



Dec 18, 2019 06:00 GMT

## Passengers offered first glimpse of new West Midlands Railway train fleet

Passengers in the West Midlands have been offered a first glimpse of the new, state-of-the-art trains which will arrive in the region next year after on-track testing began.

West Midlands Railway has ordered a total of 26 diesel trains - known in the rail industry as Class 196s - as part of its £800m investment in the region's railway network.

The trains - which are being built in two-car and four-car formations - will be used to increase capacity on the busy line between Hereford and Birmingham

when they begin arriving in the West Midlands next year. Among the benefits to passengers using the trains will be power points, WiFi and under-floor heating.

A total of 80 carriages will be constructed under the project with the first batch now under construction in Europe by manufacturer CAF. They are due to arrive in the UK in the spring, with the remaining trains being manufactured at a purpose-built factory in south Wales.

All units will undergo further testing here and in Europe before entering passenger service in the second half of 2020.

A video of one of the first new Class 196 trains – complete with West Midlands Railway branding – being track-tested in Czechia in eastern Europe can be viewed here:



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

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.

“It is exciting to see that this investment is starting to come to fruition with our new Class 196 trains entering the track-testing stage before they begin arriving in the UK next year.

“These smart, modern trains will boost capacity on our network and come with features such as under-floor heating and extra luggage space which I am certain will prove popular with passengers.”

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## About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email [press.office@wmtrains.co.uk](mailto:press.office@wmtrains.co.uk)

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](http://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](http://londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco

and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit [www.abellio.com](http://www.abellio.com)

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