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**CATEGORY WEBSITE: News and Media MONTHLY VISITS:** 6884547.08 **AUTHOR:** Richard Vaughan

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## You'll soon be able to buy your ticket on board a train and not risk a fine



New ticket app, pay-as-you-go across nation and launch of Great British Railways also in huge Labour overhaul of system arrow upward

Rail passengers will soon be able to buy all train tickets through a single government app, while payas-you-go will roll out across the country, under the biggest reforms to the rail network in a generation

Tickets will also be available to purchase at all station offices, vending machines or on board trains for any service, as part of plans to simplify the system

Under current rules, passengers can be hit with a fine if they are unable to buy a ticket on the train or show they have attempted to buy a ticket before boarding.

The measures are contained in the Railways Bill, which is being introduced to Parliament on Wednesday and will usher in the widest changes to the rail system since privatisation in the 1990s.

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As well as introducing a more simplified and streamlined ticketing system, the legislation will create a new body, Great British Railways, that will have complete oversight of the network as well as control over all trains.

The new arms-length body will bring the running of both track and train under one organisation, based in Derby.

The bill will also introduce a new, beefed-up passenger watchdog to investigate poor service and instigate improvements to the network.

It follows legislation last year that enables the Government to bring all train operators under public control as private contracts expire.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said: "Britain deserves a railway that is fit for the future – one that rebuilds the trust of its passengers, regenerates its communities and restores reliability and value for money.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander (Photo: Andrew Matthews/PA)

"The introduction of this legislation is a major step towards a rail network that supports Britain's businesses and delivers for the travelling public – paving the way for economic growth and access to opportunity across the country."

The new bill will also hand devolved administrations and regional mayors greater say over how the railways should be run and how they are integrated into their local areas.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, said the introduction of the Railways Bill to Parliament was a "pivotal moment" for rail reform across the country.

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make trains more reliable and tickets easier to use, with clearer accountability for passengers and greater confidence in every journey," he added.

The legislation will also widen the eligibility criteria for disabled railcards, making the network more accessible for passengers.

Ben Plowden, chief executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "An accessible, affordable and reliable rail network integrated with the wider transport system is key to delivering sustainable economic growth and improving regional productivity."

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