

Making Rail Accessible: Guide to Policies and Practices



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1. Operator's Strategy

At Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), we aim to build the needs of all people into our planning process, from the development of trains and stations to making it easier to use our network. We are committed to the continuous improvement of services and facilities for older and disabled passengers, to ensure that no disabled passenger is treated unfavourably. Our commitment is to expand opportunities for travel, and we will invest in the future as an integral part of our strategy of continuous improvement.

We are committed to meeting the standards and guidance contained in the current version of the Department for Transport's (DfT's) "Accessible Train and Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice" (the Code of Practice). Where, for whatever reason, we cannot meet these standards, we will consult with DfT at the earliest stage of the design process and apply for a dispensation under their guidelines. As our trains enter the workshops for refurbishment they will, where physical constraints permit, be brought up to the latest regulatory standards. We will also work towards the standards in the European Technical Specification of Interoperability for Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM/TSI), specifically those relating to new trains or the major refurbishment of existing rolling stock, and new, refurbished or enhanced facilities at stations and transport interchanges.

Our Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP) comprises two documents entitled "Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers" (our Passenger Guide) and "Making Rail Accessible: Guide to Policies and Procedures" (the Policy Guide). These will be submitted to the Department for Transport annually for approval and we will consult with DfT if we consider making any alterations to this policy. No material alterations will be made unless prior DfT approval has been received.

Specific details of those projects and activities to improve the facilities and access for older and disabled passengers at stations and on our trains are detailed in our Passenger Guide, which is updated annually.

2. Management Arrangements

Provision of services for disabled passengers is an integral part of our service delivery. Our Commercial Director is responsible for ensuring that we comply with the requirements of our DPPP and with all the relevant legislation.

Arrangements have been made to:

- Review this policy annually (or more frequently if appropriate);
- Ensure this policy for disabled passengers is integrated into our business plans;
- Ensure that designs and specifications for new/refurbishment of our stations and trains include provision for disabled customers as set out in the DfT's Code of Practice;
- Liaise with local disability groups and/or local authorities to ensure action is taken to ensure compliance with our DPPP obligations;
- Actively support the Association of Train Operating Companies' Disability Strategy Group and ensure liaison with Network Rail on new projects at stations;
- Cascade policies and measures to comply with our guidelines from our executive group to our senior management to ensure continued compliance;
- Implement systems to assess the cost and benefits of improvement to services and facilities for disabled people through liaison between Financial and Property Managers;
- Provide effective communication by making all managers and staff aware of their responsibilities to disabled customers, through training programmes, on-line information and feedback from our Customer Services Department;
- Provide the DfT with an annual report where any difficulties have been experienced with our DPPP, and our progress towards achieving those objectives within it, which will also be publicised on our website;

- Ensure staff and managers are trained;
 - to understand our DPPP,
 - in the use of equipment provided for disabled passengers; and
 - in assistance and communication techniques in order to meet the needs of disabled passengers;
- Provide DfT with annual schedules of our disability awareness training programme, including the number of staff who have received it during that period.

Management Responsibility

Our Head of Franchise and Stakeholder Management has overall responsibility for accessibility matters. Our Customer Services Director is responsible for ensuring that the DPPP and the Code of Practice are applied to station schemes and our Fleet Director is responsible for ensuring that the DPPP, Code of Practice, and PRM/TSI are applied when trains undergo major refurbishment.

Business and Project Planning

We endeavour to integrate our DPPP in all our business and project planning. If, for whatever reason, we are not able to apply these standards, we will consult with all relevant parties and apply for a dispensation from the requirements of the latest version of the Code of Practice.

Management and Staff Responsibilities

Our policy is to ensure that all our staff are trained to be aware of the needs of disabled passengers and our platform staff and conductors are also trained to assist anyone with mobility needs who is using the rail network. All our managers and staff are made aware of their responsibilities to disabled passengers at induction and initial training. Passenger-facing staff receive additional specific initial training, regular refresher training courses and briefings. Training is provided for staff to identify and assist passengers with additional needs and we will continuously improve the way services and facilities are delivered to all passengers.

