



Accessible Travel Policy

Guidance for Train and Station Operators

September 2020 edition

(includes March 2021 clarification)

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Accessible Travel Policies

- 1.1.1 Each passenger train operator, and each station operator (train and station operators are henceforth referred to collectively as 'operators' in this document), requires an operating licence, issued by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).
- 1.1.2 These licences include a condition entitled Accessible Travel Policy, which requires each operator, including Network Rail in respect of the stations it operates, to establish and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy, stating how they will protect the interests of disabled users of their trains and stations.
- 1.1.3. The licence condition also requires that, in establishing the Accessible Travel Policy and in making any alteration to it, the licence holder shall have due regard to the Design Standards for Accessible Railways: A Joint Code of Practice published by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport Scotland¹.
- 1.1.4 The Accessible Travel Policy must be established by an operator prior to the licence being granted and must be approved by ORR. Under the terms of the licence condition, ORR can also instruct the licence holder to carry out a review of its Accessible Travel Policy.
- 1.1.5 Accessible Travel Policies are the vehicle for operators to set out, for passengers and ORR, their commitments and standards of service provision, as well as relevant policies and practices, with regard to disabled people using the rail network. They will also provide an overview of the accessibility of the operators' facilities and services.

1.2 About this guidance

- 1.2.1 This guidance is the result of work undertaken since 2017 to develop and consult on proposals for improvement in the passenger experience and awareness of assisted travel, based on the results of the extensive research we published at the time and informed by our subsequent engagement with interested and affected organisations. ORR published two public consultation on improving assisted travel, firstly in November 2017 and then in November 2018, which included draft revised guidance. Over this time ORR also held a series of discussions and workshops with representatives from disabled people's organisations, passenger champions, the rail industry, franchising authorities and other stakeholders. A further consultation on the issue of rail replacement services was published in December 2019, which included proposal for revisions to the guidance. This was followed by additional engagement with interested and affected organisations.

¹ Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: A Joint Code of Practice, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-railway-stations-design-standards>

- 1.2.2 This version of the guidance has been derived from previous guidance issued by DfT in 2009. Along with the Joint Code of Practice, this guidance is designed to protect the interests of users of railway passenger services or station services who are disabled, in line with the Secretary of State's responsibility under section 71B of the Railways Act 1993 (as amended). Providers of such services should also note the application of the Equality Act 2010 Services, Public functions and Associations: Statutory Code of Practice².
- 1.2.3 This guidance sets out the criteria ORR will normally adopt in exercising its function, under the 'Accessible Travel Policy' condition of the passenger and station licences³, of approving each operator's Accessible Travel Policy. In particular, it explains what an approved Accessible Travel Policy '**must**' contain as a minimum in order to comply with the licence condition. It is also intended to set out recommended good practice that an approved Accessible Travel Policy '**may**' contain. In addition, it provides an introduction to the relevant background material that licence holders will need to take into account when drawing up an Accessible Travel Policy for ORR's approval.
- 1.2.4 However, the guidance is not intended to dictate to operators how they should deliver commitments or what their policies should be. This is largely for operators to decide, and it remains their responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with relevant legislation. Where appropriate the guidance requires operators to provide details of these policies and practices in their Accessible Travel Policy.
- 1.2.5 In particular, operators have a duty under s.29 of the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments. The duty requires TOCs to anticipate the needs of disabled people in a given situation and to think at an early stage about how to make reasonable adjustments. These adjustments should seek to remove or reduce any 'substantial disadvantage' which disabled people encounter in accessing transport, where it is reasonable to do so. There is statutory guidance on how service providers should approach the duty.⁴

Network Rail

- 1.2.6 As the operator of Great Britain's largest stations, and the provider of almost one third of all passenger assistance, Network Rail is critical to the experience of disabled passengers using the railway. As it does not operate passenger rail services, some areas of the guidance are not applicable to Network Rail.
- 1.2.7 These sections are:
- Section 3: Passenger Leaflet (Instead Network Rail must provide a guide to each station for older and disabled people – see **Appendix F**)

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/services-public-functions-and-associations-statutory-code-practice>

³ http://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2234/lic-passlic.pdf

⁴ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/servicescode_0.pdf

Section 4: Policy Document

A2.2 Rolling stock accessibility information

A2.3 Passenger journey information on trains

A3 Ticketing and fares (certain requirements do not apply)

A4 Alternative accessible transport

A5 Mobility scooters and mobility aids

1.2.8 All other sections are relevant to Network Rail and the related commitments and standards of service must be included in its Accessible Travel Policy document.

1.2.9 In cases where a small part of a section does not apply to Network Rail, i.e. references to train services, this is indicated in square parentheses [].

1.3 Relevant Legislation

Railways Act 1993⁵

1.3.1 The Act contains ORR's section 4 statutory duties which ORR must take into account in exercising our economic functions. Section 4 includes a duty to have specific regard to the interests of persons who are disabled when undertaking its general duty to promote the interests of users of railway services.

1.3.2 One of the ways that ORR achieves this duty is by requiring licence holders to establish and comply with an Accessible Travel Policy that states how they will protect the interests of disabled people who use their trains and stations.

Human Rights Act 1998

1.3.3 The Human Rights Act requires public bodies to act in accordance with the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. As a transport provider, you should provide services in a manner that is compatible with the requirements of the Act.

1.3.4 The rights provided by the Convention include a qualified right of protection from discrimination, which is set out in Article 14. Article 14 states that the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set out in the European Convention on Human Rights shall be secured without 'discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'. This means that the protection provided by Article 14 only applies to matters which are covered within

⁵ S.71B of the Railways Act 1993 also imposes an obligation on the Department for Transport to prepare and revise a Code of Practice, after consultation with DPTAC that protects the interests of users of railway passenger services who are disabled. The document that currently fulfils that obligation is the Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations; a joint Code of Practice. This is authored by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland, after consultation with DPTAC and MACS respectively.

the Convention. The European Court of Human Rights has determined that ‘other status’ includes the grounds of disability’.

Transport Act 2000

1.3.5 The Transport Act 2000, in so far as it addresses railways provided the first major change in the structure of the privatised railway system established under the Railways Act 1993. In particular for the purposes of this Accessible Travel Policy guidance, section 248 sets out a requirement that, in broad terms, if a person who provides railway carriage services instead provides substitute road services, those substitute road services, shall as far as reasonably practicable, allow disabled passengers to undertake their journeys safely and in reasonable comfort.

Equality Act 2010

1.3.6 The Equality Act 2010 entered into force on 1 October 2010 and consolidated previous anti-discrimination legislation into a single Act. The previous Disabled People’s Protection Policy guidance referred to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which is no longer in force.

1.3.7 The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

1.3.8 Part 3 of the Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for service providers or public authorities to discriminate against a service user on the basis of a protected characteristic. This Part applies whether the service is being provided by the public sector or privately, and whether that service is for payment or otherwise. Service providers have a legal obligation under section 29 of the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate against people on the basis of a protected characteristic. This includes by refusing to provide them with a service, by terminating a service provided to them, by not providing them with the service in the manner or on the terms which are usually offered to the public, or subjecting them to any other detriment concerning the service provided.

1.3.9 In respect of people with disabilities, there is an additional duty on service providers to make ‘reasonable adjustments’. This applies where a provision, criterion or practice puts a person with a disability at a substantial disadvantage compared with a person who is not disabled. It also applies where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Finally, it applies where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to persons who are not disabled if an auxiliary aid is not provided, to take reasonable steps to provide the auxiliary aid. There are a few exceptions to

this duty⁶ and providers should familiarise themselves with the exact scope of the duty.

1.3.10 The test of what is a reasonable adjustment is by its nature an objective one and whether an adjustment is reasonable depends on all the circumstances including:

- a. how practical it is for the organisation to make the change;
- b. the cost of the change;
- c. the impact of the change on other service users;
- d. the organisation's resources and size; and
- e. whether financial support is available to help the organisation make it.

1.3.11 In agreeing an Accessible Travel Policy with an operator, ORR would expect to see evidence that the operator has broadly anticipated the requirements of disabled people and reflected these in their policies, practices and procedures in accordance with Part 3 of the Equality Act 2010. In following this guidance to produce an Accessible Travel Policy, and following that Accessible Travel Policy thereafter, we expect that an operator will be able to demonstrate compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. However, the onus is on the operator to ensure that they comply with the Equality Act 2010, as failure to do so could render them liable to civil court proceedings.

1.3.12 Operators should also make themselves familiar with Part 12, Chapter 3 of the Equality Act 2010 which deals with rail vehicle accessibility regulations.

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ORR is required to have due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (relevant protected characteristics are – age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation);
- fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share.

This is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty. ORR has had due regard to this duty in drafting this guidance, and will continue to have regard to it when assessing licence holders' Accessible Travel Policies submitted for approval.

⁶ For example, the duty does not extend to taking steps to alter or remove physical features of rail vehicles themselves (paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 3 of EA10), nor does the s.29 duty apply to anything which is instead governed by the PRO Regulation EC1371/2007.

EC Rail Passenger Rights & Obligations (EC1371/2007)

- 1.3.13 The Passenger Rights and Obligations Regulation (PRO) entered into force on 3 December 2009 and aims at establishing rights and obligations for rail passenger service users in order to improve the efficiency and attractiveness of rail transport for passengers. In Great Britain, this has been implemented through the Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations Regulations 2010, and all parts of EC1371/2007 are now in effect (the last set of GB exemptions for domestic services expired in December 2019).
- 1.3.14 Operators will need to be mindful of the requirements of the PRO when developing their policies and practices. In particular, Articles 19 to 25 inclusive give certain rights to Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility (DPRM). Passengers have rights to information, reservations and tickets, assistance, care and compensation in the event of delay or cancellation, free-of-charge assistance (for persons with disabilities and/or reduced mobility), compensation in the event of an accident, and a system of national enforcement bodies (NEBs) and complaint handlers.
- 1.3.15 In December 2019, the European Council agreed to the Commission's Proposal to recast and modernise Regulation EC1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations, including in the area of assistance for passengers with reduced mobility. The effect on GB operators will depend on the date the recast comes into effect (during or after the GB transition period), and, operators will need to be aware of the proposed changes and when they will take effect.

Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable) Regulations (2010)

- 1.3.16 These Regulations (commonly known as RVAR) aim to set standards designed to improve accessibility for disabled people on light rail passenger vehicles. This includes metro, underground and tram systems, which are not subject to the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011 (nor therefore Persons with Reduced Mobility – Technical Specifications for Interoperability (PRM-TSI), see below).
- 1.3.16 RVAR cover the areas of a rail vehicle accessed by the passenger, including boarding devices, doors, controls, floors, seats and passenger information. RVAR apply to vehicles entering into service from 1 January 1999.
- 1.3.18 DfT sets the target for all rail vehicles in Great Britain – both heavy and light rail – to be accessible by no later than 1 January 2020 (unless appropriate exemptions are in place). Operators should be mindful of the requirements of this legislation when developing their policies and practices.

Railways (Interoperability) Regulations (2011)

- 1.3.19 These regulations implement European Directives which have the purpose of establishing common operational standards and practices across European railways. They require new, upgraded or renewed structural subsystems or

vehicles to be authorised, before they can be used on the mainline railway. Operators should be mindful of the requirements of this legislation when developing their policies and practices.

Persons with reduced mobility – PRM-TSI (1300/2014)

- 1.3.20 PRM-TSI relates to the accessibility of the EU's rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. This does not include light rail or metros, which are covered by RVAR in the UK and which is outlined separately above.
- 1.3.21 The legislation provides the technical specifications for trains, stations and other facilities. It includes items such as lighting, door widths, toilets, clearances and seats. This is mandatory for all new equipment and provides guidelines for how refurbished or upgraded equipment should meet the requirements. It does not provide any guidance for safety, emergency response (e.g. train evacuation) or the competence required for staff to assist passengers.
- 1.3.22 Annex 2.2 contains the following definition: “Person with disabilities and person with reduced mobility’ means any person who has a permanent or temporary physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective use of transport on an equal basis with other passengers or whose mobility when using transport is reduced due to age.”

