

Vital's Suicide Prevention Patrollers carry out 100th life-saving intervention

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Vital Human Resources, part of the Morson Group, has saved 100 lives across the rail network since 2018.

What started as a trial project in partnership with Network Rail in October 2018, recently saw Vital's Suicide Prevention Patrollers complete their 100th life-saving intervention. Its Patrollers are now raising awareness that suicide is preventable, whilst working to destigmatise, normalise and encourage open conversations about mental health to further protect vulnerable people and staff.

Vital's first life-saving intervention, as part of this project, saw a young person be talked down to a safe area with support by British Transport Police, before referring the individual to specialist counsellors and Samaritans. Since then, 64 interventions have occurred on the East Coast route, 23 on the East Midlands route and 13 on the North & East route.

Vital's Suicide Prevention Patrollers are trained as mental health first aiders, ensuring they can identify and support vulnerable people in the rail environment, which are then reported to the British Transport Police.

In 2018, Network Rail extended its contract with Vital to 2022 to ensure the programme remained in place.

Vital's Suicide Prevention Patrollers now also engage in a growing community programme to educate those living and working locally to rail stations to destigmatise mental health and educate local school children on the dangers and consequences of trespassing to promote help-seeking behaviours.

Additionally, new technology, including body cameras and lineside fencing, are being implemented to create a more integrated approach between Vital, British Transport Police and Network Rail to prevent suicides and trespassing.

Since the partnership began, 1,778 additional concerns have been raised, most of which are classed as 'associated faults', such as damaged fencing or trespassing.



Chris Gostling, Vital's UK manager for trespass & vandalism, said: "Working as part of a brilliant team of people and being involved in a working partnership with Network Rail, we have achieved the fantastic milestone of 100 life-saving interventions.

"As a company, we feel a huge sense of achievement and incredible pride knowing we have positively impacted on hundreds of lives. Attempted suicide on the rail network impacts a lot of people, from the family of the individual through to train drivers and passengers, but we work hard to use the resources available to us to minimise that, and that's what has made this outstanding result possible."

Gary Hardaker, executive director for Vital Human Resources, said: "Since 2018, our main role in the partnership with Network Rail has been to save the lives of vulnerable people and to say we are now at 100 life-saving interventions is the most rewarding achievement for everyone involved. Our hopes for the future of this partnership are to increase our presence and continue to save further lives."

Louise McNally, suicide and trespass prevention lead at Network Rail, said: "Every life lost by suicide is a tragedy, but thanks to the work of the rail industry and our partners like Vital Human Resources, for every life lost to suicide on the railway, seven are now saved. Over 100 lives saved is a fantastic achievement. We are delighted this partnership has been extended into 2022 and look forward to seeing even more lives

positively impacted by the work Vital do.”