

## New timetable for Avanti West Coast Passengers

- New December timetable adds significantly more seats and services
- All major routes have more services than before the August timetable step-down
- Timetable delivered following full and extensive consultation with unions, colleagues, and industry partners

### More train and more seats

Avanti West Coast has introduced more services across our routes this month as part of a major timetable change.

From this week (starting Sunday 11 December), we are scheduled to run 1,789 services each week, delivering a 40 percent increase in services each day.

Manchester returns to three trains per hour to and from London while services between London and Birmingham will operate every 30 minutes, with a third service per hour during busy periods. North Wales will see more direct services a day than in May 2022, before the timetable step-down in August.

The introduction of these services will increase the number of seats on a typical weekday from 104,000 to 146,000. On Saturdays, seats will go up to 135,000 from 94,000 and on Sundays to 111,000 from 77,000.

### Improvements to train times and calling patterns

To coincide with the December timetable, we have also made significant improvements to train times and calling patterns as part of our commitment to deliver better connectivity between towns and cities along the West Coast Main Line. In what is the biggest timetable overhaul since 2008, these changes, which have been designed in collaboration with industry partners and other train operators, include:

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- **Rugby** – doubling of services (Mon-Sat) to London plus an hourly direct service to Manchester.
  - **Nuneaton** – Additional calls at Nuneaton will provide an hourly service to London Euston with fast journey times of less than one hour, as well as a new direct service to Manchester.
  - **Stafford** – doubling of services (Mon-Sat) to London plus an hourly direct service to Manchester
  - **Milton Keynes** – new direct service to and from Liverpool.
  - **Liverpool** – later train from Euston at 2200.
  - **West Midlands/Birmingham** – hourly fast train between Birmingham and London with a journey time of 1hour 16mins, as well as improved connectivity with stops at Rugby, Milton Keynes, and Watford Junction in the second hourly service.

## Industrial action and service impacts

Of course, we are having to take into account the ongoing network-wide industrial action, and we will operate an amended timetable with reduced services for six days from 13 December until 18 December. We are still working through any potential impacts on our timetable that may be caused by the additional industrial action called by the RMT for Network Rail from 24-27 December.

The RMT has also called a ban on overtime in the weeks immediately after that first week. Whilst this doesn't directly affect Avanti West Coast, as the new timetable is not based on overtime, it does affect other operators and may mean some minor changes for our services.

We will update you on all these matters as soon as we can. Avanti West Coast, along with the rest of the industry, urges the RMT leadership to stay at the negotiating table so we can build on progress and end a dispute that is harming passengers and businesses, the industry, and their members.

Customers who have already bought tickets for any services that are cancelled due to industrial action will be notified of the changes, their travel options and consumer rights.

## Working collaboratively with colleagues to rebuild in a sustainable way

Our number one priority for the last four months has been to rebuild our timetable in a resilient and sustainable way to provide our customers with more services and more certainty, as well as reintroducing long term planning of rosters to create greater stability for our colleagues in frontline roles.

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A huge amount of hard work has gone in across the organisation to help us make train crew rosters more efficient and better matched to demand, recruit and train new drivers and train managers, retrain and reintroduce Covid-impacted train crew, and make tickets available further in advance. An extensive driver training programme has also delivered an additional 100 new drivers since April. We thank our colleagues for everything we've done collaboratively to get us this far, and for their continued support over the coming weeks.

## **A full and extensive consultation process has taken place with unions to deliver the new timetable**

We have consulted fully with our trade unions representatives on our proposals, and we have reached agreements with every depot within our Train Manager and Catering populations. We are pleased to say we have also reached agreement with six out of eight driver depots. We're continuing to talk with representatives from the remaining driver depots (Euston and Wolverhampton), and are making alternative arrangements where needed to ensure we are able to deliver our timetable as efficiently as possible at this vital time.

## **Tickets available for all trains we plan to run**

Customers are now able to buy their tickets earlier, up to 12 weeks in advance for midweek travel. Weekend travel dates are also available at least a month in advance with the booking window to be extended further in the coming weeks.

## **Significant step on the way to recovery**

We know in recent months our customers have not been getting the service they deserve. We are sorry for the enormous amount of frustration and inconvenience this has caused and are grateful for the patience our passengers have shown.

The work we've done gives us confidence that we will be able to deliver on our promise to passengers and give them a reliable service; more trains, more seats, and greater connectivity so they can plan, book and travel with confidence. In turn, this will significantly improve the position on board and at stations, with passengers spread more comfortably among a greater number of services.

While we still have further to go to fully achieve our aims, especially with the continuing backdrop of industrial action across the whole network, we firmly believe we are taking a significant step on the way to recovery.