

# Commuters injured in 'mosh pit' chaos on Devon's rail line from hell

## Overcrowding on the line has reached boiling point

PlymouthLive

**NEWS** By Lewis Clarke and Miles O'Leary Senior Content Editor 15:00, 12 Nov 2025



Exeter railway issues - [Commuters injured in 'mosh pit' chaos on Devon's rail line from hell | Plymouth Live](#)

Students: "Hellish, I'm not going to lie. You'll get like crushed trying to get to the doors every day. Although if you memorise where the doors are it's fine." "You know those like festivals with the mosh pits. Getting on it at peak time is like that, but there's no music and no-one is having any fun." "Like, almost violent to get on the train. So it's not as bad when you sat down but when you're like getting on the train, it's quite like it's a push." "On the way home half the time you don't really get a seat. It gets really rammed." "I saw a girl get her head split open by like being flung into the door."

Tim Steer: "We've heard through social media that the public who use the service from Barnstaple to Exeter say that the 5.15 service leaves Exeter Central overcrowded, to the point that we're getting now groups who are basically forming and pushing their way to the front. People are finishing work are mixing with those of the students and we are finding groups are forming where they're actually trying to like an alpha group, push their way to the front. What we need to see to deal with this is new Class 175 be brought in. We are going to try everything we can do with Railfuture to help expedite the Class 175's to be on the Barnstaple to Exeter line with GWR. We'd need to see the 5 or 6 carriage units ASAP."

Commuters say they're being pushed, shoved and even injured during the evening rush-hour train from Exeter to Barnstaple, as overcrowding on the line reaches boiling point.

The 5.15pm Great Western Railway (GWR) service departing Exeter Central has become so packed that passengers describe the experience as "almost violent", with some claiming the scramble to board has left people injured.

Tim Steer, chair of Railfuture's Devon and Cornwall branch, said passengers have been forming groups to jostle their way onto the train.

"This is getting to the point where it's a health and safety problem," Tim said. "We need to see the new Class 175s introduced as five or six-carriage units to cope with capacity."

He added that the combination of college students and workers on the service had led to "alpha" groups pushing their way to the front, creating challenges for station staff, reports **Devon Live**.



People on the platform (at Exeter Central station)

Tim said Railfuture is working to accelerate the deployment of longer trains on the Barnstaple to Exeter line, warning that the three- and four-carriage trains currently in use are "already proving there is a problem".

"The newly acquired Class 175s will be brought into service next year, and we are hoping driver training can be completed quickly," he said. "If we just have the same capacity with new trains, the problem hasn't been solved."



Chiefs want to tackle the issues head on (Tim Steer being interviewed at Barnstaple station)

Passengers also shared their experiences of the overcrowded service.

Dylan Goldsbury, a regular train user since September 2023, commented: "Half the time you don't really get a seat, it gets really rammed. Not enough carriages. But as long as I'm with my friends, it is a good time."

Sasha Farcus, who has been commuting for over a year, described the boarding process as chaotic: "Sometimes it's quite busy and almost violent to get on the train. I saw a girl get her head split open by being flung into the door."

Another commuter, David Waldon, compared the overcrowding to a music festival: "There's like festivals here, the mosh pits. Getting on at peak times is like that, but there's no music and no one's having any fun."

A spokesperson for GWR recognised the problem, stating both the railway operator and Exeter College were "victims of our own success" due to the increasing number of students travelling between Exeter and North Devon.

"If all Exeter College students wanted to travel on the same day, we would need a nine-car IET to get them all seated," the spokesperson said. "With non-Exeter College travellers using the route as well, we are well over capacity on some services during peak times."

GWR confirmed it cannot currently run more trains due to capacity limits on the branch line, and platform lengths prevent the use of longer trains.

"We are, however, supportive of campaigns to upgrade the infrastructure of the North Devon Line," added the spokesperson. "In the short term, the solution is more trains or carriages with selective door opening, and we hope the introduction of Class 175 trains will provide some respite in the fullness of time."