

End of the line for First Class on many Greater Anglia trains in Essex

January 5, 2021



Greater Anglia has declassified First Class seating areas on all trains on the Great Eastern Main Line except for its flagship Intercity services.

This year the company's existing old trains on non-Intercity stopping services into London Liverpool Street from Essex and Suffolk are being replaced with new, longer, state-of-the-art new trains which do not have any First Class seating.

To avoid confusion while services are operated with a mix of new and old trains, Greater Anglia has decided to declassify all First Class seating on non-Intercity stopping services operated with old trains on Great Eastern routes.

The company will only sell First Class tickets for customers travelling on Intercity services between Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket, Ipswich, Manningtree, Colchester, Chelmsford, Stratford and London Liverpool Street.

First class seating is no longer available on services between London Liverpool Street and Southend

Victoria, Braintree and Colchester Town/Clacton or non-Intercity services to Ipswich; Wickford to Southminster; Colchester to Colchester Town and Walton-on-the-Naze, and Manningtree to Harwich Town – known as “suburban” services.

Any customer with a First Class season ticket on one of the affected routes can change it over to a Standard Class ticket without penalty or apply for a full refund.

Anyone who has purchased a First Class ticket for travel on or after 2 January on one of the affected routes is entitled to a full refund of the difference between the First Class fare and the equivalent Standard Class ticket without an administration fee.

Martin Moran, Greater Anglia’s commercial director, said: “Our new trains are longer with more seats and all mod cons including fast free wifi, air conditioning and plug and USB points.

“Passengers who have used them have even told us it was like travelling first class as the standard was so much higher than the trains they have replaced.

“When we ordered our new suburban trains, in 2016, customers told us one of their top priorities was to get a seat, so we designed the new trains to have more seats. By not including First Class seating areas, we were able to fit in more seats for everyone.”

As well as on its Intercity services, First Class tickets are still available on Greater Anglia’s West Anglia services between Cambridge and Hertfordshire and London Liverpool Street, except for Stansted Express services.

The whole of the Greater Anglia network is currently in Tier 4 stay at home Covid-19 alert status. However, customers are still able to travel by train for reasons listed in Government guidance including for work, medical purposes and for education.

Greater Anglia has stepped up cleaning and sanitisation of trains and made social distancing easier at stations and on trains so that if people need to use trains, they can travel with confidence.

Photo credit: Greater Anglia – A new Bombardier train, which does not have First Class.