Communications between stations when assisting passengers

Learnings from a review of the Handover Protocol at five busy stations.

In this section:

- Executive summary
- Introduction

Executive summary

We want older and disabled passengers to have confidence that any assistance they need to travel by rail will be available and reliable. Our research shows that passenger satisfaction with

assistance when it is delivered is relatively high, but that assistance provision is not currently reliable enough. Better communication between staff at boarding and destination stations remains a key enabler for improvement as it will help to ensure passengers who are assisted onto a train by staff will receive assistance to get off at their destination.

Under ORR's Accessible Travel Policy Guidance, staff at the boarding station must contact staff at the destination station by phone when they assist someone onto a train, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with ORR. These requirements were developed by ORR in 2019. Since then, the development and rollout of the Passenger Assist staff app and web interface (dashboard) mean that many staff can communicate electronically between stations and trains to co-ordinate assistance delivery.

In 2023 ORR commissioned audits of five operators focused on regulatory requirements related to the delivery of assistance. The findings highlighted a particular risk around communications to and from busy stations at busy times. Operators' risk management processes were also highlighted as an area that needed review. We therefore committed to further assurance work, and our findings are set out in this report.

We selected five busy stations that receive high volumes of assistance requests and where assistance is delivered by a range of train and station operators, including Network Rail. The five stations were Birmingham New Street, Bristol Temple Meads, Crewe, London Kings Cross and Manchester Piccadilly. We issued them with an information request and visited the stations. This document draws together key findings and recommendations that are of broader relevance across the industry.

Our four key findings are:

- **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 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.

- **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 system. 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 staff 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.
- **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 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.
- **Some stations appear to be moving away from routinely making phone calls between stations to communicate assistance needs and towards electronic communications using 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. We fully support the use of new technology to deliver passenger benefits, but we are concerned that an unplanned transition to new ways of working creates risks for passengers as they travel across the rail network.

To address these findings, we recommend that operators of stations that deliver high volumes of passenger assistance should by end of September 2025:

- Ensure that they have processes in place at station-level that regularly bring staff together to review data on assistance outcomes, identify causes of failure and implement action to drive continuous improvement.
- Review their approach to assistance handover considering, in particular, how using the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard to communicate between stations can support the best outcomes for passengers who need assistance to travel.

- Where operators identify that an equivalent or better service for passengers could be secured using an alternative to a phone call for handover, they should submit a proposal to ORR for consideration.

We will continue to monitor passenger experiences of assistance through our ongoing passenger survey and engage with operators to secure improvements for passengers. We expect to see operators taking actions in response to this report that contribute to that improvement.

We will be engaging with the operators of stations that deliver the largest volumes of passenger assistance to follow-up on our recommendations. 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.

Introduction

We want older and disabled passengers to have confidence that any assistance they need to travel by rail will be available and reliable. Our ongoing survey of passengers that have booked assistance shows that satisfaction with assistance when is it provided is relatively high but that the service is not reliable enough.

When assistance fails it significantly impacts the wellbeing of passengers and their overall travel experience. It may cause passengers to be delayed or prevent them from travelling altogether. In the worst-case scenarios, it can result in passengers missing their station or being left on empty trains, unable to disembark. Negative experiences of passenger assistance also discourage passengers from travelling by rail in the future.

In 2023 ORR commissioned audits of five operators focused on regulatory requirements related to the delivery of assistance. The findings highlighted a particular risk around communications to and from busy stations at busy times. Operators' risk management processes were also highlighted as an area that needed review. We therefore committed to further assurance work, and our findings are set out in this report.

The regulatory framework

All train and station operators must establish and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) as a condition of their licence, setting out what they will do to help disabled people use the railway. Operators must secure ORR's approval for their ATPs, and we have issued guidance that defines minimum requirements. The ATP Guidance establishes the Handover Protocol, which defines the requirements for communications between stations when delivering passenger assistance. The Guidance also requires operators to monitor and evaluate their performance in providing services for disabled passengers and set out their plans for securing continuous improvement.

