

Network Rail successfully completes major project to move signalling to modern Rail Operating Centre in York

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Whilst most people were enjoying the festive period with their families, 35 Network Rail workers were busy moving control of the signalling system from the Integrated Electronic Control Centre (IECC) to the state of the art Rail Operating Centre (ROC) in York.

This important move, part of the Railway Upgrade Plan, began after the last service on Christmas Eve and was successfully completed ready for the first train service on Thursday, 27 December.

Moving control of signalling to the newer, more modern ROC, means passengers will benefit from more reliable journeys as the switch-over gives signallers a greater overview of the railway. The move will help to further develop a centre of excellence with greater resilience when disruption occurs and is more cost effective to run.

The IECC was first opened in 1989 and whilst it has performed well, signalling control needed to move to keep the railway running reliably for years to come. It controlled signalling across a large area of the East Coast Main Line from Doncaster to Northallerton via York, as well as the Transpennine route from York to Morley and Pudsey via Leeds and the north Bradford lines to Skipton/Ilkley.

The project was a real team effort and Network Rail Senior Project Engineer, Graham Foster who lives in York, was the man responsible for signing off the switch-over.

He said: "I have been working on the railway for 41 years. I first worked in the York IECC between 1999 and 2002. This was when the Leeds and York control areas came under one roof, which has proved very successful. The beauty of moving the IECC to the ROC is that it brings all the signallers together as well as giving them a more modern system to work with.

"We undertake these major projects over the Christmas period when there are no trains running so that we can take advantage of the downtime and keep disruption to a minimum.

"I have worked over Christmas many times. I came in on Christmas Day and Boxing Day but the 27th was the most important. We rehearsed the move several times before the big switch-over, so we were confident that everything would go to plan. I am delighted that it did."