

West Midlands Trains

# Business Update

April 2020

**Joanna Finney** @MADP30  
Replying to @LNRailway  
Thank you for listening and providing the extra services 🙏🙏



**Amy Murphy-Ruck** @murphy\_ru... · 2d  
Replying to @murphy\_ruck and @LNRailway  
Thank you. I am a key worker in a hospital in Whitechapel and have no other transport option. Much appreciated.  
London Northwestern Railway · 2d  
No problem, thank you for being patient



## Keeping our key workers moving



**Alexander Hamers** @alexanderhamers  
Replying to @LNRailway  
Thanks for having re-instated 2 trains/h to the smaller stations. You also seem to have taken up the request "not" to make trains shorter.  
I was able to travel safely to my work in the hospital today; thanks for that.  
#LondonNorthWestern  
#socialdistancing  
11:05am · 24 Mar 2020 · Twitter for iPhone



**Lauraliz aka Kitty** @Medaustar  
It was so strange being 1 of just 10 people commuting on the 6:41 #chaseline this morning, as this train is normally full to standing. Thank you @WestMidRailway for helping to get @nhs.uk and all #StayHomeSaveLives #commuterlife #ThankYou

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# Railway faces the biggest challenge in a generation - but we will come through

It is beyond doubt that the coronavirus outbreak has changed all of our lives.

From simple things like the ability to shop to major things like restrictions on our travel, every single person is feeling the impact of a new way of life.

For West Midlands Trains, our absolute priority has been to continue to provide a railway service so that NHS staff and other key workers can continue saving lives.

With the government advice to only travel when essential and a number of railway workers self-isolating due to the virus, it quickly became apparent in March that timetable changes were needed.

The first wave of changes came into effect across the network on Monday 23 March, with a service reduction of around 50% across the country.

Significant changes to timetables are usually months in the planning. On this occasion the rail industry worked with admirable speed to make the changes needed in just a few days.

After some initial teething troubles on some of our routes, we quickly added carriages where they were needed and standardised departure times to provide



Managing director  
Julian Edwards.

a largely reliable service despite our own challenges with the impact of coronavirus.

Following two weeks of operation at the new, reduced level, we are making some further changes on Monday 6 April.

You can read more details on the next page but put simply, this timetable has been created to make the very best use of our available resources to provide a robust platform for us to keep getting Britain's essential workers where they need to be.

Of course coronavirus has not only changed our timetables, but the way we travel and work too.

We have stepped up our cleaning

methods at stations and on trains to make sure the travelling environment is safe.

We have made changes to help social distancing, such as marking out queuing points on the floor at some stations.

To protect our staff we are asking passengers to avoid using cash and we have asked our senior conductors to remain in their cabs for longer.

Our back-office teams, such as HR and performance, are now working from home so they can maintain social distancing.

We've created new ways of refunding passengers online so trips to stations are not necessary. We've also relaxed the rules to help people get refunded.

Rarely since the end of the Second World War has the future looked so uncertain but what I am sure about is that West Midlands Trains has the right team in place to continue delivering the best possible rail service the country needs.

To our customers, I urge you to continue following the government advice and not to travel unless your journey is essential.

When these restrictions are finally relaxed, please rest assured we will be here to welcome you back to the railway.

# Reduced timetables in place across the network to keep key workers moving



A new timetable comes into use on West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services from Monday 6 April 2020.

The timetables reflect the steep drop in passenger numbers - around 90% - and an increased number of rail staff self-isolating due to coronavirus.

They have been designed to keep a regular service on as many key routes as possible in order to keep essential workers moving.

