

# Trial Operations underway ahead of Elizabeth line opening next year

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Delivery of the Elizabeth line has reached its next significant milestone with the Trial Operations stage now underway. This marks the final phase of the programme before the Elizabeth line opens for passenger services between Paddington and Abbey Wood in the first half of 2022.

Trial Operations involves operational exercises to ensure the safety and reliability of the railway for public use and to fully test the timetables. More than 150 scenarios will be carried out over the coming months to ensure the readiness of the railway for passenger service. These include exercises to make sure that all systems and procedures work effectively and staff can respond to any incidents, including customers being unwell or signal failures.

The start of Trial Operations is the latest milestone in turning the project into a live railway, which has been the focus since the project's governance was transferred to TfL in October 2020. Prior to October 2020 the Crossrail Board led the project with neither the DfT nor TfL being in control of the governance or construction of the line.

In the new year, a series of more complex exercises will include evacuations of trains and stations using

thousands of staff and volunteers. The final step will see a period of 'shadow running', operating timetabled services ahead of the Elizabeth line opening.

It will take several months to complete this final complicated phase. The Elizabeth line is an immensely complex railway and Trial Operations will continue until it is clear that it can operate at the highest levels of safety and reliability before the start of passenger services. Only then will a specific opening date for the railway be announced. Trial Operations will also see a number of organisations, including London Underground and Transport for London, MTR Elizabeth line, Network Rail and the emergency services all working together to respond to the trial scenarios.

Further software adjustments to the train and signalling and tunnel ventilation system will take place in December and over the Christmas period.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Reaching the start of Trial Operations is a significant milestone in the delivery of the Elizabeth line, and it's really exciting to be moving into this phase. The next few months are crucial to making sure the railway can open safely next year, and everyone is working incredibly hard to reach that goal. The Elizabeth line will help transform travel in London and the South East, dramatically improving transport links, supporting regeneration and boosting our economic recovery."

Andy Byford, Transport for London's Commissioner, said: "Everyone is working hard to make sure we can open the Elizabeth line safely and reliably in the first half of 2022."

"The project continues to have my full, personal attention, and with huge progress made to date, it is great to now enter this final stretch. The Trial Operations phase will see staff really get to grips with all aspects of this complex and transformational railway to ensure we are ready to welcome customers next year."

Minister Baroness Vere said: "I'm pleased that a key milestone has been achieved with the start of Trial Operations - a crucial, final step to ensure the highest standards of performance and safety of the railway, ahead of the Elizabeth line opening to passengers next year."

Mark Wild, Crossrail Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted to have reached the next key stage in delivery of the Elizabeth line with the start of Trial Operations. It will take several months to complete this final phase. This is an immensely complex railway and we must be able to demonstrate the highest levels of reliability. Everyone is working hard to deliver the Elizabeth line as soon as practically possible and we remain on track to commence passenger services in the first half of 2022."

The Elizabeth line will help transform life and travel in London and the South East by dramatically improving transport links, cutting journey times, providing additional capacity and transforming accessibility with spacious new stations and walk-through trains. The new railway will provide new journey options and support wider regeneration, creating jobs, business opportunities and providing a huge economic boost. It will also connect London's major employment centres and increase central London rail capacity by 10 per cent.

*Photo credit: Transport for London*