expert services to provide them with tailored help and support. That includes help to access key services such as: registering with a GP, mental health support, setting up a bank account or helping to find suitable accommodation.

Each person that uses the service will be allocated a key worker, who will support them in their journey to move away from sleeping rough.

Many people have been living on the streets for a long time, and the interventions by outreach colleagues in the stations are a first step in the process to securing permanent accommodation and life-changing support.

Hannah Lawrence, Network Rail's interim station manager at London Victoria station, said: "We're really pleased to be a part of this vital service that will help people find a route out of homelessness.

"Our day-to-day jobs mostly focus on helping passengers, but we also look out for people who are vulnerable and seek refuge in and outside our stations. By training our teams and partnering with experts at Shelter, we hope to be able to make a real difference and reduce the number of people sleeping rough in London."

Connie Cullen, head of community services at Shelter, said: "We know from experience the difference it can make, to have someone reach out when you've nowhere else to turn. That first "hello" can change someone's life forever. Anyone can become homeless, and everyone has a different story, which is why we tailor our approach to each person, putting their needs at the heart of our support.

"The pilots in Birmingham and Manchester showed us what's possible when we all come together. We're delighted to continue this work and to partner with others in the sector, to help people find a way off the streets, ensuring no-one faces homelessness alone."

Shelter will also be working alongside local charities, The Passage at London Victoria station and The Connection at St Martin's at London Charing Cross station, who will be using their specialist experience in Westminster to provide extra support.

Jenny Travassos, director of services and new development at The Passage, said: "The Passage has been supporting people who are homeless in and around Westminster for over 40 years. We're really pleased to be working collaboratively with Shelter, Network Rail and other partners to expand our specialist Outreach Service and ensure that many more people receive the help that they need. With our Resource Centre being located just a few minutes from Victoria Station, we are well-placed to offer a rapid response to those sleeping rough and provide practical solutions that help people to find sustainable routes away from homelessness."

Tilly Scott, street engagement team manager at The Connection at St. Martin's, said: "We are really pleased to be working with Shelter and Network Rail to provide much-needed support for people sleeping rough in Charing Cross station. Our teams are local experts and it's great to have this joined-up approach enabling us to do this vital work together."

In support of World Homeless Day 2022 (10 October), Shelter will also be displaying a range of retail pop-up shops in Network Rail stations listed below where passengers will be able to make donations by purchasing a range of clothes direct from Shelter Boutiques.

Dates of retail pop-up shops:

- **Tuesday 27 - Thursday 29 September** - London Victoria
- **Tuesday 4 - Thursday 6 October** - London Charing Cross
- **Tuesday 18 - Thursday 20 October** - London Bridge
- **Tuesday 25 - Thursday 27 October** - London Charing Cross

Photo credit: Network Rail