Safety is at the heart of everything we do; our staff will ensure that all our passengers are provided with the appropriate support and assistance needed at every point of their journey, from planning their journey to arriving at their destination.

How we ensure that our services and facilities are provided according to our DPPP and the Code of Practice

We have, and maintain, a working matrix (database) of all stations detailing where facilities do (or do not) comply with the Code of Practice, where each station requires works to be undertaken to make them accessible and whether or not it is physically feasible to undertake this work. This matrix is regularly reviewed and is used to pinpoint areas which would benefit from specific accessibility schemes. Information from this matrix is included in our Passenger Guide, which is designed to make disabled passengers aware of the accessible facilities at a station, any inaccessible facilities and (if a station is inaccessible) the nearest relevant accessible station to the intended starting or destination station.

We also encourage disabled passengers to use Passenger Assist when booking their tickets, in order that they may be assured of a reserved seat or wheelchair space on the train of their choice (or the nearest alternative if the wheelchair space is already booked on their first choice), with assistance on or off the train and from or to the station entrance. If you are unable to access the nearest station to your home or destination and there is no alternative means of getting to or from that nearest accessible station by regular accessible transport, we will arrange for suitable accessible transport to be provided to the nearest accessible station without extra charge.

Where advertised facilities are not available at a station due to long-term failure or refurbishment, we will endeavour to provide temporary facilities during that period.

We have systems in place to assess the overall customer benefit of investment in projects, schemes and customer facility improvements. Disability and access issues will play an important part in the consideration of any scheme. Where external funding is involved, all stakeholders will also take account of these issues.

Interchange with other modes

We will ensure that, when our contracts with licensed taxi and private-hire car operators are due for renewal, the availability of accessible vehicles will be taken into account. In the interim, where a contracted private-hire car operator is unable to provide an accessible vehicle for a customer who has booked by Passenger Assist, we will endeavour to obtain a suitable vehicle from elsewhere. We are not in a position to specify the accessibility level of taxis which ply for hire from taxi ranks at our stations.

Where appropriate, we will arrange accessible taxis without further charge if a train service is replaced by buses which are not accessible to you. Station staff and Conductors will be responsible for ensuring that this information is communicated clearly and effectively to you. At staffed stations, disabled passengers will be assisted to an appropriate taxi, whether they have booked assistance in advance or not. If you have not booked assistance, you will need to make yourself known to a member of the station staff so that we can arrange this. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you book in advance where there has been advanced warning of service disruption.

You can find advice about other local transport arrangements and onward connections through local station staff, the Station Useful Information Poster, by contacting the Customer Services Department or via our website.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

So that we can monitor and evaluate our performance in meeting the standards and commitments in our DPPP (including our commitment to continuous improvement) we will employ the following processes:

- Comprehensive initial training and regular refresher training.
- Feedback from Passengers – a four weekly report is prepared for Arriva Trains Wales' Executive, based on correspondence and telephone calls received, which picks up any trends and themes in areas of passengers' concerns. All reported failed assistance is followed up when received and a specific report is provided to our Head of Stations every four weeks, in order to identify if there are specific problems with particular locations.
- Passenger Panel – this group meets four times a year. Concerns brought to our attention are recorded and any concerns raised are brought to the attention of Senior Managers, so that any preventative or corrective action may take place.
- Disabled Passenger Panel – this sub-group of the Passenger Panel meets a minimum of once a year to specifically address the concerns of disabled passengers and matters are dealt with in the same manner as the Passenger Panel.
- Passenger comments and complaints - concerns are noted and brought to the attention of the Executive for the relevant Managers to investigate, ensure that appropriate action takes place and respond personally to the passenger.
- Feedback from letters to politicians and other public representatives – these are dealt with by our Head of Franchise and Stakeholder Management.
- Feedback from Rail User Groups – this is handled by our Head of Franchise and Stakeholder Management.
- Our participation in project management and delivery (Access for All, National Station Improvement Programme) and on-going review of our internal Accessibility Matrix (much of which has provided the details in Appendix B and C of our Passenger Guide).

