



HEART OF GOLD
AWARDS

2025 HEART OF GOLD WINNERS

Rising Star Winner

Sponsored by Furrer+Frey



Zoe Flannagan

Health and Wellbeing Coordinator -
Avanti West Coast

Zoe joined as a Health and Wellbeing Coordinator and immediately hit the ground running during a testing time for the industry. She quickly built her expertise by completing Mental Health First Aid Training and Health Coach training, enabling her to compassionately support the company's wellbeing program and manage her own caseload.

Demonstrating her commitment, she supported the business in difficult times, even taking shifts working in the shop on board trains.

Known for always going above and beyond, Zoe has established effective relationships with stakeholders and deeply immersed herself in learning about the rail industry. Her hard work culminated in her completing her Apprenticeship in July 2025, passing with a distinction.

Rail Hero Winner

Sponsored by Freightliner



Chris Bray

Train Driver -
Direct Rail Services

Chris's vigilance and quick thinking saved a life. On February 20th, while working a train from Daventry to Crewe, Chris spotted a woman in distress sitting alone by the trackside near Queensville Curve, Stafford.

Recognising the potential danger, Chris immediately applied the brakes and brought his train to a stop.

He contacted the signaller, blocking the line, and refused to move until he knew the woman was safe. Chris climbed out of his cab and spoke to her across the tracks, assuring her she wasn't in trouble, even as she continued rocking and crying.

Chris kept talking to her, not giving up until the British Transport Police (BTP) and Network Rail staff arrived. His crucial actions held the scene, and the BTP were ultimately able to lead the woman away to safety.

Chris showed courage and compassion which resulted in saving a life.

Wellbeing Champion Winner

Sponsored by Health Shield



Samantha Passmore

Customer Experience Manager -
West Midlands Trains

Sam is recognised at Wolverhampton Station for her exceptional leadership in employee and passenger safeguarding.

As a Customer Experience Manager, Sam recognised the station's challenges with mental health crises and criminal activity.

Her commitment was proven one evening when she decisively intervened with an individual waiting with a knife, de-escalating the situation and ensuring the safety of all. Driven by her determination, Sam organised a crucial stakeholder event in October, which directly resulted in the establishment of a Safeguarding Hub at the station, a dedicated, rent-free space run by Rethink Mental Illness to offer mental health support.

Sam is an approachable, reliable role model whose willingness to support others and develop life-saving community partnerships makes her a true asset and an inspiration.



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Star Team Winner

Sponsored by Amaro



The Greatest Gathering Event Organisers

The Greatest Gathering was the defining flagship event for the Railway 200 celebrations, marking two centuries of the modern railway. Held at Alstom's Derby factory (1-3 August 2025), this remarkable event drew over 40,000 visitors and achieved the world's largest-ever gathering of historic and modern rail vehicles, including iconic engines like Flying Scotsman. Organised by a small yet dedicated team of volunteers, the festival transformed the 90-acre site with immersive STEM activities, heritage train rides, and a groundbreaking, inclusive spirit, evidenced by the world's first Pride parade on a train. Beyond its spectacular scale, the sold-out event garnered international media coverage (reaching a combined audience of over 500 million people), showcased the railway family's unity and successfully raised thousands for charity.

The Greatest Gathering united history, innovation and storytelling – transforming a working rail site into a living celebration of the past, present and future of mobility.

Inspirational Volunteer Winner

Sponsored by Great British Rail
Replacement/CMAC Group



Don Coffey

Driver - TransPennine Express

Don, a recently retired Train Driver is an amazing ambassador for TransPennine Express and the railway, known for his charitable efforts.

He runs a highly successful YouTube channel featuring driver's-eye views, which has over 55,000 subscribers. Crucially, all channel proceeds are donated to various charity's, totalling more than £83,000. He actively supports mental health awareness, recently participating in the Samaritans' 'Small Talk Saves Lives' event and filming a powerful suicide prevention video with Network Rail.

Don also selflessly volunteers his time for driver simulator days and group escorts. His commitment to creating a better community and railway is first class.

Lifetime Achievement Winner

Sponsored by Railpen



Jennifer Williams

Booking Office - Northern

Jenny has dedicated 60 years to Northern and her knowledge and passion for passengers have made her an invaluable asset. Her ability to embrace innovation and adapt over six decades while maintaining the highest values is extraordinary.

Throughout her remarkable career, she has been the embodiment of commitment, professionalism and kindness.

Beyond her technical expertise, Jenny's warmth has profoundly impacted the team; she has consistently made her workplace better and more connected by reassuring nervous travellers, supporting colleagues, and sharing a smile.

This nomination celebrates a profound legacy built on excellence and compassion.