



'Severe' disruption to Christmas train services Free 251224

Description



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East of England train passengers are being warned journey times over the holidays will be “significantly longer than normal”, due to substantial engineering works.

A section of the Midland Main line will close from the 21-29 December – affecting travel to Luton Airport – as projects costing £29m are completed between London St Pancras and Bedford.

Construction of two new stations in Cambridge and Essex will also cause disruption after Christmas Day, while Liverpool Street Station in London will be shut for eight days from 25 December.

Lawrence Bowman, Network Rail’s route director for the Anglia region thanked passengers “for their patience” while it delivered “important” improvements.

London St Pancras to Bedford

From Saturday 21 December, no trains will run on East Midlands Railway between St Pancras and Bedford, or on Thameslink , externalbetween St Pancras and Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

Passengers should check their routes and expect disruption if travelling to or from stations such as Luton Airport Parkway, St Albans, Bedford, Kettering, Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield.

There will be a shuttle train service between Harpenden and Bedford, and rail replacement buses operating between:

Luton Airport Parkway and Hitchin

Harpenden, St Albans City and Potters Bar

London St Pancras and Harpenden

Neil Thompson, chief operations officer at London Luton Airport, external, said: “Passengers travelling to and from the airport by rail between 21-29 December are advised to plan their route in advance and allow extra time for their journey.

“As ever, our teams will be working hard to deliver a simple and friendly passenger experience for everyone passing through the airport over Christmas.”

he £29m works included upgrading overhead lines, a new access bridge for the Radlett Strategic Freight interchange and improving a road over the rail bridge at Agar Grove in Camden.

Philippa Cresswell, customer service director for East Midlands Railway, external, said: “We are working closely with other operators to keep customers moving throughout the festive period; however, journey times will be significantly longer than normal with rail replacement buses and amended timetables in place.”

London Liverpool Street

London Liverpool Street Station will close from 25 December to 1 January so that engineering work can take place at the Bishopsgate tunnel. Steel support girders are being installed and repairs will be carried out.

The station concourse and shops will also be closed for eight days while new ticket gates are installed, to reduce congestion.

It means c2c trains, external into Essex will depart from London Fenchurch Street via West Ham.

Greater Anglia services on the Great Eastern and West Anglia mainlines will run from Stratford. The exception is the Stansted Express, external which will run to and from Tottenham Hale.

Also in London, there will be no Thameslink trains between London Bridge and London St Pancras from 27-29 December.

Routes south of Cambridge

Major engineering work is also taking place in Cambridgeshire for up to 12 days, affecting Great Northern and [Greater Anglia , external](#) services.

It means no trains will run between Cambridge / Cambridge North and Royston or Elsenham from 27 December to 5 January.

Services to Bury St Edmunds will also be affected, with rail replacement buses running from Friday 27 December.

Normal service from Cambridge is planned from Monday 6 January.

Network Rail is continuing the construction of Cambridge South station as well as beginning an overhaul of the signalling system.

Other works involve “the complete remodelling of Shepreth branch junction” and renewing switches and crossings at Foxton sidings, which will mean closing the Foxton level crossing on the A10.

Mr Bowman said: “It is important to allow our skilled engineers the time to be able to work safely on the track while trains are not running.”

Works at another brand new station – Beaulieu Park, external at Chelmsford, Essex – will also cause disruption between Wednesday 25 – Saturday 28 December.

The signalling system will also be updated to show the new track layout between Chelmsford and Hatfield Peverel for the first time.

Great Eastern mainline services via Chelmsford will involve a replacement bus service between Billericay and Witham on 27 and 28 December.

Norfolk and Suffolk

Into the new year, further engineering works are planned for Norfolk and Suffolk.

Signal work will be taking place on the Great Eastern Mainline from Norwich to Ipswich and between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, with rail replacement buses operating on the first three weekends of January.

Network Rail's Mark Budden said: "While these essential upgrades may cause temporary disruption, it will result in faster, smoother, and more reliable journeys for passengers in the future.

"Christmas is the ideal time to carry out this work with minimal impact, as fewer people are travelling.

"Whilst that is beneficial from an engineering perspective, we do recognise that passengers are still needing to travel for work and to visit friends and relatives.

"We would like to thank passengers for their patience and understanding during this vital work."

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