4. Access Improvements

We will comply with the PRM/TSI and the Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing rolling stock and facilities at stations. All new-build rolling stock taken on lease by us will be fully compliant with the PRM/TSI by 2020. Any new on-train visual displays and public address systems installed as part of an interior refurbishment will comply with the PRM/TSI.

Where, for whatever reason and after every effort has been made to comply with the relevant requirement, we cannot meet the standards of the PRM/TSI, we will consult with the DfT at the earliest stage of the design process, and apply for a dispensation under their guidelines.

Where stations operated by us are inaccessible (for example, due to steps or gates), we will work to identify potential areas for accessibility improvements and the associated funding implications. We will liaise with the Welsh Government, Department for Transport, Network Rail and third parties to improve facilities.

Station Improvements to assist accessibility during the current year are detailed in our Passenger Guide.

Please note that, although we will update this information as often as possible and at least once a year as part of the DPPP review process, this information is correct at the time of going to print, but may be subject to change. Any changes will be notified to National Rail Enquiries and will appear on our website.

5. Working with Others

As well as attending the quarterly ATOC Disability Group and any associated meetings, we consult on disability issues with the DfT, Welsh Government, Passenger Focus and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC).

When appropriate, we also meet with the local branches of other organisations that represent disabled passengers, such as Assistance Dogs (UK) (which represents Canine Partners, Dogs for the Disabled, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Support Dogs and Guide Dogs for the Blind); RNIB; RNID and Scope, and other local groups.

In addition, we also meet regularly with local authorities and the regional transport consortia.

6. Staff Training

We realise that not all disabilities are visible and that some disabled passengers may not be easily recognised; for example, they may be visually impaired, have a learning disability or be hard of hearing.

Our staff are committed to providing assistance to all customers on our trains and stations. Our policy is to ensure that our staff are trained to help anyone with mobility needs who is using the rail network and we will work to continuously improve the way services and facilities are delivered to all passengers.

Specialist training is undertaken for our call centre staff to ensure that they communicate effectively. Other members of staff, including management staff, are given awareness training to increase confidence in their ability to adopt the correct approach when dealing with disabled passengers.

Disability Awareness Training is provided as part of our programme for all new members of staff who are involved directly with passengers. Staff with responsibilities that may involve dealing with disabled passengers are also fully trained in awareness of "hidden disabilities". This training gives a clear understanding of our policy on assisting people with these needs, as well as the practicalities of putting it in place. A video highlighting problems that disabled passengers may experience is shown to staff and they also take part in practical exercises to assist their understanding. For good guidance and good practice on staff training, we also use DPTAC's "Disability Equality and Awareness Training Framework for Transport Staff" as a reference document.

Our training programme includes instruction for staff in assisting with portable ramps, manoeuvring wheelchairs and helping passengers who have difficulty in walking or who have impaired vision or hearing. Booking Office staff also receive training on the operation of Induction Loops.

All conductors are given training covering awareness of disabilities, definitions of disability and reduced mobility, highlighting examples of problems customers have encountered in a journey from start to finish and some practical exercises. Conductors are also trained how and when to make timely on-train announcements, in a concise and confident manner, speaking slowly and distinctly. They cover the procedure for evacuating mobility-impaired passengers from a train as part of their course studies dealing with rules and regulations on the railway.

We are committed to continuously improving the travel experience for all passengers with reduced mobility through action plans involving a range of staff. These plans will also address the needs of passengers who, whilst not disabled, may nevertheless require assistance, such as older people or parents with young children.

7. Emergency Procedures

We consider the health, safety and welfare of disabled passengers a priority in all emergency arrangements involving stations and trains. Emergency and Contingency plans for stations have been prepared by our Station and Conductor Management Teams to ensure that staff are trained and briefed in their responsibilities. The plans cover potential contingencies and the evacuation and welfare of all passengers.

