

RAIL TO REFUGE

Free train travel for those fleeing domestic abuse

Rail to Refuge is a joint initiative between rail companies and Women's Aid in which train operators cover the cost of train tickets for women, men and children travelling to refuge accommodation.

First introduced by train operators, Southeastern and GWR, the Rail to Refuge scheme became a nationwide initiative in April 2020 when a rise in domestic abuse was reported due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. In the first year the scheme helped get 1,348 survivors, including 362 children over five to safety.



When I needed help but couldn't afford a train ticket, I was told about the Rail to Refuge scheme. At that point, I realised I could leave, and I wasn't trapped anymore.

Why is Rail to Refuge needed?

This scheme genuinely does save lives. Survivors escaping domestic abuse are usually advised to seek refuge services far away from their perpetrator, but for many, raising the cash to pay for a train ticket can be very difficult and become a barrier to seeking refuge. This is especially true for women experiencing economic abuse, who may have no access to cash.



On average, the Rail to Refuge scheme helps
4 survivors
to safety each day



Help raise awareness

We need domestic abuse survivors to be aware of the Rail to Refuge scheme to help them reach safety. You can play a vital part by simply helping raise awareness.

If you are worried about someone you know, you can find advice www.womensaid.org.uk

How does the scheme work?

1. A survivor reaches out for support from a domestic abuse service which is a member of Women's Aid, Welsh Women's Aid, Scottish Women's Aid or Imkaan. This includes Respect's Men's Advice Line.
2. If it's appropriate to refer the survivor to refuge, the survivor will be informed once a refuge vacancy has been confirmed
3. Once the survivor has a confirmed refuge space, the refuge can book a train ticket for the survivor so they can travel for free
4. After booking the ticket, the refuge can send the ticket and collection details to the survivor via a mobile phone. The survivor can then either use an e-ticket sent to their mobile phone or pick the ticket up from the station using any debit or credit card; they can travel like normal, without having to declare the ticket was free or that they are fleeing from domestic abuse.



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until women & children are safe

scottish women's aid
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Cymorth i Ferched Cymru
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imkaan

Rail Delivery Group
National Rail

Find out more at www.womensaid.org.uk/rail-to-refuge