

“ green  
alliance...”

# Next stop, better rail

Growing UK  
train travel



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Growing UK train travel

### Authors

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# Summary

“

**There is a once in a generation opportunity to revitalise the rail system.”**

Investing in a better UK rail network so more people can travel by train is an important way to boost inclusive regional growth, open up greater economic and leisure opportunities, and tackle climate change and air pollution.

Now is the moment to act. With the government poised to reintegrate operations under Great British Railways (GBR), extend devolution deals and develop a new integrated transport strategy, there is a once in a generation opportunity to revitalise the rail system. Reforms should work for passengers, communities and the UK's economy. Rail travel should play a greater role as a greener alternative to private car journeys as the government accelerates efforts to reach net zero emissions.

The analysis on which this report's findings are based was conducted for us by researchers at Cardiff University. It was produced using anonymised 'I came by train' ticket data, revealing journey patterns across the UK. It shows that regional disparities mean many communities remain dependent on cars and that the cost and convenience of rail services is a postcode lottery.

Rail compares favourably with driving for journeys in and out of London. But, too often, travelling by train within and between other regions is not so competitive with driving, on either cost or journey times. Poor integration of rail with bus services

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**The government was elected on a promise to deliver reliable, affordable, high quality rail services.”**

makes journeys even slower for those without a car and inconsistent facilities can make rail travel for disabled people a difficult choice.

The government was elected on a promise to deliver reliable, affordable, high quality rail services, while improving rail connectivity across the north of England. Our study reveals the three main areas of action that could achieve these aims:

- making rail fares more affordable;
- investing in faster, better connections around the country;
- smarter integration with other transport modes.

Committing to more action on these fronts would get GBR off to a successful start and accelerate the UK's journey to a cleaner, more sustainable transport system.

# Introduction

“

The UK’s rail system is at a critical juncture.”



For two centuries railways have kept Britain’s economy moving but, in recent decades, governments have prioritised road transport. This has left some communities poorly connected and many people dependent on affording a car to access good jobs, amenities and leisure activities.<sup>1</sup> It has also contributed to climate impacts, air pollution and congestion.<sup>2</sup>

People are now unhappy with rail services, one survey found that 77 per cent see trains as bad value for money and 54 per cent think there is bad investment in infrastructure.<sup>3</sup>

## A political, economic and environmental win

The UK’s rail system is at a critical juncture. The government wants to improve it, by bringing it back into public ownership and moving to a simpler, more reliable system under the new Great British Railways (GBR), transitioning to the new company as existing contracts expire.

Legislation in 2025 will establish GBR and reform the way the rail system works. This will facilitate more joined up

**“Improving the rail network promises considerable economic rewards, both nationally and regionally.”**

decision making across services, helping to improve frequency and connectivity. It should also enable better co-ordination of timetabling and engineering works to reduce delays.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to make sure the rail network delivers for passengers, regions, the economy and the environment.

### Passenger benefits

Bringing rail into public ownership is very popular with the public. People want to see GBR cut ticket prices and improve services.<sup>4</sup> The state of rail infrastructure, service reliability and high fares are barriers to more people choosing the train. A more affordable, convenient and reliable train service would improve lives by opening up more opportunities for education, work and leisure, as well as better serving people with accessibility challenges.<sup>5,6</sup>

### Regional benefits

Regions outside London and the south east face problems of under investment and aging infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> Even where local rail services exist, limited or infrequent services prevent people using them.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, other countries, like Germany and France, have recognised the importance of their regional rail networks, investing in modern, efficient and accessible services that connect smaller towns and cities and help to boost their national economies.<sup>9</sup> Germany has twice as many railway stations per 100,000 people than England.<sup>10</sup>

Rail improvements beyond the south east could help tackle a range of economic challenges, increasing productivity and attracting more business and investment.

### Economic rewards

Improving the rail network promises considerable economic rewards, both nationally and regionally.<sup>11</sup> It is a wide ranging solution to boost productivity and unlock the huge potential of the regions. New rail infrastructure will require investment, but it is essential for economic transformation, particularly in northern England. The

“

**Electrification is making rail services an even greener option.”**

regional rail body, Transport for the North, estimates that better connecting northern urban centres to one another could play a part in delivering £118 billion in economic growth for the north and 850,000 new jobs by 2050.<sup>12</sup> Greater London already secures £11 billion in social, economic, environmental benefits every year from its network of railways, according to WPI Economics.<sup>13</sup> These kinds of benefits should be spread across the country.

### Environmental benefits

Rail infrastructure investment would also accelerate the decarbonisation of the transport sector, the UK's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Rail was responsible for just one per cent of UK transport's 2022 greenhouse gas emissions despite accounting for eight per cent of miles travelled.<sup>14,15</sup> Electrification is making rail services an even greener option, especially as the government aims to complete its mission for a clean power system by 2030.

