

South Central to Southern – Train Operator names the changes

Train operator South Central is marking a milestone in its development on 30 May by changing its name to Southern, just over a year since signing its seven-year franchise.

The new name signals the start of a two to three year programme of change that goes beyond a fresh coat of paint on stations and the delivery of new trains.

Keith Ludeman, Chief Executive Rail, Govia said: “We want Southern to be a different kind of train operator where passengers expect more and are at the heart of everything we say and do. Our challenge is to transform the business, by running a better train service and offering our passengers a markedly improved travelling experience.”

The switch to Southern is underpinned by a new definition of what the company stands for and offers its passengers: The company is committed to being:

- Professional - acting in the best interests of passengers and the company
- Honest - providing clear and straightforward information to passengers
- Flexible - in responding to its passengers’ needs
- Friendly - treating passengers with respect and making them feel welcome on trains and at stations
- Safe - providing a secure environment.

Charles Horton, South Central managing director said: “We have already made extensive investment in our network, committing £1 billion on new trains, upgrading our depots and providing better facilities at our stations. The change to Southern is a declaration of our firm intent to continue that investment programme and a recognition that there are still areas requiring improvement.

The new name is also a demonstration of our confidence that our progress will continue and that we will deliver more for our passengers.”

In achieving this, Southern will complete the introduction of new or refurbished trains across the network and complete its £115 million depot upgrade project, ensuring that passengers have modern trains maintained in state-of-the art depots. Work to renovate and upgrade signage at some 160 stations across the network will also continue, with major projects planned for key stations including Norwood Junction and Brighton.

Charles Horton said: “We will also be investing in our staff, providing training for our ‘frontline’ people who deal with passengers each day, and giving them better workplace facilities such as mess rooms. We want our people to look the part too, so each of our 2,800 uniformed staff will get a new, modern-style outfit.”

Other Southern innovations will include better on-board services, new ticket machines making it quicker and easier to purchase tickets, as well as technology at stations and on trains to facilitate wireless internet access.