

# Hitachi Rail begins new phase of manufacturing at UK factory with East Coast Trains order

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Manufacturing of five 100% electric East Coast Trains has started, signalling the start of a new phase of train building at Hitachi Rail's Newton Aycliffe factory.

The construction of the new intercity trains for the open access operator (East Coast Trains Limited) incorporates a more extensive manufacturing programme than previous fleets. The increased scope will see the highly skilled workforce create a new state-of-art fleet from empty aluminium shells.

Despite the impact of Covid-19, Hitachi Rail has continued to work diligently and safely in preparing the factory and is now ready to start manufacturing the East Coast Trains order.

The five fully electric East Coast Trains – known in the rail industry as Class 803s – will begin carrying passengers between Edinburgh and London from autumn 2021, offering passengers a high quality, cost effective and more sustainable alternative to flying between two of the UK's capital cities.

East Coast Trains are focused on delighting passengers. They will have the first service of the day from London to Edinburgh, making it an attractive alternative to flying. The trains will also travel entirely in electric mode, resulting in zero-emission intercity travel.

These trains are part of the award winning Class 800 series, which are currently some of the UK's most reliable new train fleets and improving passenger satisfaction.

Hitachi Rail are due to build more intercity orders this year, which will benefit from their £8.5m investment in welding and painting at the factory.

Ross Nagle, COO Rolling Stock UK at Hitachi Rail: "Building these East Coast Trains signifies a new and exciting chapter for Hitachi Rail's UK factory.

"It is an important step as we increase our manufacturing capabilities and upskill our workforce at Newton Aycliffe, which includes a £8.5m investment in new welding and painting facilities.

"The increased skills of our workforce makes us well placed to deliver a number of highly significant orders over the next 12 months, and consolidate our place as a strategic North East manufacturing hub."

Helen Wylde, Managing Director at East Coast Trains: "Its great to see our new 100% electric trains being assembled by the skilled team at Newton Aycliffe.

"We are delighted that these trains will be at the cutting-edge of low-emission rail transport, underlining the benefits of using our rail service for travel between the two capital cities."

Ross Shepherd, Chief Technical Officer, Beacon Rail Leasing Limited: "We are delighted to see the start of the manufacture of our all-electric Class 803 fleet in the UK. It is a sign of the strong teamwork and commitment to safety across the project that this has been achieved in these extraordinary times.

"The Class 803 demonstrates Beacon's commitment to delivering environmentally friendly rail travel across Europe."

*Photo credit: Hitachi Rail*