Annual rail consumer report 2024 to 2025

Accessible travel

We want to empower confident travel by all, including disabled passengers, whether their journeys are made independently or with assistance.

Approval of operators' Accessible Travel Policies

We hold operators to account against the commitments they make in their Accessible Travel Policies (ATPs) and require operators to review their ATPs annually.

This year, we approved a new Accessible Travel Policy for London Underground Limited, which applies at the 30 stations where it delivers assistance on behalf of other operators. We also supported two new licence holders, GTS Rail Operations Limited and South Western Railway Limited, in adopting ATPs from their predecessor licence holders.

All amendments to ATPs proposed through the annual review process were minor. Separately, we approved one major ATP change within the year, from Eurostar, which established new processes for assisting manual wheelchair users in their own wheelchair, rather than a station wheelchair.

Understanding the passenger experience

We have been surveying passengers on their experience of booked assistance on an ongoing basis since 2017, and publish findings annually. This year, we have started to publish key metrics from the survey on our data portal every quarter. We use the findings to help us understand where we need to act to improve the passenger experience.

This year, more than 8,700 passengers participated. Satisfaction with the service where it is

delivered is relatively high, with 94% of passengers satisfied with the assistance they received. However, the service is not reliable enough with 11% reporting that they received none of the assistance that they booked, similar to the 12% reported last year.

Securing improvements in the delivery of assistance

Northern Trains were the poorest performer in our survey last year for the reliability of assistance. At our request, Northern carried out a detailed assessment of the gaps in the passenger assistance and proposed an improvement plan. In December, we confirmed that ORR would hold Northern accountable for the delivery of that plan. Northern has made good progress and we wrote to them in July 2025 confirming that, over the year ahead, our focus will shift to monitoring the realisation of benefits for passengers.

Throughout the year, we have been sharing survey findings with operators every quarter, challenging the poorer performers to improve. Some operators have, as a result, developed considered plans to secure improvements for passengers who need assistance travel, which we welcome.

Improving the quality of industry data on assistance volumes and outcomes

We publish industry data on the volumes of booked assistance every quarter and operators have reported a 17% increase in bookings this year.

To provide a more complete picture, we have been working with industry to strengthen the quality of data on turn up and go assistance requests. From July 2025, we started to publish the data that is reported to us and expect the quality and completeness to improve over time.

We had low confidence in the quality and usefulness of the data reported by industry on assistance outcomes. We asked operators to comprehensively review the reporting categories, which they delivered through RDG. In April 2025, we implemented changes to our reporting requirements to reflect the categories developed by industry.

The new data should provide stronger insights to both us and operators on where assistance failures are happening, enabling action to be taken to identify causes and solutions. We welcome,

for example, the work that Northern and RDG initiated in June to investigate the underlying causes where staff report that they are not able to find passengers who have booked assistance.

New benchmarking framework for passenger assistance

To strengthen our ability to hold operators to account for poor performance, we consulted on a new framework for benchmarking operators' performance in delivering passenger assistance. We have published a response to that consultation alongside this report, and have made a number of amendments to our approach in response to the feedback received.

We will use quantitative data to rank operators' performance on their delivery of assistance, with metrics on reliability, passenger satisfaction, and staff training. Data will be drawn from our ongoing passenger survey, and we will continue to explore other potential sources of data that could add additional insight.

We will qualitatively assess the poorest performing operators on their capability to improve, including considering whether they monitor their delivery of assistance effectively, identify risks that affect performance and develop appropriate solutions, and engage with passengers and industry colleagues.

We plan to publish our first benchmarking report in the Autumn.

Communications between stations when delivering assistance

Better communication between staff at boarding and destination stations remains a key enabler for improvement in assistance outcomes, as it will help to ensure passengers who are assisted onto a train by staff will receive assistance to get off at their destination.

Our review, which focussed on learnings from five busy stations, found that use of the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard is reducing the risk of information being lost or miscommunicated between stations. Previously, stations have relied solely on phone calls. We want to support a planned transition from phone calls to electronic handover.

We have asked operators to make better use of data to identify and address causes of assistance failure, and to review how they can make best use of the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard to improve communications between stations. We will be asking the operators of the stations that provide the highest volumes of assists to report the findings of their review to us in the Autumn.

This year, we have approved proposals from LNER, Avanti and Northern to use the Passenger Assist system for handover between stations as a replacement for a phone call on some journeys.

Help points at stations

Help points at stations enable passengers to speak to a member of staff. They are most commonly used to ask for information about when the next train is, but they are also sometimes used to ask for passenger assistance or to report an emergency.

However, our review found that passengers cannot consistently rely on help points at stations.

We asked station operators to review their approaches to monitoring the availability of help points. Operators have taken steps to collect better data on issues impacting their help points, including through automated remote monitoring, and strengthen existing contracts with suppliers on fixing faults.

Redress for failed assistance

Redress is a way that operators can seek to put things right for a passenger where they have failed to deliver assistance as booked.

For all redress claims submitted by a passenger, operators must provide an explanation of what went wrong, what steps they have taken to prevent the failure from happening again and an appropriate remedy. This could take a variety of forms, such as an apology, a gesture of goodwill, and/or financial compensation.

We are consulting on amending our ATP Guidance to require all operators to assess and determine appropriate redress on a case-by-case basis. If we decide to make changes to our ATP Guidance, then operators may be required to amend their ATPs and to re-submit them to us for our approval

Reliability of passenger lifts

Lifts enable access to the railway for disabled passengers and others. Last year, we identified concerns about the number of faults that are occurring and an apparent decline in performance over time.

This year, we have started publishing biannual statistics on lift performance. We now expect Network Rail (who manage the majority of lifts across the rail network) to be delivering improved performance. Network Rail recognises the need to improve and has shared an improvement plan with us. We will continue to monitor its progress closely.

Accessible rail replacement vehicles

We work with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to monitor provision of accessible rail replacement vehicles, supporting them in their role enforcing the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations and the Public Service Vehicle (Accessible Information) Regulations.

According to the data that we receive from operators, nearly all rail replacement vehicles either met accessibility standards or have an exemption from the Secretary of State.

For passengers, this means that 96% of rail replacement vehicles met accessibility standards. This is a small rise from 95% in 2023 to 2024 with improved provision of accessible rail replacement for both planned and unplanned disruption.

Regulatory framework for accessible travel

All train and station operators must establish and comply with an ATP as a condition of their licence, setting out their provision for disabled passengers.

Our published guidance defines the minimum requirements for operators' ATPs, covering areas such as:

- provision of assistance;
- staff training; and
- passenger information.

ORR also holds operators to account against accessibility standards for rolling stock and stations, which are set out in the Code of Practice on Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations and the National Technical Specification Notices that are issued by Government under the Railway Interoperability Regulations.

Our priorities for April 2025 to March 2026

We will:

- Continue to monitor operator's delivery of assistance and hold them to account for delivering improved services for disabled passengers.
- Publish our first report benchmarking operators' performance in delivering assistance.
- Publish a response to our consultation on proposed amendments to redress requirements in the ATP guidance and take forward any next steps.
- Support operators with any proposals to move to alternative approaches to communications between stations on handover.

- ← Previous Passenger information
- → Next Complaints and compensation