

# Flexible season tickets on sale, saving hundreds of pounds for rail passengers

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- #TheFutureIsFlexible as 2 and 3 day-a-week passengers given control over their commute, with potential savings of hundreds of pounds against daily and season tickets.
- Online 'season ticket calculator' will help passengers find the cheapest option as flexible season tickets go on sale from Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June, in use from Monday 28<sup>th</sup>.
- New "book with confidence" guarantee on Advance tickets allows passengers to rebook journeys or receive rail vouchers without an admin fee if plans change.

New national flexible rail tickets, matching modern working habits and saving passengers hundreds of pounds, will be available to commuters across England from next week.

The launch of flexible season tickets is the first step in the reform of the railways, as part of the recently launched Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.

The paperless tickets will allow travel on any eight days in a 28-day period, with passengers able to tap smartcards or scan mobiles at the station, with no need to select the days of travel in advance.

The change has the potential to save commuters hundreds of pounds, providing greater choice and flexibility.

Commuters can visit an updated online 'season ticket calculator' website, which will point people to the best tickets for them based on their journey, working pattern and individual needs, ensuring they get the deal that suits them.

To encourage more passengers to travel by rail, for the rest of this year (until 31 December 2021) train companies will also offer a "book with confidence" guarantee, allowing people to rebook journeys or receive rail vouchers without an admin fee if their plans change.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: "Our railways work best when they are reliable, rapid and affordable.

"As we kickstart the biggest reforms to our railways in a generation flexible season tickets are the first step. They give us greater freedom and choice about how we travel, simpler ticketing and a fairer fare.

"With a season ticket calculator to see which option works best for you, and a book with confidence guarantee to make journeys stress-free, the future of fares is flexible."

Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions at the Rail Delivery Group said: "We've worked with government to introduce the new Flexi Season ticket, which goes on sale today, to give commuters the freedom and flexibility to divide their time between home and the office.

"The rail industry is helping people travel and book with confidence by providing better journey information, boosting cleaning and helping them change a booked journey free of charge should their circumstances change."

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This new national offer also reflects the long-term decline in the use of traditional season tickets, with a change in working practices having been accelerated by the outbreak of COVID-19.

Kirstie Allsop, TV presenter and consumer champion, said: "As everyone tries to negotiate the balance between the office and working from home, and work out how, and where, they want to live, this initiative is really helpful.

"Using the season ticket calculator will also help people see which option gives them the best possible deal."

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director, said: "CBI members have told us that hybrid working is likely to be the long-term norm for many firms, with employees splitting their week between home and onsite working.

“It is therefore essential that public transport networks reflect these new habits.

“The introduction of flexible season tickets will help to ensure rail travel remains an affordable and realistic option for commuters, while future-proofing a network which has a key role to play in the UK’s decarbonisation ambitions.”

Analysis shows that two day-a-week commuters buying multiple new flexible season tickets could save the following in a year when compared to the cost of daily tickets:

- Over £260 from Woking to London
- Over £210 from York to Leeds
- Over £60 from Southampton Central to Winchester
- Over £170 from Stafford to Birmingham
- Over £230 from Liverpool to Manchester

Three day-a-week commuters could save:

- Over £230 from St Albans City to London
- Over £110 from Bromsgrove to Birmingham
- Over £90 from Weston-Super-Mare to Bristol Temple Meads
- Over £350 from Chelmsford to Stratford

Responding to the launch of flexible season tickets for part-time commuters Paul Tuohy, chief executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: “Finally, after years of campaigning, people who commute part time will be offered ticket options that suit the way they need to commute. This is a hugely important step for passengers. The projected growth in hybrid working has made this an urgent issue so we are pleased the Government has listened.

“The season ticket calculator is also good news and should provide the reassurance passengers need that they are getting the best deal possible. We’ll be making use of it to dig into the details of the scheme and make sure that commuters are getting the kind of savings that will ensure they choose the train rather than driving.”

*Photo credit: Department for Transport*