



Rail Replacement Services: Update

3rd March 2020

1. We have today published all non-confidential responses to our consultation on revising the Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) Guidance to improve the availability of accessible vehicles for use by disabled passengers during rail disruption. We have taken this step, ahead of publishing our conclusion on the consultation, since we consider it important that the information we have gathered through the consultation is available to those bodies currently undertaking parallel work - as set out below - rather than wait to publish it with our conclusions. We are therefore sharing the information provided to us to better inform ongoing work and provide a level of transparency to all respondents and stakeholders with an interest in this area.
2. We are continuing to review the responses and develop our conclusion, but as an initial comment, we note that many respondents have broadly supported our proposed amendments to the ATP Guidance. However, some respondents have suggested that we could take a more proactive approach to mandating compliance with the Public Sector Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR).
3. Other respondents have identified how the work to resolve this issue goes further than ORR, including incentives to buy or use PSVAR-compliant vehicles, and better collaboration and industry planning around major disruption and the overall reliance on rail replacement services as opposed to e.g. greater use of diversionary routes.
4. We will continue to consider carefully the detailed views and information that we have received, and we are grateful to all respondents for the comprehensive and considered information provided, particularly from those passengers that have shared their own experience of using rail replacement services during both planned and unplanned disruption.
5. Since publication of the consultation in December 2019, the Minister of State for Transport, Chris Heaton-Harris, has allowed coach and bus operators who provide rail replacement services, to apply for strictly time-limited special authorisations for the use of non-compliant coaches and buses for rail replacement services. More detail on this and conditions attached to the authorisations is available [here](#).
6. In parallel, the Minister has welcomed the industry commitment to work rapidly with coach operators, ORR, DPTAC and other interested groups to produce a robust and

achievable plan with a series of milestones and delivery points to show how it will move to providing fully compliant rail replacement services. The Minister has asked to receive a copy of this plan by the Easter Parliamentary recess.

7. This is a complex issue to resolve and alternative accessible transport is important to creating an inclusive and accessible railway. As well as continuing our own consideration of the responses we have received, it is also important that we understand the Government's position upon receipt of the forthcoming industry plan. We intend to ensure that our future intervention through the ATP Guidance will fulfil our duties as a regulator and deliver a positive outcome for passengers.
8. We will publish further updates on the ORR website.