

# The £1.4 million investment making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the railway in Lancashire

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A new footbridge over the railway in Bamber Bridge is now open so pedestrians and cyclists won't have to cross directly over the tracks.

Network Rail has invested £1.4 million to build the much safer way for people to get from Asland Close on one side of the railway to popular playing fields on the other.

This means the Playing Fields footpath level crossing is now closed, completely removing the risk from passing trains when people need to get from A to B.

Network Rail continually monitors the safety of its level crossings across the North West.

Before its closure, Playing Fields level crossing was among the worst in the region for the number of incidents of trespass, near misses or crossing misuse.

Since 2016 seven serious cases have been reported by train drivers including an elderly couple and dog walker crossing the railway as a train was approaching, children playing on the tracks and youths deliberately placing objects on the line putting passengers at risk.

Debbie Johnson, Network Rail level crossing safety manager, said: “There’s no doubt that this new footbridge is a much safer way for people to get across the railway in Bamber Bridge given the number of incidents at the former footpath crossing. It also closes the access point to tracks to stop cases of dangerous railway trespass.

“These incidents made it a priority for Network Rail to build this new footbridge to keep both local people and passengers safe. It’s also great to see how after speaking with crossing users we were able to incorporate their ideas into the design.”

Network Rail held a drop-in event in April where its engineers learned that many cyclists crossed the railway there.

So, channels for bikes were included up the staircases to allow them to be wheeled rather than carried over the new bridge.

Work will now take place to replant shrubs, bushes and trees so the new structure blends in with its surroundings.

*Photo credit: Network Rail*