

16 days of essential track upgrades on the Midland Main Line

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East Midlands passengers are being urged to plan ahead, as reliability-boosting track renewal work in two tunnels means significant changes to services on the Midland Main Line and Derwent Valley line, from Saturday 27 May to Monday 11 June.

This essential work in both Clay Cross tunnel and Milford tunnel will result in a reduced service between Sheffield and London, leading to extended journey times for passengers. Buses will replace trains between Derby and Matlock.

Passengers are also reminded that on the days of 31 May and 3 June, ASLEF union will be striking, meaning that there will be no EMR or CrossCountry services running on these days.

Designed by George Stephenson, the 183-year-old Clay Cross tunnel is just over a mile long and forms part of this core route through the East Midlands, connecting Sheffield with London. Engineers will deliver a package of improvements to the historic tunnel, including upgrading drainage and replacing sleepers (the supports for the rails) and ballast (the stones used for drainage and support of the track). Special coated rails will be installed under the ten tunnel shafts to make them more resilient during poor weather

conditions.

Milford tunnel will also benefit from a complete track upgrade, which includes replacing over a mile of ballast, split equally between both tracks.

Between both schemes, 52 engineering trains will be used and 16,107 tonnes of ballast will be installed. Any poor-quality ballast which is excavated from the tracks, otherwise known as 'spoil', will be sent to Network Rail's [Whitemoor recycling facility](#) in Cambridgeshire where it will be recycled and used for roads and building sites.

Gary Walsh, route director for Network Rail in the East Midlands, said: "This important scheme is essential to maintaining a safe, reliable and smooth service for passengers and freight users through the tunnels.

"I'd like to thank passengers for their patience whilst we complete this essential engineering work and urge anyone who is planning to travel to check National Rail Enquiries or their train operator's website before setting off."

Neil Grabham, customer services Director for EMR, said: "We are asking any customers planning to travel over the Summer half term, between 27 May and 11 June, to plan ahead and allow plenty of time to complete their journeys.

"There will be fewer Intercity services to Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield, and journey times will be extended.

"Rail replacement buses will be in place on the Derwent Valley Line, between Derby and Matlock, with the exception of the ASLEF Strike days on 31 May and 3 June, where there will be no services.

"We would like to thank our customers for their patience whilst Network Rail upgrade the tracks at both Clay Cross and Milford tunnels."

John Robson, Regional Director in the East Midlands and East Anglia for CrossCountry, said: "We recognise the impact that the upcoming engineering works will have on our passengers. In response, we will have a comprehensive rail replacement service in place between Derby and Chesterfield throughout the duration of the works, except on ASLEF strike days on 31 May and 3 June.

"We advise our customers to plan ahead, allow extra time for their journeys, and check our website for updates on the strike days. We appreciate our passengers' patience and cooperation while this important work takes place."

Photo credit: Network Rail