The Handover Protocol

The Handover Protocol was developed by ORR with input from operators and disabled people. It applies when assistance is to be provided by station-based staff at both the passenger's boarding and destination station. When delivering assistance, staff from the boarding station are required to call the destination station to confirm:

- the passenger's name if they have pre-booked assistance
- the type of assistance needed
- the train headcode (a four-digit code used to identify a particular train service)
- the passenger's location on the train
- any other relevant information

Each station must have a dedicated phone number for assistance communications, and a responsible person assigned to receive them.

The ATP Guidance allows for operators to use an alternative technology to communicate between stations subject to demonstrating at least equivalent functionality and effectiveness of a phone call. ORR must approve the adoption of any alternative technology before it can be implemented.

To date, ORR has approved use of alternatives by four operators:

- London North Eastern Railway (LNER) use the Passenger Assist system as an alternative to a phone call for booked assistance between stations where it is responsible for delivering assistance. For more details see ORR's approval letter to LNER.
- Avanti West Coast are trialling use of the Passenger Assist system to deliver an electronic handover between three of its stations. For more details see ORR's approval letter to

Avanti West Coast.

- London Overground makes and receives phone calls from a control centre, rather than between each station. For more details see ORR's approval letter to Arriva Rail London.
- Northern Trains are trialling use of the Passenger Assist system to deliver an electronic handover between four of its stations. For more details see ORR's approval letter to Northern Trains.

Passenger Assist system

Passenger Assist is the shared industry software system for logging and managing assistance requests. Under the ATP Guidance, all mainline operators, including Network Rail, must use Passenger Assist when passengers book assistance. The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) manages Passenger Assist on behalf of train and station operators.

Booking assistance

When passengers book assistance in advance of a journey, whether by phone, online or through the Passenger Assist passenger app, the booking is created in the Passenger Assist system. If a passenger requests assistance for imminent travel at the station, known as Turn Up and Go (TUAG), a booking can be created in the Passenger Assist system by staff.

Delivering assistance

Staff can view assistance bookings via the Passenger Assist web interface (which we refer to as the dashboard in this report) or staff app. The dashboard is accessed through a desktop computer at a station and provides a management tool for overseeing all passenger needs for assistance at a station.

The staff app can be made available on individual staff devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, for both station and onboard staff. It enables staff to:

- view assistance tasks that have been allocated to them
- confirm when assistance has been delivered at each stage of a journey
- enter handover information needed by the destination station and share it with them
- record if assistance has not been delivered and their understanding of why

The use of the staff app is not currently a regulatory requirement, but adoption and use expand

year on year. In January 2025, 16 operators reported having rolled out the staff app to staff responsible for providing assistance.

Communications between stations

When staff enter handover information into the Passenger Assist system it is visible to staff at the destination station. However, staff at the departure station do not know if the destination station have seen the information - unless they also make a phone call.

To resolve this issue, in October 2024, RDG made an electronic handover function available that enables a destination station to electronically acknowledge that they have received the handover information. This electronic handshake is intended to provide assurance to staff at the departure station that assistance will be available at the destination. The electronic handover therefore has the potential to be an appropriate replacement for a phone call.

Operators are able to switch on the electronic handover station by station. Take-up to date is very limited, partly because operators have requested some amendments to the functionality to reflect operational needs. RDG are currently refining the electronic handover functionality in response to this feedback.

Aims of our assurance work

The aims of this work are to:

- reinforce industry's focus on the Handover Protocol, and the central role that getting communication right plays in delivering reliable assistance
- focus on busy stations due to the risks identified in our previous audits and to make our findings more impactful given the number of passengers who rely on assistance at these stations
- gather a clearer understanding of working practices to help ORR consider proposals from operators to use alternatives to the Handover Protocol
- establish good practice and potential challenges that are of broader relevance to other stations and operators

Selected stations

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

There is further background on the five stations in Annex 2.

