

Network Rail carries out a range of upgrades across Kent, Sussex and South London

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From Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April customers are being urged to check before they travel as buses replace trains across parts of the railway in Kent, Sussex and South London.

A number of planned upgrades will take place over the Easter weekend, as part of a wider £89m programme of investment across the country, which will see improvements to track and signalling.

At Willingdon Junction in Eastbourne, a £2.2m investment in the infrastructure will improve reliability for passengers and has been designed to have a life expectancy of at least 50 years. This will include renewing the switches and crossings, installing new points and heating equipment to support their continued reliable running during the cold winter months.

Alongside this, 750m of third rail will be renewed and 2,300 tonnes of new ballast and 450 new concrete sleepers will be installed.

In the South Croydon area, Whyteleafe level crossing will be upgraded with new electrical circuits to

extend the crossing's life and improve performance while between Balham and Beckenham Junction, engineers will be replacing life-expired switches and crossings as well as carrying out wheel timber renewals and preparing the area for the installation of the new signalling system in the future.

Between Brixton Junction and Denmark Hill, work to support the new signalling will be completed with the installation of a new signal gantry across the track. This work is part of a major package of upgrades to modernise 1980s track and signalling on the South London lines into London Victoria station. During the line closure, some switches and crossings will also be refurbished and vegetation along the line will be cleared.

At Hither Green, work to stabilise the embankment will see a 115m sheet pile wall installed, protecting the railway from soil and other debris falling from the embankment on to the railway and improving reliability for passengers. The track in this area will also be refurbished including replacing the ballast.

Lucy McAuliffe, Network Rail's Sussex route director, said: "We're grateful to our passengers for their patience whilst we carry out essential work over the Easter period. We carry out a large amount of our work during Easter as passenger numbers are lower, so we disrupt fewer journeys.

"The majority of our route will be open as usual for people wanting to travel over the Easter Bank Holiday, but some services will be affected so we're asking passengers to plan ahead and check before they travel."

Jenny Saunders, GTR's Customer Services Director, said: "We thank our customers for their understanding while Network Rail undertake these vital improvements. To help people travel over the Easter weekend, buses will replace trains on some routes, so please allow extra time when planning your journey, and double-check your route before setting off."

Scott Brightwell, Southeastern's Operations and Safety Director, said: "Most of our lines are open during the Easter weekend but Network Rail is carrying out engineering work on some parts of our route.

"Buses will replace trains between Lewisham and Sidcup from Friday to Monday, and there are a number of bus replacement services in place on Easter Sunday. On Good Friday and Easter Monday, we will be operating a Saturday service.

"Full details are on our website and timetables for the Bank Holiday are available in online journey planners, please check before you travel."

Passengers are urged to check before they travel at www.nationalrail.co.uk.