

Serco bids a fond farewell to the Caledonian Sleeper

June 23, 2023



The night of Friday 23 June will see the last Caledonian Sleeper services run under Serco's management when the Caledonian Sleeper franchise expires almost eight years and three months since Serco's inaugural service departed from Fort William on Tuesday 31 March 2015.

Commenting on the end of the franchise, John Whitehurst, Managing Director of Serco's transport business, said: "We are immensely proud of everything that we have achieved since we were awarded the contract to run the Caledonian Sleeper in 2014. During the eight years since Serco's inaugural services departed, we have brought about massive improvements to every aspect of the service for our employees, our passengers and for Scotland, despite having made significant losses on the contract. These improvements have been an extraordinary achievement by everyone involved in running the service and we are grateful to everyone for their hard work, and we wish them all good luck and a great future. We hand the Caledonian Sleeper over to the Scottish Government in great shape, secure in the knowledge that this is now a world class service that represents the best of Scotland."

In addition to the introduction in 2019 of a £150m fleet of 75 sophisticated and complex new carriages that brought new levels of comfort and service, with ensuite berths and double beds and a brasserie style

Club car, Serco transformed the on-board food and drink using local Scottish suppliers; improved marketing and sales with a new booking website, sleeper.scot, which allows uniquely passengers to book their travel up to 12 months in advance and introduced hospitality facilities at stations.

Today, the Caledonian Sleeper is one of the top performing train operators in the country:

- Since March 2022, Caledonian Sleeper has consistently increased forward sales. As a result, the service has achieved the highest ever forward bookings with every individual period seeing record sales. This has been in large part due to the innovation of allowing guests to book up to 12 months in advance, a unique feature of the service that Serco introduced when we started managing the service.
- As part of this increase, there have been record sales through the dedicated website, Sleeper.scot, since January 2022.
- 2022 was the best year ever for the service as it recovered from Covid; the year saw the highest revenue since the start of the franchise with guest levels back to pre-covid;
- the performance on right time arrival has outperformed our franchise obligation of 80%;
- our guest satisfaction score reached 90% against a target of 85%, which has never been done before;
- and our employee satisfaction score is at 69, an increase of 16 points on the 2021 score.

From Sunday 25 June the Caledonian Sleeper services will be provided by the Scottish Government.