

Clifton bridge rebuild project update

Blockade dates: 31 December 2025 – 15 January 2026
(passengers impacted 1-14 January 2026)

- Network Rail is investing £60m to replace Clifton bridge near Penrith so it can continue to safely carry passenger and freight trains over one of Britain's busiest motorways.
- At 60 years old, weight restrictions on the current structure mean it can only carry one train at a time, causing delays to train services.
- Once in situ, the new bridge will allow services to pass over the motorway safely and reliably, without restrictions, to the benefit of passengers, freight and road users travelling through Cumbria.
- Network Rail is working with train operators, National Highways and Westmorland and Furness council to successfully deliver this critical work while reducing the impact on passengers, motorists and the local communities as much as possible.



Passenger impact

OFFICIAL



There is also work at Preston over Christmas which affects the WCML train plan over Christmas. Currently, the plan is as follows. This will be publicly available to passengers in full in the coming weeks.

Passengers are advised to plan their journeys in advance during this work, as journeys will be diverted, and rail replacement buses are in operation.

January 1 – 5	January 6 - 14
Avanti Rugby-Wigan Wigan-Carlisle via S&C Northern Windermere to Barrow - reverse at Lancaster Leeds to Morecambe - reverse at Lancaster Blackpool South to Blackpool North - reverse at Kirkham Liverpool Lime St to Wigan Bamber Bridge to Colne Blackburn to Headbolt Lane via Man Vic Blackburn to Leeds Clitheroe to Rochdale Carlisle to Whitehaven Carlisle to Newcastle Bus Blackpool North to Buckshaw Parkway Bus Blackpool North to Blackburn Bus Buckshaw Parkway to Ormskirk via Preston Scotrail Bus to Dumfries TPE Buckshaw Parkway to Man Airport Bus Buckshaw Parkway to Preston/Lancaster	Avanti Euston to Preston Preston to Carlisle via S&C Lockerbie to Glasgow/Edinburgh until 7th Carlisle after. Northern As normal TPE Carlisle to Edinburgh/Glasgow from 7th Oxenholme to Manchester Airport Bus Oxenholme Carlisle Scotrail Bus Carlisle to Dumfries until 7th



Road user impact

National Highways is advising motorists of two weekend closures to the M6 in January 2026:

- Friday 2 to Monday 5 January 2026
- Friday 9 to Monday 12 January 2026

During these periods, the motorway will close in both directions between junction 39 at Shap and junction 40 near Penrith.

Motorists are advised to plan their journeys. Diversionary routes are available on the [National Highways webpage](#).

Community engagement and comms

Network Rail sends a two-monthly newsletter to local residents in Clifton village, and hosted an initial community information event months ago. Regular letters about noisy work are also sent.

A periodic stakeholder forum takes place with National Highways and Westmorland and Furness Council. Locally affected elected members have been briefed about this work, which will continue.

Network Rail is leading the communication and marketing of the work, including the planned disruption and travel options for affected audiences. Working together as a coordinated industry, plenty of advanced notice is being given across all available channels in the run-up to the work, including a sizable investment in paid-for advertising.