

# South Western Railway launches Intersex-Inclusive Pride train

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South Western Railway (SWR) has launched the UK's first ever Intersex-Inclusive Pride train to show support for and solidarity with its LGBTQIA+ customers and colleagues and the community at large.

The new livery was applied to a Class 444 train at the Bournemouth Depot over the weekend and enters service from today. On its first run, the newly designed train was crewed exclusively by LGBTQIA+ SWR colleagues.

Observers will be able to spot the newly decorated train flying the flag on the busy South West Main Line between London Waterloo and Weymouth, travelling through Greater London, Surrey, Hampshire, and Dorset.

SWR revealed its inaugural 'Trainbow' train with a Pride flag livery in 2019 ahead of Southampton Pride, the annual event that SWR first sponsored in 2017 and will sponsor for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The rainbow Pride flag has long been a symbol of LGBTQIA+ people and it has been updated several times in recent years to reflect different parts of the community, celebrating its diversity and promoting greater

inclusion both within and without.

American activists Amber Hikes and Daniel Quasar respectively incorporated black and brown stripes for black and minority ethnic people and light blue, light pink, and white stripes for transgender people to create the 'Progress Pride' flag.

In 2021, British intersex equality campaigner Valentino Vecchietti redesigned the Progress Pride flag to include the intersex flag, a purple ring on a yellow background, to create the 'Intersex-Inclusive Pride' flag which SWR has used.

SWR's new train design was formally revealed today by senior leaders including SWR's Managing Director, Claire Mann, and Chief Operating Officer, Stuart Meek, who were joined by LGBTQIA+ colleagues and the flag's creator, Valentino Vecchietti.

Stuart Meek, Chief Operating Officer of South Western Railway, said: "It is wonderful to have this train proudly flying the flag for equality on our network, furthering inclusion with the new Intersex-Inclusive flag design, and visibly showing our support for LGBTQIA+ colleagues and customers.

"SWR is one family, and we are committed to fostering a sense of togetherness and standing up for all of our customers and colleagues, and all of the communities we serve."

Bryce Hunt, Weymouth Station Manager and Chair of South Western Railway's Pride Network, said: "Being proud of who you are is the opportunity to be openly expressive, loving, and honest.

"Our commitment to our colleagues and customers is that they can be unafraid of their true self and be met with understanding and support. Our Pride Network has released this new livery which shows our full commitment to the communities we serve internally and externally."

Valentino Vecchietti, creator of the Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag and founder of Intersex Equality Rights UK, said: "The Intersex-Inclusive Pride train means so much to the LGBTQIA+ community and to our families, friends, and allies. I created intersex visibility on our global Pride flag to bring joy to my community, and also to raise awareness that intersex people in the UK and worldwide are typically not included in census data collection, equality protections or hate crime legislation.

"The umbrella term 'intersex' describes the natural diversity in sex characteristics. Sex characteristics are distinct from gender identity and sexual orientation but are all connected through the sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) human rights framework, which is reflected in the new flag."

Earlier this year, the results of the first census to ask respondents optional questions about their sexual orientation and gender identity in England and Wales were published by the Office for National Statistics.

The results showed that the London Borough of Lambeth, home to SWR's flagship London Waterloo terminus as well as Vauxhall station, is one of the most LGBTQIA+ areas in the country, with the third highest percentage, at 8.3% of the population.

SWR has an active Pride Network championing inclusivity in the area on sexual orientation and gender identity. In February, LGBTQIA+ History Month, SWR was highly commended for Diversity & Inclusion in Rail at the Rail Business Awards.

The new inclusive Pride train will continue to be seen on the SWR network throughout the Pride season later this year and beyond.

*Photo credit: South Western Railway*