



Great
Western
Railway

GWR Annual Customer & Stakeholder Report 2025-26



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Mark Hopwood

Managing Director, GWR

The last year has continued to bring significant change for the rail industry and for GWR. As plans for Great British Railways develop, and public ownership of passenger rail services moves closer, this remains an important and exciting period for our industry. It's now confirmed that GWR will enter public ownership on 13th December 2026, and our focus remains firmly on delivering for customers, communities and taxpayers every day both now and going forward.

As we prepare for that future, collaboration across the industry has never been more important. Over the last 12 months we have strengthened our partnership with Network Rail Western, including creating joint leadership and operational roles designed to bring track and train closer together ahead of the wider GBR transition. Aligning our organisations in this way is already helping us make quicker decisions, improve performance and deliver a more joined-up railway for the communities we serve.

Punctuality and reliability remain our top priorities. While we have introduced timetable changes that have improved performance in several areas of the network, such as the North Downs Line, this year has also highlighted some of the challenges our railway continues to face. Severe weather and flooding once again impacted parts of our network, particularly branch lines in the South West, while issues affecting our

Intercity Express Train fleet also created operational pressures. These events underline the importance of continuing to work closely with local authorities, Network Rail, the Department for Transport, our suppliers and regional partners to strengthen long-term resilience and keep communities connected during periods of disruption.

Despite these challenges, we continue to invest in the future of rail across our network. The introduction of our May timetable and the phased rollout of Class 175 trains into Devon and Cornwall will improve connectivity, resilience and capacity across the South West. Working closely with the Department for Transport and Angel Trains, these trains will help deliver a more reliable service for customers while supporting wider fleet modernisation across GWR.

Innovation also remains central to our approach. Over the past year we have continued to support the development of new technologies and ways of working that can help shape the future railway. Our fast-charge battery train trial on the Greenford branch has now progressed into passenger service and received industry recognition through several national awards. It demonstrates how GWR can play a leading role in supporting innovation that delivers both environmental and operational benefits for the wider rail industry – particularly as work continues on our Regional Fleet Renewal Programme.



Mark Hopwood

Managing Director, GWR

Alongside investment in trains and infrastructure, we are equally committed to investing in our people. I was particularly proud to see the opening of GWR's new Learning and Development Centre by Secretary of State for Transport Heidi Alexander, creating a dedicated space to support colleagues at every stage of their careers. We were also honoured to become the first train operating company to receive the Investors in People Platinum accreditation for apprenticeships - recognition of the importance we place on developing skills, supporting future talent and creating opportunities across our region.

As ever, none of this can be achieved alone. I want to conclude by reaffirming our commitment to working openly and collaboratively with our stakeholders, partners and the communities we serve. As the railway evolves and public ownership moves closer, strong local partnerships will become even more important in ensuring the needs of our regions and communities continue to be recognised and championed nationally.

Across the GWR network, rail plays a vital role in supporting economic growth, connecting communities, enabling education and employment opportunities, and encouraging more sustainable travel choices. By continuing to work closely together we can demonstrate the value rail brings to our areas and help ensure future investment reflects the needs and ambitions of the communities we serve.

The railway continues to evolve rapidly, bringing both challenges and opportunities, but by working together we can continue to build a more reliable, resilient and customer-focused railway for the future.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, challenge and partnership.



Marcus Jones

Route Director, Network Rail – Western

This year, we celebrate ten years of our alliance with GWR to deliver a better travelling experience for passengers. As we continue on our journey to bring train and track together, we've been building on the success of uniting our Control teams under Daryn McCombe. We recently brought both Network Rail and GWR's route strategy and railway access teams together, enabling stronger collaboration and closer coordination as we prepare for Great British Railways (GBR). Our London Paddington station teams have also integrated under a single leadership structure to drive forward our shared goals at Paddington and across our managed stations.

It's an exciting time on our route – we have seven new stations planned in the West of England area, reconnecting communities and driving economic growth. In March, the new station under construction in North Filton was officially named Bristol Brabazon. The station, which is scheduled to open later this year, will serve the emerging Brabazon neighbourhood in Bristol with new homes, an arena, and a hub for leading engineering and technology companies. Work has also started to re-open the Portishead line in North Somerset as well as Charfield in South Gloucestershire, with both due to open in the next two years.

Looking to the east, it was great to officially announce the funding for the return of passenger services to the Cowley Branch line in Oxford. In October, I joined campaigners on a chartered service, run by Chiltern Railways, from Oxford Parkway to celebrate the announcement. Once in place, these services will allow direct access to London, the South West and crucially, unlock the potential of the Oxford to Cambridge corridor.





Marcus Jones

Route Director, Network Rail – Western

We also hit a major milestone as part of our work to replace the Botley Road bridge at Oxford Station. Over eight days, we demolished the old bridge and installed new bridge spans, allowing for increased capacity at the station to facilitate East West Rail and the reopening of the Cowley branch line to passengers. During the closure, 60,000 pedestrians were diverted through the station via a step-free route - the first example of this for a major project. We know the work has been disruptive to those living to the west of Oxford and into Botley and we're very much still on track to reopen Botley Road in August.



In the South West, the new Okehampton Interchange station will soon be ready for passenger use. The station will be the newest addition to the Dartmoor line, connecting West Devon, Torridge and North Cornwall with Exeter. Work is currently ongoing on the station platform and 200-space car park, with the station forecourt and bus interchange following soon after. Working with Cornwall Council and GWR, we're delivering a coast-to-coast rail service between Newquay and Falmouth. Last year we installed new digital signals to facilitate the introduction of hourly trains between Newquay and Par this spring. Direct services between Newquay and Falmouth will then follow later this year.

We've also experienced some challenges over the winter with weather and flooding. In January and February, we had three named storms in a four-week period, while Cornwall had its worst total rainfall ever recorded in January. Three of our branch lines in Devon and Cornwall were closed as a result and I will discuss the impact as well as the work we're doing to address weather-related closures later in my performance section.

We have a lot to look forward to as we start the year ahead, from new stations to reintroducing services to previously closed lines. We're working hard to connect more communities across our Western Route.



Lord Faulkner of Worcester

Chairman of GWR Advisory Board

This year and last we have been celebrating the 200th anniversary of the opening of the world's first passenger railway between Stockton and Darlington in 1825, and I want to commend all those who are making a success of Rail 200 – the anniversary is rightly being celebrated in 2025 and 2026 throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It allows us all to appreciate just how much railways have contributed to the nation's happiness, health and prosperity.

Rail 200's exhibition train – which is called "Inspiration" – is conducting its nationwide tour, and thousands of people have visited it at locations all over Great Britain. It's a great celebration of what the railway has done for us.

Railways have long played a vital role in shaping regional economies and communities, bringing a sense of community cohesion as they transport people from A to B. They enable people to get to work, to school, to see friends and family, to go shopping, to go on holiday.

Just eight years after the start of services on the Stockton and Darlington railway the original Great Western Railway was founded. It received its enabling Act of Parliament 191 years ago in 1835, and ran its first services in 1838 thanks largely to the charismatic but wayward genius of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Every time we travel on the Great Western main line – and many of the branches as well – we can see and enjoy his legacy.

For virtually the whole time since, the GWR has retained a distinct identity. It was the only major railway company that emerged largely unaltered following the creation of the "Big Four" companies established under the Railways Act 1921.

Even in the nationalised railway created in 1948, there remained a recognisable Great Western presence thanks largely to the ingenuity of successive general managers who oversaw the operation of distinctive "chocolate and cream" passenger coaches on BR's Western Region and the maintenance of that distinctive sense of Great Western superiority.

The Great Western brand was revived following privatisation in 1995 and relaunched as GWR in 2015, with the reintroduction of the green liveries that had been in existence between 1835 and 1947. The switch from First Great Western to Great Western Railway in 2015 had an almost immediate and positive impact on customer perceptions of their railway.

The company has commendably striven to bring the railway close to the communities it serves and encouraged people to feel ownership of "their" railway, eliciting that sense of pride amongst customers and those who work on the railway, with a real stake in its future.

A local brand with a strong regional identity strengthens community ties, builds trust, and creates the environment for more third-party funding where there is trust that local investment will benefit those locally.



Lord Faulkner of Worcester

Chairman of GWR Advisory Board

When local authorities and regional partners feel a genuine stake in their railway, they are far more inclined to support services and projects rather than relying solely on central national government funding. This helps to leverage more funding for the railway, reduce taxpayer subsidy and increase passenger numbers.

Promoting those links and relationships is a central role for GWR and for the stakeholder advisory board which I have had the honour to chair since 2014. We provide guidance and counsel to railway leaders, and free from statutory or regulatory requirements we can really focus on the day-to-day issues and be a voice for the communities and industries that our membership is derived from.

As we re-enter the world of a nationalised railway, this time with a single directing mind provided by the new Great British Railways (GBR), the industry will need to be supported by a strong regionalised structure truly to champion local accountability and ensure GBR earns and retains the confidence of the communities it serves.

For the new system to succeed, three things are needed:

First, the Railways Bill should explicitly support regional governance to maintain local accountability and prevent decision-making from becoming over-centralised, and keep decision-making visibly close to passengers.

Secondly the Bill should directly recognise the value of independent advisory bodies, such as the GWR Advisory Board, to provide expert guidance and ensure communities have a voice in railway decisions.

And thirdly, while supporting an umbrella national brand that offers clear direction, the GBR Bill should explicitly allow for a measured number of six or seven distinct regional identities – perhaps with a hybrid model similar to Manchester’s Bee Network and Liverpool’s Merseyrail - to enhance customer engagement, marketing effectiveness and better attract third party investment.

It would be prudent for Government and the leadership of GBR to give full thought to the value of regional identities so the value and allure of rail can best be maximised – both to reduce taxpayer subsidy and grow passenger numbers through inspiring the customers of tomorrow.

There will be no better moment than now for us to create a new railway age, looking back on the achievements of the last 200 years but at the same anticipating the huge opportunities that lie ahead.



2. Disciplined Operations

Throughout 2025-26, GWR remained focused on delivering a safe, reliable and resilient railway for the customers and communities we serve. Working closely with Network Rail and industry partners, we continued to improve performance, strengthen operational resilience, invest in our fleet and infrastructure, and maintain high standards of safety and security. This section highlights some of the key initiatives and achievements that supported the day-to-day operation of the railway during the year.

2.1 Performance

2025-26 was a year of strong progress in improving the reliability and performance of our network. Working closely with Network Rail Western Route, we strengthened our partnership through shared performance targets and closer operational planning, helping us respond more effectively to the needs of our customers and the network.

A significant milestone was the appointment of Daryn McCombe as Director of Performance & Service Delivery, Great Western Railway, Joint Director of Network Operations, Network Rail Western Route to lead our Integrated Control Centre, strengthening coordination between our organisations and improving our ability to manage disruption and recover services quickly when incidents occur.

