

Assisting passengers with hidden disabilities

Sunflower Lanyard Scheme Staff Brief

From 31st March 2020, Network Rail and GWR will be participating in the sunflower lanyard scheme in our stations and on board our trains across the Wales and Western Region.

What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a discreet way for adults and children with hidden disabilities to show that they need additional support or just a little more time.

Not all disabilities are visible – some are not immediately obvious, such as learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. Living with a hidden disability can make daily life more demanding for many people, but it can be difficult for others to recognise, acknowledge or understand the challenges faced.

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.



What do I need to do if I see someone wearing a Sunflower Lanyard?

Now you are aware of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower, should you see it being worn or presented to you on an ID card, be aware that person may have additional needs that you may be able to assist with.

You should approach them, introduce yourself and ask, 'do you need help with anything?'. It is then up to the person to let you know what help they require. Do be kind and listen to their needs.

It is not appropriate to ask a passenger what their hidden disability is. Their choosing to be identified by wearing a sunflower is a tool to start a conversation with someone who may not have the confidence to ask for help.

Some examples of areas extra support may be needed could be:

- Assistance reading departure boards/signs
- Getting to their platform in good time
- Written down or printed train times
- Extra support during disruption
- Help with platform alterations
- A quieter area to wait
- More time to ask a question
- Help using automatic gates
- Clear instructions or directions

This list is not exhaustive and the assistance you give may come in many forms, the person may just need some reassurance, more time or just a friendly smile to make them feel comfortable.

Who can join the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme?



Assisting passengers with hidden disabilities

Anyone can ask for a lanyard and they do not need to provide evidence of a hidden disability to obtain one. We will stock lanyards with ID cards in stations across the network (full list below), which you can direct passengers to. When issuing a lanyard please ensure they are accompanied by a leaflet to explain their purpose, as well as the ID card and protective plastic wallet.

What is a Hidden Disability?

A hidden disability is a disability that may not be immediately obvious, such as autism, dementia, anxiety, visual or a hearing impairment. Hidden disabilities don't have physical signs and include learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. Living with these conditions can make daily life more demanding for many people, affecting people in different ways.

Can staff wear a sunflower lanyard?

It is very important that lanyards are only worn by people who wish to be identified as having a hidden disability. Please do not wear the lanyards in support of the scheme.

Staff who have a hidden disability are more than welcome to a lanyard but please do not wear when on station duty to avoid confusion for passengers.

How can a passenger get a lanyard from us?

We will be stocking lanyards initially, in the following stations; - London Paddington, Slough, Maidenhead, Twyford, Reading, Newbury, Didcot Parkway, Oxford, Swindon, Bristol Temple Meads, Bristol Parkway, Bath Spa, Gloucester, Cheltenham Spa, Westbury, Chippenham, Weston-Super-Mare, Plymouth, Exeter St David's, Exeter Central, Truro, Taunton, Penzance, Paignton, Newton Abbot and St Austell. Passengers can also call our Passenger Assistance team on 0800 197 1329 or contact the GWR social media team and order a lanyard/ID card to be sent to their home.

How will passengers know about this scheme?

We will be advertising the scheme using posters around the station and by messaging via social media. The scheme is also fast becoming nationally recognised by the public, already recognised by Gatwick Airport, Heathrow Airport and Marks and Spencer's to name a few.

How else may the sunflower be displayed?

Hidden Disabilities supply other products displaying the sunflower such as pin badges, wristbands, travel wallets and ID cards. GWR will supply the lanyard, ID card and a plastic cover to any passenger that requests a lanyard. The ID card is designed so passengers can write down any needs/requirements, if they wanted to subtly inform staff of any support required. Should a passenger display the sunflower to you using any product, you should act in the same way, asking 'do you need help with anything?'

What if I need further information about the scheme?

You can contact barney.solomun@gwr.com or tom.law@gwr.com

