



A Better,
Safer
Railway

Improving the accessibility of the GB rail network



RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT

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1. Introduction

2. About the commission

In Autumn 2017 Mott MacDonald was commissioned by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) to develop guidance on improving accessibility across the rail sector in Great Britain (GB).

The research aimed to provide insights into the needs of a wide range of disabled customers, and to identify suitable metrics to measure levels of accessibility. The overall objective was to raise the accessibility of the rail network by providing a performance model with accompanying guidance that can be used by the industry, and particularly by train and station operators. This performance standard, referred to as 'Accessibility Maturity Assessment Tool for Rail', took the form of a maturity matrix and is also referred to as 'the framework'. The framework was developed to help operators demonstrate improvement through measurement and make Britain's rail network accessible to everyone.

1.2 Our approach to the commission

Delivery of this commission has been split into four phases, comprised of desk-based research, stakeholder engagement, and data analysis. While separate, the four phases (and the tasks associated with them), were closely interlinked to ensure that each stage built effectively on the last to provide a cohesive and evidence-based performance model. The four phases are set out below:

Phase one: This phase of the research focused on a contextual desk-based review of existing policy and evidence, providing a summary of the overall context for the project. It:

- set out an overview of current demographic trends and projections;
- detailed existing legislation, policy, strategy and guidance on accessibility in the rail sector; and
- identified, highlighted and appraised best practice examples, drawing on information from the wider transport sector, other areas of public life, and international examples.

This phase was completed in winter 2017.

Phase two: This phase expanded on the desk-based review, developing a better understanding of the needs and experiences of disabled rail users, identifying gaps in accessible provision across the rail sector. This phase of the project included extensive stakeholder engagement, identifying:

- the needs of disabled travellers at every stage of their journey;

- the strategic priorities for those groups who work with and advocate for the rights of disabled people; and
- the priorities and requirements of the rail industry itself.

The engagement process included a series of face-to-face and telephone interviews with disabled people and the organisations that represent their interests, as well as rail industry representatives. Accompanied journeys with travellers were used to observe real trips being made and to discuss issues and barriers with users first-hand. These activities helped to identify key priorities for action across the industry.

This phase was completed in spring 2018

Phase three: This phase focused on developing a structured series of performance metrics for accessibility in the rail industry. Activity from phases one and two was further reviewed to develop a long list of prospective accessibility indicators for the rail industry.

Prospective indicators were assessed and sifted using a series of criteria to shortlist 24 metrics. Workshops with rail industry and disability stakeholders were used to refine and finalise the indicators, and explore how they could be practically and effectively measured.

This phase was completed in summer 2018.

Phase four: The final phase drew on findings from all previous phases to develop a single framework and guidance document. The guidance document focuses on developing a maturity matrix that assesses current performance in terms of accessibility, and measures progress by operators effectively and practically. The document includes a series of clear accessibility performance measures for the industry to utilise, baseline performance, and measure and monitor progress in accessibility in a cost-effective, practical and meaningful way.

The approach is designed to help ensure that the experiences of disabled people travelling on GB rail are equivalent to those of non-disabled people. This is the focus of the guidance document, which is further supplemented by this research report.

1.3 The document

This report compiles and summarises the findings from the previous phases of work, it sets out the current state of affairs in terms of accessibility of the GB rail network, and also sets out the needs and impacts considered for each theme covered by the maturity matrix. Finally, the report considers strategic priorities for delivery of the maturity matrix, next steps for the review and update of the work carried out to date and areas for further exploration.

1.3.1 Explanation of the domains

The maturity matrix covers four domains, or themes; they reflect the key aspects of a passenger rail journey as identified in the initial literature review and stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of the first two phases of the work.

The domains are:

- **Pre-travel services and information provision**

- Access to information about journeys and stations in advance is an important factor in journey planning and decision making for disabled passengers. Adequate information can empower disabled people to use public transport with confidence. This domain covers thematic areas including accessing information, ticketing and pricing.

- The objectives of this domain are

1. Station information to be available to all users in a variety of accessible formats
2. Train model information to be available to all users in a variety of accessible formats
3. Station information is useable (that is understandable and applicable to the individual situation of all users)

- **Staff**

- Rail staff, both on board trains and at stations, can determine the success of a disabled passenger's journey. Appropriate interaction with and support from rail staff are often as important as physically accessible infrastructure for disabled passengers. This domain covers thematic areas including staff availability, the training and knowledge of staff, their attitude and helpfulness, and communication with passengers.

- The objectives of this domain are

1. Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive overall
2. Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive when using Passenger Assist
3. Communications from staff are clear to all users

- **Stations**

- Stations vary in size and scale, and this is reflected in their environments and infrastructure. A station can significantly impact a disabled passenger's journey experience and continued use of the rail network. This domain covers thematic areas including travelling to, from and between stations (including interchange with other transport modes), and the infrastructure and environment within a station (including toilets at station).

- The objectives of this domain are
 1. Journey planning information (to and from a station) is available to all users in a variety of accessible formats.
 2. Station infrastructure and environment are accessible and integrated with other modes of transport
- **Trains**
 - The experiences of disabled passengers once on-board the train is also important. Access to facilities such as toilets are important factors influencing the decision to travel and journey quality. This domain covers thematic areas including boarding and alighting, the environment and spaces on board trains, toilets, and, when things go wrong, Alternative Accessible Transport (AAT).
 - The objectives of this domain are
 1. On board journey experience is positive for all users
 2. Alighting and boarding experience is positive for all users
 3. Train facilities are fully available to all users
 4. Alternative Accessible Transport journeys are positive for all users

1.3.2 Explanation of the maturity matrix

The maturity matrix, as set out in the guidance document, provides the user with a means of self-assessment on the current maturity of their activities and work across the objectives that sit under the themes. The scale is set out as follows:

0. Below Minimum Requirements

Not consistently proven to be compliant with minimum standards (potentially including legal standards) in the majority of experiences. No data collection processes in place and no clear plans for improvement.

