

28 March 2013 Last updated at 11:48

London Midland rail franchise extended

Rail company London Midland has had its franchise extended by the government to June 2017, despite recent record delays on the service.

Between October and the end of December almost 1,000 trains were cancelled or delayed due to driver shortages.

The firm runs local services in the West Midlands and some routes on the West Coast Mainline.

London Midland said it would continue investing in its stations and provide new 110mph trains to London.

In December, the government extended London Midland's franchise up to September 2015, despite the prime minister warning action could be taken against the train operator if it did not reduce the number of cancellations.

Ministers then forced the company to offer a £7m package of compensation to season ticket holders affected by the disruption.

Lord Philip Hunt, who called for London Midland to have the franchise taken away last year, said he was "absolutely shocked" to hear about the two-year extension after the company's "appalling performance".

He added: "It's outrageous when you think of the hours of delays to people - making them late for work, late for school - and they could not rely on their regular train services.

"I think London Midland should be punished. I'm very, very disappointed."

'Consistent service'

The company said it had seen a "continuous period of improvement" in its performance since December and added it was continuing to train and recruit drivers.

However, on Wednesday more than 15 London Midland train services, including routes to Birmingham and Liverpool, were cancelled because of crew shortages.

Patrick Verwer, London Midland's managing director, said the franchise extension would give the company the stability to "continue to improve our service and focus on providing the reliable, consistent service our passengers expect and deserve".

He added: "We will also continue to invest in our stations and in new innovative technology such as our new 110mph trains to London."

The company said it was in discussions with the government about the "detail" of the contract.

A spokesman for the Department of Transport said the extension had been needed to help it create a "robust and deliverable franchise schedule" following a review into what went wrong with awarding the new contract for the West Coast Mainline.

He said they would continue to monitor London Midland's performance "very closely".

[More England stories](#)

[\[news/uk-england-london-22039313\]](#)

A 14-year-old girl who "set up" a boy to be stabbed by her boyfriend after she felt she had been disrespected is detained for his killing.

[Boxer Hide summoned in drug probe](#)

[\[news/uk-england-norfolk-22042110\]](#)

[Philpott a one-off case - Alexander](#)

[\[news/uk-politics-22041787\]](#)



BBC © 2013 The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. [Read more.](#)