By comparison, petrol and diesel cars and vans produced 69 per cent of domestic transport emissions, despite making up 51 per cent of miles travelled in 2022.<sup>16,17</sup> Without decisive intervention, traffic growth is predicted to grow, worsening emissions.<sup>18</sup>

The country's car and van fleet will gradually electrify as sales of new purely electric vehicles rise to reach 100 per cent by 2035. But millions of petrol, diesel and hybrid cars will remain on the roads beyond this date. Without further action to cut emissions from transport, it will be difficult to meet target timescales, based on scientific evidence of what is needed, to prevent serious climate impacts.<sup>19</sup> As we have shown in our *Net zero policy tracker* and recent *Mind the gap* report, transport is one of the UK sectors most off track in meeting legally binding carbon targets.<sup>20</sup> More action will be needed to reduce car use and encourage a shift to public transport.



## Next stop, better rail

**“  
Increasing  
passenger numbers  
could provide  
£46 billion in  
annual benefits.”**

The government was elected on a promise to modernise our rail network, accelerate action on climate change and boost growth as part of its national renewal. The UK’s rail network already delivers an estimated £26 billion a year in environmental and social benefits. This value comes from enabling business travel and cutting congestion and pollution. But there is greater, as yet untapped potential. Research has shown that increasing passenger numbers could provide £46 billion in annual benefits.<sup>21</sup>

Now is the moment to put the rail network at the heart of a cleaner, greener transport future. The creation of GBR could be more than structural reform; it could lead a cultural shift where the train becomes the first choice for sustainable travel and an engine of economic revival.

Here, we report on our new collaboration with Cardiff University and ‘I came by train’ data, mapping patterns of rail use across the UK. We then present a range of ways to encourage more people to use the train based on the insights from this work.

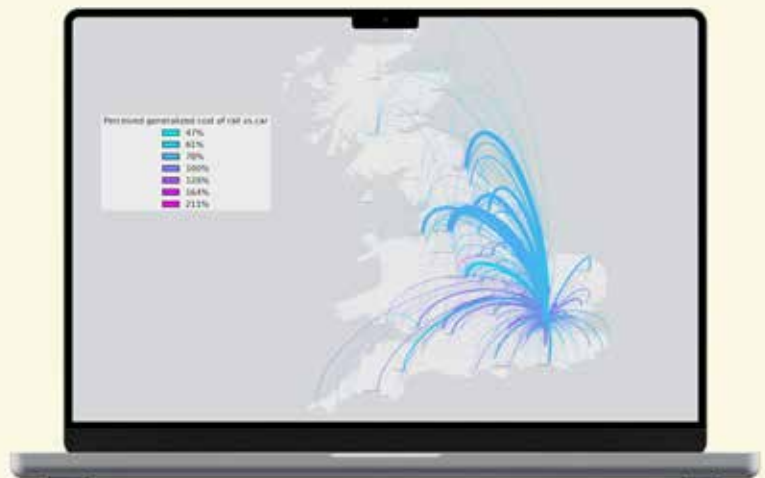
## Our research

In partnership with Cardiff University's computer science team and 'I came by train', a sustainable transport movement supported by Trainline, we conducted detailed mapping using Trainline's Reasonable by Rail dataset. This builds on previous work with Cardiff University in which we built a 'modal shift model' that allowed us to show how various policies could reduce car miles driven.<sup>22</sup> The Reasonable by Rail dataset was developed by their data science team, using anonymised booking data from 'I came by train', collating hundreds of thousands of individual bookings across all routes travelled between April 2023 and March 2024 in the UK.

This dataset was used by Cardiff University to map journey times and costs and compare them with car use.

The research provides new insights into the UK's rail system. By using the median time for all train trips between two destinations, and the median price of a one way journey for an adult without a railcard, it allows comprehensive understanding of where existing rail services offer competitive advantages over driving and where they fall short.<sup>23</sup>

The results of this analysis can be interrogated through an interactive, granular map, providing detailed insights into regional disparities. You can access the technical report and interactive maps to explore this research in more detail at [bit.ly/4aTt6tQ](https://bit.ly/4aTt6tQ).



# Our findings

“

The cost and convenience of services across the country is a postcode lottery.”



The mapping makes clear the extent of regional inequalities in rail provision across the country, which need to be tackled for more people to choose rail travel. It shows that the cost and convenience of services across the country is a postcode lottery. While rail compares favourably with cars for journeys in and out of London, travelling by train within and between other regions and urban centres is often not competitive with driving on either the cost or time of journeys. Integration with bus services is also poor in many places making travel even slower for people without a car.

