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Samaritans encourages travellers to take time out on Brew Monday

Samaritans volunteers will be at railway stations across the network today, to raise awareness of Brew Monday. The annual campaign encourages railway staff and customers to take time out for a cup of tea and a chat.

Brew Monday coincides with 'Blue Monday', which is considered to be the most difficult day of the year.

Richard Godwin, suicide prevention co-ordinator for West Midlands Railway, London Northwestern Railway and Network Rail, said: "The idea of Brew Monday is to encourage people, within their busy everyday lives, to make

time to stop for a cup of tea and catch up with those around them. Samaritans volunteers will also be offering a listening ear to commuters travelling through stations today.

“For every life lost on the railway, six are saved by those around them through an intervention. The earlier we can make an intervention and engage with those in need, the more effective we can be.”

Neil Peters, strategic programme manager for Samaritans Rail programme, said: “Isolation and loneliness are one of the main reasons people contact Samaritans, so getting together for a brew with friends can provide a lift on what is meant to be one of the most difficult days of the year.”

106 Samaritans branches are running Brew Monday events at over 150 railway stations across the country today, handing out tea bags and sharing listening tips.

Samaritans local branch members will be at the following stations across the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks:

Across the West Midlands Railway network:

Birmingham New Street, Dudley Port, Sandwell & Dudley, Coventry, Tile Hill, Solihull, Olton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Stratford-upon-Avon Parkway, Warwick, Warwick Parkway, Leamington Spa, Wolverhampton, Worcester Foregate Street, Kidderminster and Telford,

Across the London Northwestern Railway network:

Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard, Marston Green, Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and Tamworth.

Brew Monday is part of the Rail Industry Suicide Stakeholder Group’s programme of activities that aims to prevent suicides on the railway and to support rail staff affected by them. The campaign follows a similar strategy to the ongoing Small Talk Saves Lives initiative, which encourages travellers to look out for one another, and make simple conversation if they feel someone may be vulnerable.

ENDS

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

About Brew Monday

Brew Monday is one of four national suicide prevention events the Rail Industry Suicide Stakeholder Group (RISSG) is supporting in 2018/19 as part of its partnership with Samaritans.

The groups works to promote Samaritans' services with those most at risk of suicide on the railway and to encourage help-seeking behaviour or peer support amongst rail staff to reach those at risk of suicide or suffering from trauma.

Through Brew Monday, the rail industry will be encouraging members of the public and their staff to get together for a cuppa and a chat with family, friends and colleagues to help anyone who may be struggling at a particular time.

For more information visit samaritans.org/media-centre/our-campaigns/brew-monday

About West Midlands Trains

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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