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Christmas upgrades to future-proof West Coast Main Line near Milton Keynes

Passengers have been given advance notice of a major programme of improvements on the West Coast Main Line.

The upgrades will take place near Milton Keynes over Christmas and New Year, making journeys smoother and more reliable for years to come.

Journeys to and from London Euston will be affected from the afternoon of 24 December until the morning of 5 January, while engineers work around the clock on a £26m upgrade at Hanslope Junction. This is a vital section of

railway located 56 miles north of London Euston and 7 miles from Milton Keynes that carries over 3,300 passenger and freight services per week.

What's happening at Hanslope Junction?

- Replacement of large sections of track and strengthening the foundations beneath it.
- Installation of over 12,500 tonnes of new ballast stone to support the track.
- Delivery and installation of more than 130 track panels, some pre-built off-site and others assembled on location.
- Use of specialist machinery to lift and position new track across all four lines in the area.

This work will remove speed restrictions, improve reliability and reduce maintenance needs on a critical section of the West Coast Main Line.

To make the most of the closure, while trains aren't running between Milton Keynes and Rugby or Milton Keynes and Northampton, engineers will deliver additional improvements, including:

- **Milton Keynes Central station – Platform 4 renewal**
A £3.66m project to replace concrete planks and fix uneven surfaces, improving safety and structural integrity.
- **Wolverton station – Platforms 3 & 4 resurfacing**
Investing over £2m to upgrade platform surfaces and improving stepping distances between train and platform.
- **Track renewal near Roade**
An investment of almost £600,000 to upgrade the track near Roade, including the installation of over 1,500 metres of new rail.
- **Newport Bridge, Stafford**
Part of a £5.4m upgrade to the bridge carrying the A518 over the railway.

[Find out more](#) about the other upgrades which will take place in the North West on the West Coast Main Line over New year and through to the morning of 15 January.

Gary Walsh, Network Rail's route director for the West Coast South route, said:

“This Christmas and New Year we're investing in major upgrades to keep the West Coast Main Line safe, reliable and fit for the future.

“The work at Hanslope Junction is one of the most significant projects, and by carrying it out during a quieter travel period we can deliver improvements that will benefit passengers and freight for decades to come.

“Our advice for anyone planning to travel between London and Scotland this Christmas is to plan your journeys as early as possible by visiting National Rail Enquiries.”

Travel advice

To carry out these upgrades safely, there will be no trains between Milton Keynes and Northampton/Rugby for eleven consecutive days from the evening of 24 December until the morning of 5 January.

Follow up work will take place on Sundays 11 and 25 January to complete essential tamping (compacting of the stones beneath the new track that give stability) and drainage work. On these days there will be no trains between Milton Keynes and Northampton/Rugby.

Passengers are advised to:

- Plan ahead and check before travelling.
- Allow extra time for journeys.
- Expect some sections to be by bus and trains to be busier than usual.

For the latest travel information, visit <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk>.

For further information on this release, email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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