



## ORR Accessible Travel Stakeholder Forum

25 September 2025

Microsoft Teams Meeting

### Attendees

| Name |                       | Organisation                                          |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Sarah Robinson        | Office of Rail and Road (ORR, Chair)                  |
| 2    | Stewart Hill          | Office of Rail and Road (ORR)                         |
| 3    | David Kimball         | Office of Rail and Road (ORR)                         |
| 4    | Will Sanderson        | Office of Rail and Road (ORR)                         |
| 5    | Niki Glazier          | Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) |
| 6    | Simon Watkins         | Mobility Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)         |
| 7    | Megan Barnett         | Transport for All                                     |
| 8    | Katharine Weatherhead | Equality and Human Rights Commission (Observer)       |

Apologies were noted from Stephen Brookes (Disability Rights UK) and Jacqui Russell (ORR).

## Agenda

| Item no. | Time        | Topic                                                           |
|----------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | 14:30-14:40 | Welcome and introductions                                       |
| 2        | 14:40-14:50 | Update on ORR work                                              |
| 3        | 14:50-15:05 | Mobile assistance project scoping                               |
| 4        | 15:05-15:20 | Incomplete assists data reporting                               |
| 5        | 15:20-15:30 | Refreshment break                                               |
| 6        | 15:30-15:50 | Experiences of Passenger Assist survey 2024-2025 – case studies |
| 7        | 15:50-16:00 | Roundtable updates and AOB                                      |

## Meeting summary

Sarah Robinson began by welcoming the Forum members.

Sarah introduced Katharine Weatherhead, representing the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), who was renewing their position as an observer on the Forum. Katharine explained that addressing barriers to public services including transport was part of the EHRC's new 2025-2028 strategic plan.

### Update on ORR work

David Kimball updated the Forum on progress made on ORR's work to benchmark operators' performance on delivery of assistance, following [publication](#) of the new framework in July. Work is currently underway with a small number of poorer performing operators, to feed into the final benchmarking report due to be published later during the autumn. David outlined how ORR had used the Forum's input from the previous meeting on this project, and this is set out below:

| Feedback received                                                                                                                                                  | ORR action                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The risk of affecting passengers' confidence to travel is outweighed by the need to provide transparent information about operators' performance.                  | We are proceeding with our benchmarking exercise.                                                                                                                            |
| Assessment should not account for factors outside an operator's control as requirements continue to apply regardless and operators should be applying mitigations. | Assessment does not account for external factors.                                                                                                                            |
| Qualitative areas should be benchmarked.                                                                                                                           | For the operators who performed worst on the quantitative "delivery of assistance" assessment, we are undertaking a qualitative assessment of their "capability to improve". |
| Best practice should also be shared.                                                                                                                               | We have invited all operators to submit good practice examples for publication in our benchmarking report.                                                                   |

Stewart Hill then shared an update on work undertaken to support operators in improving the quality of operators' communications between stations when assisting passengers. ORR published a [report](#) in May which included three recommendations around improving use of data, use of the Passenger Assist staff app and dashboard, and consideration of using alternative methods to the telephone handover (including the electronic handover). Stewart summarised how we had applied members' feedback from the last meeting to our ongoing work in this area:

| Feedback received                                                                                                                                                                    | ORR action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For any alternative processes or technologies that replace the telephone handover protocol it is essential that there are safeguards for ensuring information has been acknowledged. | When assessing proposals for alternative processes or technologies we require them to have equivalent functionality and effectiveness to the telephone handover, including providing acknowledgement of assistance requests. This feature is built into the electronic handover. |

| Feedback received                                                                   | ORR action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Experiences of early electronic handover trials should be shared between operators. | We are encouraging RDG and operators to share information from their experiences of the electronic handover to date and have witnessed positive engagement between operators. We have developed an assessment framework for proposals to use the electronic handover, which prompts and requires operators to have engaged with other operators. |

Lastly, Sarah Robinson provided an update on the ATP Guidance redress consultation, which received a good level of response with broad support for ORR's proposal to make a one-word change to the ATP Guidance – requiring operators to determine appropriate redress on a case-by-case basis. Sarah also shared that feedback received on a range of wider issues is currently being considered. A decision on the proposed change to the ATP Guidance is expected during the autumn, at which point operators will be asked to review and update their ATPs.

