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West Midlands Trains appoints new engineering director

Rail operator West Midlands Trains (WMT) has announced that Zena Dent has been appointed its new engineering director.

As engineering director at WMT, which runs services under the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway brands, Zena will oversee the implementation of two brand new train fleets as well as the maintenance of the existing fleet.

Zena said: “It is a very exciting time to take up this post as we are on the cusp of a significant positive change with our two fantastic new train fleets.

“This will start with our smart new, air-conditioned diesel fleet carrying passengers in the West Midlands followed by our new electric trains which will particularly benefit our popular commuter routes to and from London and through Birmingham.”

Zena, who joined WMT as a project manager in 2018, will become one of only a handful of female engineering directors working at Britain’s train operating companies when she takes up her post on July 6. She will be the first woman to hold the position at a West Midlands rail franchise.

Her appointment has been confirmed ahead of International Women in Engineering Day 2020, which is celebrated tomorrow (June 23).

Zena said: “Engineering is about problem-solving and that is something that has always appealed to me, no matter what the environment. It is a pleasure to work as part of teams providing trains which carry millions of passengers every year.

“I am a firm believer that everyone is different but everyone is equal and I would absolutely encourage any young person – male or female – to consider an engineering career on the railway.”

Zena began her career with British Rail in the 1990s before overseeing the purchase and implementation of a number of train fleets across the country, including the high-speed Class 395 Javelin trains introduced ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

West Midlands Trains managing director Julian Edwards said: “I am delighted to welcome Zena as our new Engineering Director at an exciting time for the company.

“Despite the challenges coronavirus is presenting to the rail industry and society, we know the £1billion investment we are making in new trains, stations, depots and our people will make a huge difference to our customers.”

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 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.

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