Overall, we saw six different operational models (with different approaches at the two Network Rail stations, and two operators providing assistance at Kings Cross) and in our key observations chapter we refer to these as six operators.

Structure of report

The structure of this report is as follows:

- Key observations – highlights what we found from our information gathering phase.
- Findings – summarises the key findings following analysis of the information gathered.
- Recommendations – sets out what we expect operators to do based on the findings.
- Annex 1: Methodology – outlines how we selected the stations and carried out the review.
- Annex 2: Background on the stations – provides detail about the stations that contributed to their selection.

Key observations

This section summarises the key observations we made during our assurance work. It sets out our expectations on what good practice looks like and describes examples we identified at the stations.

Handover Protocol Process

The processes that operators put in place for the Handover Protocol play a key role in the success of communications between stations and therefore assistance delivery overall. Processes should be clear, robust, and well documented.

What good looks like

The good practice examples we were looking for in Handover Protocol processes were:

- contact being made to destination stations for all assistance requests
- reacting efficiently to assistance requests following contact from a boarding station
- adequate checks to ensure sufficient resource to meet demand for assistance
- robust approaches to training accompanied by quality training material
- dedicated assistance number used only for assistance communications
- good oversight of all incoming assist requests that are pro-actively monitored
- clear meeting points / assistance lounge for passengers to make themselves known to staff
- for busy stations, the responsible person is dedicated to passenger assistance delivery and has no other duties in the station

Observations

Two out of the six operators met all our expectations on Handover Protocol processes.

Good practice that was demonstrated across most operators included:

All six operators:

- having clear meeting points for passengers
- communicating assistance requirements to all destination stations during our visits
- delivering in-person training with shadowing of experienced colleagues playing a key part

Five out of six operators:

- having the responsible person dedicated to passenger assistance delivery

Four out of six operators:

- using the dedicated assistance number only for assistance communications
- demonstrating good oversight of incoming assists by having the responsible person as a static coordinator with access to the dashboard
- having regular resource reviews to ensure adequate staff to fulfil Handover Protocol requirements and meet demand for assistance

We observed some areas that were cause for concern, with all operators:

- reporting mixed success with other stations answering or making handover phone calls
- confirming they do not routinely seek the outcome of assistance at the destination station once they help board a passenger

Some stations had unique processes that were not widely observed elsewhere. Examples include:

LNER and GTR at London Kings Cross provided considerably more training material than other operators alongside the in-person training. For LNER this included an e-learning package, and for GTR this included training videos.

GTR at London Kings Cross and GWR at Bristol Temple Meads reported that they make the handover call to the destination station before the passenger is boarded. All other stations reported making the call after the passenger has been boarded. Journey length was the key factor influencing which approach was taken. Operators judged it more appropriate to contact the destination station prior to boarding the passenger where the journey times were shorter to reduce the risk that staff would not be alerted in time to provide assistance off the train.

Network Rail at Birmingham New Street reported that staff aim to meet all arriving trains where a passenger has booked assistance, including where the boarding station had not provided a handover. This is to mitigate instances where the passenger has boarded themselves and will arrive at the station expecting assistance to disembark.

Similarly, to mitigate the same risk, Network Rail at Manchester Piccadilly reported they do not remove bookings off the Passenger Assist system when they did not locate a passenger to assist them to board. This is intended to increase the likelihood that staff will be there to meet the passenger at the destination station if they boarded themselves.

Governance

Good governance structures should result in robust processes that secure positive outcomes for those who rely on passenger assistance. Communication between stations plays a pivotal role in successful assistance delivery, so operators are expected to invest time to ensure it works as intended.

