



# Simpler → Fares

## Clearer options, modern flexibility

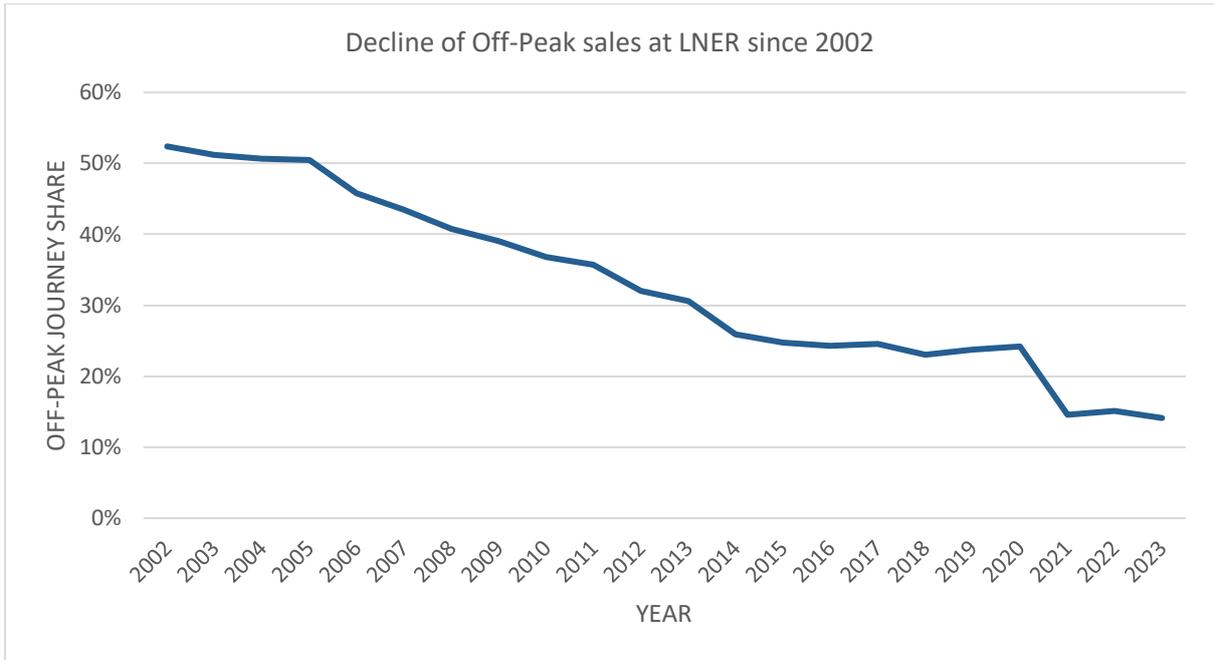
LNER is at the forefront of fares simplification. We want to simplify fares and make fares fairer – we know that complexity, crowding, flexibility and value for money are barriers to using rail – our Simpler Fares Pilot looks to tackle these barriers.

In June 2023, we rolled out Single Leg Pricing which made fares simpler by reducing the number of different fares for customers to understand. The Simpler Fares Pilot will enable LNER to set fares more fairly while focusing on reducing crowding and making fares better suited to customer needs; creating consumer confidence in buying the best tickets and delivering greater certainty of a guaranteed seat.