These results underscore the pressing need for increased investment in rail in regions beyond the south east and for an ambitious integrated transport strategy. In the following pages, we set out our findings on cost, time and integration.

## Cost is a major barrier to rail travel

The perceived high cost of rail travel, compared to fuel or domestic flights, is the biggest barrier to getting more people to take the train.<sup>24</sup>

The full cost of driving includes the cost of buying a car, tax, insurance, MOTs, servicing, repairs, congestion charges and parking costs. However, if someone already owns a car, they are likely to base their choice of travel for an individual trip on variable costs, such as tickets compared to fuel, rather than factoring in the full costs of car ownership.

Therefore, the mapping done for this report compared just the cost of buying fuel against the cost of a train ticket for different journeys between the biggest urban centres. Because the cost of fuel is cheaper than the median rail fare – which was the case on 95 per cent of the routes mapped – it reinforces the public perception that rail is the expensive option.

The map opposite, based on the interactive version produced by Cardiff University, shows that, for journeys between many of the UK's ten largest urban centres, the cost of fuel is cheaper than the median cost of train tickets. For instance, a median priced train ticket from Manchester to Leeds costs more than twice as much as fuelling a car for that journey. But it also shows that rail is better value for some of the longest journeys (the blue and yellow lines), eg between Glasgow and the largest urban areas in England and Wales.

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**If someone already owns a car, they are likely to base their choice of travel for an individual trip on variable costs.”**

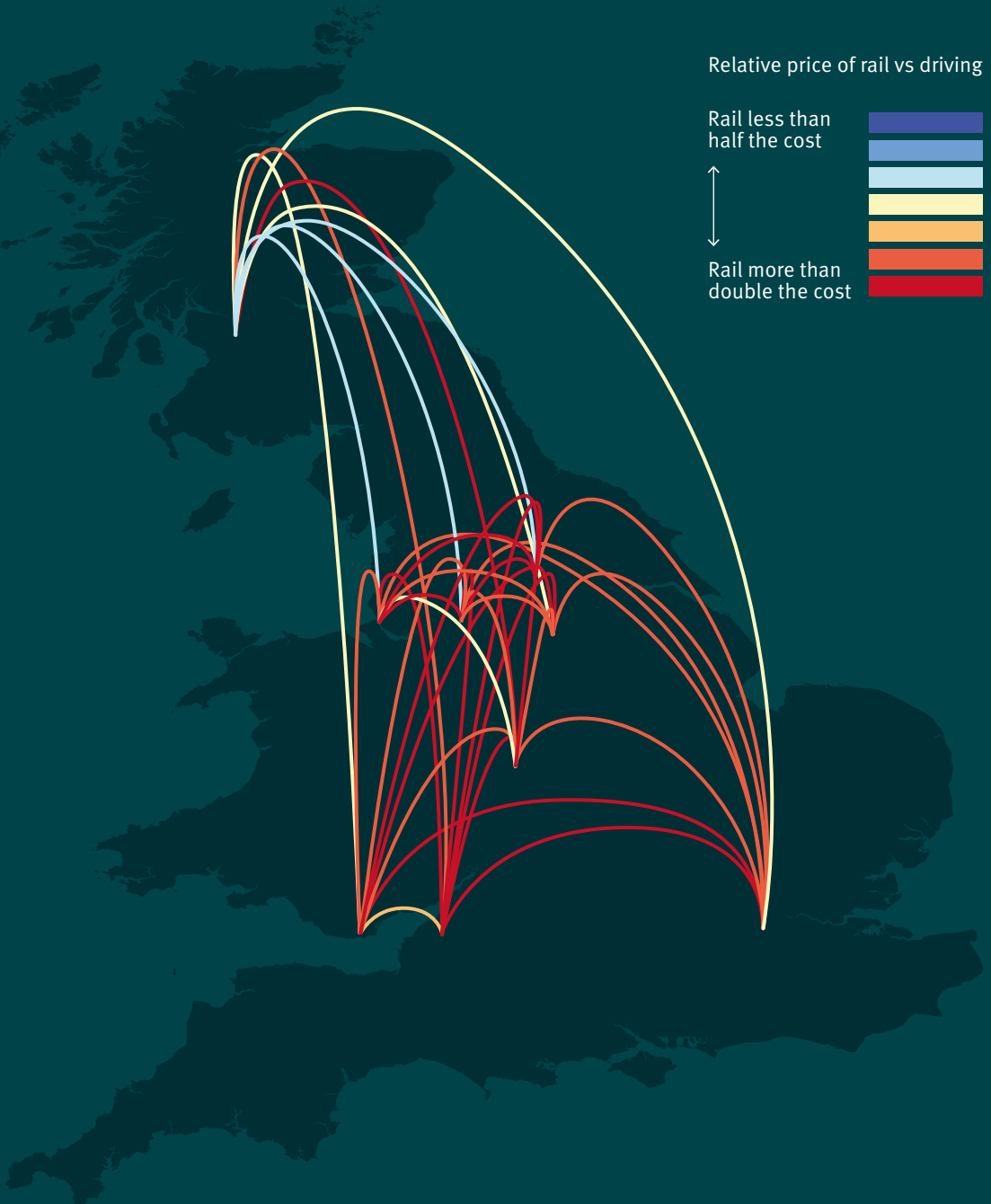
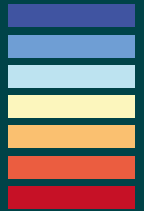
Cost of rail tickets versus fuel on major routes between ten UK cities  
(based on average fuel price and the median fare)

