

Rare track access at Birmingham New Street provides regional railway reliability boost

April 9, 2024



A rare opportunity to carry out inspections and maintenance at Birmingham New Street while there were no trains running has meant passengers will have more reliable journeys in future.

While industrial action regrettably meant there were no trains through the station last Friday (5 April), **Network Rail's** engineers utilised the time and train-free access to carry out inspections, repairs and maintenance.

Overhead power lines, which keep electric trains on the move, were inspected and assessed ahead of re-tensioning work later this month. With some of the overhead wires dating back to the mid-1960s it's vital to maintain the equipment in advance of summer to help prevent sagging during spells of hot weather.

Survey work will continue at the station over the coming weeks with a later start to services on Sunday 21 and Sunday 28 April to accommodate overnight work to carry out repairs. Passengers can check the latest travel information at www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Other work carried out included track inspections and renewals, removing overgrown plants and vegetation from the side of the tracks on the approach to the station to improve the environment and appearance for passengers and the public.

Denise Wetton, route director for Network Rail Central, said: "It's very rare that we get the opportunity to access the tracks at Birmingham New Street station in this way so we took the opportunity to carry out this extra work. It is frustrating for everyone that trains weren't able to run because of industrial action but this work will help to provide more reliable services through Birmingham New Street in future.

"Wider improvements over Easter and work on the Cross City line to help introduce new trains means passengers and freight across the West Midlands and beyond will benefit from a better, more reliable railway. I thank passengers for their patience while these essential upgrades took place."

The Cross City line was closed between Birmingham and Lichfield between 2 and 5 April to allow Birmingham City Council to safely carry out strengthening and refurbishment of the sections of the A38(M) Tame Valley Viaduct which crosses the railway lines near Spaghetti Junction.

During the closure, Network Rail inspected the overhead power lines, tested and replaced signalling and points cables between Wylde Green and Shenstone stations, and moved a railway signal at Lichfield Trent Valley in preparation for West Midlands Railways' new trains on the Cross City line.

Passengers can check www.nationalrail.co.uk for the latest travel information.