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Black Friday shoppers advised to plan ahead this weekend

As shoppers head out for Black Friday bargains, passengers travelling by train are advised to plan ahead allow extra time for their journeys.

On Black Friday last year, more than 242,000 people used Birmingham New Street station - 70,000 more than a usual Friday. Birmingham Snow Hill and stations across the West Midlands are also expected to see large numbers of people over the next few days.

This weekend also sees Aston Villa v Birmingham City taking place at midday

on Sunday (25 November), and the German market continuing.

Additional staff will be on hand at stations to help people get where they need to go.

West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway are advising customers to prepare for trains and stations to be busier than usual, by allowing plenty of time and planning their journey options before heading out.

Andy Camp, commercial director for the two train operators, said: “Travelling by train is a great way to get to and from the city centre during the festive season. Trains and stations are expected to be particularly busy this weekend, so there may be queuing systems in place at Birmingham Snow Hill and other stations. These will help keep people moving safely through stations and onto trains.

“We advise anyone travelling to plan their journey options, allow some extra time and to make sure that they know when their last train home is departing – as we don’t want anyone to get left behind.”

Patrick Power, Network Rail’s station manager at Birmingham New Street, said: “The Christmas market, Black Friday and festive attractions are great for Birmingham but marks the busiest time of the year for Birmingham New Street station, putting significant pressure on staff to safely manage much higher passenger numbers and sudden surges of people trying to catch their train.

Our advice to passengers is allow extra time to make your train, don’t rely on your last service and check before you travel. There will be extra staff in place across the station to provide advice and information and help keep passengers safe.”

Passengers are also being urged to think ahead and plan their journeys if they will be using the rail network over Christmas.

As part of its Railway Upgrade Plan, Network Rail will be carrying out improvement work across Britain between 24 December and 2 January which may affect journeys.

Passengers can plan their Christmas travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk/christmas

For specific West Midlands Railway or London Northwestern Railway information follow [@westmidrailway](https://twitter.com/westmidrailway) or [@lmrailway](https://twitter.com/lmrailway)

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About West Midlands Trains

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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Press Contact

press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

0330 095 5626