

# Full peak Elizabeth line timetable introduced as railway celebrates remarkable success in its first year

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The Elizabeth line's full peak timetable has commenced following the May timetable change. The introduction marked the final milestone of the Crossrail project, realising more of the benefits that were promised by Transport for London (TfL) and the Department for Transport (DfT) as joint sponsors including higher frequencies, greater connectivity and faster journey times.

From today, peak time frequencies will increase from 22 to up to 24 trains per hour between Paddington and Whitechapel, with 16 trains per hour running off-peak. The peak will also now last for longer, increasing capacity even further. On the east, more services at peak time will run between Liverpool Street National Rail station and Gidea Park, providing a faster route for those using the Bishopsgate entrance, and in the west, there will be an increase in peak services from Reading, with some trains that were previously operated by Great Western Railway transferring to become Elizabeth line services with reduced stops. The removal of any significant pauses for trains outside Paddington, will also bring reduced journey times for customers travelling from the west into central London.

This week marks the first anniversary of the opening of the Elizabeth line to passengers on 24 May 2022. In its first week, more than 2.5 million journeys were made on the entire route. Now with journeys from the east and west running through central London, there are an average of around 3.5 million Elizabeth line journeys each week – with around 600,000 journeys on weekdays. This means that the transformational railway, which is on track to break even by the end of the 2023/24 financial year, has already become one of the most used railways in the country as it continues to support easier journeys and new jobs, homes and economic growth.

The railway has been crucial to helping London and the UK economy recover post-pandemic, driving public transport demand. TfL figures suggest that the Elizabeth line has attracted around 140,000 additional journeys in London each weekday than otherwise would have been the case. Customer satisfaction is also high on the railway with a score of 82 per cent in TfL's Quarter 4 2022/23 Customer Satisfaction Survey (covering January – March 2023). It has transformed the accessibility of the transport network – with 41 step-free stations unlocking new journeys for disabled and older customers as well as parents with buggies and customers travelling with luggage.

An estimated 30 per cent of Elizabeth line journeys to and from Heathrow have come from those who might previously have used Heathrow Express to the airport, and in the new timetable there are also more frequent Elizabeth line services to and from Heathrow with trains from Shenfield in the east now going all the way to Heathrow Terminal 5 all day. The airport overall now receives six Elizabeth line trains per hour all day. All Heathrow trains stop at Terminal 2&3, with four trains per hour continuing to Terminal 4, and two per hour continuing to Terminal 5.

Tottenham Court Road has seen the largest (absolute) growth in demand on the Elizabeth line since it opened, with more than 100,000 additional journeys passing through the station each day, more than doubling usage over the year. Farringdon, Whitechapel and Abbey Wood have also seen large rises in demand with 100,000, 60,000 and 30,000 extra journeys respectively, again doubling or nearly doubling the customer journeys that were seen through these stations before the Elizabeth line opened.

Journeys to Canary Wharf as a whole (Elizabeth line, London Underground and DLR) on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays as well as at weekends are regularly outstripping pre-pandemic demand to the area. There are now 12 trains per hour running between Canary Wharf and Abbey Wood in the peak, restoring the frequency that was in place when the Elizabeth line opened last May, with a train around every five minutes. The morning and evening peak times also now last for longer, increasing capacity even further.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "A year since opening, the Elizabeth line has transformed travel across London and the South East and is now the most popular railway in the country. An incredible 3.5 million journeys are made a week, as passengers enjoy the modern trains, beautiful step-free stations and reduced journey times.

"The Elizabeth line is the most significant addition to our transport network in decades and has proven to be much more than just a new railway – providing a crucial economic boost to the whole country and playing a vital role in drawing people back on to London's public transport.

"The introduction of the final full timetable marks the completion of the Crossrail project, and I'm delighted that passengers will have even more frequent services to get them across the capital and beyond. The Elizabeth line is helping to build a better London – one which is safer, fairer, greener and more prosperous city for all Londoners."

London's Transport Commissioner, Andy Lord, said: "The Elizabeth line has cemented its place as an integral part of the transport network of London and the South East. It has given so many parts of London, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex a real boost with new housing, workspaces, retail and economic growth. The accessibility the line provides is a game changer, and has opened up the transport network to so many more people. Seeing millions of people using the line each week is a testament to the hard work that everyone involved in the project put in to get us to where we are today, and we look forward to even more customers using the railway now that the new timetable has further improved the service. The Elizabeth line has clearly demonstrated the value of investing capital in London's transport infrastructure."

Transport Minister Richard Holden, said: "Almost a year to the day since the Elizabeth line was first launched, it has already supported more than 150 million journeys and, from today, even more people will be able to benefit from it."

"I'm proud the Government helped make this possible through its £9bn investment, which has not only helped passengers get from A to B and reconnect with loved ones but also created more than 55,000 jobs right across the UK."

Sophie Chapman, Surface Access Director at Heathrow, said: "Heathrow is the world's gateway to the UK and we're delighted our East London and Essex passengers can now travel quickly and easily direct to the airport. The Elizabeth line has revolutionised London transport and the extension of the service will open up new travel opportunities to Heathrow's extensive travel destinations."

Shobi Khan, CEO, Canary Wharf Group, said: "The Elizabeth line has been a gamechanger for Canary Wharf – it's transformed our public transport capacity, reduced journey times and connected to Heathrow in just 45 minutes. Over 5.7 million people have arrived at Canary Wharf via the Elizabeth line since it opened a year ago, with mid-week and weekend travel now regularly surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Crossrail Place at the Canary Wharf station is thriving, with visitors enjoying the fantastic restaurants, bars, gyms and shops, as well as our award-winning roof garden. We look forward to welcoming many more people to Canary Wharf via the Elizabeth line for decades to come."

Ben Samuels, Global Head of Sales, WeWork, said: "We have seen growing demand for well-connected and flexible office space in central locations across the capital, as companies of all sizes manage their workplace strategies and look to put their right foot forward for both their employees and their bottom line. This is particularly the case for our WeWork locations on the Elizabeth line, which have experienced a strong increase in WeWork All Access bookings and overall appetite since its opening in May last year, as workers prioritise inspiring workspace that is worth the commute in."

John Lewis, Peabody's Executive Director for Thamesmead, said: "The Elizabeth line is transformational for thousands of people living in and around South Thamesmead, along with the growing number of

businesses and services based here. Excellent transport links are central to our long-term plans to improve and grow the whole town – one of the largest regeneration programmes in the UK – enabling us to deliver thousands of affordable homes, high quality commercial, cultural and leisure facilities, and outstanding open spaces.”

*Photo credit: Transport for London*