



## HALF PRICE TRAVEL FOR MORE YOUNG PEOPLE

Apprentices and trainees aged 18 or under are to get half price travel on the region's bus and tram network as part of an initiative to help them stay on the career ladder.

The deal will see an extra 31,000 young people in the West Midlands enjoy the 50 per cent discount. Only those aged between 16 and 18 and in full-time education are eligible for half price travel at present but this will now be extended to those on apprenticeships or traineeships. It is also hoped to have an agreement

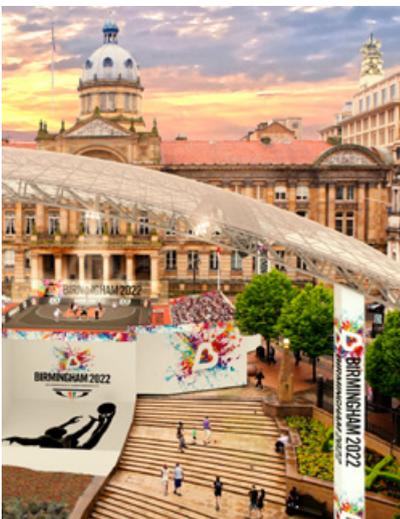
in place to extend the half price scheme to local train services by the time the scheme goes live in a few weeks' time.

The deal, which will run on a trial basis for 12 months, underpins a pledge by Mayor Andy Street to support young people in their efforts to gain employment and training. Andy Street said: 'Young apprentices and trainees are often some of the lowest paid employees so being charged the full fare to travel can take a huge chunk out of their

wages. It may also be a contributing factor in why some drop out before completing their apprenticeships and that is a shame.'

'Not only does that hurt their own future, it also hurts the future prosperity of our region because it's critical our young people are equipped with the skills needed to fill the jobs being created here. We hope this scheme will make it easier for them to overcome barriers and continue on their chosen career path.'

## COMMONWEALTH GAMES ONE STEP CLOSER



Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street has welcomed the decision to make Birmingham the UK's candidate city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The city saw off a challenge from Liverpool to win the backing of the government which will now examine the final bid proposal before it formally goes before the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Andy Street said: 'The way the region has come together to get behind

Birmingham's bid is unlike anything we have ever seen.'

The Mayor said the regional support of the wider Midlands had been a key determining factor and thanked regional agencies and organisations that had worked hard over the last six months to bring the bid together.

'We will make the Commonwealth proud,' he added. 'The next round is the international round, and we go into that race with both momentum and optimism.'



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## PEOPLE AND PROJECTS

### IS THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR YOU?



The Queen's award for enterprise recognises outstanding achievement amongst UK businesses in the fields of innovation, international trade, sustainable development and promoting opportunity through social mobility.

Recognised as the most prestigious business awards in the UK, they were first established in 1966 and since then 6,876 companies have been awarded.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce is currently encouraging local businesses to enter the award scheme and use it as a catalyst for further business improvement.

The awards for enterprise are open to applications from almost all businesses of all kinds of sizes and sectors.

If this sounds like it may work for you or your company, come along to a free briefing event to find out more on Tuesday 31st October 2017 between 09:30am and 12:00pm at Black Country Chamber of Commerce Creative Industries Centre, University of Wolverhampton Science Park, Glaisher Drive, Wolverhampton, WV10 9TG.

Come and discover how a Queen's award could benefit your business!

Register at [blackcountrychamber.co.uk](http://blackcountrychamber.co.uk) and visit [gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise](http://gov.uk/queens-awards-for-enterprise) for more.

### NEW SCREEN FUND FOR WEST MIDLANDS



Andy Street has announced a new £2.1m production fund which will be an integral part of his vision for creative and technology industries across the region.

Vice President of Facebook EMEA and Creative Industries Council Chair, Nicola Mendelsohn CBE, also unveiled the national Creative Industries Toolkit at an event hosted by the West Midlands Combined Authority and Creative Industries Council.

The formation of the West Midlands Screen Bureau is a new initiative to help galvanise the region's film, TV and digital production sectors by increasing partnership working between industry leaders and production agencies.

During the event, which took place at Birmingham City University, the Mayor presented delegates with an exclusive short film, produced to showcase the West Midlands' strong track record in the creative sectors.

Peaky Blinders, Notes on Blindness, The Girl With All The Gifts and The Call Up are just some of the recent major productions set in the West Midlands.

## WEST MIDLANDS RAIL BRINGS £1 BILLION IMPROVEMENTS



Big improvements to rail travel in the West Midlands are envisaged after the new local rail franchise was announced.

