

Press Release

*For immediate release
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‘Eye-2-Eye’ adjustable counter is just the ticket at railway stations

The country’s first modular station with state-of-the-art ticket counters designed for both disabled and able-bodied passengers has just been built by Network Rail at Greenhithe in Kent and was designed with a new adjustable height counter security screen system supplied by Safetell of Dartford.



David Finnegan, Senior Access Officer for Merseytravel, conceived a fully accessible single integrated ticket counter that met the needs of all people including employees. In 2001 in response to David's request Safetell set the ball rolling with the design of the Eye-2-Eye to provide ballistic resistant staff protection and a ticket counter adjustable to different heights for wheelchair and standing passengers. Other features to assist various disabilities included speech enhancement, minimal reflections, good colour contrasts and soft counter surfaces.

Safetell engineers designed and produced the prototype for installation in less than four months. David Finnegan along with Merseytravel colleagues and passengers were delighted with the results. It is now Merseytravel and Merseyrail policy to install the Eye-2-Eye systems in new build stations and major refurbishment of stations.

These counters allow local authorities to meet their Disability Equality Duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the 2005 Act. The counter is now featured as best practice in the July 2008 Department of Transport Accessible Train and Station Designed for Disabled People: A Code of Practice. It meets the Strategic Rail Authority Guideline Technical Notes 65, 66 and 67 (adopted by Network Rail) and incorporates BS 8300 "Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, Code of practice, Sections 10 and 11".

At the same time, the staff counter facilities reduce muscular-skeletal strains and repetitive stress injuries to assist employers with their obligations to their staff under Health & Safety legislation.

Following Merseytravel's lead, a number of train operating companies and Network Rail became increasingly interested in the Eye-2-Eye as a problem solver. Justin Ryan, Accessibility & Inclusion Manager at Southeastern railways thought that the four Safetell counters installed at Liverpool Parkway station in 2006 met all his requirements for mobility, dexterity, hearing and vision.

He contacted David Clark, the company's Business Development Director, to help design ticket counters for three stations being refurbished in 2007. The single position Eye-2-Eye unit was the ideal solution to meet their space constraints. Also impressive were the active voice transfer and integrated induction loop system to aid people who are hard of hearing. The low reflective glass plus good lighting helps lip readers and the colour contrasted Eye-2-Eye counter assists partially sighted people. These features along with the counter's ability to rise and fall make it a truly revolutionary design for the 21st century travelling public.

The counter's height can be changed by the ticket clerk or passenger and it has safety features to avoid crushing or inadvertent movement. The passenger has a "Call for Assistance" button and the profiled moulded counter edge is warm to the

touch to help anyone with manipulative difficulties pick up tickets, vouchers, bank notes or coins.

Having found a suitable product for Southeastern, Justin ordered the first Eye-2-Eye units for installation early in 2007 at the Herne Hill, Orpington and West Malling stations. While Safetell carried out the actual installations, Sonic Windows of Bexhill-on-Sea undertook the ticket counter conversions.

Justin said: "I liked Eye-2-Eye and was impressed with the understanding and co-operation we achieved when working with Safetell."

"Of all the projects and companies that I deal with," he summed up, "the Eye-2-Eye projects have been the smoothest by far." So it's no surprise that Southeastern ordered and installed Eye2Eye in eight stations in 2008 and more are likely to follow as the station refurbishment programme progresses.

Meanwhile, when Network Rail started a design process early in 2007 to develop a set of modular stations Eye-2-Eye was a natural choice for the ticket counters. They knew about it from their own bespoke installations in the North West and from the other installations for Merseytravel, GNER and ONE Railways.

Network Rail wanted some changes from the original, increasing unit height and adding flanking panels to increase staff counter width and matching fixed height counters. They also thought that the Merseytravel design of full bullet resistance to BS EN 1063 Classes BR4NS and SG1NS was more than needed for their risk profile, and the switch to anti-physical attack glass with an option for bullet resistant glass with steel protection below the counter allowed Safetell to increase the height and width of the glass to improve the visual aspect ratio and to reduce cost.

Other alterations included a "Chip & PIN" facility for passengers and an integral staff-side cash box. All added features maintained the basic concept of an electrically powered counter with infinitely variable height adjustment between 760 and 1050mm. The design changes were implemented for a mock-up modular station in the summer of 2007. Network Rail liked it and this March the first modular station with Eye-2-Eye ticket counters went into service at Greenhithe, equipped with one height-adjustable and two fixed height counters installed around a corner with in-fill panels.

Staff have pull-down "Position Closed" signs and the public sides have roller shutters to protect against vandalism when the ticket office is closed. Network Rail has handed the station over to Southeastern as the operating company.

"Every year, throughout the country and across every sector of society, there are more than 3 million incidents of violence resulting in lost working time." While Eye-2-Eye counters meet all the principles of Universal Design, we should not overlook the contribution they make to staff safety and comfort," said David Clark of Safetell.

"Effective workstation design, taking account of ergonomics and staff protection, creates a relaxed and attractive environment which empowers staff to take appropriate control of their personal safety," he added. "This improves operational efficiency and morale and reduces stress and sickness."

ENDS

Eye-2-Eye Specifications

Steel structure with glass security screen
Electrically powered, fail-safe, variable height counter
Width 1200mm; overall height 2150mm or 2350mm
Variable Counter Height 760mm-1050mm
Recess for wheelchair footplate turning circle
Active 2-way voice transmission and induction loop system
"Warm-touch" counter surface and contoured counter edge
Shallow document/cash pass tray

Options:

Bullet resistant glazing (BS EN 1063 Classes BR4/SG1 NS)
Attack resistant glazing (BS EN 356 Level P4)
"Call for Assistance" button
"Position Closed" blind
Anti-vandal external roller shutter
Staff cash box
Public "Chip & PIN" facility
Matching fixed height counter and/or fixed side panels

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