

Summary of Ticket Office Closures Consultation

Contents

Introduction	2
South Western Railway	2
How they're doing it (SWR).....	2
Wokingham Borough Impacts (SWR)	3
Case Studies (SWR)	4
Great Western Railway (GWR)	8
Changes to stations operated by GWR	8
Reasoning for the changes	10
Concerns about moving from ticket offices	11
Concerns regarding Ticket Machine.....	11
Concerns regarding Mobile Ticketing/ Apps	11
Other Thoughts	12
Resources and Links	12
Transport Focus Contact	12
SWR Consultation Contact	12
GWR Consultation Contact.....	12

Introduction

Train Operators have proposed changes to a majority of rail station ticket offices in England as part of their plans to “modernise” the railway. This is proposing to close almost all ticket offices at railway stations (except for the busiest stations) over three years. Staff would be upskilled to support customers across the stations rather than just at ticket offices.

Transport Focus are operating the consultation and the relevant webpage is [here](#).

Each operator has put together proposals for the individual stations that they operate. The railway operators that operate within Wokingham are South Western Railway (SWR) and Great Western Railway (GWR). Their webpages to set out their plans are as follows:

- [South Western Railway](#)
- [Great Western Railway](#)

The consultation was due to last three weeks and finish on Wednesday 26th July. However, on 26th July it was announced that these consultations have been extended to Friday 1st September 2023.

South Western Railway

How they’re doing it (SWR)

[South Western Railway Consultation page](#)

Based on footfall on the stations, Stations were categorised from 1 (High Volume) to 4 (Low Volume). Based on the categories, SWR have set out how they intend to treat each station:

- **Category 1 e.g., Basingstoke**
 - At least three Colleagues stationed to help support ticket purchase (on electronic device or TVM), journey planning, boarding the train, accessibility requirements, understanding cheapest fares.
 - Unstaffed hours, customers will need to purchase using ticket machines or buy online.
- **Category 2 e.g., Wokingham**
 - Multiple colleagues available to support ticket purchase, journey planning, boarding the train, accessibility requirements, understanding cheapest fares. Minimum of one colleague available between 6am – 11:30 pm
 - 6am to 11 am and 4pm – 8pm, minimum of four station team colleagues to support customers.
 - Unstaffed hours, customers will need to purchase using ticket machines or buy online.
- **Category 3 e.g., Winnersh, Winnersh Triangle, Earley**
 - One colleague at set times, most tickets are already purchased through digital channels.
 - Investments in video-calling capabilities on ticket vending machines
 - A trained staff will be stationed to help support ticket purchase, journey planning, boarding the train, accessibility requirements, understanding cheapest fares.
 - Unstaffed hours, customers will need to purchase using ticket machines or buy online.
- **Category 4 e.g., Smallbrook Station**
 - If already unstaffed, customers are able to purchase online or vending machine

Wokingham Borough Impacts (SWR)

The below sets out the category assigned to each SWR station in Wokingham Borough and both their current ticket officer opening hours and the proposed station staffing hours.

The current proposals indicate that aside from Wokingham, the rest of the stations operated by SWR in the Wokingham borough will be experiencing a loss in weekly staffing hours with Winnersh Triangle a reduction of 30 to 20 hours, Winnersh 33 to 20 hours and Earley 50 to 20 hours. A total of 10, 13 and 30 respectively. It should be noted that stations may already be staffed outside of the current ticket office opening hours, making it difficult to ascertain whether there is any net change in staffing hours or numbers. This information can be found on the SWR webpage for each station and under "Accessibility and mobility access" drop down and "Accessible station facilities" heading. Furthermore,

Earley – Category 3

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	6:05am - 1:25pm	Unstaffed
Tuesday	6:05am - 1:25pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Wednesday	6:05am - 1:25pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Thursday	6:05am - 1:25pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Friday	6:05am - 1:25pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Saturday	8:00am - 4:00pm	9:00am - 1:00pm
Sunday	10:00am - 4.00pm	Unstaffed

Winnersh – Category 3

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	6:00am - 11:30am	Unstaffed
Tuesday	6:00am - 11:30am	6:00am - 10:00am
Wednesday	6:00am - 11:30am	6:00am - 10:00am
Thursday	6:00am - 11:30am	6:00am - 10:00am
Friday	6:00am - 11:30am	6:00am - 10:00am
Saturday	7:00am - 12:30pm	9:00am - 1:00pm
Sunday	Unstaffed	Unstaffed