West Midlands Rail will take over the current London Midland franchise by the end of this year. Passengers will enjoy more frequent services with new trains and extra seats as a result of £1 billion of improvements with nearly 200 new carriages entering service by 2019 with more to follow after.

Trains running in the West Midlands will now be jointly managed by the Department for Transport (DfT) and West Midlands Rail (WMR), a consortium of 16 local councils and the WMCA.

Mayor Andy Street said: 'We want to see a new golden era for our local trains. Having the ability to use our local knowledge and understanding to shape what the new operator will deliver for passengers and businesses has been a real game changer.'

'When it comes to our local train services we have not had this level of local influence and management before and it fits with the wider powers and responsibilities currently being transferred from Whitehall to the West Midlands.'

While demand for rail in the UK has doubled over the past 20 years, on West Midlands routes it has nearly quadrupled with more than 80 million passengers now using the network every year.

## HS2 ARCHITECTS SHORTLISTED



Two of the UK's most celebrated architects are amongst five shortlisted to work on the two HS2 stations to be built in the West Midlands.

Both Norman Foster, famed for Heathrow Terminal 5 and the Lloyds of London building, and Gherkin-designer Richard Rogers are among five major

Secretary of State Chris Grayling said: 'The new franchise is part of wider government plans to transform rail travel across the Midlands. As a commitment to provide local accountability, services will be jointly managed by the Department for Transport and West Midlands Rail.'

Improvements include:

- 20,000 extra seats on rush hour services into and out of Birmingham
- 50,000 standing places for Birmingham commuters in 100 new Metro-style carriages on the Cross City line
- 80 new carriages on the Snow Hill line
- Compensation if passengers are delayed by more than 15 minutes
- Free WiFi on all main line services by the end of 2019
- Roll out of smart ticketing and live passenger information
- Trains branded in new purple, yellow and white West Midlands Railway livery
- 800 new digital information screens across 150 stations
- £70 million investment in depots
- £60 million for station upgrades with more parking, cycle racks and waiting facilities.

architects shortlisted to design Birmingham Curzon and Birmingham Interchange.

The other shortlisted architects for the two projects are Nicholas Grimshaw, Spanish practice Idom, and Wilkinson Eyre, designers of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge.

Laura Kidd, head of architecture at HS2, said: 'HS2 is looking for creative and innovative designers to seize the opportunity of designing stations that will inspire and deliver a lasting legacy.'

The designs for the new stations will be chosen in 2020 with construction beginning shortly afterwards. Phase one of HS2, between London Euston and Birmingham Curzon, is due to open in 2026 with phase two to Yorkshire and the North West following by 2033.

## MORE FOR YOU

### LEADERSHIP TEAM TAKES SHAPE



New permanent WMCA chief executive Deborah Cadman starts this month as the organisation also appoints Julia Goldsworthy as its new director of strategy.

With the new leadership team almost in place, Mayor Andy Street said he is excited for the future of the organisation and the region.

Andy said: 'This is a fresh start for our leadership team who bring with them new ideas and expertise to our organisation.'

New director of strategy Julia Goldsworthy added: 'Devolution on the ambitious scale we are seeking will have far reaching implications for the region. There are exciting opportunities ahead for the West Midlands and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to play a part in ensuring we make the most of those opportunities.'

Finance director Sean Pearce also joins the WMCA from Worcestershire County Council next month.

### MENTORS OFF TO FLYING START



Mayor's Mentors – the programme to match 1000 young people across the West Midlands with expert support and guidance from local leaders – has got off to a flying start.

Launched in June, the programme has already recruited more than 1000 people to support local young people in their professional development.

Mayor Andy Street said: 'Mayor's Mentors is a fantastic way for people to get involved in transforming the lives of young people in the West Midlands and boosting pride in our region.'

'If you have been successful in your career and you want to help young people just starting out, retraining or moving into new work, you can make a difference by becoming a Mayor's Mentor.'

Mentors typically meet with a young person, either face to face or virtually, once or twice a month for an hour to discuss the young person's studies and career opportunities. For more details, visit [wmca.org.uk/mayors-mentors](https://wmca.org.uk/mayors-mentors)

### BABY ON BOARD

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has launched its own 'Baby on Board' campaign to help expectant mums find seats on rush-hour trains, buses or trams.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the need for new mums to be while also equipping the mums themselves with badges to show other passengers they may need help finding a seat on busy public transport.

Details of the scheme and how to apply for a badge can be found at [www.networkwm.co.uk/babyonboard](http://www.networkwm.co.uk/babyonboard)

