

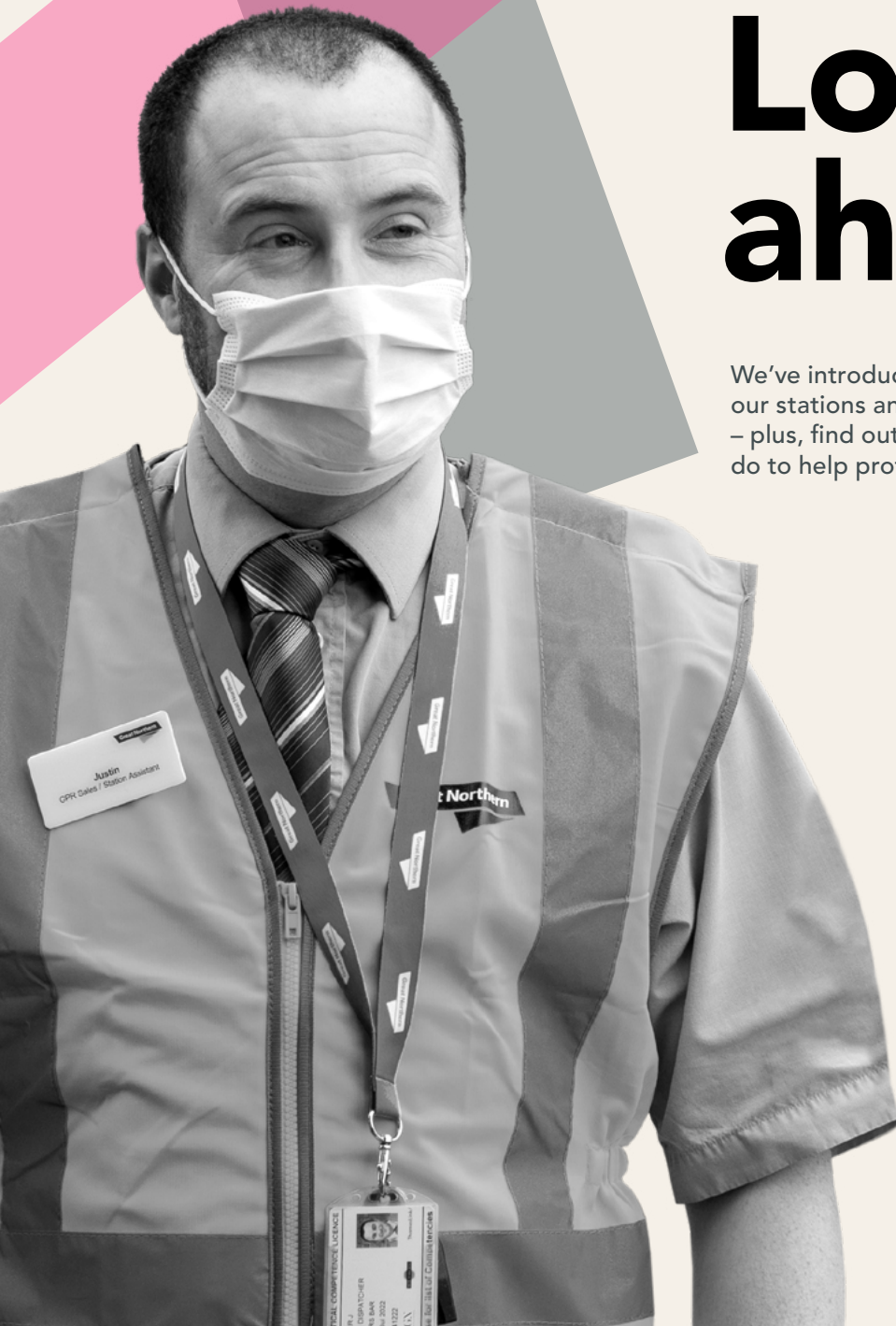
Autumn 2020

# connections

WE'RE WITH YOU FOR EVERY JOURNEY

## Looking ahead

We've introduced lots of changes across our stations and trains to keep you safe – plus, find out the little things you can do to help protect yourself and others.



