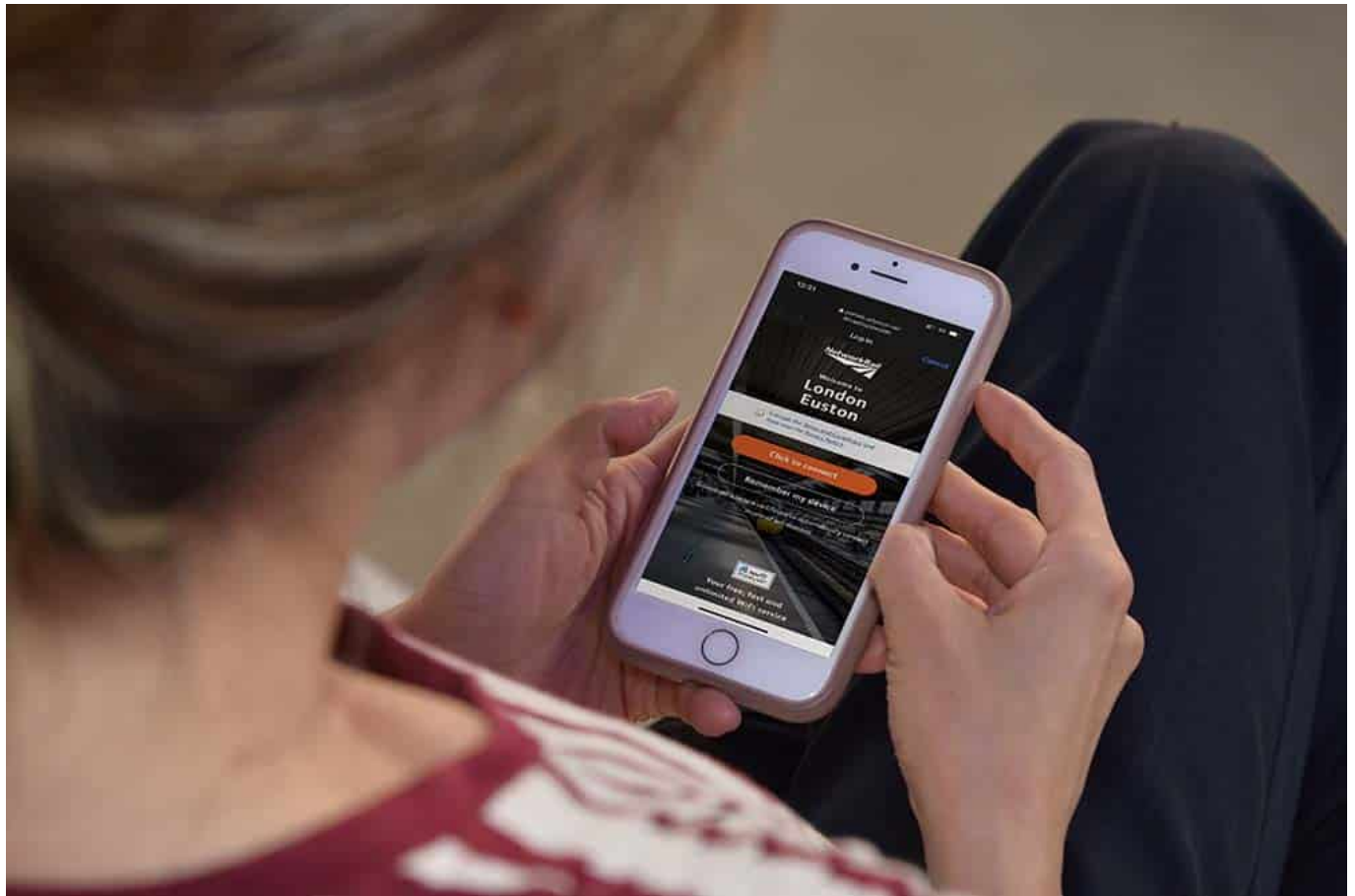


Network Rail confirms completion of £28 million Wi-Fi project

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Network Rail has announced that the last of 19 stations to be fitted out with fast and free Wi-Fi has been completed as part of a £28 million programme of upgrades.

The infrastructure owner said that following a National Rail Passenger Survey in 2019, Wi-Fi was seen as a priority for customers on the go. Subsequently, Network Rail engineers began a programme to install the infrastructure to get visitors connected.

The last switch-on was over the Christmas period, and it meant the programme would be delivered on time – and also under budget.

With the new Wi-Fi in place, station staff will also be able to provide better support to passengers, especially during times of disruption, with a private network on the system to support them in accessing information more quickly on their devices.

The latest technology, including WiFi 6, has been used to future-proof the service, and average download speeds are faster than most home broadband services.

So far, Network Rail says the feedback on the service has been “excellent”, with about 400,000 users every month recorded.

Rail minister Wendy Morton said: “Whether you’re responding to an email on the move or calling a loved one while waiting for your train, staying connected wherever you are is understandably a top priority for passengers.

“Building a railway that puts passengers at its heart is central to our Plan for Rail, which is already seeing improvements for passengers rolled out across the country.

“Improving WiFi at stations will improve the journeys of the thousands of people who travel through them every day.”

Andrew Haines, chief executive of Network Rail, said: “Offering fast, free and unlimited Wi-Fi helps make our stations fit for the future. This has been a priority for me since I joined Network Rail and I know that passengers have told us how important this benefit is also for them.

“This was an ambitious project which we have completed on time and under budget, a testament to how our business is delivering for passengers and taxpayers.

“Improving and modernising the railway is central to the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, and we look forward to bringing more benefits for passengers and revitalising our railway in the coming years.”

Steve Dalton, Telent’s managing director for transport, said: “People on the move expect to be able to have the same levels of connectivity as they do at home. We are delighted to have been part of a project which will enhance the customer experience for today’s tech-savvy passengers and to have had the opportunity to demonstrate our ability to operate as a trusted partner at the forefront of the UK’s digital revolution.”