

# Press Release

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## Avanti West Coast recognised for improving train service performance at industry awards

- *Avanti West Coast recognised for improved reliability at Golden Whistle Awards*
- *Collaborative work with industry partners helps deliver more reliable service*
- *Operations Delivery Manager, James Dobson, named Outstanding Individual*

Avanti West Coast has been recognised for delivering a more reliable train service at the Golden Whistle Awards.

The intercity operator received a Silver Whistle, awarded to the most improved, in the 'Minimising Cancellations – Long Distance' category at the ceremony, which celebrates operational excellence across the UK rail industry.

Judged from industry-compiled data, the 'Minimising Cancellations' award analysed the average number of cancellations in the 12 months leading up to 6 December 2025.

Avanti West Coast was the most improved amongst all UK long distance train operators – with the average number of cancellations decreasing to 5.2 percent – a reduction of over 2 percent on the previous year.

To deliver a more reliable service, Avanti's fleet team have worked more closely with Alstom, who maintain the operator's trains, to identify issues earlier and focus repairs on the systems which most impact performance.

Avanti West Coast continues to work with Network Rail, who are responsible for railway infrastructure, to deliver improvements across the entire route. This includes its Joint Performance Strategy, which is a collaborative approach designed to identify, and tackle causes of delay to improve reliability and punctuality on the West Coast Main Line.

Recently, the train operator began trialling a timetable optimisation tool to boost train service reliability and improve the customer experience during unplanned disruption.

Avanti West Coast's Operations Delivery Manager, James Dobson, was also presented with a special award for his role in organising The Greatest Gathering – a three-day event at Alstom's Derby factory that saw over 70 modern and historic trains, including Avanti's Pride Pendolino, on public display.

James was honoured with the 'Outstanding Individual' Golden Whistle award in recognition of his efforts to deliver the largest gathering of trains to celebrate the industry's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary known as Railway 200.

Chris Liptrot, Operations Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "This recognition is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our operational colleagues, whose tireless work – alongside our industry partners, particularly Network Rail and Alstom – has delivered meaningful improvements in performance. It reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering operational excellence and providing the level of service our customers rightly expect and deserve.

"A huge congratulations also to James for being honoured for his contribution to The Greatest Gathering. His leadership was instrumental in bringing the event to life and creating a memorable legacy as part of the wider Railway 200 celebrations."

Speaking about his recognition, James said: "I'm honoured to be recognised as part of the Avanti West Coast operations team, and even more so to receive my own award. It was a huge surprise and I'm totally overjoyed!

"I want to pay tribute to the efforts of my fellow operational colleagues who work tremendously hard each day. It is a pleasure to be a part of those teams and contribute to their success. Both awards reflect the effort of many people behind the scenes, notably those with The Greatest Gathering who helped make the event such a success. It was just brilliant and I'm very proud of what we achieved together".

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### 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.

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.

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

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