

Rail disruption on the East Coast line – check before travelling

There has been some disruption to the East Coast mainline service, caused by the discovery of cracks on the chassis of some Class 800 Series Hitachi trains.

On Sunday the UK Government called upon the rail industry to conduct a safety inspection of the fleet and resolve difficulties for passengers wanting to travel on this and all other UK routes.

The LNER version of the Class 800 Series Hitachi is called the Azuma and the majority has been removed for inspection.

A spokesperson for LNER said: “Due to a number of Hitachi Class 800 trains from several train companies being taken out of service for ongoing checks as a precautionary measure, there will be some cancellations across the LNER route from Monday 10 May 2021.

“The issue is being investigated and once trains have been checked, we are reintroducing them back into service as soon as possible.

“We apologise for the disruption caused, and are advising customers to check before they travel with LNER from Monday 10 May.”

The LNER timetable for 10 – 14 May is at this [page on their](#)

[website.](#)

Ticket acceptance is also in place with ScotRail between Inverness/Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

A spokesperson for Hitachi Rail said: "Inspection has identified cracks on the lifting points under the carriage of some Class 800 trains. Safety is our number one priority and as a precaution this continues to impact the number of trains that can run in service.

"We acknowledge the Government's clear direction regarding the forward repair plan, and our teams continue to work day and night with the ORR, operators and independent experts.

"We thank passengers for their ongoing patience."

UK Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris said on Sunday: "I have directed the rail industry to urgently set out a comprehensive plan to ensure services can safely resume as soon as possible.

"I expect operators to explore all options for replacement services to help people complete their journeys, and have asked Hitachi for a safety inspection plan, as well as longer term repair strategy.

"Our focus is to ensure trains are returned to service as quickly as possible, once they are fully approved as safe. Only then can we start to rebuild a reliable and punctual timetable for passengers.

"I also want to thank passengers for their patience during what could be a significant period of prolonged disruption, likely to continue for some time."

The government has also commissioned Hitachi to present an initial assessment of when they expect problems to be resolved. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is the independent safety regulator for all railways in Britain, ensuring that all railway operators comply with health and safety. The

department will oversee the inspection work.

Meantime the industry has been asked by the government to deliver a clear rail replacement schedule, including additional bus and coach services that will be in place to help alleviate disruption.

<https://twitter.com/DavidHorne/status/1391663668606246914?s=20>



At the launch of the Azuma in 2019 in Edinburgh Waverley PHOTO
The Edinburgh Reporter