

Kentish Town Tube Underground station to be closed for up to a year for improvements

May 2, 2023



Transport for London (TfL) is advising customers who use Kentish Town Tube station that essential work to replace both of the station's 26-year-old escalators starts from Monday 26 June 2023, meaning the Underground station will need to close for up to one year from this date.

The vital replacement programme will see both escalators at Kentish Town Tube station, which frequently cause last-minute station closures leading to disruption for customers, replaced with new, high-performing machines. The existing escalators, which are the most unreliable on the Underground network, were installed in 1997 and are bespoke to the station, making it difficult to source parts for maintenance and repairs. The new escalators will be the same model as those used on the Elizabeth line and throughout the London Underground network making sourcing parts much easier and this will lead to a reduction in unplanned station closures, improving reliability for customers. They are expected to last for around 40 years.

TfL will use the temporary closure of Kentish Town Underground station to carry out a raft of other station

improvements. These include removing the redundant ticket office and realigning the ticket barriers to provide more space for customers and additional ticket gates. The station will also be painted and deep cleaned, with new floor and wall tiling and improved signage installed.

Kentish Town Thameslink station will remain open for customers to use while the escalator replacement works are taking place. Nearby Tufnell Park Tube station is accessible by using the extensive local bus network or from Kentish Town station on foot (11 minutes). There is no major work planned on these alternative routes during the closure of the Tube station.

Esther Sharples, TfL's Director of Asset Performance Delivery, said: "I'd like to thank our customers in advance for their patience while we replace the escalators at Kentish Town station. They are the most unreliable on the Tube network and this essential work will improve journeys through Kentish Town station for many years to come. We explored all possible options to keep the Tube station open during this work but safety considerations and space constraints meant it wasn't feasible.

"We are using the opportunity while the station is closed to make many other improvements which will make the station more spacious, easier to use and more welcoming for our customers."

Access to and from the Thameslink station platforms will be via the out-of-hours entrance, approximately 20 metres along Kentish Town Road from the Tube station entrance. Tickets and Oyster top-ups will not be available at the station, as the main concourse will be closed, so Thameslink passengers will need to buy tickets or top up in advance online or at a nearby Oyster ticket outlet. All customers will need to remember to touch their Key card, Contactless or Oyster card on the validators at the temporary entrance / exit to avoid an incomplete journey charge.

Kentish Town Thameslink station is expected to be busier than usual, especially during peak hours, when passengers are advised to allow extra time to reach or leave their platform. Thameslink trains and stations in central London may also be busier, as Tube customers use alternative routes.

Jenny Saunders, Thameslink's Customer Services Director, said: "We're sorry for the inconvenience during this major TfL project, and I'm grateful to passengers for their patience. Please allow an extra few minutes to get to and from your Thameslink platform as the station will be busier than normal, especially in the evening peak, and the temporary access route is narrower. If you usually buy your ticket at Kentish Town, remember to buy it in advance while the ticket machines aren't available. And please don't forget to tap in and out when you're using the temporary entrance."

London Underground's escalators are heavy-duty machines and tend to be in operation in both directions for up to 20 hours a day. They weigh around 40 tonnes each and carry millions of people each year. A typical 15-metre rise escalator has approximately 15,000 moving parts. The two new escalators at Kentish Town Tube station will have more efficient motors and drivers, meaning less electricity will be needed to operate them. When not in use, the escalators will run slower to save energy. This will complement work already done on installing LED lighting in the ticket hall at Kentish Town, contributing to the overall sustainability of the Tube network.

Photo credit: Transport for London