

[News story: Grayling: West Coast Partnership to lay foundation for high speed future](#)

Improved accessibility, simpler fares and improved compensation are among the benefits passengers on the West Coast will receive under a new operator over the next decade, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling [announced today](#) (27 March 2018).

As companies are today [invited to bid to run the new West Coast Partnership](#), the Transport Secretary unveiled a new vision that could see HS2 become a fully integrated railway, with a single organisation running all aspects of the service – the tickets, trains, maintaining the track and other infrastructure like signalling – ensuring a single joined-up team will deliver the best possible passenger service.

The successful bidder for the West Coast Partnership will drive improvements on the current services on the existing West Coast line but also oversee the introduction of HS2 services from 2026 and work with the department and HS2 to consider the options for the future.

Bidders for the West Coast Partnership have been [challenged to innovate to improve the experience for passengers](#) on this highly successful railway. As a minimum, West Coast passengers will benefit from improved accessibility, simpler fares and modern ticketing, as well as improved compensation – with passengers on the route eligible to receive money back for delays of just 15 minutes.

[West Coast Partnership video](#)

The successful bidder will operate the West Coast service until 2031 and work closely with the government and HS2 Ltd to shape the future high-speed service, as well as running the first high-speed services from 2026. Given the scale of the interaction between InterCity West Coast services and HS2, this will ensure that these projects are effectively coordinated with the passenger at the heart of all decision making.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are investing in the biggest modernisation programme of our network since Victorian times, delivering what passengers want to see and changing the way our railways are run to ensure they are focused on delivering the best possible service.

The new West Coast Partnership will deliver immediate benefits to passengers and pave the way for the seamless introduction of HS2, with one operator responsible for all aspects of the journey, designed to deliver the best-possible passenger service.

I want HS2 to become a strong British organisation, potentially capable of not just building, but also operating a successful railway – a beacon for other countries to aspire to, both in terms of the engineering project to build it and the service it will offer to passengers, which we will introduce on the West Coast Partnership.