Consumer Rights Act 2015

- 1.3.23 The Consumer Rights Act 2015 provides to passengers a route to redress, and potentially a full or partial refund, should an operator fail to provide a service with reasonable care and skill and / or where information provided to a passenger before purchasing a ticket, whether oral or in writing, (and relied upon by the passenger in making the purchase) is not adhered to.

Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000

- 1.3.24 The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) came into force on 30 August 2000, and apply to buses and coaches with a capacity of more than twenty-two passengers which are used to provide local and scheduled services. The Regulations extend to cover such buses and coaches being used as rail replacement vehicles. These Regulations require that all buses with more than 22 seats, and all such coaches by January 2020, have to be accessible, safe and comfortable for disabled people including wheelchair users. Failure to comply is a criminal offence under the Equality Act 2010. The Secretary of State for Transport can permit coach and bus operators that provide rail replacement services to apply for time-limited special authorisations pursuant to section 178 of the Equality Act 2010.⁷

⁷ At the time of publication such special authorisations had been provided until 31 December 2020.

1.4 Maintaining this guidance

- 1.4.1 Assisted travel is a vital service for disabled people and others that may need assistance from railway staff to complete their journey. ORR is committed to ensuring train and station operators, including Network Rail, comply with their obligations to provide this assistance to which rail passengers are entitled. Our vision is of a railway network where passengers can request assistance with confidence and ease: safe in the knowledge that it will be provided reliably, effectively and consistently by staff that have the training, knowledge and attitude to do so with confidence and skill – irrespective of train company or station operator.
- 1.4.2 Expectations of the service will continue to grow as rolling stock and stations become increasingly accessible, and as the use of smart technology to improve the passenger experience becomes more widespread. ORR will keep this guidance on writing Accessible Travel Policies under more frequent review in the light of experience and regular consultation with licensed operators and disabled people's organisations. This will enable substantive developments in operating practice, technology and good practice to be kept under review and reflected more quickly in the experience of passengers.
- 1.4.3 ORR will consult on proposals for any substantive changes to the guidance. We will publish revised guidance, if appropriate, following the consultation. ORR will continue to undertake monitoring and investigation of how Accessible Travel Policies are working in practice to ensure that passengers benefit from the commitments made by licensees in this area.

1.5 ORR contact information

- 1.5.1 We encourage operators, if they have any questions about any part of this guidance, to seek advice from the Consumer team at ORR (contact details below).

E-mail: ATP@orr.gov.uk

Consumer Policy Team
Office of Rail and Road
25 Cabot Square
London
E14 4QZ

Section 2: General requirements

2.1 Name, structure and format of Accessible Travel Policies

2.1.1 As set out in section 1.2 passenger train and station operator licences have an obligation for operators to produce Accessible Travel Policies. The 'Accessible Travel Policy' condition of passenger and station operator licences requires licence holders to:

"Establish and thereafter comply with:

(a) a statement of policy; and

(b) a detailed body of arrangements, procedures, services and other benefits to be implemented or provided by the licence holder designed to protect the interests of people who are disabled in their use of trains of which the licence holder is the operator pursuant to this licence and to facilitate such use (together 'the Accessible Travel Policy')."

2.1.2 **In meeting the above licence obligation, operators must adhere to the document structure set out below when producing their Accessible Travel Policy.**



1. Passenger leaflet

This customer-facing document **must** be titled Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers.

It **must** be structured as follows (detailed guidance is in **Section 3**):

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Assistance: what is available and how to obtain it

3.3 What to expect – our commitment to you

- a. Before you travel
- b. At the station
- c. On the train
- d. If things do not go as planned

3.4 Where to get more information and how to get in touch

It **must** be produced as a DL-sized leaflet. It **must** also be provided in a range of alternative formats as set out in section C, A2.1.

It **must** be written in Plain English and **may** achieve Crystal Mark accreditation⁸⁸.

2. Policy document

This policy document **must** be titled 'Accessible Travel Policy'. It **must** be structured as follows (detailed guidance is in **Section 4**).

A. Commitments to providing assistance

A1 Booking and providing assistance

A2 Information provision

A2.1 Accessible Travel Policy documentation including alternative formats

A2.2 Stations and rolling stock accessibility information (**to be provided separately – see 3 overleaf**)

A2.3 Passenger journey information (online, at stations, on trains)

- Train departures and arrivals

⁸⁸ Details on how to achieve Crystal Mark accreditation can be found here: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/services/crystal-mark/frequently-asked-questions.html>

- Connections and wayfinding
- Delays and disruption

A2.4 Information points, help points and contact centres

A2.5 Websites

A3 Ticketing and fares

A4 Alternative accessible transport

A5 Scooters and mobility aids

A6 Delays, disruptions and emergencies

A7 Station facilities

A8 Redress

B. Strategy and Management

B1 Strategy

B2 Management arrangements

B3 Monitoring and evaluation

B4 Access improvements

B5 Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

B6 Staff training

It **must** be produced as an A4-sized document in both Word and PDF format. It **must** also be provided in a range of alternative formats as set out in section 4, paragraph A2.1.

For the purposes of this guidance, where these documents are referred to collectively, the term 'Accessible Travel Policy' will be used.

Where the document 'Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers' is referred to, the term 'passenger leaflet' will be used.

Where the document 'Accessible Travel Policy' is referred to, the term 'policy document' will be used.

3. Stations and rolling stock accessibility information

See section 4, A2.2. for further details on the documents that form part of the Accessible Travel Policy but which that must be provided separately online and on request.

- 2.1.3 The table below provides an overview of the documentation operators must provide:

Accessible Travel Policy				
	Passenger Leaflet	Policy Document	Rolling stock information	Stations information
Train operators	At stations, online and on request	Online and on request	Online and on request	Online and on request
Network Rail	Station Guides at stations, online and on request	Online and on request	N/A	Online and on request

2.2. Approval and review of Accessible Travel Policies

- 2.2.1 All licensed operators **must** have an Accessible Travel Policy compliant with this guidance.

Approval of Accessible Travel Policies

- 2.2.2 When submitting Accessible Travel Policies to ORR for approval, operators **must** submit the documents electronically to ATP@orr.gov.uk . ORR will approve each operator's Accessible Travel Policy. Operators are not required to fully design or make ready documents for publication before submitting them to ORR, to avoid potentially wasteful costs.
- 2.2.3 At the time of submission, operators **must** confirm that they have sought and considered feedback from local groups such as their passenger panel, accessibility forum and local user groups, as appropriate. Operators **may** also choose to consult other stakeholders on their draft but ORR will formally consult with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) (or Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland - MACS, as relevant for operators serving locations in Scotland), Transport Focus and (where relevant) London

TravelWatch on the draft Accessible Travel Policy documents during the approval process and collate a single set of comments to feed back to the operator.

- 2.2.4 New operators **must** obtain approval for their Accessible Travel Policy prior to a licence being granted. Drafts should be submitted to ORR as early as possible for initial comment and at least twelve weeks before the intended start of operations. We aim to approve the documents at least four weeks prior to the start of operations, but this is dependent on the operator working with us to make the necessary changes to their draft Accessible Travel Policy to ensure it complies with the guidance.
- 2.2.5 Once we have approved the draft as appropriate, we will issue an approval letter to the operator, to which will be annexed a copy of the approved Accessible Travel Policy. This will also be published on our website.
- 2.2.6 The final version **must** be published on the operator's website and notified to us and to DPTAC (and/or MACS) and Transport Focus (or London TravelWatch) by the **operator by the start of operations. Hard copies of the revised Passenger Leaflet must** be available to passengers at staffed stations within eight weeks of the approval date. The operator **must** inform ORR when these hard copies have been made available. Where exceptional circumstances mean that these deadlines cannot be met for any reason, this **must** be agreed with ORR in advance.
- 2.2.7 If an operator has any questions about writing their Accessible Travel Policies or the approval process, they can contact ORR for advice at ATP@orr.gov.uk.

Review of Accessible Travel Policies

- 2.2.8 Accessible Travel Policies **must** be reviewed by operators annually from the date of approval, or more frequently to ensure that they are as up-to-date as possible where there is a change in policy or procedure. ORR can also require the licence holder to carry out a review of the Accessible Travel Policy or any part of it or the manner in which it has been implemented, with a view to determining whether any change should be made to it.
- 2.2.9 As part of the review, operators **must**:
- Update their Accessible Travel Policy to reflect any changes to policies that may have occurred since the last approval or review;
 - Update station accessibility information where changes may have occurred;
 - Detail the extent to which any increase in the availability of accessible public service vehicles compliant with PSVAR and alternative accessible vehicles has been taken advantage of in the contracts with suppliers of such vehicles;
 - Refresh information provided about any accessibility improvements that have been or are being carried out, or that are planned; and

- Provide details of any key actions they have identified to improve performance.
- 2.2.10 Operators **must** submit their Accessible Travel Policy to the ORR for review at least six weeks before the anniversary of the date on which the Accessible Travel Policy was initially approved. The documents **must** be submitted electronically to ATP@orr.gov.uk with any proposed changes clearly marked.
- 2.2.11 At the time of submission, operators **must** indicate how they have sought and considered feedback from local groups such as their passenger panel, accessibility forum and local user groups, as appropriate.
- 2.2.12 If the operator is proposing significant or material changes to its Accessible Travel Policy, ORR will undertake a review to inform our approval the revised Accessible Travel Policy. Significant or material changes are where policy or procedure changes may have a significant impact, positive or negative, on a number of passengers – this could include changes to the notice period for booked assistance, staffing at stations or on trains or rolling stock accessibility, for example. It does not include updates to the station accessibility information to reflect improvement works.
- 2.2.13 ORR will consult with DPTAC (and/or MACS, as relevant for operators serving locations in Scotland), Transport Focus and (where relevant) London TravelWatch on any significant or material changes. When approving a revised Accessible Travel Policy, ORR will issue an approval letter to the operator, to which will be annexed a copy of the approved Accessible Travel Policy. This will also be published on ORR’s website.
- 2.2.14 If an operator considers the proposed changes are not material or significant, the operator **must** confirm this to ORR with a brief summary of the proposed changes. In these circumstances, ORR will consider whether it agrees with this. If it does, ORR will not need to undertake a formal review and approve the changes. If ORR considers that the proposed changes are in fact material or significant, it will conduct a formal review in order to inform our approval as above.
- 2.2.15 The final branded version **must** be available on the operator’s website, provided to ORR for publication on our website and notified to DPTAC (or MACS) and Transport Focus (or London TravelWatch) by the operator within one week of the approval or anniversary date, as relevant. Hard copies at staffed stations **must** also be refreshed within eight weeks. Where exceptional circumstances mean that these deadlines cannot be met for any reason, this **must have** been agreed with ORR in advance.

Section 3: Passenger Leaflet

[This Section does not apply to Network Rail. Network Rail **must** instead produce a document entitled 'Network Rail station guide for disabled and older people, as set out in **Appendix F.**]

To provide assured confidence to disabled and older rail travellers at every stage of their journey, and to ensure that they understand what assistance operators can offer, in the **passenger leaflet** operators **must** provide an explanation of:

- how to book assistance;
- what assistance they can and cannot offer; and
- where to get further information.

The following structure and content **must** be adhered to:

3.1 Introduction

Introduces in Plain English the purpose of the leaflet (i.e. to inform people that require assistance or additional information to travel by rail of the help that is available and how to obtain it).

3.2 Assistance: what is available and how to get it (see also section 4: A1, A3, A4, A5)

Explains that passengers that require assistance have two options:

- A. They can turn up at any station that they have identified is accessible to them and request assistance on to a train from a member of staff, or via a help point or a Freephone number – either this will be provided or, where reasonably practicable, alternative accessible transport offered at no extra cost to the passenger; this may explain that where assistance has not been booked in advance it may take a period of time to be provided; or
- B. Where travel is being arranged in advance, they can book assistance; this **must** explain that the maximum notice they need to provide is [XX] hours – licence holders that require less notice **must** clearly set out in what circumstances this is possible – and how passengers can book, including the relevant details for doing so online, by e-mail, over the phone, text relay, and video relay service (if applicable). It **must** make clear that assistance for any journey, including those with multiple connections using multiple train companies, can be booked using these channels. It **must** also ensure that passengers understand under what circumstances alternative accessible transport might be offered (e.g. when travelling to or from an inaccessible station); where an operator runs trains with no second person on-board to unstaffed or part-staffed stations, it **must** set out the extent to which assistance can be provided by on-board staff, station staff or

mobile staff - where such working practices are routinely operated or can be accommodated.

