

Metro drivers step on board a full-size replica of their new trains

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Metro drivers are getting to step on-board a full-size replica of their new trains that are due to start arriving next year.

A detailed mock-up of the new Metro cab, which is fully fitted out, has been built to assist with workforce familiarisation – a key part of the design process for the new £362m Metro fleet.

The new Metro trains, which are being made by the Swiss train builder Stadler, are set to enter passenger service in 2023, delivering a step-change in quality and reliability for passengers.

The mock-up boasts the full cab layout, a driver's seat, a dashboard, and the exterior has the iconic yellow livery and destination displays.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages the Tyne and Wear Metro, hopes to put the mock-up on public display once COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

Metro Development Director at Nexus, Neil Blagburn, said: "This gives you real sense of the exciting future

that the new trains are going to bring to the Tyne and Wear Metro.

“The mock-up has been built to a stunning level of quality by Stadler, and it is playing a very important role in getting the cab design right ahead of the real trains arriving in 2022.

“It is exactly to the scale of the new Metro cab and it has the same layout. Train crews can interact with the control panels and provide feedback on the ergonomics and comfort of the cab.

“It is an essential part of our design consultation and I know that the drivers really appreciate the opportunity to experience the new trains and have their final say on the design before trains start rolling off the production line later this year.

“The COVID-19 restrictions mean that we are currently unable to put the mock-up on public display. We hope that once the restrictions have eased off then we will be able to let people have a closer look, as it gives a fascinating snapshot of what the new Metro trains are going to look like.”

Andreas Discher, Stadler project manager, added: “Producing a mock-up some time before trains enter passenger service has many benefits. Not only does it enable drivers to familiarise themselves with the workings of the train, but it gives passengers and other stakeholders a taster of what the new fleet will actually be like. We share the hope that over the next few months, it will be possible for the general public to visit the mock-up and get a glimpse of these fantastic new trains for themselves.”

The Metro cab mock-up was built based on the feedback train crew provided using virtual reality technology last year which has honed the cab design.

This next phase is the final opportunity for train crews to have their input into the design of their new, modern working environment.

Stadler brought the mock-up over from Germany, where it was constructed before being shipped to the UK and assembled on site in a workshop at the Metro depot at Gosforth in Newcastle.

Stadler is building a total of 42 new Metro trains for Nexus, which will be delivered up to 2024. They will be responsible for servicing and maintaining these trains for 35 years, underscoring their commitment to the regional economy.

The new trains, which will be 15 times more reliable and will cut energy consumption by 30%, will have modern features including charging points, air conditioning and a step-change in accessibility.

Among the new features will be an automatic sliding step at every door of the new trains, making travel easier for Metro’s 50,000 wheelchair passengers as well as people with children’s buggies, luggage or bicycles.

Find out more about the new Tyne and Wear Metro fleet at <https://www.nexus.org.uk/newmetrotrains>

Photo credit: Nexus