

Rail overtakes air as transport of choice between Edinburgh and London, as Lumo figures soar

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With a million miles travelled under its belt, **FirstGroup's** 100% electric rail operator **Lumo** had already hit a major milestone.

However, with a million passengers set to have been carried by the service by November, officially meaning rail will overtake air travel as the preferred option on the Edinburgh to London route, well, that's a sky high achievement.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director of Lumo, commented: "The increase in rail's share of passengers between London and Edinburgh demonstrates the value Lumo has brought to the East Coast Main Line.

"Not only have we attracted passengers to greener transport, we have noticed that other operators have also increased their market share. Together we have convinced the public that the convenience, price and environmental impact of rail is well worth it."

Since the introduction of its full timetable in April, Lumo has helped to make rail the favoured mode of transport between Edinburgh and London for the first time. Its average ticket price is just £37.

Between April and August, 57% of journeys between Edinburgh and London were by rail, compared to a pre-pandemic position of 35% for April-August 2019. Some 66% of travellers chose rail over domestic flights in August itself, suggesting the trend may be set to continue.

The budget rail operator will carry its millionth passenger in November having run over 2,500 services, the equivalent of around 4,125 full flights each carrying 180 people.

Rail minister, Kevin Foster said: "The addition of Lumo's electric trains to the East Coast Main Line is just one way our railways are leading the way in decarbonising transport. As we continue striving towards net-zero by 2050, operators like Lumo will help ensure we meet this ambitious target."

With average customer loadings at 86%, Lumo services have broken records for reliability. The fleet, which was built at Hitachi Rail's factory in County Durham, has travelled over one million miles, without any technical incidents for half of the periods it has been in service.

The British built trains completed an entire quarter with no technical incidents, which has resulted in the Lumo fleet being four times more reliable than the UK industry average. The Lumo fleet has become the most reliable out-of-the-box train Hitachi Rail has ever delivered in the UK.

Jim Brewin, head of UK & Ireland for Hitachi, said: "In just 12 months, the Lumo fleet has become the most reliable Hitachi has ever launched in the UK. Being both incredibly reliable, and 100% electric, encourages the shift to rail required to meet Net Zero. The success of this British built train is recognition of the hard work from everyone at Lumo, FirstRail, Beacon Rail and Hitachi colleagues at our UK depots and North East factory."

Lumo launched in October 2021 with its sights set on converting domestic air travellers to rail. Edinburgh to London remains the UK's most popular domestic air route with nearly 500 flights every week between the capital cities***.

Adam Cunliffe, CEO at Beacon Rail said: "Over the past year we've seen the concept of Lumo grow from launch to become one of the most reliable and cost effective ways to travel between Edinburgh and London. Beacon is extremely proud to be a key partner in driving the success of these 100% electric trains that demonstrate a collaborative approach to reducing carbon emissions and reimagining rail travel."

Martijn Gilbert added: "It is vital for the economy to have an affordable and sustainable means to travel long distances. I know we have opened up the route for people for the first time just by being cheaper than the alternatives previously available.

"Lumo has not changed passenger habits on its own – but the rail network has proven its value, comfort and convenience to passengers convincingly."