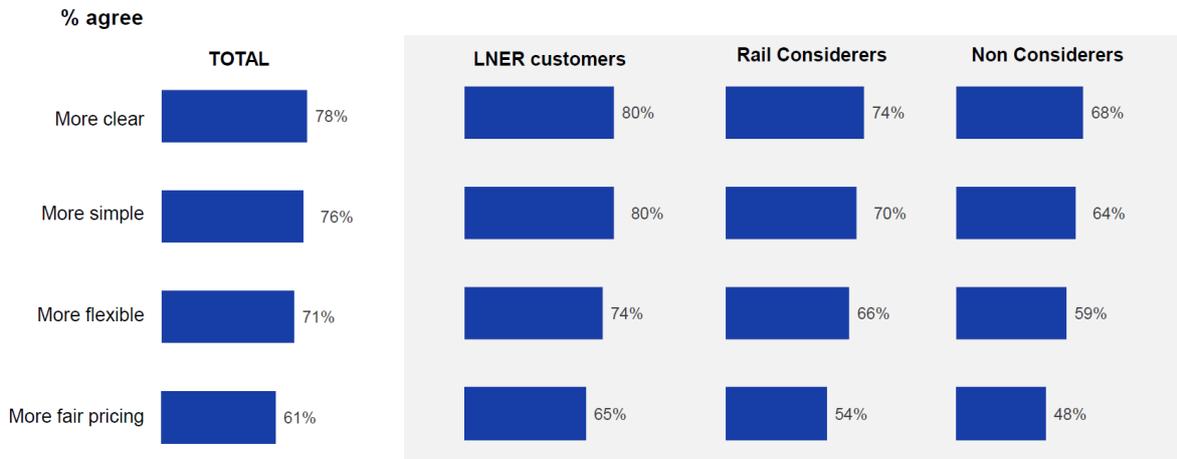
Simpler Fares builds on Single Leg Pricing: It sees the removal of complicated and outdated off-peak and super off-peak fares on longer distance journeys. As a result, all train prices more closely reflect customer demand which in turn helps to alleviate overcrowding – research conducted by Transport Focus in March 2023 cited that 21% of rail considerers said that less crowded trains would encourage them to use trains more in future. The second part of Simpler Fares is the introduction of a new, simpler form of flexibility - one that better meets the needs of today's customers.

We launched our Simpler Fares pilot in January 2024 followed by a second phase in August 24 (Northeast and Scotland) in collaboration with our partner operators. This means that our pilot fares offer is not only accessible to those using our hub stations in Newcastle, Berwick upon Tweed and Edinburgh, but also now accessible to customers using the surrounding smaller stations such as Morpeth, Dunbar and Musselburgh.

Now, we're delighted to launch the planned third phase of our Simpler Fares Pilot in collaboration with a larger group of partner operators, bringing in stations around London. This means that our pilot fares offer will be available for journeys between the defined stations in the North (Edinburgh, Berwick, Newcastle, and surrounding areas) and the defined stations in the South (London Terminals, Alexandra Palace, Stevenage, and intermediate stations), as well as all rail stations in London Zones 1-4 (and tube stations in Zones 1-6). Off-Peak and Super Off-Peak fares will no longer be available for these journeys.



Research commissioned by LNER and conducted by Incite in 2022, revealed that the new Simpler Fares fare structure was deemed more clear, simple and fair than the status quo, and reflects positively on LNER and industry. More than anything, it helps people to understand different ticket types and provides a less overwhelming booking experience. LNER customers felt positive, particularly relating to openness and honesty.



**Q. Compared to the current approach to ticket types in the rail industry: ...how clear the new approach? ...how simple is the new approach? ...how flexible is the new approach? ...how fair would you say that this new ticket pricing approach is?** Base: All respondents N=2,812 (Incite, 2022. LNER customers N=1,632 / Rail Considerers N=909 / Non-Considerers N=271)

This is a significant change to fares and we will be applying a 'test and learn' philosophy, iterating where necessary and listening to customers throughout the pilot.

## Introducing the LNER Simpler Fares Pilot

### Simplicity

With the removal of outdated Off-Peak/Super Off-Peak fares (only on Pilot journeys, see area below), it will be even simpler for customers to select the best tickets for each part of their journey. 35% of

people for whom rail is an option are put off travelling by train because they find it difficult to find the right fare and 84% of people want to see fares change (c20k). Source: RDG

## Flexibility

Simpler Fares sees the introduction of a new, widely-available Semi-Flexible fare that gives customers the freedom to either travel as booked, or to start the journey up to 70 minutes earlier or later than planned. Customers can use the connecting services of other operators or travel wholly with LNER where possible. The following, easy to understand fares will be available (in both travel classes) under the new fare structure:

