Press Release

23 July 2024

Avanti West Coast boosts recycling rates at stations with waste segregation officers

- *Avanti West Coast's Waste Segregation Officer role saves hundreds of tonnes of recyclables*
- *Role designed to maximise natural value of materials disposed at stations*
- *Separating waste on site supports train operator's efforts to improve recycling rate*

Avanti West Coast has prevented nearly 500 tonnes of recyclables from going to waste since introducing Waste Segregation Officers at its stations a year ago.

Over the course of 12 months, 494 tonnes of materials including metal, paper, glass, and plastic disposed of at four stations on the West Coast Main Line were sorted as part of the train operator's recycling initiative, which is delivered in partnership with waste management company, SWRnewstar.

Around the equivalent weight of a Pendolino (the iconic train of the west coast), the recyclables recovered meant 54 percent of waste disposed of could be transformed into raw materials for new products.

The segregation officer role, which supports part of the intercity operator's sustainability strategy, was first introduced at Crewe station to maximise the amount of waste materials being recycled. Following a successful trial that saw recycling rates increase from 20 percent to nearly 60 percent, the role was introduced at Birmingham International, Carlisle, and Stafford.

Based at the station, the segregation officer is responsible for separating waste from customer bins, staff areas, and tenants – ensuring items are properly sorted for recycling.

Waste is categorised into dry mixed recycling, food, glass, and general waste before being collected and sent to a materials recovery facility – where the items are processed for use as raw materials.

Coffee cups have recently begun to be segregated at all four locations to further increase recycling rates – with around 30,000 collected every two weeks.

Birmingham International, Carlisle, Crewe, and Stafford were selected by Avanti West Coast and SWRnewstar as locations to host a segregation officer to target places with a high volume of waste and low levels of recycling to improve rates.

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In May 2024, Birmingham International station achieved the highest recycling rate of 71 percent of all four stations - an increase from 31 percent in May 2023 when the Waste Segregation Officer role was introduced.

By sorting waste on site, it helps prevent contamination of materials and enables more waste to be separated manually. This approach supports Avanti West Coast's efforts to maximise recycling – with the aim to reduce, reuse or recycle 60 percent of waste at its 16 managed stations by March 2025.

Between April 2023 and April 2024, the intercity operator maintained its commitment of zero waste to landfill. Its focus is now on improving its recycling performance.

The Waste Segregation Officer role is set to be rolled out further – with three more stations set to benefit from the dedicated resource by March 2025.

Melanie Hockenhull, Head of Sustainability at Avanti West Coast, said: "We're committed to reducing our impact on the environment and recycling is a key activity to help achieve this.

"Working with SWRnewstar to have Waste Segregation Officers in place at our stations is the most impactful way we can improve our recycling rates. We're already seeing great results from their work – with more waste items being transformed into raw materials. We want to build on this by introducing this role at more locations, so we can better maximise the recovery of recyclable items and continue to drive sustainability improvements across the west coast."

George Tilley, Corporate Account Manager at SWRnewstar, said: "Avanti West Coast have proven that through targeted investment, and a collaborative partnership with their waste service provider they're able to improve their recycling rates even in the most challenging of environments. It's been a pleasure to work with Avanti on the segregation initiative, and we look forward to expanding the service offering at further locations across the estate."

For more information about initiatives and results of Avanti West Coast's sustainable development strategy, read the latest Sustainability Report here: Sustainability | Green Rail Travel | Avanti West Coast

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About SWRnewstar

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SWRnewstar is one of the UK's largest and fastest growing waste management companies. In December 2017 Specialist Waste Recycling and New Star Environmental joined forces to become SWRnewstar. This exciting merger provides unrivalled expertise across the Automotive & Logistics, Hospitality, Property Management, Grocery, Retail – Food, Retail – Non Food and Healthcare sectors.

SWRnewstar's approach identifies and delivers optimal waste solutions for our customers. We focus on recycling-led waste carriers for the best levels of services and latest recycling solutions.

SWRnewstar - Waste Management Company | SWRnewstar

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 have returned to the rails with a £117m investment that's delivering the best in class comfort. Known as the UK's hardest working fleet, the programme is transforming all 56 of these iconic trains boasting 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 and will replace our Voyagers. 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.

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

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