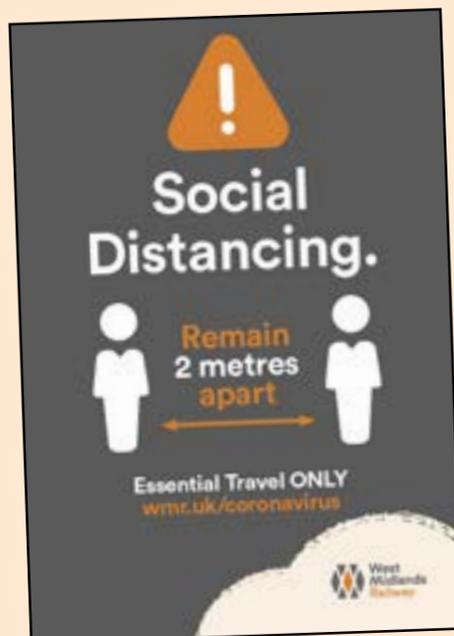
Under the new timetables, some areas where passenger numbers have been extremely low will no longer receive a train service. These include:

- The Abbey line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey
- The Marston Vale line between Bletchley and Bedford
- All stations between Hereford and Worcester Foregate Street
- Stone in Staffordshire

Some other stations, including Bearley, Claverdon and Kidsgrove, will no longer receive a West Midlands Trains service but are served by other operators.



# Essential journeys and social distancing - how coronavirus has changed our travel



Social distancing advice is being displayed at station.

Following the latest health advice from the government, West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have been urging passengers to only travel when necessary.

The companies have also launched poster campaigns urging the use of card or contactless payments and reminding passengers to adhere to rules around social distancing whenever possible.



Taped off area at Milton Keynes station encourages social distancing.



Contactless or card payments are encouraged via posters.

# Cleaning methods stepped up across the network to help stop coronavirus spread



Cleaners focus on high-touch areas such as door buttons.

In response to the coronavirus outbreak, cleaning regimes at West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have been stepped up to reduce the risk of infection while travelling.

Cleaners have been paying particular attention to high-touch areas such as handrails, door buttons and flat surfaces.



Flat surfaces such as tables are another key focus.

The companies are also trialling the use of new 'fogging' machine which produce a cloud of droplets which are harmless to humans but kill a large number of bacteria over a wide area.

If trials are successful the machines will be rolled out across stations, trains and depots.

For the latest on travelling during the coronavirus outbreak, visit our dedicated web pages at [wmr.uk/coronavirus](http://wmr.uk/coronavirus) and [lnr.uk/coronavirus](http://lnr.uk/coronavirus)

# Scheme for two new railway stations in the Black Country moves a step closer

Planning applications for two railway stations on the Walsall to Wolverhampton line have been handed in, marking another milestone on the project to restore passenger services to this part of the Black Country.

The new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall will offer vastly improved connections to Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham New Street when they open.

They will act as a catalyst for much-needed housing, industrial and commercial development along the line.

The original stations in Darlaston and Willenhall closed in 1965 and only through trains have used the line since then.

The project is led by Transport for West Midlands and the West Midlands Rail Executive in collaboration with the Department for Transport, Network Rail, West Midlands Railway, Walsall Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council.

The planning applications have been submitted to Walsall Council and will be decided in due course.



An artist's impression of how Darlaston station might look.

# Praise for front-line railway workers helping to keep the network moving

Passengers and senior management at West Midlands Trains have united in praise for the efforts of front-line staff in keeping the region moving during the coronavirus outbreak.

Hundreds of drivers, conductors, station staff, engineers, dispatchers, cleaners and control centre workers are among those continuing to report for duty to keep the trains moving.

West Midlands Trains is celebrating their efforts on social media and passengers on West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway routes have been adding their support.

Julian Edwards, WMT managing director, said: "The railway has always operated as a family and I have been very proud to see the fantastic work put in by our front-line workers."



