

Transport for Wales to increase mental health support for public and staff

February 4, 2021



Transport for Wales is marking today's Time to Talk Day (4 Feb) with a commitment to double its number of mental health first aiders and 'champions' to support members of the public and staff.

The organisation will double its network of mental health champions this year from 24 to more than 50 and will also increase the number of mental health first aiders from nine to 17 from an overall workforce of 300, with a view to further expanding this trained resource across its rail operator arm in the immediate future.

TfW has also pledged to increase the number of its staff who have undertaken 'managing suicidal conversations' training.

This invaluable and award-winning training can help staff identify, and confidently approach, somebody in this situation and strike up a conversation that could potentially save lives.

Antony Thomas, Transport for Wales Safety, Sustainability and Wellbeing Manager, commented: "From the CEO through to the senior leadership team, promoting mental wellbeing is seen not just as a good thing to

do, it is also regarded as essential to the success of our organisation.

“We’ve already made significant progress in this area but are continually looking to do more.

“As a pledged partner with Time to Change since 2019 we’re proud to support Time to Talk Day and play our part in helping to end the stigma around mental health issues.”

TfW is working with the British Transport Police and Network Rail to prevent rail suicides and support those affected by them.

As well as committing to training more staff, this includes support for the rail industry’s ‘Small Talk Saves Lives’ bystander campaign developed in partnership with Samaritans and BTP. This campaign focuses on ways to encourage the public to support those who may be in emotional crisis around them on the rail network, by striking up small talk and potentially saving a life.

It encourages people to ask simple questions such as, ‘what train are you going to get?’, ‘what’s your name?’, ‘do you need any help?’ and ‘are you okay?’, to people who may be at risk in a public place.

Going even further, TfW also signed the Time to Change pledge in 2019 and has also received the silver award for its work by Mind Cymru.

The organisation’s stakeholder and community engagement team is leading on a project to deliver education and outreach to schools and community groups on issues such as railway safety and wellbeing. This will involve engagement around the dangers of trespass and level crossing misuse, as well as opportunities to use the Transport for Wales network to improve mental health.

It will also seek to raise awareness of the importance of using everyday conversation to reach out and talk to people who may need help, on or off public transport.

If you would TfW to redeliver a talk to your school, community group or network, please contact the Stakeholder and Community Engagement Team at engagement@tfw.wales