Great Northern

**GX**  
GATWICK EXPRESS

SOUTHERN

ThamesLink/

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to the railway



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# Hello from Patrick, our Chief Executive Officer

**On behalf of the whole team at Southern, Gatwick Express, Great Northern and Thameslink, I am delighted to welcome you back to the railway.**

To say this has been a challenging period for the United Kingdom would be something of an understatement. Little did I know, as I sat down to write the introduction to the previous edition of *Connections*, exactly what 2020 had in store.

Over the past few months, we've all had to rethink the way we work, live and travel. And, whether you travelled with us as a key worker at the height of the UK's restrictions, or settled into working from home, thank you for doing your bit.

When I look back over this challenging time, I think about how well my colleagues responded to the changes, and I can honestly say I have never felt prouder. Throughout everything, they've remained determined, committed and resilient – especially when it comes to helping customers navigate the new timetables, safety measures and station layouts.

With the easing of restrictions, I'm delighted to see many more customers gradually travelling again using our trains. Once again the railway is able to play a major role in reconnecting communities, supporting the economy, and helping people to see loved ones again.

For our part, we are determined that everyone who would like to travel is supported to do so. We have implemented an enhanced cleaning regime, new smart ticketing and even more ways for passengers to access the latest safety information – find out more on page 7.

At the time of writing, we have just welcomed school children back to our network. We have introduced a set of small changes to help support the start of the academic year, building on the significant uplift of services introduced in July. With just under 3,000 daily services across the network, we are confident that we are ready to support many more customers to start travelling again.

Our promise to you is that we will continue to build a railway with customers at its heart. We will adapt our services to the challenges ahead, we will do everything we can to help keep people safe and we will keep you informed every step of the way.

The next few months will almost certainly have challenges of their own, but getting people back on trains, buses and bikes and not stationary in cars in bumper-to-bumper traffic, will be critical to our health and our future. We will be working with businesses and community groups over the next few months to reinvigorate our communities. I would like to thank you for choosing to travel by rail today – by doing so, you are helping the UK return to normal.



**Patrick Verwer**



# Key workers supporting key workers

Over the past six months, we've been proud to join the rest of the country in supporting and celebrating our key workers – especially with 200,000 of them each week relying on our very own front-line station colleagues.

Since March we've worked with the 70 hospitals across our network, as well as NHS suppliers, passengers and other stakeholders, and have introduced the current timetable (7 September) to help as many people as possible get to work and back home, with enough space to maintain social distancing.

And, to show our support in our own special way, we also wrapped three train carriages across our Thameslink, Great Northern and Southern services with a personal 'thank you' to the NHS and our own key workers.

It's been a challenging time for our own colleagues too and we're proud of how hard they've worked to keep things running smoothly and safely. With this in mind, we're taking a moment to celebrate some of our very own Railway Heroes.



## Justin Forster



### Station Assistant

There's more to this friendly face than meets the eye. As well as loving working on the railway, Justin has a black belt in taekwondo and a degree in computer studies.

*"Through the pandemic, I've noticed most people are socially distancing where they can and are wearing face coverings. I wear my mask because it's the right thing to do and I try to set an example."*

### Train Presentation Cleaner

After spending many years driving London buses, Jason recently swapped road for rail and hasn't looked back.

*"My number one priority is making sure trains are clean and ready for use. The new cleaning products we've introduced help prevent onward spreading of the virus and these are being used on all 2,700 train carriages on the network."*

## Jason Davis





## Nadia Paskova



### Train Presentation Cleaner

Nadia enjoys taking care of the local wildlife just as much the trains. Recently she rescued two baby pigeons that had fallen from a nest and took them to a local RSPCA centre.