West Midlands Railway senior conductor Sam Briggs



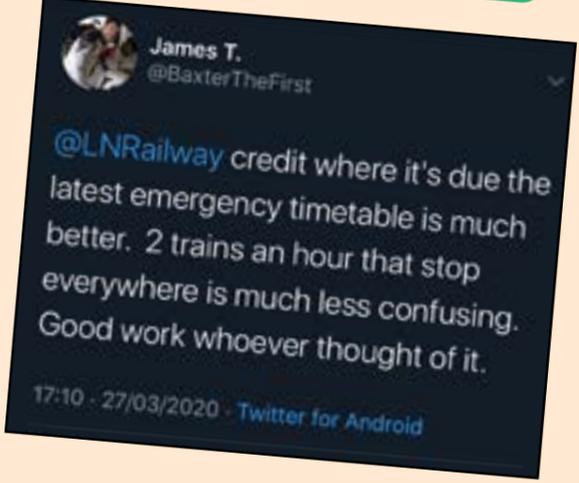
Birmingham Snow Hill staff member Malkeet Singh.



London Northwestern Railway senior conductor Dan Edwards



Milton Keynes duty station manager Cam Bliss



# Thousands of passengers join Customer Panel

Thousands of West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway passengers have signed up to a new online Customer Panel to help improve services.

The panel was set up in the spring after the operators launched the Putting Things Right improvement plan to get services back on track after a period of poor performance in the second half of 2019.

There will be 16 panels in total - one for each route on the West Midlands Trains network - with 5,000 spaces for passengers in the first year.

David Whitley, head of customer experience strategy at West Midlands Trains, said: "We are fully focused on giving our customers the service they deserve and have plans for big improvements throughout 2020. Now we want to hear what's most important to our passengers."

Details are available at [wmr.uk/customer-panel](http://wmr.uk/customer-panel) and [lnr.uk/customer-panel](http://lnr.uk/customer-panel)



# New station building opens at Stratford-upon-Avon



The new station facilities at Stratford-upon-Avon.

The new station building at Stratford-upon-Avon is now in service following a £1.5million revamp.

The waiting and seating areas have been upgraded with improved ticket-buying facilities and retail units.

Brenda Lawrence, head of stations for West Midlands Railway, said: "The investment at Stratford will significantly improve the experience for our passengers."

"With the current restrictions on travel for many it will be several months before they can enjoy the new surroundings but I am pleased the building is ready for passengers' return."

Cllr Jeff Clarke, from Warwickshire County Council, said: "Our aim is to ensure passengers and visitors get the best and easiest travel experience when visiting our county."

"The new Stratford-upon-Avon station will better serve the residents and thousands of visitors who come to Stratford every year to see the sights in the town."

# Camp Hill line reopening plan: First local passenger train in 80 years travels route

The reopening of the Camp Hill line in south Birmingham to local commuter trains moved a step closer after a stopping service travelled the route for the first time in nearly 80 years.

The line has been closed to local passengers since 1941 but plans, drawn up by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, are in place to revitalise the route and create new stations at Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell.

The plan moved a step closer when a West Midlands Railway train carrying the Mayor and other representatives from across the rail industry, travelled the line in March.

The train followed the route of what would be the re-opened line, pausing at the Moseley, Kings Heath, and Hazelwell sites before arriving into Kings Norton - and later returning to Birmingham New Street. The purpose of this inspection train was to explore how new passenger services on the Camp Hill line would work.

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for WMR, which will run the services on the Camp Hill line, said:



West Midlands Railway customer experience director Jonny Wiseman, West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Geoff Grant from Transport Focus.

“This is an exciting and visionary plan to transform local train services for our customers in the south of Birmingham.

“We are working closely with the West Midlands Rail Executive, Network Rail and the Mayor to turn this vision into reality.”

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said: “I am delighted we are pressing ahead with plans to reopen the Camp Hill line to passengers, and it was great to be on the

first passenger train to travel on the line in nearly 80 years.

“This line, which also represents another step forward in my 20-year transport plan for the West Midlands, will provide residents in South Birmingham with easier and faster connections to get to the places they need to go, whilst also offering people a real alternative to the car – helping to ease congestion and improve the air we breathe.”

## Glimpse of West Midlands diesel fleet on UK soil

Passengers on routes including Hereford-Birmingham and Shrewsbury-Birmingham have been afforded a glimpse of the new trains for their routes on UK soil.