1. Reactive

Meeting all the minimum requirements. However, ad hoc and undocumented approach to the objectives and limited evidence of appropriate partnership working. Little data is collated or analysed on accessibility. Evidence of plans for improvements, though only limited evidence of implementation of practical improvement actions.

2. Managed

Meeting all the minimum requirements through a systematic approach. Responsibility for actions clear, current levels of accessibility on objective understood, and clear evidence of appropriate partnership working. Data is collected on accessibility measures. Plans for improvement in place and being implemented.

3. Progressive Good Practice

Minimum standards met and frequently exceeded. Systematic approach documented, consistently well applied with instances of good practice and improvements being realised. Good examples of collaboration and partnership working. Data is collected and analysed by the parties before findings are published. Evidence of successful implementation of improvement measures.

4. Optimising Excellence

Highest standards achieved, and activities recognised as exemplary in terms of accessibility against objective. Data is systematically collected and analysed, published and used regularly to make continual improvements to plans and procedures. Data is collected and shared using innovative approaches that allow for it to be used to inform future research and decision making.

The maturity matrix is primarily intended for train operating companies (TOCs) and station operators. The cross-cutting outcomes of the guidance are for:

- Disabled passengers are more confident to use the GB rail network;
- Disabled passengers have better experiences when using the GB rail network; and
- More rail journeys are undertaken by disabled passengers.

1.4 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 outlines the policy context in which the maturity matrix was developed and summarises the current state of affairs in accessibility of the GB rail network.

Chapter 3 outlines the current user needs and impacts when using the GB rail network, it identifies priorities for action and links them to objectives as specified in the maturity matrix.

Chapter 4 outlines next steps and recommendation for delivery of the maturity matrix.

2. Strategic context

This chapter outlines the current policy context for accessibility in the rail industry. Several policies, strategies and legislative instruments are in place to help ensure that the experiences of disabled people using public transport are equivalent to those of non-disabled people. Outlining the current policy context of accessibility in the rail industry helps to understand the measures already in place and allows for gaps to be identified for further measures to be put in place to encourage more disabled passengers to travel.

2.1 Policy landscape

The policy landscape set out below provides a comprehensive view of the current approach to and level of accessibility in the rail industry and are the most relevant to the aims of this piece of work.

2.1.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act provides a single legislative framework to guard against discrimination toward people according to nine ‘protected characteristics’, including disability¹. The Act refers to a disability as ‘*a physical or mental condition which has a substantial and long-term impact on an individual’s ability to do normal day to day activities*’.²

The Act is intended to protect disabled people from being discriminated against in six different ways.³ The Act clearly defines these types of discrimination and offers a framework for protection for those that feel they have been discriminated against.

A key objective of the Act is to prevent disability discrimination taking place in people’s access to goods and services. This includes public transport services such as rail. It is the responsibility of the transport operator to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to the service they provide to ensure disabled people are able to use them.

As part of the Act, train and station operators are required by their operating licenses to establish and comply with a disabled people’s protection policy (DPPP). A DPPP sets out the arrangements a TOC will put in place to protect the interests of older and disabled people using its services.⁴

¹ Including people with sensory impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities, mental wellbeing disabilities, and long term medical conditions

² Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017) ‘Disability Discrimination’. Accessed here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act>

³ Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017) ‘Disability discrimination’. Accessed here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/disability-discriminationEquality Act 2010>

⁴ Department for Transport (2015) ‘Accessible rail transport’. Accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-rail-transport/accessible-rail-transport>

The Act also includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires public bodies listed under Schedule 19 of the Act⁵ (which includes those responsible for delivering public functions including a number of transport providers) to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination through the performance of their functions.

2.1.2 Department for Transport Inclusive Transport Strategy 2018

The Department for Transport's (DfT) inclusive strategy sets out the Government's plans to make transport systems more inclusive, and to make travel easier for disabled people. The Strategy sets out how, through government interventions and working in partnership with industry, necessary changes will be made to the transport network.

DfT will raise awareness of the rights of disabled travellers through the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which has recently carried out a review of the 2009 DPPP guidance. The review considered making changes to deliver improvements in assisted travel and looked at the current monitoring regime to ensure train and station operators provide the necessary assistance to those that need it, alongside delivering improvements to staff training by better integrating service users.

The Strategy also sets out the intention to launch an Inclusive Transport Accreditation Scheme in 2019, to identify and recognise best practice in disabled passenger assistance in the transport sector. Accreditation will be awarded where key factors such as staff commitment to the disability improvement service being promoted by DfT and having made clear public pledges on the steps that will be undertaken to improve service for disabled people.

By the end of 2018, bidders for franchise competitions, will be required to deliver enhanced disability awareness training covering a range of impairments, including less visible disabilities. Bidders will also be required to involve disabled people in the design and delivery of such training.

Steps will be taken to ensure disabled passengers can access the right information to help them plan their journey. In future rail franchise competitions there will be emphasis on greater passenger awareness of the Passenger Assist service. Support will also be given to the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) on the new Passenger Assistance mobile app, which will enable passengers to book assistance more easily. A trial will be evaluated by autumn 2018.