Lists briefly the types of assistance that are available, to include:

- Journey planning
- Assistance with getting on and off the train
- Assistance around the station and to the platform, including when connecting between different train services, or from train to public transport / taxi / car park
- Purchasing tickets, making it clear that Advance fares can be booked at the same time as booking assistance via Passenger Assist
- Obtaining seat reservations and booking dedicated spaces (where applicable), including whether this is possible or advisable on the day of travel
- Explaining what services and facilities are available on the train and at the station
- Help with luggage
- Boarding with scooters or other mobility aids (if applicable)

Briefly explain that staff are trained to assist passengers with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

3.3 What to expect: our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey (see section 4: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8)

3.3a Before you travel

Commits to providing the information passengers need when planning their journey, irrespective of disability. This must set out briefly how passengers can obtain help with ticket purchase (which may include seeking help from staff at the gateline) and journey planning and how to obtain information that is useful to passengers when planning their journey themselves, including:

- station and train facilities and accessibility information, including staff availability, disabled parking spaces and any temporary reductions in accessibility (including of toilet facilities)
- train times and routes
- details of delays, disruption and emergencies (including emergency or temporary timetables)
- how to purchase a ticket, including the details of any discounts (which must include the national discounts available to blind and visually impaired)

passengers travelling with a companion in England and Wales, blind persons in Scotland⁹, and to passengers who stay in their wheelchair during a journey¹⁰), and railcards (which must include the Disabled Person's Railcard); this must state that if a disabled person is unable to easily purchase a ticket at the station where the journey starts then the appropriate fare (including discount if applicable) can be paid en route without penalty

- any restrictions on the use of wheelchairs, powerchairs, scooters and other mobility aids (to include limitations on weight and dimensions), and (where applicable) how to obtain a scooter card, assistance card or priority card
- any useful mobile apps

3.3b At the station

Commits to assisting passengers at stations, irrespective of disability. This must be briefly set out in general:

- what sort of facilities are available at stations to help passengers and their hours of operation, including where to obtain useful information; and
- how assistance will be provided at the station (including with ticket purchase, interchange, boarding and alighting), and what steps the passenger can take to make themselves known to staff - setting out the differences between stations that have staff and those that are unstaffed for all or some of the time; this may include how long before departure a passenger is recommended to arrive¹¹, details of any designated meeting and information points, and how to recognise the person that will be providing assistance.

3.3c On the train

Commits to assisting passengers on the train, irrespective of disability. This must be briefly set out:

- what facilities are available on trains to help passengers, including aural and visual information, dedicated spaces for wheelchairs, how priority use of the wheelchair space for disabled people will be enforced, priority seats, how companions and family members travelling with the passenger will be seated, and toilets;
- any assistance that may be expected on board, and what steps the operator would take if passengers have additional requirements;
- any restrictions, including maximum dimensions for wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility aids; and

⁹ See: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/46500.aspx

¹⁰ See: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/44965.aspx

¹¹ Operators must not require passengers to turn up more than 60 minutes in advance.

- that when the train reaches its final destination, passengers will be assisted off within 5 minutes of arrival, where reasonably practicable.

3.3d If things do not go as planned

Commits to assisting passengers at time of disruption, delay or emergency and providing redress when assistance fails. This must briefly set out:

- what assistance will be provided when there is disruption, to include the provision of alternative accessible transport where appropriate;
- how passengers who have booked assistance in advance will be informed when there is disruption (which may include but must not be limited to via social media);
- how passengers will be informed at the station and on the train when there is disruption (this may include the use of social media or alerts via apps);
- what assistance the passenger should expect in case of emergency, and any action the passenger should take;
- what redress is available when assistance fails and how to claim it; and
- how passengers can inform the operator that something has gone wrong.

3.4 Where to get more information and how to get in touch (see section 4: A2, B5)

Sets out where further information may be obtained free of charge and how to get in touch with the operator. This must include:

- how to obtain the passenger leaflet in alternative formats;
- a very brief explanation of what the policy document is and how to obtain it (including in alternative formats);
- where to obtain stations and rolling stock accessibility information;
- who to contact on the day of travel with any queries or issues;
- contact centre opening hours and contact details (to include a dedicated text relay number and, where offered, how to get in touch via video relay);
- the National Freephone Passenger Assist and Textphone Free SMS Passenger Assist Forwarding Service contact numbers;
- how to provide feedback or make a complaint; this must set out that if the passenger is not happy with the way the complaint is dealt with, the passenger can contact the Rail Ombudsman (and provide the Rail Ombudsman's contact details);

- how to contact the operator via social media, including any Twitter accounts used for providing information to passengers; and
- how to contact the operator to get involved with its work with disabled people to improve accessibility.

Section 4: Policy document

A. Commitments to providing assistance

In addition to commitments and information provided in the **passenger leaflet**, in its **policy document** each licensed operator **must** set out how it will provide assistance to disabled people as follows.

A1 Booking and providing assistance to passengers

A.1.1 Each licensed operator **must** set out its commitment to participate in a reservation system for disabled people whose journey begins at any of the stations at which that operator's trains are scheduled to stop, and its commitment to improving the reliability of the service. The current system is Passenger Assist. To ensure consistency for passengers, operators **must** use the name Passenger Assist when referring to the system using any of the channels with which they communicate to passengers (see section A2.5 Websites).

A.1.2 Operators **must** also set out how they will deliver the following commitments:

- a. provide sufficient resource to maintain Passenger Assist and improve performance;
- b. From 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2021, permit passengers to book assistance through Passenger Assist until 10pm the day before travel. From 1 April 2021 not require passengers to give more than 6 hours' notice when booking through Passenger Assist¹². From 1 April 2022, not require passengers to give more than 2 hours' notice when booking through Passenger Assist. For international rail journeys, operators must not require passengers to give more than 48 hours' notice when booking through Passenger Assist. Any reduction in the notice period below those set out above, due to a franchise commitment or for any other reason, **must** also be clearly communicated to passengers. Where an operator's notice period is already shorter than the relevant minimum standard set out here, the operator is not obliged to revert to the minimum standard.
- c. provide assistance, when booked in advance through Passenger Assist, at any station during the hours that trains are scheduled to serve that station, and ensuring that details of these times are available on the National Rail Enquiries website. When bookings are made via a contact centre and the journey involves a station with an accessibility classification A, B, or C (see Appendix B) the operator **must** ensure that relevant accessibility information on the National Rail Enquiries station web pages (see commitment k. below) is accessed and communicated to the passenger to ensure the journey can be completed; this **must** include providing the relevant information by post on request.

¹² The 6-hour notice period applies only during the opening hours of operators' Passenger Assist contact centres. (March 2021 clarification)

- d. ensure that, where assistance has been arranged in advance, operators assist passengers off a train at its final destination as quickly as possible, and within a maximum of 5 minutes, wherever reasonably practicable; passengers booking such assistance **must** be informed of this as part of the booking process (e.g. in a booking confirmation).
- e. where assistance is to be provided by station-based staff, in order that staff at the boarding station are able to ensure that the passenger will be met by a member of staff at the alighting station, operators **must** provide a dedicated telephone number and a member of staff responsible for receiving calls from staff, for every station that the operator manages; assistance staff **must** also follow the handover protocol where it applies. In meeting these requirements all operators **must** follow the passenger assistance handover protocol technical guidance set out at Appendix C; this technical guidance **does not apply** where ORR has agreed an alternative process or technology, with equivalent functionality and effectiveness, may be used by the operator.
- f. provide assistance to disabled and older people who arrive at a station and require assistance to allow them to travel, but where assistance has not been arranged in advance, where reasonably practicable¹³. Operators **must** provide clear and reasonable justification to passengers where assistance cannot be provided for any reason; where an operator may be considering a change to train or station staffing levels, they **must** have clear measures in place to ensure that passengers who have not booked assistance in advance can still receive it in a safe manner. Within the context of the facilities available at stations, they **must** submit to the ORR an assessment of where passengers are most at risk of not being able to receive the required assistance, and of the plans to mitigate this risk.
- g. make ramps that are fit for purpose, available at all staffed stations (either at the station or on board the train) to facilitate the boarding or alighting of the train by disabled people, whether assistance has been booked in advance or not; in cases where assistance to board or alight from a train at an unstaffed station using a ramp has been booked, the operator **must** ensure that they make a member of staff with a ramp available to deliver the assistance.
- h. when a passenger wishes to book assistance through Passenger Assist in advance to board from or alight to a part-staffed or unstaffed station, operators **must** consider the needs of the passenger and their intended journey; this **must** include consideration of the staffing levels on the train and at the station, the level of accessibility of the station to the passenger and the type of assistance being requested. The ORR will require from new licence holders an assessment of where passengers are most at risk of not being able to receive the required assistance, and their plans to mitigate this risk. The ORR will not approve an Accessible Travel Policy that describes an inflexible policy of only providing

¹³ Noting the duty of operators under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments

alternative accessible transport to an unstaffed but otherwise accessible station, without first considering other options; operators **may** wish to use on-board staff, station staff or mobile staff - where such working practices are routinely operated or can be accommodated - to provide the assistance required.

- i. work with other train and station operators, to agreed and established processes, to ensure that, where a disabled passenger's journey involves changes or connections with other operators' services, assistance can be arranged through Passenger Assist through a single point of contact. This **must** ensure that the booking allows the passenger sufficient time to make their connections. Where reasonably practicable, assistance **must** be provided when trains are re-platformed at short notice and where aural and visual announcements are made at short notice. This **may** include sighted guidance for visually impaired people, for example.
- j. make clear in their policy what assistance their staff can and cannot provide disabled passengers in connecting to other services operating from the station, such as light rail, buses and taxis. This policy **may** include providing assistance to a taxi rank or bus stop that lies outside the station boundary. Where access by Private Hire Vehicles to stations is regulated under contract with the station operator, the terms of the contract **must** include, from the earliest opportunity, the requirement for the taxi operator to provide wheelchair-accessible vehicles and a reasonable number of drivers trained in disability awareness. Operators **must** make clear whether such arrangements are in place at any of their stations.¹⁴
- k. ensure information on the National Rail Enquiries station pages is up to date and accurate, with the following fields populated for every station they operate:
 - Step-free access note
 - Assisted Travel
 - Staff help available

The step-free access note field must be filled out as follows, using the station categories set out in Appendix B:

- For stations in category A, the text **must** read: "This station has step-free access to all platforms / the platform".
- For stations in category B, the text description **must** explain the access conditions. Where this varies by platform, operators **must** provide platform number and train direction where possible. Where platforms do not have step-free access operators **must** include the phrase: "There is no step-free access to Platform [X]".

¹⁴ See **section D1** of the Code of Practice

- For stations in category C, the text **must** read: "This station does not have step-free access".

Fields ii. and iii. **must** include:

- unambiguous information on the availability of station and on-train staff to provide assistance, detailing times and capability (e.g. whether only boarding/ alighting assistance or e.g. station navigation assistance), and whether available on a turn-up-and-go basis – and if not, what notice period is required;
- Platform-train ramp availability, including whether available on a turn-up-and-go basis, and confirming that this is always available with prior notice; and
- Information for passengers requiring assistance on arrival at station, indicating where to report to staff and/or other instructions such as use of Help Points or attracting attention of on-train staff on the platform.

Passengers who request assistance **must** be made aware of any limitations and/or temporary restrictions. This **must** include updating this information within 24 hours of notification of any changes; for instance, whenever any short-term or unplanned changes are likely to have significant impact on passengers' ability to complete their journeys and this would not be captured by the weekly Knowledgebase update. This **may** include directly updating the Station Journey Planner by contacting the help desk, as appropriate.