- **Fixed (Advance)** - The best value fares, only valid for the booked service(s) stated on the ticket
- **NEW: Semi-Flexible (70min Flex)** – More affordable flexibility. Travel as booked, or start the journey up to 70 minutes earlier or later, travelling with LNER to or from London Kings Cross
- **Fully Flexible (Anytime)** - Valid for travel at any time of day

## Confidence

Reduced instances of over-crowding and more chance of getting a seat on long distance journeys due to improved capacity management. Research conducted by Transport Focus in December 2022 cited 'getting a seat on the train' as the 5<sup>th</sup> most important thing for passengers (from list of 25). Digital Flexing with the new semi-flexible fare will give customers more control over their travel choices allowing them to swap trains at the click of a button.

		Stevenage <-> Morpeth				Alexandra Palace <-> Dunbar			
		OLD FARES		NEW FARES		OLD FARES		NEW FARES	
Standard	Advance	£23.10	Advance	£23.10	Advance	£34.40	Advance	£34.40	
	Super Off-Peak	£95.70	70min Flex	£43.10	Super Off-Peak	£95.40	70min Flex	£54.40	
	Anytime	£188.50	Anytime	£188.50	Anytime	£204.80	Anytime	£204.80	
First Class	Advance	£72.50	Advance	£72.50	Advance	£100.00	Advance	£100.00	
	Off-Peak	N/A	70min Flex	£92.50	Off-Peak	N/A	Super Off-Peak	£120.00	
	Anytime	£312.60	Anytime	£312.60	Anytime	£333.50	Anytime	£333.50	

If Advance and 70min Flex fares are no longer available for a particular train, this is likely to be because the train has sold out and will be a very busy service. As with 'traditional' peak services within the legacy fare structure, the Anytime fare will be the only one available for purchase in these rare circumstances.

## The NEW FARE: 70min Flex

A new **Semi-Flexible fare (70min Flex)** is designed to better meet the needs of today's customer. Simple to understand, providing appropriate peace of mind irrespective of departure time. More affordable flexibility linked to the best value available Advance fare.

- The 70min Flex comes with a guaranteed seat reservation on the chosen LNER train during booking
- These tickets offer the freedom to start the journey up to 70 minutes earlier or later than booked, travelling with LNER for the main leg of the journey.

- LNER direct customers can swap their booked journey in 'My Account' at LNER.co.uk or on the LNER App. They'll be shown other valid train options. If a customer is unable to swap digitally or if they purchased via another ticket retailer, they can simply board any valid train and find an available seat
- Tickets are non-refundable but they are changeable beyond their validity for a fee
- Tickets are subject to availability. The 70min Flex may not always be shown alongside the Advance
- Only valid on LNER services and any required connecting services
- Customers may have to stand for part of their journey on any required connecting services or where travelling on alternative trains.

The new fare will be retailed across all retail channels (LNER Website and App, Ticket Vending Machines, Travel Centres, other operator websites, Trainline, other retailers, etc.) but is not available onboard.

## **Phase 2A**

### **Phase 2A Overview**

In August 2025, LNER will launch the next planned phase of the Simpler Fares pilot (Phase 2A), bringing in more stations in the London area, as well as extending the validity of the new 70min Flex tickets to services of other operators that provide vital connecting services to and from these stations. This important phase is designed to more closely resemble our vision for long distance fares simplification and enables LNER to capture much learnings to consider ahead of any possible future roll-out. Phase 2A continues to include existing partner operator services including Northern, TPE, CrossCountry and ScotRail, and brings in new partner operator services including GTR and TfL. With the combined timetable frequency, this means that customers will be able to purchase and utilise the Semi-Flexible 70min Flex fare (where appropriate) for a journey between one of the stations in North (shown above) and one of the stations around London. E.g. A customer will be able to purchase the new 70min Flex fare from Cramlington to Stevenage, travelling on a Northern train to Newcastle and changing onto an LNER train down to Stevenage (or changing at Peterborough for a GTR train down to Stevenage).