What good looks like

The good practice examples of governance we were looking for included:

- clear roles and responsibilities, including overall accountability for passenger assistance and for each element of delivery, including the Handover Protocol
- clear escalation routes for issues to be raised by staff to senior management

Observations

Approaches to roles and responsibilities were largely the same across all operators and generally met our expectations. All operators we examined:

- described clear roles and responsibilities of the staff involved with the delivery of passenger assistance
- had an appropriately senior member of staff with overall responsibility for passenger assistance delivery
- had escalation routes for staff to report issues on an ad hoc basis

Continuous improvement

Operators must have a commitment to the continuous improvement of services and facilities for disabled people as part of their ATP. The key aspects of continuous improvement are having a good understanding of what the issues are, their causes and how recurrence can be prevented. Monitoring and evaluating performance to show trends, both positive and negative, informs what actions may be needed to secure continuous improvement.

What good looks like

The good practice examples we were looking for in continuous improvement were:

- robust risk management procedures, including internal discussion forums and ways of anticipating potential issues with the Handover Protocol and passenger assistance
- a range of insight gathered about Handover Protocol performance and passenger assistance outcomes at station-level
- boarding stations pro-actively collaborating with destination stations to review assistance outcomes

- creating action plans to address the underlying causes of any recurring issues
- using lessons learned to amend processes to prevent known issues happening again

Observations

Approaches to risk management differed across operators. Half the operators (three out of six) demonstrated good practice with risk management by holding regular internal forums where the Handover Protocol and passenger assistance are discussed. Two of those operators also monitor potential passenger assistance issues via an internal risk register. The same two used a range of insight to pro-actively monitor assistance outcomes. Four out of six operators relied largely on passenger complaints to become aware of issues with assistance delivery.

Examples of good practice included:

Avanti West Coast, responsible for delivery of assistance at Crewe, hold a monthly Passenger Assistance Steering Group that discusses passenger assistance data, any issues around the Handover Protocol and any planned improvements, across all its stations. The risk of failed passenger assistance is monitored via a risk register. Avanti West Coast examine a range of data to identify themes in assistance delivery including periodic reports from the Passenger Assist dashboard.

GTR, responsible for assistance delivery at London Kings Cross, have an Accessibility Steering Group that feeds into higher level strategic committee meetings. The Steering Group maintains a risk register that tracks assistance provision and emerging trends through regular reporting, for all its stations. GTR use its Zero Harm safety management system to report and investigate assistance incidents, feeding results into governance reports. Mystery shopping also formed a key source of insight on assistance reliability.

All operators gave examples of actions taken to improve implementation of the Handover Protocol at the relevant stations. These ranged in scale and impact. Some examples include internal promotion of the staff app to encourage uptake, improved training being rolled out, data driven roster reviews to better manage resource and new processes for terminus train walkthroughs.

All operators confirmed they work with other operators to address Handover Protocol related issues between their stations, on a largely reactive basis.

None of the operators we examined provided us with a station-level record of the outcomes of calls made to destination stations.

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.

Recommendations and next steps

Our recommendations are targeted at the operators of stations that deliver high volumes of passenger assistance.

Recommendation 1

Ensure that processes are in place at station-level that regularly bring staff together to review data on assistance outcomes, identify causes of failure and implement action to drive continuous improvement.

Recommendation 2

Review the approach to assistance handover considering, in particular, how using the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard to communicate between stations can support the best outcomes for passengers who need assistance to travel.

Recommendation 3

Where operators identify that an equivalent or better service for passengers could be secured using an alternative to a phone call for handover, they should submit a proposal to ORR for consideration. We encourage operators to contact us early to discuss any planned proposals and our approval process.

Next Steps

ORR will arrange a workshop to discuss the findings and recommendations of this report with operators. We will ask the operators of stations that deliver the largest volumes of passenger assistance, including Network Rail, to submit to ORR by end of September 2025, the outcomes of the reviews described in recommendations 1 and 2, and whether they have plans to submit proposals for an alternative to the telephone handover protocol.

We will continue to monitor passenger experiences of assistance through our ongoing passenger survey, and work with industry to improve the quality of data available on assistance outcomes.

We want to see improvements in the reliability of assistance and expect to see industry taking actions in response to this report that contribute to that improvement.