DfT plans to make physical infrastructure changes to make it easier for disabled people to access transport. Whenever the rail industry installs, replaces or renews station infrastructure this needs to meet current accessibility standards. Enforcement action will be taken where this does not happen by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). There

⁵ Government Equalities Office (2011) Schedule 19 (Equality Act 2010), Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84984/Schedule-19.pdf

will also be commitment to the Access for All programme which provides accessible routes at stations.

2.1.3 Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility

The revised Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility (PRM TSI) came into force in January 2015. They specify that all European Union (EU) Member States should work towards improving the accessibility of their rail system for disabled people and persons with reduced mobility. This Regulation establishes the technical specification for interoperability (TSI) relating to accessibility of the Union's rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, as set out in the Annex.

2.1.4 The Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System⁶) Regulations (RVAR) 2010 were developed to set standards designed for improving accessibility for disabled people on light rail systems. The RVAR 2010 were implemented in 1998 and updated in 2010 following the introduction of the Europe-wide PRM TSI.

The implementation of this legislation standardised requirements to meet the needs of disabled passengers⁷, it sets accessibility standards for a number of areas of the rail vehicle, including: boarding devices, doors, floors, passenger information, toilets, seats and wheelchair spaces.⁸

The PRM TSI has replaced the RVAR as standards for all trains used on the interoperable rail system, which comprises the major lines of all Network Rail infrastructure. The RVAR, however, continues to set accessibility standards for non-mainline railway operations that entered service after 31 December 1998.⁹

2.1.5 Heavy Rail Fleets: 2020 targeted accessibility compliance

By 1 January 2020 all passenger rail vehicles must be accessible. The purpose of the target is to enable the rail industry to improve those features of heavy rail rolling stock

⁶ These regulations set accessibility standards (i.e. standards designed to improve accessibility for disabled persons) for passenger vehicles used on light rail systems (e.g. metro, underground and tramways including prescribed guided transport systems) or which are otherwise not subject to EU accessibility specifications (EU accessibility specifications apply to the main line rail system under the interoperability directives as transposed by the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2006, (S.I. 2006/397)). (Department for Transport, 2010, 'The Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations', 2010, p43). See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/432/pdfs/ukxi_20100432_en.pdf

⁷ Department for Transport (2015): 'Policy paper: Accessible rail transport'. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-rail-transport/accessible-rail-transport>

⁸ RVAR 2010, See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/432/pdfs/ukxi_20100432_en.pdf

⁹ Department for Transport (2015) 'Policy Paper: Accessible rail transport'. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accessible-rail-transport/accessible-rail-transport>

that currently adversely impact disabled and older people. Depending on the date the vehicle was introduced, it must be compliant with either the RVAR 2010 or PRM TSI¹⁰.

There are exemptions to this compliance and fleets will be allowed to operate without full compliance with DfT dispensation under Regulation 46 of RIR 2011¹¹ and rail vehicles built prior to 1999 do not need to comply with any form of accessibility legislation at present.¹² However, DfT set the overall policy on accessibility across all transport modes and the target for all rail vehicles is to be accessible by no later than 1 January 2020.¹³ It is estimated that 95% of the fleet is likely to be compliant.¹⁴

2.1.6 Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations

The objective of the Design Standards is to assist train operators, when making infrastructure improvements, to design more accessible trains and stations to improve rail travel for disabled passengers.

Under Articles 19 and 20(1) of Regulation 1372/2007 and section 71B of the Railways Act 1993, the Secretary of State must publish a Code of Practice outlining design standards for accessible railway stations.¹⁵

The current Code, entitled 'Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations', was published in 2015 by DfT and Transport Scotland. All rail infrastructure works carried out at stations in Great Britain must comply with the EU and domestic rules set out in the Code.

2.1.7 Access for All

Access for All (AFA), a programme delivered by Network Rail for DfT, is scheduled to run until at least 2024. The programme aims to provide accessible, step-free routes at entrances and exits and between platforms. New lifts, handrails, footbridges and tactile platform paving are all features included in the programme to enhance accessibility.¹⁶ Anyone can put a station forward for AfA funding. The programme is a key mean of upgrading physical station infrastructure to ensure it's more accessible.¹⁷

Stations are selected based on annual footfall, weighted by the incidence of disability in the area (using Census data). Other local factors such as high numbers of interchange,

¹⁰ PRM TSI NIP, See: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/interoperability/interoperability/prm-tsi_en

¹¹ Department for Transport (2017): 'Heavy rail fleets: 2020 targeted accessibility compliance'. See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/heavy-rail-fleets-2020-targeted-compliance>

¹² Office of Rail and Road (no date): 'Rail vehicle accessibility'. See: <http://orr.gov.uk/rail/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-laws/rail-vehicle-accessibility>

¹³ Office of Rail and Road (no date): 'Rail vehicle accessibility'. See: <http://orr.gov.uk/rail/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-laws/rail-vehicle-accessibility>

¹⁴ Ann Frye Limited (2015) 'On Track for 2020? The Future of Accessible Rail Travel'

¹⁵ Railways Act (1993), s.17B

¹⁶ Network Rail (no date) 'Access for all: A major programme improving accessibility at train stations nationwide by installing lifts and ramps' <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/passengers/station-improvements/access-for-all/>

¹⁷ Department for Transport (2017) 'Accessibility Action Plan Consultation'

passengers or proximity to a hospital, and the availability of third party funding are also taken into account.¹⁸