Operators **must** state that the following are included in this commitment:

- where stations have a physical constraint that prevents some disabled people from using it;
 - where significant temporary work that affects station accessibility is being carried out;
 - where there are changes to stations that would make them temporarily inaccessible (e.g. when facilities such as lifts and toilets at stations are out of order);
 - where facilities on trains that materially affect disabled passengers' journeys are unavailable, including the use of inaccessible rolling stock on routes where stock is normally accessible, as far as this is reasonably practicable.[This bullet point does not apply to Network Rail]
- I. consistent with the relevant sections of the National Rail Conditions of Travel, provide details of their policy for assisting disabled passengers with luggage, including the points between which operator's staff are able to provide help. Where arranged in advance, operators **must** ensure that staff will be available to help. Operators **must** not charge disabled passengers for luggage assistance.

- m. make every reasonable effort to ensure that disabled passengers can obtain a seat on a train, particularly where these are not reservable, and that wheelchair users are able to use wheelchair spaces¹⁵. This includes clearly stating their policy on reserving priority seats. This **may** also include operating a priority seating card scheme. Operators **may** also consider how companions and family members (with a particular focus on children when travelling with a parent who has booked assistance) can obtain a specific seat on the train close to the disabled passenger. Where assistance has been booked, but a specific seat or wheelchair space has not been reserved, this **must** be made clear to the passenger at the time of booking to avoid misunderstanding. [This paragraph does not apply to Network Rail]
- n. consistent with the relevant sections of the National Rail Conditions of Travel, commit to the carriage of assistance dogs; where a seat or wheelchair space can be reserved, operators **may** consider how the assistance dog can also obtain sufficient space to lie down – in particular for longer journeys. [This paragraph does not apply to Network Rail].

A2 Passenger information and promotion of Assisted Travel

Information that is accessible, accurate, relevant, consistent, up-to-date and easy to understand helps provide passengers with assurance and confidence at every stage of their journey, including when journey planning prior to departure. This is particularly true where their journey involves a change of train or transfer to another mode of transport.

A2.1 Accessible Travel Policy documentation, provision and promotion

A2.1.1 The passenger leaflet [or Network Rail Station Guide] needs to be widely available so passengers understand what assistance is available and how to obtain it. Operators **must** set out how it will ensure that copies of this leaflet are:

- on display on leaflet racks and provided at ticket offices at all staffed stations called at by their services
- available online as a PDF that is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features, such as Adobe Reader
- provided in alternative formats, including audio, on request within seven working days
- available on request via the operator's website, phone and text relay
- available in prominent locations where public services are provided; this **may** include libraries, GP surgeries, job centres, Citizens Advice bureaux, hospitals, post offices etc. [This bullet point does not apply to Network Rail]

A2.1.2 Operators **must** also make their **policy document** (which **may** include alternative formats such as audio, British Sign Language video, Large Print,

¹⁵ Noting the duty of operators under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments

Easy Read, and PDF that actively considers the needs of blind and partially sighted people) available to passengers:

- online
- by request within seven working days; this **must** be without charge.

A2.1.3 Operators **must** ensure that at each station they operate there is a notice at a height that means it can be easily read by a wheelchair user setting out how to obtain the passenger leaflet and policy document.

A2.1.4 Operators calling at stations in Wales **must** provide their Accessible Travel Policy information in Welsh.

A2.2 Stations and rolling stock accessibility information

A2.2.2 Rolling stock and stations accessibility information **must** be kept up-to-date and made available to passengers:

- online, in a format that can easily be accessed using a personal mobile device; and
- in alternative formats, including print and audio, on request within seven working days.

This information **may** also be provided online as a PDF that is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features, such as Adobe Reader.

The location of this information should be referenced in the policy document as per section A2.1.

A2.2.3 Operators **must** also give a commitment to providing information about the accessibility of facilities and services at stations and on their trains on the National Rail Enquiries website (see section A1 (i) for more information on the information that must be included). To ensure consistency of information for passengers and staff, the station accessibility classifications set out in Appendix B **must** be used when describing the extent to which a station is step-free.

A2.2.4 Operators **must** also set out how they will ensure staff at stations have access to up-to-date station accessibility information and are able to provide this information to passengers on request.

A2.2.5 Operators **may** choose to provide a 'Step-free' network map to help passengers understand which journeys are more accessible. If so, the station accessibility classifications set out in **Appendix B must** be used when describing the extent to which a station is step-free.

Rolling stock

[This section on rolling stock does not apply to Network Rail]

A2.2.6 Operators **must** provide as part of their Accessible Travel Policy a separate document that gives an overview of the types of rolling stock [normally] used on their services, including information on the general accessibility of each type and details of the routes on which different types of rolling stock are normally scheduled to run. This **must** include information on whether and to what extent the following is provided on each rolling stock type:

- Wheelchair space
- Scooter / mobility aid acceptance
- Accessible toilet
- Standard toilet
- Boarding ramp
- Priority seating
- Aural information
- Visual information
- On-train staff to provide assistance

Stations

A2.2.7 Operators **must** also provide as part of their Accessible Travel Policy a separate document that gives details of services and facilities at all of the stations they manage and other stations called at by their services, including relevant stations operated by Network Rail.

As a minimum, this **must** include information on the following for each station:

- Staffing (indicating whether the station is staffed full-time, part-time or unstaffed).
- Step-free access (categorising all stations A-C in accordance with the definitions used in Appendix B)
- Designated disabled parking (indicating whether designated disabled parking bays are available at the station).
- Seating (indicating whether there is seating at the station that is compliant with the Joint Code of Practice, and details where this varies by platform) and heated waiting areas, indicating opening times and the level of accessibility.
- Toilets (indicating whether standard and/or accessible toilet facilities are available, their opening times and whether they are Radar Key controlled).

- Ticket sales facilities (indicating whether the station has ticket machines, smart ticketing readers, and ticket office counter(s)).
- Passenger Assist meeting point (indicating whether the station has a designated Passenger Assist meeting point, with information as to where it is located).
- Customer information systems (indicating whether this includes visual, aural or both types of information system).
- Secure Station accreditation (indicating whether the station has Secure Station accreditation).
- Catering (indicating the range and type of facilities available).

A2.2.8 Operators are encouraged to define their understanding of these categories more clearly if appropriate. They **may** also wish to consider providing additional information that will be of use to disabled passengers, which might include:

- wheelchair availability;
- ramp for train access;
- induction loops;
- accessible set-down and pick-up point;
- automatic doors; and
- platform-train stepping distance.

A2.3 Passenger journey information

A2.3.1 Many passengers who require assistance may only travel by rail infrequently; they may not know where or how to access important information. This may be particularly acute during times of disruption, diversion and delay. As follows, operators **must** set out how relevant information will be communicated accurately, clearly and consistently to passengers, including those with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, at every stage of the passenger journey - whether at home, online, on the move, at the station or on the train.¹⁶

a. Train departures and arrivals information: this **must** include a commitment to providing, wherever possible, clear and consistent aural and visual information: both at the platform and on the approach to stations. On the train, station announcements **must** provide sufficient time for passengers requiring assistance to prepare to alight. [The requirement for on-train announcements does not apply to Network Rail]

b. Connections and wayfinding: this **must** include how the operator will work with local authorities to ensure that stations are clearly and consistently

¹⁶ **Section A1** of the Code of Practice also provides standards on guidance on pre-travel information

signposted, and **may** also include working with mobile application developers and others to ensure disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility are able to navigate easily and confidently around stations – including on arrival (by connecting train service, taxi, car, public transport, cycle, on foot or in a wheelchair, scooter or using another mobility aid) when locating the ticket office, toilet and other facilities, and when navigating to the correct platform; this **must** also include how information about the availability of onward accessible transport from the station, such as accessible taxis, will be communicated, both prior to their journey and at the station.

When a passenger is travelling with more than one operator, assistance information for the entire journey **must** be relayed by the operator initiating the journey to passengers booking through Passenger Assist.

c. Delays, diversions and disruption¹⁷: where passengers have booked assistance in advance through Passenger Assist that, because of service disruption (which may include, but not be limited to, planned industrial action, engineering works or an emergency timetable), is no longer valid, operators **must** set out how they will contact passengers to inform them, provide them with information on the use of rail replacement services and discuss with them their individual needs and preferences in coming to alternative arrangements; this **may** include but must not be limited to the use of social media. Operators **must** also set out:

- for planned disruption, how they will inform passengers, including those with mental, sensory or intellectual impairments, in advance with appropriate, accurate and timely information about the accessibility of the rail replacement transport they will be providing for the affected service and the options available to the passenger to be able to make their journey;
- how they will inform passengers, including those with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments on board trains and at stations when there is disruption, a diversion or delay with no advance warning, whether assistance has been booked or not; this **must** include how clear aural and visual information will be provided to direct passengers to accessible substitute transport¹⁸;
- the mechanism to allow passengers to inform the operator when there is a problem, particularly at unstaffed stations but also on trains (such as an accessible toilet out of order); and when the level of accessibility of facilities at a station or on a train is less than that normally provided (e.g. as a result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities) how details of the

¹⁷ N.B. Condition 4 of the passenger train operator's licence requires train operators to provide appropriate, accurate and timely information to enable passengers and prospective passengers to plan and make their journeys with a reasonable degree of assurance, including when there is disruption.

¹⁸ Noting the duty of operators under the Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable adjustments.

change to station or rolling stock accessibility, including a timescale for the expected return to the normal level of accessibility at the station, will be publicised. This **may** include providing notices on websites, appropriate signage at the station and on the route, as necessary, and ensuring that staff are kept informed. In particular operators **must** consider how, where reasonably practicable, passengers will be informed when an accessible toilet is out of order, providing sufficient time for alternative travel options to be considered as required. [The references to train facilities and rolling stock accessibility information do not apply to Network Rail]

A2.4 Information points, help points and contact centres

A2.4.1 Passengers who require assistance **must** be able to get all the information they need at a station from a single source.

A2.4.2 Operators **must** set out how they will provide the following clearly-marked information points at all 'larger' stations¹⁹, which:

- a. are designed and equipped to make it easy for disabled people to use, with timetables, posters, information leaflets and other materials placed so that both wheelchair users and standing passengers (who may be unable to stoop) can use them, wherever possible; it **may** be necessary in some circumstances to provide some or all of these at different heights to ensure that they can be accessed by everyone, where this is feasible
- b. are open whenever the booking office is open
- c. are clearly signposted and locating them in an obvious position close to, or on, the concourse
- d. have available up-to-date information on:
 - the facilities, services and accessibility of all the stations at which it calls
 - timetables
 - fares
 - connections
 - delays, disruption, diversions and emergencies
 - confirmation of any help arrangements that have been made through Passenger Assist, including bookings by other operators
 - the services and facilities provided by other operators calling at the station, as well as the accessibility of other transport available near the station. If

¹⁹ Larger stations are defined here as Network Rail category A, B and C stations; largest are defined here as Network Rail category A stations.

staff are unable to provide information on the services and facilities of other operators, or the accessibility of other transport, they **must** be able to direct passengers to where such information can be found

- A2.4.3 Booking offices themselves **may** be used as information points if suitably marked and equipped.
- A2.4.4 Operators **must** provide clearly marked designated meeting points at stations for use by people that have booked assistance to meet staff.²⁰ Operators **may** also consider using dedicated staff to provide assistance at the 'largest' stations²¹.
- A2.4.5 Operators **must** set out how they will ensure that, where reasonably practicable, at every station it is clearly indicated at a height that means it can be easily read by a wheelchair user how passengers are able to speak to a human operator who is able to provide assistance and service information: this **may** be in person, via a help point or, where there is sufficient mobile phone coverage, a Freephone number. Service information available at the station **must** be obtainable via these channels. At unstaffed stations, easily accessible information **must** be provided regarding the nearest staffed station.
- A2.4.6 Operators **must** state their commitment to ensuring that all telephone services include providing a text relay number; they **may** also provide a video relay service.

A2.5 Websites

- A2.5.1 Operators **must** commit to working towards achieving the industry-recognised WCAG standards. Where relevant, operators **must** highlight the accessibility of their website and provide information on how the website will work with screen readers, magnifiers, voice over software and in-browser accessibility functions.
- A2.5.2 To help achieve consistency for passengers, operators **must** use the term Passenger Assist when referring to assistance booking services and **must** include an Assisted Travel icon or hyperlink on their homepage that displays that information. Operators **must** provide a source of relevant information on Assisted Travel on one page, which **must** include:
- a summary of Passenger Assist and its services in a clear and concise manner, using plain English and avoiding the use of industry jargon;
 - the necessary contact information and provisions for passengers to book assistance (including details of the National Freephone Passenger Assist line and Textphone Free SMS Passenger Assist Forwarding Service) and purchase a ticket to travel (including details of any national discounts available to disabled passengers or persons with reduced mobility);

²⁰ As required by EC1371/2007.