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

Annex 2: Background on the stations

Birmingham New Street

Network Rail delivers all assistance at Birmingham New Street for the five train companies that operate there – Avanti West Coast, CrossCountry, London Northwestern Railway, Transport for Wales Rail and West Midlands Railway.

During April 2023 to March 2024, 68,040 passenger assists (booked and TUAG) were requested at Birmingham New Street (source: RDG). The peak number of assists delivered in 2024 was 833 on 27 December 2024 (source: Network Rail).

Birmingham New Street had 33.3 million passenger entries and exits in during April 2023 to March 2024, making it the busiest station in Great Britain outside London.

There are 12 platforms that are located below the main concourse which are accessed via stairs, escalators and lifts. The platforms are all through platforms and each one is split into two ends, labelled 'A' and 'B'. There is also a separate bay platform named 4C located between platforms 4b and 5b.

Bristol Temple Meads

Great Western Railway (GWR) delivers all assistance at Bristol Temple Meads for the two train companies that operate there – GWR and CrossCountry.

During April 2023 to March 2024, 28,969 passenger assists (booked and TUAG) were requested at Bristol Temple Meads (source: RDG). The peak number of assists delivered in 2024 was 298 on 23 December 2024 (source: GWR).

Bristol Temple Meads had 10.2 million passenger entries and exits during April 2023 to March 2024 and is the busiest station in South West England.

There are 13 platforms in use at the station numbered from 1-15 (there is no platform 2 or 14). Eight of the platforms at Bristol Temple Meads are terminus platforms.

Crewe

Avanti West Coast delivers all assistance at Crewe for the eight train companies that operate there – Avanti West Coast, LNER, Northern Trains, Transport for Wales Rail, East Midlands Railway, West Midlands Railway, Caledonian Sleeper and CrossCountry.

During April 2023 to March 2024, 21,545 passenger assists (booked and TUAG) were requested at Crewe (source: RDG). The peak number of assists delivered in 2024 was 244 on 23 December 2024.

Crewe had 3.1 million passenger entries and exits during April 2023 to March 2024. Crewe's location on the West Coast Mainline makes it a major interchange station.

There are 12 platforms that are located below the main concourse and are accessed via stairs and lifts. Seven are terminus platforms and five are through platforms.

London Kings Cross

At London Kings Cross, LNER delivers all assistance for four of the five train companies that operate there – LNER, Hull Trains, Grand Central and Lumo. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) deliver all assistance for its own services at London Kings Cross. It is the only station we selected that has more than one operator with responsibilities for delivering assistance.

During April 2023 to March 2024, 59,875 passenger assists (booked and TUAG) were requested at London Kings Cross (source: RDG). The peak number of assists delivered by LNER at London Kings Cross in 2024 was 380 on 27 December 2024 (source: LNER). The peak number of assists delivered by GTR at Kings Cross in 2024 was 59 on 28 December 2024 (source: GTR).

London Kings Cross had 24.5 million passenger entries in during April 2023 to March 2024 and is part of a busy transport hub in central London.

There are 11 platforms in total, numbered 0 to 10, all of which are terminus platforms.

Manchester Piccadilly

Network Rail delivers all assistance at Manchester Piccadilly for the five train companies that operate there – Avanti West Coast, CrossCountry, East Midlands Railway, Northern Trains, TransPennine Express and Transport for Wales Rail.

During April 2023 to March 2024, 47,202 passenger assists (booked and TUAG) were requested at Manchester Piccadilly (source: RDG). The peak number of assists delivered in 2024 was 706 on 27 December 2024 (source: Network Rail).

Manchester Piccadilly had 25.8 million passenger entries and exits during April 2023 to March 2024 making it the second busiest station outside London after Birmingham New Street.

There are 14 platforms made up of 12 terminus platforms and two through-platforms (13 and 14). The through platforms are located some distance from the main concourse and can only be accessed by stairs, a travelator and lifts.