

East Coast Digital Programme progress

January 9, 2023



Network Rail says progress has been made on the transformational East Coast Digital Programme (ECDP).

Engineering work at the weekend and over the Christmas period saw further steps taken towards the introduction of state-of-the-art digital signalling – providing continuous, real-time information to the driver's cab. The technology will mean more reliable and greener services for passengers and freight, creating the next generation railway.

A successful testing of a new signalling system was carried out in the Wood Green-New Barnet area of North London. This will improve reliability whilst also preparing the area for the future introduction of digital signalling.

New lineside equipment and technology was also installed between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin. This section of route is being prepared to become the first part of the East Coast Main Line to operate with digital signalling.

Ed Akers, Principal Programme Sponsor for ECDP, Network Rail said: "As we begin a New Year we're continuing the work with all our industry partners towards the prize of a modernised, more reliable and greener railway."

"I'd like to thank passengers for their patience while this vital work was carried out, which is enabling further progress on the journey to a digitally signalled East Coast Main Line. I also advise passengers intending to travel over the weekend of 18/19 February to plan ahead and check before you travel, while we continue to work on digital upgrades."

The recent work has included the installation of around 120 axle counters and 40 balises (electronic devices placed between the rails to transmit information to and from the train), along with supporting infrastructure required.

There will be further work taking place at both locations over the weekend of February 18 and 19, which will mean no train services in or out of London King's Cross, St Pancras via Finsbury Park or Moorgate on those dates.

Jenny Saunders, Customer Services Director, Thameslink and Great Northern, said: "I'm sorry that, on top of the strikes that affected so many of our customers, we also had to replace much of our service last weekend with buses for this planned essential work. However, the end goal will be worth it: digital signalling will give us all a better, more reliable railway between London and Peterborough."

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER, said: "The East Coast Digital Programme is taking our railway into a digital age. It will transform journeys for passengers by making them even smoother, more punctual and more sustainable. While the upgrades may see some changes to our services during planned works, this vital investment in digital signalling will bring long-term benefits and enable our Azuma trains to realise their full potential."

Martijn Gilbert, Managing Director of Lumo, said: "We're very excited about the East Coast Digital Programme which will deliver a state-of-the-art railway for our customers. During these engineering works we are working alongside Network Rail and other operators to minimise the short-term impact on customer journeys with alternative travel options. The long-term benefits will make this worthwhile and help us provide a train service that is fit for the future".

Louise Mendham, Service Delivery Director at Hull Trains, said: "As this programme of engineering works progresses, we would encourage all customers of Hull Trains to check our website or social media pages before planning journeys as amended timetables will be operational on the days when works are taking place."

Photo credit: Network Rail