

Rail ambassadors – Wales

[Keeping communities safe] – a social performance case study

The project

In November 2014, Caerphilly saw a spike in anti-social behaviour incidents. As a result, Network Rail worked with the British Transport Police and Gwent Police to develop 'Fab Fridays' – a youth group offering diversionary activities with subtle rail safety messaging. Fab Fridays was successful in attracting large numbers of local young people, and the spike in incidents quickly dissipated.



In 2015 we recognised that releasing police officers to run this event on a regular basis was resource-intensive, so worked with BTP to develop an accredited Rail Life Rail Ambassadors volunteer scheme. Volunteers were recruited from the 16-19 year old aged group to allow peer-to-peer spreading of the rail safety message, and a training programme was developed so volunteers could become competent to lead the Fab Friday sessions.

The key benefits delivered

Benefit to society: Young people were engaged in safe, fun, free, educational activities in areas of deprivation that lack any kind of social investment. Young people who saw the benefit of these programmes for their peers were trained and mentored to use new skills to help their community and improve their personal and professional development.

Benefit to the business: Since the existence of Fun Fridays, railway trespass in the Caerphilly area has decreased significantly. There is far less antisocial behaviour which reduces the risk of potential trespass as well. Working together with industry partners such as the British Transport Police has demonstrated the business benefit of shared goals and collaboration.

Lessons learned

- Due to the travel and risk assessment restrictions involved in working with young people, we would recommend recruiting volunteers aged 18-24.
- Volunteers and mentors required a lot of initial support so face-to-face training is advised.
- It is useful to have a project leader for a small group of volunteers, rather than one person who is responsible for everyone. This provides mentors and volunteers with extra support.

Who to contact for more information

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