

£31m Easter upgrades on railway between London and Scotland

March 31, 2021



Network Rail is keeping people on the move this Easter (2-5 April) while carrying out £31m of upgrades to improve future passenger and freight journeys between London and Scotland.

Government is advising people to minimise travel over the Easter bank holiday due to COVID-19. But for those who do need to use it, the railway is open.

Where possible Network Rail has moved planned work to minimise disruption for passengers needing to travel:

- Upgrades at Bletchley over Easter, affecting London to Birmingham journeys, will finish earlier on Easter Sunday to allow more trains to run.
- Essential work in North London and Northamptonshire has been brought forward so it is completed before Easter.

Passengers are urged to check www.nationalrail.co.uk before travelling so they know in advance whether their journeys will be affected by the upgrade work on the West Coast main line, Chiltern main line and

some rail routes in the Midlands and the North West.

Tim Shoveller, managing director for Network Rail's North West & Central region, said: "Our work will make the West Coast main line more reliable for our passengers and pave the way for HS2, which will bring much-needed extra railway capacity.

"There is no question such large scale improvements will mean changes for passengers, but we're working with the industry to minimise disruption to passengers as much as possible.

"Our advice to people is to please check before you travel so none of this comes as a surprise while we carry out this vital work."

Two of the major projects taking place this Easter are:

- A £12.3m investment to build two new underpasses beneath the Chiltern main line in Bicester.
- A £3.5m project to upgrade bridges which carry tracks at Warrington Bank Quay station.

Patrick Cawley, director of On Network Works for HS2 Ltd and Network Rail, said: "Investing in HS2 will create additional rail capacity across the existing UK network, providing more local, regional and intercity services. Although some disruption to the current rail service is unavoidable in the short term, in preparation for this we have completed other service upgrades to minimise impact, such as increasing platform lengths at busy stations on the West Coast main line."

David Hunter, senior route freight manager for Network Rail, said: "On the West Coast main line alone we move over one million tonnes of critical goods every week. This not only means us keeping supermarket shelves stocked, delivering vital medical equipment and keeping power stations going, it also crucially helps to reduce UK carbon emissions. We continue to work with our freight colleagues to run more and longer freight trains so we can transport more goods and further reduce our carbon footprint. The work being delivered on the West Coast main line this spring and summer will help make this a reality."

Passengers can find out more travel information at www.nationalrail.co.uk/westcoast

Travel information over Easter

There are no trains to/from Euston on the morning of Easter Sunday. Services will resume after midday.

There will also be reduced services and bus replacements on the Chiltern route between London Marylebone and Birmingham and across the North West over Easter weekend.

Stations and trains between Euston and Scotland may be busier, services will change, journeys may take longer and, in some instances, buses will replace trains.

Passengers are urged to check www.nationalrail.co.uk or with their train operator before they travel.

The Easter upgrades form part of a major programme of upgrades between London Euston and Scotland being delivered this spring and summer.

Euston preparation work for HS2

Preparatory work on the approach lines at Euston to enable HS2 will be carried out over a number of weekends, resulting in platform and service alterations, including some being reduced between April and August.

For Euston to be the London terminus for HS2 – two of the approach lines to the station, will be closed for a combined total of 12 weeks this spring/summer. This will be split into two separate six-week closures:

- 02 April to 17 May 2021
- 17 July to 31 August 2021

Most services into and out of Euston will run during the work on the approach lines to prepare the way for high speed rails.

However, over the early May bank holiday weekend, no trains will run in or out of London Euston station, affecting journeys south of Milton Keynes.

As well as being one of the biggest investments in Euston for decades, this is also one of the most complex infrastructure changes ever to take place at the station.

Other railway improvement work in March

Between 20–27 March track and drainage improvements are being delivered in the Willesden area between London Euston and Wembley.

Most train services will continue running while this work takes place, but there will be some timetable and platform alterations.

Further upgrades look ahead for 2021

Other essential rail upgrades are planned:

- 1-3 May (Early May bank holiday)
- 29 -31 (Late May bank holiday)
- 28-30 August (Summer bank holiday)

The work to improve future journeys for passengers and freight includes:

- Major track renewals between Euston – Milton Keynes, Rugby – Birmingham, Crewe – Wigan, Preston – Penrith
- Signalling replacement in Greater Manchester, Preston and Warrington
- Trackside drainage work between Wigan and Crewe
- Construction of a new bridge and underpass in Bicester
- Further Bletchley flyover work as part of the East-West Rail project

The rail industry has worked closely to combine the Euston, West Coast main line, Chiltern main line, Midlands and North West railway upgrades as much as possible to minimise disruption to passengers.

People have been reminded about the railway improvements now so they can make informed choices about travelling over spring/summer.

West Coast main line train operators and Network Rail have worked together to develop a dedicated timetable to support customers during this period, which will also reflect potential and ongoing changes to travel demand due to COVID-19.

Photo credit: Network Rail