

Midland Main Line upgrade works

March 12, 2024



Network Rail and train operators are reminding passengers to plan ahead and check before travelling as further improvement work to the Midland Main Line (MML) takes place across two weekends in March.

The project will see improvements to the current overhead line equipment south of Bedford and there will be further engineering work in addition to the MML upgrades to install new track between Syston and Helpston allowing for more reliable, quieter, and greener journeys for passengers.

Engineers have successfully completed two weekends of work in the past few weeks, with work to further electrify Kettering to Wigston, upgrades to existing overhead lines between Luton and Bedford, and cyclical maintenance taking place through the Thameslink core taking place on 25 February and 10 March.

On Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 March, buses will replace trains between Luton and Bedford to allow for upgrades to the overhead lines which will allow for new trains to run at 125mph in the future.

Thameslink will run amended services south of Luton to and through central London, and EMR will operate a train shuttle service between London St Pancras and Luton, with trains running northbound from Bedford.

Passengers are also reminded that on 17 March and 23/24 March, engineers will be laying new track to

deliver smoother journeys between Syston and Helpston, separate from the MML work, which will affect CrossCountry services from Leicester to Peterborough. A rail replacement bus will be in place to serve passengers along this route.

On the weekend of 23/24 March, there will be additional improvement work to the overhead lines south of Bedford and upgrades through Luton station as new switches and crossings are installed, the specialist equipment used by trains to change tracks from one to another, meaning smoother journeys for passengers.

Amended and reduced Thameslink services will operate south of Harpenden, where a rail replacement bus service will transfer passengers to Luton and Bedford. Trains will not call at London Bridge owing to further engineering work in that area.

East Midlands Railway will operate no services between Bedford and London St Pancras on the affected weekend. EMR passengers should travel on Thameslink from London Kings Cross to Hitchin, where a rail replacement bus service will operate to Bedford, connecting passengers to EMR services towards Sheffield and Nottingham.

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

Gavin Crook, Principal Programme Sponsor for Network Rail's East Midlands route, said: "Over the last few weekends, we have carried out vital upgrade work to different parts of the network to enhance the journeys of passengers, resulting in a greener, faster, and more reliable railway.

"Engineers will be working around the clock throughout the next two weekends in March to carry out further essential upgrades to the Midland Main Line.

"We want to thank all passengers for their patience and understanding and encourage them to check before they travel via National Rail Enquiries or their train operator to ensure they are aware of any impact on their journeys."

Jenny Saunders, Customer Services Director for Govia Thameslink Railway, said: "We also thank our customers for their patience and understanding while Network Rail carry out vital modernisation along this important route.

"We're running replacement buses to help passengers complete their journeys, which means those journeys will take longer than normal, so we advise everyone to plan ahead and re-check their schedules before setting off."