

# Fewer trains to run on Scotland's Railway

January 28, 2021



ScotRail will reduce the number of trains running across the country from Monday (1 February) as the train operator continues to revise the critical service being provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ongoing lockdown restrictions in place are severely reducing the number of people travelling, and the changes being made to the timetable reflect the current demand from customers, while delivering better value for the taxpayer.

This is the second change from the operator in recent weeks, after the number of carriages on services were reduced earlier in January, with customer numbers down by almost 90 per cent compared to the same time last year.

With a focus on continuing to provide a safe and reliable service, particularly for key workers and in support of the vaccination rollout, the number of services is being reduced to 65 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, while delivering 72 per cent of seats. ScotRail has consulted with NHS boards across Scotland to ensure shift patterns for key workers are supported as far as possible.

At a time when businesses throughout the country are working under financial constraints, ScotRail is no different, and making changes in a safe and controlled manner is part of that process.

The train operator's ability to fully staff the different areas of the business have also been impacted, including staff having to shield, and others having to self-isolate with increases in positive tests across the country. The suspension of driver training due to the pandemic also means ScotRail is unable to train new drivers or increase the number of routes on which existing drivers can operate.

All changes being made will be constantly reviewed, particularly if there is any change to passenger numbers. This will ensure that physical distancing guidelines can be observed.

The operator is reminding passengers that the law allows only essential journeys on public transport. People who do have to travel by train should follow the five rules for safer travel, including wearing a face covering and maintaining physical distance in stations and on-board trains.

Customers are reminded that they should only be travelling if they meet the criteria set out by the Scottish Government guidelines. Customers should also check their journey before they travel on 1 February, as online systems will still be in the process of being updated. Details of the changes to the various routes can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

David Simpson, ScotRail Operations Director, said: "Everyone across Scotland's Railway is working incredibly hard to deliver for our customers, and this latest change to our timetable helps us to ensure we keep getting people to where they need to be.

"We have constantly adapted our timetable throughout the pandemic to reflect restrictions in place at any given time, allowing those travelling to be able to rely on ScotRail, and these alterations will again ensure that we deliver that critical service. There will also be minimal change for those currently using our services, as we have matched changes with the current demand.

"Like any business during the pandemic, we need to continue to make sensible financial decisions, and reducing the number of services means a reduction in costs for the taxpayer, while continuing to deliver a safe and reliable rail service."

Robert Samson, Transport Focus Stakeholder Manager, said: "Train timetables must still meet the needs of those who have to travel. Many key workers rely on the first and last services of the day so it's important that these are maintained. Providing enough capacity for those who are travelling to properly social distance remains vital.

"The focus on adapting the timetable to continue to provide a safe and reliable service, particularly for key workers and in support of the vaccination rollout should ensure a train service that passengers can rely on."

*Photo credit: ScotRail*