



ORR Accessible Travel Stakeholder Forum

10 03 2022

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

| Name | Organisation |
|------------------|---|
| Matt Westlake | Office of Rail and Road (ORR, Chair) |
| Jacqui Russell | Office of Rail and Road (ORR) |
| Claire Clark | Office of Rail and Road (ORR) |
| David Mapp | Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) |
| Sam Pugh | Leonard Cheshire |
| Stephen Brookes | Disability Rights UK |
| Charlotte Morley | Scope |
| Katie Pennick | Transport for All |

Apologies were noted from Clare Gray (Shaw Trust), Lynne Nicholl (Alzheimer's Society), Michael Tornow (Mobility Access Committee for Scotland (MACs) and Zoe Courtney (Royal National Institute of Blind People, RNB)

Agenda

| Time | Topic |
|----------------|--|
| 14:00 to 14:10 | Welcome and introductions |
| 14:10 to 14:35 | Findings of Accessible Travel Policy compliance research |
| 14:35 to 15:05 | Update on ORR's accessibility-related work |
| 15:05 to 15:25 | Group roundtable update |
| 15:25 to 15:30 | AOB |

Meeting summary

Matt welcomed the Forum members and provided an overview of the agenda. He welcomed Sam Pugh as the latest member to the group, representing the charity Leonard Cheshire.

Findings of Accessible Travel Policy compliance research.

Scope and objectives

Matt introduced the first item by summarising the recent research ORR have undertaken with the Research Institute of Disabled Consumers (RIDC). The research focused on station operators' compliance with aspects of the Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) Guidance, where the main objectives were to better understand compliance with Turn up and Go requirements and key dependency areas for un-booked assistance, e.g. help points. Additionally, to better understand how policies are implemented in the real world, and the impact on disabled passengers. A copy of the report and details of its findings is published on the [ORR website](#).

Overall conclusions

Matt reported that overall, the research provided a mixed picture in terms of provision of information made available at stations, where generic information scored highly in terms of compliance with the relevant requirements, however accessibility information tended to score much lower for both staffed and unstaffed stations suggesting that this type of information is less of a priority. Matt went on to summarise how the use of the help point operators had enabled some passengers to successfully make their rail journey and only a significant minority reported a negative element to this interaction.

In the majority of cases, help point operators were helpful and supportive, however a significant minority reported a negative element to this interaction. The ORR team committed to reporting back to the members on several questions raised regarding the data.

Next steps

Matt confirmed the RIDC report will be published on the ORR website and a cover letter will be issued to all operators, detailing the main findings. ORR will be looking to engage with operators and the Rail Delivery Group to understand how the main gaps in the report are being managed and seek opportunities for improvement.

Matt reminded members of the several workstreams already underway which relate to this area, including the ORR-led audit of station accessibility information. In the spring, ORR will be receiving a response from all operators regarding their response to the gaps identified in the audit and plans to address any remaining shortcomings.

Update on ORR's accessibility-related work

Matt and Claire summarised the work the ORR accessibility team had undertaken in the last 6 months, which includes:

- Working closely with operators and the Rail Delivery Group to ensure that they are ready for the transition to the 2-hour Passenger Assist notice period deadline by 1 April;
- Undertaking a mystery shopping exercise with the RIDC focusing on Turn up and Go assistance at unstaffed stations and the use of Help points;
- Concluding an audit of station accessibility information provided on the National rail enquiries site and operator websites and asking operators for plans to address the issues identified;
- Continuing the review of Network Rail's ATP station guides; and

- Continuing the ongoing formal liaison with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency in relation to monitoring accessible rail replacement services.

They went on to summarise the forthcoming work to take place over the next 6 months, which includes:

- Monitoring compliance with the 2-hour Passenger Assist notice period;
- Completion and publication of a review of operator web accessibility, with a focus on panel user-testing;
- Completion of the annual reviews of operators' ATP documentation;
- Publication of the ORR Annual Consumer Report;
- Publication of the annual Passenger Assist survey;
- Continual engagement with the DfT's redrafting of the Design standards for accessible railway stations Code of Practice;
- Assessing compliance with the handover protocol for booked and un-booked assistance;
- Assessing the broad industry implementation and use of the Passenger Assistance app; and
- Looking into accessibility training opportunities for ORR senior staff and policy leads.

Roundtable update

Members took it in turn to provide an update on their organisation's respective priorities. Disability Rights UK are focusing on the issue of priority seating and the need for consistency across operators and how they identify seating on their services. They also raised the issue of inconsistent train announcements in relation to automatic and manual and queried whether ORR can do anything in this area. Jacqui clarified that ORR work closely with the Rail Delivery Group on a Smarter journeys workstream which looks at this area.

Leonard Cheshire reported they have recently been involved in responding to the Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP) and feeding into the ongoing development of the Passenger Assistance app. They queried whether ORR had an update on the availability of Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) and the availability of compliant rail replacement vehicles. Matt confirmed that ORR continue to collect data in this area and will present a full update in the next meeting later in the year.

DPTAC have been heavily involved with the rail transformation programme and engaging with the Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT). This has included

the delivery of the national station audit and the development of the new passenger service contracts which will replace the former franchise versions.

AOB

No further business needed addressing and the meeting closed at 15:30. The next meeting will be held in September 2022.

END