Substantial investment has been made since the launch of the AFA scheme in 2005: by 2020 the percentage of passengers using step-free stations will have risen from 55% to 81%. Although, there are disparities among TOCs: Arriva Trains Wales has 61% of stations with step-free access to all platforms but Thameslink/Great Northern only has 28%.¹⁹ These improvements are increasingly being shown to support rail travel by disabled people. A study carried out for DfT in 2015 found that 33% of wheelchair users, 19% of hearing impaired passengers and 15% of mobility impaired passengers made extra journeys following station improvements.²⁰

2.2 Next Steps

The publication of The Inclusive Transport Strategy demonstrates the government's commitment to improving accessibility. This will continue to be an area of importance for the transport industry and the rail sector. The policy impetus has improved accessibility across the last decade and improvements continue to progress with the adoption of the sentiment "nothing about us, without us" across areas of focus for the ORR and RDG. There remains work to be done on the physical environment (currently being tackled with the extension of Access for All) and journey experience both in terms of staff (an area of focus for DPPP review) and train environment (an area of concern under the PRM TSI).

¹⁸ Department for Transport (2018) 'Access for All in CP6: Station Nomination Process', See: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/passengers/station-improvements/access-for-all/>

¹⁹ Ann Frye Limited (2015) 'On Track for 2020? The Future of Accessible Rail Travel'

²⁰ Department for Transport (2017) 'Accessibility Action Plan Consultation'

3. Current accessibility of the GB rail network

This chapter provides an overview of findings for each of the domains, or themes, considered in the maturity matrix. The domains: pre-travel and information provision, interaction with staff, and experiences around and within stations and trains.

A thematic approach was adopted to outline the picture of disabled users' needs and impacts when using the GB rail network, which included a detailed desk-based review and extensive stakeholder engagement. This was further elaborated by considering priorities for action and objectives for each of the domains and by linking them with the data collection methods suggested in the maturity matrix.

3.1 Setting the scene

There are 13.3 million people with a limiting long-term illness, impairment or disability (21% of the total population) in the UK. The most commonly reported impairments are those that affect mobility (52%), followed by stamina, breathing and fatigue (38%).²¹ The prevalence of disability tends to rise with age; in 2015/16 around 7% of children were disabled, compared to 44% of adults over State Pension age.²²

Around a third of disabled people experience difficulties related to their impairment in accessing public, commercial and leisure goods and services. Over a quarter of disabled people say that they do not frequently have choice and control over their daily lives.²³

In 2011, around a fifth of disabled people reported having difficulties related to their impairment or disability in accessing transport.²⁴ As of July 2018, 87% of mainline trains had been built or fully refurbished to modern access standards.²⁵ In 2015, 18% of the stations on the UK rail network have step-free access to and between all platforms.

In 2014, of the disabled travellers who didn't use public transport, 40% said that one of the main reasons for not using it was due to a lack of confidence in service provision in different areas.²⁶ More than 170,000 Disabled Persons Rail Cards (DPRC) are in circulation (2015) - an increase from 110,000 in 2010. DPRC discounts are applied to approximately 5m rail journeys per annum. Through the National Passenger Survey, it is estimated that there are over 70 million journeys per annum made by disabled people on the GB rail network. Of these 1.2 million journeys take place which involve pre-booked assistance.

²¹ Scope, (2018) 'Disability facts and figures'

²² Department for Work & Pensions (2017): Family Resources Survey 2015/16

²³ ONS (2011) Opinions Survey

²⁴ ONS (2011) Opinions Survey

²⁵ Department for Transport (2018) Rail vehicles built or refurbished to modern accessibility standards

²⁶ ORR (2014) Disabled Travellers – Awareness of Rights

3.2 Pre-travel services and information provision

Disabled people should be able to access consistent and high-quality information across the transport network. The Transport Select Committee outlined that repeated experiences with inadequate information can deter some disabled people from using public transport, leading to adverse consequences for their social life and wellbeing.²⁷

The maturity matrix outlines how to measure the current accessibility status against the following areas: accessing information and ticketing and pricing. It also outlines drivers for improvements in accessibility.

3.2.1 Accessing information

Inconsistency in information provision creates barriers for disabled passengers with a range of impairments. For instance, inconsistency in the provision of audio and visual information can cause confusion and distress for people with visual and / or hearing impairments, while digital-only information creates barriers for those who cannot access the internet or who cannot read a digital screen without assistance. Steps need to be made to ensure that travel information, and especially notifications of alterations, are easy to access, and read or listen to, and that they are integrated across different trains.

The lack of availability of station planning tools creates a barrier for all passengers but can be particularly challenging for those who feel more comfortable memorising a journey, which can include passengers with learning difficulties as well as mobility impairments. Furthermore, the negative effects of the lack of information around planning can be exacerbated when a journey is disrupted, as passengers are often unable to complete their journey in a stress-free and timely fashion. Consistency in the provision of journey planning information and tools that are made available, and increased publicisation of such tools would contribute to improving disabled passengers' experience.

3.2.2 Ticketing and pricing

There is a degree of confusion around ticket types and pricing, as well as discounts that are available through the use of the DPRC and other local discounts. This can result in disabled passengers paying more than they should do, and otherwise would do, if accurate information was provided to them. Research conducted by RDG²⁸ and ORR found that the provision of information online or digital solutions can be a source of stress for older people, who are more likely to experience disability. Older people are also more likely to buy tickets on the day, potentially missing available discounts.²⁹ Passengers express a desire for the provision of clearer ticket information, such as clearly specifying peak and off-peak travel times and how busy the train is likely to be, and by broadening the definition of eligibility for use of the DPRC.

