

# Railway between Southampton and Bournemouth to close for 5 days for major improvements in November

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The railway between Southampton and Bournemouth will close for five days from Monday 1 to Friday 5 November to deliver a range of long-term improvements making journeys more reliable and resilient to extreme weather.

Engineers will upgrade the track, signals and drainage between Totton and Bournemouth, removing speed restrictions and making South Western Railway and Cross Country journeys through the area faster.

Mark Killick, Network Rail Wessex route director, said: “This critical improvement work will improve journeys, making them more resilient and allowing us to remove speed restrictions.

“To support the country building back from the pandemic and as a reflection of a rise in leisure and tourism travellers to the South Coast, this critical work will be completed over five weekdays rather than closing the railway for a number of weekends.

“Changing travel patterns mean our railway is busier at weekends than midweek and it’s important for us to minimise the number of people affected by the work being carried out. We never take the decision to close a busy stretch of railway lightly and have reviewed our approach carefully to confirm it is the best option.

“We are working with operators SWR and Cross Country to plan alternative travel arrangements and I would encourage anyone travelling that week to check before they make their plans.”

Alan Penlington, SWR’s customer experience director, said: “The work Network Rail are carrying out from the 1 November will mean big improvements for our customers. Not just a more reliable and resilient service, but also visible improvements.

“I realise these works will mean significant disruption for our customers and I’d like to remind anyone who’s traveling to plan ahead to see if their journey is affected. Replacement buses will be in operation meaning journeys will take longer. I’d like to thank customers for their patience and understanding whilst these essential works are carried out.”

Over the five days, engineers will work at several locations carrying out:

- Track level improvements at Brockenhurst, Sway and Hinton Admiral
- Drainage improvements in the Sway area to help reduce delays and cancellations during extreme weather
- Bridge maintenance in the Christchurch area to ensure structures can support track and trains for years to come
- Track and signalling maintenance at Totton, Beaulieu Road, Brockenhurst and Christchurch
- Installation of new rails between Hinton Admiral and Christchurch and new ballast and sleepers at Sway to improve reliability.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*