

Industry collaborates to deliver more Avanti West Coast services during upgrade works

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Avanti West Coast is providing more services as a result of a short-term timetable change to facilitate essential works on the West Coast Main Line.

Joining up with industry partners, the intercity operator has taken advantage of planned upgrade works near Wolverhampton to increase connectivity between the North West, Midlands, and London on eight consecutive weekdays.

Working together with Alstom, who maintain the train operator's fleet, and Network Rail, who are responsible for railway infrastructure, five Avanti West Coast services* scheduled to run between Wolverhampton and London Euston each day have been extended to serve Blackpool North and Crewe. They will run between Monday 19 – Friday 23 April and Monday 26 – Wednesday 28 April.

These short-term timetable changes are a result of trains that are kept at Oxley depot (near Wolverhampton) during the day because of the reduced timetable, being utilised to enable Network Rail access to carry out repairs to overhead power lines.

With entry to the depot restricted and the site unable to function normally due to power being switched off while the works take place, trains could not be stabled until they were required later in the day. Therefore, a collaborative effort was made to keep these trains in service for longer.

The intercity operator worked with Network Rail to amend its timetable and extend existing services to make use of the Pendolinos. It also collaborated with Alstom to adapt the scheduled maintenance of its fleet and ensure overnight upkeep of the trains continued at Oxley once power was restored.

Once complete the works will improve resilience of overhead wires during hot weather – preventing sagging and reducing the risk of them coming down, which can result in delays.

Gus Dunster, Executive Director of Operations and Safety at Avanti West Coast, said: “We are pleased to have worked with Alstom and Network Rail to utilise our trains to provide more connections between the North West, the Midlands and London, while these essential works take place.

“Facilitating the repairs to the overhead wires near Wolverhampton is the latest example of how the industry has collaborated to minimise the impact to people’s journeys, and on this occasion offer additional connectivity for our customers.”

Dave Penney, Network Rail’s Central route director, said: “We’ve worked closely with Avanti West Coast and Alstom so these services can continue to run with the added bonus for passengers of a direct connection to Blackpool from the West Midlands during the work. Maintenance like this is carefully planned with our partners and is key to keeping trains moving in the future.”

Peter Broadley, MD Services UK & Ireland at Alstom, said: “Collaboration and teamwork are vital to ensure passenger service is not disrupted. I am delighted we have been able to work closely with our friends at Avanti West Coast and Network Rail to extend services to minimise the impact of the essential works at Oxley.”

*The services extended between Monday 19 – Friday 23 April and Monday 26 – Wednesday 28 April:

Southbound:

- 11:45 Wolverhampton – London Euston starts from Crewe at 11:02
- 17:45 Wolverhampton – London Euston starts from Crewe at 17:01
- 19:45 Wolverhampton – London Euston starts from Blackpool North at 17:47

Northbound:

- 11:34 London Euston – Wolverhampton extended to Blackpool North
- 13:34 London Euston – Wolverhampton extended to Crewe

Photo credit: Avanti West Coast