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Record numbers of rail travellers using passenger assistance

Record numbers of passengers are taking advantage of assisted travel across the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks, new figures have revealed.

The data, published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), shows that last year more than 52,000 people received assistance on their train journey, a rise of more than a third on 2017/18.

The assisted travel schemes run by the operators allow passengers with visual, hearing, mobility or other impairments to book free assistance at the

station.

Jon Harris, integration and accessibility manager at WMR/LNR, said: “Our railway is open for everyone and we are committed to offer help where it is needed, particularly to those with hidden disabilities and those who need more confidence when travelling.

“While these figures are very pleasing we know there is more to do and we have a number of schemes up and running or in progress across our network to do even more to open up our services for every single passenger.”

Among the projects which West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have invested in to improve accessibility across the network include:

- Formed a dedicated Stakeholder Equality Group to advise on improvements
- Developed a disability training package for front line staff
- Carried out an accessibility assessment at every station in our network
- Working with Network Rail on accessibility projects at Lichfield Trent Valley, Tring, Stechford, Smethwick Rolfe Street and Worcester Shrub Hill
- Joint-funded the creation of a ‘Calm Corner’ at Crewe station

Additionally, as part of a year-long partnership with the Alzheimer’s Society, West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway have delivered training to station staff and train crew on assisting passengers with dementia.

For more information on Accessible Travel, including information on booking assistance at station or help purchasing tickets, passengers can visit www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk/accessibility or www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk/accessibility

To find out more about how West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway are focusing on inclusive travel and access for all, or to have your say, email accessibility@wmtrains.co.uk

The ORR 'Measuring Up' report can be found [here](#)

In 2018/19, 52,555 passengers booked assistance using services operated by either West Midlands Railway or London Northwestern Railway. This is a rise of more than a third on the figure of 38,750 passengers in 2017/18 and more than double the figure from five years ago (25,810 in 2013/14).

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or 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 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 or 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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