

Key Carlisle rail routes reopen after freight derailment

December 7, 2022



More than 25,000 hours of work has taken place to get the railway restored after a freight train derailment cut off two key rail routes in Carlisle for seven weeks.

Since 6.45am this morning (Wednesday 7 December) direct trains are now running again on the Tyne Valley line between Carlisle and Newcastle and the Settle to Carlisle line between Carlisle, Appleby and Skipton.

Network Rail engineers have been working around the clock to restore the railway at Petteril Bridge junction after a train carrying powdered cement left tracks on Wednesday 19 October.

Huge damage was caused to a Victorian-built railway bridge, railway lines and signalling equipment during the incident.

Mark Evans, Network Rail senior programme manager, said: "I'd like to thank passengers for their patience while we worked tirelessly to get the railway back up and running after it was severely damaged by the freight train derailment.

“This has been a very complex recovery and repair job. Now it’s complete this major railway junction is future-proofed and has been strengthened in the very rare event anything like this should happen again meaning more reliable journeys for passengers and freight for years to come.”

Over the last seven weeks:

- Forensic rail accident investigators assessed the cause of the derailment
- The locomotive and 11 of 14 wagons carrying powdered cement were recovered soon after the incident
- Giant vacuums removed 80 tonnes of powdered cement from 3 wagons which needed lifting
- Environment Agency experts made sure no contamination entered the river Petteril
- An 800-tonne crane recovered those wagons which ended up in the water and on the embankment
- Eighty metres of damage track was replaced
- 400 metres of cabling was installed for signals and points
- Replacement of two switches – moving sections of track which enables trains to switch lines
- 125 tonnes of structural concrete was poured into 16 tonnes of metal reinforcement cages to repair the damaged railway bridge over the river
- The work took 25,000 hours, over 40 people working 7 days-week, for 7 weeks.

Kerry Peters, regional director at Northern, said: “We have been working very hard with Network Rail to reopen the railway at Petteril bridge following the freight train derailment in October.

“Now that work is complete, Northern services have resumed on both the Tyne Valley and Settle to Carlisle lines – and we have allocated extra advance purchase fares to welcome people back on-board. We’d like to thank our customers for being patient during this disruption and everyone involved in getting our passengers moving again.”

*The derailment involved one locomotive hauling 14 wagons, each filled with 80 tonnes of powdered cement, as it travelled between Clitheroe and Carlisle on Wednesday 19 October.

Five of the wagons derailed shortly after 8pm at Petteril Bridge Junction.

An initial report published by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch found that a fault with a train wheel was the most likely cause of the derailment.



Photo credit: Network Rail