### **Mobile assistance project scoping**

Will Sanderson introduced the first item, seeking input from the Forum on initial scoping for a project on mobile assistance. This is a method of assistance delivery where staff will travel to a station to deliver assistance in a demand responsive manner, often (but not only) used where trains without any onboard staff (other than the driver) are calling at unstaffed or part-staffed stations. Having provided an overview of what mobile assistance is and how it might be used by operators, Will explained that this work was being done as a result of ORR having previously committed to further engagement on this topic, and a desire for improved knowledge in this space – including around the passenger experience and the extent to which operators themselves have oversight of their operations.

Members felt that this would be a worthwhile project, referring to data that indicated that passengers may experience poorer outcomes at unstaffed stations – it is at these stations where mobile assistance may be used (as an alternative to assistance being delivered by onboard staff or use of alternative accessible transport).

Will outlined the areas that may be included in the scope of this project. These included how operators use mobile assistance, the systems and processes behind it, its reliability and the passenger experience, operators' monitoring, challenges and good practice.

Members were supportive of the proposed scope and emphasised the importance of understanding its reliability and passengers' perspectives.

### **Incomplete assists data reporting**

Sarah Robinson updated the Forum on new data being collected by ORR on assistance delivery, specifically where an assist has been marked as incomplete. Sarah shared early insight from the data and noted further areas in which the data was being interrogated.

The Forum noted the data's value and supported ORR's continued involvement with the additional research being led by industry.

### **Experiences of Passenger Assist survey 2024-2025 – case studies**

Stewart Hill introduced the final item, sharing headlines from the latest iteration of ORR's annual Experiences of Passenger Assist [survey](#). These figures, which have remained near-static year-on-year included:

- 88% of respondents were satisfied with the service from booking to receiving assistance
- 94% were satisfied with the assistance received (of those who were met)
- 95% were satisfied with the helpfulness and attitude of staff
- 78% received all of the assistance booked
- 11% received none of the assistance booked

Stewart explained that this year ORR had asked its research agency to create case studies focused on the experiences of different respondents. These case studies focused on respondents who reported having non-visible disabilities, visual impairments and who used assistive devices on their journey.

It was reported that respondents with non-visible disabilities experienced worse outcomes than other respondents, including on the metrics of *met within a reasonable timeframe*, *received all assistance*, *satisfaction their needs were understood by staff* and *satisfaction with assistance received*. The Forum suggested it would also be useful to understand the extent to which people with non-visible disabilities are aware of assistance being available.

Passengers with visual impairments were found to report similar experiences to respondents in general.

The experience of assistive device users depended on the type of device being used; wheelchair and mobility scooter users were found to be more likely to receive all the assistance booked, whereas users of mobility aids (such as a walking stick, frame or crutches) or hearing aids were less likely to. Satisfaction was similar regardless of the assistance device being used.

Forum members felt that differences in experience may be a result of the training received by staff and suggested that this should be considered as a next step.

Stewart asked Forum members for their thoughts on what groups should be considered in the next survey. Members suggested that ORR continue to include case studies on other groups of respondents to provide similar insights.

### **Roundtable update**

Sarah Robinson provided members with the opportunity to provide updates on their organisation's work to the rest of the Forum, as outlined below:

- Transport for All – currently investigating ticket office relocation at Newcastle Station having received multiple items of correspondence on this matter.
- DPTAC – new members have been recruited to replace outgoing members, with the Rail Working Group's recent work focused on Newcastle Station's ticket office relocation and rail reform.
- MACS – news shared of ScotRail having agreed that all non-intercity routes will have level-boarding in future.

Forum members asked about ORR's position on the changes to the provision of ticket office services at Newcastle Station. Sarah committed to ORR providing an update following the meeting.

### **AOB**

Noting that Niki Glazier's term at DPTAC was ending and that this was her last Forum, Sarah took the opportunity, on behalf of ORR, to thank Niki for her valuable contributions to the Forum.

The meeting closed at 16:00. The next meeting will be held in March/April 2026, and members will be contacted to confirm availability.

**END**