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A final call – who are the region’s Cross City Heroes?

The countdown is on to nominate heroic groups from across the West Midlands to receive recognition at local Cross City line stations.

With less than two weeks left for entries into the Cross City Heroes competition (nominations open until 31 March) – West Midlands Railway is calling for even more communities to highlight groups who have made a real difference in their area.

The train operator is looking for nominations from local areas all the way

along the route, from Lichfield in the north, through Birmingham, to Bromsgrove and Redditch in the south.

So far, local Scout groups, animal charities and social groups tackling loneliness in their communities have been nominated as potential recipients of receiving a Cross City Heroes title. The campaign has also seen entries highlighting a local charity which supports neonatal units and a group working with their local library.

Winning groups will receive a plaque of recognition at their local station and a VIP visit to see the new trains for the route being built in Derby. The train operator will also donate 10 free tickets for journeys across the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks, to aid in the winning group's fundraising efforts.

Fay Easton, head of stakeholder and community for West Midlands Railway, said: "It would be fantastic to get a representative group based in the locality of each of our 24 Cross City line stations. The route is such a key part of many communities, and there is so much going on in every one of these areas. If you know of or are part of a group near a Cross City line station, please do make a nomination and get involved."

West Midlands Railway and West Midlands Rail Executive are running the Cross City Heroes competition, to celebrate 40 years of passenger services between Lichfield, Birmingham and Redditch/Bromsgrove. The two organisations want to find deserving community groups near to every local station along the route.

Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of West Midlands Rail Executive and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) portfolio holder for transport, said: "The Cross City line is by far our busiest commuter rail route and now carries more than 55,000 passengers every day. This is due to the significant investment we have put into the route over the years including the extension down to Bromsgrove in July this year which saw the first electric services starting to and from the town.

"We believe local rail lines are an important part of any local community and to mark the Cross City Line's 40th anniversary we wanted to highlight and acknowledge some of the selfless work people in those communities are doing to help others."

Cross City Heroes could be charities, young people's clubs, sports teams or other community groups who make a difference to the lives of people in the area. The competition aims to find those who may not have received the recognition they deserve and would like to hear how they are making an impact to those around them.

The Cross City line has grown to become the busiest commuter route outside of London, and today, West Midlands Railway manages 24 stations along the line.

A group will be selected for each of the 24 West Midlands Railway stations on the route.

Groups can be nominated online at westmidlandsrailway.co.uk/crosscityheroes.

Entries will close on 31 March and winners announced mid April.

You can follow the progress of the campaign on social media at #crosscityheroes

All nominations will be assessed by the West Midlands Railway team, in conjunction with West Midlands Rail Executive.

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For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

List of West Midlands Railway Cross City line stations:

1. Bromsgrove
2. Redditch
3. Alvechurch
- 4.

- Barnt Green
5. Longbridge
6. Northfield
7. Kings Norton
8. Bournville
9. Selly Oak
10. University
11. Five Ways
12. Duddeston
13. Aston
14. Gravelly Hill
15. Erdington
16. Chester Road
17. Wylde Green
18. Sutton Coldfield
19. Four Oaks
20. Butlers Lane
21. Blake Street
22. Shenstone
23. Lichfield City
24. Lichfield Trent Valley

About West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](https://www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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