

Flybe Doubles Flights Between Newquay And London Gatwick To Alleviate Cornwall Travel Crisis

Europe's largest regional airline doubles flights to six a day adding extra 4,500 seats a week to alleviate SW passenger transport woes

Flybe, Europe's largest regional airline, has moved quickly to ensure that Cornwall and the South West has a convenient and affordable lifeline transport link to the UK capital following the severing of the train link between the two regions on Wednesday at Dawlish in Devon.

Working together with the Department of Transport, Newquay Cornwall and London Gatwick Airports, Flybe has worked fast to quickly find a solution to the critical travel situation now facing the South West. It has adjusted its flying programme to free up one of its 118-seat Embraer 195 aircraft and re-scheduled crews to operate it.

By so doing, Flybe will double the number of weekday flights it offers between Newquay Cornwall Airport and London Gatwick with a boost to its normal three times a day programme, adding 4,500 seats to the lifeline service with effect from Wednesday February 12th. This will be for an initial two week period whilst demand for the new schedule is monitored and assessed.

Additional seats are on sale now with one way fares from £36.99 inclusive of taxes and charges.

DETAILS OF NEW FLIGHT SCHEDULE MON-FRI (*new flights)

Dep NQY 0715 Arr LGW 0825 Dep LGW 0905 Arr NQY 1015

Dep NQY 0805 Arr LGW 0910 Dep LGW 0940 Arr NQY 1045

Dep NQY 1400 Arr LGW 1505 Dep LGW 1525 Arr NQY 1630

Dep NQY 1455 Arr LGW 1605 Dep LGW 1635 Arr NQY 1745

Dep NQY 1705 Arr LGW 1810 Dep LGW 1835 Arr NQY 1940

Dep NQY 1815 Arr LGW 1925 Dep LGW 2010 Arr NQY 2120

Paul Simmons, Flybe's Chief Commercial Officer says: "Flybe fully appreciates the enormous economic cost to the region of losing its rail services, an untenable situation that looks likely to impact the region severely for at least six weeks and possibly even longer.

"Flybe's regional model means that, at this time of travel crisis which is placing huge pressure on the West Country's industry and commerce sectors and on leisure and business travel, we are well placed to be able to step in quickly and provide a fast and convenient travel solution.

“We also commit to maintaining our normal pricing mechanism. We have no wish to take advantage of this very difficult situation by inflating fares and can assure our customers that our fares’ policy will be managed in exactly the same way as always.”

Chris Pomfret, Chairman of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “This additional capacity from Newquay to Gatwick is very good news and will be warmly welcomed by the business community given the current state of the railway line at Dawlish. But it is only a short-term measure which is why we will continue to lobby Ministers hard for substantive investment in the region’s road and railway infrastructure and for a Public Service Obligation to safeguard our London hub airlinks in the longer term.”

Guy Stephenson, Chief Commercial Officer at London Gatwick, said: “During this period of unprecedented weather it is crucial that the aviation industry pulls together to ensure businesses and the people of Cornwall remain well connected to London and the rest of the UK and beyond. London Gatwick is very happy to do our part in supporting these efforts by waiving all charges on these additional flights.”

Newquay Cornwall Airport MD Al Titterton adds: “The current situation regarding the disruption to train services which have been affected by the weather, is causing major travel issues for people in the South West.

“Over the last 48 hours we’ve been working closely with Flybe to see how we can increase the capacity on the London Link. The confirmation of Flybe operating the additional flights to and from Newquay to Gatwick is well received and will certainly go some way to alleviating the current headaches travellers are experiencing. With flight times of around an hour and the convenience of the Gatwick Express in to London Victoria, we expect travellers who need to get to the capital to appreciate the additional flexibility these flights will offer.”

Flybe’s one way fares between Newquay and London Gatwick compare extremely favourably with those offered by the county’s rail services and offer a flight time of just over an hour. The rail link between Penzance and Paddington normally takes well over six hours and this time will likely be substantially increased with replacement coach services needed whilst repairs to the vital rail line are made in Devon.

Concludes Mr Simmons: “We have been proudly serving Cornwall on this key route for almost five years. Flybe remains fully committed to providing the most convenient, affordable, quality travel options to and from the region. This unfortunate emergency situation has seen everyone working together in a truly positive way and we’re grateful to our partners at Newquay and London Gatwick in particular.”