Press Release

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Refurbished Pendolinos return to the rails as part of UK's biggest ever train upgrade

- *First 'as new' train due back in service following transformation*
- *£117m investment set to deliver step change in onboard experience for Avanti West Coast customers*
- *Upgrade will add more than 2,000 extra Standard Class seats*

Avanti West Coast's first refurbished Pendolino has returned to service after being transformed as part of the UK's biggest train upgrade.

The tilting, electric powered Pendolinos, or 'Pendos', are one of the most iconic train fleets in the UK, transforming train travel between some of Britain's biggest cities when introduced nearly two decades ago in July 2002.

Customers onboard Monday's 05:05 Manchester Piccadilly to London service were the first to travel on the upgraded Pendolino. They experienced the new, more comfortable seats, a revamped shop and better on-board customer information.

After reaching London, the refurbished train was due to make a quick round trip to Liverpool before being welcomed into Euston by invited guests and Avanti West Coast colleagues. It will visit other destinations such as Birmingham, the Lakes, Glasgow and Edinburgh during its normal course of work.

Rail Minister Wendy Morton said: "The iconic Pendolino is back and better than ever before. This refurbished version of the classic fleet is a fantastic example of our cutting-edge rail network and how our railways are leading the way in creating a cleaner, more environmentally friendly and modern transport system."

The £117m upgrade programme was two years in the making and involved experts in technology, customer information and ergonomics. Customer improvements include:

- 25,000 new, ergonomic Standard Class seats;
- Conversion of one First Class carriage on each of the 35 eleven-carriage Pendolinos to provide more than 2,000 extra Standard Class seats;
- The introduction of a new onboard shop;
- Improved lighting and new interior carpets;
- Greater use of technology with customer-friendly passenger information screens;
- Additional luggage space in Standard Class;
- Power points at every seat;
- New carpets throughout using sustainable British wool;

- Refurbished toilets and
- New First and Standard Premium seats

Widely regarded as the UK's hardest working train fleet, the Pendolinos have served towns and cities along the West Coast Main Line for close to 20 years, clocking up more than 270 million miles – enough to go to the moon and back more than 500 times.

Managing Director of Avanti West Coast, Phil Whittingham, said: "This investment has been one of the key promises to our customers and they will see a dramatic transformation of our well-loved fleet. The refurbished Pendolinos look and feel like new trains with state of the art technology as well as brand new seats that promise best-in-class comfort."

The remaining 55 trains are to receive the same treatment as part of the £117m programme with the second set due back in service early next month. Rail manufacturer Alstom is undertaking the work at their new depot in Widnes in the North West, helping to secure 100 skilled jobs.

Peter Broadley, Managing Director Services, Alstom said: "We are delighted with the launch of the newly modernised Pendolino. Working closely with our partners at Avanti West Coast and Angel Trains, we have created something truly special for the customers travelling on the West Coast Mainline. Our team at Widnes have created something amazing and we are incredibly proud of the final product. We hope it secures the future of the Pendolinos on the West Coast for many years to come".

The upgrade programme will run until 2024 when the last of the 56 strong fleet is expected to leave Widnes.

UK suppliers are benefitting from 80% of the £117m investment, which is financed by Angel Trains, one of the UK's leading train Asset Management companies.

Malcolm Brown, CEO of Angel Trains, said: "We are delighted to see the first of our new refurbished Pendolino trains re-enter passenger service. As one of the UK's most iconic fleets, this project demonstrates how, through sustainable methods, existing trains can be renovated to provide a top-tier passenger experience. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with our industry partners to deliver a fast, comfortable, and low carbon mode of transport for passengers on the West Coast Mainline."

The investment in the Pendolino fleet is just part of the changes taking place on the West Coast route. The ground-breaking Standard Premium has already been introduced, as has at-seat ordering for customers in Standard or Standard Premium, as well as an upgraded

menu and bespoke service for passengers in First. A brand-new fleet of Hitachi trains will replace the diesel Voyagers from 2023.

Ends

Editors Notes

- The Pendolino fleet was launched in 2002/03 and has clocked up over 272 million miles in service along the West Coast route.
- Train number 390125, the first to enter the refurbishment programme, has travelled over 5.1 million miles.
- A refurbished 11 carriage Pendolino will have 607 seats. 508 will be in Standard Class, up from the current 444 (an increase of 9.6%). The remaining 99 will be split across First and Standard Premium.

About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel, linking together the towns and major cities of the UK to create an iconic railway the country can be proud of. We've got big plans including a fleet of new intercity trains, as well as the complete refurbishment of the existing Pendolino train fleet. We will introduce more train services every week with new routes added, and a much-improved onboard service with enhanced free Wi-Fi, plug sockets, 25,000 brand new seats and improved catering. Since December 2019, passengers have benefitted from improved passenger compensation, available for journeys delayed by just 15 minutes.

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https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/

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