*"We are doing our bit and now we need the public to do theirs too. We encourage passengers not to touch doors and buttons with their hands, but instead to use elbows to help slow the spread of germs."*



### Shunter

Reece found a way to combine his children's interest in trains with his own love of football last season by travelling with his son to Finsbury Park station to see Arsenal play at home.

*"I enjoy everything about my job; the best I've ever had. I pride myself on punctuality – I hate a train leaving late. It's important that customers have clean and punctual trains."*

## Reece Hill



## Harsitt Chandak



### Station Manager

Self-professed 'people person' and globe-trotter, Harsitt is looking forward to welcoming more customers back, with safety the key priority.

*"I've been a station manager for six years, but station life has been very different during the pandemic. To be a good station manager, you really need to know your local people and regular travellers. It's a real community."*



# Protecting you all the way

**With lockdown easing, it's great to see more and more people back on the move. But after months of staying at home, we understand that travel may seem daunting – so we've been making changes across our network to help keep you safe.**

We're supporting social distancing measures and using enhanced cleaning routines at every stage. In stations, we've installed over 1,000 hand sanitiser points, rolled out 19,000 floor signs, and are sanitising touchpoints such as screens, buttons and handrails throughout the day.

On board, we're also using a long-lasting cleaning treatment on all 2,700 of our carriages, and have created as much space on our trains as possible – running over 3,000 daily train services.

**"We have been keeping a close eye on our capacity to make sure that people have as much space on our trains as possible."**

**Chris Fowler**

Customer Services Director  
Southern & Gatwick Express



# Safety steps to get on board with

**There are lots of little things you can do to help protect yourself and others. Here are 10 easy-to-follow tips:**

**Don't travel if you're feeling unwell**

If you're experiencing any symptoms, it's always best to stay home.



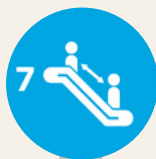
**Avoid busy times, especially rush hour**

Staggering your journey will make it easier to keep your distance from others.



**Stand on the right of the escalator, leaving a gap in front**

There should be at least a couple of steps between you and the next person.



**Try to keep your distance from others**

Take extra care during busy times and when you get on or off the train.



**Board at the front or back of the train**

Most people go for the middle, so there may be more space at either end.



**Wear a face covering**

This is especially important while on the train.



**Pay using contactless or Key Smartcard**

Avoid going to the ticket office and/or machines as much as possible.



**Open doors with your elbow**

Instead of pushing the button with your hands, to help slow down the spread of the virus.



**Avoid eating or drinking on board**

Having any snacks beforehand means you can keep your face covered for the whole journey.



**Follow social distancing measures at stations**

Look out for signs and queuing systems if you need help.



# Meet Jenny



Jenny's title is Customer Service Director for Thameslink and Great Northern. That means she's in charge of listening to your feedback and is helping make sure everyone can travel safely with us, with the help of her team.

Having joined just before the pandemic, Jenny quickly learned the ropes and has played a vital role in making sure everything is safe for when you're ready to travel with us again.

## What does your typical workday look like?

I'm sure everyone would agree that there's no such thing as a typical day on the railway, but there are two main parts to my job. The first is reviewing feedback and making decisions that will help improve our customers' experience in everything from safety to accessibility and punctuality.

The other thing I love doing is getting out of the office to visit the teams working on board our

trains and at our stations. I'm so proud of what they do day in day out, especially during the last few difficult months, and it's great to be able to thank them personally, hear their thoughts, and find out what customers are saying.

## The best thing about your job?

Without a doubt, it's very much the people I work with. I work with a diverse team of people who are all passionate about what they do. Being part of the railways is something special. Our customers trust us to make the right decisions, and it is a real privilege to work with people who make this their priority.

***"The other thing I love doing is getting out of the office to visit the teams working on board our trains and at our stations."***

## Has much changed since you started?

As you can imagine, there've been a number of really important changes, both at stations and on our trains.

