

# LNER leads the way in railway innovation and investment

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London North Eastern Railway (LNER) has invested millions of pounds improving every aspect of the customer experience –accelerating projects during the pandemic to transform the UK’s railway–as it looks forward to welcoming passengers back to the railway.

From booking to onboard, a digital revolution has quietly been taking place using everything from real-time apps to AI, to deliver a step change in rail travel.

In addition, during the past year more than £14 million has been invested in upgrading and transforming stations. The newly-launched LNER mobile phone app has soared in popularity to become one of the most highly rated within the industry, making it easier for customers to book and access their tickets in one place whilst on the go.

Customers are also now able to receive real-time personalised journey messages by opting-in to push notifications via LNER’s mobile app, SMS or Facebook Messenger after further enhancements to the award-winning LNER Assistant.

The service sends messages to customers about their journeys on up to moment of travel, providing information such as which platform their train will be leaving from, if there is any disruption and real-time updates if there are any changes to their journey.

The LNER website now offers 'One-click Delay Repay' allowing quick and easy compensation when delays of more than 30 minutes impact a journey. A new LNER parking app also makes it simpler for customers to pre-book and pay for their space at LNER managed stations,

In order to provide customers with more comfortable journeys on LNER services and give confidence that trains will not be overcrowded, most seats on LNER services will require a reservation.

The approach, called Seat Sure, will protect the flexibility of the walk-up railway as there will be a number of unreserved seats in Coach C for Standard and a number of seats in Coach M in First Class, or Coach E in First Class in a five-coach train. Customers without a reservation will be able to travel in these unreserved areas of the train.

This is complemented by a world-class cleaning regime that has seen the team of cleaners grow to record-breaking levels, with 360 specialist staff now working across the route.

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER, said: "Over the past 16 months of the pandemic, we have grasped hold of every opportunity to innovate, invest and improve for the benefit of our customers.

"Our ambition is to truly transform rail travel in the UK and we believe that this pioneering approach is key as we look to welcome customers back to rail.

"We're incredibly excited to see how our customers react and take advantage of the changes we've introduced, which run right through the customer experience – from booking to onboard to the station facilities."

LNER has continued to pioneer new approaches when it comes to the onboard experience, becoming the first in the industry to roll out its trial of an 'at-seat' catering offer.

The 'Let's Eat at Your Seat' service enables customers in Standard to order and pay for food and drinks from their phone in the comfort of their own seat.

As part of LNER's focus on innovation to enhance the customer experience, LNER has become the first train company in the UK to use new artificial intelligence software to better manage disruption.

When services are disrupted, the new system by JUNCTION, aims to help LNER ensure any delays are kept as minimal as possible. A new customer loyalty scheme, LNER Perks, has also been launched, giving loyal customers benefits to spend on future journeys, gifted as an LNER eVoucher to friends or family or donated to a charity partner.

Customers will notice that it is not just the digital experience that has changed, as LNER has invested more than £14 million over the past 12 months in improvements to stations and facilities.

From a total transformation of Doncaster Station to new travel centres and toilets at York, a customer lounge at Berwick and car parks at Durham and Grantham, LNER has created first class facilities right along the East Coast of the UK with further improvements to come.

*Photo credit: LNER*