

# Network Rail gears up for nine-day total closure of Penge Tunnel

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**Network Rail** engineers are on track to begin work renewing the railway in Penge Tunnel, between Brixton and Beckenham Junction, where the line will be closed for nine-days at the end of this month.

Engineers will be working around the clock to replace almost two and half miles of track inside the huge 1.25-mile-long tunnel in South London, Saturday 23 July until Sunday 31 July.

Fiona Taylor, **Network Rail's** Kent route director, said: "We'd like to thank passengers and residents living alongside the railway for their patience while we carry out this major track replacement at Penge tunnel.

"This will be a challenging task as the tunnel is over a mile long, but the benefits will mean less maintenance will be needed in future as the track and components will be newer, meaning fewer faults and smoother, more reliable journeys for passengers.

"We recognise this work can be disruptive to passengers and those living alongside the railway and that's why we've tried to fit in other maintenance tasks within the nine-day railway closure so that it causes less disruption and is more cost effective.

“By taking a full nine days, we will significantly reduce overall disruption to passengers, as the alternative to this approach would be five weekends of closure in addition to two separate Sundays.”

Scott Brightwell, operations and safety director for Southeastern said: “We don’t want people to get caught out, so our advice to our passengers during this work is to check before you travel, and to plan ahead by using the Southeastern website or National Rail Enquiries. There’s never a good time for work like this to be carried out but the work is crucial and it will mean better journeys in the future.”

The work will involve removing the old track, digging up the track bed, and then replacing the rail and ballast (track stones) using a special track laying machine. This will ensure the continued safe and smooth running of the railway, allowing more reliable services to run with fewer faults.

To minimise the overall disruption to both passengers and residents, the line will be closed for nine consecutive days, which is half the time it would take if the work was carried out over multiple weekends. Alongside this, other essential maintenance work will be carried out on the line at the same time, allowing the project to be more efficient and cost effective.

The £5 million track replacement is part of the £1.25 billion South East Upgrade programme which aims to provide passengers in Kent and South East London with better journeys and fewer delays by improving railway infrastructure.

The track work will affect Southeastern services from **Saturday 23 July until Sunday 31 July**.