



ORR Accessible Travel Stakeholder Forum

05 10 2021

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Matt Westlake	Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Claire Clark	Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Lynne Nicholl	Alzheimer's Society
Niki Glazier	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
Thomas Burke	Leonard Cheshire
Michael Tornow	Mobility Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
Stephen Brookes	Disability Rights UK
Tom Marsland	Scope
Katie Pennick	Transport for All

Apologies were noted from Clare Gray (Shaw Trust) and Zoe Courtney (Royal National Institute of Blind People, RNB)

Agenda

Time	Topic
14:00 to 14:05	Welcome and introductions
14:35 to 15:15	ORR accessibility work: activity since March and forthcoming work with Q&A
15:15 to 15:35	Avanti West Coast's presentation on their staff training on disability awareness with Q&A: Melanie Hockenhull & Brandon Peat, AWC
15:35 to 15:50	Group roundtable update
15:50 to 16:00	AOB

Meeting summary

Matt welcomed the Forum members and provided an overview of the agenda. He introduced himself as the new Chair of the forum, and Senior Manager for accessibility in the ORR consumer team.

ORR accessibility work: activity since March and forthcoming work

Report publications

Claire started the update by signposting the [ORR Annual Rail Consumer report](#) published in June, which covers all consumer areas including accessibility. The report highlights where progress has been made by train companies and Network Rail and compares performance across several areas. It also includes examples of specific interventions that ORR have taken over the past year and sets out ORR's consumer work plan for 2021/22.

Alongside this was the annual publication of the [Experiences of Passenger Assist Research report](#) published in July, where the company 2CV undertook research on ORR's behalf to investigate the extent to which Passenger Assist is meeting users' needs and expectations overall, and how well individual operators are performing in terms of meeting their Passenger Assist obligations. Claire explained that the report this year differs to previous years because it does not include performance league tables at individual operator level. This is due to small samples sizes caused by the vast reduction in booked assistance journey volumes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Claire went on to summarise the report's findings, confirming that the majority of passengers receiving assistance at stations were satisfied, at 92%, a significant rise from the previous year at 88%. She explained that the time it takes to book assistance over the phone took longer on average than in previous years which could be a result of going through the additional pandemic precautions. Overall satisfaction with Passenger Assist was 84%, a 2% rise from the previous two years. Claire reminded the group that whilst the results were encouraging, consideration of the smaller sample size needed to be factored in when comparing them to previous years.

Network Rail ATP Station Guides

Alongside their ATP policy document, Network Rail are required to produce a station guide for each of their managed stations, which explains how assistance works for each one. Claire explained that the guides will help passengers navigate these complex and busy stations and will be particularly useful for passengers who may not be familiar with them. She confirmed that the ORR consumer team are in the process of reviewing the guides and expect Network Rail to make these available at stations in early 2022.

Rail replacement data

Matt reported that earlier in the year, ORR began working with the Rail Delivery Group to create a public service vehicle accessibility regulations (PSVAR) reporting central collection for 2021-22. He explained that the benefit of one central collection ensures consistent definitions and metrics are employed across the rail industry which serves to enhance the accuracy and comparability of the data. The data covers passengers that have booked assistance that are impacted by a rail replacement service. It also covers PSVAR reporting for rail replacement services. Matt explained that in most cases the rail replacement companies will submit information on behalf of operators and it forms part of ORR's regular core data reporting which operators must submit as part of their licence conditions.

Matt went on to explain that ORR have this year developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Driver and Vehicles Standard Agency (DVSA), with the principle objective being to ensure that public service vehicles used in rail replacement services are compliant with the relevant legislation. As part of the MOU ORR and DVSA have started to hold meetings to discuss specific between the respective industries and how we regulate them.

Operator ATP quarterly meetings

Matt confirmed that the consumer policy team have started to hold quarterly meetings with every operator to monitor each of their progress in meeting their ATP commitments. They have mainly been concerned with ensuring operators were on track to meet the July deadline for the delivery of their disability and equality staff training.

ATP handover protocol

Claire completed this item by summarising the current work being delivered by the consumer team on the analysis and evaluation of alternative processes to support the ORR ATP handover protocol. She explained that the consumer policy team are looking at two TIL operators' use of a control centre to manage their assistance communication between stations. The work involves collecting data, evaluating evidence, visiting the sites and assessing whether the control centres demonstrate equivalent functionality to the station to station protocol, and whether it is in the passenger's interest to maintain the running of each one.

ORR forthcoming accessibility work

Matt and Claire continued on the topic of accessibility workstreams and ran through the forthcoming work to be delivered in the next 6 months. This includes:

- Conclusion of the current audit of station accessibility information provided on the National rail enquiry website and on each operator's website. ORR will write to each operator with the results and require remedial action where necessary;
- Conclusion of the mystery shopping of turn-up-and-go assistance and the use of Help Points across the network;
- Delivery of a further audit of operators' website accessibility, to include the experience of disabled users;
- Conclusion of the phased in reduced notice period for booking assistance, which will fall to 2 hours from 1 April 2022;
- Delivery of an annual review of each operator's ATP, and

- Publication of consultation on ATP Guidance for operators of single stations, trams and heritage railways, that use the national rail network.

Avanti West Coast's presentation on their staff training on disability awareness

The group were joined by Melanie Hockenull, Inclusion Lead and Brandon Peat, Accessibility and Inclusion manager both from Avanti West Coast (AWC). Melanie and Brandon presented to the group the delivery of their staff training on disability and equality training, which saw the majority of their frontline staff receive the training by 31 July earlier in the year. The pair went took the group through the steps taken to ensure the training was delivered whilst the impact of the pandemic took away the use of a classroom setting. They confirmed that AWC are gradually returning to the classroom for the delivery of their training, and their team are going out to stations and working with the station teams to take the learning to the next stage.

More generally, the pair discussed with the group the need to ensure their engagement with disabled people covered a range of tools, not just online or via apps. In response to a query on inconsistencies with the delivery of assistance at stations, the pair confirmed that AWC are part of the One Team approach for their larger stations which involves cross collaboration with all operators who serve/manage the station. They confirmed that that they will be looking at feedback from these teams as the months progress, to monitor the outputs of their staff training delivery and work on the gaps identified.

The meeting came to an end and ORR confirmed their actions with the group, which included to provide them with more information on the content of the mandatory ORR staff training outcomes.

AOB

No other business was noted.

Next Meeting: February 2022

END