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New Street's new way to help passengers during Christmas markets

More support teams to help keep rail passengers and revellers safe at Birmingham New Street station are being introduced during this year's Frankfurt Christmas markets.

Since the summer, St John's Ambulance volunteers and a dedicated anti-social behaviour team have been based in the station during busy weekend nights on a trial basis.

It's helped tackle anti-social behaviour, such as drunken behaviour and begging, which otherwise would've tied up British Transport Police resources,

and get speedier first aid for anyone needing medical treatment in Britain's busiest station outside of London.

Since the start of the trial until the beginning of October, the anti-social behaviour team dealt with more than 1,000 incidents.

The initial success means both trials are being extended into November and December to support Network Rail station staff and British Transport Police during the busiest periods of the Christmas markets which started on Thursday 2 November.

Once again passengers using Birmingham New Street station are being urged to 'think in threes' in the run up to Christmas.

Network Rail is advising rail travellers to follow these three tips for the smoothest journey possible.

- Plan your journey and check before you travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk
- Take an earlier train home – later services will be extremely busy
- Respect staff and other travellers during the season of goodwill

Craig Stenning, Birmingham New Street station manager, said: "All we want is for people to enjoy the Christmas season and get to where they need to be safely, so it's great we have extra support from the anti-social behaviour team and St John's Ambulance during the busiest time of year for our hardworking teams at New Street.

"While we're doing our bit, I'd please ask passengers to do theirs, and follow 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."

Millions of people are expected to visit Birmingham to see the stalls and attractions until 24 December.

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

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

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- **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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