

Midlands railway network gets set for a massive summer of sport

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Now that there's only 100 days until the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Network Rail explained how it is warming up to carry 1 million extra passengers during a massive summer of sport.

For more than a year, Network Rail staff have been busy preparing for the influx of visitors this summer and getting the railway in the best possible shape ahead of July and August.

To ensure it's in peak fitness for passengers during the games, Network Rail has:

- Unveiled a hi-tech response vehicle to quickly deal with any railway incidents if they happen
- Trained more than 100 volunteer station hosts to welcome visitors to Birmingham New Street
- Cleaned up thousands of unsightly graffiti 'grot spots' across the West Midlands

Network Rail has also revealed its three golden rules for passengers who will travel by train during the Commonwealth Games:

- Plan your journey and check before you travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk
- Allow extra time – services and stations will be busier than usual, especially near key venues
- Remember Network Rail's motto of 'Be safe, be patient, be kind'

Improvements continue at train stations to get them into podium position before passengers arrive.

At Leamington Spa, the station forecourt and underpass are being transformed to provide a cleaner, brighter welcome for spectators the Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls.

Meanwhile, work to install lifts at Smethwick Galton Bridge has been sped up to make sure that they will be working for visitors to the Sandwell Aquatics Centre during the Games.

Elsewhere, Coventry station's major makeover with new bus interchange will make it much easier for passengers using the station throughout the Games and beyond.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said: "We're pulling out all the stops to get ready for the million extra journeys we're expecting while the Commonwealth Games are taking place, so that passengers can get to the Games safely and reliably.

"It's great to be able to welcome so many extra passengers to the station and we'll have extra staff and volunteers on hand to make sure visitors to the Games get off to a winning start."

Malcolm Holmes, executive director West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) and director of rail, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), said: "With more than a million spectators expected for the Games, we need to make it as easy as possible for people to leave the car at home and go by public transport. This will help us manage congestion and emissions and keep the region moving during what will be a very busy time.

"The rail network will play a key role in getting spectators and visitors to their venues and our new station at Perry Barr along with investments into Coventry and University stations will leave a lasting legacy for passengers.

"But planning for such a major sporting event is always a challenge and it has seen a tremendous collaborative effort across the rail industry with WMRE, Network Rail and all train operators working together through the Grand Railway Collaboration."

The million extra passengers means that all rail passengers can expect a busier rail network while the while the Games are taking place – from Thursday 28 July until Monday 8 August.

For events in the West Midlands, tickets even include access to public transport in the local area on the day of the event, with more details to be released.

Passengers should check www.nationalrail.co.uk for the latest journey information ahead of and during the Commonwealth Games.