Press Release

17 June 2025

Avanti West Coast recognised for contribution to rail safety

- *Avanti West Coast recognised for efforts to help young people stay safe on railway*
- *Networking event brings industry partners together for Rail Safety Week*
- *Train operator extends partnership with Rail Safe Friendly Programme*

Avanti West Coast has been recognised for its efforts to educate young people about the dangers of trespass as part of a rail safety initiative which it joined last year.

The intercity operator was presented with a gold disc to acknowledge its contribution to the Rail Safe Friendly Programme – a scheme dedicated to spreading the vital message of rail safety throughout schools in the UK.

Since partnering with Learn Live (a virtual education platform) on the programme in 2024, Avanti West Coast has enabled 181 schools local to its route to access essential knowledge about staying safe on the railway.

The presentation took place at Crewe station as part of a networking event organised by Learn Live and hosted by Avanti West Coast to mark Rail Safety Week – an industry wide and industry led initiative that aims to bring rail safety to the forefront of people's minds.

Bringing together partners from across the industry and those local to Crewe, the event provided an opportunity to connect, learn what has been delivered as part of the programme and how they can get involved.

Launched in 2023, the project is designed to provide children with crucial rail safety education – helping them to recognise potential hazards in their surroundings. It was inspired by the words of Liz Ballantyne who lost her 11-year-old son, Harrison after he was electrocuted by overhead power lines while attempting to retrieve a football in a rail freight depot. Learn Live aims to have every school in the UK enrolled on the Rail Safe Friendly Programme by 2027.

Avanti West Coast has also extended its partnership with Learn Live for another year to engage more schools on the topic.

Andy Mellors, Managing Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "Every child should be aware of how to keep themselves safe on the railway and through our partnership with Learn Live we know how important it is for children to have access to vital rail safety knowledge.

So, to join industry partners to discuss how we can provide further education around this topic as part of the Rail Safe Friendly Programme has been brilliant.

"We're pleased to be supporting this great initiative for another year, so we can continue to make a positive impact on young people in the communities we serve."

Stuart Heaton, Founder of the Rail Safe Friendly Programme, said: "Our partnership with Avanti West Coast has been instrumental in expanding the reach of the Rail Safe Friendly Programme, helping us to educate more young people about crucial rail safety. This collaboration is vital as we work towards our goal of enrolling every school in the UK on the programme by 2027, ultimately saving lives through awareness and education."

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About Rail Safe Friendly

Rail Safe Friendly is a programme run by Learn Live, launched in March 2023, to educate young people about the dangers of trespassing on railways. The programme delivers rail safety content directly to schools via the Learn Live Channel, offering both live and on demand sessions. Schools can achieve Bronze, Silver, or Gold status by engaging with the content and promoting safety within their communities. More information can be found at railsafefriendly.com

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. Our refurbed Pendolinos returned to the rails in June 2024 following a £117m investment programme that's delivered the best in class comfort. Known as the UK's hardest working fleet, all 56 of these iconic trains have been transformed and now boast better seats, improved lighting, new interior carpets, customer-friendly passenger information screens, additional luggage space, power points at every seat and refurbished toilets.

Our new Evero fleet was introduced in June 2024. Built by Hitachi, the 23-strong fleet, consisting of 10 seven-carriage electric trains and 13 five-carriage bi-modes, will serve routes from London to the Midlands, Chester, North Wales and the North West, leading to a substantial cut in carbon emissions with an increase in seats, and offering improved comfort. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, these new trains are the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel.

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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