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Birmingham stations ready to welcome Christmas market visitors

As Birmingham's famous Christmas market opens for another year, the region's railway is ready to help get passengers safely to and from festivities and celebrations.

Birmingham New Street, along with Birmingham Moor Street and Birmingham Snow Hill, plays a vital role in getting people to and from the Christmas market and bars, shops and restaurants in the city centre.

Birmingham's Frankfurt Christmas Market is a firm favourite in the city's annual calendar of events and attracts millions of people every year. In 2023,

weekends in the run up to Christmas regularly saw over 500,000 passengers using Birmingham New Street alone.

Along with Birmingham City Council, British Transport Police and train operating companies, Birmingham New Street's staff have planned for the market for months with clear plans in place to help passengers and safely manage large crowds.

Following last year's successful trial between Network Rail and Birmingham City Council, a dedicated anti-social behaviour team will be in place in the station, together with increased support from British Transport Police and St John Ambulance volunteers, to help keep passengers safe as they make their journeys.

Ahead of the market opening, Birmingham City Council's cabinet member for environment and transport, councillor Majid Mahmood, and deputy leader of Birmingham City Council, Sharon Thompson, visited the station this week to see first-hand how Birmingham New Street is gearing up for the Christmas markets.

Councillor Majid Mahmood, cabinet member for transport and environment, said: "It was great to see the work being done by Network Rail to keep passengers safe, especially when popular events are taking place.

"We always work closely with our partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime on public transport and in the wider city and look forward to continuing the work with colleagues at Network Rail."

Patrick Power, head of stations and passenger experience for Network Rail's Central route, said "It's great to have Birmingham City Council's support and understanding heading into the Christmas season. Having extra support from the anti-social behaviour team during the busiest time of year means people can enjoy the festivities and get to where they need to be safely.

"While we're ready to welcome everyone to the station, I'd please ask passengers to do their bit by following our three golden rules to make their journeys as smooth and pleasant as possible.

"There will be extra staff in place across the station to provide advice and

information and help keep passengers safe throughout the festive season.”

The golden rules to follow to help have the smoothest journeys during the Christmas market are:

- Plan your journey and check before you travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk
- Know your last few trains and don't rely on the last service to get home – it will be extremely busy
- Respect staff and other travellers during the season of goodwill

Train operating companies will also be strengthening some services across the festive period to help keep the predicted extra passengers on the move.

Lucy Wootton, head of Grand Railway Collaboration, said: “This is a great time of year for the city and the railway plays a key role in making sure everyone enjoys the festivities and everything that Birmingham has to offer.

“With Network Rail prepared for extra passengers and train operating companies strengthening services, the railway is ready to help get everyone in and out of the city smoothly and safely.

“Make sure you plan ahead, allow plenty of time for your journey and please be patient and kind to your fellow passengers and train crew.”

While the Christmas markets and attractions are a great addition to the city, it can mean trains and platforms are much busier at the station. As with previous years, queuing systems may be used at exceptionally busy times to safely allow people to board their trains home.

To plan journeys in advance and find out train times home passengers should check www.nationalrail.co.uk.

For more information on the Frankfurt Christmas market and other events happening across the city visit www.christmasinbirmingham.com

For further information on this release, 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 Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

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

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Press Contact

press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

03300 955150