

# Two Southern Rail stations are getting step-free access improvements

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Two projects to deliver step-free access to Southern Rail stations are underway this month.

As part of an investment of more than £9 million, Network Rail will oversee the improvements at Crowborough and East Grinstead stations. It is expected work will finish in Autumn 2022.

Both stations will get a new footbridge and new lifts, providing customers with step-free access. Tactile paving will also be installed close to platform edges to assist blind and partially-sighted passengers.

Meanwhile, new CCTV cameras will also be installed to maintain safety and security.

The investment of £4.7m at Crowborough and £4.6m at East Grinstead is being made to ensure both stations are much easier to use for passengers with accessibility needs.

During the works, engineers will be constructing foundations on the platforms. New lift shafts and the footbridges will be created off-site and lifted by crane into position during planned line closures.

The new footbridges, lifts and stair structures are of a design in keeping with the stations and surrounding landscape. On completion of each footbridge, engineers will dismantle the existing station footbridge and remove it from the station.

Katie Frost, Sussex route director for Network Rail, said: “We are committed to improving access for passengers and this vital work will make it much easier for people to move around Crowborough and East Grinstead stations.

“Stations are important gateways to the communities they serve, and the new footbridges and lifts will help to improve connections within the community. Crucially we now have two stations that are more accessible for all passengers, whether they are wheelchairs users, have reduced mobility or just carrying luggage or pushchairs.

“We have worked with local stakeholders and accessibility groups to find the best option for passengers, and we will minimise disruption as much as possible throughout the project.”

Anita Scaife, Southern’s area station manager, said: “We’re on a journey of improvement to create a more accessible and inclusive railway, where everyone has the confidence to travel with us, no matter what their disability or need for assistance.

“Step-free access to the platforms at Crowborough and East Grinstead will transform the experience of travelling by rail for many local people.”

This project is being delivered as part of the Department for Transport’s Access for All programme where £300m has been secured to make further accessibility improvements at stations over the next five years.