

Metro major line closure South Gosforth – Airport for £1.6m overhead line renewal work

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A busy section of Metro line in Newcastle is to close for five days for a £1.6 million programme of overhead line renewal work.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, will carry out the major line closure between South Gosforth and Airport, Monday March 20 to Friday 24 March.

The five-day closure will deliver new overhead line along a 3km section, forming part of a £36.4 million wire renewal programme that started in 2011 and is expected to run through to 2025.

A total of 106 kilometres of wire is being replaced in a rolling programme, which is one of the biggest maintenance projects ever undertaken on Metro.

Customers will be provided with a frequent replacement bus, 900, service during the closure, calling at or near all Metro stations on the affected route.

The line will re-open as usual on Saturday 25 March.

Metro Infrastructure Director, Stuart Clarke, said: "This is vital investment in new Metro infrastructure ahead of welcoming our new trains.

"The work to replace such a long stretch of overhead line can only be carried out safely during a major line closure. This will be in place for five full days, March 20 to March 24.

"Customers travelling through the affected area are advised to plan journeys in advance and allow time to make their journeys.

"I understand this causes some disruption, and we always try to make closures as short as possible and to provide a good replacement bus service when there are lines affected, but it is necessary to make sure that the Metro system is fit for the future."

He added: "This is the same wire that was installed 40 years ago when Metro was first opened so it has become worn and more prone to failure.

"If it fails then that becomes disruptive to the services that we provide, so by renewing the wire this is an investment in helping to ensure that the Metro stays as reliable as possible for years to come.

"The work involves the old wires being unclipped and then taken down and then the new wire is put up. We then do a process called registration which involves getting the wire into the precise locations that it needs to be in before we do tests and assurances so that we can allow the trains to start running again."

Overhead lines are used to conduct electricity to trains. Without them the trains simply wouldn't run.

These power lines have been there since the Tyne and Wear Metro was built – which is why this current renewal work is so essential.

During the major line closure the Fawdon level crossing will be closed to both vehicle and pedestrian traffic and diversionary routes will be in place.

A shuttle taxi service will be in service for pedestrians on each day of the closure between to transfer customers to each side of the crossing if they need transport.

Photo credit: Nexus