

31 MAY 2024



You'll want to know this, if you travel by train

A new summer timetable on the Great Western Railway network will deliver more trains where they are needed most, starting this Sunday.

The new timetable sees the return of weekday, SuperFast services between London Paddington and South Wales for the first time since March 2020; the doubling of midday capacity from London Paddington and Plymouth; and additional services on the corridor between London Paddington and Bristol Parkway, as well as additional services to summer holiday destinations.

GWR Managing Director Mark Hopwood said:

“We are continuing to work closely with our industry partners to improve performance and capacity so that we can deliver the services our customers expect.

“Services that help to support the local and regional economy and connect people to work, to schools and colleges, to friends and family and to some of the best leisure destinations in the UK.”

Two new early evening weekday services between London Paddington and Bristol Parkway allow for the introduction of two SuperFast trains to Swansea, with journey-time savings of up to 30 minutes.

The trains run fast from London Paddington to Bristol Parkway (not stopping at Reading and Swindon) before continuing to south Wales, meaning huge time savings.

Reflecting the demand for services towards Devon and Cornwall, especially at midday, a new service has been created at 1204 and will serve intermediate stations (Reading; Taunton; Exeter; Newton Abbot). The previous 1204 is being retimed to run at 1202, and will run direct to Exeter and onto Plymouth, before heading to stations in Cornwall.

This focuses resources on this really important leisure flow, doubling the number of trains at that time of day.

Direct services between Bristol Temple Meads and Oxford are also planned to be restored for the first time in more than 20 years. In response to growth in demand for leisure travel, GWR will run two return Saturday services between the cities from September. A direct service last ran in 2003. The services will run from 14 September through to 14 December as a pilot to assess demand, including on Saturdays of the Bath Christmas Market.

Helping people to make more sustainable transport choices, the half-hourly services introduced last December between Reading and Gatwick airport are being retimed to make a better clock-face timetable. Services are being retimed to depart Reading at xx20 and xx50; and from Gatwick at xx26 and xx56.

Starting this weekend, there will also be seasonal changes to trains to reflect summer demand. These include additional services between Bristol and Weymouth; extra services between Paddington and Newquay; trains extended to serve the popular Pembroke Dock (starting from London Paddington), as well as many other alterations.

Early-morning services from Exeter to Plymouth have also been amended to allow for an earlier arrival to support travel to work at Devonport Dockyard. This follows a request from Babcock International to support modal switch from private car to public transport. This will mean some earlier starts and arrivals in both Devon and Cornwall.

Detailed service changes are available in online journey planners and through GWR's Journey Check service <https://www.gwr.com/travel-information/travel-updates/check-your-journey> and those used to catching a specific train should check their journey in advance.

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Notes to editors

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First Greater Western Limited, trading as “Great Western Railway” (GWR), operates trains across the Great Western franchise area, which includes South Wales, the West Country, the Cotswolds, across southern England and into London. GWR provides high speed, commuter, regional and branch line train services, and before the covid-19 pandemic helped over 100 million passengers reach their destinations every year. GWR has been awarded a National Rail Contract to continue operating the Great Western network, which shall run up to 21 June 2025, with the potential for a further three years at the Secretary of State’s discretion. Find out more here: <https://www.gwr.com/about-us>

Responding to increases in demand on Paddington-South Wales route, two additional services formed of 8-car 387s have been included:

- 16.12 Paddington-Bristol Parkway, calling Reading, Didcot Parkway, Swindon and Bristol Parkway
- 19.12 Paddington-Bristol Parkway, calling Reading, Didcot Parkway, Swindon and Bristol Parkway

Including these services allows speeding up the corresponding South Wales services to become SuperFast:

- 16.18 Paddington-Swansea now runs fast to Bristol Parkway (not stopping at Reading and Swindon). Service is extended to Carmarthen and the 15.48 Paddington-Carmarthen now terminates at Swansea. **Journey time savings of up to 30 minutes**
- 19.18 Paddington-Swansea now runs fast to Bristol Parkway (not stopping at Reading and Swindon). Journey time improvement of up to 22 minutes.

On the route between London Paddington and Devon/Cornwall:

- The 12.04 Paddington-Penzance is one of the most in demand summer services
- This service has therefore been retimed to run at 12.02 and run fast to Exeter and then on to Plymouth and stations in Cornwall to specifically cater for customers headed to these stations. This will be formed of a 9-car IET.
- A new service has been created at 12.04 to run as a relief Paddington-Plymouth and will serve intermediate stations (Reading, Taunton, Exeter, Newton Abbot). Also formed of a 9-car IET.
- This doubles capacity on the service at this time and focuses needed capacity on an important leisure flow.
- Also provides an additional return working to Paddington from Plymouth at 15.50.