²¹ Defined as Network Rail Category A stations.

- c. links to or expandable sections providing information of on-board facilities and station information, including accessibility information, staff availability, contact centre opening hours, disabled parking spaces.
- d. links to or expandable sections providing information relating to any temporary reductions in accessibility and details of any delays and disruptions to facilities and services where relevant;
- e. links to or expandable sections providing information to advise passengers of any restrictions on the use of wheelchairs, power chairs, scooters and other mobility aids and (where applicable) how to obtain a scooter card, assistance card or priority card;
- f. a link to enable passengers to access the passenger document and details of how to obtain it in an accessible formats; and
- g. instructions for passengers on how they can provide feedback or make a complaint, and include details on the availability of redress for when assistance has not been delivered as booked.

A2.5.3 Where information is located elsewhere, operators **must** provide a hyperlink to it on the Assisted Travel page.

A3 Ticketing

A.3.1 Operators **must** set out how they will ensure that, where disabled passengers are unable to buy a ticket at a station before their journey, they are able to buy a ticket without penalty on the train or at their destination. [This paragraph does not apply to Network Rail]

A.3.2 Operators **must** ensure that:

- a. where automatic ticket machines are provided at stations, they have the facility to issue tickets at the reduced rate to holders of a Disabled Persons Railcard and to the holder's companion; and
- b. where a station has automatic ticket gates or manual gates, where these are unstaffed, or staff are not in attendance, they **must** be locked open²².

A3.3. Where advance tickets are available for purchase (via any of the available channels, including online, at the ticket office or via telecommunications), the operator **must** ensure that disabled passengers are unable to purchase, or warned against purchasing, tickets they cannot make use of on the operator's services e.g. due to the accessibility of rolling stock (e.g. when purchasing first class tickets, passengers should be warned if there is no wheelchair space in first class). [This paragraph does not apply to Network Rail]

A3.4 Operators **may** also consider, when reasonably practicable to do so, updating the ticket booking section of their website and, where necessary, their contact centre call handling procedures, so that when passengers indicate they have a Disabled Persons Railcard during ticket purchase they are asked whether they

²² See **section N3** of the Design Standards for Accessible Stations: A Joint Code of Practice.

require assistance with any aspect of their journey. [This paragraph does not apply to Network Rail]

- A3.5 Standards and guidance on ticket sales points are provided in section N2 of the Joint Code of Practice.

A4 Rail replacement services and alternative accessible transport

[Section A4 does not apply to Network Rail]

- A4.1 Operators **must** ensure that passengers who require assistance are able to make as much of their journey by rail as possible. However, there are circumstances under which substitute transport is provided to replace rail.
- A4.2 The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) require that public service vehicles (PSVs) **must** either be compliant with the (PSVAR), or be operated under special authorisation pursuant to s.178 of the Equality Act 2010.²³
- A4.3 Operators **must** take appropriate steps to procure, through explicit requirements in tenders for contracts with vehicle suppliers, the use of accessible PSVs that are compliant with PSVAR and alternative accessible vehicles for use where, for whatever reason, substitute transport is provided to replace rail (e.g. because of planned engineering works, industrial action or a replacement timetable).
- A4.4 Such contracts **must** be reviewed annually to consider any changes in the availability of accessible vehicles.
- A4.5 At least 12 weeks before all major planned engineering works²⁴, operators **must** take appropriate steps to:
- a. assess the requirement for accessible PSVs that are compliant with PSVAR and alternative accessible vehicles for use as substitute transport; and
 - b. where necessary, procure the use of such vehicles.
- A4.6 There are additional circumstances under which alternative accessible transport **must** be offered instead of rail. Operators **must** consider the assistance requirements of the passengers, the relative journey times involved, the accessibility of the rolling stock and stations that may be used and the planned staffing levels on board the train and at the station, including the potential for the flexible deployment of staff to the station, in order to ensure that the full range of

²³ N.B. ORR has published legal advice on the applicability of PSVAR when PSVs are used as substitute transport for rail on its website: https://orr.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/42483/accessible-travel-policy-rail-replacement-services-final-legal-advice-2020-02-06.pdf Compliance with and enforcement of PSVAR is a matter for DVSA.

²⁴ By this, we refer to engineering works planned under rules set out in Part D of the Network Code which confirms the timetable 12 weeks in advance: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/industry-and-commercial/information-for-operators/network-code/>

options can be considered. Operators **must**, where reasonably practicable, offer an option that most resembles the service provided to passengers not requiring assistance and, during all major planned engineering works, ensure waiting times for alternative accessible transport are similar to those for PSVs.

- A4.7 For the circumstances under which alternative accessible transport is offered, operators **must** therefore set out how they will provide, without extra charge, an appropriate alternative accessible service to take disabled passengers to the nearest or most convenient accessible station from where they can continue their journey. In setting this out, operators will have regard to the anticipatory nature of the duty to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. These circumstances are:
- a. where a disabled passenger or passenger with reduced mobility is unable to travel from a station because the station is inaccessible to them (e.g. because of a physical constraint);
 - b. where a disabled passenger or passenger with reduced mobility is unable to travel from a station because the rolling stock is inaccessible to them (e.g. because of a physical constraint);
 - c. where, for whatever reason, substitute transport that is inaccessible to disabled passengers is provided to replace rail (e.g. because of planned engineering works, industrial action or a replacement timetable); where there is disruption to services at short notice that, for whatever reason, makes services inaccessible to disabled passengers.
- A4.8 Standards and guidance on the provision of substitute transport (both pre-planned and emergency) are provided in section B1 of the Joint Code of Practice.²⁵
- A4.9 For transparency, operators **may** indicate what alternative accessible transport is usually provided - noting that, when providing taxis for disabled people, this will not always require an 'accessible' taxi. The need for 'accessible' taxis will depend on the specific needs of the individual passenger, which should be discussed with the passenger before taxis are arranged.

²⁵ See **Section 248** of Transport Act 2000.

A5 Mobility scooters and mobility aids

[Section A5 does not apply to Network Rail]

- A5.1 Operators **must** set out their policy regarding the carriage of mobility scooters and other mobility aids for mobility-impaired people on their trains. Operators **must** make the reasoning behind their policy clear, particularly with regard to any policy excluding the carriage of some or all mobility scooters and mobility aids. Any exclusion **must** only be as a result of an evidenced safety or physical restriction on carriage of scooters and other mobility aids.
- A5.2 Operators **may** offer a scooter card scheme which allows passengers to apply for a permit for the carriage of their scooter based on its dimensions and other relevant information reasonably requested by the operator. Rejection of an application **must** be explained.
- A5.3 Where operators do carry scooters on trains, operators **must** clearly set out whether passengers are required to transfer to a seat, rather than remain seated on their scooter while on board the train – and ensure passengers are informed.

A6 Delays, disruption to facilities and services, and emergencies

- A6.1 Disruption to facilities and services can have a significant impact on both the accessibility of rail services to persons with reduced mobility and the confidence of disabled people and other passengers with reduced mobility in travelling on the railway. Where disruption does occur, operators **must** do everything possible to ensure that, wherever possible, passengers are able to continue their journey and are not left stranded.
- A6.2 Operators **must** provide details of relevant policies and operational arrangements for meeting the needs of disabled passengers when dealing with the breakdown of facilities and services that can affect access to passenger trains and stations.
- A6.3 This **must** include details of the operator's policy with regard to assisting disabled people in making connections when trains are re-platformed at short notice, as well as information on policies and procedures relating to the provision of accessible substitute transport. Where substitute transport is inaccessible to some disabled people, alternative arrangements **must** be made, as set out at A4.
- A6.4 Where passengers have booked assistance in advance through Passenger Assist that, because of service disruption, is no longer valid, operators **must** set out how they will contact those passengers to provide information on the use of rail replacement services, discuss the individual needs and preferences of the passenger and make appropriate alternative arrangements (such as re-booking assistance). Operators **must** also provide details of arrangements for assisting disabled people when disruption occurs with no advance warning.
- A6.5 Operators **must** set how they will make reasonable efforts to provide, wherever possible, reasonable replacement facilities that are accessible when the level of accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided (e.g. as a

result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities).²⁶ Guidance on provision of information during disruption is set out in section A2.3.

- A6.6 Operators **must** also set out how they will ensure assistance is provided to disabled people at stations and on trains in the event of an emergency, including any relevant training given to staff.
- A6.7 Operators are not expected to provide details about their plans for dealing with a range of specific emergencies.

A7 Station facilities

A7.1 Left Luggage

Operators **must** set out, where left luggage facilities are available to passengers, how these will be available to persons with reduced mobility, including wheelchair users. This requires lockers of different sizes to be provided at various heights to suit the range of passengers who may wish to use them. Lockers **must** also have a mechanism that can be easily used by people with a visual impairment and/or limited strength or manual dexterity.

A7.2 Disabled Parking

Passengers who require assistance to travel by rail should be able to travel to the station by private car and park with confidence. When the provision is not compliant with section C of the Joint Code of Practice, operators **must** set out how they will ensure there are sufficient designated disabled parking bays within the station lease area, including those operated by contractors, and that these are only used by motorists who hold disabled parking badges.

A7.3 Third party provided facilities

Operators **must** set out what actions they will take to ensure that services and facilities provided by third parties are as accessible as possible. Such actions **may** include ensuring that services and facilities provided by third parties are not located where they will cause an obstruction or, where operators have a contract with a third-party service provider, making accessibility a requirement of their contract. While it is recognised that third-party service providers have their own responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, operators **must** make every effort to ensure that any services and facilities provided by others at their stations are accessible to disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility.

A7.4 Replacement facilities

Operators **must** commit to making reasonable efforts to provide, wherever possible, reasonable replacement facilities that are accessible when the level of

²⁶ Noting the duty of operators under the Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable adjustments.

accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided (e.g. as a result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities).

A7.5 Station entrances

- A7.5.1 Operators **must** give a commitment that they will not permanently close station entrances or gates if this will lead to a reduction in accessibility for disabled passengers to any platform or facility at that station, unless operators have first consulted with the DfT (or Transport Scotland in Scotland), Transport Focus (and London TravelWatch, where appropriate) and local access groups, and the changes to access have been approved by the DfT (or Transport Scotland in Scotland).
- A7.5.2 Operators **must** consider the needs of disabled people when restricting or temporarily closing access points at stations. Section F2 of the Joint Code of Practice sets out mandatory standards regarding unobstructed progress during building works.
- A7.5.3 For any permanent closure of an entrance or gate, an application for a minor modification determination would need to be made to the DfT under sections 34 and 35 of the Railways Act 2005. The DfT has issued an operational guidance note on minor modifications that is available to view on its website.²⁷

A8 Redress

- A8.1 When assistance has been booked but has not been provided as confirmed by the operator, due to a failure of the assistance service, the operator **must** provide appropriate redress to a passenger that has submitted a claim. The form and, where appropriate, value of this redress **may** be determined on a case-by-case basis to allow operators to consider the circumstances of the case. The operator **must** explain to the passenger in its response why the assistance was not provided, and what steps have been taken to ensure the failure does not reoccur. Operators **must** set out an overview of the claim process, which must be simple, straightforward and clear, and commit to promoting this to passengers, including on their website, via social media and in their passenger leaflet.
- A8.2 A claim for redress about a specific assistance failure **must** be owned by the operator of the train the passenger was travelling on, or due to travel on, when the failure took place.
- A8.3 A passenger **must** not have to submit a claim for redress to more than one operator. In cases of multiple assistance failure with a number of operators during a single multi-leg journey, the receiving operator **must** coordinate a single response on behalf of all of the operators involved. Sometimes this may not be sensible if the bulk of the assistance which was booked failed to be provided by another operator on whose train the passenger was travelling, or due to travel, when the failure took place. In this instance, it may be in the best interest of the

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/minor-modifications-operational-guidance-note>

claimant to receive a response directly from the operator primarily responsible. In this case the receiving operator **may** make arrangements to have the claim passed to the more appropriate operator. The operator **must** inform the claimant and obtain their consent when their claim is transferred to another operator.

