

Network Rail: £127 million of improvements work over Christmas

November 28, 2023



Network Rail says there will be a “lighter” package of works taking place over the Christmas and New Year period with £127 million being spent on improvements.

It says more than 96 per cent of the rail network will be open for business, with most journeys unaffected by engineering work, but some lines will be impacted so passengers are being urged to plan ahead and check their journey details.

Some of the most significant investment projects this Christmas include:

- Work outside London Victoria station including maintenance and resignalling work to improve reliability with Southeastern services diverted to Blackfriars, Charing Cross and Cannon Street (23/12 – 1/1)

- HS2 work at Old Oak Common and laying new track at West Drayton will see no services from London Paddington between Sunday 24 and Wednesday 27 December. Long distance services will terminate at Reading with onward travel to either Ealing Broadway or London Waterloo. The Piccadilly Line is fully open for travel to Heathrow Airport
- Work to bring the East Coast Main Line a step closer to state-of-the-art digital signalling will take place between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin, resulting in no long-distance services to or from London King's Cross on Sunday 24 December. LNER, Hull Trains, Lumo, Thameslink and Great Northern services will be affected, and no Grand Central services will operate. Alternative travel arrangements are in place and can be found online at National Rail Enquiries
- Outside of the capital, work near Southampton will see some disruption to services, as will work to build the new Cambridge South station. Diversions and alternatives are in place with details online.

Lawrence Bowman, network strategy director for Network Rail, said: "We understand how important this time of year is for our passengers for reconnecting with family and friends. With more than 96% of the network open for business as usual, we have tried as far as possible to design our investment projects around our passengers and keep disruption to a minimum.

"We are carrying out some significant projects, not as many as past years, but still some £127m of investment ranging from laying new track, installing new bridges and making improvements to stations so that passengers can benefit from better and more reliable services and facilities.

"We plan our Christmas engineering programmes months- and in some cases years- in advance and target the quietest times – overnight, weekends and Christmas Day and Boxing Day to ensure we keep what disruption there is to an absolute minimum and will always look to use diversions rather than put people on buses.

"But some routes will see disruption as we upgrade the railway, so it's important that passengers check their journeys before travelling."

Photo credit: Network Rail