

Press release

Transport Secretary to nationalise Avanti West Coast services at first opportunity

From 7 March 2027, Avanti West Coast's services will be nationalised to improve infrastructure, cut delays and improve the passenger experience.

From: **Department for Transport**
(/government/organisations/department-
for-transport), DfT Operator Limited
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limited) and **The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander**
MP (/government/people/heidi-alexander)

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- Transport Secretary confirms that the government will take control of Avanti West Coast's services from 7 March 2027, part of wider drive to put essential services back in public control
- Heidi Alexander calls time on unacceptable performance on the West Coast Main Line and promises renewed focus on passengers over profits and supporting growth in every postcode
- nationalisation will end fragmentation and tackle infrastructure issues on the route, creating a more reliable service

Britain's busiest train line will soon be re-nationalised, as the government steps in to take control of Avanti West Coast's (AWC) services at the first opportunity after the expiry of its contract.

By bringing AWC's services into public ownership in March 2027, West Coast services will soon be run in the interests of passengers, not private sector shareholders. The move supports the government's drive to put essential services back in public hands, connecting people to opportunity and delivering growth in every postcode.

Avanti West Coast passengers have been experiencing frequent disruption on one of the country's busiest routes for years. Performance remains behind the industry average, with passengers frequently frustrated by delays and cancellations. Infrastructure issues along the West Coast Main Line (WCML) resulting from long-term underinvestment are the biggest cause of disruption for passengers.

From 7 March 2027, taxpayers will no longer be paying fees to a private operator. Instead, every penny will be spent for the benefit of passengers. Nationalisation will be supported by a dedicated improvement plan to fix the basics, delivering much-needed infrastructure improvements to cut delays and improve passenger experience.

Changes passengers will see include:

- Fewer delays and cancellations thanks to an extra £10 million boost for power and signalling maintenance to be delivered by the end of 2027. This is in addition to the existing £840 million investment to improve infrastructure problems, which account for a third of delays on the WCML.
- Faster and more reliable services through changes to existing timetables, focusing on routes going in and out of Manchester. Amendments will start to come in from December 2026.

- Upgraded facilities at Euston with a £50 million investment at Euston station over the next 3 years. £11 million will initially go towards creating more seating, better waiting areas and refurbished toilets and within the next year, passengers will also be able to access their train further in advance of departure to streamline boarding. A further £10 million will be invested in other stations on the WCML to improve comfort and cleanliness before the end of 2027.
- More stable internet connection along the route through the deployment of low earth orbit satellite technology to secure faster and more reliable wifi and 5G coverage onboard.

Public ownership will end the fragmentation that has contributed to infrastructure issues on the WCML. It will enable closer working between track and train, making it everyone's business to get it right for passengers.

Passengers are already seeing benefits of bringing operators' services into public ownership ahead of the creation of Great British Railways (GBR). On average, publicly owned operators perform better than those still in private hands, fares have been frozen for the first time in 30 years and 76,000 extra seats a week have been introduced on public operator services across the network to create more affordable and comfortable journeys up and down the country.

The government is on track to complete all public ownership transfers by the end of 2027 ahead of setting up Great British Railways (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/great-british-railways>). Once set up, GBR will work in partnership with mayoral strategic authorities to make sure local priorities are factored into decision making, giving communities a more direct say in how the railway they use is run.

AWC's transfer is the latest move to bring local transport under greater public control. Beyond rail, local leaders will have more say on how bus services are run, including decisions on routes, branding, fares and standards so that they can make sure they work for local communities.

This month (September 2026), we announced £86.3 million of funding until 2029 to deliver better bus services for passengers in Liverpool (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-era-for-liverpool-buses-as-government-backs-local-control>), as well as a share of a new one-off £3 million pot to help mayors take control of their services.

This is all part of the plan to put life's essentials back in public hands and support growth in every postcode.

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