



# West Midlands Railway

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## West Midlands Railway unveils ticket office modernisation plans

West Midlands Railway has today (5 July) published proposals to modernise the way train tickets are sold at stations.

The company, alongside other train operators in England, is proposing to bring employees out from behind ticket office windows to be closer to customers, providing an enhanced customer service role and greater visibility of staff on concourses and platforms.

The proposals represent the biggest change to customer retailing since the

1990s, when 82% of all tickets were sold at ticket offices, compared to just 12% today.

A consultation on the reforms will provide rail passengers with the opportunity to have their say on the plans, which aim to follow other modern retailers such as airlines, supermarkets and banks in adapting to consumer demand and providing a quicker, smoother and more convenient experience.

Under the plans, all ticket offices in their current form would close over the next three years, but the operator would retain six hub stations across the network: Birmingham Snow Hill, Sutton Coldfield, University, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Worcester Foregate Street.

These hubs would enable the evolution of retail and the multi-skilling of staff, offering enhanced retail facilities and customer support whilst industry fares, ticketing and retail reforms are delivered. In the meantime, cash will continue to be accepted across the rail network.

Mobile teams would move between stations and be deployed to offer extra help where needed. Ticket vending machines would be upgraded to make sure customers can still buy the most popular tickets at stations and many staff will have hand-held devices. New customer help points would also be introduced at stations as part of the proposals.

Nationally around half of all sales are now online, with many customers choosing to use more convenient ways of paying for their journey, including online and self-service ticket machines. An estimated 99% of all transactions made at ticket offices last year can be made at TVMs or online.

Ian McConnell, managing director of West Midlands Railway, said:

“We need to evolve with our customers, as well as creating a more sustainable railway that’s fit for the future.

“Our proposals would mean staff being more visible and available where customers most need them; on concourses and platforms to help with journey planning, finding the right ticket and supporting passengers with accessibility needs.

“We understand that some customers have complex needs and some are less comfortable using digital technology. That’s why we will be consulting widely with relevant groups and looking at ways of supporting all our customers to ensure that no-one is left behind.”

Further information on West Midlands Railway’s proposals can be found at [wmr.uk/ticket-offices](http://wmr.uk/ticket-offices)

### **Notes to editors**

Customers who would like to comment on these proposals can contact Transport Focus, the independent transport user watchdog, by Wednesday 26 July 2023 at [TicketOffice.WMT@transportfocus.org.uk](mailto:TicketOffice.WMT@transportfocus.org.uk) or Freepost: RTEH-XAGE-BYKZ, Transport Focus, PO Box 5594, Southend on Sea, SS1 9PZ.

For more information about how to have your say visit [www.transportfocus.org.uk](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk)

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### **About West Midlands Trains**

For further information on this release, 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 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](http://westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](http://londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

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