

## 18/3 – Coronavirus: Some train services cancelled because of the virus

March 18, 2020



South Western Railway says it is having to cancel a small number of trains at very short notice as more staff are having to stay at home unwell.

It is as the number of people in the UK with coronavirus continues to rise. There is a warning from several train operating companies that services might be reduced after a drop in passenger numbers as people are being urged to only travel if necessary.

Anyone showing symptoms of coronavirus – a high temperature, or a new, continuous cough, is being told to stay at home.

A message from South Western Railway said: “Unfortunately we’re having to cancel a small number of trains at very short notice as more of our staff are having to stay at home unwell. We’re sorry for any inconvenience this causes and hope you understand.”

Nexus has announced that Metro services will operate to a reduced timetable as part of measures to reflect the spread of coronavirus.

All additional peak hour services between Pelaw and Monkseaton or South Gosforth will be cancelled. In addition, there may be additional core train services not operating to timetable due to driver resource availability.

In total, just over 50 of around 450 Metro services each day will cease to run until further notice. It comes as the number of people using Metro has fallen by 4.5% since the start of March.

Huw Lewis, Customer Service Director at Nexus, said: “We are withdrawing Metro’s additional peak services so that passengers can be sure when trains will run, rather than face sudden cancellations should we see a reduction in available staff.

“Fewer people are using Metro now following public health advice, and the move by universities in the region to online teaching. There will be enough Metro trains to meet demand, although passengers may have to wait a few minutes longer.

“Metro has an essential role to play getting people to work, not least in the health sector, so this action is about making sure we provide a sustainable, convenient service people can plan around.

“Passengers can remain confident about travelling by Metro when they need to make a journey. We have taken on extra people and increased cleaning of trains and stations.”

Covid-19 is also impacting the heritage railways. Among those suffering is Severn Valley Railway, which has postponed train services for the rest of March and throughout April.

A statement on the website said: “This is going to be a challenging period for all heritage railways as we rely on footfall to keep us running. Your understanding, patience and co-operation is appreciated and we thank you all in advance for your ongoing support.”

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