



The Calm Corner at Crewe station is now available for passengers with hidden disabilities who need a more relaxing space to wait for their train

Jun 20, 2019 11:06 BST

New waiting room opened to help those with hidden disabilities at Crewe station

Passengers at Crewe station now have access to a new waiting room, specifically designed to offer those with hidden disabilities a safe and calm environment.

The Calm Corner is the first of its kind on the rail network, brought to life through the work of train operators at the station, Network Rail and advice from a number of partner charities. The idea was first suggested by work

experience student, Megan Hughes, who used her own experience of living with Aspergers Syndrome as inspiration for the project.

Passengers using the waiting room will have access to the same support and passenger information they would get elsewhere on the station, but with the addition of a special totem screen, offering helpful advice such as train times, onward travel information and station layout.

The room is decorated in a calming grey and green colour scheme, with a 'living wall' and plants to complement the colour scheme. Furniture in the room is designed to be comfortable and provide relaxed atmosphere. A children's play table also features for younger travellers, as well as a special 'memory corner' to help support those living with dementia.

Through ongoing work with Alzheimer's Society, London Northwestern Railway is committed to improving the experience for passengers living with dementia, to help support independent living through use of the rail network. The train operator is working on initiatives to improve staff training as well as implementing small changes at stations that will make a big difference to the experience for passengers.

The 'memory corner' has been designed to help trigger memories for those who may have used Crewe station for many years – with a collection of historic photos of the station. In due course, it is hoped this collection can grow, with contributions from passengers, families and other supporters.

Jon Harris, integrated transport and accessibility manager for London Northwestern Railway, said: "As part of a year long partnership with Alzheimer's Society, we are committed to improving our provision for those living with dementia who use services across our network. The dedicated memory corner is a unique feature of The Calm Corner, which we hope will help to bring back memories for those who have travelled on the railway through Crewe for many years.

"The Calm Corner is an important addition to Crewe station, and working closely with our partners and other train operators is key to providing a positive experience for all passengers – no matter what accessibility challenges they face."

Victoria Whitehouse, inclusion lead at Virgin Trains, said: “We want to make travelling by train as easy as possible for everyone. The Calm Corner is somewhere where people can escape and will hopefully encourage those with neurodivergent illnesses to have the confidence to travel by train.”

Rory Kingdon, senior sponsor at Network Rail said: “It’s a priority for Network Rail and our rail industry partners to provide first-class service to our customers. Travelling through a busy railway station can be daunting for some passengers, but the new Calm Corner provides a calm and safe environment for people with hidden disabilities while they wait for their train. We are pleased to contribute to this worthy project that will transform the way passengers access rail travel at Crewe station.”

The introduction of the Calm Corner is being supported by comprehensive staff training to ensure that passengers receive consistent service and assistance at the station. This training will help staff identify passengers who may need help, to distinguish between different types of hidden disability and to respond and support those who may be struggling in the busy station environment. Other initiatives such as the JAM card (Just a Minute) for those living with communication barriers are also supporting this wider work to promote inclusivity for all passengers on the rail network.

Each year over two and half million journeys are made to and from Crewe, with a further one and half million connections between train services at the station.

Partners officially opening The Calm Corner at Crewe station - 19 June 2019

ENDS

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

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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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