



APTU's Guide to Best Fares: Peak travellers Radlett to Harlington (and Flitwick & Bedford too)

(Valid as of August 2020)

APTU is the local traveller's Group representing the interests of passengers travelling on Govia Thameslink Railway ("Thameslink") to/from stations between Harlington and West Hampstead inclusive on the Bedford - London - Brighton line.

Our website is at www.aptu.org.uk and we can be contacted at aptu@aptu.org.uk.

For those of us travelling to London in the morning peak, understanding the rules for cheapest travel are complex; they vary by time of travel and station (depending on the availability of Carnets and/or Contactless and/or Oyster).

In the tables below, we have summarised the options available in price order per station; '1' is the cheapest, and '5' the most expensive. For these purposes we have split the price of peak tickets into outward and return legs on a 50/50 basis – a Peak Hour Single actually costs slightly more.

To London Thameslink: Travelling 4:30am to end of morning peak

	Off Peak Contactless (to 6:30am)	Peak Carnet	½ of Total of Outbound single + Return Off-Peak Single with Railcard	Peak Contactless	Anytime ticket (½ of cost)
Radlett	1		2		3
St Albans	1	2	3		4
Harpenden	1	2	3		4
Luton Airport Parkway	1	2	3		4
Luton		1	2		3
Leagrave		1	2		3
Harlington			1		2
Flitwick			1		2
Bedford		1	2		3

To London Underground/DLR Z1/Z2: Travelling 5am to end of morning peak

	Off Peak Contactless (to 6:30am)	Peak Carnet + Contactless in Z1/Z2	½ of Total of Outbound single + Return Off-Peak Single with Railcard + Z1 Contactless	Peak Contactless	Anytime Z1 / Z2 ticket (½ of cost)	Contactless Cap	Anytime Travelcard (½ of cost)
Radlett	1		2		3		4
St Albans	1	2	3		4		5
Harpenden	1	2	3		4		5
Luton Airport Parkway	1	2	3		4		5
Luton		1			2		3
Leagrave		1			2		3
Harlington					1		2
Flitwick					1		2
Bedford		1			2		3



From London Thameslink: After Morning Peak (assuming travel to London in morning peak)

	Off Peak Carnet (not 4:30/7:01pm at St Pancras)	Off Peak Contactless (not 4pm/7pm)	Peak Carnet	½ of Total of Outbound single + Return Off-Peak Single with Railcard	Peak Contactless	Anytime ticket (½ of cost)
Radlett		1		2		3
St Albans	1	2	3	4		5
Harpenden	1	2	3	4		5
Luton Airport Parkway	1	2	3	4		5
Luton	1		2	3		4
Leagrave	1		2	3		4
Harlington				1		2
Flitwick				1		2
Bedford	1		2	3		4

From London Underground/DLR Z1/Z2: After Morning Peak (assuming travel to London in morning peak)

	Off Peak Carnet (not 4:20/7:01pm at St Pancras) + Contactless in Z1/Z2	Off Peak Contactless (not 4pm/7pm)	Peak Carnet + Contactless in Z1/Z2	½ of Total of Outbound single + Return Off-Peak Single with Railcard + Z1 Contactless	Peak Contactless	Anytime Z1 / Z2 ticket (½ of cost)	Contactless Cap	Anytime Travelcard (½ of cost)
Radlett		1		2		3		4
St Albans	1	2	3	4		5		6
Harpenden	1	2	3	4		5		6
Luton Airport Parkway	1	2	3	4		5		6
Luton	1			2		3		4
Leagrave	1			2		3		4
Harlington						1		2
Flitwick						1		2
Bedford	1			2		3		4

From cheapest to most expensive:

- Off-Peak Contactless** is the Cheapest, *if available*, and ends (based on tap-in time) at 6:30am. For Radlett, Oyster is also a possibility. This can be combined with a Carnet return (not Radlett). If you haven't already, you might want to set up a [TfL account](#) and link your Oyster and/or Bank accounts.
 - Off-Peak Contactless has two key advantages over National Rail Fares; (1) the morning peak doesn't start until 6:30am and (2) it gives access to 'proper' half-price off-peak fares.
- Carnets** are next cheapest, again *if available*. Off-Peak Carnets are available, but require a start before 4:30am, so aren't listed in the table for the morning as every conceivable possibility would result in an enormous table.
- Two Singles** can offer a *small saving* over an Anytime Return – but *only for Railcard holders*. This option probably only makes sense where Carnets are not available – or they are, but peak travel is very irregular. The Saving from this option is typically around £1 – £1.50 per return journey.



4. For those travelling only travelling to a London Zone 1 or 2 Underground or DLR station – and back again, a **Zone 1/2 return** might make sense; these are **cheaper than a Travelcard**.
5. An **Anytime London Thameslink** ticket or an **Anytime Travelcard** are the most expensive. From stations with Contactless enabled, **using Contactless** is the other possibility when travelling to **TfL destinations** as the Contactless cap (including Peak travel) is set to the same as an Anytime Day Travelcard.

When does a season ticket make sense?

The other key question is the break-even vs a season ticket. There is no simple answer to this; some very generic rules of thumb are:

1. If travelling off-peak, day tickets are likely to be cheapest, particularly if you can wait for your Railcard to become valid (eg 10am for a Network Card).
2. If you hold a Railcard that gives discounts during the Morning Peak (possibly with a minimum price cap), Day tickets are likely to be the best option. This applies to Disabled Persons, 16-25, 26-30 and 16-17 Saver Railcards.
3. If #1 & #2 do not apply and you are travelling 3 or less weekdays, then day tickets are likely to be cheapest.
4. With some day ticket combinations, it is possible to travel 5 days a week and still be cheaper than a Season ticket.

We have **created a [calculator in Excel](#)** (which contains fare tables [which are available [separately as a PDF file](#)]) for you to work out what is best for you. As regards 'Health warnings':

- It **does not cater for every possible situation** - it does not hold or refer to all fares - eg there is no option to price up journeys to East Croydon, nor to Underground DLR Zones 3 to 6 - or Buses. It **does not allow for the benefit / cost of additional journeys** (eg to evening entertainment, or at the weekends).
- It is **likely that there are undetected errors**, and in the case of season tickets from 1 month 1 day to c 10 months, it uses an approximation to price them.