

South Western Railway improves West of England timetable with more direct services to and from London

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South Western Railway's (SWR) December 2023 timetable will increase the number of direct, weekday services to and from London Waterloo on the West of England Line.

Direct services on the line that connects London Waterloo with Salisbury, Yeovil Junction and Exeter St Davids were reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those reductions almost halved the number of direct, off-peak services between London Waterloo, Andover and Salisbury, while customers travelling off-peak from London Waterloo to Overton, Whitchurch and Grateley must currently change at Basingstoke and wait up to 30 minutes for an onward connection.

However, following an increase in customer numbers, SWR is introducing a new timetable from Sunday 10 December that will see ten services on the West of England Line extended to and from London Waterloo

on weekdays.

There will be more services to Basingstoke while Salisbury and Andover will once again see two trains per hour to and from London Waterloo, with off-peak direct services restored to Overton, Whitchurch and Grateley.

Two services will be extended to London Waterloo from East Devon, providing customers between Honiton and Basingstoke with two, and customers between Exeter and Honiton with one, additional direct service to the capital.

Customers travelling to Yeovil will also see an uplift in direct services. SWR is the only operator to provide direct services between London and the Somerset town, and customers will soon have three extended, direct services to Yeovil Junction, and two to Yeovil Pen Mill, per weekday.

Timetable changes for services to London Waterloo from:

- Honiton at 0620, calling at all stations to Basingstoke and additionally at Woking, arriving at London Waterloo at 0918
- Exeter St Davids at 0641, calling at all stations to Basingstoke and additionally at Woking and Clapham Junction, arriving at London Waterloo at 1020
- Gillingham (Dorset) at 0918 and 1618, calling at all stations to Basingstoke and additionally at Woking
- Salisbury at 1047, 1147, 1247, 1347, 1747 and 2052*, calling at all stations to Basingstoke and additionally at Woking

Timetable changes for services from London Waterloo to:

- Yeovil Junction at 0950 (via Westbury) and 1550, calling at all stations from Basingstoke to Salisbury and additionally at Clapham Junction and Woking
- Salisbury at 1050, 1150, 1250, 1450 and 2250, calling at all stations from Basingstoke to Salisbury and additionally at Clapham Junction and Woking
- The 1438 Basingstoke to Gillingham will start at London Waterloo at 1350 and terminate at Salisbury at 1520, calling additionally at Clapham Junction and Woking
- Yeovil Pen Mill at 1851
- Salisbury at 1950, calling at all stations from Basingstoke to Salisbury and additionally at Clapham Junction

Steve Tyler, Planning and Performance Director for South Western Railway, said: “We’re delighted to

increase the number of through services between London Waterloo and stations west of Basingstoke on weekdays, which were reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This service uplift means that customers travelling between Overton, Andover, Whitchurch, Grateley, Salisbury and London Waterloo will benefit from additional direct services, while reducing waiting times and offering additional journey options for customers at Basingstoke.

“We’re also pleased to be able to enhance the service between London Waterloo and destinations further west, such as Gillingham, Honiton, Yeovil and Exeter, allowing greater choice for our customers.”

Simon Jupp, Member of Parliament for East Devon and Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Department for Transport said: “This very welcome improvement in South Western Railway services towards London is fantastic news, particularly for residents of the South West who will have faster and more convenient journeys during the week.

“The frequency of services is something I’ve raised with South Western Railway and I’ve no doubt these improvements will encourage more people to travel by train.”

*The 2053 Salisbury to Basingstoke, formerly the 2047, will no longer call at Grateley, Whitchurch or Overton.

Other changes for the West of England:

- A new service, the 1525 from Salisbury to Gillingham calling at Tisbury, will be introduced, terminating at Gillingham at 1548
- The 1725, 1825 and 1925 Exeter St Davids to London Waterloo services will additionally call at Grateley, Whitchurch and Overton
- The 1847 Salisbury to Basingstoke service will be extended to Reading, terminating at 1947
- The 1947 Salisbury to Basingstoke service will be extended to Reading, terminating at 2045, and will no longer call at Grateley, Whitchurch or Overton
- The 2047 Salisbury to Basingstoke will be extended to London Waterloo, departing at the later time of 2052, terminating at 2212, and will no longer call at Grateley, Whitchurch or Overton
- The 2149 Salisbury to Reading service will be withdrawn
- The 2238 Basingstoke to Salisbury service will be withdrawn

Timetables will be available at southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey/timetables.

Photo credit: South Western Railway