



OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD

IMPROVING ASSISTED TRAVEL

SUMMARY OF NEW ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY GUIDANCE FOR RAIL COMPANIES



ORR's vision is of a railway network where passengers can request assistance with confidence and ease, safe in the knowledge that it will be provided reliably, effectively, and consistently by staff that have the training and knowledge to do so with confidence and skill.

We have published new Accessible Travel Policy Guidance for train and station operators. This sets out the commitments they must include in their policies for helping older and disabled people to travel by rail.

In producing this new version, we have listened to passengers, disabled people's organisations, rail companies and others in order to strengthen and improve the arrangements for providing assistance.

The new Accessible Travel Policy Guidance will:

- **Increase the reliability of assistance for disabled and older passengers** that book in advance and those that request assistance at the station, by introducing a new standardised handover process for all GB mainline stations.
- **Improve accessible journey planning** by standardising key station accessibility information on facilities, step-free access and staffing to provide a better and more accurate picture of what disabled passengers can expect at each station.
- **Strengthen train and station operators' training of staff in disability awareness**, including involving disabled people in its delivery and requiring staff to have refresher training at least every two years.
- **Reduce the notice period for booking assistance**, currently up to 24 hours before travel to a minimum of 2 hours before travel by April 2022.
- **Ensure all train companies make it easier for passengers to receive redress** when booked assistance fails.
- **Require comprehensive evidence of how assistance will be provided to passengers during disruption** to ensure previous failures are not repeated.
- **Standardise and improve information for passengers**, including provision at staffed stations of a concise, easy-to-read passenger leaflet focused on what to expect before travelling, at the station, on the train and if things do not go as planned.
- **Strengthen how operators consider assistance provision for passengers in differing circumstances**, including under different modes of train operation.
- **Involve disabled people in a meaningful way in the development and review of operator policies and training**, so that the view of passenger champions, local communities and user groups are considered.
- **Provide clarity on the carriage of mobility scooters and other mobility aids**, to ensure passengers understand on which journeys a mobility scooter or other mobility aid can be used.
- **Provide transparency on the accessibility of buses and taxis to be used during planned rail replacement services**, and encourage more use of accessible vehicles and training of drivers.
- **Make more passengers aware of the help that is available when travelling by rail**, by requiring train operators to work with local authorities, service providers and disabled access groups to promote the service.
- **Ensure passengers with hearing or speech impairments can use the latest technology to book assistance**, by requiring operators to adopt text relay services and highlighting as good practice the video relay service used to enable communication using British Sign Language.



Next steps:

We are requiring rail companies to submit their revised policies by December 2019. We have set out how we will monitor their progress in delivering their commitments:

- **By March 2020, we will** publish bespoke guidance for operators of heritage railways, trams that run on the national network, and single stations on how to write an Accessible Travel Policy.
- We will strengthen our monitoring of operators' passenger information obligations to ensure the information provided is relevant and up-to-date. In particular, we will monitor the accuracy of information online to ensure it complies with our requirements **by April 2020** (including the consistent use of the Passenger Assist brand), undertake a review of the accessibility of operators' websites **by July 2020**, and carry out mystery shopping exercises at stations and over the phone.
- **By July 2020** we will require operators to set out the progress they have made in meeting our new training requirements (due to be delivered in full by **July 2021**).
- We plan to establish a regular forum with disabled people's organisations, to include users of assisted travel.
- In addition, we will work with Railway Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to update its Accessibility Maturity Framework Tool, DfT on implementation of its Inclusive Transport Strategy, RDG on the development of its new Passenger Assist system and with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on ensuring passengers and operators understand their rights and obligations under the Equality Act.
- We will also continue to work closely with the Williams Rail Review, Rail Sector Disability Champion, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, Transport Focus, Transport Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government.





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