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Rail passengers in the West Midlands to benefit from timetable improvements this May

Passengers across the West Midlands will benefit from extra services, and direct trains to a range of new destinations, when West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway introduce new timetables this May.

The train operators are introducing a range of improvements, including new additional services, extra capacity and enhanced timetables across the region. The changes will benefit passengers travelling for both work and leisure – including those using rail services during evenings and weekends.

There will be more direct services operating between major cities, airports and transport hubs across the rail network. Many of these services will operate via Birmingham New Street, connecting London Euston to destinations such as Wolverhampton, Walsall, Stoke-on-Trent and Liverpool.

These new routes will enable three trains an hour to operate to and from London Euston every day – with more services being made up of eight car trains. Journey times from Birmingham on the West Coast Mainline will also have reduced waiting time at Northampton, improving the journey time to/from the capital.

Electric trains will be introduced on the Chase line, following the £100m electrification of the route between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley. This will enable faster trains to operate, with more carriages and extra seats for passengers. From Walsall, there will be an hourly service to London Euston and a half hourly service to Birmingham Airport from Monday to Saturday.

Various timetable enhancements will also provide additional services and capacity across the West Midlands. There will be earlier and later services to and from many stations, with frequent services operating on many routes later into the evenings. Some of the routes that will benefit from these improvements are*:

The last evening trains to operate between Birmingham New Street and Coventry will depart between 20 and 45 minutes later, with an additional 0040 departure from Birmingham New Street on weekdays.

On the Cross City North, four trains an hour will continue to the end of the line at Lichfield Trent Valley throughout the day. There will be the introduction of a new 2340 departure from Birmingham New Street to Four Oaks on weekdays, and a 2325 departure on Saturdays.

Services calling at local stations to Wolverhampton will see an additional train from Birmingham at 2338 from Monday to Saturday.

There will be new Birmingham Snow Hill to Worcester Shrub Hill departures until 2300 on Fridays and Saturdays.

Richard Brooks, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway and

London Northwestern Railway, said: “The timetable improvements being introduced in May will bring a range of benefits to passengers, with more direct services to destinations across our network and improved capacity on some of our busiest services. The changes we are making across the West Midlands this Spring will open up new opportunities for passengers to travel by train for both work and leisure – with additional earlier, later and weekend services making rail travel a fantastic option for getting around the region.

“However, this isn’t the whole story. We will also have a further timetable change in two years time, where passengers will see further benefits from the introduction of new trains onto the network, which when fully operational, will increase capacity by 25%.”

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street, said: “This is great news for those who want to go out for a night at the cinema, take in a show or see their favourite band because they know they will be able to get the train home thanks to later evening services on key routes. There will also be more services on Saturdays and Sundays which will help those going for a day out as well as those many people who work weekends.

“And for some of those commuters who struggle with overcrowded trains day in day out there will be extra carriages on a number of services, with a promise of more to come in future years thanks to West Midlands Railway’s £1 billion investment.”

Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of the West Midlands Rail Executive and leader of the City of Wolverhampton Council, said: “One of our key demands for the new West Midlands Rail franchise was more frequent services and more capacity and we are delighted to see that they are delivering on this. We are also eagerly anticipating further improvements in the years ahead.”

The new timetable will operate from Sunday 19 May. There will be changes to the time and formation of some services, so passengers are advised to check their train times and to plan ahead for the changes. The new timetable is now live on journey planning systems and can be found at www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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***For information on how other parts of the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks will benefit from our new timetable, see the related content associated with this release.**

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

About West Midlands Trains

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 or 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

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