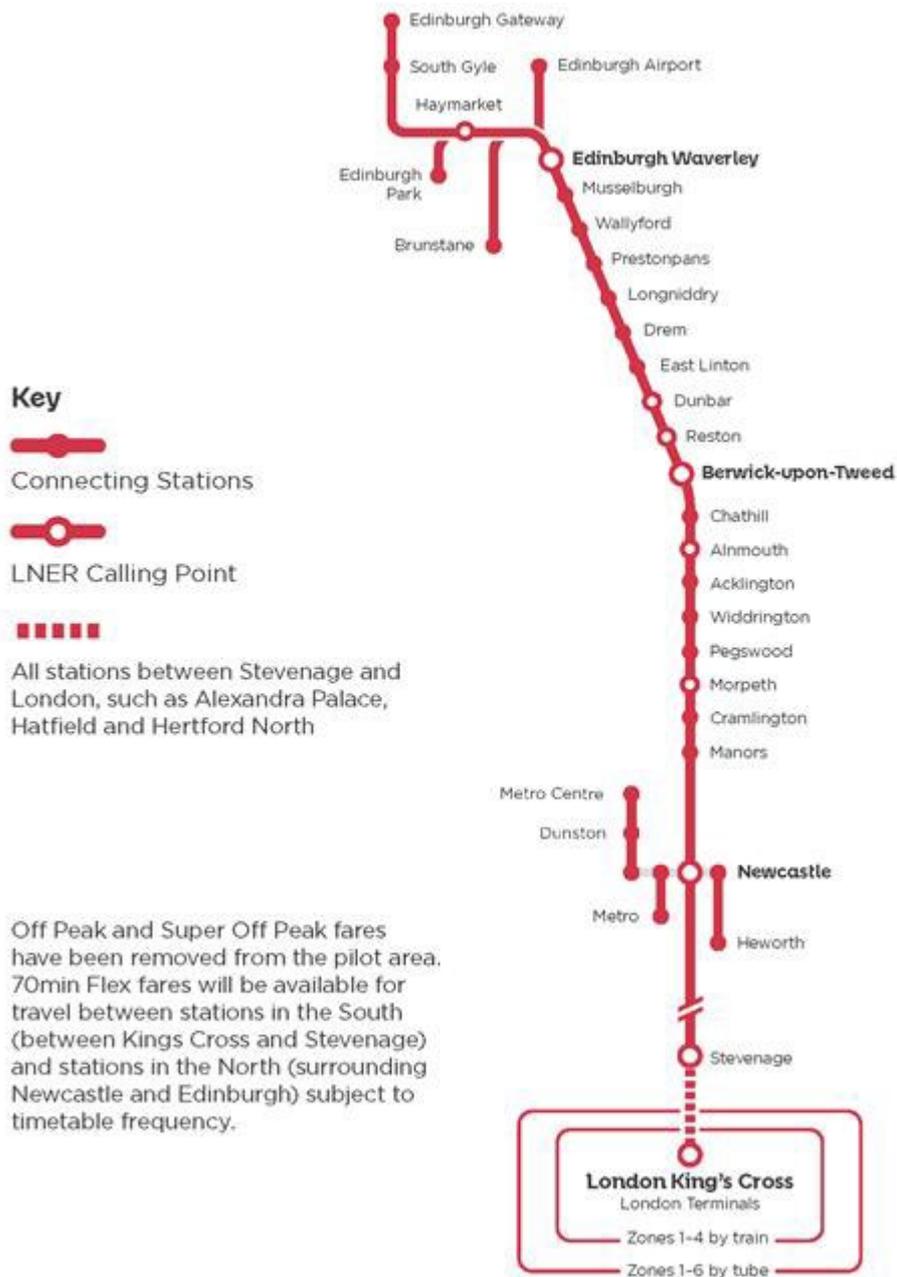
As with previous phases, for London-based journeys, the new Semi-Flexible fares will only be available where LNER is the primary operator for the selected travel itinerary and may not always be shown alongside the Advance.

### **Phase 2A Timings**

**On Sale:** 10<sup>th</sup> August 2025

**Travel From:** 7<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## Simpler Fares Pilot Area



## Customer Assurances

Most of our passengers choose to buy fixed tickets because they offer excellent value, and this is the case in our Simpler Fares pilot too.

