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## Friendship group in Birmingham hailed as Cross City Heroes

A remarkable community group which encourages friendship among people with different communication needs have celebrated being recognised as Cross City Heroes.

The Di Cardwell Friendship Group, based at the TouchBase Pears community centre in Selly Oak, was honoured by West Midlands Railway earlier this year to mark 40 years of Cross City line services.

It was chosen as one of 24 community organisations to receive a plaque of recognition at local railway stations on the popular line between Redditch /

Bromsgrove, Birmingham and Lichfield.

Earlier this month group members paid a special visit to Selly Oak station to see the plaque in pride of place.

Fay Easton, head of stakeholder and community for West Midlands Railway, said: "The Cross City line connects communities across North Worcestershire to Birmingham, and is a big part of many people's lives.

"Getting people to use the train with confidence can open up so many opportunities for them, so it is always great to be able to welcome groups like this onto our stations and trains.

"The Di Cardwell Friendship Group does remarkable work in the city, so it was a pleasure to recognise the group with a plaque at Selly Oak station as part of our Cross City Heroes competition."

Martyn Wright, from the Di Cardwell Friendship Group, said: "Our group encourages friendship amongst people with different communication needs and people who are deafblind. As well as spoken English we communicate in many ways including several different types of sign language and Braille."

For the list of winning Cross City Heroes groups visit <https://bit.ly/2WuPPcb>

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## About West Midlands Trains

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

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**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](https://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](https://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](https://www.abellio.com)

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