

New signalling control system for Christmas to boost reliability across North East

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Passengers in the North East will soon benefit from a more modern, reliable railway as Network Rail teams are upgrading the signalling control system over Christmas.

Between the early hours of Saturday 25 December and before the first train on Monday 27 December, engineers will be updating the signalling system in a Tyneside control centre which covers Newcastle, Gateshead, Darlington and Sunderland.

Signalling is a complex traffic light system for the railway which makes sure trains run safely and reliably. Signals tell train drivers when to proceed, to make sure services are a safe distance apart.

As well as modernising the railway, the upgrade will boost reliability for passengers, help to reduce delays and make sure the equipment can be maintained for years to come.

A vital part of this project involves turning the older signalling system off – to switch to the more modern version – which can only take place safely when no trains are running.

Carrying out these improvements on Christmas Day and Boxing Day means the work does not impact train services. It also avoids disruption for passengers at busier times.

Lewis Hannibal, Project Manager for Network Rail, said: “This upgrade is much more complex than just switching from one signalling control system to the other – and Christmas is the perfect time to carry out this work without impacting passengers.

“We need to turn the old system off, install new equipment and then carry out vital work to test it, which can only be done safely when there are no trains in the area.

“I’m looking forward to working on this project with my team over Christmas. It will bring more reliable journeys for passengers travelling on the East Coast Main Line and across the North East for years to come.”

Aerial footage of Tyneside signalling control centre:

Photo and video credit: Network Rail