



# 2021 IMPACT REPORT

# CONTENTS & INTRODUCTION

- 02 Contents & Introduction
- 03 A Message From Our Chairman
- 04 Services Support
- 05 New Funds
- 06 Fundraising
- 07 Team Update
- 07 Our Pledge To Make a Difference



The Railway Benefit Fund, also known as RBF, is a charity which provides support to current, former and retired railway staff and their dependants across the UK.

We've been here for railway people since 1858 and today, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we're able to offer help to those who need us. From financial grants and confidential advice, to online tools and a legal helpline, we provide a range of services designed to support through life's unexpected events.

Our assistance extends not just to those working in passenger rail, but also to the wider rail supply chain as well as freight and ancillary.

We are not a membership organisation and rely solely on fundraising and donations so we can continue to support our Railway Family.

## Our vision and mission

The vision of the Railway Benefit Fund is to improve the quality of life of current and former railway people in the UK. Our mission is to provide customised advice and support to railway people and their families, whenever they need us most.



The RBF helped me when I was in financial hardship and going through a really tough time. With their assistance I managed to pay some priority bills and get some much-needed food shopping. I cannot thank the team enough for their support.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Dear supporter,

Welcome to our Impact Report for 2021, our annual opportunity to update you on the impact we are making as a charity, who we've helped and how we spend your donations.

Whilst 2021 continued to be dominated by the pandemic, the Covid-19 crisis in 2020 became the catalyst for many charities to re-assess their funding and service provision and RBF was no exception. The changes made provided a strong foundation to allow us not only to provide a full range of services in 2021 but also to make progress on some key strategic initiatives which were encompassed in a new four-year strategy ratified by the Board in December 2020.

Our strategy shows a commitment to develop services to support people in the early stages of their journey. Alongside this is the recognition to ensure the industry are aware of what we offer and how to easily access this support through our marketing campaigns.

The need for a stronger technology platform to support our ambitions has been evaluated in 2021 and will be worked on further and implemented during 2022. The Board recognises that engaging and mobilising the support of the wider Rail Industry remains our priority.

And finally, on behalf of the Board, our sincere thanks to you all. We cannot continue to be here for railway people who need us without your donations and fundraising. Your support is needed now more than ever.

Kindest regards,

***Tim Shoveller***  
***RBF Chairman***



**Tim Shoveller**  
*Chairman of RBF and Managing Director  
for NW & Central at Network Rail*



Thank you to Pete Waterman for his continued support as the RBF President.

"I'm a big fan of the RBF, I have been for 25 years, and am proud to be President and help raise the profile of the great work they do. It's amazing to be a part of this important offering to the whole of the Rail Industry and it's been so important to get back out and about this year to connect with the people we support and reassure them that we are here. Thank you for your support."

***Pete Waterman, RBF President***

# SERVICES SUPPORT

## Every 7 minutes someone in rail reaches out to RBF

In 2021 RBF reached more beneficiaries than in previous years. The overall total beneficiaries reached was 858 – an increase of 55% compared to 551 beneficiaries reached in 2020.



858 people benefitted from direct financial support.



3,000 people received advice and signposting to other charities and agencies who can provide targeted support.



£281,506 given out in grants.

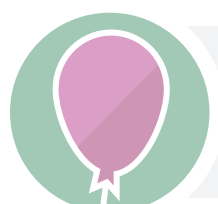
Statistics also show where our support has been needed the most. The climate during the year has impacted the younger age groups the most, especially those with children. There has also been a significant shift in the number of current workers reaching out for help.



117% increase in applications received and processed.





50% of the financial support given helps the children of railway families.





33% of applicants are in their 30s/40s and more likely to have young families.



60% of those we help are current workers and 40% former or retired.

 I am absolutely overwhelmed and feeling very emotional because RBF have literally saved my Christmas! I have been worried over the weekend as to how I was going to buy some food and top up the electricity so I can switch the heating up I really don't know how I would have managed without the £300 you have awarded me for food and electricity - I am very grateful. 

 The RBF helped me in my time of crisis. I had just moved 90 miles away to start a new job, I had a relationship breakdown due to domestic violence and that person left me in a lot of debt. I was in arrears with my rent and my life was spiraling downhill. I reached out to RBF reluctantly, I was so relieved to receive support at such a crucial time, I honestly don't know what I'd have done without them. 

# NEW FUNDS

## Home Schooling Fund

The fund was created in January 2021 as an emergency measure when it was apparent that many families did not have the equipment to effectively home school, with classes and homework being conducted on parent's mobile phones or having to share tablets and laptops between children.

Support was available from schools and the government, but those identified as most in need were prioritised. This left a gap in sufficient support for home schooling for those in employment with limited means to purchase the required devices for their children. Because of the generous support we receive, we have been able to award over £40,000 to help over 100 families and give 217 children the home schooling equipment they needed.

