

Direct weekday services resume on West Coast mainline

April 24, 2023



Direct weekday services between Glasgow and Carlisle resumed on Monday (April 24) following completion of the latest phase of the £164 million project to upgrade Carstairs junction on the West Coast mainline (WCML).

As part of the Scottish Government-funded investment, engineers have been working to simplify and upgrade the track layout – clearing bottlenecks and making the junction more reliable.

Overhead power infrastructure and signalling systems have also been replaced or renewed during the project.

Since the closure of the line at the start of March, engineers have:

- installed 7km of track and laid more than 10,000 new sleepers.
- Installed 135 new overhead line structures and renewed 22km of wiring
- Run out 75km of new signalling cables.

During the final phase of the modernisation works, which will take place between now and early June, the WCML section of the junction will continue to close on weekends.

With more weekday services on the key cross-border route restored, work now focusses on further signalling and overhead wire renewals on sections of track towards Glasgow and Edinburgh and on work to remodel Carstairs station's platforms ahead of it reopening on Tuesday, May 30 – when ScotRail services will resume.

The closure of Carstairs junction affects cross-border train operators including Avanti West Coast, Caledonian Sleeper, CrossCountry and TransPennine Express, who have been operating via diversionary routes or offering alternative journey options during these vital improvements.

Jim McCleary, Network Rail programme manager for the Carstairs junction remodelling project, said: “The reintroduction of direct services between Glasgow and Carlisle is fantastic news for passengers.

“Carstairs junction was coming to the end of its operational lifespan and this crucial upgrade work will improve the reliability of this strategically important infrastructure – providing improved journeys for passengers and more capacity for freight.

“The project is progressing well and we look forward to completing our work and fully reopening the line for customers in June.”

Barry Milsom, Executive Director of Operations and Safety at Avanti West Coast, said: “We’re pleased to welcome the return of our normal weekday timetable on our Glasgow and Edinburgh routes following the completion of the second phase of Network Rail’s upgrade work.

“We’d like to thank customers for their patience and understanding over the last seven weeks and remind them our weekend services will still be impacted, as the third and final phase of the Carstairs Modernisation Project is completed. With no direct trains to or from Scotland on Saturdays and Sundays until early June, we strongly advise customers plan their journey, as well as visit the Avanti West Coast website for the latest updates.”

Passengers planning to travel on weekends between now and Sunday June 4 – including on the extended bank holiday weekends in May – are advised to check their journey at www.nationalrailenquiries.co.uk or with their train operator.

Photo credit: Network Rail