Press Release

12 March 2024

Avanti West Coast teams up with Alstom and Angel Trains to showcase careers for women

- *West Coast operator joined forces with Alstom and Angel Trains to celebrate International Women's Day*
- *Local school enjoys interactive day at Avanti West Coast stations and Alstom's Longsight depot*
- *Activities aimed at Year 7 and 8 pupils and encouraging them to pursue a career in rail or science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).*

Avanti West Coast has teamed up with rail manufacturer Alstom and rolling stock company Angel Trains to showcase the diverse range of roles and careers available to women in the rail industry.

Held on International Women's Day (Friday 8 March) 20 pupils between the ages of 11 and 13 from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent travelled from the Staffordshire city with Avanti West Coast to Stockport, where they went to visit Alstom's Longsight depot.

Known as the Manchester Traincare Centre, the facility can accommodate almost 300 rail vehicles at one time – making it one of the biggest of its kind in the UK – and employs almost 300 members of staff.

There pupils enjoyed learning about female rail pioneers on the train journey itself and also spent time shadowing two female Avanti West Coast Station Managers, who oversee Stoke-on-Trent and Stockport railway stations respectively.

Laura Warwick, Station Manager for Avanti West Coast said: "This visit is all about inspiring the next generation of railway workers, whilst at the same time continuing to challenge the stereotype around gender bias. I'm incredibly proud to say I work for the railway. As an industry we've made great strides in recent years. But there's more that needs to be done to encourage more women to actively pursue a career on the railway.

"Hopefully today will have given these school pupils a bit of feel for just some of the roles and opportunities open to them."

Avanti West Coast supported the event through its Feel Good Field Trips initiative, which gives pupils aged between four and 18 the chance to travel up and down the West Coast Main Line for hands-on learning, fun and culturally diverse days out.The visit was also part

of Alstom's wider national initiative for International Women's Day – InspiHer – which saw 25 of its UK sites open its doors to female students in Years 7 and 8, with the aim of inspiring them to pursue a career in rail or science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

During the visit pupils were able to design and build a model using a 3D scanner, operate a Lean-Lift to find hidden items and experience maintenance work taking place on a Pendolino – the same type of train the pupils had travelled between Stoke-on-Trent and Stockport on. The Avanti West Coast service the pupils travelled on as part of the event was driven by female colleague, furthering showcasing the potential career options available to women in rail.

Linda Dennis, Information Systems and Technology Business Partner UK and Ireland at Alstom said: "It has been truly inspiring to spend the day with students from Co-op Academy Stoke-on-Trent, who impressed us with their curiosity, enthusiasm and potential. Witnessing their engagement with various aspects of the rail industry and seeing their passion for learning about STEM careers reaffirms the importance of initiatives like InspiHer in nurturing the next generation of diverse talent.

"We know that there's still work to be done in breaking down the stereotype that the rail sector is predominantly a career for men. However, my experience has shown me that talent knows no gender and the contributions of women in the rail sector are invaluable. Together, we must continue to challenge outdated perceptions and create a more inclusive industry for all."

Aamina Shah, Systems Engineer at Angel Trains added: "It was fantastic to celebrate International Women's Day by getting to interact with enthusiastic students as they learnt about different careers and technology in rail, and as they shared their experiences of travelling on a Pendolino."

Historically, Avanti West Coast, Alstom, and Angel Trains have worked in close collaboration with one another. They are currently completing the UK's largest ever train refurbishment project; a £127 million upgrade of the 56-strong Pendolino electric fleet at Alstom's Widnes depot.

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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.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel. Our refurbed Pendolinos are returning to the rails, with a £117m investment that's delivering best in class comfort. Rebuilt using sustainable materials wherever possible, including tables made from recycled plastic bottles, our upgraded fleet offers 25,000 brand new seats, free Wi-Fi, onboard recycling and much more.

New Hitachi trains are set to replace our Voyager trains from 2024, leading to a 61% cut in carbon emissions. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, the new 23-strong fleet is 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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