²⁷ Transport Select Committee (2013): 'Access to transport for disabled people, fifth report of session 2013-14, Volume I, HC 116'

²⁸ RDG (2015) 'On Track for 2010? The future of Accessible Rail Travel'.

²⁹ ORR (2017) Research into Passenger Awareness of Assisted Travel Services'.

The purchasing process itself is also a challenge for some users. In 2017 a ten-point improvement plan for ticket machines was developed, the plan involves a mandate to work in partnership with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) to ensure ticket machines meet the needs of disabled customers.³⁰

In 2018 RDG announced a major review of fares policy and launched a public consultation, with results expected to be published in autumn 2018. This will propose a road-map for change to update fares regulation and simplify it for customers.

3.2.3 Assisted Travel

Disabled people have also identified difficulties with the planning and use of Assisted Travel services, which include lack of consistency in ways Assisted Travel services can be booked³¹ and some gaps in the way assistance is provided by staff, which can make it difficult to plan and complete a journey. Moreover, awareness of Assisted Travel services among disabled passengers is generally low and awareness of the specific types of assistance even lower.³²

Improvements could include improved ways of booking Assisted Travel, such as streamlining it in the ticket booking process, better use of technology for TOCs, staff and passengers to communicate, including the use of some of the newly developed apps, as well as awareness raising activities among those that might benefit from the service.

Table 1: Priorities for action, objective and suggested supporting evidence for pre-travel services and information provision

Priorities for action	Maturity matrix objective	Suggested supporting evidence³³
Consistent journey planning information provision in a number of accessible formats, prior and during travel.	Station information is available to all users (objective 1) Train model information is available to all users (objective 2) Station information is useable (objective 3)	Database of Station Accessibility Reviews (SAR) available. Database of train models for routing available. ORR complaints data Quantitative primary data collection (e.g. National Rail Passenger Survey)
Clearer pricing information, including peak and off-peak and available discounts for	Station information is useable (objective 3)	ORR complaints data Quantitative primary data collection (e.g. National Rail Passenger Survey)

³⁰ Rail Delivery Group (2017): 'RDG publishes report on future of accessible rail travel'. See: <https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/2017/469772982-2017-06-30.html>

³¹ Where assistance is required outside of normal station hours, assistance typically needs to be booked in advance. And in circumstances such as providing assistance with personal care, staff will not be able to provide support

³² ORR (2017) 'Research into Passenger Awareness of Assisted Travel Services'

³³ Suggested supporting evidence describes the evidence that TOCs and station operators will have to collect and compile to assess their accessibility maturity against the maturity matrix objectives. One of more evidence sources would be required to achieve different maturity levels.

Priorities for action	Maturity matrix objective	Suggested supporting evidence ³³
disabled passengers and travel companions.		
Consistent booking provision for Assisted Travel, including information on pick up and drop off points.	Station information is available to all users (objective 1) Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive when using Passenger Assist (objective 5)	Database of Station Accessibility Reviews (SAR) available.

3.3 Staff

Rail staff, both on board trains and at stations, plays a significant role in a disabled passenger’s journey experience.³⁴ There are also decision makers within TOCs, governing bodies and other organisations that influence the experiences of disabled passengers. The maturity matrix outlines how to measure the current accessibility status against the following areas: training and knowledge, staff availability, attitude and helpfulness, and communication. It also outlines drivers for improvement in accessibility.

3.3.1 Training and knowledge

One of the key areas of focus for TOCs through the DPPP is to ensure that rail staff are appropriately trained to deal with passengers with different impairments. This tends to focus on assistance for those who have visible physical impairments, offering less emphasis on those with hidden ones.³⁵

Staff that are not in receipt of training that meets the needs of all passengers might be prevented from providing appropriate assistance. While the customer experience provided might vary according to individuals, strong emphasis should be placed on delivering interactive training and training that is facilitated by disability groups in order to maximise learning potential.

There are currently a number of initiatives that TOCs are implementing to improve quality of staff support and assistance to disabled passengers. Including sending staff on station visits to assess the provision of Assisted Travel elsewhere, as well as engagement with other staff regarding the delivery of assisted travel services.³⁶

³⁴ Office of Rail and Road (2017) ‘Passenger Assistance – Deep-dive qualitative research’

³⁵ RDG (2015) ‘On Track for 2020: The Future of Accessible Rail Travel’

³⁶ Govia Thameslink (2017) ‘Making rail accessible: helping older and disabled passengers’

3.3.2 Availability

Stations and trains are not always staffed during operational hours. As of 2011, 48% of all stations were completely unstaffed and a further 27% were unstaffed at some points of the day where services were running.³⁷ The availability of staff can be reassuring and enhance passenger perception of personal security and disabled passengers may prefer to seek assistance from an individual to complete their journey.

Staff presence is particularly required where there is disruption to facilities and services such as late changes in platform, staff will generally offer support to customers who have identified themselves as needing assistance, although this might be more challenging when stations are un-staffed. Consideration should be given to ensuring information regarding the availability of staff is kept up to date and accessible in a variety of formats, especially when staff are not present.

3.3.3 Attitude and helpfulness

An important enabler for a disabled passenger's journey is confidence in travelling, and this can be affected by negative experiences when interacting with staff. Examples of experiences affected by communication breakdowns can include not being given accurate and up to date information whilst on the train, and disruptions in assistance provision when multiple members of staff are involved.

