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Rail passengers to benefit from new direct services to more destinations from Staffordshire and Cheshire this May

Rail passengers across North Staffordshire and Cheshire will benefit from quicker journey times and new direct services more destinations from May

London Northwestern Railway is introducing a new timetable from 19 May. Changes being made include the more carriages on some London-bound services from Crewe, quicker journey times to/from the capital and new direct services to destinations across the rail network, including Birmingham Airport. The changes will benefit passengers travelling for both work and leisure – including those using rail services during evenings and weekends.

A new Monday to Saturday service will operate from Crewe, via Stoke-on-Trent, to Wolverhampton, Birmingham New Street, Birmingham Airport and London Euston. On Sundays this service will operate as far as Birmingham New Street for onward connections across the rail network.

On services between Crewe and London Euston, some trains will have eight carriages, rather than four. The improvement comes as services will begin operating directly between Crewe and Stafford – shortening journey times between Cheshire and the capital, via stations such as Stafford, Rugeley Trent Valley and Lichfield Trent Valley. There will also be later evening services on the route on weekdays, with a new 2153 departure from Crewe. On Sundays, journey times will also be reduced, with trains from Crewe no longer travelling via Northampton.

Passengers from Alsager, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent and Stone will also be able to connect with fast London-bound services at Stafford for travel to and from the capital.

Across South Staffordshire, there will also a number of improvements:

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.

More services will operate between Lichfield and Birmingham on the Cross City line, with four trains per hour serving the station throughout the week.

There will also be more trains calling at Penkridge on the line between Birmingham and Liverpool.

Richard Brooks, customer experience director for 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.

“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%.”

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.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

ENDS

***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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