Winnersh Triangle – Category 3

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	6:00am - 11:00am	6:00am -10:00am
Tuesday	6:00am - 11:00am	6:00am -10:00am
Wednesday	6:00am - 11:00am	6:00am -10:00am
Thursday	6:00am - 11:00am	6:00am -10:00am
Friday	6:00am - 11:00am	Unstaffed
Saturday	8:00am - 1:00pm	Unstaffed
Sunday	Unstaffed	9:00am - 1:00pm

Wokingham – Category 2

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Tuesday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Wednesday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Thursday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Friday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Saturday	6:10am - 8:25pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Sunday	8:00am - 6:30pm	8:00am - 8:00pm

Case Studies (SWR)

This section sets out the case studies as an example for each category of station and how the operation of these stations will change as can be found in the [Station Change Proposal PDF on this webpage](#).

A case study of Basingstoke station (Category 1 Station)

A Southwestern Railway customer travelling from Basingstoke station would be greeted by at least three colleagues who would have the training and skills to support customers with:

- Purchasing tickets online using an electronic device and ticket vending machines
- Planning their journey
- Understanding the cheapest fares available for the journey in question
- Boarding and alighting from the train
- Any additional accessibility requirements

These Southwestern Railway colleagues would be on the station concourse interacting with customers and on the platform and would also be able to sell customers the small number of ticket types currently unavailable at TVMs or online.

Basingstoke – Category 1

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Tuesday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Wednesday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Thursday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Friday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Saturday	6:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm
Sunday	7:00am - 9:30pm	Midnight - 11:59pm

A case study of Wokingham station (Category 2 Station)

Every day of the week between 6am and 11.30pm, a customer arriving at Wokingham station would be greeted by at least one station team colleague who would be able to support customers with their journeys, including ticket purchasing.

Through busier hours (6am to 11am and 4pm to 8pm), there would be a minimum of four station team colleagues available to support customers.

During unstaffed hours, a customer arriving at Wokingham station without a ticket would make their ticket purchase using the ticket vending machine.

For ticket types that cannot be purchased at Wokingham station, the customer would need to buy the ticket online or at one of South Western Railway's category 1 stations. Ahead of implementation, there will be a way for customers to buy a ticket that allows them to get to a category 1 station to purchase the ticket they require for their journey without being out of pocket. South Western Railway will work with passenger groups to develop the specifics of this proposal.

Wokingham – Category 2

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Tuesday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Wednesday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Thursday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Friday	5:45am - 8:35pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Saturday	6:10am - 8:25pm	6:00am - 11:30pm
Sunday	8:00am - 6:30pm	8:00am - 8:00pm

A case study of Hedge End station (Category 3)

During staffed hours, a customer travelling from Hedge End would be greeted by a multi-skilled colleague who would be able to help them with their journey, including by:

- Helping to purchase tickets online using an electronic device or ticket vending machine
- Helping plan their journey
- Advising of the cheapest fares available for the journey in question
- Helping with boarding and alighting from the train
- Supporting those with additional accessibility requirements

During unstaffed hours, a customer at Hedge End would use the ticket vending machine to purchase a ticket. If the customer was struggling to buy a ticket using the ticket vending machine, they could use the video call facilities on the ticket vending machine. Through the video call facilities, the customer would be supported by a South Western Railway colleague working from our video contact centre.

For ticket types that cannot be purchased at Hedge End station, the customer would need to buy the ticket online or at one of South Western Railway's category 1 stations. Ahead of implementation, there will be a way for customers to buy a ticket that allows them to get to a category 1 station to purchase the ticket they require for their journey without being out of pocket.

Hedge End – Category 3

Transport Focus will be running the consultation for this station

	Current ticket office opening hours	Proposed station staffing hours
Monday	6:15am - 12:30pm	Unstaffed
Tuesday	6:15am - 12:30pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Wednesday	6:15am - 12:30pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Thursday	6:15am - 12:30pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Friday	6:15am - 12:30pm	6:00am - 10:00am
Saturday	8:00am - Midday	9:00am - 1:00pm
Sunday	Unstaffed	Unstaffed

A case study of Smallbrook station (Category 4)

- As is already the case, a customer travelling from Smallbrook station would purchase tickets online or at a ticket vending machine.
- For ticket types that cannot be purchased at Smallbrook station, the customer would need to buy the ticket online or at one of South Western Railway's category 1 stations.
- Ahead of implementation there will be a way for customers to buy a ticket that allows them to get to a category 1 station to purchase the ticket they require for their journey without being out of pocket. South Western Railway will develop the specifics of what this will look like by working with passenger groups.
- Smallbrook is a category 4 and is currently unstaffed and will remain so in the future, so is not subject to consultation

Great Western Railway (GWR)

Changes to stations operated by GWR

Key Links:

[GWR Consultation page](#)

[Changes to Ticket Retailing at GWR STATIONS full list](#)

GWR have set out information for each station as downloadable PDFs either by station or as a whole. Interestingly GWR set out the proportion of tickets sold and collected at each location alongside their proposals.