- A8.4 Nothing in this section is intended to diminish or remove the obligations that operators have to passengers under relevant legislation, including the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the Rail Passengers Rights and Obligations Regulations or the Equality Act 2010.²⁸

²⁸ via the Equality Advice and Support Service.

B Strategy and Management

In addition to the commitments to providing assistance to passengers, set out in section 4, operators must also set out how they are:

embedding the provision of services to disabled people within their business and project planning

- continuing to improve access to the railways for disabled people and those with reduced mobility
- ensuring their staff have the resources, skills and confidence to deliver assistance to passengers; and
- measuring the success of their Accessible Travel Policies.

The following sections must be included:

B1 Strategy

B1.1 Operators **must** include in their policy document details of their strategy regarding accessibility. This **must** include a commitment to the continuous improvement of services and facilities for disabled people, details of the operator's strategy for the implementation of plans and policies for improving access and services in the coming year, as well as any other information about how operators take the needs of disabled people into account as part of their day-to-day operations and longer-term planning. Operators **must** also include information on any relevant franchise commitments and investment plans.

B2 Management arrangements

B2.1 The provision of services to disabled people is an integral part of planning and delivering rail services. In order to demonstrate this, operators **must** allocate overall responsibility for the Accessible Travel Policy to a director of the licence holder's company and should provide details of the following:

- a. how their Accessible Travel Policy is integrated into both business and project planning, and how the needs of disabled people are taken into account;
- b. the senior management reporting arrangements that are in place for the implementation of their Accessible Travel Policy;
- c. how managers and staff are made aware of their responsibilities to disabled passengers;
- d. what systems are in place to ensure that services and facilities for disabled passengers are provided according to the operator's Accessible Travel Policy and the Joint Code of Practice;

- e. whether systems are in place for assessing the return on investment of improvements for disabled passengers.

B3 Monitoring and evaluation

- B3.1 The monitoring and evaluation of performance in delivering services and facilities to disabled passengers, and acting upon the results, are crucial in ensuring that the standards of service committed to in Accessible Travel Policies are being met, as well as delivering on the commitment to continuous improvement.
- B3.2 Operators therefore **must** monitor and evaluate their performance in meeting the standards and commitments in their Accessible Travel Policy. They must set out in their Accessible Travel Policies what mechanisms they have in place to monitor and evaluate performance, which should include the use of measurable criteria where appropriate. Where operators have a commitment in their franchise agreement to monitor and evaluate performance in providing booked assistance, they **must** include details of the processes in place for doing so.
- B3.3. Operators **must** identify and set out in their Accessible Travel Policy the range of information that they use to monitor and evaluate performance. It is expected that this will largely depend on sources of data that are already available and be integrated with operators' existing arrangements for performance management, although operators are encouraged to seek more information where this would be helpful.
- B3.4. Operators **must** provide us with performance data to demonstrate they are complying with their obligations to passengers in relation to Accessible Travel Policies. This allows us to monitor operators' progress in these areas over time and improves transparency and accountability for passengers. Core data reporting requirements are set out in the 'Reference guide for ORR Core Data compliance reporting'.²⁹
- B3.5 As part of annual reviews, operators **must** provide the ORR with details of any key actions they have identified to improve performance.

B4 Access improvements

- B4.1 Operators **must** state their commitment to comply with PRM-TSI and the Joint Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing rolling stock and facilities at stations. This **must** include a commitment to applying for derogations against the PRM-TSI and/or dispensations against the Joint Code of Practice when necessary, after every effort has been made to comply with the relevant requirements.
- B4.2 Operators **must** provide details about any specific access improvement schemes, including any relevant franchise commitments and investment plans. This **may** include:

²⁹ <https://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/core-data>

- a. identifying relevant schemes delivered since the last review (or, in the case of an initial Accessible Travel Policy, delivered in the previous twelve months);
- b. reporting on the progress of ongoing schemes currently being delivered by the operator, including estimated timescales for delivery/completion;
- c. providing information on the progress of key ongoing schemes being delivered by other parties, including estimated timescales for delivery/completion where possible;
- d. details of any firm plans for future access improvements, including information about any priorities for future improvements that have been identified;
- e. details of any plans for other station or rolling stock works, how accessibility improvements are being incorporated and how the needs of disabled people have been taken into account. This includes identifying where stations and rolling stock are being brought into line with the Joint Code of Practice and the PRM-TSI.

B4.3 When providing details on the above, operators **may** be pragmatic in deciding what information, to what level of detail, should be included. Operators **may** wish to make it clear, if necessary, that information (for example on timescales for delivery of schemes) is estimated and/or subject to change.

B5 Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

B5.1 As set out in section B2.2, it is vital that Accessible Travel Policies are developed with the input of disabled passengers themselves. Operators **must** operate a regular forum of disabled passengers, to include users of assisted travel, with whom they consult on accessibility issues, such as options for and prioritisation of access improvements, raising awareness of assisted travel and developing new initiatives under the Accessible Travel Policy.

B5.2 Operators **must** actively promote the availability of assisted travel, with a particular focus on the passenger leaflet. As well as ensuring that this leaflet is available at staffed stations, in prominent locations where public services are provided, and online, as required by paragraph A2.1.1, additional promotion of the assisted travel service **may** include, for example, advertising at stations, on train services and via social media. Operators **must** work with local authorities, local service providers and local or regional access groups and charities to promote the benefits of assisted travel; this **may** include using online forums to test ideas, producing and providing video testimony of positive experiences, and offering accompanied journeys to prospective users. This **may** also include taking part in schemes that help passengers with non-visible disabilities, such as cognitive and intellectual impairments, more easily travel by rail.

- B5.3 Operators **must** provide an annual report to ORR on the activity and outputs of their work with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities as set out in this section (see section CB2).
- B5.4 Operators **may** also provide in their policy document (as an appendix if preferred) a list of key organisations (including, for example, any partnerships, local authorities and local access groups) that they consult with about accessibility issues.

B6 Staff training

- B6.1 Operators **must** make the following commitments in their Accessible Travel Policy in relation to staff training, setting out a plan for how these commitments will be delivered:
- a. By 31st July 2021 all new staff, including senior and key managers, **must** as part of their induction, receive relevant disability awareness training or disability equality training in a predominantly classroom-based setting that delivers mandatory training outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as set out in Appendix D.
 - b. In addition, by 31st July 2021, all frontline staff that interact directly with passengers at any time as part of their duties **must**, as part of their induction, receive training that delivers mandatory training outcomes 7, 8 and 9 as set out in Appendix D.
 - c. In order to achieve consistency of approach across operators for the benefit of passengers, operators **must** be able to demonstrate by 31st July 2021 that all current frontline staff have met the mandatory training outcomes set out in Appendix D; the extent to which this will require staff to receive refresher training by 31st July 2021 **may** take into account factors such as the scope and content of previous training packages, staff responsibilities, and existing training commitments.
 - d. Staff **must** receive refresher training within 2 years of receipt of disability awareness or disability equality training, and as a minimum every 2 years thereafter; the exact scope and format of this training will be for operators to determine, but operators will be expected to demonstrate on an ongoing basis that staff are able to deliver the mandatory training outcomes described above.
 - e. By 31st July 2021, operators **must** make reasonable efforts to ensure the lived experience and expertise of people with a range of disabilities is utilised in disability awareness or disability equality training course development and delivery. In particular:
 - Staff **must** hear from disabled people about their lived experience of using the railway and be provided a safe space to explore the issues raised;

- Course content and material **must** be developed in consultation with disabled people.
- f. By 31st July 2021, where reasonably practicable, agency staff and staff contracted on a temporary basis that interact directly with passengers at any time **must** receive a condensed version of the disability awareness training or disability equality training, to deliver as a minimum mandatory training outcomes 6 (Passenger Assist), 7 (Communication) and 9 (Providing safe assistance) as set out in Appendix D.
 - g. Where reasonably practicable, anyone employed at a contact centre who provides information or advice directly to passengers on behalf of the operator, whether directly employed by the operator or not, **must** receive a condensed version of the disability awareness training or disability equality training to deliver as a minimum mandatory training outcomes 6 (Passenger Assist) and 7 (Communication).
- B6.2 By 31st July 2020, operators **must** provide a report to ORR setting out progress against delivery of these commitments.
- B6.3 Operators **must** also set out what appropriate training drivers of rail replacement bus services and taxis receive to ensure they are able to provide assistance to rail passengers. Where it is not reasonably practicable for this training to be provided, the operator **must** provide an explanation³⁰.
- B6.4 Operators **must** confirm to ORR at the time of submitting their Accessible Travel Policy for review that all statistics, legislation and language used in training are up to date.
- B6.5 Until 31st July 2021 operators **must** continue to ensure that, as a minimum:
- a. Frontline staff who may, at any time, need to assist passengers receive appropriate training in the use of equipment provided to assist people with disabilities, such as ramps, wheelchairs and induction loops.
 - b. Any staff who may, at any time, deal directly with passengers receive appropriate training to help them communicate with people with different disabilities.
 - c. Any staff who answer telephones are trained in communicating clearly with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding.

³⁰ Noting the duty of operators under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments.

Appendix A: Glossary

Term	Definition
Accessible Travel Policy	The policy all train and station operators must provide in accordance with their passenger and station licences.
Consumer Rights Act 2015	Legislation which provides passengers with a route to redress, or a refund, should an operator fail to provide a particular service.
Disabled Person's Railcard	The Disabled Person's Railcard provides a discount on rail tickets for people with a disability that makes travelling by train difficult. It is administered by the RDG on behalf of train operators.
Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: A Joint Code of Practice	Published by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland. Sets out European and national standards to be complied with when carrying out rail infrastructure improvements at stations, alongside good practice.
EC Rail Passenger Rights & Obligations (1371/2007)	A set of rules established by the European Commission to better protect train travellers in case of delays, cancellations or discrimination.
Equality Act 2010	The Act brings together nine main pieces of legislation to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.
Human Rights Act 1998	The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law.
Knowledgebase	The name given to the engine that contains all the textual content provided on the National Rail Enquiries website. It holds a range of rich supplementary information, both static and real-time, about travelling by train on the GB rail network.
National Rail Conditions of Travel	Defines the agreement that comes into effect between passengers and the Train Companies that provide rail services on the National Rail network when a rail ticket is purchased.
National Rail Enquiries	A public information provider from RDG offering advice on timetables, fares and other rail queries.

ORR	Office of Rail and Road: the economic regulator of Britain's mainline railway and health and safety regulator on all Britain's railways. It also monitors England's Strategic Highways network
Passenger Assist	The booking system that enables passengers to book assistance to travel by rail.
PRM-TSI	Persons with Reduced Mobility Technical Specification for Interoperability. The PRM-TSI applies to all trains used on the interoperable rail system, which comprises the major lines of all Network Rail infrastructure. It sets standards for accessible trains, stations and other facilities.
Rail Ombudsman	An independent, not-for-profit organisation that offers a free, expert service to help sort out unresolved customer complaints about service providers within the rail industry.
Rail Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2010 (RVAR)	Set out the accessibility standards to which new non-mainline (and older rail vehicles as and when they are refurbished) must comply.
Railways Act 1993	An Act to provide for the appointment and functions of a Rail Regulator and a Director of Passenger Rail Franchising.
Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011	Establish common operational standards and practices across European railways.
RDG	Rail Delivery Group: Brings together the owners of Britain's Train Operating Companies, Freight Operating Companies and Network Rail.
RSSB	Railway Safety and Standards Board: an independent, industry-wide body established under the licences of Network Rail and the passenger and freight train operators
Train Operators	The companies that operate passenger rail service on the GB rail network.
WCAG Guidelines	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: Set out how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities.

