

Rail and road workers join forces against motorway graffiti blight

October 4, 2021



Illegal graffiti vandals are being dealt a double blow as Network Rail and National Highways join forces to fight the blight on rail and road networks.

Graffiti is an unsightly problem on both railway and motorway structures in the North West.

While illegal trespassers put themselves in great danger to deface public property, it also costs millions of pounds of taxpayers' money each year to remove often offensive and ugly graffiti from motorway bridges.

Now in a bid to ensure more Government cash can be spent improving road and rail journeys – National Highways and Network Rail are working together to bring graffiti clearance costs down.

The new partnership will instead see highways maintenance teams remove railway bridge graffiti from the carriageway up – instead of rail workers cleaning it from the track down.

This will happen during planned National Highways closures while it maintains the region's motorways – reducing the need to close the railway above at the same time.

Network Rail will provide materials and paints so National Highways contractors can carry out the clean-up work.

Chris Pye, Network Rail's infrastructure director for the North West, said: "It's not right that millions of pounds of taxpayers' money is being spent cleaning up illegal graffiti and it's an unnecessary cost which frustrates both Network Rail and National Highways each year.

"We hope that in pooling our resources we will make motorway journeys for drivers more pleasant and reduce disruption for rail passengers through railway closures. It will also send out a strong message to those who want to deface our property that it won't be tolerated on either the rail or road networks and we will look to prosecute anyone committing this dangerous and careless crime."

Paul Elliott, National Highways' maintenance service manager for the North West, said: "Our partnership with Network Rail in the North West is just one of the ways we're tackling the blight of graffiti on the major A road and motorway network across the region. Graffiti is unsightly, a distraction to drivers and costly to get rid of – up to £10,000 at a time. We'd rather use that money to improve our roads instead of cleaning up graffiti, often having to close lanes and carriageways in the process."

Graffiti is a blight on the railway and Network Rail spends £3.5m every year cleaning offensive material.

The new partnership supports Transport Secretary Grant Shapps' commitment to get tough on graffiti on transport networks.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps MP, said: "The blight of graffiti on our railways must be tackled, and I am delighted to see that Network Rail and National Highways are working together to deal with this problem.

"Removing graffiti will improve the appearance of our railway and roads, making journeys more pleasant for everybody."

It is extremely dangerous for those trespassing onto tracks to commit acts of vandalism, as well as being a criminal offence.

Trespassing on the railway is a crime – punishable by fine of up to £1,000.

Incidents of graffiti can be reported to Network Rail's 24-hour national helpline on 03457 11 41 41.

Photo credit: Network Rail