

## Avanti West Coast update

Recently there has been some debate in Parliament about rail services and Avanti West Coast in particular; you may have seen the coverage. We would like to update you on our plans to recover services and present some facts which we hope will aid understanding.

Avanti West Coast is currently running a reduced timetable for which we're sorry. We have faced unprecedented challenges, some out of our control.

All train operators rely on overtime (rest day working) to deliver services, and have for decades. We used to reliably deliver around 400 services a week via overtime but at the end of July, virtually all AWC drivers decided to stop volunteering. This caused multiple short-notice cancellations and to improve reliability we reduced our timetable. As a result, cancellations have improved significantly – from nearly 25% at the end of July/start of August to around 5% for the last few weeks.

The reduced timetable includes extra services where they're most needed, for example, weekdays 6-8am we run seven trains Manchester - London; 7-9am we run six trains Birmingham - London. We have since added in additional trains: up to 10 extra a day between Manchester and London, and up to 4 extra a day between Birmingham and London.

In December, we will introduce a significant increase in our timetable, going from around 180 services a day now, to 264 services a day. This timetable will not be dependent on overtime. That will mean all our principal routes (Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, Holyhead) have more services than they had in May, including Manchester restored to its full 3 trains per hour service.

### December Timetable

Route	Service Level
Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A full timetable will operate</b></li><li>• 3 trains an hour at 20 minute intervals:</li><li>• 1 train calling at Nuneaton, Stoke-on-Trent, Stockport</li><li>• 1 train calling at Stafford, Crewe, Wilmslow, Stockport</li><li>• 1 train calling at Milton Keynes, Rugby, Stoke-on-Trent, Macclesfield, Stockport</li></ul>
Liverpool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A full timetable will operate</b></li><li>• 1 train an hour direct to Liverpool and calling at Milton Keynes, Crewe, and Runcorn.</li></ul>

<b>Birmingham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2 trains per hour</b></li> <li>• 1 fast train stops at Coventry, Birmingham International &amp; Birmingham New Street</li> <li>• 1 "connectivity service" stops at Watford, Milton Keynes and Rugby in addition to Coventry, Birmingham International &amp; Birmingham New Street</li> <li>• 1 train each hour continues through to Preston, and will extend to Edinburgh every two hours. In alternate hours, five trains will continue to Glasgow (one starting in Birmingham), with the remainder terminating at Blackpool.</li> <li>• In the <b>busiest periods, a third train</b> per hour will run. In these hours, there will be a half-hourly fast service between London Euston and the West Midlands in addition to the Birmingham connectivity service</li> </ul>
<b>North Wales, Shrewsbury, Wrexham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be a <b>significantly improved</b> service to the North Wales Coast and Chester, with the <b>majority of services restored</b>.</li> <li>• New weekend services will be introduced at Wrexham, and service provision to Shrewsbury will remain as planned in the original December '22 timetable.</li> </ul>
<b>Scotland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service levels to Scotland will remain broadly the same</b> as the pre-Covid, Dec 2019 timetable.</li> <li>• Some minor changes to timings to support operational reliability.</li> </ul>

We have nearly 600 drivers, more than the previous franchise, but training was suspended, or part-suspended, for nearly two years during the pandemic. As it takes 18 months to train a driver, this clearly had an impact on our operational capacity. Nearly 100 drivers will have completed their training and entered into passenger service between April and December this year which will help us deliver the new timetable.

Tickets are on sale up to 13th January on weekdays, but only 29th October on weekends. We are working hard to increase the booking horizon, and weekends will be available four weeks out from 7th November, before increasing to six weeks out in the new year. Weekends have a shorter booking horizon because of engineering work taking place almost every weekend until Christmas. As a result, each weekend needs a bespoke timetable.

We know the reduced timetable we're currently running isn't good enough, or what our communities expect, but we're working hard to improve it and are making progress. We are committed to rail-based recovery across the UK and our focus is on our customers and delivering a more reliable and dependable service than ever before.

*If you require any further information, or would like to arrange a meeting to discuss Avanti West Coast's recovery plan, please contact Thomas Barlow, Senior Public Affairs Manager at [thomas.barlow@avantiwestcoast.co.uk](mailto:thomas.barlow@avantiwestcoast.co.uk).*