These include enhanced cleaning regimes, one-way systems and hand sanitiser units, not forgetting to wear face coverings on all our services and at our stations, unless you are exempt for health reasons.'

We've also welcomed some innovations to help keep the trains moving on time while still staying safe. As an example, we are now using electronic whistles at our stations so we don't have blow into them. They even sound just like the real thing!

## What has 2020 taught you?

While it wasn't the start to my new role that I'd predicted, COVID-19 has shown me how we can quickly adapt to help customers. Something I learned early on in my career, and keep relearning, is that it's so easy to either make or break someone's day through what we do.

I've also seen our customers being fantastically supportive by following the guidelines, and we make it our priority to respond with honesty, empathy and open communication – especially when things don't go to plan.'

## How can people stay safe while travelling?

We're really looking forward to welcoming you back and want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable journey with us. So, alongside following government advice, the best things people can do are to regularly wash their hands or use hand sanitiser, wear a face covering and buy tickets online before travelling. If anyone's looking for more advice, it's always worth visiting our website.





# Learning from our schools

**As your children returned to school this September, we wanted to understand how to best help them travel safely with us, so we contacted over 600 local schools and colleges within a 1-mile radius of our stations.**

Using the information they gave us, we updated timetables, introduced bigger trains and added extra stops in key areas since 7 September.

We've also made sure that keyGo on Key Smartcards accept student railcards, so they can avoid queues, reducing social contact even if they choose to pay-as-you-go.

Steve White, Chief Operating Officer says: "After extensive discussion with schools and colleges our latest timetable better meets the needs of students now they've returned for the new academic year.

"Please remember: you must wear a face covering and you should always wash or sanitise your hands before, and after, every journey. Use contactless, plan ahead and check our websites to see which trains are highlighted as busy."



# Stay in control of your journey

During the summer, we've been making it even easier for you to access the most up-to-date travel information, so you can make the best decision for you. When planning your next journey, here are three new tools you can use:



## Busy train markers

Our teams are constantly keeping an eye on how many people are on board and in stations. You can check for live status updates on which trains are busy using the National Rail [website](#) and [app](#).



## Websites update

We have a dedicated [COVID-19 information page](#) on our websites. This is where you can find the latest travel information, timetables, and our refund policy.



## Alert me by Messenger

Simply press the "Keep me updated" button on the [National Rail journey planner](#) and you can receive personalised updates and information on Facebook Messenger direct from our control centre.

# Community matters



**This edition, we have news of two projects involving our teams supporting NHS workers and local communities surrounding our stations.**

We partnered with several local authorities and NHS Trusts across our network to donate 107 abandoned bikes to NHS staff. Partners include West Sussex County Council, Handle Bars, Luton Borough Council, St Albans Council & Central Bedfordshire Council.

Bikes that have been abandoned and not claimed, were serviced, repaired and matched up with NHS staff.

We're also proud to have launched The Railway Food Collection on 21 July. The 6-week pilot for the industry was backed by Bedford Foodbank and The Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership (BMECP) Food Bank in Brighton and introduces handy new food drop-off points in our Bedford and Brighton stations.

It came as a result of The Trussell Trust food bank network seeing an 89% increase in people reaching out for support compared to the same period last year, as well as a 107% increase in emergency food parcels for children at the height of lockdown restrictions.

Over 800 meals were donated by members of the public and our colleagues. A huge thanks to all involved.

We hope these drop-off points encouraged additional donations, helping even more families across our network.



## Did you know?

You can now choose to donate your Delay Repay to NHS charities if your train is delayed for 15+ minutes.

**Click here to find out more.**



# Looking out for those at risk

**Our priority has been to ensure we support key workers who are relying on us to get them to work safely, but we're also keeping an eye on the vulnerable people on our network.**

While there were far fewer people using our stations during spring, we have been making use of our CCTV hub manned by volunteers to spot people who are most at risk on our network, allowing us to provide better support to those who need it most.



