

Avanti says no services this Saturday as ASLEF strike set to go ahead

August 10, 2022



National strike action by the train driver's union, ASLEF, on Saturday 13 August will mean the Avanti West Coast is unable to operate any of its services along its west coast route for the whole day.

As a result, options to travel by rail will be extremely limited on the West Coast Main Line between London, Scotland, and North Wales. Many destinations will have no rail connectivity on 13 August and rail replacement services will not be in place either.

With no Avanti West Coast trains running to and from all destinations on the West Coast Main Line, customers are being told by the operator not to travel on Saturday 13 August and instead claim a refund, seek alternative transport or rearrange journeys for another date.

The strike will affect those intending to travel by rail to Premier League fixtures in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and London on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August.

Customers with tickets for 13 August can claim a full refund from their point of purchase. Alternatively, customers with tickets dated 13 August can use those tickets to travel either the day before, or up to and

including 16 August.

Managing Director of Avanti West Coast, Phil Whittingham, said: "Yet again our customers will bear the brunt of industrial action and will face a weekend of misery as a result.

"With the summer holidays in full swing and the return of the Premier League, this action will ruin many people's plans. We're obviously disappointed by ASLEF's decision to go on strike, which we believe is unnecessary and premature. We would urge them to engage in meaningful industry reform talks around modernising working practices and developing a railway fit for the 21st century and we remain open for talks at any time.

"Our route will be severely impacted on 13 August. As a result, we're telling customers not to travel and instead make their journeys on another date or claim a full refund. Many destinations on the West Coast Main Line will have no rail connectivity on this day, so anyone who needs to travel should seek alternative transport. Again, I would like to reiterate my thanks to our customers for being patient and understanding as our services face further disruption."

Change in services criticised

Further strike action by the RMT and TSSA is planned for 18 and 20 August, which will impact Avanti West Coast services.

From Sunday, Avanti is stepping down its service to levels it describes as similar to those during the **Omicron COVID-19 outbreak**. It says this is due to the current industrial relations climate which has resulted in severe staff shortages in some grades through increased sickness levels, as well as unofficial strike action by ASLEF members.

Criticising the move, **Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, London Mayor Sadiq Khan and Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council, have written** to voice how they have been angered by the development.

"The plan to run just four trains an hour from London Euston, with only one service to Manchester, came with no notice nor any consultation beforehand and no date by which the full timetable will be restored," the letter said. "This is completely unacceptable."

They said the reduction will harm major economic and cultural centres at a "critical time" following the COVID-19 pandemic – citing the Notting Hill Carnival and Manchester Pride as two major events that would be affected.

They said drivers were entitled not to work rest days and that it reflects "extremely poorly" on the operator.

The political leaders said they sought an urgent meeting with Avanti.