

Railway Mission: Supporting railway workers who are struggling

April 14, 2020



The Executive Director at the Railway Mission says they have been receiving emails, phone calls and WhatsApp messages from workers suffering from anxiety, fear and bereavement, during the COVID-19 crisis.

Liam Johnston leads the group of specially trained people who offer friendship and a listening ear to anyone connected to the nation's railways.

Last month the Railway Mission set up a dedicated email and contact number for those struggling during the coronavirus pandemic.

He said: "Although many rail staff are self-isolating or signed off sick, the reduced level of services has meant that they companies have been able to cope and maintain this essential service. Nevertheless, there is still a number of staff who are finding the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic difficult to cope with for a variety of reasons.

"Over recent days the Railway Mission has been contacted by staff from TOCs, FOCs, Network Rail and BTP for a variety of reasons, from anxiety and fear, to bereavement caused by COVID-19.

"These contacts have been made via email, phone calls and WhatsApp messages. Many of the situations

have been heart-breaking, but as one person said following the death of a family member, 'all I need is to know someone is there who cares'.

"Where we can give support, Railway Mission will continue to be here offering a sympathetic listening ear or where possible practical advice and signposting to other services."

Although the UK is in lockdown, the UK rail network continues to be a vital part of the transport system for both freight and the transportation of key workers.

Mr Johnston said: "Sadly there continues to be fatalities on the railway, most have been suicide, but tragically there have also been a number of accidental deaths too.

"One recent incident was at North Acton when a 10-year-old child tragically fell while running along the railway, falling and hitting his head.

"Another was the accident that took the life of a track worker near Northampton. The chaplaincy team has been contacting as many of the staff affected by these incidents and giving support to those affected by phone. Although that it not ideal, at this time it is the best we can do.

"The railway industry chaplains desperately want to be out visiting railway stations and officers, signalling centres and depots. Sadly we can't because we don't want to risk spreading this virus. We're still supporting the Railway Family, we just can't do it face to face."

For more information about the Railway Mission, visit www.railwaymission.org

The contact details for those needing support about coronavirus:

Email - COVID19@railwaymission.org

Phone/Text/WhatsApp - 07903-505868.