**Over 289 incidents with vulnerable people spotted between April – July**

While children and young people were out of school, we've been ensuring teachers and parents have information on railway risks and trespassing. We reached out to secondary schools with industry guidance on trespassing, supported by Network Rail and the British Transport Police.

**Dan Moon**



Brighton-based volunteer, Dan Moon, has worked on the railway for 13 years and says:

**"There are a lot of vulnerable people out there at the moment and we're the eyes to spot them. You might not see anything for five days and then there may be one day when you spot someone who is vulnerable and get help to them, possibly saving that person's life."**



# Gatwick station upgrade

Throughout the last few months, progress has continued on the £150m station upgrade at Gatwick Airport, despite COVID-19 restrictions. Set to transform the station, the changes will improve accessibility and customer experience while cutting delays.

By September 2020, our team will have completed critical work and can start building the new station concourse above platforms 5, 6 and 7, with construction activity set to continue throughout this autumn and winter.

Angie Doll, Managing Director, Southern and Gatwick Express says:

**"This is a key upgrade for the whole south coast at this important airport and interchange station. It's great that the team have been able to adapt plans quickly in the past few months so that customers benefit from the upgrades as soon as possible."**



## East Coast upgrade works – dates confirmed

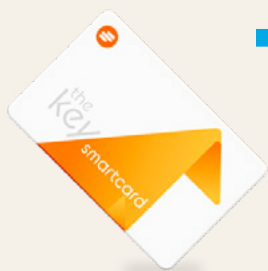


**Key works on the East Coast will now take place between Friday 26 February and Sunday 6 June 2021 as a result of COVID-19. The £1.2 billion upgrade includes essential replacement of tracks and track layout on the 1.5-mile approach into London King's Cross.**

It will mean that for three months there will be temporary changes to LNER, Great Northern, Thameslink, Hull Trains and Grand Central services. Peak services into and out of King's Cross will be slightly reduced, while off-peak services will be less impacted.

We'll continue to work with other train operators on these lines to develop the new timetable – all while bearing in mind any changes in travel demands – and will be able to give you more details this winter.

Tom Moran, Managing Director, Thameslink and Great Northern says *"This is essential work at King's Cross and we will be working with Network Rail in the months ahead to keep disruption to customers to an absolute minimum."*



# The smart way to socially distance

**You can now skip queues at stations and minimise social contact by loading, viewing and checking the expiry dates of any of your tickets on your Key Smartcard from your phone.**

It's just one of the ways we're helping everyone stay safe on our network.

If you'd like to view existing tickets, check expiry dates and buy or renew your weekly, monthly and annual tickets, download the latest version of any of the Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern [On Track apps](#) today. Then simply tap your Smartcard to your phone, and it'll be ready to use in just 15 minutes.



Just like other contactless payments, this works using the NFC technology in smartphones, so check to see if your phone is compatible [here](#).



If you prefer to buy single or return tickets, you can also link a bank or credit card to your Smartcard using [keyGo](#) or download an Eticket straight to your mobile.





# Improving your stations

As part of our commitment to improving your stations, we're investing millions of pounds into several upgrades. Following local community feedback and suggestions each station has looked into the following:



## Accessibility

- Automatic doors
- More seats
- Information screens



## Sustainability

- LED lighting
- Water butts
- Solar panels
- More cycle parking



## Experience

- Station canopies
- Refurbished toilets
- Waiting rooms
- Station decorations
- Station planters

With plenty more improvements in the pipeline, look out for further updates in the coming months.

Download  
a detailed  
list

Click here





# How we're performing

## Operational performance

The tables below provide our performance scores for the first few months of the 2020/21 financial year. They show a strong start, despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As lockdown began, we responded to the dramatic decline in people travelling with a reduced timetable. And, as restrictions have eased, we've been increasing

the number of services in line with customer demand and requirements, in order to allow for as much social distancing as possible.

