

## #TheFutureIsFlexible: new era of rail travel arrives with new flexible season tickets

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A new national flexible rail ticket, matching modern working habits and saving passengers hundreds of pounds, will be available to commuters across England once travel restrictions are lifted.

As the Government publishes the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail today, setting out the path towards a truly passenger-focused railway, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced that “the future is flexible.”

The new flexible ticket will be on-sale on 21 June, for use by 28 June.

The paperless tickets will allow travel on any eight days in a 28-day period, with passengers able to tap smartcards or scan mobiles at the station, with no need to select the days of travel in advance.

The change has the potential to save commuters hundreds of pounds, providing greater choice and flexibility.

Grant Shapps, Transport Secretary, said: “For many, the idea of travelling five days a week to the office is fast becoming a relic of the past.

“The future is flexible: passengers want a simple, stress-free option, and new flexible tickets make fares fairer.

“As we kickstart the biggest reform of our railways in a generation, we’re committed to creating a modern railway that works for its passengers.”

Exact details of savings will be provided before tickets go on sale. However, analysis shows that two day-a-week commuters buying multiple new flexible season tickets could save the following in a year when compared to the cost of daily tickets:

- Over £250 from Woking to London
- Over £200 from York to Leeds
- Over £60 from Southampton Central to Winchester
- Over £160 from Stafford to Birmingham
- Over £220 from Liverpool to Manchester

Three day-a-week commuters could save:

- Over £220 from St Albans City to London
- Over £120 from Bromsgrove to Birmingham
- Over £90 from Weston-Super-Mare to Bristol Temple Meads
- Over £330 from Chelmsford to Stratford

This new national offer also reflects the long-term decline in the use of traditional season tickets, with a change in working practices having been accelerated by the outbreak of COVID-19.

With the pandemic sweeping away the traditional commute and leading to a significant increase in home-working, this ticket reflects the new priorities of the public.

Flexible season tickets and greater discounts are just one of a package of measures to reform the railways to put passengers first. The Government has also announced today it will explore new ‘design and ride’ standards to eradicate ‘ironing-board seating’, and efforts to ensure fewer repetitious and annoying pre-recorded announcements.

Responding to the news, Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions at the Rail Delivery Group said: “The pandemic has recast how and where people work, which is why we’ve worked with government to introduce new season tickets that will give commuters the freedom and flexibility to divide their time between home and the office. New flexible fares will be key to getting people back onto trains, supporting the country’s economic and environmental recovery.

“Flexi Season tickets are a step in the right direction, but to really maximise the benefits and make it easier for people to get good value fares requires government to go further and get under the bonnet to fix the engine of the fares system.”

*Photo credit: Department for Transport*