

Rail industry issues 'essential travel only' bank holiday plea

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The rail industry is calling on people to only make essential train journeys this bank holiday weekend.

Many parts of the network in the north of England will be undergoing improvement work – courtesy of Network Rail – while government advice is still asking people to avoid using public transport where possible.

Despite this advice some are still travelling by train for leisure journeys with people spotted travelling to the coast and other picturesque areas in the region for days out.

Chris Jackson, Regional Director at Northern said: “The rail industry is working hard to provide the best possible service for key workers and those who need to make essential journeys – and we need everyone else to stay away from the railway to leave space for those who need to travel.

“Our trains have a significantly reduced capacity at the moment because of social distancing measures so we really need people to listen to the advice and avoid travelling on the railway unless it’s absolutely necessary. Anyone who does need to travel should wear a face covering while on trains.”

Kathryn O’Brien, Customer Experience Director for TransPennine Express, said: “With the improving weather there will be a temptation for some people to use the railway to make non-essential trips this

bank holiday weekend. However, the trains we are running are only for those who need to make essential journeys, as there is limited capacity on our services to help with social distancing, with a maximum of 20 seats per carriage.

“Please, can all those who intend to use the railway follow the government advice and only travel on our trains if they have no alternative way of travelling.”

This weekend that capacity is reduced further as many services will be affected by pre-planned engineering work with some routes facing a reduction in services and, in some areas, rail replacement buses.

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail, said: “This Bank Holiday weekend, we are carrying out a number of projects to improve the railway and better connect towns and cities across the north, which means there are significant changes to services.

“We strongly advise people to continue to follow the Government’s advice and avoid public transport where possible. If you must travel, please follow the guidance on social distancing and plan ahead via National Rail Enquiries or with your train operator.”

Meanwhile East London and South Essex train operator c2c is also asking local residents not to make leisure journeys by train.

Social distancing rules drastically reduce the amount of capacity available, despite c2c returning to its full timetable this week. The Prime Minister’s instruction to avoid using public transport if at all possible remains in place.

c2c Managing Director Julian Drury said: “Even though we’re running our full timetable, social distancing means that capacity on our trains remains extremely limited. Our staff are working hard to provide a service for people making essential journeys to work, including weekend workers. We cannot be more clear: please do not use c2c for leisure journeys at this time.”

For full details of amended train times please visit [National Rail Enquiries](#).

Photo credit: Northern