



Feb 20, 2026 13:05 GMT

West Midlands Railway is named 'Train Operator of the Year' at national awards

West Midlands Railway (WMR) has been awarded the top prize of 'Train Operator of the Year' at the 2026 Rail Business Awards.

The award follows a milestone period for WMR and its sister-brand London Northwestern Railway (LNR), as its £1billion investment into new trains and infrastructure came to fruition.

The sister-brands have introduced three new fleets in recent years, increasing capacity on its services by 40% and improving journeys for more than one million passengers every week.

A key part of this programme includes WMR's introduction of the Class 730/0 electric trains to popular routes such as the Cross City Line – the busiest commuter route outside of London. These spacious trains feature intelligent air conditioning, improved accessibility features and power points at every seat. Since their introduction, customer satisfaction has risen by 19%.

Significant investment has also been made into the company's train depots. Facilities in Birmingham, Coventry, Worcester and Shrewsbury have been modernised, including a £70million investment into Birmingham's Tyseley depot. The enhancements, unveiled by West Midlands Mayor Richard Parker, provide increased capacity and future-proofed equipment to support the new fleets.

Ian McConnell, managing director at WMR, said: "We are extremely proud to win 'Train Operator of the Year'. This award is testament to the hard work of colleagues across our business, who have successfully introduced three new train fleets and futureproofed our train depots, while continuing to keep passengers moving every day.

"It's been a tremendous team effort, so it's fantastic to be recognised for our achievements over the past year. We are committed to keeping up this high standard and continuing to improve, so we can deliver the best possible service for our customers and communities."

The investment programme has driven significant passenger growth. A recent report from the [Office of Rail Road](#) showed a massive 12% year-on-year increase in the number of people using the sister operators' services in the first quarter of 2025/26, equating to more than two million extra journeys.

In total WMR and LNR carried a combined 67.7 million passengers in 2024/25 and this figure is forecast to rise to more than 80 million journeys in 2025/26.

The Rail Business Awards is held in Manchester and run by the Railway Gazette.

About London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway

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

- **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 or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

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