

Wifi to be introduced at 25 railway stations across Scotland

Free wi-fi will be rolled out at 25 ScotRail stations across the country, ScotRail and Transport Scotland revealed today.

And all 38 of ScotRail's Class 380 trains will have wi-fi by March 2014, with trains being fitted at a rate of six or seven a month from October this year thanks to more than £1million of Scottish Government funding.

These trains – the newest in the ScotRail fleet – are used on routes linking Glasgow Central with Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, as well as Edinburgh-North Berwick/Dunbar.

The expansion of wi-fi represents the latest phase in the Scottish Government's long-term ambition to provide wi-fi right across Scotland's railways.

Transport Minister Keith Brown said: "We are committed to ensuring that rail travel across Scotland is an attractive option for tourists, commuters and business users. Giving passengers the ability to connect to the internet at 25 stations and on all class 380 trains throughout Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire and the Lothians will provide more opportunities for people to switch to the rail network whilst keeping up-to-date with the latest information.

"In 2014, the eyes of the world will be on Scotland and we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase what we have to offer as a modern country. I am pleased that in advance of the major events taking place in 2014, visitors flying into Prestwick and Glasgow International airports, who then join the rail network, will be able to get access to wi-fi on every train. Combined with the station

enhancements, this will help keep Scotland's railways at the forefront of wi-fi installation. We will continue to explore ways of getting more people connected when travelling by train between all seven Scottish cities."

Steve Montgomery, ScotRail managing director, said: "It is exciting that people will be able to enjoy free wi-fi at ScotRail stations for the first time, as well as on board our largest fleet of electric trains.

"We are confident that the expansion of wi-fi will be warmly welcomed by our customers, who increasingly want to stay connected during their journeys, whether for business or to chat with friends."

The Scottish Government has provided £250,000 to help install wi-fi by December 2013 at Aberdeen, Anniesland, Ayr, Dalmarnock, Dundee, Dunfermline Town, Edinburgh Haymarket, Edinburgh Park, Exhibition Centre, Falkirk High, Fort William, Glasgow Central, Glasgow Queen Street, Helensburgh Central, Inverness, Kilmarnock, Kirkcaldy, Linlithgow, Mount Florida, Paisley Gilmour Street, Partick, Perth, Stirling and Wemyss Bay stations.

Wi-fi will be installed at Gleneagles station as part of its refurbishment in time for next year's Ryder Cup.

Mr Montgomery said: "We considered several factors when selecting stations to receive wi-fi, including footfall, how long people stay in the station, number of services and the impact of major events, such as the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup. We have longer term plans for further stations to receive wi-fi in future."

Fitting of wi-fi to Class 380s will take place at Shields Depot in Glasgow during routine weekend maintenance between October 2013 and March 2014, avoiding any impact upon customers.

Liz Cameron, Chief Executive of Scottish Chambers of Commerce, said: "This is great news and a first-class project from both the Scottish Government and ScotRail.

"The ability for businesses to remain connected whilst travelling will enable us to be more productive and makes best use of our time. There is no doubt this will encourage more people to travel by rail."

The expansion builds upon the ongoing installation of wi-fi on all 59 of ScotRail's Class 170 express trains.

ScotRail's free wi-fi service allows access to email, web browsing and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

This announcement by Scotrail does not affect Waverley Station which is managed by Network Rail and there is wifi at the station provided by The Cloud, BT and T-Mobile on a paid for basis.