

South Western Railway receives highest possible score for safeguarding customers and colleagues

February 9, 2024



South Western Railway (SWR) has received the highest possible score for safeguarding vulnerable people on its network.

The British Transport Police (BTP) awarded the train operator 100 per cent for its Safeguarding on Rail scheme reaccreditation, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to protecting its customers and colleagues.

SWR was only the second train operator to achieve Safeguarding on Rail accreditation, with over 90 per cent initially, and has now received 100 per cent for its reaccreditation, cementing its leadership on safeguarding in the rail industry.

Safeguarding on Rail was developed by the BTP and the Department for Transport to reflect the high

numbers of vulnerable people on the rail network, and the responsibility that the industry has to keep them safe.

For the reaccreditation, SWR submitted over 200 pages of evidence showing the various systems and schemes in place to embed safeguarding as 'business as usual' within its culture, involving everyone from senior leaders to frontline colleagues.

By December last year, almost 90 per cent of SWR colleagues had completed a safeguarding training course, with colleagues able to complete additional training to become a 'safeguarding champion'.

SWR shared examples of positive safeguarding interventions by colleagues putting this training into action, including helping customers in a moment of crisis and reuniting lost minors with their loved ones.

The BTP also interviewed SWR directors, department heads, the safeguarding coordinator, rail community officers, and colleagues at stations and across the network to compile the final report.

SWR works closely with the BTP to deliver on its safeguarding strategy, routinely sharing information and proactively engaging with BTP partners daily, on areas ranging from counterterrorism to violence against women and girls.

Together with the BTP, SWR has set up 'safe spaces' at key locations, including at large events like Royal Ascot, and outside busy stations such as Richmond, to identify and respond to vulnerable people.

SWR promotes safeguarding campaigns with other organisations too, such as 'Small Talk Save Lives' with Samaritans, the White Ribbon campaign with White Ribbon UK and 'Safe Way Home' with Missing People.

The 'All Aboard' campaign was also launched in the autumn, aimed at ending discrimination and abuse on the railway by encouraging customers and colleagues to report incidents to the BTP.

Dan O'Riordan, Head of Security and Safety Assurance at South Western Railway, commented:

"I'm incredibly proud of the team for achieving 100 per cent for our Safeguarding on Rail accreditation. They do such a fantastic job protecting our customers and colleagues on the network.

"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, which is why we have worked so hard to embed safeguarding as 'business as usual'.

"If anyone is feeling vulnerable, anywhere on the network, we want them to know that they can talk to a colleague and will be in safe hands."

Paul Furnell, Detective Chief Superintendent for the British Transport Police, said:

"South Western Railway achieved the pass mark of 100 per cent which is a testament to the significant amount of work they have put in to protect and safeguard vulnerable people.

“It was evident both through interviews and with evidence provided that South Western Railway is dedicated to safeguarding and has a real desire to build on what is a great foundation to make this a success.

“I would like to congratulate South Western Railway for the work done to deliver the Safeguarding on Rail criteria.”

SWR plans to build on the reaccreditation further by organising a national safeguarding conference, engaging further with other train operators and partners to build on its success and share best practices.

More information about how SWR safeguards its customers can be found [here](#).

Photo and video credit: South Western Railway