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## Birmingham railway stations to provide free sanitary products

Free sanitary products are being made available at all three of Birmingham's major railway stations for the first time under a new trial scheme.

Last year Birmingham New Street station installed a vending machine to provide free sanitary pads and tampons for passengers, and now the same will be offered at both Birmingham Snow Hill and Birmingham Moor Street stations.

The products being made available are sustainable, utilising responsibly-sourced bamboo and chemical-free materials free from toxins, bleach and

other harmful materials.

The initiative has been funded by Network Rail in partnership with the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration, which brings together train operators from across the region.

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Lucy Wootton, head of the Grand Railway Collaboration, said: “I’m proud that the Grand Railway Collaboration has brought together our three rail hubs to improve what we can offer to passengers.

“Ensuring free access to sanitary products for people out and about on the rail network is the right thing to do, so it’s great to be able to play a part in the fight against period poverty so close to International Women’s Day 2023.”

Denise Wetton, Central route director for Network Rail, operator of Birmingham New Street, said: “I’m pleased to work with our fellow station operators in this cross-industry effort to improve journeys for people in need of sanitary items while using Birmingham New Street station.

“We hope that making sanitary items free and convenient for passengers in all city centre stations will mean those who need them can travel in confidence.”

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway, operator of Birmingham Snow Hill, said: “I am sure this initiative will benefit

passengers using Snow Hill and the other major stations in Birmingham city centre.

“Period poverty should not be a barrier to using the rail network and we are proud to work with the Grand Railway Collaboration and Network Rail to play our part in tackling the issue.”

Eleni Jordan, commercial and customer strategy director for Chiltern Railways, operator of Birmingham Moor Street, said: “We are proud to be installing sanitary product dispensers at Birmingham Moor Street station in collaboration with our partners in Network Rail and the Grand Railway Collaboration. We hope that free, easy access to these products make our station a more comfortable and convenient location for customers who need them.

“Nobody should be held back from travelling because of period poverty. We are determined to remove this barrier and the introduction of free period products is a step in the right direction in ensuring that the region’s rail network is accessible to all.”

Period poverty – a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints – is an issue that affects women, girls and people who menstruate across the globe.

Studies have shown that around 10% of girls aged 14 to 21 in the UK are unable to afford sanitary items, with the average annual cost of purchasing tampons and pads totalling approximately £128, or £10 a month.

One in seven female students have had to rely upon their friends to provide them with the products they need owing to affordability issues.

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## **About West Midlands Trains**

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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](https://www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

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