

Avanti West Coast launches new Standard Premium service

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Avanti West Coast has become the first UK train operating company to offer an additional class of travel as part of its services.

Standard Premium will give customers greater choice and is available on all the West Coast Main Line operator's Pendolino services.

Sitting between Standard and First, customers will enjoy roomier seats, greater space and a guaranteed table.

They will also have the option to purchase refreshments via the new 'At-Seat Order' feature where customers can have items delivered to them without moving from their seat.

The new class is initially available to buy as an upgrade on the day of travel, with Advance purchase tickets on sale from July for travel from September. Single journey upgrade prices range from £15 for Birmingham to London to £30 for Glasgow to London.

Standard Premium was developed following initial market research and then successful trials last year and more recently, with customers taking part in the trials asked to rate their experiences and help shape the new product. Figures showed 96% of respondents said they were either “highly likely” or “likely” to upgrade to Standard Premium for future journeys, citing extra space as a key benefit.

As part of further improvements, Avanti West Coast will launch an enhanced First Class offering with improved catering and more bespoke customer service later this year, with the enhanced service available seven days a week. Work is also due to start next month to fully refurbish the entire Pendolino fleet of 56 trains as part of a £117m deal signed with Alstom who maintain the operator’s fleet.

New seats, with leather headrests, will be installed in Standard Premium and First. All 25,000 Standard seats will be also be replaced, with customers also benefiting from a new look onboard shop, as part of the biggest ever fleet upgrade.

In addition, one carriage on all 11 coach Pendolinos (the existing Coach G), will be converted from First to Standard, increasing each train’s seating capacity by 5%. The first refurbished set is due to enter service in November 2021.

Phil Whittingham, Manager Director at Avanti West Coast said: “This is the first major step in our transformation of services on the West Coast. Together with our upcoming First Class service which will lead the industry, and the complete refurbishment of the Pendolino fleet, Standard Premium will set a new benchmark for UK rail travel.

“Our new class of travel will offer greater choice and provide a unique offer which meets customers’ changing needs as they return to rail. This new feature is another step in raising the bar for excellence on the railway.”

Photo credit: Avanti West Coast