

# LNER works with young entrepreneurs to capture their insight into the future of rail travel

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LNER has been working with budding young entrepreneurs on a project which has the potential to shape the future of rail travel.

The LNER Digital team spearheaded an innovation challenge with social enterprise Startup Sherpas, an organisation which provides real-life paid opportunities for young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills. A hand-picked 'SuperSquad' of one hundred and fifty 13 to 18-year-olds, who all live along the LNER route, were tasked by the LNER Digital team to come up with creative ideas that would make them want to choose train travel in the future and leave the car behind.

To get a taste of LNER's innovative spirit, the squad took a journey on one of its world-class Azuma trains, which for some of the young people involved was their very first experience of travelling by train. The journey certainly sparked their imaginations, with the squad generating more than one thousand ideas.

From their extensive database of ideas, four clear themes emerged for further investigation:

1. Office on rails – designated office carriages to work, study and revise.
2. A safe space for all – teenager-only carriages.
3. Tiered WiFi access – a new tiered ticketing system for rail travel based on WiFi access.
4. Rail Rewards – a gamified loyalty scheme with discounts and partnerships.

The ideas were presented back to LNER for discussion with the company's Directors, to see if any could become a reality. The ideas and feedback have been brought together in a report, '[Young People – The Champions of Rail](#)' which has been published on the Startup Sherpas' website today.

Speaking about the SuperSquad's creative thinking Frances Walker, Head of Digital Experience Strategy at LNER, said: "We're so impressed by the quality and depth of the ideas that the squad developed. The project has given us some great insight into what customers of the future think is important when it comes to rail travel and we're already looking at developing another SuperSquad to investigate the Rail Rewards concept further. It's clear to see that the next generation has some fantastic ideas on how to ensure rail remains an exciting and relevant way to travel."

SuperSquad member George O'Brien, said; "The LNER squad has given me an insight into how trains are run and that there is so much more to them than getting you from point A to B. It made me think about how to advertise rail to a younger audience and I think the squad came up with some amazing ideas! It was a privilege to be picked for this squad and I'll use the skills I learnt in it for the rest of my life."

Startup Sherpas founder, Hugo Pickford-Wardle, said: "We have been delighted to partner with LNER, a forward-thinking organisation which shares our view that, whatever the next steps are from this, young people must be part of it.'

To read the Sherpas report [Young People – The Champions of Rail](#), or to register your interest for the next SuperSquad, visit the Startup Sherpas website ([Startup Sherpas](#).)