**102** Railway families given essential equipment

**117** Laptops, printers and tablets awarded

**217** Children supported through lockdown



Nick's children were struggling with home schooling due to their very old equipment that didn't work properly. After reaching out to us, they now have a new laptop to complete school work from - just look at their happy faces!

## Children's Fund

The demand and success of the Home Schooling Fund led us to make some important changes to our Family Support Fund which was re-launched as the Children's Fund. This fund is available to support children and their development. Sometimes a helping hand is needed for the hidden extras that always seem to crop up when least expected.

We understand that times are tough, which is why we have widened our criteria for support. We initially considered support through this fund to railway households who earn less than £30,000 annual income. We now consider support to households who earns £40,000 or less to make this fund more accessible to those in need. In addition, the maximum amount awarded was previously £200 and increased to £300 in line with the increase in cost of the things we need. The application process has also been streamlined to make it easier and quicker to apply.

Sally, a single mum working as a platform assistant in the Midlands, recently received a grant from the RBF Children's Fund.

When I lost my overtime and became ill with Covid and had time off work, I found we were really struggling to afford the essentials, let alone think about Christmas costs. At first, I was reluctant to reach out to RBF but I'm so glad I did- they provided us with a grant to buy new winter coats for my children. It's one less stress for me knowing I don't have to worry about that cost!

# FUNDRAISING

***Fundraising income for 2021 was £280,380 which was a 37% increase on last year***

During 2021, a three-year Fundraising Strategy was devised and a new Fundraising Sub-Committee, comprising of trustees and external advisors, was established to support the delivery.

Although some of our traditional income streams were adversely affected by the pandemic, notably in person events, the response to our Covid campaign was very encouraging. This resulted in a noticeable

increase in individual donations during 2021.

New in 2021, Railway Family Week was a week-long fundraising and awareness event bringing together the whole Rail Industry. The week included an online Auction of Experiences and the 1858 Challenge and raised in excess of its £50,000 target.

Face to face events started back up later in the year and the Christmas campaign of 2021 was the most successful ever in fundraising terms.



## ***Railway Family Week***

During Railway Family Week, we were honoured that Avanti West Coast named one of its Pendolino trains 'Railway Benefit Fund'. The RBF Pendolino, number 390155, travelled over 200,000 miles in the first year.



## ***Heart of Gold Awards***

The 4th year of our Heart of Gold Awards saw the addition of four new sponsored categories. There was so much support for our 12 shortlisters with over 7,000 votes cast.

Meet our winners: *(In no particular order)*  
A: Jennifer Birdstall B: Paul Scott  
C: Siggie Cragwell D: Hatch End Station Team



## ***Annual RBF Golf Day***

The sun was shining for 15 teams who joined us for the delayed 17th Annual RBF Golf Day at Hendon Golf Club in September 2021.

# TEAM UPDATE

## Sir Peter Hendy CBE becomes an Honorary Patron

"I am delighted and honoured to have become a Patron of RBF to support fundraising efforts and help to raise awareness of the charity's crucial work in the rail industry. The last year has been particularly difficult for the Railway Family, and staff have worked tremendously hard to keep Britain moving during this time. The RBF have been there to help many railway workers through tough situations, which is why I am delighted to show my support."



## Welcome new members to the Board of Trustees

In early 2021 Mick Cash, former General Secretary of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), and Emma Wasley, HR People Partner at Govia Thameslink Railway, joined the RBF Board of Trustees.

"I have long known about the good work that the Railway Benefit Fund does and have myself referred people for help and assistance in the past. I am delighted to be an RBF Board Member and relish the opportunity to bring my knowledge and experience to ensure that RBF can continue to support railway workers, both employed and retired, when they face difficult times."

**Mick Cash**

"I am very excited to get the opportunity to help fellow rail workers. Joining RBF is a perfect chance for me to get involved."

**Emma Wasley**

# OUR PLEDGE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 2021 RBF joined the NSPA, an alliance who care about suicide prevention and are willing to take action to reduce suicide and support those affected by suicide.

We signed the Railway Mental Health Charter which provides targeted actions and resources for improving mental health in your organisation.

We also joined the Women in Rail and Railway Industry Association, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Charter, a commitment to work together to build a more balanced higher performing sector.



✓ We have signed  
The Rail Industry  
Equality, Diversity  
& Inclusion Charter





*Thank you for your continued support*



**[www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk](http://www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk)   [info@railwaybenefitfund.org.uk](mailto:info@railwaybenefitfund.org.uk)   0345 241 2885**

**1st Floor, Millennium House, 40 Nantwich Road, Crewe, CW2 6AD**

** @RBF1858    RBFCharity    Railway Benefit Fund**

*Registered charity No 206312  
Scottish Ref no SC039550*