

Network Rail launches Brighter Journeys campaign to support passengers' mental health amid return to workplaces

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After a challenging 18 months for many and with more people gradually returning to the workplace, Network Rail, together with the wider rail industry, has launched a new mental health campaign, Brighter Journeys, in partnership with national charity Chasing the Stigma.

Following new research into how the industry can help more people struggling with their mental health¹, it is working with Chasing the Stigma to help make stations feel brighter and happier for passengers returning to the railway this autumn, whilst also helping those struggling to access support.

While home working may have become a common part of pandemic life, a new survey by Network Rail² reveals the nation is now heading back to work as passengers readjust to life after lockdown. The findings from YouGov show nearly half of UK adults (48%) travelled to their workplace for most of their working week in August, when lockdown restrictions were fully lifted across the country. Meanwhile, almost a third (29%) said they are more likely to travel to the workplace on a regular basis from September onwards. Reasons include missing speaking to colleagues face-to-face (27%) and the boost it brings to team and

work morale (21%).

As more people adapt their routines following the lifting of lockdown restrictions, over half (52%) of UK adults surveyed said a return to the workplace can boost their own and others' mental health and wellbeing, while 57% also said it provides a sense of human connection.

The Brighter Journeys campaign will visit a number of stations to help welcome back passengers during the first two weeks of October. Inspired by the wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature, the campaign aims to bring the outdoors into the station environment and put smiles on passengers' faces in the lead up to World Mental Health Day (10 October).

Brighter Journeys will signpost people to share and download the Hub of Hope app if they or someone they know are struggling with their mental health. The app – provided by Chasing the Stigma – is the only service of its kind that brings together all the mental health support options available to someone in any given area, from NHS support and national charities like Mind and Samaritans, to 3,500+ registered national and local voluntary, grassroots, private and third sector services, with the number listed growing daily. It has also been included in the Government's Covid-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Recovery Action plan and on the official [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk) website.

Andrew Haines, chief executive of Network Rail, said: "We must continue to prioritise our mental wellbeing and support one another as we tackle the various challenges life can throw at us. I care passionately about making lasting changes to support the mental wellbeing of our people and our passengers. We will be making our stations brighter, more positive and friendlier places and making access to support services easier to help vulnerable people find the support they need."

Jake Mills, founder and CEO of Chasing the Stigma, developed the Hub of Hope following his own suicide attempt. He realised when talking through his own personal experience that many people didn't know where to turn when living with mental health challenges and he wanted to offer support to others who found themselves in a similar situation.

Jake commented: "As we enter autumn, Brighter Journeys shines an important light on mental health. The last 18 months have been tough for so many people and it's essential that we continue to look out for one another. Breaking down the stigma around mental health, providing tools for early intervention and giving people access to the right support at the right time is vital – it's the reason why we set up the Hub of Hope and can make such a massive difference."

This campaign forms part of Network Rail's efforts to reduce suicides across the rail network alongside train operating companies and British Transport Police. Ongoing measures are being taken to prevent such incidents from taking place, including training thousands of industry staff and running campaigns such as Small Talk Saves Lives with Samaritans and British Transport Police, which calls on the public to trust their instincts and start a conversation if they see someone who might need help.

Brighter Journeys, however, has been created with the input of suicide prevention and mental health experts to signpost those struggling with their mental health to support services much earlier on in their mental health journey.

The campaign will launch with a sensory installation unveiled at London Waterloo on Monday 4 October, which will include a burst of colourful flowers in bloom, a nature themed soundscape and uplifting poems by James McInerney featured across in-station media.

Anyone struggling with their mental health can download the Hub of Hope app. The Hub of Hope can be accessed through the app, Chasing the Stigma [website](#) or at www.hubofhope.co.uk. The app also has a 'Need Help Now?' button that links straight through to Samaritans and Crisis Text Line's 24/7 messaging service.

1. Pracademic literature review of dissuasion techniques, James Bannerman, 2020
2. Survey was carried out by YouGov from 13-14 September 2021 with a total sample size of 2161 adults. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+)
 - Brighter Journeys installations will feature in the following stations:
 - London Waterloo, 4 October – 5 October
 - Ilford, 4 October
 - Slough, 6 October
 - Cardiff Central, 7 October – 8 October
 - Watford Junction, 8 October
 - Leicester, 11 October
 - Glasgow Central, 11 – 12 October
 - Liverpool Lime Street, 13 October
 - For more information about Network Rail's work to support mental health and reduce suicides, visit our [website](#). You can find out more about the Small Talk Saves Lives campaign [here](#)

Photo and video credit: Network Rail