

# Grand Central to extend current period of hibernation

February 23, 2021



Following yesterday's Government announcement on the timeline for the easing of current national lockdown restrictions, Grand Central (GC) has decided to extend its current period of hibernation.

In light of the roadmap set out by the Prime Minister, and following discussions with employees and trades union representatives, the train operator says it now aims to return to service on March 27th. However, should circumstances allow it to bring trains back to you earlier, it will do so.

Richard McClean, Grand Central Managing Director, said: "I'm encouraged by recent reductions in the national 'R' rate and a drop in COVID-related hospitalisations. This, along with the ongoing vaccination programme, leaves me hopeful that when we return to service it will be permanent, albeit cautious and incremental. Grand Central's Open Access business model means, unlike other train operators, we rely exclusively on income from ticket sales – an essential factor in our business decisions.

"I understand our passengers may have questions over existing seat reservations, particularly between March 1st and 26th and I can confirm that all GC tickets reserved for these dates are transferable, free of charge, to other dates. We are also working with fellow train operators on transferring your GC reservation

to one of their services. I'm also pleased to confirm that you can currently book seats with GC for travel from March 27th into May. And we're planning to extend availability into the summer."

Grand Central has set up a dedicated web page to answer travel queries and guide you to the relevant source of information, including refunds. [Click here for more details.](#)

Mr McClean added: "In terms of Grand Central's employees, I can confirm we will continue to make use of the Government's furlough scheme, including flexible furlough, to support our return to service. This allows us to closely monitor Government easing of restrictions and passenger demand – all major factors in our return. I would like to extend my, and my fellow GC executive's, gratitude for the patience, understanding and professionalism of our employees throughout what has been a very difficult year.

"Finally, a huge thank you to our customers, who continue to show their support and loyalty to GC on a near daily basis. For now, I ask you all to stay safe, follow official advice and we will welcome you on board again soon."

*Photo credit: Grand Central*