

Storm Ciara: Damage to the Conwy Valley Line

February 10, 2020



Storm Ciara, which brought 90mph winds, extreme rainfall, and flooding across Wales, has caused extensive damage on the Conwy Valley Line, north of Llanrwst.

Network Rail engineers inspecting the line today have identified several sites where the ballast supporting the track has been washed away by floodwater. The storm has also damaged fencing and level crossings at several locations.

Further assessments will be carried out once the floodwater has receded, but early indications suggest that the damage is not as extensive as that caused by Storm Gareth in March last year, when the line was closed for four months.

While the line remains closed, Transport for Wales will continue to operate a rail replacement bus service to keep passengers moving and passengers are urged to check before they travel.

Bill Kelly, route director for Network Rail, Wales and Borders, said: "Firstly, we would like to apologise

to passengers and the local community affected by this closure. The Conwy Valley Line is a social and economic lifeline and this latest setback is particularly frustrating given this line has been hit so hard by extreme weather over recent years.

“Storm Ciara caused significant disruption to transport networks across the country and unfortunately the damage caused to this part of the line was significant. We simply can’t commit to a timescale for the completion of this work until the floodwater has receded and we’ve completed our assessments, but we will work tirelessly reopen this line as soon as possible.”

Meanwhile the line in Kirkstall has been reopened after the railway was severely impacted by floodwater over the weekend.

Services through Kirkstall, on the Leeds to Ilkley, Leeds to Skipton, and Leeds to Bradford Forster Square routes, were suspended to allow Network Rail teams to pump water from the railway. As the deluge of water was from the river, pumping was only effective once the river levels started to drop.

Work has also taken place to check trackside equipment for any damage. This could only be done once the water levels had receded.

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail’s North and East Route, said “Storm Ciara has caused widespread disruption across the country and our teams have been working nonstop to keep passengers moving safely.

“We are pleased to confirm that the line has now reopened at Kirkstall following severe flooding. Whilst the line has reopened, a full service isn’t expected until later this afternoon, so we encourage all passengers to check their journeys before travelling.

“We would like to thank passengers for their patience, as we work with train operators to get a full service running as soon as possible.”

Photo credit: Network Rail