Our continued focus on reducing cancellations delivered positive results across the network, supported by improved traincrew availability and more effective fleet management. Infrastructure reliability also continued to improve, particularly across the Thames Valley, where customers benefited from the ongoing impact of investment through Project Brunel.

The year was not without its challenges. Reliability issues affecting our Intercity Express Train fleet, together with several severe winter storms, impacted performance during parts of the year. Despite these challenges, close collaboration between GWR and Network Rail teams helped minimise disruption and support the swift recovery of services.

The measures below provide an overview of our performance across punctuality, reliability, capacity and major delays during 2025-26.

Detailed operational performance reporting, including service group level performance measures, continues to be reported through GWR's regular performance reporting arrangements.



Trains arriving punctually

We measure punctuality using three industry-recognised measures: On Time (within one minute of schedule), Time to 3 (within three minutes) and Time to 15 (within fifteen minutes).

Across the network, 60.88% of services arrived On Time, 78.17% arrived within three minutes of schedule, and 96.59% arrived within fifteen minutes. While Time to 15 performance improved slightly compared with the previous year, shorter-interval measures were affected by fleet reliability issues and periods of severe weather.

Performance varied across different parts of the network throughout the year. Services between London and South Wales performed particularly strongly, benefiting from targeted timetable improvements and operational interventions. In contrast, services on the London to West of England route experienced greater challenges during the autumn and winter, primarily as a result of Intercity Express Train fuel pump reliability issues and adverse weather conditions in the South West.

Cancellations and service reliability

Reliability improved during 2025-26, with overall cancellations reducing from 4.60% to 3.99%, equating to 3,380 fewer cancelled trains compared with the previous year.

This improvement was largely driven by a reduction in GWR caused cancellations, which fell from 2.69% to 2.02%. Improved traincrew availability, particularly on Sundays, played an important role in supporting this outcome, alongside continued operational focus on delivering the published timetable.

Most areas of the network recorded improvements over the year, demonstrating the benefits of targeted investment in people, planning and fleet availability.

Train capacity and carriages (short formations)

Providing sufficient capacity remains an important priority. During 2025-26, 35,641 services operated with fewer carriages than originally planned from a total of 522,134 scheduled train services, resulting in an overall seat shortfall of 2.45%.

The majority of these instances were linked to the availability of Intercity Express Trains, particularly during periods when additional maintenance activity was required to address fleet reliability issues. These challenges were felt most strongly on longer-distance routes where services are commonly formed of multiple train units.

Despite these pressures, the vast majority of services operated with their planned capacity, ensuring customers continued to have access to the seats and space expected when travelling with us.

Major journey delays

The vast majority of services continued to operate without significant delay, with 99% of trains arriving within 30 minutes of their scheduled arrival time.

Of the small proportion of services experiencing longer delays:

- 4,445 services (0.86%) were delayed by between 30 and 59 minutes.
- 595 services (0.11%) were delayed by between 60 and 119 minutes.
- 60 services (0.01%) were delayed by 120 minutes or more.

While overall levels of major delay remained broadly consistent with the previous year, some routes experienced increased disruption during periods of fleet reliability challenges and severe weather, particularly during the autumn and winter months.

2.2 Network Rail Western Route Performance - Marcus Jones, Route Director, Network Rail – Western

Our performance improvement plan, Project Brunel, was introduced in February 2024 to address a range of persistent performance and reliability issues across the Thames Valley. It was an 18-month programme which ended in October last year and we're now using the lessons we've learnt to shape our practices, allowing us to maintain and further develop the improvements through the remainder of our current funding period and into the next.

The programme focused on improving track, points, overhead power cables and signalling performance. Over 300 targeted interventions on the worst performing assets significantly reduced delays and helped us to establish a more proactive, data driven maintenance approach. We increased access to the railway which enabled us to clear the backlog and we've also secured funding to replace some of the ageing overhead wires between Paddington and Heathrow. Our trespass and welfare interventions have had a strong impact on performance through, for example, the deployment of static welfare officers. This change has achieved a reduction in incidents and delay minutes and is now fully embedded within our route's arrangements.

To the west of Swindon, further along the main line, sits Chipping Sodbury tunnel. We've been working hard to help prevent flooding on the railway and surrounding land, working closely with industry partners. The resilience work we've completed here means the railway can now handle twice as much water before it starts to flood. This allows us to keep trains running through this vital section of railway for longer during wet weather and in some cases, without needing to close it at all. As a result, the main line between Paddington and Swansea wasn't closed during periods of heavy rain in January and February.



In January, the railway in the South West was hit by two major storms - Ingrid and Chandra. Ahead of Storm Ingrid, we closed the railway between Exeter and Newton Abbot as a precautionary measure. This was following our highest internal level weather alert since 2014, which saw the railway closed between Exeter and Newton Abbot for two months. Despite the strong winds and high tide, the £164.5m investment we've made in the last decade, which includes a new sea wall, a rockfall shelter, cliff protection and more, protected the railway and the town of Dawlish. As a result, we were able to fully resume train services by Sunday afternoon, just over 24 hours later – far quicker than other forms of transport were able to recover in Devon and Cornwall.

Two major storms hitting Devon and Cornwall one after another also meant our branch lines were impacted by floodwater. The North Devon, Looe and Newquay lines were closed for periods and we recognise this was hugely disruptive for the communities we serve in the South West. These are, by far, the biggest impacts we've had in years and there is clearly an increase in storm incidents every year.

Rather than remaining reactive, we're moving to a more proactive approach which means identifying and prioritising risks in advance, as well as carrying out work to prevent closures before they occur. We're doing this through our strategic rapid adaptation pathway assessments, working with key partners through our region. Our workshops have helped us identify our at-risk locations along the route and possible measures to mitigate the risks. This work will help us develop a schedule of work required to achieve the desired levels of resilience which will be fed into our next funding period.

We recognise there's still more to do, but by continuing to build on these achievements and embedding long-term resilience planning into our future programmes, we're better positioned to provide a more reliable railway for the communities and customers we serve.



2.3 Timetable Development and Service Improvements

During 2025-26, GWR continued to work closely with customers, stakeholders and local authorities to ensure our timetable reflects the needs of the communities we serve.

A key part of this engagement is our programme of Local Transport Forums, which bring together representatives from across our network to discuss timetable proposals, regional priorities and wider railway developments. These forums help ensure local insight informs future service planning and investment decisions.

Delivering timetable improvements

Throughout the year, targeted timetable changes were introduced to improve connectivity, support growing demand and strengthen operational performance.

The May 2025 timetable focused on enhancing key customer connections across the network. One notable example was an improvement to connections between Swindon and the South Cotswolds, which contributed to customer satisfaction with connections rising from 70.5% to 81%.

The December 2025 timetable also introduced a number of further enhancements, including:

- Additional travel opportunities between Oxford, Didcot Parkway and London during peak periods.
- A new late-evening London Paddington to Reading service, helping create additional capacity for customers travelling both to Reading and destinations further west.
- An additional Sunday morning Oxford to London service, supporting growing leisure demand.

The timetable change also marked an important fleet milestone, supporting the transition from the remaining Castle Class trains to newer rolling stock, including the gradual introduction of the Class 175 fleet.

Working together to manage change

Throughout the year, GWR worked closely with Network Rail and industry partners to ensure customers continued to receive reliable services during major engineering projects and periods of disruption.

This included extensive planning to support major infrastructure works across the network, ensuring services could continue to operate wherever possible while essential upgrades were delivered.

During engineering works affecting routes in Devon in early 2026, innovative planning and close collaboration between GWR and Network Rail helped maintain rail services for communities that might otherwise have faced significantly greater disruption. Customer feedback following these arrangements was positive, highlighting the value of maintaining convenient rail connections wherever possible during infrastructure upgrades.

Supporting performance and growth

Timetable improvements introduced during the year also contributed to wider performance benefits across the network.

Targeted changes on the North Downs Line supported improvements in punctuality, while timetable refinements around London Paddington helped improve service reliability and reduce delays.

By combining stakeholder feedback, operational expertise and close collaboration with partners, GWR continues to develop timetables that improve connectivity, support economic growth and deliver better outcomes for customers across the network.

2.4 Fleet

During 2025-26, GWR continued to work closely with industry partners to improve fleet reliability, introduce new trains and support long-term improvements across the railway.

Improving Reliability

During the year, a reliability issue affecting components on parts of the Intercity Express Train (IET) fleet resulted in some trains being unavailable for service. This placed pressure on performance and capacity, affecting some customer journeys.

Working closely with Hitachi and Rolls-Royce, GWR undertook a significant programme of investigation and corrective maintenance to identify and address the root cause of the issue. Additional measures were introduced to maximise fleet availability and minimise disruption wherever possible.

As a result of this collaborative approach, the number of affected trains reduced significantly over the course of the year, contributing to improvements in both operational performance and customer satisfaction.

Introducing new trains

A major milestone was achieved in December 2025 when the first recommissioned **Class 175** train entered passenger service.

GWR has secured a fleet of 26 Class 175 trains, which will be progressively introduced across the network during 2026. Once fully deployed, the trains will help strengthen regional services across Devon and Cornwall, including routes serving Barnstaple and Okehampton.

The additional fleet will provide greater resilience, improve operational flexibility and support future passenger growth across the region.

Driving Innovation

Innovation also continued through the introduction of the battery-powered **Class 230** train into regular passenger service on the Greenford branch line following a successful trial period.

The project demonstrates GWR's commitment to exploring new technologies that support a more sustainable railway while helping to inform future approaches to decarbonisation.

Working towards a more efficient railway

Looking ahead, GWR is working with Hitachi and Network Rail on initiatives designed to improve the long-term efficiency of the railway network.

This includes research into ways to reduce wear on both trains and infrastructure, helping to improve reliability and deliver better value from future maintenance and investment programmes.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate GWR's continued commitment to providing a more reliable, resilient and sustainable railway for customers and communities across its network.

2.5 Safety, Security, and Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of our customers and colleagues remains a top priority. During 2025-26, GWR continued to work closely with the British Transport Police (BTP), Railway Children and the Samaritans to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive railway for everyone.

As part of this commitment, GWR supported a range of awareness and safeguarding initiatives across the network. During Reading Festival, colleagues and partner organisations engaged with festivalgoers to promote safe travel, raise awareness of support services and highlight the locations of safe spaces available to those who needed assistance.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour through Partnership

One of the most successful initiatives during the year took place in Bridgwater, where GWR worked with more than 20 partner organisations to address youth anti-social behaviour around the railway.

