

South Western Rail and TransPennine Express issue warnings ahead of RMT strike

June 8, 2022



Following the announcement of industrial action dates by the RMT union, South Western Railway (SWR) services will be significantly affected between Tuesday 21st and Saturday 25th June 2022. Meanwhile TransPennine Express is calling on customers to plan carefully for travel during the strike action.

Train operators are working closely with Network Rail to finalise a significantly reduced timetable for those dates, but is warning customers to expect severe disruption on days impacted by industrial action.

Announcing the strike action, RMT says Network Rail and the train operating companies have subjected their staff to multiyear pay freezes and plan to cut thousands of jobs which will make the railways unsafe.

- **RMT announce three days of national strike action across the railway network**

With Network Rail signallers and more than 2,100 SWR RMT members taking industrial action, it is likely that significant parts of the South Western Railway network will be unavailable for travel on those dates. Where routes are open, it is likely that far fewer trains will run than normal.

As a result, customers are urged to change their travel dates if they can and, for those who have to travel on those dates, to begin looking for alternative methods of transport.

Teams are also working to update hospitals, schools, airports and businesses across the network on what this will mean for them.

Claire Mann, Managing Director of South Western Railway, commented: "I understand that the announcement of upcoming industrial action will worry many of our customers, particularly against the backdrop of significant cost of living pressures.

"We are carefully finalising contingency plans, but I'm afraid this action will mean that many customers will be unable to travel by rail.

"If customers can change their date of travel, or make alternative arrangements, I urge them to begin making those arrangements as soon as possible.

"I appreciate how challenging this may be and would like to thank customers for their patience as the rail industry responds to this unprecedented industrial action."

SWR will publish details of its reduced timetable when finalised and customers should check the website for latest updates: <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/industrial-action>.

Kathryn O'Brien, Customer Experience Director at TransPennine Express (TPE), has issued a similar warning saying that any amended timetable is likely to represent a significant reduction in services across TPE's entire network.

She said: "We are now working with industry colleagues, who are also affected by the industrial action, to determine what level of service we will be able to provide.

"We will publish our amended timetable as soon as possible via our website and National Rail Enquiries.

"In the meantime, anyone planning on travelling is advised to avoid using TPE services on the affected days and to consider alternative options. People making essential rail journeys should be aware services are likely to be extremely busy and may be subject to delays and short-notice cancellations."

Kathryn added: "TPE is extremely disappointed with the news that RMT members will again be taking industrial action, particularly at a time when the rail industry – together with much of the nation – continues to work together to recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We remain open for talks with the union, but any talks must be realistic, affordable and take into account the context of the environment in which the rail industry is now operating."

Photo credit: Tony Miles