Relative price of rail vs driving

Rail less than  
half the cost



Rail more than  
double the cost



“

**Travel between Manchester and Leeds is likely to take as long or longer by train than by car.”**

Our analysis found that one of the most effective ways to encourage greater rail use is to reduce the cost of train tickets.<sup>25</sup> Our model shows that a ten per cent reduction in rail ticket prices could increase rail use by ten per cent and, even accounting for the newly generated trips, it would remove approximately 1.2 billion car miles from the roads annually, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by approximately 335,000 tonnes.<sup>26</sup>

### **The time it takes to travel by train is offputting**

Our analysis looked at the median time taken to travel on major rail routes across the country, compared to the average time to drive the same journey. In part as a result of the UK's failure to keep up with other European countries in developing high speed rail lines, 83 per cent of the train routes mapped have a slower median journey time than the average time it takes to drive the same route.

A train journey from London to Manchester takes half as long as driving. Taking the train from Glasgow, Cardiff or Bristol to London is also quicker. The median train journeys from Bristol to London are around 40 minutes faster than the average driving time.<sup>27</sup> However, travel between other urban centres within regions, like Manchester and Leeds or Plymouth and Bristol, is likely to take as long or longer by train than by car in some cases. In rural areas, like Cornwall, travelling by train can be far slower than driving. The journey from Newquay to Falmouth takes two hours 15 minutes, a distance which can be driven in 46 minutes. On this route, trains currently only run every two hours.

The map opposite reveals the time disparities between London connections and others around the country, not including travel time to and from the nearest station.

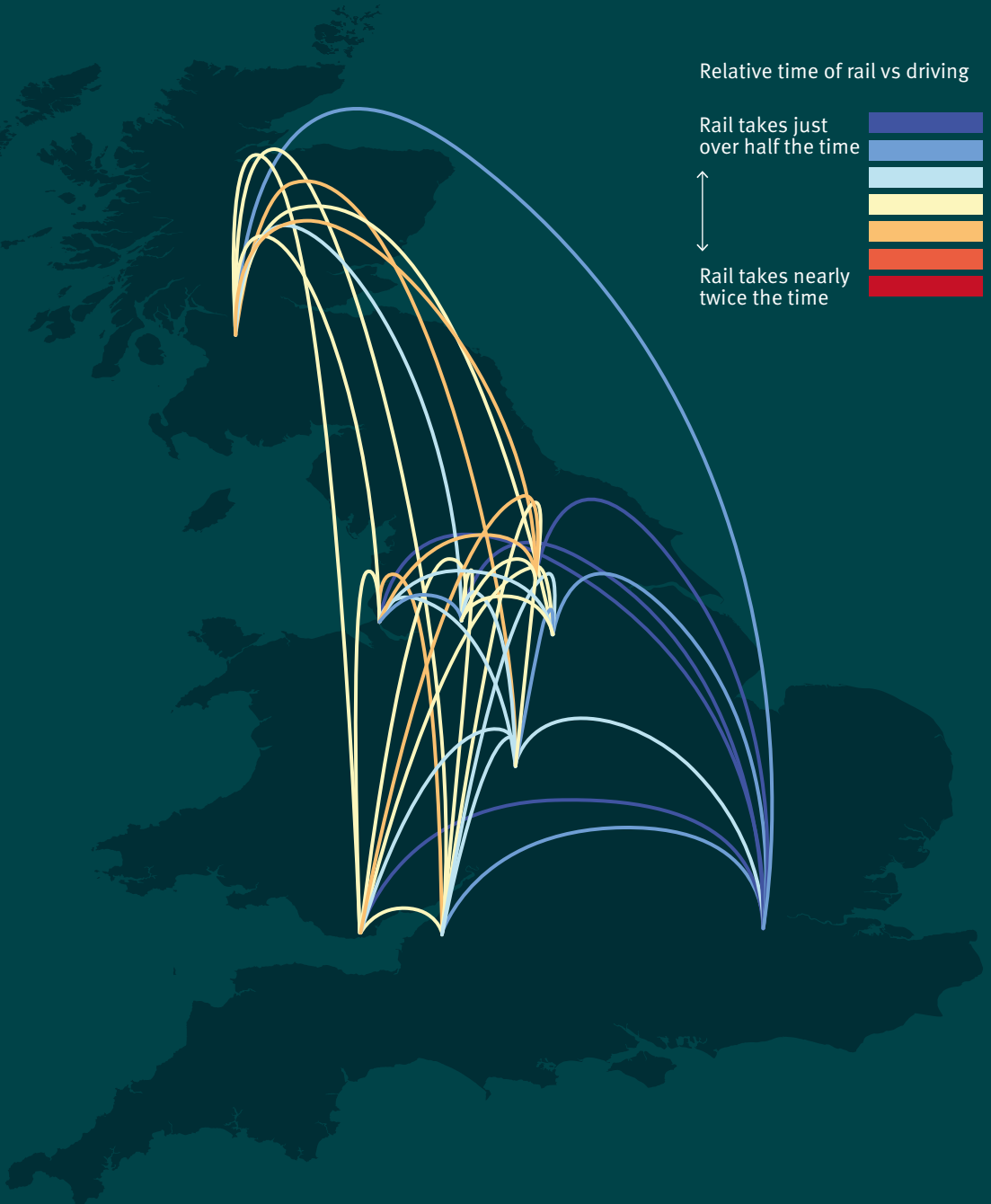
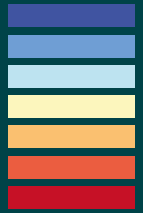
Time taken for rail journeys, compared to driving, on major routes between ten UK cities  
(based on median rail travel and average driving times)

