Press Release

24 April 2026

Free exhibition train celebrating UK's railways set to pull into Stockport next week

- *One week until Avanti West Coast hosts exhibition train, Inspiration, at Stockport*
- *Inspiration is a mobile museum created to mark 200 years of modern railway*
- *Free, family-friendly activity offers visitors chance to discover history, innovation milestones and careers in rail onboard*

Avanti West Coast is set to welcome a unique exhibition train at Stockport station next week as part of celebrations to mark 200 years of the UK's railways.

Named *Inspiration,* the exhibition train, co-curated by the National Railway Museum and Network Rail, will pull into platform 0 from Friday 1 until Wednesday 6 May giving people the opportunity to learn about the past, present and future of rail.

The free attraction is part of a campaign to mark the industry anniversary known as Railway 200. It will offer visitors the chance to come onboard to experience a series of four exhibitions set across different carriages.

Designed to showcase the history, innovations and careers of the railway, *Inspiration*, features interactive displays as well as activities for people of all ages.

Inspiration reveals how railways shaped the UK – and ultimately the world. It includes a fascinating look at railway firsts, hands-on engineering challenges and a whistle stop tour of some of the interesting, and lesser-known, careers available on the railways.

The train's visit to Stockport will be hosted by Avanti West Coast, who manage the station. It will be stop number 52 on its tour of the UK, which formed part of the Railway 200 celebrations in 2025 and is due to end in June 2026.

Local railway groups and organisations will showcase nearby rail attractions, while musicians will perform songs linked to the station's underpass art installation, which celebrates the town's music scene.

From Saturday 2 – Monday 4 May, guided tours by Stockport Music Story – a project which documents Stockport's musical history – will take visitors around sites that played an important role in the development of the town's musical legacy.

Record producer and rail enthusiast, Pete Waterman, and his team of rail fans, Railnuts, will join the weekend's events by displaying the latest addition to their record-breaking model railway – a tiny version of *Inspiration*.

Lisa Musgrave, Avanti West Coast Station Manager at Stockport, said: "It's great to be hosting this special train at Stockport as part of its tour to highlight the station's role in connecting people and places. We're joining the community to celebrate 200 years of the railways and look to the future, showcasing its importance in Stockport, and across the UK.

"The train's visit promises to be an exciting event, and we cannot wait to welcome people. We hope to inspire a passion for rail among the next generation, so our railways continue to thrive for years to come."

Emma Roberts, Programme Manager for Railway 200, said: "*Inspiration* is coming to Stockport over the Bank Holiday weekend – and it's shaping up to be a really special stop.

"Not only can locals visit our free, one-of-a-kind exhibition train they can also enjoy music, tours, and Pete Waterman OBE's record-breaking model railway. We look forward to welcoming you aboard!"

Tickets are still available to book here.

ENDS

About Railway 200

2025 marked the 200th anniversary of the modern railway, inspired by the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825, a journey that changed the world forever. Under the banner of Railway 200, nationwide celebrations took place throughout 2025, showcasing how the railway shaped Britain and the world and how its pioneering pedigree continues today and is shaping tomorrow. The Railway 200 exhibition train *Inspiration* tours until June 2026.

Railway 200

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. Avanti West Coast serves key UK cities, including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow as well as North Wales.

WEST COAST PARTNERSHIP

AVANTI WEST COAST

We're on a mission to be the transport of choice – connecting customers and communities along the West Coast. Our award-winning Pendolino refurbishment programme transformed the UK's hardest working fleet with all 56 of the iconic trains providing best-in-class comfort.

Our Evero fleet, which offers more seats, improved comfort, and a substantial cut to carbon emissions, was introduced in June 2024 and is the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel. Built by Hitachi, the 23-strong fleet, consisting of 10 seven-carriage electric trains and 13 five-carriage bi-modes, serves routes from London to the Midlands, Chester, North Wales and the North West.

We want to make a positive difference to the people and places we serve – helping to drive economic growth, green travel, and break down barriers. Our efforts to contribute to society and enable people to benefit from the opportunities rail offers through purpose-led initiatives including Feel Good Field Trips and award-winning female driver recruitment campaign has seen us create over £1billion in social value impact.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

For the latest news, visit the Avanti West Coast Media Centre: https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/

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