

Small Talk Saves Lives

Being a caring neighbour – a social performance case study

The project

Following a trackside intervention by members of our team (Works Delivery Drainage and Off Track) to prevent a suicide at Wigan in September 2017 and the launch of Network Rail and Samaritans' Small Talk Saves Lives campaign, we decided to utilise our volunteer leave to further promote and raise awareness of the campaign with passengers at stations.

As a starting point, we made contact with Network Rail's suicide prevention team and the Samaritans themselves who provided us with communication materials and briefing information. We then rounded up 20 volunteers and organised for groups of three to visit six stations on the LNW Route to deliver the key messages of the campaign.



The key benefits delivered

Benefit to society: We handed out over 2000 of the Small Talk Saves Lives information cards as well as holding countless conversations with passengers. The feedback on the campaign from the public was extremely supportive, with many people happy to talk at length and discuss it further with their friends and colleagues.

Benefit to the business: Sadly, suicide on the railway is a frequent issue with far reaching impacts, but by building on the success that rail employees have already had with making interventions, raising awareness of the issue and building confidence with the public to also look out for others can only be a good thing. The potential to empower the travelling public with the skills to help someone is huge.

Lessons learned

- Approaching and speaking to members of the public can sometimes be daunting. Training and tips on the best way to start a conversation are available.
- Working alongside Samaritans to garner their experience would make the sessions even more beneficial.
- At some of the bigger stations, a larger group of volunteers would be useful and volunteers could consider having a stand or offering warm drinks to encourage passenger participation.

Who to contact for more information

Stephen Cooper – Infrastructure Maintenance Protection Coordinator – Network Rail

Email: Stephen.Cooper@networkrail.co.uk | Phone: 07860 500 421