

Passengers take on plastic pollution at Britain's biggest and busiest stations

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Passengers have helped save the equivalent of three million plastic bottles from landfill with the introduction of free drinking water fountains at Network Rail's biggest and busiest stations.

The measurement is based on an average 23.5cm 500ml bottle.

Since launching in 2018, the water fountain initiative has proven increasingly popular with passengers. During last year's National Refill Day – an initiative led by City to Sea – Network Rail celebrated saving the equivalent of one million plastic bottles and set a target of reaching two million by the end of 2020. Passengers have already surpassed that goal by one million by making the switch to reusable bottles.

This success coincides with the final major station, Leeds, installing its water fountain last month as part of wider refurbishment works. Free water fountains can now be found at all 20 of Network Rail's managed stations, including Waterloo, Birmingham New Street and King's Cross.

With water fountains springing up across the UK, passengers are encouraged to download City to Sea's Refill App. The app connects people to almost 30,000 Refill Stations nationwide, to help them reduce their use of single-use plastic on the move.

Steve Hynd, Campaigns Manager at City to Sea, said: "It's fantastic to have the support of Network Rail, and through our partnership with them we are empowering passengers to avoid single-use plastic. We know that when people are on the go, this is the time they're most likely to buy a plastic bottle of water.

"We are here to offer them an easy, cheap and good for the environment alternative. Now that's something to raise a glass to."

David Biggs, Managing Director Property, Network Rail, said: "Network Rail has a big role to play in tackling plastic pollution. We know that passengers share our passion for reducing single use plastics, so it's important that we make it as easy as possible for them to refill throughout their journey. It's great that we now have free water fountains in all of our managed stations, and even more so, that they're making a real difference for passengers."

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, said: "Network Rail and City to Sea's campaign has been a massive success, ensuring passengers stay hydrated, save money and we all save the planet one water bottle at a time.

"People across the country start and finish their days on our railways and encouraging water refills both avoids waste and means that, as a nation, we won't be running on empty."

Photo credit: Network Rail