

GWR Rockfall Shelter Work at Dawlish – Impact on Night Riviera Sleeper

We have just issued a [release to media](#) about the next stage of resilience work at Dawlish, where Network Rail teams will be working with specialist contractors to install a rockfall shelter to protect the rail line.

The shelter is an extension of Parson's Tunnel designed to protect the railway line from rocks falling from the cliff face above, which Network Rail has identified as a growing risk to the railway. While there is temporary mitigation to this problem at the moment, this work provides additional, more permanent protection.

To do this safely the line needs to be closed. We have worked together to cause minimum disruption. It will however mean that the Night Riviera Sleeper will only run on Fridays and Sundays between Monday 24 January and Thursday 17 March, and the 22.02 service from Paddington will terminate at Exeter, with a bus connection to Plymouth. There are no changes to weekend services, or to any other weekday services.

Traditionally January and February see the lowest demand for sleeper services, and bookings are particularly low this year due to the increased levels of Covid, and a return to working from home.

By doing this work overnight now, before Easter, we can keep Devon and Cornwall open at weekends, meeting customer and visitor demand for more leisure travel, and we will help keep the South West Resilience improvement programme on time.

We are contacting customers who have booked berths directly and as well as traditional media, we will be using social media and updating our webpages to keep customers informed.

The sleeper will continue to run, in both directions, on Fridays and Sundays throughout the work, which will allow our regular weekly commuters to continue to travel. We will be asking customers to check journey times, particularly in March when Network Rail will be undertaking overnight improvement work in Cornwall.

If you have any queries or concerns we are here to help.

This was not an easy decision, but given the current low level of bookings, the opportunity to maintain weekend services, and the importance of getting the rock shelter work complete before Easter, we believe it is the best decision for our customers in Devon and Cornwall.

The sleeper will be fully operational again from Friday 18 March.

Jane Jones and Toby Elliott

GWR and NR Wales and Western