

Rail pastors return to the Greater Anglia network

June 5, 2023



Rail pastors who help vulnerable people during their time of need, are back patrolling the Greater Anglia network.

From June 1 onwards, they are again patrolling the network from Shenfield to Southend Victoria, Shenfield to Colchester Town and Harlow Town to Cambridge after an absence of nearly 3 years.

Rail pastors patrol throughout the day and into the evening, visiting stations and boarding trains and helping anyone who is vulnerable, distressed, or in need of some assistance.

They can help people access any support services they may need, such as counselling.

Matthew Wakefield, Greater Anglia's Head of Safety, Security and Sustainability, said: "We are very pleased to welcome rail pastors back to the Greater Anglia network.

"We fully support any initiative which aims to keep people safe on our rail network, and we are extremely grateful to the rail pastors for volunteering their time to care for others.

“As well as looking out for suicidal or vulnerable people, pastors provide assistance to anyone – this includes helping anyone who may be confused or anxious, ensuring they get to where they need to go, or just offering reassurance and a friendly face.”

Pastors first started patrolling the Greater Anglia network between Shenfield and Colchester on the Great Eastern Main Line in January 2018, before starting on the West Anglia route in June 2018, and have carried out some excellent and very important work.

Rail Pastor, Phil Norton, said: “We are a non-judgmental group of people who are here to support those who are vulnerable or simply need someone to talk to.

“We have enjoyed patrolling the railway in Essex and we are very pleased to be back again to help those in need.”

Pastors are easy to identify and wear a bright blue uniform. They support those who are vulnerable or simply need someone to talk to.

To become a rail pastor, volunteers first undertake the street pastor training. Training to become a street pastor takes a minimum of three months.

Rail pastors is an initiative of Ascension Trust, supported by and in partnership with British Transport Police, train operators, Network Rail and Samaritans, and aims to save lives and reduce disruption on the rail network.

All rail pastors are fully trained Street Pastors who have also completed the Samaritans’ Managing Suicidal Contacts course, which has been undertaken by thousands of rail workers across the country.

Photo credit: Greater Anglia