

# Pay-as-you-go smartcard initiative aims to make rail trips easier and deliver best value

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Great Western Railway (GWR) has announced that it is set to launch a new pay-as-you-go smartcard to roll payments and tickets into one – with the aim of ensuring customers get the best value on the day of travel.

The GWR touch smartcard will be available to use across the west of England area. It will be valid on GWR, Cross Country and Transport for Wales rail services within the pay-as-you-go boundary.

The service is expected to be available to customers at the beginning of September and 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.



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.

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 impending customer 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. People just need to 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 they will be charged the best walk-up fare. Should a journey be delayed, the train operator will let you know if you're eligible for compensation.

Councillor Don Alexander, Bristol City Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "I am really pleased the GWR touch smartcard is launching and enjoyed finding out more about how it works.

"Smart ticketing plays an important role in making public transport more user friendly. This new pay-as-you-go card will help our residents access their local rail services and make sure they are getting the best available fares.

"We are continuing to work in partnership on rail improvements as part of the MetroWest programme and are looking forward to launching a series of new railway stations in the future to help connect Bristol communities to sustainable public transport."

Train tickets and **season tickets** can also be stored on a 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."