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Major signalling upgrade on the West Coast main line over four days in January to kick off the New Year

Network Rail is completing an £85million investment into the signalling on the West Coast main line between Rugeley and Colwich on Sunday 14 and from Saturday 20 until Monday 22 January.

During that time, the section of the railway between Rugby and Stafford will be closed so engineers can connect the new signals that have been installed in stages since 2017. The work has involved upgrading:

- 39 new signals
- 124 axel counters (the system used to detect if a section of track is clear or unoccupied)
- Combining and moving Colwich and Trent Valley workstations to be based from the Rugby Rail Operating Centre.

Rail passengers are reminded to check before they travel and plan ahead by using www.nationalrail.co.uk. Long-distance trains will use alternative routes through the West Midlands, and rail replacement buses will keep passengers on the move between stations.

The new signalling system will mean a more reliable services for passengers and freight in the future.

Passengers are being advised that journeys will take longer, could involve rail replacement bus services and that timetables will be different.

Dave Penney, Network Rail passenger director for the North West and Central region, said:"These major signalling improvements on the West Coast main line will mean better, smoother and more reliable journeys for passengers and freight in the future. However, complex upgrades like these mean we have no choice but to close sections of railway for new signalling equipment to be installed and tested.

"I'd urge anyone planning to travel on 14 January or between 20-22 January to please check National Rail Enquiries to plan their journeys. I'd also like to thank passengers in advance for their patience."

Barry Milsom, executive director of operations and safety at Avanti West Coast, said: "While Network Rail carry out these major works, we'll be operating an amended timetable and journeys to and from London Euston will take longer. We strongly advise customers making journeys on 14 January and between 20 and 22 January to plan ahead and check the Avanti West Coast website before travelling."

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director at West Midlands Trains, said: "Investing in new signalling and the upkeep of our railways will support a better travel experience, providing passengers with more efficient journeys on our services in the future.

“As a result of these works, I urge passengers to check their journeys on 14 January and between 20-22 January as the major upgrades will result in either longer journey times, bus replacements or alterations to services along the West Coast Main Line.”

Passengers can plan ahead and check before they travel with their train operator or visit www.networkrail.co.uk/wcml for more information.

About West Midlands Trains

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

West Midlands Trains 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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