TOCs should improve communication strategies and cascade them onto frontline staff, to ensure seamless communication with passengers for end to end journeys.

3.3.4 Communication

Along with communication, staff attitude also has a significant impact on disabled passengers' experiences when undertaking a rail journey as poor service from rail staff can undermine their confidence in travelling. Steps to improve this could be integrated in staff training and further refined in TOCs communication strategies.

The Accessible Information Standard³⁸ sets out a specific yet consistent approach on how organisations can ensure they provide access to a communication professional for any service user who is disabled. It also advises how to change working practices to support effective communication.

³⁷ Network Rail, (2011), 'Network Route Utilisation Strategy, Stations', See: <http://archive.nr.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20utilisation%20strategies/network/working%20group%20%20-%20stations/networkrusstations.pdf>

³⁸ NHS England (2017) 'Accessible Information Standard', See: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/>

Table 2: Priorities for action, objective and suggested supporting evidence for staff

Priorities for action	Maturity matrix objective	Suggested supporting evidence
Consistency in disability awareness training provided to staff, including the contribution of service users whenever possible.	Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive overall (objective 4)	ORR training completion figures Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users HR/ learning and development records
Ensure staff are aware of appropriate communication and attitude to be adopted with passengers with a range of disabilities.	Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive overall (objective 4) Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive when using Passenger Assist (objective 5)	ORR complaints data. Quantitative primary data collection (e.g. National Rail Passenger Survey)
Consistent information provision about staffed and unstaffed hours at stations and on trains provided in a number of accessible formats.	Station information is available to all users (objective 1)	Database of Station Accessibility Reviews (SAR) available.

3.4 Stations

Railway stations are the main hub for passengers starting and finishing their journey on the rail network before going on to their final destination. The station environment and the facilities surrounding it can significantly impact a disabled passenger's journey experience. The maturity matrix outlines how to measure the current accessibility status against the following areas: travelling to and from stations and infrastructure and environment.

3.4.1 Travelling to and from stations

Disabled passengers often travel to, from and in between stations via different transport modes, and appropriate provisions should be put in place for successful completion of the so-called 'first and last mile' of a journey. Such measures could include suitable parking areas, public transport connections, and ensuring consistency in provision of Assisted Travel services for different legs of the journey.

Legislation requires that at stations where parking is available 5% are for 'Blue Badge use' and that 'obstacle-free routes shall be provided that interconnect set-down and pick-up points.'³⁹ Particular effort should be made to ensure that all relevant information about travel to, from and between stations is kept up to date and accessible in a variety of formats to allow passengers to plan the entirety of their journey.

3.4.2 Infrastructure and environment

Disabled passengers with either a physical and/or hidden disability can require specific adjustments in relation to station infrastructure to enable them to travel around stations with ease. Those with mobility impairments are likely to require step-free access, those with hidden disabilities are likely to require, for example, adjustment to lighting and information provision and those with hearing difficulties are likely to require audio-visual information provision.

While some of the infrastructure currently in place at stations was built prior to existing disability legislation and at a time when disability awareness was generally low, when stations or elements of stations are being redesigned and refurbished, inclusive design should be considered, and relevant stakeholders should contribute to the process.

The station environment often presents a challenge to disabled people, with crowding and noise being a particular issue at peak travel times. Crowded and noisy stations can be a challenge for passengers whose mobility is reduced by their impairment, and for those affected by mental health conditions such as anxiety. This can mean that disabled passengers do not have the time and space required to experience the station environment safely and confidently. Adjustments such as the provision of appropriate infrastructure such as quiet rooms or allowing passengers to factor in more time to change between services during busier periods can reduce some of the anxieties currently experienced.

³⁹ European Union (2014), Commission Regulation No 1300/2015.;

Table 3: Priorities for action, objective and suggested supporting evidence for stations

Priorities for action	Maturity matrix objective	Suggested supporting evidence
Consistent station access information provision in a number of accessible formats	Station information is available to all users (objective 1) Station information is useable (objective 3) Journey planning information (to and from a station) is available to all users (objective 7)	Database of Station Accessibility Reviews (SAR) available. Qualitative primary data collection (i.e. mystery shopper) Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users
Adoption of inclusive design principles when stations are being built or refurbished, including service users' contribution whenever possible	Station infrastructure and environment are accessible (objective 8)	ORR complaints data Qualitative primary data collection (i.e. mystery shopper) Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users
Provision of adequate spaces for disabled passengers to use within stations, such as quiet rooms	Station infrastructure and environment are accessible (objective 8)	Database of Station Accessibility Reviews (SAR) available. ORR complaints data Qualitative primary data collection (i.e. mystery shopper)

3.5 Trains

The on-board experience of rail travel needs to be consistent to ensure that disabled passengers have equivalent experiences to all passengers across their journey. The maturity matrix outlines how to measure the current accessibility status against the following areas: environment and spaces, boarding and alighting, toilets, and AAT.

The accessibility of vehicles is improving but there is still some way to go before existing targets are met. At present, around 87% of mainline and 58% of non-mainline trains meet modern accessibility standards.⁴⁰ Regulations necessitate that all vehicles meet

⁴⁰ DfT, (2012) 'Rail vehicle build or refurbished to modern accessibility standards'.

accessibility standards (RVAR 2010 and RIR 2011) by no later than January 2020. Although there are a number of factors that suggest completion by the deadline might be at risk, with RDG estimating that 95% of the fleet in Britain being compliant by 2020.⁴¹

3.5.1 Environment and spaces

There can be conflict of space on board trains in the areas allocated for disabled passengers, with dedicated spaces often being occupied by luggage, pushchairs or other passengers. Disabled passengers often express anxiety at the prospect of requiring the space to be vacated.