Appendix B: Station accessibility classification system

Every station **must** be allocated by operators to one of three categories A-C and described in public facing information provided by the operator (including station maps, timetables and posters, and the station accessibility information provided alongside the Accessible Travel Policy as described in Section 4, A2.2 of this guidance) as follows:

Category A: "This station has step-free access to all platforms / the platform"

Category B: "This station has a degree of step-free access to the platform, which may be in both directions or in one direction only - please check details."

Category C: "This station does not have step-free access to any platform."

Operators **must** apply the following definitions to determine which of these three categories a station will be allocated to:

Category A

The station has step-free access to and between all platforms, at all times trains are running, via level access, lifts or ramps (in accordance with new-build standards re gradient/length). Additional station entrances or walking routes not meeting the A criteria are permitted, providing the additional walking distance to avoid these is no more than 100m.

Category B

The station does not meet category A, but has step-free access to either all platforms or at least one platform. In some cases, the station may be usable for some disabled and older people, but in others major barriers may exist which are likely to restrict the ability of some disabled or older people to use the station. This may include long or steep ramps, access between platforms that may be via the street, and there may not be step-free access to or between all station areas.

Category C

The station has no step-free access to any platform.

In its station accessibility information provided alongside the Accessible Travel Policy as described in Section 4, A2.2 of this guidance, an operator **may** – for the benefit of passengers and staff that require further detailed information – choose to further classify stations in category B according to the following definitions, using the text in bold to describe the level of step-free access:

B1. "Step-free access to all platforms - may include long or steep ramps. Access between platforms may be via the street."

This station does not meet the A criteria, but has step-free access (to all platforms) likely to be usable by many people with reduced mobility. Access may be via ramps, up to 1:10 gradient (any length). Short end-of-platform ramps may be up to 1:7. Access between platforms may be via the street, no more than 400m. Access via level crossings is permitted (if full barrier). Access routes may be via car parks, or short access roads without pavements, but otherwise routes via the street must include a pavement. Additional entrances/ walking routes not meeting the A or B1 criteria are permitted, providing the additional walking distance to avoid these is no more than 400m.

B2. "Some step-free access to all platforms - please check details"

This station has step-free access to all platforms, but major barriers exist which are likely to restrict the ability of some people to use the station. Step-free routes do not meet the A or B1 criteria (e.g. long ramps steeper than 1:10, or the step-free route between platforms is greater than 400m). Any station with an ungated or half-barrier level crossing between platforms is in B2 or lower. Any station where step-free access is only available at certain times, or only to certain passengers, is in B2 or lower (e.g. because lifts are unavailable when the station is unstaffed) for example, if the step-free entrance opening times depend on staff presence at the station.

B3. "Some step-free access, may be in one direction only - please check details"

This station has step-free access to fewer than the total number of platforms.

Appendix C: Passenger assistance handover protocol technical guidance

The following technical requirements **must** be adhered to when implementing the passenger assistance handover protocol.

This technical guidance does not apply where ORR has agreed an alternative process or technology, with equivalent functionality and effectiveness, may be used by the Operator.

1. Dedicated assistance telephone number for each station;

a) All stations **must** have a dedicated assistance number³¹ for receiving calls relating to assistance provision³².

b) The station's dedicated assistance telephone number **may** be made available to the public or can be for operational use only.

c) The dedicated assistance telephone number for a station **must** be made widely available to any station or on-train staff who interact with the station for assistance purposes e.g. by ensuring the number is available and accurate in relevant industry systems.

d) The telephone line used for the dedicated assistance line **must** be capable of logging when calls are received to enable the Operator to audit communication as required e.g. can log when calls were received with precise times and dates.

e) By exception, in the event no one is available to answer calls made to the dedicated assistance telephone number, the assistance number **must** either be: (i) temporarily diverted elsewhere or; (ii) have a recorded message in place explaining the assistance arrangements for that station at that time.

2. Responsible Person for assistance-related communications for every station;

a) An operator **must** ensure there is a rostered Responsible Person for each of its managed stations during hours when services are operating at the station³³.

³¹ The dedicated assistance number can also be used for purposes other than assistance-related communication.

³² For stations that are always unstaffed, Operators are permitted to use the same dedicated assistance telephone number for more than one station. Staffed or partially staffed stations must have their own unique dedicated assistance number.

³³ During periods when a station is unstaffed, Operators are permitted to use the same Responsible Person for more than one station.

b) During periods when stations are staffed the Responsible Person for the station **must** be on-site. During periods when the station is unstaffed the Responsible Person **may** be in a remote location³⁴.

c) The Responsible Person **must** have responsibility for ensuring calls to the dedicated assistance number are answered during times when trains are operating at that station. This means the Responsible Person **may**: answer calls to the dedicated assistance number themselves; delegate responsibility for this function to a colleague at that station³⁵; or by exception invoke the arrangements in 1e).

d) The Responsible Person **may** or may not have direct responsibility for the delivery of assistance at the station.

3. Handover protocol for the communication of assistance information between stations;

a) The handover protocol (see figure 1 overleaf) applies where assistance is to be provided by station-based³⁶ staff at the passenger's alighting station³⁷.

b) Where the handover protocol applies, it **must** be followed by station-based assistance staff at the passenger's boarding station, with the information pertinent to the passenger's assistance 'scenario' communicated to the passenger's alighting station.

c) The handover protocol information **must** be communicated to the alighting station by calling its dedicated assistance telephone number.

³⁴ The same individual who is the Responsible Person for a staffed station may also be the rostered Responsible Person for other station(s) during periods when they are unstaffed.

³⁵ When the Responsible Person is off-site they can delegate to another individual who is also off-site.

³⁶ 'Station-based' assistance staff includes mobile assistance staff who provide assistance at that station.

³⁷ If staff at the passenger's boarding station are unsure if staff will be available to assist at the passenger's alighting station then this must be ascertained by calling the alighting station's dedicated assistance telephone number to confirm.

Figure 1

Boarding station handover protocol for assistance					
Assistance Scenario	Passenger name	Assistance needed	Train headcode	Location on train	Other*
A. Booked with seat reservation	CONFIRM	CONFIRM	CONFIRM	CONFIRM	WHERE APPLICABLE
B. Booked without seat reservation	CONFIRM	CONFIRM	CONFIRM	PROVIDE	WHERE APPLICABLE
C. Unbooked assistance	PROVIDE (OPTIONAL FOR PASSENGER)	PROVIDE	PROVIDE	PROVIDE	WHERE APPLICABLE

*Rail staff have discretion over any additional information they wish to provide that would further support the delivery of assistance at the passenger’s alighting station.

Appendix D: Mandatory training outcomes

1. Understanding Disabled People and their everyday challenges

Staff will be introduced to the term disability and will explore how it covers a wide range of different people with different impairments, which may or may not affect the way they travel by train.

They will be able to:

- a) Challenge misconceptions about disabled people and disability
- b) Explain the relationship between disability and age
- c) Discuss what is meant by physical barriers to access and inclusion
- d) Consider attitudinal barriers to access and inclusion
- e) Recognise the prevalence of different disabilities in Great Britain, using up-to-date statistics

2. Equality Legislation

Staff will explore the Equality Act 2010 and how it prohibits discrimination against people with specified protected characteristics, one of which is disability, and the Act's requirements for 'reasonable adjustments'.

They will be able to:

- a) Describe the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and its relevance to disability
- b) Explain the duty to make reasonable adjustments and discuss some of the reasonable adjustments made on the railways³⁸
- c) Discuss the negative impacts of discrimination on the disabled person and the rail industry
- d) List some of the social, economic and reputational benefits of an accessible and inclusive railway
- e) Recognise the implications of the Equality Act 2010 for the provision of luggage assistance

³⁸ Passenger assistance is one of the ways the railway makes reasonable adjustments for disabled people but there are many other ways to make adjustments. For example: -Reading someone's ticket aloud or helping with shopping or luggage. Offering a hand or arm to help someone who may be unsteady or just giving directions are all adjustments too.

3. Defining Disability

Staff will be introduced to various definitions of disability and appropriate terminology (including the Equality Act 2010 definition and the social model) to help them identify disabled people (and others that may need assistance) and be able to use appropriate language.

They will be able to:

- a) Set out the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability, including some of the conditions that are not included
- b) Explain the social model of disability and its implications for the provision of rail services
- c) Use appropriate language when describing disability and talking to disabled people

4. Recognising passengers who need assistance

Staff will explore physical and non-physical impairments to enable them to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance.

They will be able to:

- a) List a range of visible disabilities and impairments
- b) List a range of disabilities and impairments that may not be visible³⁹
- c) Tailor the provision of assistance and services to the needs of the following (not an exhaustive list):
 - i. Sensory impaired people including visually impaired and blind people and deaf and hard of hearing people
 - ii. People with cognitive impairments
 - iii. People with learning difficulties
 - iv. People with physical impairments

5. Railway Regulatory Framework

Staff will be introduced to the regulations that are relevant within the railway industry, and will explore some of the actions that licensees are required to take and how this may impact on their job roles.

This will include an awareness of:

- a) RVAR
- b) PRM-TSI

³⁹ Non-visible disabilities include Depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, Attention Deficit-Disorder or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD), Learning Disabilities (LD), Traumatic Brain Injury and Neurodiversity, Epilepsy, HIV/AIDS, Diabetes, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis. etc.

- c) The licence holder's own Accessible Travel Policy
- d) The Accessible Travel Policies of other relevant operators (this may include those that operate stations on the licence holder's network, or those operating neighbouring networks) where the service received by passengers may differ from that received from the licence holder to e.g. booking assistance notice period, include those of Network Rail, London Underground, London Overground and Heathrow Express
- e) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Passenger Assist

6. Passenger Assist

Staff will explore the Passenger Assist process and how it works for disabled passengers and how they play an important part in delivering the service.

They will be able to:

- a) Explain the assistance that disabled passengers may require (and the sorts of reasonable adjustments staff can provide)
- b) Describe how Passenger Assistance works
- c) Where relevant to the staff role, use the relevant Passenger Assist information technology systems
- d) Recognise that assistance must be provided whether it has been booked or whether it has been requested on a Turn Up and Go or 'on demand' basis, including:
 - i. Help with alighting and boarding
 - ii. Help with interchanging between services
 - iii. Help with navigation and wayfinding
 - iv. Help with ticket purchase
 - v. Luggage assistance
 - vi. Sourcing alternative accessible transport
 - vii. The importance of calling ahead and advising on-board staff and destination staff of the passenger's impending arrival

7. Communication

Staff will explore the concept of respect and dignity and why it is important to treat disabled people with patience, optimism, and a willingness to find a way to communicate.