It should be noted that stations may be staffed outside of the current ticket office opening hours. This information can be found on the GWR webpage for each station and under "Staffing and General Services" drop down.

Twyford:

Twyford

Current Ticket Office times		Proposed Staffing Times	
Sunday:	08:15 - 15:00	Sunday:	08:15 - 15:00
Mon-Fri:	06:00 - 19:00	Mon-Fri:	06:00 - 19:00
Saturday:	06:45 - 15:30	Saturday:	06:45 - 15:30

Customer access to station facilities such as waiting rooms and toilets is unaffected by these changes

All tickets sold and collected - Financial Year 2022/23

Ticket sold at Ticket Office:	98,202	25.2%
Bookings collected at Ticket Office:	3,911	-
Ticket sold at the TVM(s):	118,035	30.3%
Bookings collected at the TVM(s):	41,997	-
Journeys from this station booked online:	173,786	44.6%
Cash payments received:	11,350	11.6% of total transactions
Warrant / voucher payments:	163	

Less common tickets sold - Financial Year 2022/23

Product	Issues	Alternative customer options		
Season Tickets	6,973	Online	Telesales	-
Rovers/Rangers	4	Online	On-Train	Telesales
Excess Fares*	51	Online	On-Train	-
Car Parking	0	App	-	-
Disabled discounts (D34/D50)	1	On-Train	-	-
Railcards sold	583	GWR App	Online	-
Refunds processed:	157	Call Centre	-	-

Crowthorne:

Although Crowthorne Station is not within Wokingham Borough it is a key railway station where many residents of Wokingham are likely to travel to/from.

Crowthorne

Current Ticket Office times		Proposed Staffing Times	
Sunday:	--:-- - --:--	Sunday:	--:-- - --:--
Mon-Fri:	06:45 - 10:30	Mon-Fri:	06:45 - 10:30
Saturday:	--:-- - --:--	Saturday:	--:-- - --:--

Customer access to station facilities such as waiting rooms and toilets is unaffected by these changes

All tickets sold and collected - Financial Year 2022/23

Ticket sold at Ticket Office:	263	1.4%
Bookings collected at Ticket Office:	32	-
Ticket sold at the TVM(s):	19,215	98.6%
Bookings collected at the TVM(s):	6,343	-
Journeys from this station booked online:	-	-
Cash payments received:	15	5.7% of total transactions
Warrant / voucher payments:	0	-

Less common tickets sold - Financial Year 2022/23

Product	Issues	Alternative customer options		
Season Tickets	3	Online	Telesales	-
Rovers/Rangers	0	Online	On-Train	Telesales
Excess Fares*	0	Online	On-Train	-
Car Parking	1	App	-	-
Disabled discounts (D34/D50)	0	On-Train	-	-
Railcards sold	0	GWR App	Online	-
Refunds processed:	3	Call Centre	-	-

Wargrave:

There is currently no operating Ticket office, and will remain so in the future, so is not subject to this consultation.

Reading:

Although Reading Station is not within Wokingham Borough it is a key railway station in the vicinity where residents of Wokingham are likely to change trains and as such changes here will impact our residents.

Reading

Current Ticket Office times		Proposed Staffing Times	
Sunday:	07:15 - 22:00	Sunday:	07:30 - 20:00
Mon-Fri:	06:15 - 22:00	Mon-Fri:	06:30 - 19:30
Saturday:	06:15 - 22:00	Saturday:	06:30 - 19:30

Customer access to station facilities such as waiting rooms and toilets is unaffected by these changes

All tickets sold and collected - Financial Year 2022/23

Ticket sold at Ticket Office:	645,910	24.4%
Bookings collected at Ticket Office:	78,609	-
Ticket sold at the TVM(s):	787,638	29.8%
Bookings collected at the TVM(s):	411,772	-
Journeys from this station booked online:	1,213,679	45.8%
Cash payments received:	120,418	18.6% of total transactions
Warrant / voucher payments:	2,435	