Additionally, we have committed to the following assurances to provide a large range of good value fares within the simpler fares pilot.

1. There is a maximum price: the “Fully Flexible” ticket. Fully Flexible (Anytime) fares, although they are not regulated, will remain capped in line with other regulated fares for the duration of the pilot.
2. A large selection of more affordable seats: at least 2/3 of all “Fixed” tickets sold will be priced at less than half the price of the Fully Flexible ticket.
3. A maximum of 10% of all “Fixed” tickets will be sold at 80% or more of the Fully Flexible price.

## Fact Checker

LNER wants to make travelling by train a more attractive proposition. Here are some of our latest statistics on how Simpler Fares is offering good value for passengers:

### Performance against Customer Assurances (July 2025)

- Assurance 2: 89.9% (vs. >67%) of Standard Advance fares sold were priced at less than half the cost of the Fully Flexible (Anytime) fare
- Assurance 3: 0.5% (vs. >10%) of Standard Advance fares sold were priced at over 80% of the cost of the Fully Flexible (Anytime) fare

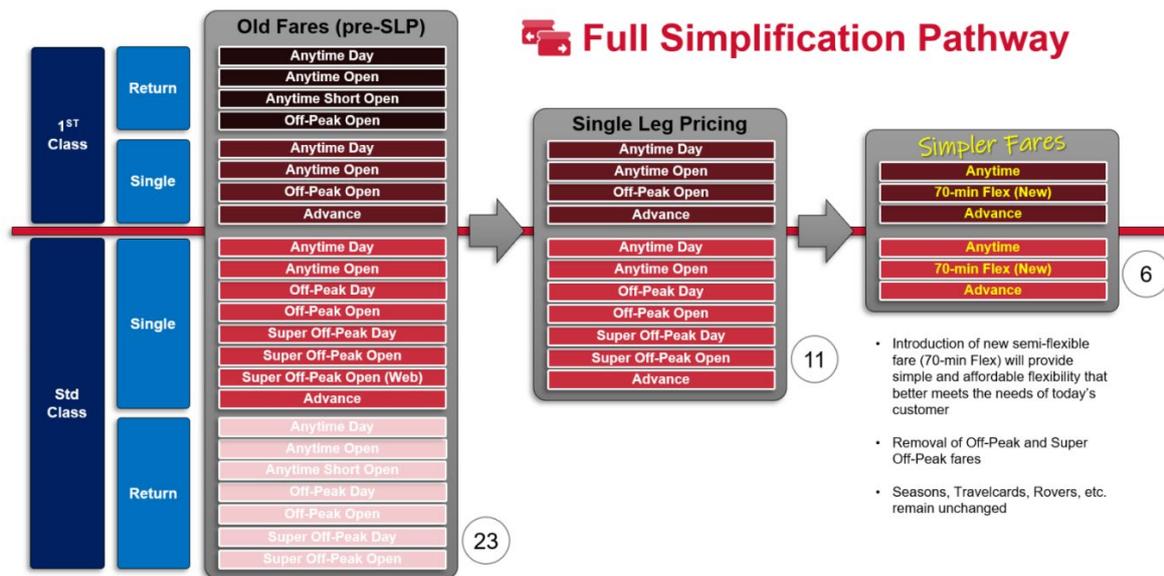
### Stats specific to the Simpler Fares pilot and the new Semi-Flexible fare (July 2025)

There are **1.1 million new Semi-Flexible tickets priced at less than the Super Off-Peak fare** in the booking horizon (for travel from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 until 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 inclusive)

- There are **1.8 Million Standard Advance fares available and priced lower than the Super Off-Peak fare on trains where the Super Off-Peak fare was previously valid** (for travel from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 until 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 inclusive)
- Around a third of all 70min Flex fares sold over the last 4 weeks in Standard Class cost less than the old Super Off-Peak fare
- Approximately 75% of customers who purchased the new 70min Flex travelled on their booked trains
- 75% of all ‘Digital Flex’ changes (direct customers using LNER App/Web) are occurring within 24hrs to departure (50% within 2hrs)
- Of those customers that flex, 3 times as many customers are swapping onto earlier trains than later trains