A total of 26 diesel trains, known as Class 196s have been ordered as part of the company's £800m investment in the region's railway network.

The trains, which are being built in two-car and four-car formations will come with air conditioning, WiFi and power sockets and will be used to increase capacity on the busy lines.

A total of 80 carriages will be built with the first batch under construction in Europe by CAF.

The remaining trains are being manufactured at a purpose-built facility at Newport in South Wales - where the new photographs were taken earlier this year.

All units will undergo testing in the UK and in Europe before entering passenger service.

Jane Fisher, transition and projects director for West Midlands Railway, said: “The popularity of rail travel in the West Midlands is continuing to grow at a rapid rate, which is why we have pledged to invest £800m to help us keep up with demand.



A Class 196 unit in production at CAF's factory in Newport.

“It is exciting to see that this investment is starting to come to fruition with these smart, modern Class 196 trains which will boost capacity on our network and I am certain will prove popular with our passengers.”

## Performance update

Period 12 - 2 Feb - 29 Feb

Period 13 - 1 Mar - 30 Mar

PPM  
79.6%

MAA  
80.0%

PPM  
75.9%

MAA  
80.0%

Reliability - 94.0%

Reliability - 88.0%

- PPM (Public Performance Measure) is the % of trains arriving within five minutes of advertised times.
- MAA (Moving Annual Average) is the average PPM over the last year to date.
- Reliability is the % of trains that ran for the whole of their journey.



The impact of Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge affected performance in recent reporting periods but the number of train achieving the Public Performance Measure (PPM) was higher than in the final months of 2019.

The reduced timetable to account for the drop in passenger numbers due to the coronavirus outbreak came into effect on Monday 23 March, impacting on PPM for Period 13 as the company adjusted to the new pattern of working.

Shortly before the coronavirus impact, a number of small performance-improving timetable measures came into effect, with a reduced number of off-peak services calling at Coseley and Smethwick Galton Bridge.

## May timetable changes delayed

The impact of the coronavirus outbreak is expected to delay the implementation of planned timetable changes in May 2020.

With the entire rail industry operating to special, reduced timetables for an indefinite period, discussions with the relevant authorities are ongoing as how - and when - the changes planned for May should be implemented.

West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway plan to introduce a number of changes to improve performance by simplifying their timetables.

A number of smaller changes were made shortly before the reduced coronavirus timetable came into effect, notably at Rugeley Trent Valley and along the Chase Line, where fewer trains now continue to London Euston, preventing delays on the congested West Coast Main Line being 'imported' into the West Midlands.

## Engineering work planned

**Easter Weekend\***  
Sat 11 April - Mon 13 April 2020  
**Wolverhampton**

No trains will call at Wolverhampton over the Easter weekend due to major engineering works. Rail replacement buses will be in operation.

**London Euston - Northampton**  
Engineering works take place between Cheddington and Milton Keynes, closing two of four lines. Fewer trains may be able to run between London Euston and Northampton and passengers are advised to check live journey information.

**Mon 27 April - Fri 1 May 2020\***  
**Birmingham - Hednesford**

Engineering work is taking place at Hednesford overnight, closing the line. Late trains (dependant on timetable reductions) may be cancelled.

*\*Note - all works may be subject to last-minute cancellation or amendment due to the coronavirus outbreak. Check live journey information before travelling - and follow the government advice to make only essential journeys.*

For the latest travel information check [nationalrail.co.uk](https://nationalrail.co.uk)

## About us - West Midlands Trains

We operate over 1,300 train services a day over our West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks, manage 149 stations and provide over 80 million passenger journeys each year. We are investing £1 billion into our rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 413 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

Central to our delivery of rail services are the communities we serve. We are looking to improve integration, sustainable travel and developer engagement as well as expanding our community rail partnerships. We also hope to increase the number of adopted stations and regenerate station environments while making the railway accessible for everyone.

If you ever have any questions or feedback on what we're doing in your area, please contact:



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