

# Rail industry makes final preparations for summer timetable change

May 15, 2019

## ***Rail Delivery Group***



**National Rail**



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Britain's train companies are prioritising punctuality and reliability for passengers as they prepare to introduce the new summer timetable on Sunday 19th May.

Rail timetables are changed twice each year to meet the needs of passengers and to introduce new services as extra carriages and infrastructure improvements are completed. This summer, more than 1,000 additional services will be introduced into the timetable and rail users are advised to check before they travel in areas where services are changing.

Learning from the disruption following last year's May timetable change and building on the effective implementation of the winter 2018 timetable, the industry's preparedness has been closely scrutinised by a cross industry task-force. Network Rail and train companies have worked together to ensure that changes are only made where there is a high confidence that the necessary infrastructure, rolling stock and staffing plans are ready.

The new services introduced from Sunday will mean more choice and capacity in areas including Bristol, Brighton, Glasgow and Hull. Including the 3,000 additional services introduced in timetable changes last year, the rail industry has introduced over 4,000 extra services a week since the beginning of 2018. In total, 6,400 additional services a week are expected to be added by the early 2020s. This will deliver more frequent trains for passengers, boosting the economy and better connecting towns and cities across the

country.

While many passengers will benefit from new services from next Sunday, other new services will become available over the following days and weeks as the industry employs a more gradual approach to maximise reliability and provide confidence for customers.

Introducing a thousand more services onto one of Europe's most congested railways presents a significant challenge and punctuality might see a small impact as the new timetables bed in, with staff and passengers getting used to new train times and calling patterns. Rail companies will closely monitor the services as the new timetable is introduced and respond quickly to any disruption.

As a precaution, rail companies will have extra staff on hand across the country and Network Rail will have rapid response teams on standby at key locations to deal with any infrastructure issues that may arise. Train companies are also increasing customer information. These extra measures follow months of hard work by hundreds of rail planners and engineers across the country to prepare for the timetable change.

Paul Plummer, chief executive of the Rail Delivery Group, which represents the rail industry, said: "Train companies and Network Rail are focussed on maintaining reliability as we deliver the step change in services people want and the country needs. We know that running more services cannot come at the expense of running a punctual railway.

"Introducing 1,000 more services a week to meet demand on a congested network poses a significant challenge but we are working together to ensure improvements are introduced with the absolute minimum of disruption."