Less common tickets sold - Financial Year 2022/23

Product	Issues	Alternative customer options		
Season Tickets	32,017	Online	Telesales	-
Rovers/Rangers	28	Online	On-Train	Telesales
Excess Fares*	7,505	Online	On-Train	-
Car Parking	3	App	-	-
Disabled discounts (D34/D50)	25	On-Train	-	-
Railcards sold	7,981	GWR App	Online	-
Refunds processed:	2,676	Call Centre	-	-

Retailing facilities at this station

Current ticket office windows:	12
Number of TVMs:	11
TVM payments accepted:	Cash & Card

Reasoning for the changes

- Promise that there will be more staff on the platforms overseeing day to day
- Modernise the railway
- Seventy-five per cent of SWR passenger journeys are already made using smart media - contactless, Oyster, Tap2Go, SWR Touch Smartcards, eTickets
- The vast majority of ticket types are already available via smart media, online or at ticket vending machines
- Of the 12% of tickets bought at ticket offices nationwide last year, an estimated 99% could have been bought using a ticket vending machine or online
- Save Costs

Concerns about moving from ticket offices

The following section sets out some general concerns surrounding moving from ticket offices over to ticket machines or buying online.

Concerns regarding Ticket Machine

- Services unavailable at ticket machines including refunds, season ticket changes, ranger and rover tickets, ferry/bus connections, park and ride, group save, disabled persons discount, season tickets over one month in length, advance fares, rail card purchases, off-peak tickets before 9.30am, changes to ticket classes, seat reservations, cycle reservations, photocards for season tickets, scholar tickets, sleeper bookings and car parking.
- Inaccessible for those that predominantly use cash, part cash, part card payment - impacts lower incomes and older and disabled people are more likely to use cash.
- Machines don't automatically offer cheapest tickets or explain restrictions on certain fares
- Reduction in facilities and support for passengers with disabilities/accessibility or other equalities related needs
- Overwhelming opposition to ticket office closures from disabled people's organisations, including Disability Rights UK, National Federation of the Blind UK, Transport for All, RNIB, RNID, Guide Dogs, Scope, Thomas Pocklington Trust, Winvisible, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People and the MS Society.
- Safety at station for passengers
- Staffed ticket offices have an important role in supporting passenger safety and security.
- Ticket offices provide a place of safety for both staff and passengers. Requiring staff to undertake transactions out on the platform puts both passengers and themselves in a more vulnerable position.
- Lack of emergency support for incidents, anti-social behaviour, deterrent, safety & security
- Safety concerns and feeling vulnerable without station staff
- No longer be any statutory regulation of staffing provision at stations and the passenger watchdogs would have no formal role in monitoring this. Undoubtedly this will lead to reduced staffing provision at stations.
- Loss of human contact and two-way questions to help get the correct ticket
- Concern around pay cuts and job losses for station staff

Concerns regarding Mobile Ticketing/ Apps

- Accessibility Issues i.e. Dyslexia
- Old/ Young with no access to apps
- No access to apps for those without bank accounts
- General complication to use apps instead of having someone explain clearly what tickets are needed
- Loss of human contact and two-way questions to help get the correct ticket
- Concern around pay cuts and job losses for station staff
- General reluctance to change

Other Thoughts

- Down to 12% report – cited numerous times in news sources but the actual report to present this is nowhere to be found. The most credible cite was from the Rail Travel Group but latest reports do not mention this.
- Consultation is an Email instead of a form may be confusing and inaccessible to the people the ticket offices will impact the most – again another barrier to the proposed changes
- Major opposition group with the RMT - [SAVE OUR TICKET OFFICES - rmt](#)
The South western Protest group: [Save your South Western Railway ticket offices | New Mode](#)
- Initially a three-week public consultation was proposed with little notice of this major change. This would not have enable many organisations to compile a response. Due to backlash this has since been extended until 1st September 2023.

Resources and Links

Transport Focus Contact

Email: TicketOffice.SWR@transportfocus.org.uk

Freepost: RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, Transport Focus, PO Box 5594, Southend on Sea, SS1 9PZ

For more information about how to have your say see www.transportfocus.org.uk

SWR Consultation Contact

Email: SWR.Consultation@Londontravelwatch.org.uk

Freepost: RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, London TravelWatch, PO Box 5594, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9PZ

For more information about how to have your say see londontravelwatch.org.uk

GWR Consultation Contact

Email: GWR.Consultation@londontravelwatch.org.uk

Freepost: RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, London TravelWatch, PO Box 5594, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9PZ.

For more information about how to have your say

see <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/ticketoffices>

GWR Consultation Page: [Have your say | Consultation on changes to ticket offices | Great Western Railway \(gwr.com\)](#)