

Major signalling upgrade reaches key milestone in Cornwall

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Network Rail has reached a key milestone in the final phase of its work to modernise railway signals across Devon and Cornwall, with passenger train services resuming on Monday after 13 days of round-the-clock work.

A team of more than 100 people worked across a 50-mile site to remove redundant equipment, lay new track, sleepers and ballast, and install new equipment that will ease congestion at Truro.

From Monday (11 March) a new digital signalling system in Cornwall has come into use, with control from Lostwithiel, Par and Truro signal boxes moving to Exeter.

The upgrade, carried out with contractor Siemens, will improve the reliability and safety of the railway and new digital technology will allow for real-time information to be provided to passengers.

Passengers are being reminded that work on the major programme is due to resume near Plymouth from Saturday 16 until Thursday 21 March.

The work in Devon will include the installation and testing of 21 new signals and renewal and removal of track at Hemerdon, near Plymouth. Control for these new signals will remain at Plymouth.

GWR is asking people to check their journeys before travelling, with buses replacing trains on routes on these dates:

- Saturday 16 to Sunday 17 March – line closed between Exeter St Davids and Plymouth
- Monday 18 to Thursday 21 March – line closed between Totnes and Plymouth (extending to Exeter St Davids after 21:40 each night)

More information can be found at [GWR.com/South West Upgrade](https://www.gwr.com/SouthWestUpgrade).

Network Rail Capital Delivery Director Stuart Calvert said: “Today marks the start of a new era with a switch to digital signalling in Cornwall, bringing more reliable journeys and better information for passengers.

“Our teams have worked around the clock in all weathers over the past two weeks to successfully reach this key milestone in our 18-month programme.

“Not only will the new technology improve safety and reliability in the region, it will also unlock future development of the railway in the area, including the new Mid Cornwall Metro scheme.

“We’d like to thank our passengers for their patience while we carried out this vital upgrade and would like to remind them to check before they travel as we move into the final stage in Devon later this week.”

Sharon Holloway, GWR Station Manager for West Cornwall, said: “We would really like to thank customers for their patience whilst this signalling work has been affecting many of our train services throughout Cornwall for almost two weeks.

“As a reminder, further engineering work is planned in South Devon from Saturday (16 Mar) until next Thursday (21 Mar) affecting trains between Plymouth and Totnes or Exeter St Davids.”

Siemens Mobility Senior Project Manager Stephen Mills said: “We are extremely delighted to have been Network Rail’s contractor in delivering this work. Our thanks goes out to everyone who has been part of the successful commissioning of the new signalling system which has been the culmination of many months of hard work by everyone.”