

# ORR Assisted Travel Advisory Group

Meeting 2.

3rd July 2018, One Kemble Street, London, WC2B 4AN



## Attendees

### Assisted Travel Advisory Group:

David Mapp	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
James Taylor	Disability Charities Consortium
Craig O'Beirne & Micky Ball	Rail Delivery Group
Stephen Brookes MBE	Rail Sector Champion
Phil Wilks	Transport Focus
Stephen Chamberlain	Welsh Assembly Government

### ORR:

Stephanie Tobyn	Consumer Policy Team
David Kimball	Consumer Policy Team
Bryan Little	Consumer Policy Team
Scott Hamilton	Consumer Policy Team

### Apologies:

Fiona Walshe	Department for Transport
Michael John Priolet	Network Rail
Chris Clark	Transport Scotland
Stephen Chamberlain	Welsh Assembly Government
Marcus Clements	Consumer Policy Team
Anna Saunders	Consumer Policy Team
Chris Casanovas	Information & Analysis Team
Chloe Barton	Legal Team
Anne Heal	ORR Non-Executive Director

## 1. Welcome

Stephanie Tobyn welcomed the advisory group and introduced Stephen Brookes and Craig O'Beirne. Apologies were noted from Fiona Walshe, Michael John Priolet, Chris Clark and Stephen Chamberlain, as well as various ORR staff members.

## 2. Minutes from first meeting

The minutes from the first advisory group meeting were shared in advance of the meeting. Stephanie confirmed that the minutes were, as of today, published on ORR's website and would be publicised on social media.

### **3. Update on DPPP Guidance review**

#### **Raising passenger awareness of assisted travel;**

David Kimball provided the advisory group with a short update on the work being undertaken by ORR in raising passenger awareness of assisted travel. David highlighted the two key areas of focus as; raising awareness at stations and improving the reporting requirements on train operators.

David advised that ORR's research and engagement has identified that train operators are already undertaking lots of positive engagement with third parties to raise awareness and concluded that ORR may consider further research or mystery shopping to monitor passenger awareness levels.

Stephanie Tobyn noted parallels with work previously undertaken by ORR in addressing the Which? Super-Complaint that identified passengers were not always aware of their rights. ORR will take the lessons they learned during that piece of work to ensure that a suitable approach is found to suit the needs of all passengers.

Stephanie also confirmed that ORR will explore why information cannot be provided to passengers regularly at the booking stage, particularly when they book using a disabled person's rail card.

#### **Developing staff training requirements;**

David advised that an information request was sent to all train operators, in order to get a better understanding of the depth, breadth and frequency of the training that is provided to their staff.

Initial findings concluded that most training courses covering disabilities takes place over 1 day, usually during the staff induction process. Hidden disabilities are being considered by a number of train operators but the format and level of detail varies.

David confirmed that a more extensive discussion on this item will be included at the next advisory group meeting.

Scott Hamilton advised the advisory group that ORR's satisfaction survey has recently been enhanced to ensure it measures passenger satisfaction with both the technical assistance provided and the staff attitude in delivering customer service. Scott also commented on the increase in online accessibility training being undertaken by train staff and questioned the value of this approach.

The advisory group suggested the need for a consistent approach and highlighted the important role DfT could play to help set minimum requirements for train operators in England to adhere to via the franchising process.

#### **'Other' DPPP Guidance updates;**

David shared a brief summary of ORR's recent workshop with disability groups, which touched on a number of key areas of the current DPPP Guidance. The workshop confirmed that the current Guidance is generally fit for purpose but needs revising to provide additional clarity and consistency in specific areas, reflect good practice and bring it up to date.

David also confirmed that a further workshop with representatives from a number of train operators would be taking place mid-July to discuss ideas explored with disability groups..

The advisory group noted the inconsistent approach by train operators in producing their DPPP's and suggested industry must aspire to a more consistent approach.

#### **4. Group discussion**

##### **Improving the reliability of assisted travel**

Scott Hamilton provided an overview to the advisory group of a workshop held with rail industry representatives to develop options that would improve the reliability of assisted travel, and advised that a further workshop would be taking place early July.

Scott reminded the advisory group of the findings from ORR's research in this area and as a result ORR have identified '*Journey Planning*', '*the Booking Stage*' and '*Assistance Delivery*' as the three key areas to address the main causes of booked assistance failures.

The advisory group agreed with ORR's assessment that Stations Made Easy could be improved to provide passengers with more accurate and concise information. The advisory group also urged the industry to be mindful of passengers with hidden disabilities and to ensure that they are not treated any differently to other passengers who require assistance.

Micky Ball (RDG) provided the advisory group with an explanation of, the new Passenger Assist system being developed by RDG, which aims to improve the interface of the current booking process and increase the reliability of assisted travel. The new system, currently in trial phase, will include a mobile application that will make it easier and quicker for passengers to book their assistance, and a staff application to improve the communications within and between train and station operators, that will help ensure passengers receive the assistance they have booked.

The advisory group were impressed with the system's capability but were keen to raise areas for RDG to consider before the software's national rollout.

##### **Reducing the booked assistance notice period**

David Kimball discussed ORR's progress on its review of the current notice period for booking assistance and shared with the advisory group a summary of ORR's desk based review of train operators' current notice periods, which varied from 1 hour to 24 hours.

David confirmed that ORR recognised that a consistent approach to reducing the notice period must be deliverable across the Network at any station by any train operator. Engagement with disability groups has taken place, and suggested there is an appetite for a shorter notice period but also a desire for a more consistent approach across train operators.

A workshop with key industry colleagues was planned to take place mid-July to help ORR understand the potential impacts and implications of reducing the notice period, reflecting the experience of those that already required less than 24 hours.

David concluded that ORR would return to the group for a further discussion on 31 July.

##### **Passenger redress for assistance failures**

David Kimball provided the advisory group with a summary of a recent discussion on this subject with industry representatives. This confirmed that the industry supports providing redress to passengers when assistance fails. Many train operators indicated they already

provided this and were keen that any proposal did not constrain their ability to tailor compensation to the impact of the assistance failure on the passenger.

In the subsequent discussion, the advisory group suggested that the industry could implement a minimum level baseline for redress.

David concluded that ORR would include a requirement to provide redress in the draft revised guidance for consultation.

## **5. Next Steps**

Stephanie thanked the advisory group for their input and offered to meet members individually before the next meeting on 31st July, if that was considered useful to their thinking or understanding on any of the issues raised.

**END**