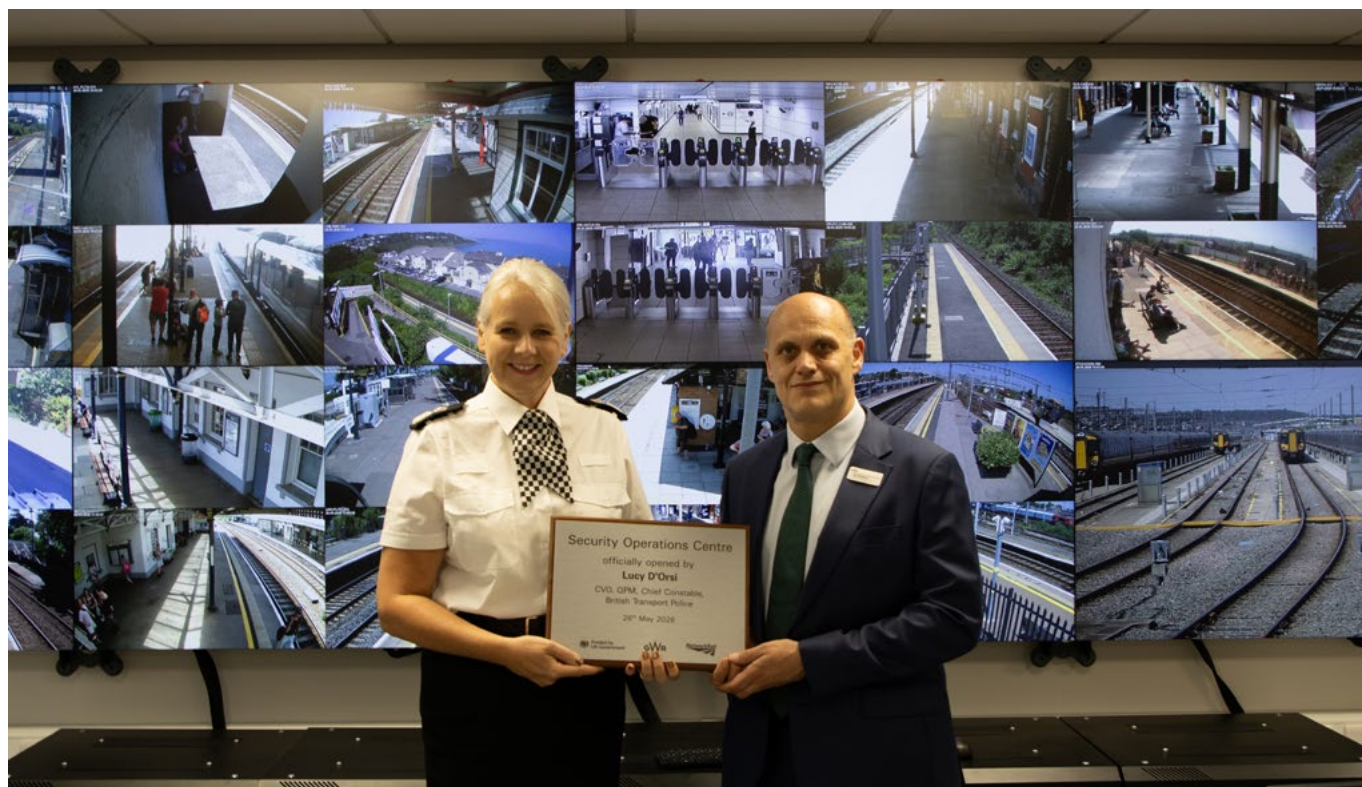
Rather than treating incidents solely as an enforcement issue, partners adopted a safeguarding-led approach that focused on understanding and addressing the underlying causes of behaviour. The programme included enhanced staff training, improved reporting processes and community-based initiatives designed to provide better opportunities for young people.

This collaborative approach resulted in a 77% reduction in youth anti-social behaviour incidents and was recognised nationally with the Safety & Security Excellence Award at the Rail Business Awards.

Investing in Railway Security

During the year, GWR enhanced its security capabilities through upgrades to its Security Operations Centre (SOC), strengthening our ability to monitor stations, share information with partner agencies and respond quickly to incidents across the network.

These investments, alongside our continued partnership working, demonstrate GWR's commitment to providing a safe, secure and welcoming railway for customers, colleagues and the communities we serve.



2.6 Environment & Sustainability

During 2025-26, GWR continued to monitor and manage its environmental performance across energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, water consumption and waste management.

Environmental Performance against Targets

Performance against GWR's Environmental Impact Targets during 2025-26 was as follows:

- Traction carbon emissions: 237,712 tCO₂e against a target of ≤245,000 tCO₂e, achieving performance 3.0% below target.
- Non-traction energy consumption: 42,225,681 kWh against a target of ≤33,000,000 kWh, resulting in performance 28.0% above target.
- Mains water consumption: 286,531 m³ against a target of ≤200,000 m³, resulting in performance 43.3% above target.
- Waste sent to landfill: 0%, maintaining the target of zero waste to landfill.
- Recycling rate: 63.5% against a target of ≥78.0%, finishing 14.5 percentage points below target.

Total energy consumption comprised 21.4 million kWh of non-traction electricity, 20.3 million kWh of non-traction gas, 214.9 million kWh of traction electricity and 72.5 million litres of diesel fuel used in train operations.

Water consumption increased to 286,531 m³ during the year, primarily due to significant leaks at St Philip's Marsh Depot and a number of station locations across the network. Enhanced monitoring and validation processes have improved visibility of energy and water consumption, supporting earlier identification of leaks, billing anomalies and operational inefficiencies.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GWR continued to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and air quality impacts associated with train operations and the wider estate. Traction carbon emissions were recorded at 237,712 tonnes CO₂e during the reporting year, remaining below the Environmental Impact Target.

Air quality impacts, including emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter associated with diesel train operations, continued to be monitored through GWR's environmental management and reporting processes in line with contractual and industry requirements.

Compliance, Monitoring and Reporting

GWR maintained a strong compliance record during 2025-26, with zero environmental fines, prosecutions, enforcement notices or information notices received during the year.

Environmental performance data continued to be reported through the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) Sustainable Insights platform. All required environmental performance data for the reporting year was submitted through the relevant RSSB reporting arrangements.

During the year, Operations teams recorded 109 environmental complaints and 44 environmental incidents, while Engineering teams recorded 11 environmental incidents. All incidents were managed through GWR's Environmental Management System to support investigation, corrective action and continual improvement.

The Environmental Impact Monitoring (EIM) audit was completed in accordance with the contractual requirements applicable at the time. No annual independent EIM audit requirement applied during the 2025-26 reporting period.

Improvement Actions

Performance targets for non-traction energy consumption, mains water consumption and recycling rate were not achieved during 2025-26. In response, GWR continued to implement improvement measures including:

- Enhanced energy and water monitoring across stations and depots.
- Improved leak detection and asset management processes.
- Continued investment in energy efficiency initiatives.
- Exploration of renewable energy opportunities, including solar generation.
- Support for emerging low-emission and battery-powered rail technologies.
- Development of climate adaptation plans to improve resilience to flooding, heat and severe weather.

These actions form part of GWR's ongoing programme to improve performance against Environmental Impact Targets and deliver a more sustainable railway.

Environmental Case Study – Zero Waste to Landfill

GWR successfully maintained its commitment to sending zero operational waste to landfill during 2025-26. Waste generated across stations, depots and offices was managed through recycling, recovery and alternative treatment routes, ensuring that no waste was disposed of to landfill. This achievement supports GWR's circular economy ambitions and demonstrates the effectiveness of the company's waste management arrangements.

Further Information

Environmental performance information, sustainability reporting, environmental policies and GWR's ISO 14001 & ISO 50001 Environmental & Energy Management System certifications are publicly available on the GWR website



2.7 Poppies to Paddington: A Royal Tribute



In a historic moment for GWR, Her Majesty Queen Camilla joined our sixth annual 'Poppies to Paddington' operation on Armistice Day in 2025. Travelling from Chippenham to London Paddington, the Queen led a national act of remembrance that united the "railway family" with the communities we serve.

As the industry celebrated Railway 200, the ceremony was the most significant to date, not only marking 80 years since the end of the Second World War but also honouring 200 years of service of the railway in times of conflict.

A Network-Wide Operation

What began as a lockdown initiative in 2020 has evolved into a massive logistics operation. In partnership with The Veterans Charity, GWR coordinates special 'Poppy Trains' that act as mobile tributes across the network.

Every year, we invite community leaders from across the network to present wreaths at their local stations, and each time we are moved by the depth of local pride on display. This was evident across the regions: in Swansea, a full service was held ahead of the 07:18 departure; in Penzance, a 40-strong gathering saluted the 05:03 train; and in Bath Spa, 30 veterans from the Grenadier Guards Association presented wreaths to the poignant sound of the 'Last Post'.

This year, 10 'Poppy Trains' – including the train Her Majesty travelled on – carried more than 370 wreaths from over 60 stations across the South West, South Wales and the Cotswolds – a volume of tributes on par with the national service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

Upon arrival at London Paddington, the wreaths were received by the Hereford City Royal Air Force Cadets and placed at the Platform 1 war memorial. The iconic statue was framed by a 'curtain of poppies' – an installation of 22,442 poppy flowers recycled from wreaths collected from previous years' ceremonies and creating a powerful backdrop for the Remembrance service.

National Railway Remembrance Service

Marking Railway 200, the guests arriving at Paddington represented a “Who’s Who” of senior industry leaders and government leadership. The backdrop for the service was a specially liveried train bearing the names and stories of 2,545 GWR workers lost during World War I – ensuring the names of our fallen colleagues remained at the heart of the ceremony.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander MP, who attended the event, emphasised the enduring link between the railway and national service:

“Today we stand together to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, united in gratitude. As we mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War, we are reminded that our railways played a vital role in that conflict – and continues to serve our nation today, 200 years on from the birth of the modern railway.”

Impact and Legacy

The event reached far beyond the station platforms, generating 200 media articles and reaching an audience of over 42 million people. Poppies to Paddington is now firmly an important part of Remembrance across the communities we serve forming an integral part of their commemoration events. And from those communities, wonderful Remembrance projects emerge, from the school children of Monkton Park Primary – who presented a hand-crocheted wreath to The Queen – to the veterans and reservists who participate and led the service. Poppies to Paddington has become a definitive symbol of community remembrance, resilience and fills our industry with pride.



3. Delighting Our Customers

Throughout 2025-26, GWR continued to focus on building stronger relationships with customers, stakeholders and communities. Through targeted marketing, customer insight, accessibility improvements and community partnerships, we worked to encourage rail travel, improve the customer experience and strengthen trust in GWR across the regions we serve.

3.1 A Gift from Blenheim Palace to Oxford Station

Oxford station welcomed the festive season with a unique community partnership that brought together GWR, Blenheim Palace and St Barnabas' C of E Primary School.

At the heart of the celebration was an 8-foot Nordmann fir tree, donated by the Blenheim Palace Estate and displayed in the station concourse. Pupils from St Barnabas' designed 30 rail-themed decorations and performed carols for customers, helping create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for passengers travelling through the station.

The initiative highlighted the strong connections between the railway and the local community during the Railway 200 anniversary year, while also promoting sustainable, car-free access to one of Oxfordshire's most iconic visitor destinations.



3.2 Stakeholder Audit

Each year we undertake an independent stakeholder survey to better understand how GWR is performing for the communities, organisations and partners we work with across our network. Our stakeholders play an important role in representing the interests and experiences of customers, helping to provide insight, challenge and feedback on the services we deliver.

