

Cross City line flood protection work to bring more reliable rail journeys

April 19, 2023



Railway improvements on the Cross City line south will bring faster and more reliable journeys for passengers thanks to upcoming work to prevent heavy rainfall flooding tracks and causing delays.

Network Rail is carrying out major drainage upgrades between Barnt Green and Longbridge over three weekends on:

- Saturday 6 and Sunday 7
- Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 and,
- Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 May.

Passengers are being advised to plan their journeys ahead of the essential railway improvements by visiting www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Footage released shows trackside drainage overflowing onto railway lines in January this year after a period of very wet weather.

When this happens trains have to slow down and if rails are completely submerged underwater the railway has to close.

The weekend improvement work will reduce the risk of flooding and prevent speed restrictions on the busy route between Birmingham and Cheltenham Spa.

For the essential work to take place, some sections of the Cross City line between Birmingham and Redditch/Bromsgrove will need to close – including over the weekend of the King's Coronation.

To keep passengers on the move rail replacement buses will be in operation throughout the railway improvements*.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said: "These drainage improvements to the Cross City line will mean better, smoother and more reliable journeys for passengers and freight in future.

"However, upgrading drainage systems like this means we have no choice but to close sections of railway to get to the drains beneath the tracks. I'd urge anyone wanting to travel at weekends in May – in particular over the weekend of the King's Coronation – to please check National Rail Enquiries to plan their journeys. I'd also like to thank passengers in advance for their patience."

Passengers are advised that journeys will take longer and to check www.nationalrail.co.uk in advance so they know exactly what to expect during the essential work.

Nick Chadwick, CrossCountry's regional managing director for West Midlands & North West, said: "It's important that Network Rail can carry out these vital drainage improvements so that we can continue to deliver comfortable and reliable journeys for our passengers travelling between Birmingham and Cheltenham and beyond.

"I'd advise anybody planning to travel with us over these weekends in May to plan their journey and leave extra time to get to their destination, and I want to thank customers in advance for their patience while this work takes place."

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director at West Midlands Railway, said: "The track upgrades by Network Rail will reduce flooding risks and ensure more reliable journeys for our passengers travelling on the Cross City line.

"I advise passengers to check their journeys and plan ahead as services travelling south on the Cross City line will be affected for three weekends in May."

For more information on how Network Rail is making the railway more resilient to adverse weather, visit: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/sustainability/climate-change/climate-change-adaptation/>

*Trains between Birmingham New Street and Bromsgrove / Redditch will run as far as Longbridge. A rail replacement bus service will operate between Longbridge and Bromsgrove / Droitwich Spa and between Longbridge and Redditch.

Services between Birmingham New Street and Worcester Shrub Hill / Great Malvern / Hereford will start and finish at Birmingham Snow Hill – instead of Birmingham New Street – and will not call at University or Bromsgrove.

There will also be no CrossCountry services between Cheltenham Spa and Birmingham New Street across the three weekends of work.

Photo credit: Network Rail