

New pay-as-you-go system launches for wider Bristol area

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Great Western Railway has launched a new pay-as-you-go smartcard to roll payments and tickets into one.

The GWR touch smartcard is available to use across the west of England area and valid on GWR, Cross Country and Transport for Wales rail services within the pay-as-you-go boundary from today, Tuesday 30 August.

Metro Mayor Dan Norris said: “If we are going to reach our really ambitious net-zero-by-2030 target, we need to make it as easy and affordable as possible for West of Englanders to use public transport. This will help us cut congestion, improve road safety and begin to clean up our air too.

“The new pay-as-you-go GWR touch smartcard makes it easier for passengers making local journeys across the West of England Mayoral region, letting people breeze through the ticket barriers rather than having to queue in the station for a printed ticket. And with money tight it’s good to know you’ll always be charged the best value walk-up, flexible fare. This is an important first step and I look forward to working with GWR on further future improvements to make it easier to top up, to integrate with other types of public transport and one day to be able to use debit cards to tap in.”

The card will enable passengers to get best value on walk-up fares for the day of travel, plus Weekly Season ticket price capping applied to end-to-end journeys between two stations over a Monday to Sunday seven-day week.

At the end of the day, GWR analyses all entry and exit taps and applies the most appropriate fare for the journeys made. The fare will be based upon the ticket types available on the day and the time travelled on services. It will then charge the best value walk-up, flexible fares as available on GWR.com made up of Standard Class Anytime, Off-Peak and Super-Off-Peak Day Single, and Day Return Fares.

GWR Head of Retail Lee Edworthy said: “We’re delighted to be able to introduce this innovative new product, making it easier for people to take advantage of using the train in the Bristol area.

“We’re really excited about the launch of the scheme and the future opportunities it provides in other areas and incorporating other modes of transport.”

Users will no longer need to buy a train ticket before jumping on a train in the pay-as-you-go travel area. You need to just touch in and touch out on yellow smartcard readers on the ticket gates or platform validators for each journey you make, and at the end of the day you’ll be charged the best walk-up fare. Should your journey be delayed, the train operator will let you know if you’re eligible for compensation.

The new scheme has been welcomed by leaders across the west of England area.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, said: “GWR’s new pay-as-you-go smartcard scheme will make public transport more convenient, helping people to travel in and around Bristol by train more easily and for cheaper.

“It’s great to see it launch today, hot on the heels of securing £95 million to double the capacity of Brunel’s historic station and unlock the promise of Temple Quarter. As we build Bristol’s first new local railway stations in almost a century, GWR’s price-capped tap-in and tap-out scheme is another step towards the modern public transport system Bristolians need and deserve.”

Victoria Matthews, Initiative Manager – West of England, Business West said: “This new smartcard will be great for business. It makes it easy for anyone who is working partly from home and partly in the office and in addition to helping to reduce car use and saving on fuel costs, it is another opportunity to support and sustain local and regional economic growth, whilst supporting our ambitious net-zero-by-2030 targets so Business West very much welcome this.”

Train tickets and [season tickets](#) can also be stored on your smartcard with pay-as-you-go, except a [Flexi Season ticket](#). GWR advises that a Flexi Season ticket is not used in combination with pay-as-you-go and customers should obtain a separate smartcard for these products.

Sevenside’s Heather Cullimore added:

“Sevenside Community Rail Partnership welcomes the introduction of the new pay-as-you-go GWR touch smart card on routes radiating from Bristol. Finding best value rail fares is sometimes confusing for

passengers, so a tap in and out system which does this automatically and accounts for railcard discounts is a great step forward.”

The service is the first step before expanding wider schemes to other areas of the GWR network. Future plans could also see the inclusion of bus services and other transport modes to offer a true multi-modal solution.

How do people get one?

You can get your GWR touch smartcard now and we'll let you know when you can start enjoying pay-as-you-go travel with GWR.

- register for a GWR.com account or login if you already have one
- go to 'Manage smartcards' within your account and choose 'Apply for a smartcard' from the drop-down menu
- fill out the form and submit your order
- you should usually receive your free smartcard within five working days

For further information including answers to some frequently asked questions please [click here](#).

The Smartcard system uses technology provided by iBlocks. iBlocks managing director, Tim Brewer, said: “We are especially pleased to be the key supplier to GWR for this smart ticketing programme in the Bristol region. GWR is continually at the forefront in improving passenger experience and this launch is yet another example of their forward thinking as this product will help to deliver the integrated transport and carbon reduction strategy for the city. iBlocks is the market leader in the rail industry in this field and so our association with GWR is fitting.”

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