



A Class 196 train at Tyseley depot in Birmingham.

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New West Midlands Railway train fleet enters service on Hereford Line

A brand new West Midlands Railway (WMR) train fleet has carried its first passengers on the Hereford Line.

The Class 196 train left Birmingham New Street shortly before 6pm last night (Monday) for its maiden journey to Worcester Shrub Hill. The rollout means the fleet is now serving passengers in new locations including Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Worcester. The start of passenger services on the route follows the fleet's introduction on the Shrewsbury Line in October.

There are a total of 26 trains in the Class 196 fleet, whose features include intelligent air conditioning, plug and USB chargers at every seat and extra storage space. The trains offer 25% more capacity than the fleet they replace.

Jonny Wiseman, WMR customer experience director, said: “I am delighted that even more passengers are now able to take advantage of our newest train fleet with the rollout of the Class 196s onto the Hereford Line.

“With smart air conditioning, power points at every seat and extra space on board, I am certain these trains will prove a hit with our passengers in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.”

The Class 196 is the first new fleet to be introduced to the West Midlands franchise for more than a decade and is part of WMR’s £690m investment in new trains and infrastructure.

Initially a small number of journeys on the Hereford Line will be run by Class 196s as the new trains are drip-fed into service over coming months. The trains are also due to enter service on the Leamington to Nuneaton route later this year, serving communities including Coventry, Kenilworth and Bedworth.

One of the trains in the fleet – 196004 - was officially named “Sir Edward Elgar” by the High Sheriff of Worcestershire Andrew Manning-Cox at a special ceremony last month. The name was chosen by WMR staff to honour the Worcestershire-born composer recognised as one of the greatest Britons of all time.

The first train in passenger service was formed of a pair of two-carriage trains - 196005 and 196006.

For more information visit www.wmr.uk/newtrains

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

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 Main Line to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Snow Hill.

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

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