Relative time of rail vs driving

Rail takes just  
over half the time



Rail takes nearly  
twice the time



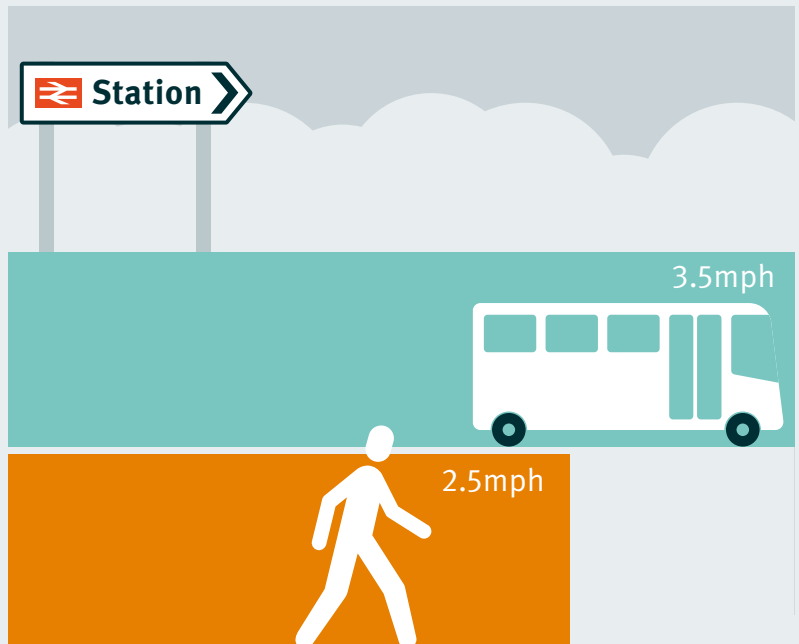
## Poor transport integration makes journeys too slow

There are considerable inequalities across the country in the speed people can reach rail stations by public transport. Additional analysis by Cardiff University (see the technical report at the link on page eight) calculated the average effective speed of the journey from each postcode area to local railway stations (within 7.5 miles of each station). It found that the median speed nationally, of waiting for and then taking a bus to a nearby station, was 3.5 miles per hour, which is barely faster than walking. This is also slow compared to the average speed of cars on local streets, estimated at 13 miles per hour.

**“  
The shift from cars  
to public transport  
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without more  
action to  
encourage it.”**

These slow transport connections to stations are a significant barrier to wider rail use. Our previous work has highlighted that the shift from cars to public transport will not happen without action to encourage it, including capital investment in bus priority measures to speed up journeys.<sup>28</sup>

Across the country, average public transport speeds to a nearby station are barely faster than walking





# Transforming UK rail travel

“

**Reducing the cost of rail tickets is one of the fastest ways to encourage people onto trains.”**

As GBR is established in 2025 and the government delivers its national integrated transport strategy, there is an opportunity to transform UK rail travel and grow passenger numbers with more affordable fares, faster connections and better integration with other modes of public transport. Here, we outline a range of options available to the government.