They will be able to:

- a) Identify the importance of voice tone, pace and body language
- b) Describe how to communicate effectively and considerately with passengers:

- i. with a visual impairment
- ii. who are deaf or hard of hearing
- iii. without speech or with speech impairment
- iv. with physical impairments (including wheelchair users)
- v. who may have dementia
- vi. with learning difficulties
- vii. with other cognitive impairments or neurodiversity

8. Accessibility in stations

Staff will explore and will be able to identify the accessible features of the stations in which they work and of the key destination stations on the network, including the availability of:

- a) Accessible toilets on stations (RADAR keys)
- b) Seats
- c) Accessible windows in ticket offices
- d) Tactile Paving
- e) Induction loops
- f) Other general information

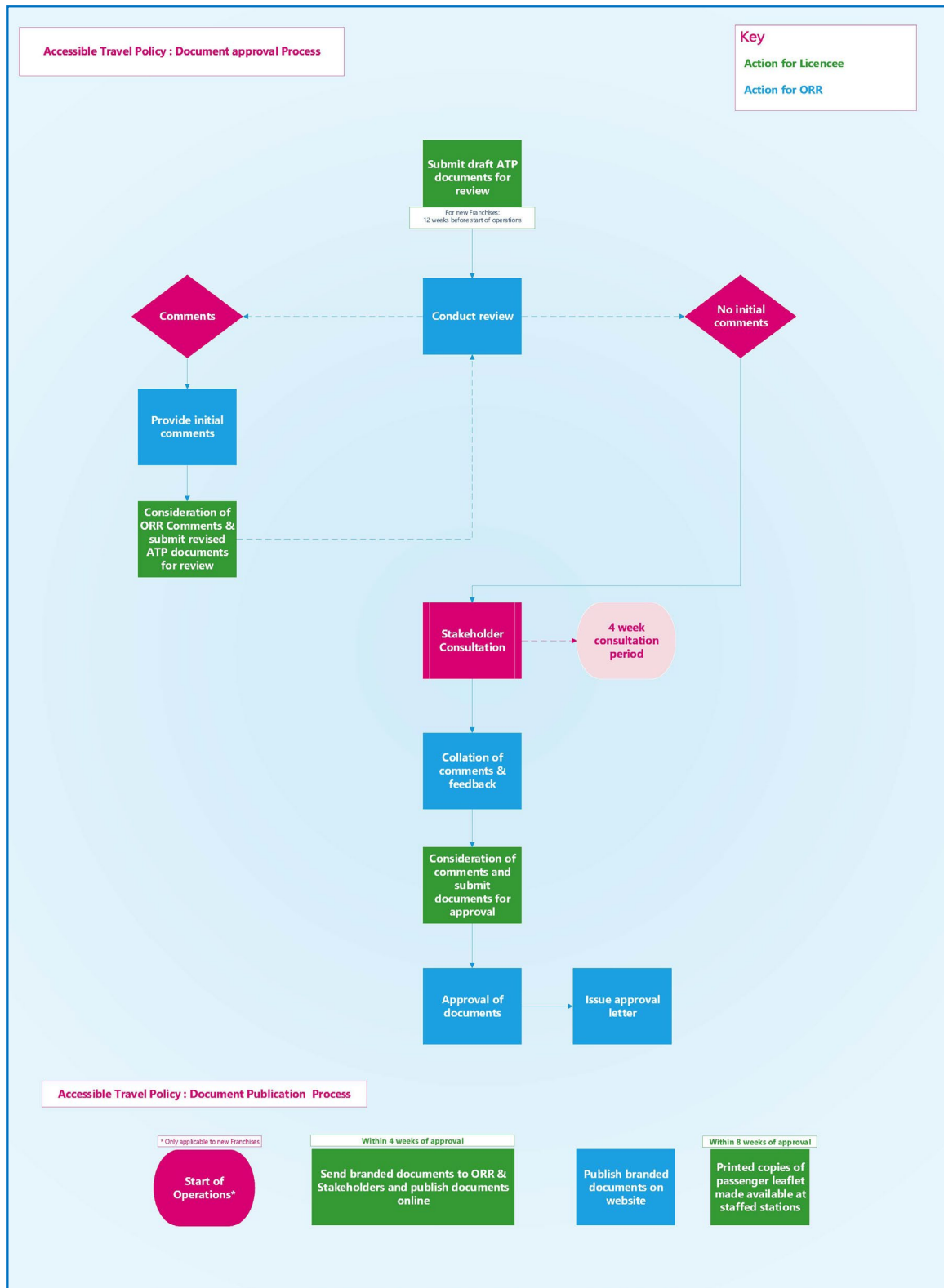
9. Providing safe assistance

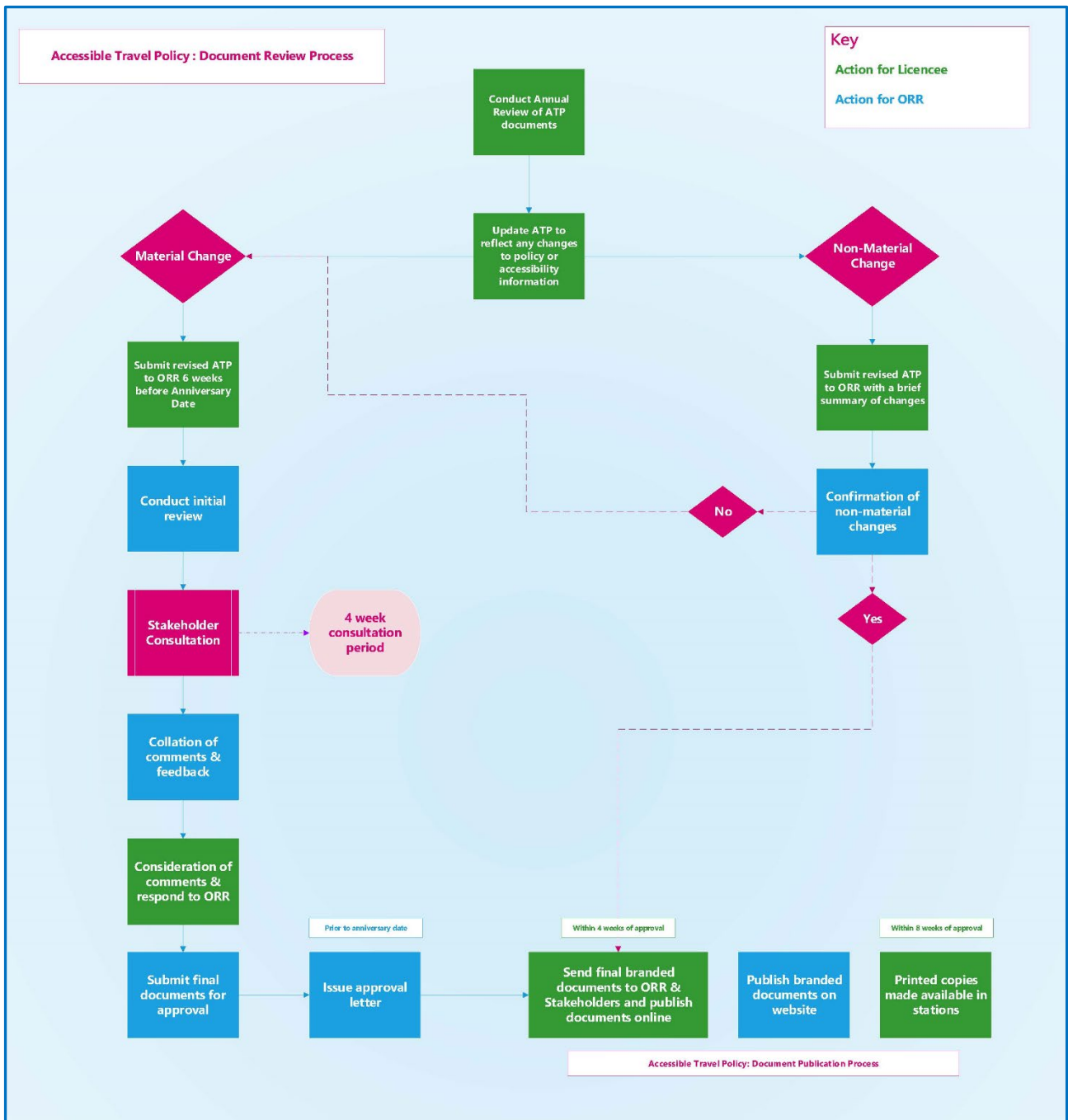
Staff are made aware that it is their duty to ensure that both staff and passengers remain safe at all times. They are able to:

- a) Identify and deploy the correct ramp safely for boarding and alighting
- b) Transport a passenger safely, correctly and comfortably in the station wheelchair
- c) Correctly guide a blind or visually impaired person

N.B. Operators are not obliged to give equal time and weight to each of these outcomes

Appendix E: Accessible Travel Policy Approval Flowcharts





Appendix F: Network Rail Station Guides for Older and Disabled Passengers

To provide assured confidence to older and disabled rail travellers, Network Rail **must** provide a leaflet for each of its managed stations that sets out key accessibility information. The following structure and content **must** be adhered to.

Each Guide **must** be produced as a DL-sized leaflet and made available at stations. It **must** also be provided in a range of alternative formats as set out in section C A2.1.

It **must** be written in Plain English and **may** achieve Crystal Mark accreditation⁴⁰.

1. Introduction

Introduces in plain English the purpose of the leaflet (i.e. to inform people visiting a Network Rail managed station who require assistance or additional information to travel by rail, of the help that is available and how to obtain it, and of the accessible facilities that are provided).

Makes clear the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations that contribute to accessibility at the station. It should cover Network Rail as the station manager and all of the train operating companies who operate at the station, including any operators providing interchange opportunities.

Clearly distinguishes which operator is responsible for providing the assistance and which operator is responsible for operating and maintaining the station facilities, particularly those which may be of interest to a disabled passenger such as accessible toilets, lifts and induction loops.

Assurance that there is a close working relationship with all parties to meet the standards outlined and commits to working together to continuously improved services and facilities for older and disabled passengers.

2. Station Access and Facilities

Commits to assisting passengers irrespective of disability. This must briefly set out in general what sort of facilities are available at the station to assist passengers with both visible and non-visible disabilities and their hours of operation:

- Station operating hours
- Designated disabled parking (indicating whether designated disabled parking bays are available at the station)
- Seating (and where this varies by platform) and heated waiting areas, indicating opening times and the level of accessibility

⁴⁰ Details on how to achieve Crystal Mark accreditation can be found here: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/services/crystal-mark/frequently-asked-questions.html>

- Toilets (indicating whether standard and/or accessible/Changing Places toilet facilities are available, their opening times and whether they are Radar Key controlled)
- Ticket sales facilities (indicating whether the station has ticket machines, smart ticketing readers, and ticket office counter(s))
- Passenger Assist meeting point (with information as to where it is located)
- Customer information systems (indicating whether this includes visual, aural or both types of information system)
- Catering (indicating the range and type of facilities available)
- Location of Information Points and Induction Hearing Loops

This section must be supported by a station plan.

3. Assistance: what is available and how to get it

Sets out how assistance will be provided at the station:

- Journey planning
- Ticket purchase (which may include seeking help from staff at the gate line)
- Boarding and alighting
- Help with luggage, and
- Assistance around the station and to the platform, including when connecting between different train services, or from train to public transport / taxi / car park),

Explains that passengers that require assistance have two options:

- A. They can turn up at any station and request assistance on to a train from a member of staff; this may explain that where assistance has not been booked in advance it may take a period of time to be provided; or
- B. Where travel is being arranged in advance, they can book assistance with a train company; until 10pm the day before travel from 1 April 2020, until 6 hours before travel from 30 March 2021, and until 2 hours before travel from 1 April 2022.

It must clearly set out in what circumstances this is possible – and how passengers can book via the train companies who operate at the station, including the operators' relevant details for doing so online, by e-mail, over the phone, text relay, and video relay service (if applicable).

It must make clear that assistance for any journey, including those with multiple connections using multiple train companies, can be booked using these channels. It must also ensure that passengers understand under what circumstances alternative accessible transport might be offered (e.g. when travelling to or from an inaccessible station).

It must explain what steps the passenger can take to make themselves known to station staff when they arrive at the station.

4. Interchange

Clearly outlines how passengers can change from one mode of transport to another, how to navigate within and around the station easily and whether the route is step-free.

Provides information on how to move around the station at the busiest periods of the day, and who to talk to about all of the services provided at and around the interchange.

Explains whether staff can provide assistance with interchanging, and whether this needs to be booked.

5. If things do not go as planned

Commits to assisting passengers at time of disruption and providing guidance on redress when assistance fails. This must briefly set out:

- what assistance will be provided when there is disruption, to include how Network Rail will work with the relevant train operators to provide alternative accessible transport where appropriate;
- how passengers will be informed at the station when there is disruption (this may include the use of social media or alerts via apps);
- how a claim for redress can be made where assistance at the station fails, providing contact details of the train operators that call at the station;
- how passengers can inform Network Rail that something has gone wrong.

6. Where to get more information and how to get in touch

Sets out where further information may be obtained and how to get in touch with Network Rail. This must include:

- how to obtain the station guide in alternative formats;
- a very brief explanation of what the policy document is and how to obtain it (including in alternative formats);
- where to obtain more detailed accessibility information for the station;
- who to contact on the day of travel with any queries or issues;
- the National Freephone Passenger Assist and Textphone Free SMS Passenger Assist Forwarding Service contact numbers;
- how to provide feedback or make a complaint; this must set out that if the passenger is not happy with the way the complaint is dealt with, the passenger can contact the Rail Ombudsman (and provide the Rail Ombudsman's contact details);

- how to contact Network Rail via social media, including any Twitter accounts used for providing information to passengers;
- how to contact the train companies operating at the station; and
- how to contact Network Rail to get involved with its work with disabled people to improve accessibility.



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