

Avanti West Coast - summer holiday service reductions which disproportionately affect Rugby

The summer train timetable starts today, 17th May. Rugby Rail Users Group (RRUG) has been shocked to be notified by Avanti West Coast that services will be cut over the summer holiday period - from Monday 20 July to Friday 28 August. This change, on behalf of the DfT, has been made without any consultation. It is a retrograde step which has a disproportionately bad impact on Rugby.

Since the pandemic, Avanti have been telling us how they have been restoring train services so that the full timetable could be run. This has given us a predictable hourly timetable which makes it comprehensible to passengers. Avanti has just announced that it will cut 10% of services on weekdays over the high peak summer period, which reverses the progress that they have made.

We have analysed the list of trains that are being cut from the timetable, and the impact on Rugby specifically is far higher than 10%. Our analysis (see below) is that between 21% and 32% of trains are being cancelled, depending upon which destination is chosen. No alternatives, such as additional calls by other trains, have been provided by Avanti.

Avanti states that there will be no impact on passengers as "the cancelled trains have not yet been retailed" - by which they mean that no specific advance tickets have been sold. However, many passengers use other ticket types - anytime, day returns, season tickets, so this is not a correct statement.

Avanti also states that they have no shortage of staff or trains, so the savings from these cancellations are questionable - and they further state that the cancelled services could be reinstated at any time, so this is not a resource constraint.

In summary, we think that this change will reduce the attractiveness of the train service, and of Rugby as a place. Reliable regular hourly public transport service patterns have transformed the train service at Rugby, and for this to be suspended is a retrograde step. We are also concerned that this may be the start of wider service cutting.

RRUG analysis of proposed train cancellations for the high summer period

AVANTI TRAIN CANCELLATIONS AT RUGBY

Monday 20 July to Friday 28 August 2026

Euston to Rugby

7 trains cancelled out of 37 = **26%**

Rugby to Euston

8 trains cancelled out of 38 = **21%**

Rugby to Birmingham

6 trains cancelled out of 20 = **30%**

Birmingham to Rugby

6 trains cancelled out of 19 = **32%**