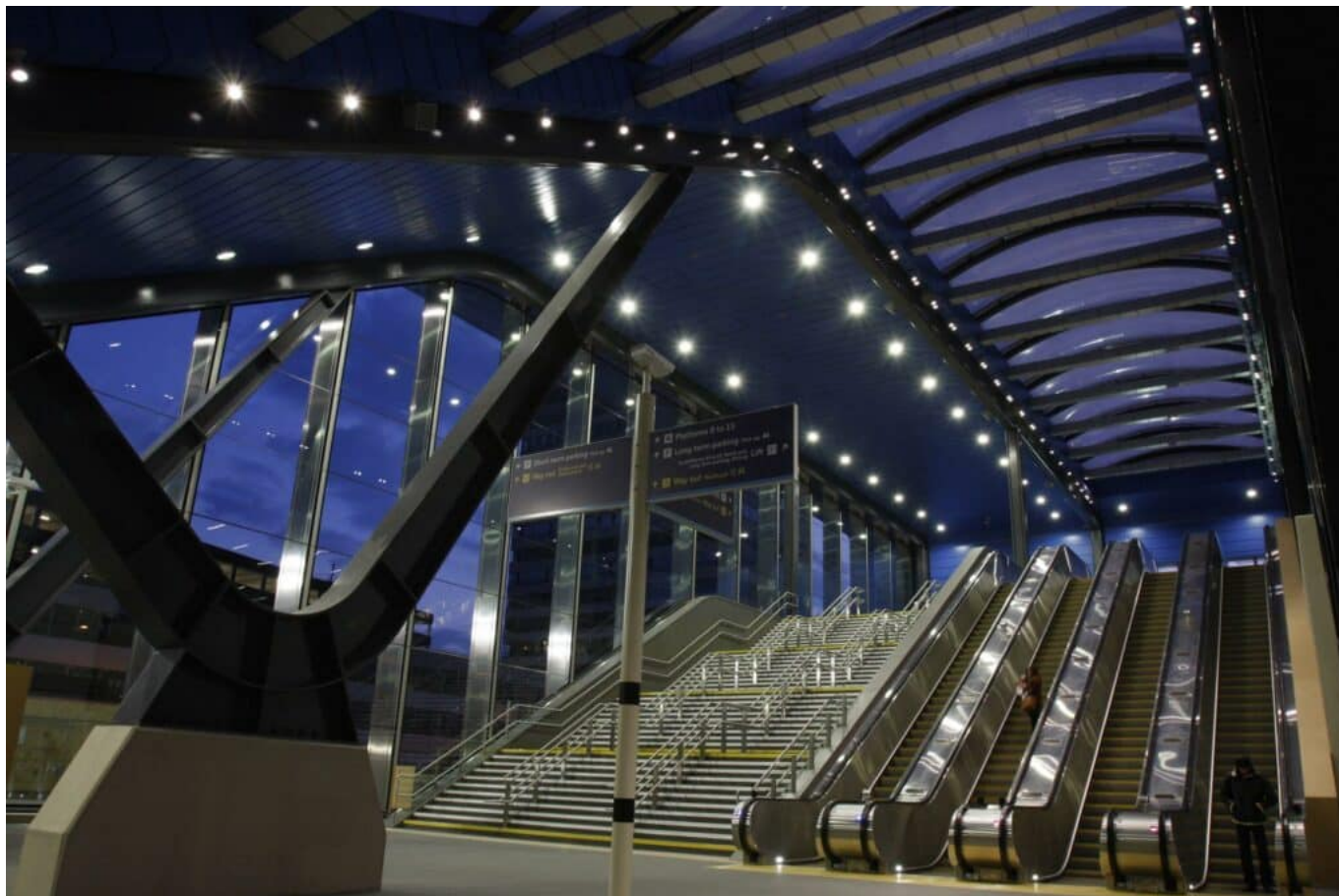


Network Rail sets out £1million plan to improve station facilities

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Network Rail have earmarked £1million to improve facilities at London Paddington, Reading and Bristol Temple Meads as part of their drive to put passengers first and improve their experience of travelling by rail.

The stations are on Network Rail's Western route, which runs from Paddington to Penzance and as far north as Worcester, and builds upon improvements recently made at all three of the stations.

At London Paddington passengers have benefitted from the introduction of a free water fountain, free use of the toilets and improved wayfinding in recent months that has helped passengers navigate the station.

As part of the £1million investment new seating is set to be installed in the Lawn area of the station and charging points will be installed so passengers can keep laptops and devices topped up.

At Reading improved information screens have been installed that inform passengers of their expected arrival time at each station rather than just the departure time. This allows passengers to better plan their arrival at their destination and plan for onward connections.

Better signage has also been installed to improve safety and two free to use water fountains have been installed.

Further improvements planned include more than 80 new seats and a larger team of staff dedicated to assisting passengers at busy times and during special events such as Reading Festival.

At Bristol Temple Meads the station has recently benefitted from a new water fountain as well as two new sets of ticket gates which has reduced congestion through the station and sped up the time it takes to pass through the station.

In the next year work will begin on a new roof at the station which will enable the continued safe running of the station and more than 150 new seats will be installed.

Susan Evans, head of customer relationship management at Network Rail, said: "We want to provide the best facilities possible for those that use our stations and the £1million of investment allows us to make significant improvements.

"In recent months we have made toilets free to use at Paddington station and installed free to use water fountains at all three stations. The fountains have already been used thousands of times and we are pleased that we can be more environmentally friendly whilst giving our passengers a better experience when they travel.

"More is to come, including extra seating and improved information for passengers."

James Adeshiyan, GWR's head of stations, said: "As we continue our work to transform the Great Western network, delivering new trains, more seats and more frequent journeys, we welcome this extra funding to improve the full range of services we can offer to customers."