

Services to stop at South Kensington Station from next week

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The work to replace five escalators serving the Piccadilly line at South Kensington is nearly finished, with the station ready for services next week.

Trains will stop at the station again from 1 June.

The complex escalator replacement work started on 27 February 2021 and has seen all five Piccadilly line escalators at South Kensington station replaced. The escalators, which were installed in 1973 and were at the end of their lifespan, had become unreliable and were the highest priority escalators for replacement on the Tube network.

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- **New Tube map published including Elizabeth line**
- **Jubilee Night Tube services to return**

South Kensington station remained open for Circle and District line customers for the duration of the works.

The essential work means that the station, which prior to the pandemic saw almost 34 million customer journeys each year and provides an important gateway to the world-famous cultural attractions in the area, will have five new, high-performing escalators for decades to come. As well as being more energy efficient than their predecessors, the new escalators are also more reliable and less prone to failures, meaning a better experience for Londoners and visitors using the station.

Esther Sharples, TfL's Director of Asset Performance and Capital Delivery, said: "I'd like to thank our customers for their patience while Piccadilly line services have been non-stopping at South Kensington. Replacing the nearly 50-year-old escalators with new, high-performing machines will mean more reliable journeys for Piccadilly line customers for decades to come, whether they are using the station as a local resident, for work or to access the area's world-famous cultural attractions. I'm delighted that the Piccadilly line will serve South Kensington again ahead of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, which will bring more visitors to the area as they seek to enjoy all that this vibrant area of London has to offer."

Before the Piccadilly line starts serving South Kensington station again on 1 June, TfL has taken the opportunity to deep clean the Piccadilly line platforms as well as all stairs and corridors leading to them, re-painted the arcade stairways, and replaced the tiles at the top and bottom of the new escalators. In addition, the customer areas between the escalators have been re-surfaced.

The escalator replacement work at South Kensington took 15 months to complete due to the complexity of working with such historic assets, the access restrictions from the street through the arcade and station buildings (all of which are listed) and the extensive works that needed to be completed prior to the escalators being delivered and installed.

Emily Candler, Executive Director of Exhibition Road Cultural Group, said: "I am delighted that South Kensington will have a full service again making it easier for people to come to all the exciting events and activities here. The Great Exhibition Road Festival returns on 18-19 June and we're gearing up for a fantastic summer with free activities for all ages, great exhibitions, and unforgettable performances. The station being fully open for the first time since the pandemic will make a huge difference to visitors, staff, students and residents and help us to welcome people back to London's original cultural district."

London Underground's escalators are heavy-duty machines and tend to be in operation in both directions for up to 20 hours a day. They weigh around 40 tonnes each and carry millions of people each year. A typical 15-metre rise escalator has approximately 15,000 moving components. Thirty-four of the new high-performing escalators of the same type that have been installed at South Kensington Tube station are already in operation at London Underground stations. Sixty-four of these high-performing escalators have also been installed on the Elizabeth line, which launched earlier this week. Those travelling to South Kensington will also be able to visit a range of new tenants on the TfL retail estate, which extends out of the station and along Pelham Street, Thurloe Street and the South Kensington Arcade. The new retailers, who have opened during these vital works, are bringing new, high-quality food and beverage options to one of London's most popular visitor destinations. TfL's investment in its retail estate is testament to its commitment to encouraging people back into London to enjoy all the capital has to offer.