

Rail industry creates immersive VR film to show passengers at Birmingham New Street how they can help to combat sexual harassment

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As part of the rail industry and **British Transport Police's** continued commitment to make sure every passenger feels safe when travelling by train, an immersive virtual reality (VR) experience is coming to Birmingham New Street station on Monday 16th October.

The event is aimed at tackling all forms of sexual harassment by educating people to recognise how these situations occur for passengers and empower them to intervene safely and report perpetrators.

Sexual harassment is a real and far-reaching issue in society with seven in ten (71%) women in the UK having experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space, the latest survey commissioned by UN Women UK finds.

The short VR film shows how small actions, such as asking the victim if they want to swap seats or distracting the perpetrator with a question, can prevent further escalation in the moment.

Following a successful initial launch of this innovative VR film earlier this year at London Waterloo station,

Rail Delivery Group (RDG) together with British Transport Police (BTP) and local train operators are inviting people in Birmingham to try the immersive VR experience in their local station.

Jacqueline Starr, Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group said: "As an industry we are actively tackling all forms of sexual harassment and are committed to making our passengers feel safe when onboard.

"By showcasing the ground-breaking VR experience in stations across the country we're to equipping people with tips on how to safely intervene in situations as a bystander without putting themselves in harm's way. Whether you see it or experience it, we ask everyone to report anything that makes you uncomfortable to British Transport Police by texting 61016 or using the Railway Guardian app.

"Passengers using Britain's railways have a right to feel safe and confident to call out these behaviours without fear."

Jess Phillips, MP for Birmingham Yardley and Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, will be attending the event and has spoken of her support for the campaign.

Jess Phillips, MP said: "This campaign is important. Everyone has the right to feel safe on our railways and everyone has the right to feel safe when they try to protect others. That's what a civilised society is about."

Jo MacPhail, HR director and deputy managing director at West Midlands Trains said: "Sexual harassment is sadly a very real problem within our society and that includes on public transport, so supporting this campaign is hugely important to us.

Ensuring our passengers feel safe when they travel is our priority, and equipping people with the knowledge of what to do if they see or experience sexual harassment will help to reduce harm and challenge these damaging behaviours.

By working together, we can help prevent incidents of sexual harassment from escalating and call out the perpetrators."

David Whitehouse, Safety and Security Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "Our railway is a safe network for passengers to travel on and we are committed to making sure that stays the case. But no one should be worried about what they may experience on their journey, and alongside the rest of the industry we are committed to tackling this issue.

"There are different forms of sexual harassment which many of us are not aware of, from intrusive staring to persistent questioning and this important initiative helps highlight unwanted behaviour. It's important we ensure the travelling public know the role they can play if they see this happening and how to safely intervene as well as reporting those responsible. If a passenger has concerns, they can speak to one of our teams who are always on hand to help, contact the BTP by texting 61016 or using the Railway Guardian app.

Further events will be held in various cities in Great Britain over the coming weeks and months.

How to report

By reporting all incidents that occur, bystanders can help British Transport Police to identify perpetrators and reduce potential harm for others in the future.

To report an incident, contact British Transport Police by texting 61016 or using the [Railway Guardian app](#). In an emergency, always call 999.

To watch the full VR film, visit the National Rail YouTube channel [here](#).

Photo credit: Rail Delivery Group