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‘Stay off the railway’ warning as Walsall to Rugeley line is electrified

The overhead power lines on the railway between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley are now live as work continues to introduce electric trains on the route.

Network Rail is electrifying the railway as part of its Railway Upgrade Plan to provide passengers with better, more reliable journeys.

Working with West Midlands Railway, electric trains will be introduced on the route from May 2019.

Now the lines have been switched on, residents in the area are being reminded to never trespass on the tracks as the overhead power lines – which carry 25,000v of electricity – pose an even greater risk to life and limb now they are live.

Network Rail has been raising awareness of railway safety among young people by visiting schools in the West Midlands and Staffordshire area as part of the upgrade and electrification of the railway.

During the visits, primary and secondary school age children learn about the dangers of trespassing on the railway and the new threat of the overhead line equipment and the devastating consequences of getting too close or coming into contact with them.

Lisa Lewis, community safety manager at Network Rail, said: “Safety is our priority and we’ve already delivered our presentation to more than 40,000 young people in schools and at community events. The sessions are doing a fantastic job at highlighting the very real dangers of playing and trespassing on the railway.

“The sessions focus on safety and young people learn more about the overhead line equipment which is used to power trains. Once installed, electrified wires are always switched on – even when there are no trains passing. They carry 25,000 volts of electricity, which can be fatal. Our message is simple – never trespass on the railway for any reason.”

Fay Easton, head of community and stakeholder engagement at West Midlands Railway, said: “Electrifying the route means we will be able to run bigger, more modern trains to new destinations, including London, direct from the Chase Line next year . This is part of a £1 billion improvement plan for passengers in the West Midlands and across our network.”

For more information railway safety visit
www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/.

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For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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