

New timetable adjustments put in place by train operators to tackle COVID effects

January 6, 2022



Two train operators have announced changes to their timetables to deal with the effects of COVID-19.

The news follows a statement yesterday from the [Rail Delivery Group](#), which said passengers should expect to see more reduced timetables from train operators as the omicron variant continues to spread.

A recent roundup of other operators introducing reduced temporary timetables can be found [here](#).

GWR

[Great Western Railway \(GWR\)](#) has introduced a new temporary reduced timetable to combat the effects of COVID-caused staff absences.

GWR's timetable comes into effect on Saturday, 8 January, and it is designed to ensure the train operator can provide most of its usual services. It will be reviewed every week and is expected to be in place for only a short time.

Mark Hopwood, GWR managing director, said: “We are taking some sensible measures using the experience, knowledge and good processes we have developed over the past 20 months to give customers confidence in our timetable.

“In the past few weeks, we have already taken steps to maintain service levels across the network, including cancelling all non-safety critical staff training.

“Like many other businesses, we are expecting prolonged periods of staff absence due to Covid to continue in the coming weeks, and the objective of this temporary timetable is to provide a service that can be relied on, reducing the potential for ad hoc short-notice cancellations.

“This means reducing our timetable a little to shore up the large number of services we continue to operate. We have prioritised high-use school, college and other known key worker services and we very much hope that the changes will only be needed for a short period.

“We will be reviewing the need for temporary changes weekly and will update journey planners and our website [gwr.com](https://www.gwr.com) with details of any changes needed for the week ahead.

“As always, our advice to customers is please check your journey before you leave home at [journeycheck.com/greatwesternrailway](https://www.journeycheck.com/greatwesternrailway).”

Greater Anglia

Train operator Greater Anglia is going to replace the current temporary weekday timetable which was implemented just before Christmas with a Sunday-style timetable on most routes – but with earlier first trains mostly consistent with a normal weekday timetable and more trains at peak times.

The busiest services will be operated with eight- or ten-carriage trains.

No changes will be made to regional route service frequency apart from removing four additional peak services on the Norwich to Great Yarmouth route, meaning an hourly service on most routes or two-hourly on the Ipswich to Peterborough route, as normal.

The Norwich to London Liverpool Street intercity service, which operates with 12 carriage trains, will become hourly.

The weekend timetable will remain unchanged.

All changes will come into effect from 10 January.

Passenger numbers at Greater Anglia have fallen again in recent weeks – and are currently at 40-50 per cent of pre pandemic levels, having increased to around 65-70 per cent in the autumn. Peak-time passenger numbers are currently around 30 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.