

Avanti West Coast begins the UK's biggest ever train fleet upgrade

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Avanti West Coast has kicked-off the UK's biggest ever train fleet upgrade this week, as the first Pendolino was taken out of service for work to begin on the £117m project.

The programme will transform all 56 of Avanti West Coast's iconic Pendolinos. The trains are widely regarded as the UK's hardest working train fleet, clocking up more than 270 million miles since they were launched – enough to go to the moon and back more than 500 times.

The Pendolinos have served routes between London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh for close to 20 years and the upgrade will return the whole Pendolino fleet to an 'as new' condition.

Customer improvements include:

- Replacing 25,000 Standard Class seats;
- Conversion of one First Class carriage on each of the 35 eleven-carriage Pendolinos to provide more than

2,000 extra Standard class seats;

- The introduction of a new Café Bar for customers to meet and enjoy refreshments;
- Improved lighting and new interior carpets;
- Greater use of technology with customer-friendly passenger information screens;
- Additional luggage space;
- Power points at every seat;
- Refurbished toilets.

Watch the train arriving onto the depot:

“The Pendolino is a real workhorse which has helped to transform services on the West Coast Main Line,” explained Phil Whittingham, Managing Director for Avanti West Coast. “This investment will take them to the next level and they’ll feel like new trains with state of the art technology and brand new seats. I can’t wait to see the reaction from our customers and people.”

Rail manufacturer Alstom will oversee the refurbishment at their new depot in Widnes in the North West securing 100 skilled jobs.

The first train, set number 390125, is due to re-enter service in late 2021. The upgrade programme will run until February 2024 when the last of the 56 strong fleet is expected to leave Widnes.

“We were delighted when our friends at Avanti West Coast entrusted our team at Widnes with the upgrade of the Alstom-built Pendolino, one of Britain’s most reliable, popular and sustainable trains” said Peter Broadley, Managing Director, Services, Alstom UK & Ireland. “Alstom is the nation’s leading train services provider and train refurbishment is a major part of our offering, so we can’t wait to get cracking on this landmark project.”

UK suppliers will benefit from 80% of the £117m investment, which is financed by Angel Trains, one of the UK’s leading train Asset Management companies.

“Investing in the refurbishment of rolling stock is crucial for advancing the UK rail industry and supporting the wider supply chain,” said David Jordan, Chief Operating Officer of Angel Trains. “This project is a huge milestone, and we are proud to work with our customers Avanti West Coast to upgrade the Pendolino fleet, to create modern train interiors that are fit for future passengers’ needs.”

The refurbished Pendolinos are just part of the changes taking place on the West Coast. The ground-breaking Standard Premium has already been introduced, as has at-seat ordering and a brand-new fleet to replace the diesel Voyagers is coming in 2023.

Photo credit: Avanti West Coast