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## Affordable fares

Affordability is a major barrier to more people choosing rail travel. High fares are not only putting off potential new customers, but they also price regular commuters away from using trains. Polling of over 1,000 people for the Campaign for Better Transport in January 2025 found 71 per cent would travel more by train if fares were cheaper.<sup>29</sup> Our modelling backs this up, showing that reducing the cost of rail tickets is one of the fastest ways to encourage people onto trains.<sup>30</sup>

## Make rail a more attractive choice

The high costs to society of car travel, resulting from climate-changing emissions, air pollution, congestion and road accidents, are not well reflected in the price of fossil fuels or government policy. For two decades, before the recent energy price crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, the price of train travel was allowed to rise faster than the cost of driving.<sup>31,32</sup> Since fuel duty was frozen in 2011, rail ticket prices have risen by 50 per cent.<sup>33</sup>

But cutting fares is a challenge in a difficult economic environment. Railways are expensive to run and require public subsidy in the UK. In 2023-24, £12.5 billion of public money supported operator running costs.<sup>34</sup>

**“  
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intervention  
could enable  
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low incomes to  
travel by train.”**

One solution is to raise more revenue by taking the freeze off fuel duty, more fairly reflecting the negative external costs to society and the environment of driving compared to rail travel, another would be to introduce a pay per mile charge to replace the tax revenues that will be lost as the car fleet electrifies. The chancellor could have raised £3 billion in 2025-26 if the temporary 5p cut to fuel duty had been permitted to end in March 2025 (when it was due to) and ended the freeze on the duty introduced in 2011.<sup>35</sup> Our modelling suggests that channelling an extra £3 billion into discounting rail fares could deliver a 22 per cent increase in passenger rail miles travelled in the UK.<sup>36</sup>

This additional revenue could fund a fare cap or discounts and make rail more competitive with the perceived cost of driving. This has been trialled in Germany, with a single €9 ticket for all rail travel across the country for a month to encourage passengers to return to rail after the Covid pandemic. This increased public transport use by 29 per cent.<sup>37</sup> The Deutschlandticket has subsequently risen to a flat rate of €58.<sup>38</sup>

### **Rail discounts to cut transport poverty and attract new passengers**

People in the lowest income quintile in the UK currently only travel 12 per cent of rail miles compared to 36 per cent for the highest quintile.<sup>39</sup> Lower income households are also less likely to have access to a car, so they are disproportionately priced out of travelling distances to access work, education and other services. While jobseekers are given a short term temporary railcard to assist them in finding work, more could be done to support all low income groups priced out of transport.

A targeted intervention for those most priced out of rail could enable more people on low incomes to travel by train, assisting them to reach better work opportunities and helping to solve economic stagnation in some areas. Targeting fare reductions at this group would also help to maximise the use of available capacity on rail services, by increasing the number of passengers travelling overall.

“  
Despite the  
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electrification, the  
UK’s progress has  
been ‘stop start’.”

Another option could be to offer free travel for the children of low income families, which would also help to embed sustainable travel habits. GBR should take forward lessons from existing regional trials, such as in Greater Manchester and London, with targeted fare discounting and pilot a national scheme to expand train travel.

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### Faster journey times and better connections

Disparities in rail speed and frequency, identified in our analysis, highlight the pressing need for the government to accelerate electrification, cut delays and deliver better rail provision to the regions outside the south east. Addressing these barriers is essential to connect more communities and ensure rail travel is viable for most people.

The creation of GBR is a rare chance to tackle these issues directly by promoting co-ordinated decision making across the network, improving service reliability and enhancing connectivity, especially for the most poorly served regions.

### Electrify track faster to cut journey times

Accelerating progress on electrifying track can deliver faster services, reducing travel times on routes across the country and making train journeys more competitive. Electrification also reduces tailpipe air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, saves operators money on fuel costs and can reduce the need for costly maintenance work compared to diesel trains.<sup>40</sup> Electric trains accelerate faster than diesel engines, and the consistency in their journey times enables more capacity and frequency.<sup>41</sup> Just 38 per cent of Britain’s network is electrified, compared to 60 per cent in the EU.<sup>42</sup> Despite the benefits of electrification, the UK’s progress has been ‘stop start’. In 2021-22, only 1.4 miles of track was electrified. This increased to 38.5 miles in 2023.<sup>43,44</sup>

### Modernise regional infrastructure

While London has enjoyed high levels of rail investment per resident, delivering a world class public transport network, the rail network across other UK regions has been underfunded.<sup>45</sup> Better east-west and north-south links are needed for other regions to thrive and overcome disparities

**“Cutting regional rail investment to save money is a false economy.”**

in rail access and efficiency between London connected routes and those in the rest of the country. Successive governments have recognised this problem, but efforts to invest in regional improvements have repeatedly faltered. Many regional growth plans were relying on the northern leg of HS2 but, following its cancellation, alternative solutions must be provided.

