

News story: All aboard the new Intercity Express trains that will transform journeys across Britain

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling hailed the start of a new era in rail passenger services when he travelled on the first of the new fleet of £5.7 billion Intercity Express trains from Bristol Temple Meads to London Paddington today (16 October 2017), joined by Great Western Railway (GWR) bosses and commuters.

The fleet, which is being built at Hitachi Rail Europe's manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe in County Durham, will be rolled out across the Great Western and East Coast lines over the next 3 years. The manufacturing facility at Newton Aycliffe has created more than 700 new direct jobs and more at depots across the routes, as well as supporting the UK supply chain. And more than 70% of the parts sourced for building the trains at the facility come from UK suppliers.

Tim Bowles, West of England Mayor, Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport and Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales at Paddington.

Today's launch is the beginning of a huge change for passengers that will deliver more than 4,000 extra seats into London Paddington in the morning peak from 2018, and more than 12,000 extra seats into London Kings Cross by the end of 2020.

Jobs and skills

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

This government is investing record amounts to modernise Britain's rail network and give passengers the faster, more comfortable trains and the better journeys that they expect.

These new state-of-the-art trains show our commitment to put passengers at the heart of everything that we do and will carry people across Britain, from Swansea to Aberdeen and London to Inverness.

Our railways are a huge success but passengers rightly expect improved services and better trains – and only last week I announced another [£48 billion for the network from 2019](#) that will focus on better maintenance to dramatically improve reliability.

I'm pleased to be on the very first of these brand new trains to welcome them into action.

GWR Managing Director Mark Hopwood said:

Today, we at GWR are once again making history, as we launch the first new Intercity Express Train in almost 40 years – and continue our journey to revalue rail in the hearts and minds of the travelling public.

I am delighted to have this first train in passenger service. Over the next year we will continue to expand the operation of these new trains, including the introduction of another fleet specific to Devon and Cornwall.

The new trains, alongside our new Electrostar fleet for London and the Thames Valley, will bring about a step change in passenger transport – delivering more seats, and enabling us to operate more frequent and faster services.

The new trains are a renewal of the ageing Intercity 125 fleet, which was first introduced in 1976, and they will go on to replace fleets across the country. The government-led Intercity Express Programme (IEP), funded by Agility Trains, has brought together Hitachi Rail, GWR, Virgin Trains East Coast and Network Rail to design, develop and build the new class of state-of-the-art, modern trains and supporting depot infrastructure for the Great Western and East Coast routes.

Karen Boswell, Managing Director, Hitachi Rail Europe, said:

We, at Hitachi Rail, are really proud to have built trains in the UK, designed using Japanese bullet train technology, that are improving passengers' journeys on the Great Western route.

Nine years of hard work has gone into making today happen, from creating a brand new factory and workforce, to establishing modern maintenance facilities from Swansea to London. We've delivered pioneering 21st century trains for passengers to enjoy and sparked a manufacturing renaissance in the north-east.

[New intercity express trains](#)

The first services of the 57 new Class 800 Hitachi trains are being introduced from now into 2018 and will mark the start of the biggest fleet upgrade in a generation for GWR as the InterCity 125 fleet is replaced. Once completed in 2018, trains will then be introduced on the East Coast Mainline.

Agility Trains is working in partnership with the Department for Transport to develop the IEP. Agility Trains West, which is funding the fleet entering service with GWR, is made up of Hitachi Rail Europe, John Laing Group and John Laing Infrastructure Fund.