

# Network Rail launches initiative at Leeds station to tackle period poverty

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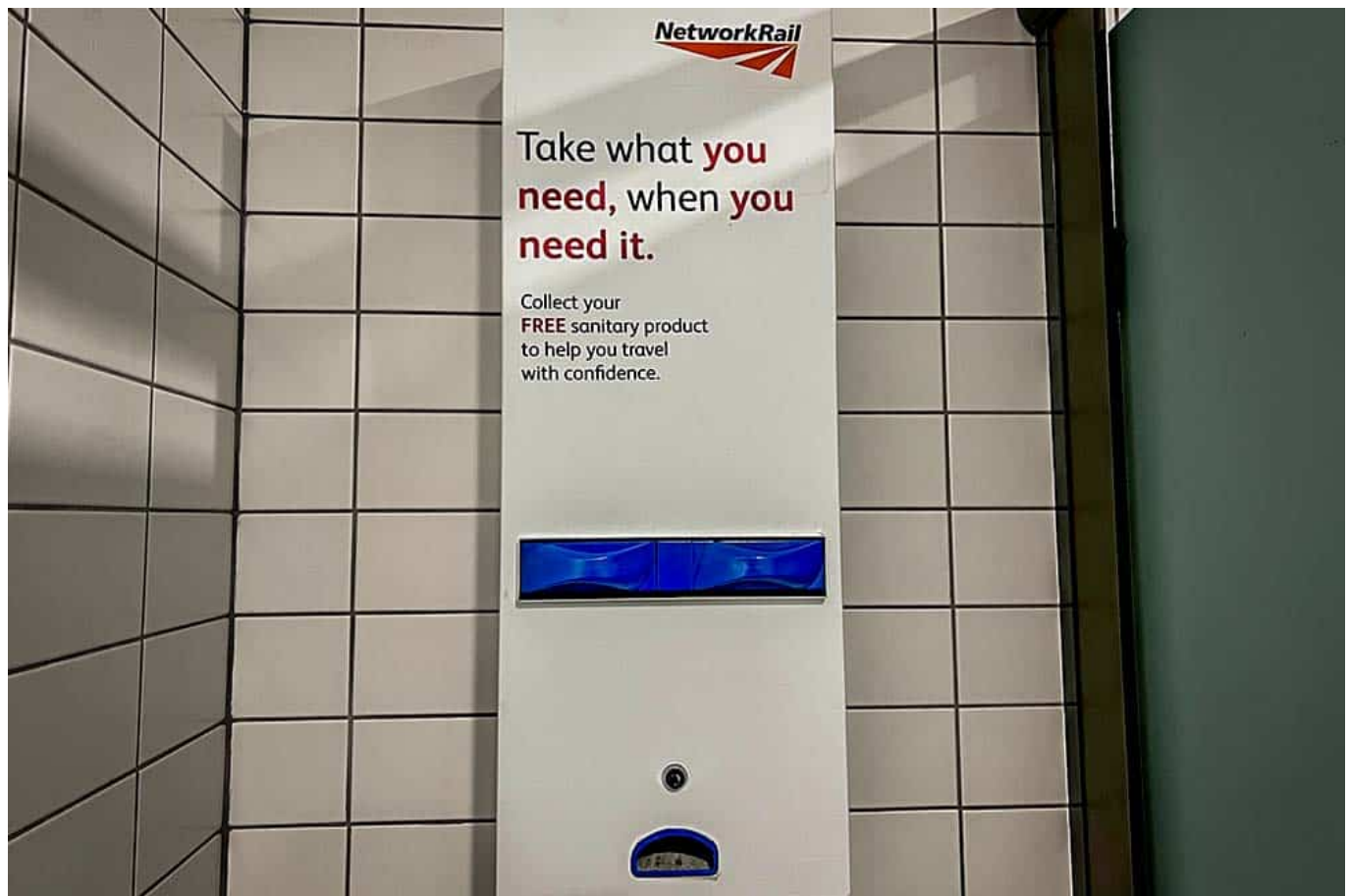


Leeds station has now installed new vending machines in its toilets, offering free sanitary products to prevent issues caused by period poverty.

Network Rail's new initiative launches following 2017 data that suggests one in ten girls were unable to afford sanitary products.

The pads and tampons are available from vending machines in the female and accessible toilets on the main concourse and on the platforms.

Network Rail says it hopes that providing access to the free products will help passengers travel with dignity and confidence. Earlier this year, the station also opened its Changing Places facility – a toilet for people with profound and multiple disabilities – to help make rail travel more accessible.



Maxine Joicey, station customer experience manager for Network Rail's North and East Route, said: "This new initiative, combined with other recent accessibility improvements at the station, is a huge move in the right direction. We want everyone to feel welcome at Leeds station. That's why we're providing free access to period products which we hope will allow our passengers – or anyone else in need – to travel by train or explore the city of Leeds with confidence."

Period poverty is when a person struggles or is unable to access sanitary products due to financial constraints, with periods costing an average of £128 a year, or £10 a month. It's an issue which affects people worldwide.

Cllr Jonathan Pryor, deputy leader and executive member for economy, culture and education at Leeds City Council, said: "Period poverty is something no one should have to experience and we welcome this initiative from Network Rail; it builds on Leeds City Council's previous work with schools to provide free sanitary products through a variety of locations and provisions, and also helps tackle the stigma around periods and period poverty."