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How a little small
talk can make a big difference

SMALL TALK
SAVES LIVES

SAMARITANS

in partnership with



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Passengers encouraged to make small talk and help save lives on the railway

Rail passengers are being encouraged to look out for those around them, in the latest Samaritan's campaign to reduce suicide on the railway.

Small Talk Saves Lives is a joint partnership between Network Rail, Samaritans, the British Transport Police, train operating companies and the wider rail industry.

The latest stage in this ongoing campaign asks passengers to act on their instincts if they notice someone who may need help. People are being

encouraged to make a little small talk, which could be all it takes to interrupt somebody's suicidal thoughts.

In 2017/18 there were more than 1900 life-saving interventions reported by the BTP, of which 160 were carried out by members of the public. Between January and September this year, public interventions were 20% higher, compared to the same period last year.

Richard Godwin, suicide prevention manager working with West Midlands Railway, London Northwestern Railway and Network Rail said, "For every life lost on the railway, six are saved by those around them. We want to encourage people that even the simplest of interactions could help save a life. If you think somebody may need help, trust your instincts and start a conversation. Alternatively, find a member of staff who can help"

Ruth Sutherland, CEO of Samaritans said, "It's really heartening to see more members of the public feeling they have the confidence and knowledge to act if they're worried about someone, and we're grateful for their support. Suicide is preventable and any one of us could have the opportunity to save a life.

"A phrase as simple as, 'I can't believe this weather', could be enough to interrupt a person's suicidal thoughts. Even if small talk doesn't come naturally to you, if something doesn't feel right, please try to start a conversation. There's no evidence you'll make things worse."

Railway staff also continue to play a key part in preventing suicide on the railway everyday. Passengers who may be concerned about anyone they see on the rail network are also encouraged to speak to station staff

Samantha Wood, customer service assistant for London Northwestern Railway, is one of the nominees for this year's Samaritans Lifesaver award. She approached a distressed lady at her station, taking time to talk to her whilst a colleague put a caution on the line.

Jennifer Plumbley, station manager at the train operator said, "Samantha managed the situation proactively and sensitively, which started with the simple act of talking with her. It was evident that this lady was intent on taking her life on our railway and Samantha's simple yet heroic action of

approaching and talking with her had a positive outcome for all involved.

“Since this event, the same lady has travelled through the station and staff have been able to recognise and look out for her on other occasions too.”

Over the next two weeks, commuters will hear a special announcement by radio presenter & TV personality Gaby Roslin across the rail network. Samaritans volunteers will also be at stations, handing out information on how passengers can help.

A new campaign video is also being shared to encourage rail travellers to look out for one another and to help give people the confidence to make small talk where it really matters.



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

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About Small Talk Saves Lives

Small Talk Saves Lives aims to empower the public to act to prevent suicide on the railways and beyond. Suicide is preventable and suicidal thoughts are often temporary and can be interrupted. Samaritans and their industry partners want to give as many people as possible the knowledge and skills to notice if someone may be at risk and the confidence to approach them. A

simple question or an observation about the weather can be all it takes to interrupt suicidal thoughts and encourage them to get help and recover. The campaign aims to remind people that they already know how to start a conversation and do it every day, giving them the confidence to act.

For more information on the campaign, visit the [Small Talk Saves Lives website](#)

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is

the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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