The survey gathers feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, including parliamentarians, local authorities, Community Rail Partnerships, rail user groups, business organisations, transport partners and regional representatives.

Their insight is invaluable. These organisations and individuals help shape local transport priorities, support economic growth and represent the communities we serve. At a time of significant change across the railway industry - including continued reform, closer integration between track and train, and the transition towards Great British Railways- maintaining strong relationships and understanding stakeholder priorities is more important than ever.

This year's findings are encouraging and reflect the progress made over the past 12 months in strengthening relationships, improving collaboration and delivering a more joined-up railway across our network.

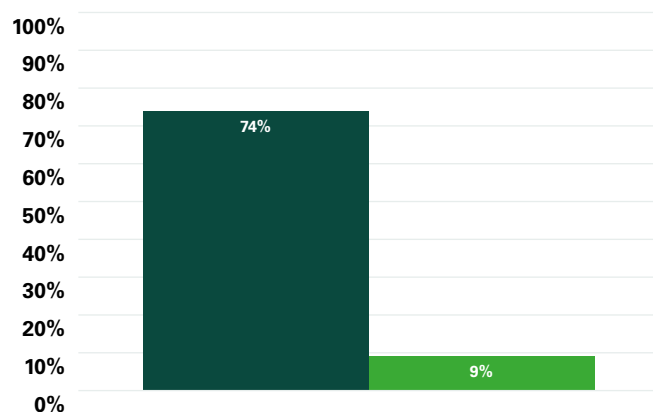
Overall confidence in GWR improved significantly, contributing to a 19 percentage point increase in our advocacy score and one of the strongest results recorded since this research began. Stakeholders increasingly recognise both the direction of travel for GWR and the wider industry's progress towards Great British Railways.

Community engagement remains one of our strongest-performing areas and continues to shape positive perceptions of GWR. Encouragingly, 74% of stakeholders believe GWR builds constructive partnerships with the communities it serves, while 71% agree we are committed to working collaboratively across the rail industry to deliver improvements for customers.

GWR's commitments

Showing % who NET: agree/disagree

■ Net agree ■ Net disagree

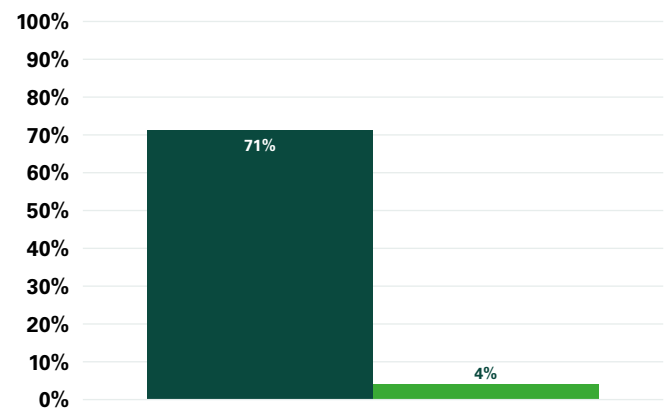


GWR builds constructive partnership with members of the communities it serves

GWR's commitments

Showing % who NET: agree/disagree

■ Net agree ■ Net disagree



GWR is committed to working collaboratively with the rail industry to deliver improvements for customers

Stakeholders also continued to view service performance positively overall, despite the operational challenges faced across the network during the year, including severe weather events and fleet availability issues.

The survey highlighted continued strength in the quality of GWR's stakeholder relationships and engagement. Four in five stakeholders rated their overall experience of working with GWR as good or very good - an increase of five percentage points on last year - while confidence in GWR's ability to address key priorities also improved. A similar proportion of stakeholders agreed that GWR responds in a clear, timely and proactive manner.

Experience of Great Western Railway in 2025 (% who say the following)

NET: Poor 4%

NET: Good 80%



Importantly, perceptions were more consistent across regions this year, with notable improvements in the Central region following concerns raised in the previous survey around operational performance and engagement.

We were also pleased to see a significant improvement in perceptions amongst parliamentarians. Following the 2024 General Election, last year's survey reflected the understandable impact of many new stakeholders becoming familiar with GWR and the wider rail industry. This year's results demonstrate a strong recovery across advocacy, engagement and performance measures, reaching some of the highest levels recorded for this group.

The proportion of stakeholders who believe GWR is "on the right track" has continued to rise, reaching 70% this year following the lower scores recorded in 2023. This reflects growing confidence in the progress being made across the business, including investment in fleet modernisation, innovation, closer partnership working with Network Rail, and our continued focus on supporting the communities we serve.

The survey also provides a clear reminder of where stakeholders expect further progress. Capacity, punctuality and reliability remain the most significant drivers of dissatisfaction, alongside ensuring value for money for taxpayers and customers. However, it was encouraging to see improved satisfaction across a number of operational and engagement measures this year, including information provision during disruption, collaboration with customers and stakeholders, and punctuality and reliability, particularly given the challenges experienced with fleet reliability and severe weather disruption during the year.

Finally, we were particularly encouraged by the continued improvement in perceptions of GWR as a trusted partner, with 85% of stakeholders now agreeing with this statement. At a time of significant change for the railway industry, maintaining this trust and collaboration with stakeholders, partners and communities remains more important than ever.

Experience of Great Western Railway in 2025 (% who say the following)

I consider GWR to be a trusted partner to me and/or my organisation



Net:
Agree
85%

Change
since 2024
+4

Legend: Agree strongly (dark green), Agree (green), Disagree (yellow), Disagree strongly (orange), Don't know (red)

3.3 Marketing and Growth

During 2025-26, we built on our strengths in people, geography and heritage to deliver another successful year for GWR. Our marketing strategy played a pivotal role in inspiring discretionary leisure travel and delivering significant revenue growth. Through high-impact revenue generating leisure campaigns and targeted initiatives, we fostered positive perceptions of rail travel and encouraged more customers to choose GWR for their journeys.

The return of the much-loved Famous Five campaign played a central role in driving leisure demand, showcasing the breadth of destinations across the GWR network and reconnecting audiences with the spirit of adventure associated with rail travel. This was supported by key commercial initiatives such as the Long Weekender campaign and compelling off-peak fare promotions, which helped stimulate demand and increase network utilisation.

Throughout the year, always-on performance marketing consistently converted interest into bookings, delivering measurable sales outcomes and reinforcing GWR's position as a leading and innovative rail operator.

Marketing

GWR Marketing activity continued to build brand strength and affinity with our audiences through emotive, storytelling campaigns via our long-running Famous Five creative. These campaigns delivered strong, and in some cases record-breaking performance across key metrics such as awareness and consideration, while also driving effective return on investment and revenue generation to further reduce net subsidy.

The success of our new Famous Five campaign: Five and the Thrilling Engagement, continued. At the centre of the campaign was a 60-second animated film where the Famous Five race to return a lost engagement ring, travelling across iconic GWR locations to do so; including Bristol, Henley and the Eden Project.

Our autumn 2025 campaign was one of the most successful ever run, both commercially and in campaign-tracking, delivering a £3.78 return on investment – over 50% more than the target and the highest yet recorded for an autumn campaign. We also saw some of the highest levels of spontaneous brand awareness (82%) and campaign awareness (68%) ever seen, demonstrating the power these campaigns continue to have in driving awareness and consideration amongst our target audiences. It reached 97% of all adults on the GWR network an average of 10 times throughout the course of the campaign.

The year culminated in the launch of our latest, most ambitious and integrated Famous Five campaign yet: Five and the Dragon Quest. This innovative campaign draws on the myths and legends that have shaped the South West and Wales for generations, reimagined for a modern audience and rooted firmly in the places our railway connects every day.



Tactical and Product Marketing

Over the past year, GWR's large-scale Famous Five leisure campaigns have been supported by a variety of tactical and product marketing activities. This included promoting key GWR fare products and services, such as the Long Weekender ticket, value-for-money products such as Railcards and the Night Riviera Sleeper and Pullman services.

Black Friday

Seizing the opportunity to drive further journeys at a time when consumers are already thinking about savings, GWR launched its first ever Black Friday sale in late November 2025. Running for just 4 days, the campaign delivered an excellent incremental return on investment of £4.76m.

The Great GWR Getaway Sale

A well-established commercial initiative, GWR launched another of its Great Getaway Sales in January 2026 to promote leisure travel during a seasonally quieter time of year.

This campaign performed well, achieving a ROI of 3.78:1 and generating over 35 million impressions among our ABC1 target audience throughout the sale period.

GWR also supported the national Great British Rail Sale which followed, where customers could take advantage of up to 50% off rail fares nationwide.

Pay-as-you-go

In November, pay-as-you-go was expanded to cover the whole of Cornwall as well as Plymouth and the Tamar Valley Line. We continue to promote the ease and time-saving that pay-as-you-go brings customers, and to encourage frequent usage and boost sign-ups we rolled out a 10% discount on all journeys made using pay-as-you-go across Bristol and Cornwall schemes, throughout March and April.



Regional Marketing

Regional marketing activities ran throughout the year, supporting broader awareness campaigns and stimulating travel at local and regional levels by collaborating with partners to maximise opportunities. GWR continue to work closely with Destination Management Organisations and LVEPs across the network to promote the wealth of destinations and attractions across the GWR network. Our partners included Visit West, Visit Wales, Visit Cornwall, Visit Oxfordshire, Visit Exeter and many more.

GWR continue to recognise the importance of events to stimulate demand, and a regular stream of marketing activity was in place to promote and support customers attending events. GWR also continue to sponsor several events on the network – building brand awareness, driving revenue and building advocacy - these included Britain's Ocean City Running Festival, English Riviera Airshow, Wales Airshow and Bristol International Balloon Fiesta.

In September, partners of tourism and transport gathered at Tinside Lido, Plymouth for the GWR Destination Partnership Conference. The theme of the day was Collaboration & Community; working together to build the visitor economy. A reminder that by uniting in a shared ambition to harness the power of rail we can all support and grow the visitor economies we serve.

The purpose of the day was to inform and inspire our partners through:

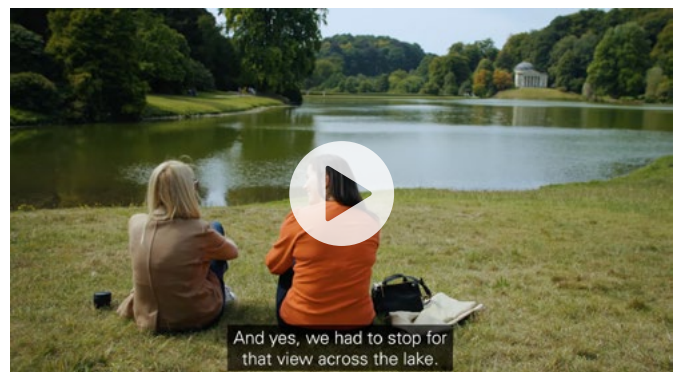
- Showcasing our marketing activities
- Celebrating the destinations we serve
- Highlighting the breadth of our relationships
- Demonstrating the benefits of partnering with GWR
- Reinforcing the power of collaborative working

GWR was joined by leading voices from Travel, Tourism, and Destination Marketing, giving partners the opportunity to build new relationships and begin discussions on co-operative marketing activities for 2026/27.

