

Increase in traffic on the railway network across the Wales and Borders route means an increase in danger for members of the public

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Members of the public are being urged to take extra care at level crossings as rail services in the Wales and Western region have increased from this week, with freight services also subject to change at short notice. This message is aimed at those whose daily exercise includes using level crossings, the farming community, who often cross at level crossing/agreed points on the network, and those who illegally trespass.

Network Rail has seen an increase in the use of footpath level crossings as people take advantage of the warm weather and take a walk or cycle ride as part of their daily exercise routine. In addition, it has also recorded an increase in trespass incident numbers across the Wales and Borders route and across the country as a whole.

Level crossing users are also reminded to close gates and keep children close by and dogs on a lead when crossing. Adults should also make their children aware of the dangers, and cyclists should always dismount before walking their bike across.

When using a level crossing, pedestrians should:

- Concentrate – it's easy to get distracted, especially by phones, music and conversation.
- Stop, look and listen. Follow signs and instructions.
- Check both ways before crossing – if there is a train coming, don't cross.
- Understand the warnings (lights, barriers, alarms).
- Cross quickly, keeping children close and dogs on a lead.

Trespassing on the railway network is illegal and those choosing to do so fail to understand the danger they put themselves and others in when they make the choice to step on the track.

Bill Kelly, Network Rail's route director for Wales and the Borders, said: "It stands to reason that a greater amount of traffic travelling across the railway network will result in a greater risk to those in and around the tracks. It is vitally important that people understand that services are increasing. They are starting earlier in the day and ending later, they are more frequent from this week and, importantly, additional changes could happen a short notice.

"Network Rail looks after and maintains a lot of land across the Wales and Borders route and for many, these have proved to be lovely spots to take some daily exercise, but additional vigilance is now needed. People need to be aware of the dangers in order to keep safe and only travel if necessary, to do their part to protect the NHS."

British Transport Police Embedded Inspector Beata Evans said: "Each year, hundreds of people take risks on and around the railway, resulting in tragic consequences and life-changing injuries.

"We are continuing to proactively patrol the railway network across Wales. Safety is our number one priority and we're reminding everyone of the importance of taking care around the railway and that everyone loses when you step on the track."

Information about crossing safely can be found

here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/level-crossing-safety/level-crossings-for-pedestrians/>

Network Rail has worked with British Transport Police on the You vs Train campaign since 2018. Initially targeting young people and their parents, the campaign aims to educate on the devastating and wide-reaching consequences of trespass.

Further information on the dangers of railway trespass and the You vs Train campaign can be found on the You vs Train website here: <http://www.youvstrain.co.uk/>

Photo credit: Network Rail