

# Portsmouth Direct upgrade to lead to staggered road and rail closures in Surrey and Hampshire

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Drivers and rail users between Guildford and Portsmouth are being made aware of staggered rail and road closures in the Surrey and Hampshire areas, between 27 September and 13 November, as [Network Rail](#) engineers complete the final stage of the Portsmouth Direct signalling upgrade.

As part of the work, signalling control will be transferred to the Basingstoke Railway Operating Centre (ROC). The 90 new signals and 17 new signalling equipment buildings that have been installed and constructed, will be tested during the line closure. Transferring to the ROC will enable faster and more efficient train management.

Between September and November, Network Rail will be upgrading nine level crossings to make them safer for all road users. Manual level crossing operations are being replaced with new technology including Obstacle Detection (OD) and CCTV control.

## **Changes to train services**

To prepare for commissioning, there will be four weekend closures between Guildford and Havant taking

place on 27-28 September, 4-5 October, 11-12 October and 18-19 October. A longer nine-day closure will then run from Saturday 25 October to Sunday 2 November. During the closure, control of signalling between Farncombe and Petersfield will be transferred to the ROC.

Passengers are advised to check before they travel during these periods as services and journey times will be revised. Once this upgrade has been completed, passengers will benefit from more reliable train services.

## Road closures

Drivers using level crossings between Farncombe and Liss should be aware of upcoming road closures as engineers carry out critical upgrades.

Nine level crossings in south west Surrey and north east Hampshire are being upgraded to improve safety for road users and support a more efficient train service.

The improvements include:

- Upgrading automatic half-barrier crossings to modern barriers with obstacle detection, which improves safety.
- Converting some crossings so they are monitored by CCTV or obstacle detection systems.
- Updating footpath crossings with miniature stop lights for added safety.

To complete these improvements, road closures will be carefully staggered to minimise disruption. The first road closure is on 27 September at Liss Common Level Crossing, with the final works scheduled to finish on 13 November at Farncombe West.

Between initial commissioning and full CCU (Crossing Clear Unit) activation, crossings will be overseen by dedicated staff on site 24/7, ensuring safety until automation is fully operational.

Details of the closures are below:

- Liss Common (27 September to 24 October)
- Kings Fernsden (4 October to 24 October)
- Princes Bridge (11 October to 25 October)
- Milford (18 October to 2 November)
- Petersfield (25 October to 2 November) – Night-time closure (10pm to 6am)
- Liss (26 October to 2 November)
- Sheet (25 October to 2 November and 8 November to 9 November)
- Farncombe East (25 October to 2 November) – Night-time closure (10pm to 6am)
- Farncombe West (25 October to 13 November)

These upgrades may result in slightly longer barrier downtimes but will significantly reduce the risk of accidents and injuries for pedestrians and drivers. The average changes are outlined below.

- Liss Common – An increase of two minutes, two seconds
- Kings Fernsden – An increase of two minutes, 24 seconds
- Princes Bridge – An increase of one minute, 38 seconds
- Milford – An increase of one minute, 48 seconds
- Petersfield – An increase of six seconds
- Liss – No expected increase
- Sheet – An increase of two minutes, 23 seconds
- Farncombe East – No expected increase
- Farncombe West – No expected increase

Speaking on behalf of [Network Rail](#) and South Western Railway, Mark Goodall, Wessex Route Director, said: “We appreciate that there is never a good time to close the railway and we’re sorry for the disruption this will cause. However, these closures are essential to complete the vital upgrade of the Portsmouth Direct line. By carrying out the majority of work during the October half-term – when fewer people travel – we can minimise disruption while delivering long-term benefits.

“Drivers in the area will need to plan ahead and may need to take alternative routes when the roads around level crossings are closed. We know that waiting longer at a level crossing is frustrating for drivers but the biggest changes in barrier downtime are as a result of upgrading some of the most dangerous level crossings on the line.”