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West Midlands Trains to give jobseekers a helping hand

West Midlands Trains has welcomed efforts by the UK rail industry to encourage jobseekers to participate in schemes allowing discounted travel to and from interviews and work. The train operator also says it has more plans in the pipeline to help those seeking employment.

As part of the new franchise, West Midlands Trains will be offering jobseekers free travel whilst looking for a job on all its London Northwestern and West Midlands Railway services.

The scheme, due to be introduced by the end of the year, will provide extra support for university graduates and those who have been unemployed for over six months.

Under the new scheme, university graduates or anyone graduating from a higher education equivalent, will be able to claim six free standard return tickets on West Midlands Trains services for travel to and from interviews; and three months' free travel to and from their place of work after securing a job. The same benefits will be available to any person in long-term unemployment.

Currently the rail industry is making efforts to assist people in getting into work. Recent research by the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) has revealed very low levels of use outside of London and the South East of the 'Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card'.

Issued by job centres, this card is offered by all train operators in Britain and gives people claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit a 50 percent discount on rail journeys. Currently, only 28 percent of discounted journeys are made outside London and the South East.

Andy Camp, commercial director at West Midlands Trains, said: "Finding a job can be a very pressured process and the last thing anyone wants is to be worrying about organising travel to and from interviews.

"Our aim with these schemes is to help those who have been out of employment for some time to get back on their feet, and support graduates making their first steps into the world of work.

"Rail travel is essential for a significant number of people travelling to interviews and commuting for work. The breadth of our network and fast links between towns and cities means that taking a train is often the most efficient way to travel. We're hugely proud and excited about being able to support our customers in this way."

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- **1.About the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card:** The card provides discounts of 50% on Anytime Day tickets, Off Peak Day tickets, and Season tickets up to three months in duration. The card is valid on all British train operator services and can be used to purchase tickets online, including [National Rail Enquiries](#), at ticket machines and ticket offices
- **2.Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card - full eligibility:** To be eligible for the discount card, one of the following criteria must be satisfied:
 - i.Claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit AND are aged 18-24 and have been unemployed for 13-39 weeks
 - ii.Claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit AND are 25 or over and have been unemployed for 13-52 weeks
 - iii.Claiming Incapacity Benefit, Employment & Support Allowance or Income Support AND are actively engaged with an advisor in returning to employment

For further information on West Midlands Trains, London Northwestern Railway or West Midlands Railway call our **newsroom** on **03300 955150**.

About West Midlands Trains

West Midlands Trains Ltd. will be running the West Midlands rail franchise from 10 December 2017 until 2025/6. Abellio has a 70.1% share of the company, East Japan Railway Company (JRE) and Mitsui & Co., Ltd. (Mitsui) own the remaining 29.9% in a 50:50 split.

About Abellio

Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. Every day our people provide rail, bus and tram services to 1.7m customers across the UK, Germany and in the Netherlands. In the UK we operate buses through Abellio London, as well as ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, and Merseyrail in a joint venture with Serco. In Germany we operate Abellio Deutschland, serving communities in North Rhine Westfalia, Saxony, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Hesse and Thuringia. Our role in transport extends beyond the journey from a-to-b. With our international heritage and our policy of sharing best practice,

not just amongst ourselves, but across the wider transport industry, we provide thought leadership and truly innovative ideas which make a positive contribution to the communities we serve. For more information on Abellio visit www.abellio.com

About Mitsui

Mitsui is one of the most diversified and comprehensive trading, investment and service enterprises in the world with 139 offices in 66 countries as of March, 2017. Utilising our global operating locations, network and information resources, we are multilaterally pursuing business that ranges from product sales, worldwide logistics and financing, through to the development of major international infrastructure and other projects in the following fields: Iron & Steel Products, Mineral & Metal Resources, Infrastructure Projects, Integrated Transportation Systems, Chemicals, Energy, Food Resources, Food Products & Services, Consumer Services, IT & Communication, and Corporate Development Business. Mitsui is actively taking on challenges for global business innovation around the world. For more information, visit www.mitsui.com.

About JR East

East Japan Railway Company (JR East) was established in 1987, when Japanese National Railways was divided as part of a package of railway reforms. JR East's railway business covers a 7,500 km (approx. 4,660 miles) network in the eastern part of the Japanese main island, including Tokyo Metropolitan area, and provides transportation services, comprising urban, suburban and high speed operations, for 17 million passengers on a daily basis. JR East also undertakes non-transport commercial activities, which account for more than 30% of the total revenue of JR East Group. JR East contributes to passengers and communities it serves by delivering high degrees of punctuality, reliability and comfort and also continues to pursue higher levels of safety and service quality through technical innovation. For more information, visit www.jreast.co.jp/e.

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