

Brand new trains off the production line in Newport

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The transformation of the Wales and Borders network has moved another step closer with the first of the brand-new Class 197 trains coming off the production line.

Testing has begun on the first two of 77 new trains which are due to begin entering service from next year on long-distance services, serving destinations as varied as Holyhead, Fishguard and Liverpool.

The bodyshells of the Class 197 Civity trains were built in Beasain, northern Spain, by Spanish rolling stock manufacturer CAF before final assembly took place at the company's factory in Llanwern, Newport.

Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change, commented: "As we recover from the pandemic and work towards a greener future we need to do all we can to encourage more people back on the train.

"Seeing these new trains coming off the production line is a positive sign of improving the quality of train travel in Wales."

James Price, Transport for Wales Chief Executive, said: "It's an exciting milestone to have the first brand

new trains built by Transport for Wales off the production line and into testing.

“The Class 197s will be an important part of the transformation of the Wales and Borders network and we look forward to welcoming passengers onto the new trains from next year.

“We’re delighted with the quality of the trains and proud that final assembly has taken place in Newport, supporting highly-skilled jobs and bringing further employment to the area.”

These new trains will provide enhanced comfort for TfW customers with features such as leather seats (first class), stain resistant seats and a modern air conditioning/heating system.

The Class 197 trains also come equipped with a smart seat reservations system. Seat reservations will be downloaded from the reservation computer each time traincrew change ends on the train.

Richard Garner, CAF’s UK Director, comments: “CAF is proud to be playing a key role in delivering Transport for Wales’ commitment to transform rail travel. Our ‘Made in Wales’ trains put the passengers needs first and will ensure a high-quality, reliable, and comfortable journey across the Welsh rail network.”

The £30m CAF factory at Celtic Business Park near Llanwern Steelworks in Newport has grown from just 12 employees in 2016 to more than 200 today.

Testing for the two new trains (197001 and 197002) is currently taking place in North Wales and the north of England.

Photo credit: Transport for Wales