When the previous Conservative government announced the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2, it promised £36 billion would be spent on alternative rail, road and bus schemes.<sup>46</sup> This included a new link between Manchester and Liverpool, a part of the proposed Northern Powerhouse Rail link. The Manchester to Crewe route is also set to be upgraded.

Despite coming to power on a promise to modernise transport infrastructure, the current government has cancelled some investment in regional rail. In July, the chancellor announced the cancellation of the £500 million Restoring Your Railway fund, which had been introduced by the previous administration to reopen rail lines to “provide better access to jobs, homes and education, and level up and reconnect communities.”<sup>47</sup> Funding for the promised Liverpool line is also under threat.<sup>48</sup>

The government is developing a ten year infrastructure strategy, promising to align with regional development priorities, including rail connectivity across the north of England. Improving connectivity must be a priority to achieve the strategy’s three objectives: boosting growth, accelerating to net zero and ensuring social infrastructure supports public services. Cutting regional rail investment to save money is a false economy if the government wants to unlock the growth potential of the regions.

As the government devolves more powers to regional leaders, these must be accompanied by capital expenditure, some of which should be directed to improving rail infrastructure in the north. The West Midlands and Greater Manchester mayors have proposed a Midlands-North-West rail link that would reportedly be more cost effective to construct than the cancelled northern leg of HS2.<sup>49</sup>



“  
Open access  
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connectivity.”

Adequate funding, alongside spending powers, would enable regional leaders to determine priorities for their areas.

### End delays to stimulate passenger growth

Frequent delays are a barrier to passenger growth but, as GBR brings better co-ordination to the rail system, there is great potential for improvement. Unsurprisingly, services prone to late running trains and cancellations suffer from lower demand.

Halving the average lateness of services could lead to increases in rail demand of two per cent for journey season ticket holders, and four per cent for other tickets, with further increases in demand possible with further reductions in lateness.<sup>50</sup>

### Service level innovation is cheaper

People are more likely to use frequent, convenient rail services. Our modelling shows that a ten per cent increase in service frequency would lead to a two per cent increase in passenger numbers.<sup>51</sup>

Improving service frequency on existing lines is cheaper than building major new infrastructure. One way this can be done is by encouraging open access operators to make the most of existing infrastructure to offer additional services.

Open access operators, such as Lumo, Hull Trains or Grand Central, have track access agreements for lines in competition with existing services. The government recognises the benefits of these operators as they increase competition, innovation and offer more diverse services. They can also help to improve regional connectivity. The approval process ensures they add capacity where it is needed, rather than detracting from existing franchised services.

**“Lumo has innovated, by prioritising long distance travel, highlighting green credentials and creative discounting.”**

### **Lumo: high discounts for long journeys**

Lumo was launched in 2021. It operates train services between London and Edinburgh via Stevenage, Newcastle and Morpeth, working alongside the franchised operator on the East Coast Main Line, LNER.

Price variations the company offers make it possible for passengers to travel cheaply on long distance trips at unpopular times. Customers are only able to reserve seats on the longer journeys.

With no first class, no paper tickets and no reservations for shorter trips, Lumo has innovated, by prioritising long distance travel, highlighting green credentials and creative discounting, to increase passenger numbers. The company now has a new service planned from Euston to Rochdale



Other open access routes planned include Hull Trains’ expansion from King’s Cross to Sheffield, and Grand Union’s routes from King’s Cross to Stirling and Paddington to Carmarthen. Additionally, Grand Union’s Alliance Rail has proposed a Cardiff Central to Edinburgh route. Go Op is a proposed co-operative open access operator, based in the south west of England, to connect underserved towns in the West Country such as Swindon, Taunton and Weston-super-Mare.

**“  
Improving  
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between bus and  
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increase the use  
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buses by around  
14 per cent.”**

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## Integrated transport services

Rail travel is most efficient when it integrates well with other modes of transport and is accessible to all, regardless of individual needs or circumstances. The government’s national integrated transport strategy for England, which it intends to publish by summer 2025, should focus on making switching between rail and other modes of transport smoother and easier.

