

Temporary reduced timetable for West of England Line from Monday 5 September

September 2, 2022



From Monday 5 September, South Western Railway (SWR) will be introducing a temporary reduced timetable on the West of England line.

This revised timetable will enable SWR to operate a resilient service for customers after an Emergency Speed Restriction was put in place between Gillingham in Dorset and Tisbury in Wiltshire by Network Rail engineers.

The extremely hot and dry weather experienced recently has caused the clay embankments to dry out and shrink – leaving the track on top uneven and trains unable to travel at full speed.

Train services have had to be amended as the line is single track – meaning trains cannot pass each other outside of passing loops – and trains are taking approximately twice the normal length of time to run between Gillingham and Tisbury.

It is likely that the timetable will remain in operation until at least October, as engineers must wait for the soil to stop shrinking and regain some of its moisture before repairs can be made and the speed restriction

lifted.

The new timetable for week commencing 5 September is now available in online journey planners, showing the following changes: trains will generally run hourly between Waterloo & Yeovil Junction and trains will generally run every two hours between Waterloo and Exeter St Davids. Journey times will be amended and/or extended across most services on the route.

For more information about the ongoing disruption on this line and reasons for this, visit the SWR website at www.southwesternrailway.com/tisbury.

Commenting, SWR managing director Claire Mann said: "After two weeks of delays and short-notice changes to our services, this decision to introduce a revised timetable will allow us to run a resilient service and at least provide certainty to our customers in the West of England. I am sorry to all those whose journeys will be affected as we wait for weather conditions to improve so Network Rail can safely remove the speed restriction."

Network Rail Wessex Route Director, Mark Killick, said: "We're sorry for the disruption that our customers are seeing between Salisbury and Yeovil Junction, which is a direct result of the hot and dry conditions. We hope the amended timetable can give our customers confidence, but we do recognise that the reduced number of services and longer journey times will be disruptive. As soon as it is safe to remove the speed restriction, we will do so, but this may not be until October when we hope conditions will improve."