

Year of action on railway starts with new fares trials

- new fares trial for GTR passengers and start of LNER trials, providing more flexible tickets and informing wider improvements across the rail system
- government to establish new 'fares trials fund' to establish further fares trials across the country
- trials to provide evidence base in advance of the independent Keith Williams Rail Review, which will provide recommendations focused on creating a simpler, more effective railway system

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (2 January 2020) told passengers to expect a year of action towards creating a rail industry relentlessly focused on improving their experience.

Steps to pilot new fares systems have been announced today, designed to support people who want to travel and work flexibly.

A new fares trial on Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) will provide passengers on certain routes with the opportunity to purchase better value tickets aimed at part-time workers, reflecting modern working patterns.

The government will also establish a new 'fares trials fund', to kickstart further trials this year across the country. These will help thousands of passengers save money, and provide the foundations for reform.

Reforms of the rail system will be set out in a white paper this year, responding to the recommendations of [Keith Williams' root and branch review of our rail network](#). The recommendations will include plans for a more modern rail system, including ending the complicated franchising model to create a simpler, more effective system.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said:

This government will improve the railway system to ensure the focus is always on putting passengers first.

This commitment begins with the launch of innovative fares trials, to help explore the benefits and costs of a clearer, more flexible and fairer fares system.

Delivering such significant change will take time, but passengers can have total confidence that these trials will help provide the evidence needed to develop wider reforms to the fares system and a significantly better service.

The announcement of GTR trials coincides with the start of trials on LNER

today, enabling passengers to purchase cheaper single-leg tickets on services from London to Leeds, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Previously a passenger travelling between London and Edinburgh purchasing a ticket at the station would have paid £150.50 for a Super Off-Peak Single ticket or £151.50 for a Super Off-Peak Return ticket from 2 January. Under this trial, the cost of a Super Off-Peak Single is now £75.75.

The chair of the government's root-and-branch rail review has set out that his recommendations will focus on making the current system simpler and more convenient for passengers.

Independent Chair of the Williams Rail Review, Keith Williams, said:

My review's proposals will make recommendations aimed at modernising the railway, creating a system that's built for its passengers.

The trial launched today will help to shape my recommendations for a fairer, more flexible and modern service, which better reflects the way people want to travel.

The move comes as the government freezes regulated fares in line with inflation for the seventh year running. Since 2014 fares have, on average, remained below the annual inflation cap.

The government has also helped cut the cost of fares for a generation of passengers through the new 16-17 and 26-30 'millennial' railcard, and will be rolling out a new veteran's railcard to give 700,000 former servicemen and women a third off their rail costs.