

First phase of Carstairs Junction remodel nearing completion

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Network Rail says the first phase of work to upgrade Carstairs Junction nears completion.

Following a 16-day closure of the West Coast main line, phase two of the programme, will see part of the junction re-opening to allow some trains to run directly to Edinburgh – and via diversion routes to Glasgow – on weekdays.

The work is part of a £164m Scottish Government investment to modernise this key junction for passenger and freight services on one of Scotland's two cross-border routes.

The three-month programme will see trains diverted and journey-times extended on services between Glasgow/Edinburgh and Carlisle until June.

Engineers are working around the clock to simplify and upgrade the track-layout to clear an existing bottleneck on the network, making it more reliable and better able to cope with increasing passenger and freight demands.

During the first 16 days of the work, the focus was primarily on completing the south junction -installing

and upgrading the track, signalling and overhead line equipment to enable passenger and freight services to connect to Edinburgh and to add an additional diversionary route for services to Glasgow.

Work on this strategically important junction is complex and challenging and Network Rail, alongside contractor partners, developed the staged programme to manage the effect on services in the least disruptive way.

The closure of Carstairs junction impacts on cross-border operators including Avanti West Coast, Caledonian Sleeper, CrossCountry Trains and TransPennine Express, who are operating via diversionary routes or offering alternative journey options during this time.

Jim McCleary, Network Rail's programme manager for the Carstairs Junction remodelling project said: "Although the weather has been challenging, work has been progressing well. As we near the end of the first stage of work, we have delivered new track, signalling and overhead lines all across the junction.

"Delivering work in the southern section enables the first section of the new layout to re-open and from Monday (March 20) passenger and freight services will begin to again run to Edinburgh and will also enable an alternative diversionary route for services to Glasgow.

"There is no pause for the team however and the next stage of work focuses on the West Coast main line section of the new layout, building it to be more resilient and reliable with the aim of reopening in late April.

"We are grateful for the support and cooperation of the travelling public and for the patience of the local community thus far as we deliver this massive investment our railway."

Photo credit: Network Rail