

# Kiosk set to stop passengers needing to wave down trains

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At more remote stations, some passengers still have to flag down trains with their hand to get them to stop — now, newly installed technology will seek to make this a thing of the past.

Network Rail says the first “request-stop” kiosk on the Far North Line will go on trial at Scotscaider station from next Monday (15 August).

This will be the first of eight set to be rolled out along the Highland route. The idea is that passengers can access the next planned service electronically, rather than having to wave the train down.

It is being installed as part of a wider £5 million investment in the line’s radio signalling system.

Should the trial prove a success, the other seven stations are Altnabreac, Kinbrace, Kildonan, Dunrobin Castle, Rogart, Invershin and Culrain. Network Rail says they would get these systems in the “coming months”.

Passengers onboard wishing to leave the train at Scotscaider will continue to speak to the guard or

conductor as at present.

Scotscladder has been selected as a trial location which will be closely monitored to ensure safety and reliability. Information will also be available on platforms initially to highlight the change to passengers and a period of dual running will be in place to extensively test the enhanced system prior to it being rolled-out at the other locations.

As well as the installation of the request-stop kiosks, Network Rail has upgraded existing radio communication masts and antennas and installed new equipment at Muir of Ord, Invergordon, Kildonan and Wick stations to enhance radio coverage.

This has improved the reliability and resilience of the communications network across the route to improve overall passenger experience for those travelling on the line.

Cara Healy, Network Rail's development manager for the work on the Far North Line, said: "Enhancing the radio network will make the experience of using request-stop stations more straight forward for local people and for the increasing number of tourists visiting the area.

"Once the trial-period is complete at Scotscladder, we are confident that the system will be ready to be rolled out to improve performance and the overall passenger experience for those travelling on the railway.

"This new system will make it easier to use some of the most remote stations on our network and hopefully help encourage more people to travel into the Highlands to walk, climb, cycle and sightsee."

David Simpson, ScotRail Service Delivery Director, said: "We are delighted to welcome request-stop kiosks on to the network with the improvements they will offer to our passengers using this rural line.

"Enabling the driver to be alerted in advance to the need to stop in the station, rather than being reliant on hand-signalling, delivers a safer and more reliable system, and means that trains don't need to slow down at stations where there are no passengers waiting.

"This will improve performance and it's a really positive step for the operation of the route.

"We look forward to a successful trial and the technology being rolled out to other stations on the Far North Line."