

Network Rail carrying out major programme of maintenance and upgrades between Guildford to Petersfield

February 9, 2023



Network Rail says the railway between Guildford to Petersfield will be closed from Saturday 11 to Sunday 19 February, with the closure extending from Guildford to Gomshall on Sunday 19 February only which will affect Great Western Railway (GWR) services between Guildford and Gatwick Airport. It is part of the Portsmouth Direct Upgrade.

Engineers will be renewing a key set of switches and crossings in Haslemere which will allow trains to move from one track to another. This will include 500m of plain line track and 1750m of conductor rail. This will make the line more reliable and provide greater operational flexibility.

Between Farncombe and Petersfield, the signalling system is being brought up to modern standards, with initial preparatory work starting which will eventually allow more trains to run between Woking and Portsmouth Harbour.

Mark Killick, Network Rail's Wessex route director, said: "It's really great to see work progressing so well

on the Portsmouth Direct Upgrade programme. Our teams have been working hard to try and carefully plan and fit multiple pieces of work within the same railway closure which in turn will save time and taxpayers money.

“I’d like to thank passengers again for their patience while we carry out these upgrades and bring the signalling system up to modern standards. We hope this will be a long-term benefit and cause less disruption in the future.”

Engineers will also be working around the clock with contractors Balfour Beatty to demolish the existing Silo Road footbridge which was constructed in the 1930s and replace it with a new steel footbridge using a rail mounted crane.

The concrete used in the old footbridge contained high level of salts and the new, steel one will be more durable, with a life expectancy of 120 years which will be safer for local residents to use for years to come.

Christian Neill, service delivery director for South Western Railway, said: “In mid-February, the major programme of improvements will continue on the Portsmouth Direct line.

“This significant investment will replace decades old equipment to help improve performance for customers, and infrastructure resilience, for many years to come.

“We appreciate that nine consecutive days of engineering works can be frustrating, so we would like to thank customers for their patience as these improvements are carried out.

“We advise customers to check their whole journey before they travel and to make use of the rail replacement bus services available.”

Passengers should be aware that buses will replace South Western Railway (SWR) services throughout the project.

During the closure, engineers will also:

- Continue to carry out track maintenance at Witley station, Milford, Liphook and Liss and (including stone blowing which is similar to tamping), for smoother and more reliable journeys.
- Renew drainage in the Witley area and stabilise Gomshall rock cutting to improve reliability during extreme weather.
- Continue upgrade work on three level crossings in Farncombe, Milford and Lilac, to make them safer and more efficient.
- Carry out graffiti and litter clearance to improve the stations and surrounding areas.

Photo credit: Network Rail