

Rail Minister joins with rail industry to tackle suicide prevention

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- Key rail industry experts join together to find innovative approach to tackle suicide on rail network
- Rail Minister pledges to do whatever he can to help tackle the tragedy of rail suicides
- Work bringing together rail industry and suicide prevention experts follows 2,233 lifesaving interventions made on the railways in 2019/20

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris has pledged to lead the ongoing battle to tackle suicide on Britain's railways, during a special virtual event with key industry experts aimed at tackling deaths on the network.

Mr Heaton-Harris thanked members of the rail industry, transport sector and suicide prevention experts – including from the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), British Transport Police (BTP) and Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) – for their work and dedication in keeping people safe, ahead of a discussion to examine best practice in how industry can help prevent more deaths on rail.

As a result of the work being done by the sector, with Network Rail leading the way, 2,233 lifesaving interventions on the railways were made in 2019/20, meaning that six people were saved for every one that took their life.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: “For the majority of us, it almost impossible to comprehend the mental anguish that leads people to attempt to take their own lives.

“We all have a part to play, and I am personally committed to doing whatever I can to ensure the railway does more to help those in crisis. Days like today, bringing together the industry to consider new and innovative approaches, are crucial to help reach our joint target of achieving a reduction in suicides nationally.

“I am incredibly proud of the exceptional work that has already been done to prevent suicides on the transport network, helping result in thousands of life-saving interventions made every year. Now, we’re challenging ourselves to do more.”

Samaritans has so far trained more than 20,000 railway employees in prevention techniques while hundreds of rail industry employees have donated their time to the Million Hours Challenge to support the charity, whose Small Talk Saves Lives campaign has been running successfully since 2017.

Photo credit: Department for Transport

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