### Co-ordinate timetables for better interchanges

Improving integration between bus and rail services could speed up journeys overall and, as Cardiff University’s analysis shows, could potentially increase the use of both trains and buses by around 14 per cent.<sup>52</sup> Increasing bus speeds by ten per cent, for instance using bus priority measures, would increase bus use by six per cent.<sup>53</sup> If bus and train timetables were better aligned across England and Wales, this could cut the equivalent of 760,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year.<sup>54</sup>

Our mapping demonstrates that many people cannot easily access a train station unless they drive, which is a major barrier. Effective integration means co-ordinating bus and rail timetables, safe and convenient bike routes and storage, and good transfers between modes. Other European countries, including Ireland, are leading the way by planning effortless public transport interchanges.<sup>55</sup> The government should require GBR to engage with bus operators to ensure timetables for both services are complementary.



“  
Capacity can be  
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### Mid Cornwall Metro: better integrating existing rail lines to increasing capacity

Capacity can be increased through lower cost, quickly implemented interventions instead of constructing new rail lines.

The Mid Cornwall Metro initiative is investing £56 million in improvements, such as station upgrades, ticketing reforms and enhanced active travel connections, to improve passengers' experience and increase capacity on existing lines. From summer 2025, the service between Newquay and Par will double to hourly, increasing the number of available seats by 700,000 a year. From 2026, the Newquay service will extend to St Austell, Truro, Penryn and Falmouth, improving connections across the county on existing lines.<sup>56</sup>



### Connect new developments with public transport

New Economics Foundation's analysis reveals a growing trend over the past 15 years for new housing developments to encourage car dependent lifestyles.<sup>57</sup> The government must ensure new developments are sited close to train stations where possible. Mobility hubs, ie spaces for multiple transport options, including shared transport like car clubs, should be created to make it easier to travel to stations.

As more transport powers are devolved to regional leaders, they should be given support and guidance to provide integrated multimodal ticketing for city regions, to facilitate public transport use by residents and visitors.

## Make trains accessible to all

Poor accessibility across the rail network prevents some people who already struggle with mobility from taking the train. Disabled people make fewer journeys overall than able-bodied people. Forty four per cent of disabled people are unhappy about making journeys at all.<sup>58</sup> This is not surprising when only one in four mainline stations have step free access and only two per cent provide level boarding.

**“Forty four per cent of disabled people are unhappy about making journeys at all.”**

Rail passengers requiring assistance must book at least two hours in advance of their journey. The passenger assist system is also underperforming. In 2022, almost one in five requests passenger assist requests were unsuccessful.<sup>59</sup>

GBR should engage with people with a range of disabilities to find out how to enhance these services, setting an improvement target for all passenger assist requests to be met by 2030.

Accessibility can be enhanced by GBR, working with rolling stock providers to increase flexible space design onboard new trains. With improved step free access, this would also make travel easier for older people, those using pushchairs and those with luggage.

# Railways fit for the future

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A target to encourage more people to use rail was promised by Labour ahead of the 2024 general election.”

Making travel on the UK’s rail system more appealing and accessible will grow passenger numbers, meet climate goals, cut car dependency, tackle inequality and support economic growth. As our analysis has shown, this can be done by making rail more affordable, better connecting communities and improving integration with other transport modes.

Our recommendations:

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## Set a target to grow rail travel

- A target to encourage more people to use rail was promised by Labour in its *Get Britain moving* report, published ahead of the 2024 general election.<sup>60</sup> This should be set soon in the Rail Reform Bill.

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## Prioritise affordability

- The government should commission a national review of fares and ticketing to inform GBR’s approach. Its remit should be to simplify fares and increase the affordability of rail compared to the perceived cost of driving.
- The chancellor should end the 5p cut to fuel duty and the 14 year fuel duty freeze that has helped feed the perception that driving is so much cheaper than rail travel for many journeys. The additional revenue should be used to cut train fares as GBR services begin.
- The government should consider targeted ticket reductions to reduce transport poverty and increase access to education, jobs and vital amenities for those on low incomes.

“

**The £36 billion capital investment promised for transport infrastructure projects should be spent on enhancing regional connectivity.”**

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## Improve connections

- Electrification will speed up journey times and further reduce the rail’s already low climate impact. GBR’s governance of track and train services should enable more consistent investment and the Treasury should support this with adequate funding to accelerate track electrification.
- The £36 billion capital investment promised for transport infrastructure projects, when phase two of HS2 was cancelled, should be used to support rail and bus improvements. This should be spent on enhancing regional connectivity, with better integration of rail and bus services, delivered in collaboration with regional leaders.

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## Promote integration

- The forthcoming national integrated transport strategy should promote bus and train timetable alignment across England, and encourage the development of bus and cycle routes connected to stations
- Accessibility should be a higher priority, with a target to meet all passenger assist requests by 2030 and a design requirement for more flexible space in all new rolling stock.

# Endnotes

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