3.5.2 Boarding and alighting

Further difficulties can be experienced in the boarding and alighting process, especially for passengers that need staff assistance and may also be unfamiliar with the surroundings of a specific train or station. The concern is further exacerbated in emergency situations, particularly for those whose impairments make it difficult for them to understand verbal instructions or to make themselves known to rail staff or emergency services. Such instances emphasise the importance of 'soft assistance', including the presence of staff to provide emotional support, alongside assistance requiring equipment, such as deploying ramps.

3.5.3 Toilets

The inconsistency in accessible toilet provision onboard trains needs to be addressed not only to ensure basic service provision, but also to increase confidence of passengers whilst travelling. The lack of available, accessible toilets on trains is a deterrent to travel for both disabled and older people. Not all trains are required to have toilets, but even in occasions where there is a PRM-TSI compliant toilet on board the train, these can be out of order or locked (particularly on evening services), often without this being specified to passengers before travel. Consideration needs to be given to better toilet provision, and efforts should be made by TOCs in checking the functioning and availability of toilets. When extenuating circumstances occur and this is not possible, clear information about lack of accessible toilet should be communicated to passengers before departing every station.

3.5.4 Alternative Accessible Transport

Service disruption can be challenging for disabled passengers, especially when the disruption leads to the provision of replacement services using AAT. Coaches and taxis often provided as AAT can have limited or non-existent space allocated to wheelchairs or mobility scooters and the experience can be stressful for those with mental health conditions such as learning disabilities. Provisions, such as ensuring that there is a

⁴¹ Ann Frye Ltd et al. (2015) 'On track for 2020? The future of accessible rail travel'.

thorough handover process to the onward member of staff, should be put in place to ensure disabled passengers have a positive, stress-free journey experience.

Table 4: Priorities for action, objective and suggested supporting evidence for trains

Priorities for action	Maturity matrix objective	Suggested supporting evidence
Improved maintenance and information around accessible toilet provision	Train facilities are fully available to all users (objective 11) On board journey experience is positive for all users (objective 9)	ORR complaints data Quantitative primary data collection (e.g. National Rail Passenger Survey) Qualitative primary data collection (i.e. mystery shopper) Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users
Adequate support from staff is provided throughout the whole journey, including boarding and alighting	Alighting and boarding experience is positive for all users (objective 10) Disabled passenger interactions with staff are positive overall (objective 4)	ORR complaints data Qualitative primary data collection (mystery shopper) Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users
Integration of a thorough AAT process to ensure appropriate service provision	AAT journeys are positive for all users (objective 12)	ORR complaints data Quantitative primary data collection (e.g. National Rail Passenger Survey) Records of engagement with disability organisations, access groups and service users.

4. Strategic priorities for delivery and recommendations

Throughout this commission, from the review of existing policy and evidence, to the development of the maturity matrix, a key focus was to ensure that the requirements of the outputs were practically and financially achievable to implement. Here, following delivery of the maturity matrix itself, we summarise strategic priorities for its delivery and recommendations for the rail industry in general, for TOCs and station operators in particular.

4.1 For the rail industry

Stakeholders across the rail sector have an important role in supporting the implementation and management, governance and oversight, as well as contribution to the necessary data collection, of the maturity matrix. Partnership working will be essential to ensure effective delivery of a more accessible network.

RSSB will publish and coordinate the initial implementation of the framework.

DfT will need to provide a degree of overall governance for the matrix, providing oversight to its implementation. DfT will also likely have a role in facilitating compliance with the maturity matrix by TOCs and station operators to achieve the overarching aims of the Inclusive Transport Strategy: achieving equal access for disabled people.

RDG will need to support TOCs to achieve the standards of the matrix, by ensuring that the detail and quality of the data collected by stations operators is of the necessary detail and quality, and by finding suitable channels via which disseminating information to customers. Due to its central role in the industry, RDG will also be responsible for identifying good practice and shortfalls in service provision.

Transport focus will have a role in supplying information through the National Rail Passenger Survey from customers to decision makers and will also have a role in ensuring data is accurate and the information collected up-to-date.

ORR will continue to have a role in collecting and sharing information received by TOCs around complaints and performance as well as by conducting primary research to assess current experiences of disabled passengers when travelling on the network. ORR will need to be supported by industry partners, such as RDG, in sharing up to date information and good practice examples.

4.2 For TOCs and station operators

The maturity matrix provides TOCs and station operators with a mean of self-assessment on the current maturity of their activity to ensure accessibility of the rail industry.

TOCs and station operators will hence have a vital role in collecting and maintaining up-to-date accurate information about the accessibility and service they provide. They will also have a role in ensuring the customer experience is consistent and positive for all, by preparing staff adequately for day-to-day operation as well as exceptional circumstances.

TOCs also need to support the wider rail industry by supplying up to date information, alerting when disruption or change is happening and by being clear about the advice and guidance they would like to receive to improve accessibility over time. Similarly, TOCs need to be supported in their responsibilities by trade, regulatory and legislative bodies.

4.3 Areas for further exploration

The project has explored in detail a range of factors related to accessibility and has specifically sought a broad perspective, beyond traditional areas of consideration around accessibility (such as step free access) to include the end-to-end journey and for travellers with a disability or reduced mobility and for travellers with a hidden disability. In the course of this exploration the project has identified areas for further exploration including:

- The impacts of accessibility on carers

It is estimated that around 6.5 million people in the UK are carers, and the number is expected to continue increasing.⁴² Limited research has currently been done on the impact of current accessibility measures on carers.

