



Briefing for MPs on the Railways Bill - April 2026

The government says that “passengers will be at the heart of Great British Railways”. Bringing rail franchises in house is the right starting point but the government must go further to make sure public ownership of the railway is a real success. This briefing explains a number of key amendments (under three broad headings) that will truly put passengers first.

1) The railway’s primary purpose is to deliver for passengers

What is the railway for?

The railway is a natural monopoly and Great British Railways needs to have a clear purpose **to deliver for passengers and the environment**. These new public missions must be prioritised over competition law. Government can’t get the benefits of public ownership - like being allowed to use the profits from busy lines to open new services in rural areas - if it is still focussed on outdated competition law. Instead it should put new duties first to build a railway fit for the future.

CREATE NEW PUBLIC MISSIONS

- Introduce a new public interest duty to deliver for **economy, society and environment**
- Introduce a duty to deliver **modal shift** from flying and driving to public transport, a duty to **integrate** transport, a duty to increase **sustainability**
- Introduce a duty to protect and promote **passenger rights including strong disability rights** - and apply the Public Sector Equality Duty to the private sector
- Introduce a duty to **reduce fares** - start by cutting rail fares with a Great British Railways rail card that will entitle every passenger to a **third off fares**

(Please vote for amendments 29, 30, 32 and 33 by Chris Hinchliff MP)

PUT THE PUBLIC FIRST

- **Prioritise the new duties above** over competition and private sector interests
- Allow Great British Railways to cross-subsidise, using **profits to fund and grow** the publicly owned rail network
- Create a new department in Great British Railways to explore opportunities to **open new rail services** in underserved communities (and/or task GBRX with a target for this)

(Please vote for amendments 31 and 54 by Chris Hinchliff MP and NC16 by Steve Witherden MP)

2) Give passengers rights and accountability

Who is the railway for?

The new publicly owned railway should be truly **accountable to passengers** - this means giving us a way to hold it to account. Workers have unions, passengers need an equivalent body with elected representatives at the regional and national level. We need strong rights for disabled passengers. And the board of Great British Railways should represent us, not the private sector that has failed.

- Create new democratically accountable national and regional organisations that genuinely represent passengers in Great British Railways
- Give passengers a seat on the board - ensure that representatives from these organisations sit on the boards (regional and national) of Great British Railways
- Enforce passengers' rights and accessibility including disabled passenger rights (reflecting "needs and interests" is not sufficient)
- Remove all private interests from Great British Railways policy and decision making

(Please vote for amendments NC24 and NC25 by Richard Quigley MP)

3) End privatisation loopholes

Where do the profits go?

Privatisation loopholes must go - rolling stock (trains) must be gradually brought into public ownership and all lines run in public hands. No mishmash of competing interests, no reprivatisation by the back door - protect the public purse by reinvesting all profits to improve services.

- Reinvest profits from private **rolling stock** by creating a plan to gradually commission new publicly owned trains
- Ban new **private contracts** in our railway, including private open access: stop the waste of cherry picking and free riding in our publicly owned railway
- Make sure Great British Railway itself is **fully publicly owned**

(Please vote for amendments 44 and 45 by Neil Duncan-Jordan MP, and amendments 73, 74, 75 to 80, 81, 82 to 84 by Richard Burgon MP)

NB: You can find the full list of all We Own It supported amendments, including a summary of what each does and the full text of amendments, [HERE](#).

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