

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS369)

Department for Transport

Written Statement made by: **Secretary of State for Transport (Heidi Alexander)**
on 13 Oct 2026.

Transfer of Chiltern Railways' Services into Public Ownership

I am confirming to the House that on Sunday 20 September 2026, Chiltern Railways' services transferred into public ownership under the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act. Operations are now run by a new public sector operator – Chiltern Rail Limited – a subsidiary of public corporation DfT Operator Limited (DFTO).

As we make progress towards the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR), 10 of the 14 train operators delivering passenger services under contract with the Department for Transport are now in public ownership. With Chiltern, DFTO now runs over 12,000 passenger rail services a day and delivers over 1 billion passenger rail journeys across its networks every year.

Chiltern will press ahead with delivering a range of measures to improve passengers' experience, including more modern trains, more services and more comfortable journeys across the network. Public ownership also provides a fresh opportunity to deliver East West Rail and its benefits to passengers.

Great Western Railway's services will be the next to transfer into public ownership on 13 December 2026, followed by Avanti West Coast's services on 7 March 2027, and the rail public ownership programme remains on track to be completed by the end of 2027.

Public ownership means Britain's railways are owned by the public, for the public, putting passengers and customers back at the heart of the railway. The Railways Bill, currently making its way through Parliament, will lead to the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR), a new publicly-owned body and a new passenger watchdog.

GBR will maintain and improve the railways and be accountable to passengers, freight customers and taxpayers. By unifying track and train under GBR, we will deliver a reliable rail network that people can be proud of and that will create growth, jobs and homes.