

Workforce and volunteers at heart of #StationsDay celebrations

- [#StationsDay](#) sees the Department for Transport and rail industry celebrating the work of young apprentices, volunteers and staff who keep the railways running
- online campaign recognises the vital role of stations in connecting communities, providing skilled jobs and boosting economic growth

The dedication, hard-work and enthusiasm of staff and volunteers responsible for keeping Britain's railways running are at the heart of Stations Day celebrations today (15 October 2019).

As the government invests a record [£48 billion to modernise the UK rail network](#), upgrading and building new stations across the country, Stations Day helps recognise the 240,000 people who, in stations of all sizes, are integral to keeping the country moving.

Last year alone, 1.8 billion passenger journeys were made in Great Britain, averaging 4.8 million passenger journeys each day. Station environments, passenger information and accessibility are being improved across the country, with major upgrades at the country's biggest stations.

Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris, said:

Today we are celebrating the brilliant people at the heart of our railways, whose dedication and enthusiasm makes the journeys of millions of passengers every day that bit better.

More than 2,500 stations on our network have played a central role in our villages, towns and cities for over a century. Together with industry, we are working to provide passengers with more modern and accessible stations, ensuring our railways continue to connect people across the country.

Some of the staff being celebrated today include young apprentices who have entered the industry as part of the Prince's Trust's 'Get into Railway' series. As part of a scheme delivered with South Western Railway, the series helps young people gain experience and skills in the rail industry.

Ashley is a gateline assistant at Havant Station:

I've been working for South Western Rail (SWR) for 4 months at Havant Station in Southampton. Ever since I was young, I've wanted a career in rail, so when I did the course with the Prince's Trust, it was a chance for me to get experience and to get my foot in the door. It was absolutely brilliant when I was offered the job at

SWR. I love the trains, the stations and the customers.

I like working at Havant because it's a gateway to the south and it's a really busy station, especially in the morning peak. The passengers are great – especially the peak commuters – and the staff are so brilliant. Starting a career in rail can lead to so many good opportunities in the future and I would recommend it to anyone thinking about pursuing this as an option.

Shernell works at Clapham Junction Station:

I've been working at Clapham Junction Station for 6 months, following my placement with the Prince's Trust. The course was a chance for me to learn more about working in the railways and to hopefully get a job at the end of it, which I have been successful at.

The customers that you meet every day and the opportunities to progress your career are the things I love the most about working here. I'd like to be a train driver in the future, and that's my main goal now.

Director of Partnerships at The Prince's Trust, Ben Marson, said:

The Prince's Trust is proud to work within train operating companies like SWR. By working together, we are helping provide young people with life changing opportunities to gain work experience on the railways and secure jobs in the sector.

Volunteers, such as those at the Strawberry Line Café in Somerset, also play an important role in improving journeys for passengers. Situated on platform 1 at Yatton Railway Station, the café was set up in 2008 and quickly established itself as an integral part of the station. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, it was set up to employ and train adults with learning disabilities, enabling them to gain the skills to work in the catering and hospitality industry.

Jon Godden, train service delivery manager, said:

The café was born out of a local initiative to try to help people with learning difficulties find employment. At the time, I was the station manager for Yatton, so I knew there was a derelict room that needed refurbishment – it seemed like the perfect place to start the project, and so the café was opened, specifically to employ people with learning difficulties.

The best thing about the café is that it provides a real purpose

for the community – both the staff it employs and the passengers it serves. It's a great use of station space and the passengers love it – especially the homemade carrot cake!