

Northern announces new autism friendly stations on World Autism Awareness Day

April 6, 2021



Northern is partnering with Specialist Awareness Services to transform three flagship stations into autism friendly hubs.

The three stations – Leeds, Manchester Oxford Road and Manchester Victoria – are among the busiest in the north of England and can be overwhelming for people with autism.

There are around 700,000 autistic children and adults in the UK, and all would like the same opportunities to travel as everyone else, but can struggle in public places such as stations and trains. They can also be anxious about unexpected changes, such as transport delays.

The 12-month programme will include colleague engagement and training for Northern staff who work at the stations. Staff will be taught how they can deliver the best possible experience and support for autistic customers and others with hidden needs.

The scheme extends Northern's commitment to providing an autism-friendly railway which was cemented in 2019 when the operator joined forces with Community Rail Lancashire and the National Autistic Society

to develop the UK's first autism friendly railway line.

Mark Powles, Commercial and Customer Director at Northern, said: "We are proud to be working with Specialist Autism Services to support those in our communities to use our trains and stations with confidence.

"We want to make our trains – and our wider network – as accessible as possible, and this programme is the next step in the journey to deliver a Northern that works for everyone and makes a positive difference."

Detailed line guides are offered for families to download and help them prepare for rail journeys.

The guides cover key travel information about the stations, trains and family-friendly businesses along the line, many of whom have autism-friendly sessions. Activity books are available for young adults and children.

For more information and to view resources please click [here](#).

Photo credit: Northern