



Aug 24, 2020 09:30 BST

West Midlands Railway to increase services from September

Thousands of extra seats are being introduced on West Midlands Railway (WMR) services from next month as passenger numbers across the rail network continue to rise.

The new timetable, which comes into effect from Sunday 6 September, will see available space increased in time for the return of schools and workplaces across the region. It returns the capacity in many places on the WMR network to near pre-Covid levels.

All rail operators significantly reduced services in March in response to the pandemic, with passenger numbers dropping by 95% at the height of the lockdown. Services have been stepped up twice since May and with increased numbers travelling, WMR is once again adding more trains as part of a timetable focused on capacity and reliability.

The enhanced timetable is the most significant step up in rail capacity since lockdown and will see the introduction of longer trains running modular routes to boost reliability.

Among the key changes are:

- Train frequency on Birmingham's Cross-City Line increases from three to four trains an hour on the majority of the route and will be the maximum six carriages in length
- Services on the Birmingham-Hereford and Birmingham-Shrewsbury lines increase to two trains per hour in the peak
- Snow Hill Line services increase to six trains per hour while services to Birmingham International increase to two trains per hour
- Services between Walsall and Rugeley step up to two trains per hour both peak and off-peak. In order to improve reliability, Chase Line trains will remain self-contained in the West Midlands rather than continue through to London Euston

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for West Midlands Railway, said:

"This timetable is the most significant step up in our capacity since lockdown. We're adding thousands of extra seats to give our customers the space to travel with confidence.

"We've taken all the aspects which made our lockdown timetable work so well and expanded them as increasing numbers of customers continue returning to the railway. This simpler timetable will be more reliable for passengers with longer trains to help social distancing.

"We know that coronavirus will continue to impact our lives and workplaces for some time to come but by creating a resilient, flexible timetable we can

help our customers adjust to their new normal.”

Passengers are also being reminded that wearing a face covering is compulsory on trains and in stations unless exempt for medical reasons. Non-compliance is punishable by a fine from the British Transport Police.

The new timetables are in journey planners now - see www.wmr.uk/plan for details.

Notes to Editors

- Between April and July 2020, under a modular lockdown timetable, on average 95% of West Midlands Trains services arrived on time (under the industry-standard Public Performance Measure).

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email 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 Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

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. 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.

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