We've also managed to improve our punctuality, due to a series of knock-on effects; having fewer trains on the tracks has eased congestion, resulting in fewer incident delays – which has significantly reduced our total delay minutes.

Year Starting April	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
PPM Target	85.8%	84%	83.1%	85.4%	85.1%
PPM Achieved	74.2%	81%	82.7%	84.8%	94.5%

Delay Responsibility	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
GTR	37.6%	32.6%	35.8%	29.1%	26.5%
Network Rail	59%	62.5%	58.7%	64.3%	69.7%
Other Operators	3.5%	4.9%	5.5%	6.6%	3.8%

**GTR:** Govia Thameslink Railway  
**GX:** Gatwick Express  
**GN:** Great Northern  
**SN:** Southern  
**TL:** Thameslink  
**PPM:** Public Performance Measure

Recent Months	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
PPM GX	70.2%	74.5%	69.9%	-	-	-	-
PPM GN	84%	85.1%	87.4%	95.1%	93.5%	94.2%	91.5%
PPM SN	86.2%	86.2%	87.3%	97.2%	96.3%	95.2%	94.7%
PPM TL	82.4%	79.6%	82.6%	95.6%	95.3%	90.4%	88.2%

## Department for Transport contractual targets

The Department for Transport sets us a series of targets on a variety of performance measures. We monitor these and use the results – plus ongoing driver training, reliable train fleets and robust operational planning – to inform how we can improve services across all routes.

We publish detailed performance figures on our website every four weeks and monthly updates on the progress of our improvement plan. You can find these at [thameslinkrailway.com](https://thameslinkrailway.com), [greatnorthernrail.com](https://greatnorthernrail.com), or [southernrailway.com](https://southernrailway.com).

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Delay mins per 1,000 miles	19.64	17.98	19.40	19.43	15.95	17.50	20.40	18.36	17.60	12.79	17.18	11.02
Cancellations	2.10%	1.94%	1.88%	2.20%	1.25%	2.02%	7.82%	7.75%	1.87%	1.87%	1.67%	1.61%
Train running with fewer carriages than planned	0%	1.03%	0%	1.42%	0%	1.42%	0%	0.80%	0%	0.57%	0%	0.50%

Did you know? You can now donate your Delay Repay payments to NHS Charities if your train is delayed for 15+ mins.

# Fare evasion

## Why does fare evasion matter?

The rail industry loses millions of pounds a year through ticketless travel and fraud, money which could have otherwise been re-invested

to improve rail services for you. During COVID-19 we are continuing to do everything we can to reduce ticketless travel.

# Customer satisfaction

## How do we measure customer satisfaction?

We set annual Passenger Experience Measure (PEM) targets to monitor customer satisfaction. This is a combination of audits completed at stations and on trains (QuEST), with an independent customer survey led by Transport Focus, the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS).

Measuring impressions of all UK train operating companies, across a wide range of criteria, the NRPS takes

place twice a year. Unfortunately, the latest round, 27 January – 16 March, was disrupted by Storm Dennis and Storm Ciara; lockdown then brought the survey to an early close on 5 April.

Because of this, we’ve made an extra effort to listen to customers via our ‘We’re Listening Passenger Surveys’ during the last few months. You can also sign up to our online panels [here](#).

# How are we doing?

## Our results for the spring 2020 National Rail Passenger Survey showed some steady results that we’re proud of.

Some of the highlights:

- Overall satisfaction with our GTR stations is up 3.75% since last spring, to 83%.
- Overall satisfaction with our GTR trains has also increased 2.5% to 78%.

- Punctuality and reliability has improved across Southern, Great Northern and Gatwick Express.

We have agreed with the Department for Transport that, while we’re operating under the Emergency Management Agreement due to COVID-19, there will not be any QuEST audits – and so we have not published QuEST scores since March 2020.

