

Lifesaver case study: Station Assistant Kay Awote



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South London Station Assistant Kayode (“Kay”) Awote, helped four vulnerable people to safety – two who were close to taking their own lives, and two children running away from home.

In March, Kay was alerted when an audibly distressed young man walked past the ticket office window on the platform. The station assistant said: “I kept an eye on him with the station CCTV to see him safely onto the next train, but he didn’t get on. He seemed very upset and possibly a bit tipsy, so I decided to go and have a chat.

“Before I got very near he suddenly put himself in a very dangerous place. I caught his attention and managed to persuade him to stop and get him to tell me why he was so upset. I told him I would get help for him and called the police, who were able to calm him down some more and get him to move to safety.”

One day in August, Kay heard someone yelling, and found a woman sitting on the platform. “She was crying loudly. I approached her carefully and asked if I could help. She didn’t respond but didn’t seem to be an immediate danger to herself, so I turned away to call the police. When I looked again, she seemed about to risk her life.

“I had to pull her back, and then tried to calm her down. I said she should talk about whatever was making her so upset, and offered to call the Samaritans if she would rather not tell me. The police arrived and took over, but it was another 40 minutes before they persuaded her to go with them.”

The two children Kay rescued were sisters aged just 5 and 3. “They were on their own and wearing rucksacks, so it was obvious something was wrong. I persuaded them to sit in my kiosk on the platform, and I played some music for them on my phone to keep them occupied while I phoned the police and waited for them to arrive.

“With the police on the way, I chatted with them and they told me they were going to their auntie’s house, which was four stations up the line. They had climbed out of a window to leave home because their mother and father were fighting. They left quite happily with the police, who took them home, but their sad situation affected me a lot.”