

Network Rail warns passengers of winter works in Wales and Borders region

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Network Rail is warning people to plan their festive journeys in the Wales and Borders region, as works will take place over Christmas and beyond.

The infrastructure manager and owner is continuing work on a £30m refurbishment of Gwynedd's iconic Barmouth Viaduct. The Cambrian Coast Line between Machynlleth and Pwllheli will be closed until Wednesday 29 December, with replacement buses running.

Meanwhile, train services between Shrewsbury and Crewe will be replaced by buses on 27 and 28 December as Network Rail undertakes work to replace the Mill Street bridge in Wem. Most of the work will take place between 11 pm on Christmas Eve and the morning on 29 December. Once complete, the brand-new bridge will ensure more reliable journeys for rail passengers and road users in north Shropshire.

Engineers are also taking advantage of the railway being closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day to carry out key projects in partnership with two local authorities along the South Wales Mainline. Working with Newport Council, a brand-new, fully accessible footbridge will be installed at Newport Railway Station, making travelling easier for passengers by linking Devon Place and Queensway. This work will not impact

train services.

Furthermore, Network Rail and contractors will also be removing the Llanharan railway footbridge, adjacent to the A473, in Llanharan. The old footbridge is no longer fit for purpose and the council's contractor will commence work in February 2022 to replace the bridge. Pedestrians are reminded to follow the diversions that are in place at both locations while work is underway.

Transport for Wales' ongoing work to develop the South Wales Metro is also continuing over the festive period, with buses replacing trains between Pontypridd and both Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare from Saturday 27 December to Thursday 6 January.

The closure period will allow engineering work to take place, as part of preparations for the introduction of brand-new electric tram-trains. Replacement bus services will be in operation between Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare and Pontypridd. Services between Radyr, Pontypridd and Treherbert will also continue to be replaced by buses in the evenings while overnight work takes place.

Great Western Railway services between London and South Wales will also be altered between 27 and 31 December due to engineering work being undertaken by Network Rail. Services will divert between Newport and Swindon, which will extend journey times by around 25 minutes. Trains will call at Patchway instead of Bristol Parkway, which will be only served by replacement buses. For more information, please visit the GWR website.

Bill Kelly, Wales and Borders route director at Network Rail said: "The refurbishment work we are doing over the festive period is vital to the long-term future of the railway in Wales.

"We are hoping to minimise disruption for passengers by carrying out much of the work on Christmas Day and Boxing Day – when there are no timetabled train services."