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Overhead cables damage causes widespread train delays

Rail passengers face disruption to their journeys after overhead wires on the West Coast Main Line near Milton Keynes were damaged.

Services on the line between Northampton and Milton Keynes will be delayed all day, according to train operator London Midland.

Engineers are investigating the cause of the damage to the cables at Hanslope Junction.

Replacement bus services are operating between the affected stations.

The problems are disrupting trains between London and the Midlands and the direct Rugby to Milton Keynes route.

All Virgin Trains from London Euston have been cancelled and the company's services across England and into Scotland are suffering disruption.

Virgin passengers can go from Northampton to Rugby and change there to alternative services as their tickets are being accepted by other operators on services across the north of England, the Midlands and Wales.

Two-hour delay

London Midland said services north of Northampton were still running, but subject to delays and cancellations.

They are also running a two-trains-an-hour shuttle service between Milton Keynes Central and London Euston in each direction.

A bus service is in operation between Rugby, Northampton and Milton Keynes Central.

Buses will also take passengers between Milton Keynes Central and Luton Airport Parkway to connect with East Midlands and First Capital Connect services.

Buses are now running between Northampton and Wellingborough to connect to East Midland Trains services going north to Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield and south to St Pancras station in London.

London Midland said their tickets will be honoured by passengers going on to use Chiltern Railways, Cross Country, East Midlands Trains (between Sheffield, Wellingborough and London St Pancras International), First Capital Connect, First Great Western and Southern.

Passengers are being advised that journey times are taking up to two hours longer.

'Lines remain blocked'

Network Rail said a train pantograph had become entangled with overhead lines at the junction and the cables were damaged.

"At around 05:00 GMT on Friday the overhead wires on the West Coast Main Line, just north of Milton Keynes (at Hanslope Junction), suffered damage blocking all four lines," a spokesman said.

"An empty train, moving into position for the morning peak is currently entangled in wires that have come down.

"Network Rail engineers are currently on site and hope to restore two of the four lines by lunchtime with the aim of restoring all lines tomorrow following overnight work.

"All lines remain blocked," the spokesman said.

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