

Major upgrades on Midland Main Line will result in changes to train services

April 16, 2024



Network Rail, East Midlands Railway (EMR), and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) are urging passengers to plan ahead as major engineering work to upgrade the Midland Main Line continues throughout April and May.

Across upcoming weekends, engineers will work to upgrade existing overhead line equipment south of Bedford and continue to install new overhead wires between Kettering and Wigston. The work is taking place as part of the multi-million-pound Midland Main Line Upgrade.

It will mean that EMR's new fleet of greener bi-mode trains will be able to operate at 125mph and result in faster, quieter, and more reliable journeys for passengers travelling between the East Midlands and London.

To upgrade existing equipment, Network Rail teams will be working overnight between Bedford and Luton on Sundays throughout April and May. Rail replacement services between the stations will operate from 00.05 to 08.05 on 21 April and on the 5, 12, and 19 May.

Throughout this coming weekend, Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April, maintenance to improve reliability will be taking place on the Thameslink lines through central London.

The work means there will be no cross-London Thameslink services running between St Pancras and London Bridge or Sutton/Wimbledon. Passengers should use London Underground or London Buses to cross central London.

Additionally, on Sunday morning before around 9am, buses will replace Thameslink trains between West Hampstead Thameslink and St Pancras International. Thameslink services will not call at Kentish Town all that day.

On the weekend of Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May, engineers will be continuing to install new overhead line equipment between Kettering and Wigston.

A reduced train service between Sheffield/Nottingham and London St Pancras will divert around the closure with rail replacement bus services operating for passengers travelling between Leicester, Market Harborough, and Kettering.

At the same time, Network Rail teams will also be installing new switches and crossings, the specialist equipment used by trains to cross from one track to another, between Radlett and Cricklewood. A reduced train service will operate in the area throughout the weekend.

Passengers are encouraged to check their journeys before travelling via National Rail Enquiries or through their train operator.

Gavin Crook, Principal Programme Sponsor for Network Rail's East Midlands route, said: "Work to deliver major upgrades to the Midland Main Line is ramping up and our engineers will be working hard throughout weekends in April and May to deliver these improvements.

"We always try to minimise disruption to passengers when carrying out work which is why we are working overnight to upgrade existing overhead line equipment, but some work needs an extended period to be completed.

"Passengers should check their journey before travelling so that they are up to date with the latest information. We want to thank them for their understanding and patience as this work is carried out."

Dave Meredith, Customer Services Director for EMR, commented: "We are strongly advising customers planning to travel throughout April and May to check their journeys in advance by looking for updates on the EMR website.

"Engineering work will affect EMR services and customers should expect extended journey times with rail replacement buses and amended timetables in place.

"We would like to thank our customers for their patience whilst the engineering work to electrify the Midland Main Line takes place. This work will greatly benefit our customers in the future with more reliable, quicker journeys to and from London."

Jenny Saunders, Customer Services Director for Thameslink and Great Northern, said: "We thank our

customers for their patience and understanding while Network Rail are modernising the infrastructure on this important route. Please plan ahead, and double-check your route before you set off, allowing plenty of extra time if you need to use replacement buses or other alternatives.”