

More trains on Great Northern, Southern and Thameslink from 16 May

April 21, 2021



Great Northern, Southern and Thameslink will be adding 1,000 extra services per week from 16 May as coronavirus restrictions ease further across the UK. To help plan their journeys and get the latest information on how busy train services are, passengers can check ahead at www.nationalrail.co.uk before they travel.

Steve White, Chief Operating Officer of parent operator Govia Thameslink Railway, said: “As lockdown restrictions are eased, we are reinstating services for our returning customers. These additional trains will help provide more space on board by adding more capacity on our busier routes at the most popular times. They will also provide more journey choices for customers at quieter times.

“Social distancing will become more challenging as more people start to travel again, so we’d advise everyone to use online journey planners which will highlight the busiest services to help you plan an alternative time or route if you can.

“Our team are really looking forward to welcoming people back to the railway. As customers return, and the impact of COVID on our resources allows, we will continue to review and increase our services based

on feedback from our passengers, hospitals, vaccination centres, schools and businesses. This will ensure that we continue to support our customers and our communities as we did during the height of the pandemic.”

Passengers returning to rail should wear face coverings unless exempt and maintain social distance.

They can be reassured by the measures in place:

- GTR’s modern trains have air conditioning which replaces the fresh air in each carriage every 6-9 minutes
- Alerts will show busy trains in online journey planners such as National Rail Enquiries, where you can also subscribe to journey alerts and see information on busier services
- New ‘live maps’ service, which is available from the top right-hand side of each train service’s websites (Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern), shows the service status of each route
- Weekly COVID safety checks are carried out across trains and stations, looking at cleaning, passenger information, social distancing and the wearing of face coverings
- GTR sanitises all 2,700 of its train carriages every night and uses a long-lasting viricide across stations and trains which kills coronavirus for weeks at a time
- Independent laboratory results show that Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern trains are testing negative for COVID-19
- Over 1,000 touch-free hand sanitisers have been installed at stations since the start of the pandemic

The times of some Sunday services are changing and engineering work continues so the advice remains to check every journey in advance.

On Great Northern the last of the older Class 365s will be removed from service with the timetable change, to be replaced with modern air-conditioned trains.

Steve White added: “The Class 365 trains have been helpful ‘peak busters’ on a busy railway but don’t benefit from air conditioning, CCTV or selective door opening, making them less flexible than our other Great Northern fleets. Releasing these trains earlier than planned, and temporarily reassigning other trains to reflect reduced customer demand across the whole GTR network, allows us to offer a much-improved experience for passengers and make savings which is good news for the taxpayer.”

Photo credit: GTR/ John Vaughan