

Paramedics who have helped hundreds win at prestigious Rail Business Awards

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South Western Railway's (SWR) team of paramedics have won the 'Customer Service Excellence' award at this year's prestigious Rail Business Awards, with judges describing the team as 'exceptional and game-changing with life-changing results'.

The paramedics are station-based, which means they are perfectly positioned to immediately respond to serious medical incidents, from cardiac arrests and anaphylactic shocks to helping unwell customers off trains or preventing others from boarding.

Over the last 12 months, they've helped nearly 400 people.

The paramedics were originally introduced at three of the operator's busiest stations – Clapham Junction, London Waterloo and Wimbledon – as part of a trial in collaboration with Network Rail. Their impact was quickly recognised, helping both customers in need and improving the reliability of services.

Each time a customer becomes unwell on a train, there is a risk of services on the affected route being severely delayed. The introduction of paramedics at SWR's key stations, however, has reduced average delays from each incident by 12.5 per cent at Wimbledon, 66 per cent at Clapham Junction and 30 per cent at London Waterloo.

The paramedics also work alongside 110 Welfare Officers, who to step-in and help individuals in need around the clock at nearly 50 stations on the network. As a joint initiative between SWR and Network Rail, these officers have helped save people lives by making 75 crisis interventions as well as reduce trespassing incidents.

The success of the paramedics has led SWR to commit to permanently deploying more teams across its network, starting with Vauxhall and Woking this month.

Alan Penlington, Customer Experience Director at South Western Railway, said: "The safety of our customers is paramount and we're extremely proud of our multi-awarding team of paramedics. Winning at the Rail Business Awards is just recognition of their dedication to giving swift, life-saving medical care to our customers, while minimising the impact to other customers and services.

"The presence of station-based paramedics provide our customers with a reassurance that someone is on hand to help them when they feel unwell."

Chris Eason, Paramedic at Wimbledon station, commented: "I have witnessed at first-hand the difference we're making to passengers. In one incident, we responded to a man who suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed in the station's lift – a very serious and life-threatening situation. Because we're station-based, we quickly arrived at the scene and successfully performed advanced cardiac life support to help save his life. He was later transferred to the local hospital and recovered."

Samantha Price, Emergency Medical Technician at Wimbledon, added: "I choose this career because it makes a meaningful difference to people; being that first person someone sees when they need help and going home knowing you've made a difference to someone's life, no matter how big or small that may be."

Photo credit: South Western Railway