Integrated Transport Marketing

Integrated transport continues to go from strength to strength, with further strategic partnerships established with other transport operators, local authorities, airports and organisations such as the National Trust.

Highlights of the year included working with Go Cornwall Bus and the Eden Project to promote train and bus accessibility (a project recently featured in the Department of Transport's 'Connected Places' strategy) and a joint marketing campaign with Wiltshire Council, South Western Railway and Stourhead to show the ease of using rail plus demand responsive transport.



Looking ahead, the relationship between rail and bus continues to deepen with the launch of a new Cotswolds Rail Link – an enhanced bus link from Moreton-in-Marsh station that will enable people to easily transition from train to some of the Cotswolds’ most iconic destinations.

Meanwhile, we continue to nurture and develop our airport connections. In particular, summer 2026 will see the launch of a trial overnight services to Gatwick which will be supported by a paid and own channel marketing campaign to maximise its opportunity for success.

Customer Relationship Management

During 2025-26, our CRM activity focused on making communications more targeted, timely and relevant to support bookings, repeat travel and customer retention. This included further development of our welcome, in-life, lapsed and trigger-based journeys, alongside capturing and using more customer data to better understand different customer types and travel behaviours in order to deliver more personalised content. This has helped us identify likely behaviours, such as customers with a propensity to travel First Class or those at risk of lapsing.

We also made greater use of geo-targeting and travel behaviour to tailor inspiration and offers more closely to where customers live and where they are likely to travel. Alongside this, CRM supported upsell and cross-sell opportunities through more personalised content, while improved reporting and analysis helped us better understand performance and where to optimise further.

We also successfully launched GWR Rewards and grew the programme to over 220,000 members. The programme is designed to reward customers based on the frequency and value of their travel, while also helping us grow our direct customer base and encourage stronger repeat behaviour. Alongside the core member proposition, we introduced a range of trigger-based communications to encourage desired and repeat behaviours, such as registering, travelling more often, progressing through tiers and redeeming rewards, helping to keep members engaged and active within the programme.

3.4 Customer Feedback, Complaints, and Faults Handling

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction remained high throughout 2025–26, despite periods of operational challenge. We began the year strongly, achieving a record overall customer satisfaction score of 92%, with Period 3 delivering our highest satisfaction result since 2023.

Performance was affected during the middle of the year by a number of fleet reliability issues, particularly relating to generating units on parts of our Intercity Express Train fleet. These issues placed pressure on service performance and contributed to a temporary decline in customer satisfaction, which reached its lowest point since 2023 during Period 9.

Through the combined efforts of our engineering teams, suppliers and operational colleagues, these challenges were addressed during the latter part of the year. As reliability improved, customer confidence recovered, with overall satisfaction returning to 91% by year-end.

Throughout the year, customers continued to rate the service provided by our colleagues highly. Satisfaction with the on-board experience remained at 95%, while satisfaction with station services reached 92%, demonstrating the important role frontline teams play in delivering a positive customer experience, particularly during periods of disruption.

The introduction of RCXS replaces the former National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) and provides the new industry benchmark for measuring customer satisfaction and passenger experience across the rail industry.

Looking ahead, we recognise that passengers increasingly expect a railway that is both reliable and easy to use. As commuting journeys continue to recover alongside strong leisure travel demand, our focus remains on delivering consistent performance, excellent customer service and value for money.

Customer Relations

Customer feedback continues to play an important role in shaping service improvements across the network. Throughout 2025–26, our Customer Relations team worked closely with colleagues across GWR to understand customer concerns, identify recurring themes and support targeted action to improve the passenger experience.

Correspondence and Complaint Trends

During 2025–26, GWR recorded 48,189 complaints, representing a modest increase of 1.5% compared with the previous year.

Encouragingly, complaints relating to punctuality and reliability fell by 17%, reflecting improvements in overall operational performance and a reduction in cancellations. This included 896 fewer complaints relating to cancelled services and 348 fewer complaints concerning repeated poor performance.

Many of the reliability related themes raised through customer feedback reflected the operational challenges outlined in our Performance section, particularly the fleet reliability issues experienced during the autumn and winter. As these issues were resolved, improvements were seen in both operational performance and customer sentiment.

Capacity remained an important area of customer feedback. While overall capacity-related complaints remained broadly unchanged, complaints relating to crowding increased by 749, reaching 7,404 complaints during the year. Conversely, complaints relating to reservations fell by 384, indicating improvements in the booking experience despite ongoing pressure on capacity on some routes.

On-Board Experience and Fleet Upkeep

Maintaining clean, comfortable and reliable trains remains a key priority.

During 2025-26, GWR received 1,439 complaints relating to train upkeep and repair, an increase of 24.8% compared with the previous year. The majority of these complaints were linked to on-board facilities and reflected the fleet reliability challenges experienced during parts of the year.

The most common issues reported were:

- Faulty on-board toilets- 438 complaints
- Seating availability and comfort- 316 complaints
- Carriage cleanliness- 195 complaints

Smaller volumes of complaints related to carriage damage, door faults, power sockets and lighting.

These insights continue to inform maintenance priorities across the fleet. Throughout the year, GWR worked closely with engineering teams and suppliers to address the issues most frequently raised by customers and improve the reliability of customer-facing facilities.

Station Environment and Facilities

Alongside our trains, customers continue to place significant importance on the quality and accessibility of station facilities.

During 2025–26, GWR recorded 368 complaints relating to station upkeep and facilities. The most common themes raised by customers were:

- Station toilets- 134 complaints
- Lift reliability and availability- 93 complaints
- General station environment and maintenance- 100 complaints

Complaints relating to litter, graffiti, vegetation management, lighting and building condition remained comparatively low throughout the year, reflecting the continued efforts of station teams and maintenance partners to maintain high standards across the network.

Customer feedback is routinely reviewed alongside operational and maintenance data to help prioritise future improvement activity and investment.

Notified Faults and Asset Management

Customer-reported faults relating to rolling stock and station facilities continue to be monitored and managed through GWR's maintenance and asset management processes. These reports are reviewed alongside operational performance data to help prioritise repairs, maintenance activity and future investment.

Detailed reporting relating to notified faults, fault resolution performance and asset reliability is monitored through GWR's operational reporting arrangements and informs ongoing improvement programmes across the network.

Learning from Feedback

Customer feedback remains one of the most valuable tools available to us for improving the railway.

Insights gathered through complaints, surveys, correspondence and direct customer engagement are used across the business to identify trends, prioritise investment and inform service improvements. During 2025–26, this feedback helped shape actions to improve fleet reliability, station facilities, customer information and service recovery processes.

As we look ahead, we will continue to use customer insight to guide decision-making and ensure investment is focused on the areas that matter most to passengers.

Celebrating Our Colleagues

While understanding and resolving customer concerns remains a key priority, it is equally important to recognise great service.

During 2025-26, positive feedback received by our Customer Relations team increased by 36% compared with the previous year. Customers regularly praised colleagues for their professionalism, helpfulness and support, particularly during periods of disruption.

This increase in commendations reflects the dedication of colleagues across the network and demonstrates the important role they play in creating a positive customer experience every day.

3.5 Station Operations

Providing reliable station services remains a core priority across the GWR network.

During 2025–26, ticket office opening hours compliance reached an annual average of 90.5%, improving on the previous year and representing our strongest performance since 2020. This ensured scheduled closures were kept to a minimum across our managed stations.

Gateline operations also remained resilient, achieving a year-on-year improvement of 0.2 percentage points. Together, these results demonstrate the continued commitment of station teams to delivering reliable, accessible and welcoming environments for customers throughout the network.

3.6 Passenger Assistance

Ensuring our railway remains accessible and inclusive for everyone is central to our customer service commitment.

Although changes to the Office of Rail and Road's research methodology resulted in a temporary pause to some published data during the year, GWR's own customer tracking and performance monitoring demonstrated continued strong performance despite growing demand for assistance services.

Growing Demand for Passenger Assist

Demand for Passenger Assist continued to grow significantly during 2025–26, 384,646 assistance requests were successfully delivered across the network. This represented a 23% increase compared with the 312,705 requests provided during 2024–25.

139,998 assists were delivered to customers travelling without a pre-booking through our "turn up and go" service.

Importantly, customer satisfaction remained stable despite this substantial growth in demand.

Delivering a High-Quality Service

Customer surveys continued to highlight strong performance across the Passenger Assist journey.

Satisfaction with the booking process remained high, with 92.2% of customers satisfied with the ease of arranging assistance. Overall satisfaction with the service was 89.5%, matching the previous year despite significantly higher demand.

Performance across key service measures included:

- 76% of booked customers were met exactly at the agreed time.
- 7% were met within five minutes of their scheduled arrival.
- 6% were assisted directly by Train Managers at unstaffed stations.

To further improve the experience, we are working to strengthen communication around meeting locations and will introduce more consistent meeting point information across stations and booking channels during the coming year.

Improving Accessibility

During the year, GWR and Network Rail continued to invest in infrastructure that makes rail travel easier and more accessible.

Accessibility improvements included:

- New lifts at St Erth, Tilehurst, Theale and Farnborough North.
- Lift modernisation works at Bath Spa, Bristol Parkway and Exeter St Davids.
- Trials of Assisted Boarding Points at unstaffed stations in Devon.

The Assisted Boarding Point trial provides clearly identifiable waiting areas for customers requiring boarding assistance and will inform future accessibility improvements across the network.

Supporting Inclusive Travel

GWR's commitment to accessibility extends beyond physical infrastructure.

During the year, GWR achieved the National Autistic Society's Autism Friendly Award across its entire network and introduced Widgit Symbol Guides to help neurodivergent and non-verbal customers navigate stations more confidently.

Our Try a Train programme also continued to build travel confidence among disabled and older passengers, supporting 4,933 participants during 2025–26.

Working in partnership with Bristol City Council's Travel Training Team and a range of community organisations, we will continue to expand opportunities for inclusive and independent travel across the communities we serve.



4. Keeping Our Communities Prospering

Communities are at the heart of the railway. Throughout 2025-26, GWR continued to work with local authorities, community groups, transport partners and volunteers to support economic growth, improve accessibility and strengthen connections across the regions we serve. This section highlights some of the ways we have invested in our communities and worked with partners to deliver lasting benefits.

4.1 Community Heroes Honoured at Goring & Streatley

GWR unveiled a permanent plaque at Goring & Streatley station to recognise the outstanding contribution of local volunteers who have helped make the station more welcoming, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

Since 2017, volunteers from Goring-on-Thames in Bloom have transformed station platforms with wildlife-friendly planting, enhancing the station environment and supporting local biodiversity.

