

LNER begins global search for innovation to ignite growth in the rail industry

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London North Eastern Railway (LNER) is now accepting applications for the [LNER FutureLabs](#) second cohort, a groundbreaking accelerator focused on fast-tracking the latest innovations into the travel industry.

The 10-week programme is designed for innovative startups, small and medium-sized enterprises and scaleups looking to prove and scale their technology within the rail industry.

The second year of the programme builds on the success of the first cohort last year, which resulted in pilots with five innovative startups. Solutions ranged from revolutionising mobility with a truly door-to-door travel experience to enabling customers to order food at their seat.

LNER is now launching FutureLabs 2021, presenting a fresh opportunity for startups to work with LNER to test their technologies and pioneer the next generation of rail travel.

Successful applicants will receive unprecedented access to LNER's live operational environments, one-to-one mentoring from senior stakeholders, and the opportunity to apply for funding to scale their proof-of-

concept.

They will also deploy their solutions with support from dedicated LNER sponsors and industry-leading mobility, digital and data teams.

Danny Gonzalez, Chief Digital and Innovation Officer at LNER, said: “Our ambition is to truly transform rail travel for the benefit of our customers and communities. We’re not just talking about micro changes that tinker around the edges.

“As we build on the success of FutureLabs last year, which introduced a number of creative and new ideas to the rail industry, we are keen to continue to take advantage of some of the world’s latest digital and tech developments to transform ways of working for our people and the experience for our customers.”

The programme will run from 9 June to 11 August 2021. Demo Day will be held in September, where participants will have the opportunity to showcase their proof-of-concepts to LNER stakeholders, industry leaders, investors, and media.

LNER FutureLabs is open to SMEs from across all industries and applications are invited against three key challenges:

- 1.Revenue opportunities: whether it’s making the most of assets or finding new ways to create value, how can we make the most of opportunities to generate revenue.
- 2.Smarter ways of working: finding ways to help our people focus on their core purpose and expertise by improving the day-to-day tasks that take up time.
- 3.Better connections: improving customer and colleague experience and collaboration with our partners such as Northern Trains, and across the industry.

Companies that fit the areas of interest, have an established digital product and a highly compelling use case, can apply to LNER FutureLabs.

Applications close on 1 May 2021. Shortlisted companies will be announced on 12 May and will be invited to pitch to LNER on 26 May 2021. To apply or find out more, visit lnerfuturelabs.co.uk

Photo credit: LNER