	Annual PEM Target	Actual PEM Annual Result	NRPS Scores	QuEST Scores	
2018	83.35%	84.51%	Spring: 75%	Jan – Mar: 95.26%	April – June: 95.86%
			Autumn: 75%	July – Sept: 95.79%	Oct – Dec: 96.23%
2019	84%	81.96%	Autumn: 19-82%	July – Sept: 96.39%	Oct – Dec: 96.68%
2020	84.28%		Spring: 20-81%	Jan – Mar: 96.51%	

# Passenger survey

Below is a breakdown of our Passenger Experience Measure (PEM) for 2020. It shows our scores for each indicator, alongside our results for the spring 2019 survey.

GTR NRPS Indicator	Spring '19	Spring '20
Overall journey satisfaction	81	81
Overall satisfaction with the station	80	83
Overall satisfaction with train	76	78

PEM Indicator	Spring '19	Spring '20
1 How well train company deals with delays	37	34
2 How requests to station staff was handled	86	90
3 The attitudes and helpfulness of the staff (Station)	75	79
4 The usefulness of information provided during delay	45	44
5 The availability of staff (Station)	68	71
6 Provision of information about train times/platforms	84	86
7 Cleanliness (Station)	74	77
8 Ticket buying facilities	74	82
9 Facilities for car parking	48	47
10 The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	71	73
11 Station toilets (formerly, facilities and services [Station])	43	50
12 Your personal security whilst using that station	73	73
13 The provision of shelter facilities	72	74
14 Overall environment (Station)	73	76
15 Availability of seating (Station)	51	55
16 The cleanliness of the inside (Train)	74	75
17 Level of crowding (formerly 'Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand')	73	74
18 The provision of information during the journey	77	81
19 Upkeep and repair of the train	74	77
20 Your personal security on board	71	75
21 The cleanliness of the outside (Train)	72	73
22 The space for luggage (Train)	60	59
23 Punctuality/reliability (i.e. the train arriving/departing on time)	74	74



# Our commitments

We are continually improving the services we offer you on our network. Here we have tracked the progress of each commitment made to you from the start of the franchise.

Commitment	Route	Deadline date	Status
108 new carriages on Gatwick Express	Gatwick Express	2016	Complete
All day staffing at further 16 stations	Southern	Jul-16	Complete
The key top-ups in third party retailers	All	Sep-16	Complete
New ticket vending machines	All	Sep-16	Complete
Introduce a subscription based area of the website for over 65s with promotions and discussion board	All	Oct-16	Complete
Introduce more staff for train cleaning	All	Dec-16	Complete
Repainting programme for all GTR managed stations	All	Dec-16	Complete
Enhance and upgrade existing station CCTV and install CCTV at stations previously without	All	Dec-16	Complete
Introduce on trial basis an online magazine aimed at 16-24 year olds	All	Jan-17	Complete
Additional £2.5m investment on improving facilities and information at stations	All	Jan-17	Complete
'My Journey' info on train performance for holders of 'The Key' smartcard	All	Apr-17	Complete
Investment in improving retail and catering facilities at stations	All	Jul-17	Complete
Programme of upgraded ticket machines and automatic payment methods at car parks	All	Sep-17	Complete
LED lighting installed at various stations and on older train units	All	Sep-17	Complete
Enhancements to on-train passenger information systems	All	Oct-17	Complete
London Bridge station re-opens	Southern/ Thameslink	Jan-18	Complete
New class 700 introduction	All	2018	Complete
Further upgrades to customer app	All	2018	Complete
Class 717 introduction. 150 new carriages on the Moorgate route.	Great Northern	2019	Complete
King's Lynn 8 carriage scheme	Great Northern	Dec-20	Underway



## Govia Thameslink Railway



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We publish Connections twice a year to keep you on track with our progress and future plans.  
All information is correct at time of publication.