The plaque also honours John Boler and the Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley (MIGGS) for their long-standing work to improve accessibility. Their partnership with GWR helped secure the installation of station lifts and supported initiatives that enable more passengers to travel independently and with confidence.

John Boler, Chairman of MIGGS said:

“MIGGS has been committed over the last 17 years to ensuring that people in South Oxfordshire communities with additional needs can travel safely and with confidence. I’m very grateful to GWR for the acknowledgement represented by this plaque.”

The recognition highlights the important role that volunteers play in helping create stations that are welcoming, accessible and valued by the communities they serve.



4.2 Customer and Community Improvement Fund

The Customer and Community Improvement (CCI) Fund continues to play an important role in supporting projects that improve the customer experience, strengthen communities and encourage sustainable growth across the GWR network.

Delivering Community Impact in 2025/26

Interest in the 2025-26 funding round was exceptionally strong, with 306 applications seeking a combined £4.7 million of support. Following a robust assessment process, 90 projects were awarded funding, supported by a total investment of £1,034,931.

Funding was provided through the core CCI Fund alongside complementary investment from accessibility, heritage and integrated transport programmes. Together, these projects delivered benefits ranging from improved accessibility and community engagement to educational and sustainable travel initiatives.

The Sign Train

One of the projects supported through the fund was The Sign Train, led by the Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Bristol.

Awarded £24,000, the project aims to improve travel confidence within the deaf community while helping participants make greater use of the rail network. Linked to the Railway 200 celebrations, the initiative brings together deaf communities across Taunton, Reading and Gloucester through a programme of rail-based activities and visits.

The project focuses on three key outcomes:

- Improving access to railway heritage through British Sign Language (BSL) supported visits and resources.
- Strengthening social connections between deaf communities across the region.
- Providing valuable feedback to GWR on barriers experienced by deaf passengers when travelling by rail.

The feedback gathered through the project will help inform future improvements to accessibility across the network.

Alongside projects such as The Sign Train, the CCI Fund supported a wide range of initiatives focused on accessibility, community engagement, sustainable travel and education throughout 2025/26.



Looking Ahead to 2026-27

Building on the success of the current programme, applications for the 2026/27 CCI Fund opened in early 2026.

The next funding round continues to prioritise projects that deliver meaningful local benefits while supporting wider railway objectives, including:

- Encouraging rail travel and supporting carbon reduction.
- Promoting inclusion, accessibility and diversity.
- Supporting economic growth, skills development and rail safety education.

The application window closed on 2 February 2026, and assessments are now underway.

We look forward to supporting the next generation of community led projects that will help strengthen links between the railway and the communities we serve.

4.3 Joanna Grew, Joint Route Strategy Director, GWR and Network Rail Western

The Integrated Western Route Strategy and Investment Team brings together colleagues from GWR and Network Rail into a single Track and Train function. By combining strategic planning, investment, regional development and project delivery expertise, the team provides a unified approach to shaping the future of the railway across the Western Route.

The team has been created to strengthen collaboration, improve decision-making and provide a clear, joined-up railway voice for partners, stakeholders and local communities. By aligning priorities across both organisations, we are better placed to identify opportunities for growth, coordinate investment and deliver improvements that benefit both customers and the regions we serve.

As Joint Route Strategy Director for GWR and Network Rail Western, I lead the integrated strategy, planning and investment agenda on behalf of both organisations.

My ambition is to ensure we provide a clear and accessible interface for stakeholders while creating a truly integrated team that is focused on delivering long-term benefits for our customers, communities and partners. Through closer collaboration, we can accelerate delivery, make better use of resources and support sustainable economic growth across the West of England, South Wales, Devon and Cornwall, and the Thames Valley.

By bringing colleagues together into a single directorate, we can align priorities, reduce duplication and provide greater clarity for partners and funders.

This approach enables faster decision-making, stronger accountability and more effective planning for future investment. As the railway progresses towards a more integrated Great British Railways model, the team will play a key role in delivering a joined-up railway that supports growth, improves connectivity and meets the needs of the communities we serve.

The creation of this integrated team marks an important step towards a more joined-up railway, ensuring investment decisions are aligned with the needs of passengers, communities and future economic growth.



4.4 East

GWR's East region covers the Thames Valley, Oxfordshire, the North Downs, the North Cotswolds and the Kennet Valley. During 2025-26, we worked with partners across the region to improve connectivity, enhance station facilities and support sustainable growth.

Supporting the Oxfordshire Metro Vision

Oxfordshire's 23 stations handled 19.6 million rail journeys during 2024-25, and demand is expected to grow significantly over the coming years as the county delivers new homes, jobs and economic opportunities.

Working closely with Oxfordshire County Council and local district councils, GWR is supporting delivery of the OxRail 2040 Strategy. This includes proposals for improved station facilities, increased service frequencies, new stations and stronger links to major development areas.

Recent improvements at Oxford station include a new waiting room on Platform 4 and upgraded station signage. We are also developing plans to further improve the customer experience through enhanced waiting facilities, improved retail provision, upgraded ticket gate facilities and better active travel connections, including cycle storage improvements.

Alongside these improvements, GWR and Network Rail are investigating opportunities to increase capacity and provide more frequent services between Oxford, Banbury, Didcot Parkway and the North Cotswolds.

GWR is also working with development partners to ensure rail supports future growth. At Heyford, a joint study with Dorchester Living is examining opportunities to improve station facilities, accessibility and sustainable transport connections as part of plans for approximately 9,500 new homes.

Improving Customer Facilities Across the Thames Valley

The Thames Valley continues to be one of the UK's most important centres for science, technology and innovation. To support growing passenger demand, we are investing in stations and transport interchanges across the region.

In December 2025, GWR completed a major refurbishment of the ticket hall at Twyford station. The improvements were designed to support continued passenger growth, with more than 1.7 million journeys already being made through the station each year.



The project delivered:

- A new open-plan ticket office layout to improve customer service.
- Enhanced waiting areas and seating.
- A new retail facility within the station building.
- Relocated ticket machines for greater convenience and security.
- Improved welfare and working facilities for colleagues.

Together, these improvements have created a more welcoming and accessible station environment while supporting future passenger growth.

Looking ahead, we are working with Wokingham Borough Council to explore further enhancements, including improvements to the station forecourt, public transport access and station parking.

Elsewhere, improvements have also been delivered at Maidenhead station to support significant town centre growth, including upgraded pick-up and drop-off facilities.

Expanding Opportunities on the North Downs Line

Building on the success of the North Downs Line partnership, GWR will trial overnight services between Reading and Gatwick Airport during summer 2026.

The trial will provide new rail connections for customers travelling on early-morning and late-night flights and will serve stations including Wokingham, Guildford, Dorking Deepdene, Reigate and Redhill. Subject to demand, the service could be expanded in future years, supporting wider ambitions to increase public transport access to London Gatwick.

Investment in station facilities has also continued across the route. During 2025, Farnborough North station benefited from a new step-free footbridge and lifts, significantly improving accessibility.

Plans are also progressing for improvements at Dorking West station, including upgraded forecourt facilities, cycle parking, platform seating, customer information screens and improvements to the station subway. Alongside this work, GWR and its partners are exploring future accessibility improvements at Dorking Deepdene station.



4.5 Central

Rail demand across the West of England continued to grow during 2025–26. Since the introduction of enhanced services supported by the West of England Combined Authority, more than three million additional journeys have been made on routes serving Bristol, Westbury, Gloucester and Severn Beach.

As a result, half-hourly services between Bristol and Gloucester have now been secured on a permanent basis, providing greater flexibility and reliability for customers.

Delivering MetroWest

The MetroWest programme continued to make significant progress during the year.

Construction is now underway on the Portishead Line, which will reconnect Portishead to the national rail network and provide a new station at Pill. Progress is also being made on the Henbury Line, with Bristol Brabazon station due to open later this year.

When complete, these projects will extend rail access to around 100,000 additional people, creating new opportunities for travel, employment and economic growth across the region.

Working alongside local authorities, Network Rail and community partners, we have continued to engage with local communities through public consultation events and information sessions to ensure new railway infrastructure responds to local needs.

Planning for Future Growth

The West of England Combined Authority has secured funding to further develop a package of future rail improvements, including:

- Enhanced service frequencies on the Henbury Line.
- Improved connectivity between Bristol Brabazon and Bristol Parkway.
- New station proposals.
- Future electrification opportunities.
- Additional station accessibility improvements.

GWR has also worked closely with partners to support the designation of the West Innovation Arc as a new town. Rail connectivity will play a vital role in unlocking future housing and employment growth, with Bristol Brabazon station forming a key part of these plans.



Transforming Chippenham Station

A £2.3 million programme of improvements was completed at Chippenham station during the year, delivering enhanced facilities for passengers and supporting more sustainable travel across the town.

Delivered in partnership with Wiltshire Council and Network Rail, the scheme included a new 200-space cycle hub, improved bus facilities, a relocated taxi rank and a redesigned forecourt to improve traffic flow and transport connections. Accessibility was also enhanced through improved step-free access, additional disabled parking and better pedestrian links to the town centre and Chippenham College.

Together, these improvements have created a more accessible and integrated transport hub, supporting the needs of a growing community while encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling.



Looking Ahead

The coming year will see several significant milestones, including the opening of the new eastern entrance at Bristol Temple Meads and the opening of Bristol Brabazon station.

Construction will continue on the Portishead Line, while work will begin to deliver step-free access improvements at Lawrence Hill and Weston-super-Mare stations.

Together, these projects will strengthen the railway's role in supporting sustainable growth and improving access to opportunities across the West of England.

4.6 Wales

Passenger demand on GWR services in South Wales continued to grow during 2025–26, with journeys increasing by 3.5% compared with the previous year.

Growth was particularly strong on routes linking South Wales with Bristol and London, reflecting the importance of rail in supporting both economic activity and leisure travel.

Improving Performance

Performance improvements were delivered across all South Wales routes during the year.

Punctuality on London to South Wales services improved by 2.37 percentage points, while services to Taunton and Portsmouth also recorded year-on-year improvements.

These improvements reflect the ongoing efforts of colleagues across GWR and Network Rail to deliver a more reliable railway for customers.

Promoting Wales by Rail

During the year, GWR launched a new campaign celebrating the heritage, culture and landscapes of Wales.

The campaign featured locations including Cardiff Castle and used storytelling inspired by Welsh myths and legends to encourage customers to explore Wales by rail. Installations at stations including Cardiff Central and Swansea helped bring these stories to life while promoting sustainable tourism.

GWR also celebrated Wales Week London by welcoming the Cardiff Arms Park Male Voice Choir to London Paddington. As a longstanding supporter of Wales Week, GWR continues to promote Welsh destinations and experiences to customers across the UK and beyond.



Supporting Local Communities

Through the Customer and Community Improvement Fund, GWR continued to support projects that celebrate Welsh heritage and strengthen community connections.

