

West Coast main line closure for Preston station track upgrades

January 31, 2023



West Coast main line passengers are being urged to plan their journeys ahead of four weekends of essential railway improvements at Preston station.

Network Rail is investing £1.5m to upgrade railway foundation stone and six switches and crossings – moving sections of track which allow trains to change lines.

These hardworking pieces of railway equipment are crucial to keep trains running smoothly and this maintenance will mean more reliable journeys for passengers and freight in future.

The complexity of upgrading switches and crossings means the railway will need to close completely between Wigan North Western and Lancaster on:

- Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 February
- Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 February
- Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 March
- Sunday 12 March

This also means no trains will serve Preston station at all on those dates.

Avanti West Coast staff will be on hand to help passengers stay on the move through rail replacement bus services which be in operation between Wigan North Western, Preston and Lancaster*.

Where the West Coast main line is open, passengers are advised that:

- fewer trains will be running,
- services are expected to be busy,
- journeys will take longer than usual,
- people should check before they travel

Phil James, Network Rail's North West route director, said: "I'd like to thank people in advance for their understanding ahead of our essential track improvements at Preston station. Once complete it will mean better, smoother and more reliable journeys for passengers and freight on the West Coast main line.

"However, upgrading complex equipment like switches and crossings means we have no choice but to close sections of railway and stop trains running so engineers can quickly and safely carry out our work. I'd urge anyone wanting to travel over the four weekends concerned to check National Rail Enquiries and plan ahead, allow extra time to get to where you need to be, and be prepared for some of your journey to be by bus."

Shirley Ross, Avanti West Coast's station manager at Preston, said: "We're working closely with Network Rail and our industry partners to minimise the disruption to customers on the weekends where engineering works are taking place. Our team at Preston will be on hand to help customers at the station. Those who do travel, should check in advance and allow extra time for their journey, especially those travelling to and from Scotland. Anyone travelling is advised to check www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk."

Chris Nutton, major projects director for TransPennine Express, said: "Whilst the upgrade work takes place around Preston station, there will be a number of changes to TransPennine Express services between Manchester/Liverpool to Glasgow/Edinburgh. We strongly advise customers to plan ahead and to check the latest changes to our services before they travel on our website www.tpexpress.co.uk/travel-updates/changes-to-train-times. Updates will also be available on our social media channels."

Chris Jackson, regional director for Northern, said: "We welcome this investment in the rail infrastructure at Preston station. Getting people from where they are to where they want to be is what Northern is all about – and essential maintenance like this is an important part of protecting our operations for the future."