

# Communications between stations when assisting passengers

## Findings

### Finding 1

The continued rollout of the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard is giving staff better oversight of assistance needs, and they are invested in the benefits.

At all the stations we engaged with, staff were hugely positive about the impact of the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard on their ability to better meet passengers' assistance needs on a day-to-day-basis.

The Passenger Assist dashboard provided stations with a real-time overview of all passengers who requested assistance and was used to match assistance staff to passengers on both inbound and outbound services. At most of the stations we visited, a dedicated coordinator managed the dashboard to reduce the risk that assistance needs would be missed.

Assistance staff were able to independently manage the tasks that had been allocated to them through the staff app and could quickly and easily input the handover information needed by destination stations.

Compared to previous approaches, the risk of information being lost or passed on incorrectly within or between stations appeared to be significantly reduced. Previous approaches would, for example, rely on daily paper printouts of booked assists that were manually updated through the day with notes from handover phone calls and TUAG requests, and on ad hoc conversations between staff to pass on information within station teams. There were many opportunities for

inadvertent errors to be introduced that can be mitigated through a shared real-time electronic record of assistance needs.

We note that securing the benefits of the dashboard and staff app for passengers depends on a range of other factors including the quality of the information entered into the Passenger Assist system, the quality of communications between staff in more complex situations, the availability of sufficient staff to meet demand and the quality of the training provided to those staff.

## Finding 2

**The Passenger Assist system captures data on assistance outcomes, but we did not observe this data being routinely used to monitor assistance reliability or inform improvements for passengers.**

Most of the stations we visited made very limited use of the data held within the Passenger Assist systems to monitor assistance outcomes.

The Passenger Assist system contains records of all booked assistance requests and all TUAG requests that are entered on the day. Assistance staff report the outcome of each assistance including, where assistance was not delivered, why they believe it was not. New reporting categories were introduced into Passenger Assist by RDG in March 2025, with the aim of making this data more useful to operators in identifying assistance failures and investigating causes. To take advantage of this opportunity to improve data quality, staff need to be trained on how to use the reporting categories and, critically, operators need to create a culture where accurate reporting by staff is embraced as a route to driving improvements for passengers.

The Passenger Assist data should be a rich source of insight for operators in investigating why failures happen and what they need to do to improve. We expected to see stations regularly reviewing outcomes both for assists that they were directly responsible for delivering, and for the onward journey of passengers that they had assisted onto trains.

## Finding 3

**Structured governance processes for considering assistance risks and outcomes help drive continuous improvement.**

At those stations where managers hosted regular staff discussion forums on passenger

assistance and monitored issues via a risk register on an ongoing basis, we were able to see better examples of continuous improvement actions. Where this was done best, there was clear senior accountability for passenger assistance delivery at the station and a range of data and information sources were used to inform discussions.

Where these governance processes did not exist, we had low confidence that the stations had an informed understanding of whether their assistance processes were working for passengers or what improvements were needed.

## Finding 4

Some stations appear to be moving away from routinely making phone calls between stations to communicate assistance needs and towards electronic communications using only the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard, without sufficient planning.

We saw evidence that, as staff embrace the benefits of the Passenger Assist staff app, some are choosing to move away from making a handover phone call.

During our station visits, staff were making handover phone calls. However, all reported mixed success with calls being answered by other stations. They also reported that some stations where use of the Passenger Assist dashboard and staff app are well-embedded, actively state they prefer not to be called. This was understood to be because they consider they receive all the information they need for the handover electronically, and more efficiently, through the Passenger Assist system.

Operators should secure our approval if they want to move away from making a handover phone call and use an alternative approach instead. The approval process seeks assurance that an operator has taken the necessary steps to secure at least an equivalent level of service without making a phone call. We would expect an operator to demonstrate, for example, that they understand and will monitor assistance outcomes, have provided appropriate training for staff, and have agreed processes between those stations that will no longer routinely be using phone calls.

We see this structured planning by operators as necessary when they are moving to new ways of working to minimise risks and maximise opportunities for improvement. Where individual staff or stations are making their own decisions to move away from making a handover phone call, there

are risks that information gets lost because staff are working to different processes and do not know what to expect.

Our assumption is that, as the Passenger Assist app and electronic handover function become embedded, many operators will find that routine information is passed between stations more accurately and efficiently through the Passenger Assist system than a phone call. We want to support this transition and will ensure that our approval processes are proportionate to the risks to passengers.