One example was the Audio Heritage Walks project delivered by South West Wales Connected. Inspired by Railway 200, the initiative used audio trails and local storytelling to showcase the railway, industrial and cultural heritage of South West Wales, helping local communities and visitors engage with the area's rich history in an accessible and innovative way.

4.7 West

Rail continues to play a vital role in connecting communities across Devon and Cornwall, supporting economic growth, tourism, education and access to employment. During 2025-26, GWR continued to work with local authorities, Network Rail and regional partners to improve connectivity, enhance accessibility and prepare for future service improvements across the region.

Introducing the Class 175 Fleet

During 2025-26, GWR made significant progress in introducing the Class 175 fleet into passenger service across the network.

The first Class 175 entered service in December 2025, marking an important milestone in the modernisation of the regional fleet. The introduction of the new trains has provided additional operational flexibility while supporting the planned replacement of the Castle Class HST fleet.

Throughout the year, further driver training, route learning and operational preparations continued to support the phased rollout of the fleet across Devon and Cornwall. The introduction of the Class 175s also supports wider service improvements planned across the region, including the future development of the Mid Cornwall Metro programme.

During 2026-27, GWR plans to continue the rollout of the Class 175 fleet across the region. This will include the introduction of services on the Dartmoor and Tarka Lines, providing additional seating capacity and greater operational resilience.

The expanded deployment of the fleet will also support the opening of Okehampton Interchange and help accommodate growing passenger demand, including education and commuter travel across North Devon and Cornwall.



Mid Cornwall Metro

Significant progress was made during 2025-26 on the Mid Cornwall Metro programme, one of the most important rail investment projects currently being delivered in Cornwall.

During the year, infrastructure works continued in preparation for the introduction of enhanced services, including completion of the Goss Moor passing loop, the construction of a second platform at Newquay station and signalling improvements along the branch line.

These improvements will support the introduction of an hourly service between Par and Newquay from May 2026, providing the most frequent service on the route for many decades. The enhanced timetable will also enable local services to continue operating alongside summer London Paddington services, providing more consistent and regular intermediate stops throughout the year.

Work is also continuing on Phase 2 of the programme, which will link the Maritime and Atlantic Coast Line branches with through services between Falmouth, Truro, St Austell and Newquay. Once delivered, the scheme will connect many of Cornwall's largest population centres and support a significant increase in sustainable public transport journeys across the county.

Expanding Pay-as-you-go Ticketing

GWR's pay-as-you-go (PAYG) scheme continues to transform rail travel across Cornwall by making ticketing simpler, more flexible and better value for customers.

First introduced between Penzance and Par in 2023, the scheme allows customers to travel using a GWR Touch smartcard, automatically charging the best available fare for the journeys undertaken while applying eligible discounts and Railcard benefits.

During 2025-26, the scheme was expanded across the whole of Cornwall and into Plymouth, covering all Cornish branch lines, the Tamar Valley Line and stations between Penzance and Plymouth. The expansion supports wider ambitions to encourage greater public transport use while improving integration between rail services across the region.

Working with Devon County Council, we are also exploring opportunities to extend the scheme to Ivybridge during the coming year, helping create a more comprehensive travel to work area around Plymouth and offering greater convenience and value for customers.

Improving Accessibility at St Erth

Accessibility improvements were completed at St Erth station with the opening of the new lift bridge, marking the final phase of Cornwall Council's St Erth Multi-Modal Hub project.

The project has transformed St Erth into a major transport interchange for West Cornwall, supporting rail, bus and park-and-ride connections. The station plays an important role on the St Ives branch line, which now carries more than 800,000 passenger journeys each year.

The new lift bridge provides step-free access between platforms and the station's southern car park, making journeys easier for customers with reduced mobility, luggage, bicycles and pushchairs. It replaces the need for customers to rely on station stairs or seasonal shuttle services and represents a significant improvement in accessibility and customer experience.



4.8 Integrated Transport

Supporting growth in the communities we serve requires more than investment in the railway alone. Customers increasingly expect seamless journeys that combine rail with buses, cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable transport.

Throughout 2025-26, GWR continued to work with local authorities, transport operators and community partners to improve connections beyond the railway, making it easier for customers to complete their journeys while reducing reliance on private cars. From expanding Rail Link services and improving station wayfinding to supporting active travel and strengthening airport connections, our focus has been on creating a more integrated transport network across the regions we serve.

Improving Rail and Bus Connectivity

Throughout the year, we worked closely with local authorities and bus operators to expand and enhance the Rail Link network, making it easier for customers to connect between train and bus services.

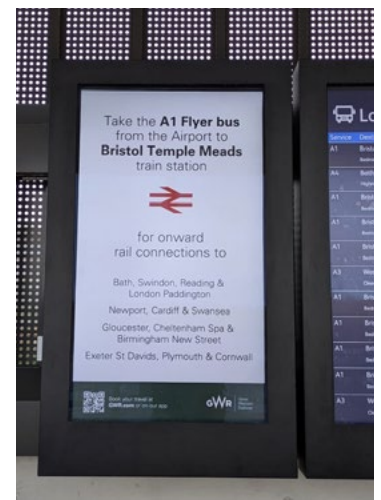
In Wiltshire, we partnered with Wiltshire Council to support the launch of a new demand-responsive transport service linking Warminster station with key visitor destinations including Longleat and Stourhead. The service was promoted through Rail Link branding, enhanced station information, digital journey-planning tools and a coordinated marketing campaign delivered with industry partners.

In Somerset, local bus route 68 was designated as a Rail Link service, improving connections between Yeovil Pen Mill and Yeovil Junction stations and strengthening links between GWR and South Western Railway routes. Bus timetable information was integrated into rail industry systems, making onward connections more visible during journey planning.

Additional Rail Link improvements were delivered across the network, including:

- Branding and promotion of the Chippenham – Castle Combe service.
- Improved bus-to-rail wayfinding at stations across Cornwall, including Camborne, Falmouth, Saltash and Redruth.
- Enhanced interchange facilities at Yatton following the introduction of a new direct bus service linking the station with Clevedon and Portishead.
- Improved bus stop signage and customer information at Chippenham station following forecourt improvements.

Together, these initiatives have helped improve access to communities and visitor destinations that are not directly served by rail while making public transport journeys simpler and more attractive.



Improving Customer Information

Clear information is essential to successful transport integration. During the year, we continued to improve the visibility of onward travel options at stations and across our digital channels.

Enhanced bus information and interchange branding were introduced at locations including Bourne End, Hanborough and Reading, helping customers better understand available onward transport connections. This included improved wayfinding, local bus maps, upgraded bus shelter information and dedicated bus connection posters.

We also expanded content on GWR.com, significantly improving information about bus connections and integrated travel opportunities across the network.

Strengthening Airport Connections

We strengthened our partnership with Bristol Airport to improve awareness of rail and bus connections to the airport.

Working collaboratively, we supported the opening of the airport's new Passenger Transport Interchange and provided information for customer-facing displays to promote sustainable travel options. We also trialled enhanced rail-and-bus ticket integration through GWR's booking channels, enabling customers travelling to nearby stations to add an airport bus ticket as part of a single journey purchase.

Promoting Integrated Travel

A number of targeted marketing campaigns were delivered throughout the year to increase awareness of integrated travel opportunities.

Working with The Eden Project, Visit Cornwall and Go Cornwall Bus, we promoted sustainable rail-and-bus travel to one of the South West's most popular visitor destinations. The campaign combined enhanced customer information, improved bus connections and digital content demonstrating how easily customers could complete the journey without a car.

We also led a joint campaign with Wiltshire Council, South Western Railway and the National Trust to support the launch of Wiltshire's newest demand-responsive transport service. This campaign promoted seamless rail-and-bus journeys to destinations including Longleat, Stourhead and Center Parcs.

In addition, GWR launched its first dedicated customer marketing campaign focused solely on integrated travel, promoting Rail Link connections to destinations including Padstow, Helston, The Lizard and Minehead. The campaign reached more than 300,000 customers and established a strong foundation for future integrated transport communications.

Supporting Active Travel

We continued to encourage active travel by improving cycling facilities and information across the network.

During the year we:

- Updated our Cycling by Train guidance, including clearer information relating to e-bikes.
- Doubled the number of cycle parking spaces available at Penzance station.
- Installed a new cycle maintenance stand at Cholsey station in partnership with the local authority.
- Refurbished cycle locker facilities at Yate station, helping customers combine cycling and rail travel more easily.

Looking Ahead

Integrated transport remains a key part of our approach to delivering a more sustainable and accessible railway. By working closely with local authorities, transport operators and community partners, we are helping customers make seamless journeys across different modes of transport while supporting economic growth, reducing car dependency and improving access to opportunities across the communities we serve.

4.9 Paws for Celebration as Station Jim Returns to Slough Station

As part of the Railway 200 celebrations, Slough station's much-loved mascot, Station Jim, returned to his home on Platform 5 following a specialist restoration programme.

The Victorian canine mascot became famous after raising the modern equivalent of more than £4,500 for the GWR Widows and Orphans Fund. Working in partnership with Museums Partnership Reading, Arts Council England and the Aldama Foundation, GWR restored both Jim and his display to ensure his story can continue to be shared with future generations.

The project included expert conservation work and the installation of a new display cabinet featuring heritage railway materials. While Jim originally collected coins in a harness, visitors can now continue his fundraising legacy through a QR code supporting the Samaritans.

Joe Graham, GWR Business Assurance Director, said:

"Station Jim is very much a part of the fabric of Slough station. We're pleased to have listened to the wishes of our customers and colleagues to ensure he is returned to his rightful place."

The return of Station Jim reflects GWR's commitment to preserving railway heritage and celebrating the unique stories that connect our stations with the communities they serve.



4.10 Honouring the 'British Schindler' at Maidenhead Station

In a moving tribute at Maidenhead station, Baroness May joined the family of Sir Nicholas Winton to unveil a new plaque honouring his legacy. Sir Nicholas famously saved 669 children by organising their rail transport from Prague on the eve of World War Two, and while his statue has been a fixture on Platform 3 since 2010, this addition ensures every traveller understands the history behind the man on the bench.

The ceremony also celebrated Sir Nicholas's profound local impact. Beyond his global humanitarian efforts, he was a dedicated Maidenhead resident who founded the Abbeyfield Society in 1973 to provide sheltered housing and care for the town's elderly. His son, Nick Winton, observed that the station is a fitting place for the memorial, as the East-to-West train movements mirror the journey of the children his father brought to safety.

Baroness May, member of GWR Advisory Board, said:

“

I was pleased to join members of the Winton family and Great Western Railway to unveil a plaque on the Sir Nicholas Winton statue at Maidenhead railway station.

Passengers often ask who the statue commemorates; now they will know, and in learning his story, they will encounter the quiet courage of an individual whose selflessness saved so many lives.



5. Great People

Our colleagues are at the heart of everything we do. Throughout 2025-26, their professionalism, dedication and commitment to customers continued to shape the experience we provide across the GWR network. This section highlights some of the ways we have invested in our people and recognises the achievements that made a difference to our customers, communities and industry.

