

Network Rail: West Coast main line to close for major overhaul

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Network Rail has announced that Carstairs Junction will be modernised as part of a £164 million Scottish Government investment in the railway.

Passengers are being reminded that the West Coast main line will close for 16 days from Saturday (March 4) as engineers deliver a vital programme of work to upgrade Carstairs Junction.

The closure of the line, between March 4 and March 19, is the first phase of a three-month programme of work which will also see trains diverted and journey-times extended all services between Glasgow/Edinburgh and Carlisle until June.

The work is part of a £164 million Scottish Government investment to modernise the key junction for passenger and freight services.

Engineers will simplify and upgrade the track-layout to clear an existing bottleneck on the network, making it more reliable and able to better cope with passenger and freight demands.

Work on this strategically important route will be complex and Network Rail will complete it in three phases designed to manage the effect on services in the least disruptive way.

During the first phase of the project there will be no direct services to Glasgow Central and Edinburgh on the West Coast main line through Carstairs.

The closure of the junction will affect cross-border operators including Avanti West Coast, Caledonian Sleeper, CrossCountry Trains, London North Eastern Railway and TransPennine Express, who will be operating via diversionary routes or offering alternative journey options during this time.

Liam Sumpter, Route Director, Network Rail Scotland, said: "Carstairs Junction is coming to the end of its life cycle and with the volume of freight and passenger trains passing through each week it's important that we modernise this part of the network.

"By completing this crucial upgrade work we will improve the capabilities and reliability of this strategically important junction, providing better future journeys for passengers and more capacity for freight.

"There's never a good time to close such an important line but this is a huge and extremely complex piece of work that will safeguard the future of the route for years to come.

"We appreciate that this will cause some inconvenience and would like to thank customers for their patience during this time."

Photo credit: Network Rail