

[News story: Passengers in South West Wales to shape future of Great Western Rail service](#)

Passengers in South West Wales are on track to get improved rail journeys, as the UK Government seeks views of people in Carmarthen and Swansea on how they want the Great Western rail service to look in the future.

The UK Government has launched a [consultation](#) on the future of the Great Western Franchise and is asking passengers, businesses and local councils for their views at two consultation events on 13 February 2018.

Join the conversation at:

- The Atrium, Gorseinon Development Trust, Gorseinon, Swansea between 2pm – 4pm
- Teifi Suite, Halliwell Centre, UWTSO Carmarthen Campus between 6pm – 8pm

Billions of pounds are being spent to upgrade services for passengers on Great Western, which carries 100 million passengers a year and stretches from London to Pembroke Dock and from Portsmouth to Worcester.

Passengers are already experiencing improvements to their journeys across south Wales on brand-new bi-mode IEP trains which provide more seats and more comfortable journeys. Timetable changes will also mean faster and more frequent trips on many routes by 2019.

In order to ensure that the next Great Western Rail franchise is delivering what people want, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is calling on people to attend the UK Government events in Carmarthen and Swansea to have their say on how future services can be better shaped to deliver for passengers in south west Wales.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Our railways provide vital links for rural communities, businesses and visitors across south Wales. It makes perfect sense that those that use the services every day should have their say in improving these services.

This consultation discusses ways in which we can give the professionals who run our railways more flexibility to innovate and to provide the best solutions for passengers. We want to hear your views about how you'd like that to work in practice and what can be done to improve it.

The UK Government has decided to extend the franchise for the current

operator Great Western Railway (GWR) until March 2020 to make sure passengers get the best possible service while current route upgrades are carried out.

And we will also seek to agree terms for them to continue operating until 2022, which will allow the improved services to be in place fully before running a competition for a new long-term franchise.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns added:

The UK Government is investing in the biggest modernisation of the railways for over a century. Working with GWR, we are bringing the very latest in rail technology to some of the world's oldest lines, putting passengers first so that they benefit from a transformational programme of upgrades as quickly as possible.

The benefits of these improvements will be felt right across the franchise area. But as the franchise continues to grow into the 2020s, we want to ensure every line, station and passenger remains central to the train operator's strategy. This consultation asks passengers how they want their railway to look into the 2020s and beyond and how it will best deliver for them.

The [consultation](#) will close on 21 February.