5.1 Investing in the Future: New Learning and Development Centre Opens in Swindon

In October 2025, GWR officially opened a new state-of-the-art Learning and Development Centre at our Swindon Head Office. Inaugurated by the Secretary of State for Transport and MP for Swindon South, Heidi Alexander, the facility represents the culmination of 18 months of development and a major investment in rail industry skills.

The centre provides modern, purpose-built spaces for both technical and customer service training. These facilities are designed to equip GWR colleagues with the tools necessary to maintain the highest standards of safety, performance, and passenger experience across the network.

During a tour of the site, the Secretary of State observed live training sessions on conflict resolution and met with the graduates and apprentices who will form the backbone of the region's future rail operations. Highlighting the local and national significance of the project, Heidi Alexander said:

"Swindon has the railway running through its heart, so it was a great pleasure to open GWR's new Learning and Development Centre in my constituency. The rail industry is a fantastic employer, and it was wonderful to meet new GWR recruits and colleagues who are completing apprenticeships and degrees and who represent the very best of the railway. It's in very good hands for the future!"

Beyond classroom learning, the centre is a key part of GWR's strategy to attract, develop and retain talent. By investing in learning and development, we are helping colleagues build rewarding careers while ensuring GWR has the skills needed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future railway.



5.2 Awards, Accreditations & Achievements

The achievements of GWR and its colleagues continued to be recognised throughout 2025–26, reflecting our commitment to customer service, operational excellence, accessibility, innovation, community engagement and workforce development.

Major Industry Wins

- **Rail Business Awards – Innovation of the Year**

GWR received the Innovation of the Year award for its battery train programme, which achieved a record-breaking 200.5-mile journey on a single charge. The project demonstrated the potential for long-range battery-electric traction to support the decarbonisation of regional rail services, while the Greenford fast-charging trial validated technology capable of delivering significantly lower infrastructure costs than traditional electrification. The programme is helping to inform future approaches to sustainable fleet renewal and railway decarbonisation across the industry.

- **Rail Staff Awards – Station Staff Team or Person Award**

Emma-Jane Kennedy, Dispatch Supervisor, received this award in recognition of her outstanding commitment to the safe and efficient operation of the station. Alongside ensuring key operational responsibilities were delivered to a high standard, Emma-Jane consistently supported gateline teams, assisted colleagues across the wider network and enhanced both the customer and employee experience.

- **Rail Staff Awards – Railway Depot Team or Person Award**

Jack Farley, Shift Technician at Reading Train Care Depot, was recognised for his exceptional contribution to fleet maintenance and reliability. Through his dedication, technical expertise and leadership, Jack has played a central role in several major fleet introduction programmes, including the Class 387, Class 769 and Class 230 fleets, helping to ensure trains remain safe, reliable and ready for service.



- **National Autistic Society – Autism Friendly Award**

GWR became the first train operator in the UK to achieve the National Autistic Society's Autism Friendly Award across its entire network. Building on a successful pilot between Plymouth and Penzance, this accreditation recognises our commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible railway for autistic customers and their families

- **Railway Innovation Awards – People, Skills and Diversity Award**

GWR received this award for the Rupee and Sushi Travel by Train initiative. More than 30,000 physical copies of the book have been distributed, supported by animated digital versions available in English, Welsh and British Sign Language, helping to make rail travel more accessible and welcoming for a wider range of customers.

- **Everywoman in Transport and Logistics Awards – Customer/Passenger Award (Above & Beyond)**

Carys R Thomas received the Customer/Passenger Award (Above & Beyond) in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the transport industry. Alongside her professional achievements, Carys has mentored apprentices, supported STEM programmes, championed diversity and inclusion, and encouraged young people to explore careers within the railway industry.

- **Rail Business Awards – Safety & Security Excellence**

GWR received the Safety & Security Excellence Award for the Resilient Futures: Bridgwater Safeguarding Response initiative. This innovative programme reframed youth antisocial behaviour as a safeguarding issue rather than solely a policing matter, contributing to a 77% reduction in recorded incidents.



Investors in People - Platinum Standard for Apprenticeships

During National Apprenticeship Week, GWR became the first train operator in the UK to achieve the Platinum “We Invest in Apprentices” accreditation from Investors in People. Presented at London Paddington by the Minister for Skills, Baroness Jacqui Smith, the accreditation places GWR among the highest-performing apprenticeship employers globally.

The achievement also recognised the work of GWR’s Apprenticeship Team, which supports more than 300 apprentices across the network. Having previously achieved Gold accreditation in 2023, the team has continued to strengthen and expand apprenticeship opportunities across the business, helping to develop the next generation of railway talent.

With more than 300 apprentices across 17 different programmes, the scheme continues to create career opportunities throughout GWR. Recent success stories include:

- Caio Alvino Camara (Reading), who progressed from Customer Service Apprentice to Train Manager in just seven months.
- Katie Knight (Swindon/Bristol), who used the Aspire Management Apprenticeship to progress into a Duty Station Manager role.
- Ash Bere (Taunton), who combined a passion for rail with customer service to become a Revenue Protection Inspector.
- Niamh Upton, who is now supporting new starters as a Customer Services and Retail Trainer.
- Louis Necker (Swindon), who relocated at the age of 18 to begin his career as a dispatcher through GWR’s “earn while you learn” pathway.
- Community Rail Awards – Tourism & Leisure Award
- The Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership received the Tourism & Leisure Award for the More Time in Looe campaign, which contributed to the line’s busiest summer on record.

Highly Commended and Shortlisted Recognition

Alongside these award wins and accreditations, GWR colleagues and projects received recognition across a number of industry awards:

- Rail Staff Awards – Lucy Fawkes-Grey and Lee Bladen were Highly Commended in the Health & Wellbeing category.
- Rail Business Awards – Project Unity, delivered in partnership with Hitachi, was shortlisted for Network Resilience & Maintenance Excellence.
- Rail Business Awards – Mary O'Neill and the Commercial Development Team were Highly Commended for the transformation of Castle Cary Station in partnership with Network Rail and the Emily Estate.
- Rail Business Awards – GWR received a Highly Commended distinction for accessibility and integrated transport improvements at Barnstaple Station, including integrated transport pilots and autism awareness initiatives.
- Women in Rail Awards – Carys R Thomas was shortlisted for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Individual Award.
- Young Rail Professionals Awards – Carys R Thomas was shortlisted for Young Rail Professional of the Year.
- Spotlight Rail Awards – Carys R Thomas received a Highly Commended recognition in the Young Rail Professional category.
- Spotlight Rail Awards – GWR's Fraud Investigation Apprenticeship Programme received a Highly Commended recognition for its contribution to vocational training.
- Exemplar Accreditation – The Traincrew Strategy Team achieved Exemplar Silver status, while the Kennet and Thames Valley Stations Team achieved Exemplar Gold status.
- Community Rail Awards – The Southeast Communities Rail Partnership was recognised for both the 200 Blue Plaques heritage project and the Travel Ambassadors programme supporting disabled passengers.

A Year of Achievement

These awards, accreditations and industry recognitions demonstrate the dedication, professionalism and innovation of colleagues across GWR. Together, they reflect our continued focus on delivering excellent customer experiences, supporting our communities, promoting inclusion and developing a safe, reliable and sustainable railway for the future.

5.3 A Life Saved: Teamwork in Action at Reading

In February 2026, passenger Ian Drewry returned to Reading station to thank the railway colleagues and emergency responders who helped save his life following a cardiac arrest on board a GWR service the previous September.

When Ian became seriously unwell during his journey, colleagues across GWR and Network Rail worked together to deliver a rapid and coordinated response. On-board staff, control teams, signallers, station colleagues and emergency services combined their efforts to ensure he received urgent medical attention as quickly as possible.

Reflecting on the incident, Ian said:

"I just didn't realise the number of people involved. I would not be here today if it wasn't for the platform staff, the train manager, the driver and everyone who coordinated the help I needed."

This remarkable story highlights the value of teamwork, training and professionalism across the railway. Every colleague involved played a vital role in ensuring Ian received the care he needed when every second counted.

As Train Manager Veronika Rogers said:

"It's all about teamwork – everyone who got involved did their bit to help save his life."



5.4 Walk to Paddington for Prostate Cancer

GWR colleagues came together in a remarkable show of endurance, teamwork and support by completing a 19-hour overnight relay at Gloucester station to raise funds and awareness for Prostate Cancer UK.

The challenge saw colleagues walk a combined 114 miles—the equivalent distance between Gloucester and London Paddington—along the UK’s longest continuous railway platform. Organised by Train Managers Stuart Gardner and Adam Broadhurst, the event was inspired by colleagues whose lives have been affected by prostate cancer and aimed to encourage greater awareness of the importance of early diagnosis.

The walk concluded with Driver Mike Speck, a prostate cancer survivor, crossing the finish line. Diagnosed following a routine GWR medical, Mike used the event to encourage others to seek advice and testing when needed.

“My colleagues are my extended family; I want to share my story to give men the courage to get checked.”

The fundraiser attracted support from across the railway community, including colleagues from Network Rail and CrossCountry, demonstrating the strong sense of partnership that exists across the industry.

The event highlighted the strength of the railway community and the willingness of colleagues to support important causes affecting fellow employees, their families and the wider community.



5.5 Railway 200: Honouring GWR's First Locomotive Driver

As part of the Railway 200 celebrations, a blue plaque was unveiled in Swindon in April 2025 to honour James "Jim" Hurst, Great Western Railway's first locomotive driver and one of the pioneering figures of Britain's early railway industry.

The plaque, unveiled by the Secretary of State for Transport and MP for Swindon South, Heidi Alexander, marks Hurst's former home in the heart of Swindon's historic Railway Village. Hurst joined the railway in its earliest years, working alongside figures including Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Daniel Gooch, and took to the tracks as GWR's first locomotive driver in 1837.

His contribution helped lay the foundations for the railway in Swindon, with five generations of the Hurst family going on to work for GWR, contributing more than 1,000 years of combined service to the railway.

Speaking at the unveiling, Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander MP said:

"I'm thrilled to unveil James Hurst's blue plaque today, which not only honours one of the lesser-known pioneers of the railway, but also celebrates the part that Swindon and its community played in the founding of the railway 200 years ago."

The plaque serves as a lasting tribute to James Hurst and the generations of railway families whose dedication helped shape both the railway and the communities it continues to serve today.



6. Looking ahead

As GWR prepares to enter public ownership in December 2026, we remain focused on delivering a reliable, safe and sustainable railway for our customers and communities. Working closely with Network Rail, industry partners and stakeholders, we will continue to improve performance, strengthen accessibility, support economic growth and invest in the people who make our railway possible.

6.1 Contacts

For more information visit **GWR.com**, or call our Customer Support team on 03457 000 125, who are available between 08:00 and 20:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 17:00 Saturday and Sunday. Alternatively, you can contact National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950, who are available 24 hours a day.

Scan the QR code to read our full [Social Values Report](#), or find us on social media on the handles below.



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