

# East Coast Main Line May 2022 Timetable Change

An introduction and supporting information from the rail industry

# May 2022 Timetable: A Cross Industry Effort

The proposed May 2022 timetable has been developed by Network Rail with all train and freight operators on the East Coast Main Line. It has involved balancing long distance high-speed, regional and commuter/local services alongside the needs of the rail freight sector.

The new timetable will deliver the benefits of over a decade of planning and investment in the East Coast Main Line. Upgraded infrastructure and new train fleets across the route will mean better journeys for some passengers between London King's Cross, the East of England, the North of England and Scotland – supporting the economy and helping to protect the environment – although the industry does recognise that some passengers will see service levels and connectivity reduced as a result of this timetable.

The timetable follows a detailed forecast of rail capacity on the East Coast following the East Coast Upgrade, and is based on a subsequent decision by the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) in 2016 about how we can use that capacity. It also requires some operators to have their contingent track access rights amended as well as amending neighbouring services, including requiring the planned split of East Midlands Railway's Liverpool to Norwich services at Nottingham to be implemented, the detail of which is still to be worked through.

Realising the benefits to long distance connectivity on the East Coast inevitably involves some changes to some existing local and regional services. This means that the timetable does involve a series of trade-offs which we'd welcome your views on although changes are unlikely to be able to be made.

The May 2022 timetable will not be the end of our journey to improve the service we offer to our passengers. The industry is currently examining options for potential changes beyond 2022 about how to further enhance rail capacity on and around the East Coast, whilst also reflecting the projected levels of demand we expect to see as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on east-west connectivity in the north of England.

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For the development of this new timetable we have looked to:

- **Balance frequency and reliability.** Passengers want a well-designed timetable with the frequency they need but which has enough space between services to avoid congestion and delays. As we increase the frequency of services on the East Coast we want to continue to deliver high reliability for our customers.
- **Balance connectivity and journey times.** The investment in upgraded infrastructure and new trains allows us to improve journey times and compete with other modes of transport. A key way to keep journey times down is to not over-serve stations. So we have balanced the need for fast journeys with serving all destinations.
- **Balance ambition with realism.** There has been significant investment in the East Coast, but we still need to remain realistic about both the opportunities and remaining constraints on the route. The timetable needs to work well in reality as well as on paper. This means some difficult trade-offs on parts of the route, including for some East to West journeys, have been necessary.
- **Deliver for the future.** The pandemic is likely to have a continuing impact on our lives, and the rail industry is no exception to this. But we are confident that demand to visit places, enjoy leisure and retail experience and meet colleagues, friends and family will remain. That means providing a timetable that will give the reliability and connectivity that passengers want for the long term.

We are now consulting on proposed changes to the timetable for May 2022 and want to hear your views and receive any feedback you have on these plans.

The timetable is based on a series of decisions about investment in infrastructure and train fleets, as well as access decisions made by the ORR. This means that the structure of the timetable for May 2022 is fixed.

It may be possible to make some local adjustments based on the feedback received, with any wider comments about the balance of services considered for future timetable iterations. We are aiming for all train operators to have their plans in place by early Autumn to deliver the new timetable from May next year.

This is a major change for the East Coast Main Line but it is not the end of improvements to services, either for trains travelling North-South or for those on East-West routes. We have further upgrade plans including bringing in the next generation of digital signalling. Some operators have plans to invest more in their train fleet, and Network Rail is looking at options for infrastructure investment, including on the congested section of the route north of York.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation. Your feedback will enable us to derive the most benefit we can from the investment in the East Coast, and to meet our ongoing commitment to make changes which deliver for passengers.

# May 2022 Timetable: Performance

Network Rail is leading a wide-ranging programme to better understand performance as part of the introduction of the May 2022 timetable. The aim of this is to increase the number of trains, use the full capabilities of new trains, and review infrastructure capabilities so that we don't deliver the new timetable at the expense of good performance.

This work is re-evaluating a large portion of the 'building blocks' of the timetable known as Timetable Planning Rules (TPRs). These rules enable us to move trains safely and efficiently across the network and cover things like;

- The length of time between trains on different parts of the network to keep trains a safe distance from each other.
- Taking account of factors that lead to differences in train performance each day, including on things like weather conditions or a speed restriction being in place.
- The length of time trains dwell at different stations.
- How long it takes the signalling equipment to safely change between routes.
- The speed trains can move across critical parts of our rail infrastructure.

May 2022 will be the first timetable to fully realise the benefits of faster acceleration and deceleration of new trains and use this to support improved journey times.

New trains bring an improved reliability compared to older rolling stock and allow the use of cutting edge technology to monitor the success of any changes we make.

For the May 2022 timetable this means we are analysing performance to an extent that we haven't done before on the East Coast. We understand more about conflicting train movements, the time trains will be held at signals and the impact of specific pinch-points on the route.

This is a step-change in the information used to predict performance.