

Further rail timetable changes announced due to COVID-19

December 31, 2021



Following our earlier reports before the Christmas break, other [train operating companies](#) are reporting they are changing timetables in light of staff absences caused by COVID-19.

Scotrail

[ScotRail](#) has said January will see an altered timetable because of the impact of COVID-19.

The rapid spread of the Omicron variant has seen a recent spike of COVID-related absences among ScotRail staff – with some having tested positive, others awaiting PCR test results, and many who are self-isolating as a result of being in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

These staff absences have had an impact on ScotRail services – mainly across the central belt of Scotland – and have resulted in a number of services cancelled or amended in recent weeks.

In order to provide customers with a level of certainty about which services are running in the coming weeks, ScotRail has said it will make temporary changes to its timetable from Tuesday, 4 January 2022.

Timetable changes are mainly focused across the central belt - with changes spread out across the day where possible to minimise the impact on customers' journeys - and will operate Monday to Friday until Tuesday, 28 January 2022.

Routes affected by the timetable revision include:

- Glasgow Central – Neilston / Newton
- Glasgow Central – East Kilbride
- Glasgow Central – Lanark
- Glasgow Central – Ayrshire / Inverclyde / Stranraer
- Glasgow Central – Edinburgh Waverley via Shotts
- Glasgow Queen Street – Edinburgh Waverley via Airdrie & Bathgate
- Glasgow Queen Street – Edinburgh Waverley via Cumbernauld & Falkirk Grahamston
- Glasgow Queen Street / Edinburgh Waverley – Stirling / Dunblane / Alloa
- Glasgow Queen Street – Anniesland via Maryhill
- Edinburgh Waverley – Dunbar / North Berwick
- Edinburgh Waverley – Fife
- Edinburgh Waverley – Newcraighall / Tweedbank

London Underground

The Waterloo and City line was shut until early January because of COVID-19.

Notices told customers there had been reduced demand since the UK Government advised people to work from home, and that the festive period meant that demand would dip even further.

It said that along “with other business” it was experiencing absences due to COVID-19, and so remaining Waterloo and City drivers would be put on the Central line trains.

Govia Thameslink

The operator said train times will change on weekdays from Tuesday 4 January 2022 as **Southern**, **Great Northern** and **Thameslink** introduce reduced timetables until further notice.

It added a reduced timetable will help ensure a more reliable service and less last-minute cancellations.

Gatwick Express will remain suspended, as it has been over the festive period to allow for engineering works, until further notice. Gatwick Express crews will instead focus on supporting Southern services, which also serve Gatwick Airport.

There are no planned changes for weekends, but it may be necessary to make smaller, additional on-the-day changes.

Angie Doll, Govia Thameslink Railway interim Chief Operating Officer, said: “Due to the significant

challenges we face with Covid now affecting many of our colleagues, we have taken the decision to operate a reduced train timetable from January. We're really sorry if this does affect your journey.

"While many more people are now working from home again, we're fully focussed on proving a service that passengers can rely on if they need to travel. We'd strongly urge people to check before they travel for the latest information and to leave extra time."

Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales (TfW) introduced an emergency rail timetable from 22 December, which equated to a reduction of between 10-15% of the standard timetable introduced on 12 December. However, with staff absences continuing to increase, the decision was subsequently taken to further reduce services to ensure the company can provide a reliable service throughout this latest stage of the pandemic.

The new timetable equates to a further reduction of 10-15% of the timetable introduced on 22 December, with a focus on parts of the rail network suffering from particularly high staff absence. It emphasised this move is in line with service reductions being introduced by other operators across the whole of the British rail network.

The new timetable will remain in place over the coming weeks and will be reviewed regularly as the rail industry in Wales monitors the impact of the new Omicron variant on staff levels.

All customers are urged to check www.tfw.wales before travelling and follow the up-to-date guidance from the Welsh Government.

Jan Chaudhry-Van de Velde, Managing Director of TfW Rail, said: "We are very much dealing with the Omicron wave of COVID infections and, like many public service organisations, have seen a major rise in colleague absences over the last few weeks.

"It's fundamental we continue to run as reliable a service as possible for our customers and therefore we are introducing a revised timetable from 3 January, reducing the risk of late notice cancellations.

"Wherever we can, we'll use additional carriages made available due to the reduced timetable to run longer trains, which will help with social distancing. We'll also provide supplementary road transport, where possible.

"We appreciate this will be frustrating for some customers, and we have not taken this decision lightly. We ask that all customers check online before they travel and follow current government advice. Our aim is to restore the timetable as soon as absence rates caused by this wave of the pandemic allow."

Customers who have already purchased tickets for services affected by this change will be able to use their tickets on alternative TfW rail services. Alternatively, they will be able to request a refund by visiting www.tfw.wales.

LNER

Over the new year, **London North Eastern Railway** (LNER) warned customers to check journeys online, after having to reduce some services due to COVID-19.

⚠ We have some daily train service reductions due to a shortage of train crew as a result of an increase in the number of staff self-isolating with COVID-19. Most services continue to run.

Please visit <https://t.co/5oFWVItD4> for a list of affected services and further advice.
[pic.twitter.com/i6FjYUdP9v](https://t.co/5oFWVItD4)

— London North Eastern Railway (@LNER) **December 31, 2021**

CrossCountry

CrossCountry has likewise issued similar warnings. It said trains showing in online journey planners are expected to run, but may be altered at short notice.

⚠ CHECK YOUR TRAIN TIMES ⚠

We're sorry, but the disruption on our network due to staff shortages is continuing until at least Sat 08 January. Your usual train may not be running.

Please check before travelling:- <https://t.co/7tB03Z6PHI>

More details:- <https://t.co/mNTu1mBVBA> [pic.twitter.com/zmUtYjpGCO](https://t.co/mNTu1mBVBA)

— CrossCountry trains (@CrossCountryUK) **December 27, 2021**