Equality Information and Objectives 2025

Regulation of Network Rail

ORR's work in this area has the potential to impact all **protected characteristics**.

Economic regulation

Funders (Department for Transport and Transport Scotland) decide funding and priorities for Network Rail infrastructure. These priorities may impact people with **protected characteristics**, and ORR's periodic reviews consider whether Network Rail's plans will deliver against these priorities in an efficient way and confirm expectations for the five-year funding period. ORR does not determine whether funders have set the 'right' priorities. We scrutinise and challenge Network Rail's draft business plans and monitor its performance against the commitments made in Network Rail's Delivery Plans over the Control Period. We seek assurance that workplans are compliant with relevant accessibility standards in legislation or licence.

Evaluation of Network Rail's performance and expenditure is included within our routine reporting on Network Rail. We review Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan (at national and regional level) for commitments on accessibility-related outputs, and this includes obtaining assurance that Network Rail gives due regard to the implications for inclusion and accessibility when planning and prioritising its asset management activities for infrastructures under the given funding. The most recent Periodic Review secured commitments from Network Rail on several areas relevant to accessibility, including on lift performance reporting and compliance with the Station Code. We continue to hold Network Rail to account for improving its management practice for lifts and escalators, in support of UK Government's 2025 roadmap to an accessible railway.

Access for All funding

ORR sits on the board for the Access for All programme. Access for All contributes to **promoting equality of opportunity** by using Department for Transport funding specifically for accessibility initiatives at stations. **Disability, age**, and **pregnancy and maternity** have particular relevance to such projects. ORR's role is to scrutinise whether Network Rail is using Access for All's funds appropriately and achieving the programme's stated objectives, however our role does not include selecting which projects are funded.

The programme board monitors governance of Access for All, and any issues are reported in the Network Rail Annual Assessment. In January 2026 the Government published its update on the latest Access for All programme and the programme forms part of the roadmap to an accessible railway.

Land disposal

Under Condition 17 of its network licence, Network Rail are required to refer a land disposal to ORR for consent. Sometimes these may impact pre-existing facilities (e.g. disabled parking), therefore we must consider our duty to **promote equality of opportunity**. In such cases, **disability, age**, and **pregnancy and maternity** may be relevant. For every submission we expect Network Rail to consult relevant stakeholders, including with passenger representative organisations representing the views of individuals using the railways.

Our land disposal guidance refers to our duties under Equality Act 2010. When assessing submissions, we will check for issues relating to equality and record these in our casework notes, consider the associated views, issues, and impacts, and have regard to them in reaching a decision. All land disposal casework is stored electronically.

- ← Previous Station and rolling stock accessibility
- → Next Railway safety