

# Train services in Devon and Cornwall double

May 20, 2019



Train services between Plymouth and Penzance are set to double as part of Great Western Railway's new May timetable.

To be operated by new Intercity Express Trains and refurbished Castle Class trains, offering more seats and greater comfort, the new timetable will see regular half-hourly local stopping services between Plymouth and Penzance, doubling the frequency of off peak services. The additional trains will provide over 4,000 extra seats every weekday.

Announcing the timetable change, GWR Managing Director Mark Hopwood said: "I am delighted that we have been able to deliver these improvements today, and another significant step to provide more modern trains, and more frequent services on almost every part of our network.

"These new, routine half-hourly services will have a significant impact for those who travel in Devon and Cornwall and the communities we serve; and paving the way for mainline improvements between London and Devon and Cornwall to come later in the year.

At present GWR services on the line are for the most part every hour, with some extra services during peak times. The seven new services in each direction will help plug the gaps, providing a near half-hourly service for the majority of the day.

Cornwall Council cabinet portfolio holder for transport Geoff Brown said: “We know that good public transport connections are important to our residents, businesses and visitors. That’s why improving public transport in Cornwall is a priority for this Council. The introduction of this new and improved rail timetable by GWR is a major milestone in the creation of a One Public Transport System for Cornwall – a fully integrated and sustainable public transport network which will link bus, rail, ferry and airport timetables.”

The increase in services follows a £30 million signalling upgrade delivered by Network Rail between Plymouth and Penzance. The modernisation has seen 21 additional signals added along the Cornish mainline as well as upgrades to seven level crossings to improve safety. This work enables more services to run and has improved the reliability of the railway in Cornwall.

The Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has invested £3.2 million in the signalling project from the Government’s Local Growth Fund.

LEP Chief Executive Glenn Caplin said: “These new services give better connectivity to Cornish businesses and improved access to employment and education for people across Cornwall. With more capacity in the public transport system we can boost productivity and grow the economy.”

With the delivery of the new Intercity Express Train fleet complete, and a further timetable change in December, GWR also plans to improve the number of direct trains from London to Devon and Cornwall, and reduce journey times between Paddington and Penzance by up to 14 minutes.

Included in the May timetable change are also a host of Summer improvements to GWR’s branch line services:

- On the Riviera line, additional trains run to and from Paignton on Saturdays, including more through trains to and from London
- On the Tamar Valley line, a later last train on Sundays runs in each direction at 2001 from Plymouth and 2050 from Gunnislake
- On the Tarka line, trains to and from Sampford Courtenay and Okehampton are reintroduced on Sundays for the summer period
- On the Looe Valley line, some Saturday and Sunday trains are re-timed and a later last train runs on Saturdays in each direction at 2041 from Liskeard and 2113 from Looe
- On the Atlantic Coast line, most local stopping trains are withdrawn on Saturdays, to allow direct long-distance services from London and the North of England to operate to and from Newquay. On Sundays, an enhanced level of service is introduced for the summer period
- On the St Ives Bay line, the new Park & Ride facility is planned to open at St Erth at the end of May 2019. This will replace the existing site at Lelant Saltings, which will only be served by one train in each direction. All trains will now call at Carbis Bay, and some will call additionally at Lelant. On Sundays, train services will start earlier at around 0900