

Train capacity could be reduced to as little as a tenth as lockdown eased

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The Rail Delivery Group is warning rail passengers to continue to only use trains if necessary.

The message, from the group which represents train operators and Network Rail, comes as the Government sets out roadmap to gradually ease coronavirus restrictions.

Robert Nisbet, Director of Nations and Regions at the RDG warns that there will be space for as few as a tenth of the usual number of passengers.

This is due to the requirement to maintain 2 metres distance between passengers, to keep people safe and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Mr Nisbet said: "As the government has said, people should only use trains if they have no alternative. There will be space for as few as a tenth of the usual number of passengers so we need everyone's help to keep trains for those who really need them, so please only use the railway if you absolutely have to.

"If you do have to travel by train, help us get you safely where you need to go. Plan ahead by buying tickets online and travelling off-peak. Consider others by maintaining social distancing where possible and wearing a face covering. Stay safe by using contactless, washing your hands and carrying hand sanitiser.

"As well as gradually increasing services from next week to support the nation during the next phase of the coronavirus response and running longer trains in some places, we will be cleaning trains and

stations throughout the day, every day. We will be managing capacity on trains and in stations and increasing signage to help people get around.”

Meanwhile London Northwestern Railway is urging passengers to only use the train for essential journeys ahead of a new timetable coming into effect.

With social distancing advice still in place, capacity on trains remains limited and the operator is asking its customers to only travel by train if they have no other option.

Passengers who do use the train are being advised to check their journeys when the latest timetable comes into effect on Monday 18 May. The timetable includes the reinstatement of services through The Potteries which were temporarily halted last month.

Those who do travel are urged to follow government advice to wear face coverings while travelling. Other measures such as one-way systems at stations may be in operation. Passengers are also being encouraged to avoid travelling at peak times and to buy their tickets in advance online.

Lawrence Bowman, customer experience director for London Northwestern Railway, said: “I would like to thank all the people who have stayed away from the railway during the national emergency. Since the travel restrictions have been in place we’ve been able to help thousands of key workers make essential journeys across the region.

“The well-being of our customers and staff is our top priority which is why we are asking our passengers to act considerately and think very carefully if they really need to travel by train.”

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