The majority of customers who are swapping are doing so in the Northbound direction (likely homeward)

## Our Vision for Fares



## FAQs

### Do customers want this?

- 84% of consultation respondents want fares to change (c20k). Source: RDG
- 35% of people are put off travelling by train because they find it difficult to find the right fare. Source: RDG

### How long will the pilot last for?

- The pilot launched mid-January 2024 and will run for 2 years.

### Why do you need to remove off-peak/super off-peak?

- The current fare structure leads to several pain points and more often than not, customers are confused. Over 80% of customers want to see fares change and when tested, the proposed new structure was considered simpler and fairer – and ultimately designed to encourage more people to choose rail.
- Advance fares continue to present the best value for customers and they come with a guaranteed seat reservation.

### Will this cover all LNER routes and services?

- In August 2024, LNER launched the next phase of the Simpler Fares pilot, bringing in more stations local to Newcastle, Berwick upon Tweed and Edinburgh, as well as extending the validity of the new 70min Flex to services of other operators that provide vital connecting services to and from these stations. As of August 2025 we have extended the pilot fares offer further with the inclusion of more stations located around the London area. This allows us to test a version of Simpler Fares that more closely reflects the vision for long distance fares simplification.

### Will fares become more expensive?

- Sometimes. The Simpler Fares fare structure means that there will be occasions where customer driven demand pushes prices. However, the opposite is also true and lower prices

will be available on quieter trains. Customers will find it easier to make more informed purchasing decisions and will have greater certainty of the onboard experience – this is because the new 70min Flex fare comes with a guaranteed seat reservation. Our best value Advance fares are almost always available for trains on the day of travel and can be purchased up to 5 minutes before departure.

### **How much more will people pay for flexibility?**

- LNER's Advance fares will continue to be available as they have been for many years. The variable nature of Advance fares will mean that as before, some customers will pay more and others less depending on the individual demand of the train, journey and date they are booking. Some customers will be able to purchase flexibility for a better value price than ever before. The best value Advance fares between London and Newcastle are only £26.30 each way and the best value Advance fares between London and Edinburgh are only £32.80 each way. The most expensive Anytime fares are £195.70 and £199.60 respectively. We would always recommend booking as far in advance as possible to secure the best value prices.

### **How will you determine whether the Simpler Fares pilot is successful?**

- We will measure the success of the pilot on:
  - Customer satisfaction
  - Commercial performance

### **To what extent is this part of a wider reform of fares?**

- Our Simpler Fares initiative is a critical part of a wider Fares Reform programme – that builds on our recent roll out of Single Leg Pricing. Simpler Fares is designed to make rail travel simpler and challenge some of the perceptions around value for money, flexibility, complexity and crowding with the aim of encouraging more customers to choose rail.

### **Is +/- 70 minutes of flexibility enough for customers?**

- Research by Ipsos Mori, commissioned by LNER, found 53% of customers and 55% of non-customers think the option to travel up to one hour earlier or later is about right/more than enough flexibility. 70 minutes was chosen to give more leeway to ensure that some services which are close to, but not exactly on hourly timetables are included

### **Why is this different to the way airlines and events venues price their tickets?**

- It's similar inasmuch as prices will more closely reflect demand BUT... There are some key differences with our Simpler Fares fare structure:
  - There will be a maximum price (the price of Anytime Single) for fully flexible fares which cannot be exceeded to prevent completely unconstrained surge pricing.
  - There are customer assurances to ensure affordable fares are available. E.g. two thirds of all Standard Advance fares sold will be at least 50% less than the Standard Anytime.
  - Tickets (Anytime singles) will continue to be available even after all the seats have been sold. This protects the 'walk-up railway' and enables customers to travel on any train in almost every circumstance – although we will remind people that the service is likely to be busy and not having a reservation means that a seat is not guaranteed.

