

# New rail services for Northumberland

September 3, 2021



Transpennine Express has announced that from December this year it will begin a new service between Newcastle and Edinburgh calling at a number of key stations in Northumberland.

The service is planned to operate five times each weekday in each direction, calling (in most cases) at Newcastle, Cramlington, Morpeth, Widdrington, Alnmouth and Berwick-Upon-Tweed. In Scotland it will serve a new station at Reston when it opens in the coming months, Dunbar, and Edinburgh Waverley.

The service will operate until at least May 2023 and is the result of discussions between Transpennine Express, Transport Scotland, and the Rail North Partnership. Calls at Widdrington and Cramlington are subject to completion of industry procedures for operational and safety requirements, meaning these calls might be introduced after the start of the December 2021 timetable.

This announcement comes shortly after confirmation from LNER that the rail industry plans to introduce a controversial new timetable on the East Coast Main Line in May 2022 have been deferred. That proposed timetable would have seen a drastic reduction in the number of trains serving Morpeth and Berwick-Upon-Tweed.

Cllr Glen Sanderson, Leader of Northumberland County Council, said: "I'm delighted by this

announcement. Northumberland County Council has been campaigning for better rail services for communities located along the East Coast Main Line, and our work has yielded results. This new service will greatly improve peoples' ability to use the train to get to work, education and leisure opportunities. Taken together with the project we are leading to bring rail services back to the Northumberland Line, rail connectivity in Northumberland will be transformed."

Cllr Martin Gannon, Chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, said: "This is excellent news and shows how our region can improve transport links when we work together. Not only have we seen off the disastrous plans to decimate our rail service on the East Coast Main Line – for now at least – but it is now confirmed that we are going to see an exciting new service introduced that provides even better links between Northumberland, Newcastle and Scotland. We will continue to make the case for the government to invest in the East Coast Main Line in our region so that there is enough capacity for all of the services that need to use it, now and in the future, providing further appealing, sustainable transport options for people in the North East – a key objective of the North East Transport Plan."

Matthew Golton, Managing Director for TransPennine Express commented: "We are thrilled to have been able to respond to this request by Transport Scotland and the Rail North Partnership to operate five services per day in each direction between Edinburgh and Newcastle starting from December 2021.

"These will serve, in most cases, Edinburgh Waverley, Dunbar, Reston (once opened), Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnmouth, Widdrington, Morpeth, Cramlington and Newcastle with calls at Widdrington and Cramlington potentially introduced after the start of the December 2021 timetable due to industry approvals.

"Our new services will boost connectivity across communities in the Scottish Borders and Northumberland, as well as providing direct links to Edinburgh and Newcastle.

"This is excellent news for customers and stakeholders, and we can't wait to welcome them on-board so they can experience travelling on our modern Nova trains."

*Photo credit: Tony Miles*