An Emergency is defined as being a situation where a station or a train has to be evacuated immediately, either through a major incident or on the advice of the Emergency or Security Services. The evacuation of trains is the responsibility of our train crew, who are trained in the procedures and receive regular briefing and re-assessment. If a train needs to be evacuated at a station, portable ramps will be used to assist wheelchair users onto the platform. The procedure for safe evacuation is covered within the training programme for our train crews.

Where a train is not standing at a station platform, it is normal policy not to evacuate the train unless the situation is severe enough to suggest immediate danger to life. In such a case, ambulant passengers would disembark using the emergency ladders carried on board, and/or steps built into the carriage. At the same time, wheelchair users would be carried from the train by staff with emergency services assistance if necessary.

Evacuation of a train is different from what we call "detraining", which usually occurs when a train breaks down within a specified walking distance from a station. In these cases, wheelchair users will remain on the train, accompanied by a member of staff, until the train can be safely moved to the nearest station, where they will be able to alight safely and continue their journey.

8. Communications Strategy

In conjunction with our industry partners, we will ensure that information about our services is as widely available as possible, to all potential customers. We do this through a range of printed literature and advertisements, local newspapers and local TV/radio stations (both for advertisements and in connection with providing news updates on major service disruptions) and our website.

We recognise the importance of communicating relevant and meaningful information, particularly regarding service provision, to all our customers. A priority consideration is communication of information relating to unplanned service disruptions. The release and publication of information is managed by our Marketing Team.

Train service and station facility information is available in a number of formats, including:

- Pocket timetables and leaflets;
- Station posters;
- Arriva Trains Wales' and ATOC/NRE websites;
- Press releases and multimedia contact;
- Product advertising.

We also recognise that important information regarding the use and availability of our services is also communicated through this document, which is managed by our Head of Franchise and Stakeholder Management.

We welcome your feedback. Our contact details and the ways you can send us your comments are in our Passenger Guide. Information from our customers is always welcome and will be used to evaluate potential options for the improvement of our services and facilities.

8.1 Telephones

You can phone us to arrange assistance, or use our e-mail and website facilities if you have hearing difficulties. You can also use our textphone number to buy ticket, but no printer is attached to the ticket sales textphone, as the delivered tickets and reservations are the result of the transaction.

8.2 Websites

Arriva Trains Wales wants to ensure that its website is as inclusive as possible and presents no barriers to anyone using it regardless of ability. Our website is double A compliant to W3C web standards and is accessible to screen readers. We commissioned Shaw Trust to carry out an accessibility audit, which was completed during Spring 2012, and recommendations and improvements to the website will be in place by Summer 2012.

This means that our website will have passed stringent accessibility testing by experienced users of adapted technology for access by people who have:

- No vision;
- Limited vision;
- Colour blindness;
- Dyslexia;
- Hearing impairments;
- Mobility impairments;
- Learning difficulties.

This accreditation will apply to all elements of the website, except for our downloadable timetables and leaflets.

8.3 Signage

We will seek to identify inadequacies in the provision of directional signage to our stations, train services and facilities across our network. Where these are identified within areas and locations which fall within the jurisdiction of Local Authorities, we will engage with the relevant Authority with a view to pursuing improvements.

We will follow the standards and guidance in the Code of Practice which deal with signage at stations.

9. Car Parking

We are committed to ongoing monitoring of the use of designated Blue Badge car-parking bays at our “Pay and Display” car parks, particularly where the provision of spaces is not compliant with the Code of Practice. The contracted managers of these car parks regularly undertake occupancy counts of both the designated bays and the general spaces. This allows us to gauge the usage of the designated bays and, where required, either to provide more designated bays or to support conversion of existing bays for general use. If necessary, we will use this information for submission to the DfT to support any applications for dispensations against the Code of Practice.

Our Pay and Display car parks are also regularly patrolled to ensure that designated bays are occupied only by blue-badge holders. Any vehicle in a designated bay not displaying a blue badge will be charged a penalty.

General

This is an Arriva Trains Wales publication and any comments on its content should be addressed in writing, in the first instance, to:

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