Communications between stations when assisting passengers

Annex 1: Methodology

Station selection

We selected five busy stations that have a range of different characteristics. It was important that they all had high volumes of passengers and delivered high volumes of passenger assistance. Beyond that we sought to represent:

- a range of different operators responsible for delivering assistance, including but not limited to Network Rail, who deliver assistance at most of the busiest stations
- a mix of stations that service through-trains and terminating trains
- a range of Network Rail regions
- a range of assistance performance in ORR's Experiences of Passenger Assist report 2023 to 2024

The stations we selected were:

- Birmingham New Street, where all assistance is delivered by Network Rail
- Bristol Temple Meads, where all assistance is delivered by Great Western Railway (GWR)
- Crewe, where all assistance is delivered by Avanti West Coast
- London Kings Cross, where assistance is delivered by London North Eastern Railway (LNER) and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)
- Manchester Piccadilly, where all assistance is delivered by Network Rail

Information request

In October 2024 we issued an information request to the operators responsible for delivering assistance at the five stations. The questions focused on how the Handover Protocol was implemented at each station and was split into six main sections:

- minimum requirements
- governance
- processes
- training
- quality assurance
- data

We sought feedback on these areas, and on our emerging findings and recommendations, from our Accessible Travel Stakeholder Forum.

The operators' responses were collated and analysed ahead of visiting the stations.

Site visits

We carried out in-person station visits between 20 and 22 January 2025.
During the visits we:

- spoke to staff with responsibilities for delivering passenger assistance, including station managers, accessibility leads and assistance staff
- observed the various roles involved with the Handover Protocol and assistance delivery in practice
- obtained feedback from staff on the benefits and drawbacks of both the staff app and the phone call as a method of communication

- ← Previous Recommendations and next steps
- → Next Annex 2: Background on the stations