Accessibility of rail, including having access to accurate and up-to date information, as well as the availability of appropriate infrastructure not only affects the experiences of disabled passengers, but also of those who have caring responsibilities towards a disabled person. Hence, it is important that their views are also considered when looking at the end-to-end journey for travellers with a disability.

- Physical changes to station environment and infrastructure to improve accessibility

It is expected that with the continuous roll out of programmes such as Access for All and with major investment in rail infrastructure to deliver accessible rail routes as part of the DfT's Inclusive Transport Strategy, the station environment and infrastructure will continue to evolve and improve. As the changes to infrastructure are rolled out the needs in regard to accessibility will change and develop and will require continued considerations. The advancement of assistive technology will also impact on the accessibility considerations of the station environment.

⁴²Carers UK (2018), See: <https://www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/press-releases/facts-and-figures>

- Redesign of train layout and infrastructure to improve accessibility and customer experience

January 2020 will set an important date for the accessibility of GB rail with the target for all rail vehicles to be accessible. Data around compliance is already available⁴³ and the assessments of heavy rail fleet will continue to help the industry focus on the features that adversely affect disabled people and older passengers. At the same time, important reviews are being done to aspects that affect customer care, such as DPPP and training.

With continuous changes taking places, and new standards being introduced, it will be important to reconsider the accessibility of the train system an equity of experience.

- User engagement for the development of technological improvements and applications for accessibility

Information and technology advancements continue to improve and change the accessibility of the rail industry – for instance the roll out of Transreport application for the passenger, to send reports containing photos, videos, and comments, of things they don't like about your journey. Users and disabled passengers will need to be engaged in the development and usability of these tools to ensure their own accessibility and utility. The ability for real time information to be placed in the hands of passengers can improve the accessibility of the rail industry as a whole.

⁴³ Gov.UK (2018) 'Heavy rail fleets: 2020 Targeted accessibility compliance' see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/heavy-rail-fleets-2020-targeted-compliance>

Appendix A: List of organisations involved

The below organisations participated in the research, a further two organisations participated and have not consented to be named in this report.⁴⁴

Action on Hearing Loss
Cross Country
Deafblind UK
Dementia UK
Department for Economy and Transport - Welsh Government
Department for Transport
Dewis Centre for Independent Living
Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
Goss Consultancy
Guide Dogs
HS2
Hull Trains
Independent Consultant
Mencap
Mental Health Foundation
Mind
Muscular Dystrophy UK
Network Rail
Office of Rail and Road
Rail Delivery Group
Royal Association for Deaf People
Royal National Institute of Blind People
Scope
Scot Rail
Shropshire Wheelchair Users and Shrewsbury Access Group
Signly
South Eastern Railway
South Western Railway
The Minister for Disabled People
TransPennine Express
Transport Focus
Transport for All
Transport for London Rail
Transport Scotland

⁴⁴The purpose of the stakeholder engagement was to gather feedback from a wide range of interested stakeholders. The evidence and information generated from the stakeholder engagement was inputted into the development of the needs and impacts evidence and maturity matrix indicators, however this is one of several pieces of evidence used in their development. This report pulls together the range of evidence from sources and stakeholders and provides overview recommendations but may not represent the views of each individual stakeholder.

Appendix B: Glossary

Alternative Accessible Transport (AAT): AAT is the transport provided by train operating companies when their stations or trains are not accessible. AAT is also provided when substitute transport used to replace rail services (for example during planned engineering works) is inaccessible to disabled passengers, and where there is disruption to services at a short notice.

Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC): The DPRC is available to people who have a disability or impairment that makes travelling by train difficult. The railcard provides eligible passengers, and another adult with whom they are travelling, with one third off rail fares when travelling on the rail network in Great Britain. Certain restrictions are in place which mean the discount does not apply to seasons tickets, most London Underground and Docklands Light Railway tickets (excluding Oyster pay as you go) and certain promotional offers.

National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS): The NRPS is an annual survey of 50,000 passengers. It provides a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel. Passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. The survey is run by Transport Focus.

Rail Delivery Group (RDG): The RDG is the umbrella organisation that brings together all train operators with the aim of delivering a better railway for Britain.

Station operator: The responsible authority for each station. Operators are usually defined during the franchising process, though Network Rail also manages 20 of Britain's busiest category A stations.

Station Accessibility Review (SAR): The SAR is the proposed method of recording the accessibility of stations across a variety of factors known to impact on disabled passengers' journey experiences. The information recorded in the SAR needs to be detailed to ensure that all disabled passengers have the information they need to make informed journey planning decisions. The SAR should take account of the variations in accessibility for different disabilities and impairments.

The SAR should include information on (but not limited to):

- accessible toilets, including location and whether the station toilets can accommodate a wheelchair or buggy
- any dates planned for station intervention works that may impact accessibility
- availability of staff in different areas of the station
- direct link to the location of the station travel plan (where available)
- options available in station to make purchases e.g. staffed tickets desks, ticket vending machines (TVMs)
- staffed hours
- step-free access

- the availability of blue badge parking
- waiting/quiet room availability and location.

Station Travel Plans (STP): An STP is a strategy for managing the travel generated by stations, with the aim of reducing its environmental impact. It typically involves support for walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. STPs bring together stakeholders.

Appendix C: Materials reviewed

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