

Drones to zone in on track trespassers

October 24, 2022



Network Rail and the **British Transport Police** now have an eye in the sky when it comes to tracking down wrong-doers on the network.

Using drone technology to provide a bird's eye view of the railway, officers are able to help keep passengers safe, and prevent delays.

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail's route director for Anglia, said: "We're already seeing the benefits of having this technology, in terms of finding people quickly and reducing the length of delays for passengers.

"The railway is full of danger, both obvious and hidden and this new equipment will help us and the British Transport Police to keep everyone safe."

There is often an increase in trespass incidents during the school holidays and half term, and officers are now using drones to find people who shouldn't be on the tracks. The drones are fitted with special cameras with high quality zoom and thermal imaging to speed up the process of finding the person quickly before they come to any harm. This also reduces the length of time trains are stopped in the area, minimising the impact on services.

Trespass is a huge problem on the railway with thousands of incidents recorded each year. Last year (April 2021- April 2022) there were 1105 incidents, which resulted in 48,702 delays at a cost of £3.5m.

In the first half of this year (April 2022 - April 2023) there have already been 572 trespass incidents, resulting in 21,021 delay minutes at a cost of £1.1m to the industry.

Trespass also carries a potentially devastating impact, not only on the trespasser - who risks serious life-changing, if not fatal injury - but also on their friends and family, and the wider community.

Image credit: Network Rail