### **Will Simpler Fares be rolled out everywhere?**

- The results of this pilot will determine whether we roll out further

### **Why is digital flexing only available to LNER direct bookers?**

- Currently rail does not have an industry wide ticketing system to allow digital flexing for both direct and indirect customers. LNER is working with retailers to enable our customers who book indirectly, e.g. book through a Third Party Retailer, to digitally flex.

#### **How can indirect bookers with the new Semi-Flexible fare get a seat reservation if they choose to switch trains?**

- By using LNER's standalone reservation tool on our website and app, or through the travel centre or Customer Service Centre

#### **Can you only flex if you have a smart phone/LNER App?**

- No – customers can flex simply by getting on a train and finding an available seat within +/- 70 mins of their original booked train. Customers can make a seat reservation through LNER's standalone reservation tool, or by contacting the Customer Service Centre or travel centre.

#### **How does Delay Repay work with semi-flexible fares?**

- One-click Delay Repay will be available for all customers that book with LNER and travel as per their latest booking to easily confirm they were delayed.
- Customers who are not entitled to One-click Delay Repay will have to complete a delay repay form either online or on paper.

#### **What is digital flexing?**

- For LNER direct customers only (excludes 3rd party retailers at launch), they can swap their train(s) in 'My Account' at LNER.co.uk or on the LNER App. They'll be shown other valid trains and will be able to see whether their desired train has any seat reservations available.
- Allows customer to flex to another train within +/- 70min of their original booked train. Makes a new seat reservation, if available, and releases the old seat reservation.
- Travel Centres cannot flex for a customer. They will direct customers to the standalone reservation tool.
- Customer can flex (walk up or digitally) after their original booked train has departed, as long as it's within 70 minutes after their original booked train.

#### **What if a 70min Flex customer has Passenger Assistance (PA) and decides to flex?**

- If flexing through "My Account" their original PA booking will be pre-populated for the customer to amend to the new train. This applies:
  - If a customer is travelling on a different service to their assistance booking and they are making a multi-leg journey (e.g. Morpeth to London Kings Cross, changing at Newcastle).
  - If a customer is making a journey using only one train (e.g. direct from Newcastle to London Kings Cross).
- The same PA rules apply here as for a normal Change of Journey. If the customer changes their plans within the 2-hour cut-off, they will be advised to arrive at the station earlier to ensure that assistance is available.

#### **How can a customer flex when the trains are full?**

- We strongly recommend that customers who have booked direct with LNER look to swap their train in 'My Account' at LNER.co.uk or on the LNER App. They'll be shown other valid trains

and will be able to see whether their desired train has any seat reservations available. If a customer is unable to swap digitally or if they are an indirect booker, they can simply board any valid train and find an available seat, irrespective of whether it is full/sold out online.

#### **How does the 70min Flex work in disruption?**

- Just the same as Advance. Customers will be advised to take the next available service.

#### **Can wheelchair users use the new 70min Flex?**

- Yes. While there is clearly more limited availability due to limited wheelchair spaces on-board, this new type of ticket provides a better experience for wheelchair users, as they can be reliably informed of the current availability via LNER digital channels. If 'digitally flexing' via "My Account", they will be presented with the reservation status of each travel option as they select and progress with them.

#### **Will there be times that the price of a 70min Flex ticket is less than an Advance ticket for a train that the customer could flex onto?**

- Yes, but not very often and will decrease further as the pilot develops and more data is acquired. With the new Simpler Fares fare structure, our pricing of trains will become smoother across the whole day with no more 'cliff-edges' between traditional peak and off-peak trains.

#### **What if a customer wants to flex onto a delayed train which is now outside the 70 minutes?**

- This is OK. Their ticket enables them to flex onto any train which was due to depart up to 70 minutes before or after their original booked train. If any of these trains are delayed, the customer is still entitled to travel on them.

#### **Can a customer flex onto a delayed train that would have been outside of the flexing window?**

- No. Their ticket enables them to flex onto train which was due to depart up to 70 minutes before or after their original booked train.