



OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD

# Improving assisted travel



# Questionnaire

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# Introduction



This report is about **assisted travel** on railways.



**Assisted travel** is the help that disabled people can get so they can travel by rail.



This report has been written by the Office of Rail and Road.

The Office of Rail and Road is responsible for:



- Making sure the railways are safe



- Making sure the railways are fair to everyone



- Checking that the railways are run properly



This report is about how we can improve assisted travel on the railways.

We have looked at:

- How we can make sure that people know about the Assisted Travel Schemes
- How we can improve the schemes
- How we can train staff so that they know how to help people and understand about hidden disabilities
- How we can get better at checking that the Assisted Travel Schemes work well
- How can we help railway companies produce better policies for assisting people with disabilities

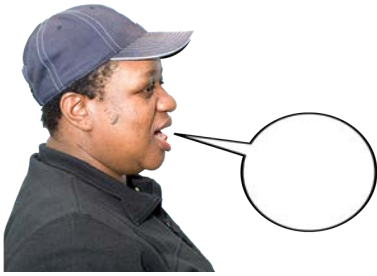


We want to know what you think.

Please read through the report and answer the questions.

Please send your answers back by 31 January 2018.

# Assisted Travel



More people are wanting assisted travel. In 2016-17 people asked for assisted travel 1.2 million times.



Assisted travel is where railway staff help you with things like:

- Planning your journey
- Booking tickets
- Moving around the station
- Getting on and off your train
- Finding your seat
- Carrying luggage





Assisted travel is free and available to anyone who needs assistance due to a disability or older age. You don't need to have a railcard.

There are 2 types of assisted travel schemes:



1. Book before you travel. This is where you have made arrangements before you travel.

This is called **Passenger Assist**.



2. **Turn up and go**. This is where you have not booked assistance before you travel (even if you have booked your ticket).

# Knowing about the schemes



We asked people if they had heard about the Assisted Travel Schemes.

We found that:

- 7 out of 10 people who might use **Passenger Assist** have never heard of it
- 8 out of 10 people who might use 'Turn up and Go' have never heard of it



Leaflets on assisted travel should be provided in racks at every station with staff.

These should be:

- In plain english
- Available as an easy read version



There should be posters about Assisted Travel Schemes at stations.





**Question 1:** How can rail companies improve the way information about assisted travel is given?



**Question 2:** Are there any reasons why information should not be in plain English?



We also think that:



- Information about the Assisted Travel Schemes should be easy to find on every railway company's website



- The railway company websites should be more accessible to people who find it difficult to use or understand websites



- Railway companies should ask groups of disabled people to check that people can get the information they need



- Railway companies should make it easier to book assisted travel



- Railway companies should involve disabled people in checking that the way you book assisted travel is easy to use



- You should be offered the chance to book assistance when you buy your ticket online



**Question 3:** What should railway companies do to make their websites more accessible?



**Question 4:** How can rail companies use **social media** to tell more people about assisted travel?



**Social media** is new ways to share information online using apps like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



**Question 5:** Should rail companies give information about assisted travel with one click from their website's home page?



**Question 6:** Should people be able to book assisted travel at the same time that they book their ticket?

We also think that:



- Rail companies should put information about assisted travel in places like:

- Doctor's surgeries



- Shops



- Local support groups



- Pharmacies



- Rail companies should work more closely with organisations that work with disabled people



**Question 7:** How can rail companies make more people aware about Assisted Travel Schemes?

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**Question 8:** How can rail companies work more closely with organisations that work with disabled people?

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# Improving the schemes



We talked to lots of people who booked their assistance in advance using **Passenger Assist**.



We also asked people to test the **Turn Up and Go** scheme and to tell us how they found them.



Most people said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the way the schemes work.



But one in five people said that they did not get all the assistance they booked.

One in eight people did not get any of the assistance they had booked.



People had problems with:

- Staff turning up late



- Information about the passenger who needed help not being passed on from one station to the next



- Some railway companies performing better than others



- Getting off the train. One in five people who asked for help getting off the train did not receive it.



**Question 9:** How might we improve the way information is passed from one station to another?



**Question 10:** Would new rules for rail companies make the service better passengers who need the Assisted Travel Schemes?





## What should happen when Assisted Travel Schemes don't work?

We thought about how the passenger should get compensation when Assisted Travel Schemes don't work.



**Question 11:** Should rail companies refund the cost of the journey if assistance does not work properly?



**Question 12:** Should rail companies write their own policies for giving passengers compensation when Assisted Travel Schemes don't work?

# Staff training



Most people say that the staff who assist people were very good.



But staff do not always find people with hidden disabilities.



Occasionally, staff are not always as helpful as they could be and get annoyed with people asking for assistance.



Different railway companies give different amounts of training to their staff.



**Question 13:** How can different railway companies give the same good training to their staff?



**Question 14:** How often should disabilities training take place?



**Question 15:** Should there be rules about including disabilities training in staff training programmes?



**Question 16:** Should there be agreed standards of disability training for railway staff?

# Better checking



We want railway companies to get better at checking that their Assisted Travel Schemes are working properly.

We think that railway companies should:



- Include more information about accessibility when they collect information about complaints



- Check that the right staff training takes place



- Provide more information about how the Assisted Travel Schemes are working



**Question 17:** What information should be collected about how the Assisted Travel Schemes are working?



**Question 18:** How should we get better at checking that Assisted Travel Schemes are working well?

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**Question 19:** Are there any ways that we could use new computer systems to check how Assisted Travel Schemes are working?

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# Disabled People's Protection Policy



A Disabled People's Protection Policy is a plan about how a rail company should make sure that disabled people can use their railway safely.



Each railway company has to write a Disabled People's Protection Policy and make it available to its customers.



The Office of Rail and Road has to check each company's Disabled People's Protection Policy.



We are thinking about the best way to help rail companies write their policies, so that they provide a better service and people understand what is on offer.



We will take account of the ideas that come from people answering the questions in this document.

# Thank you



Thank you for your ideas.



Please now post your answers back to:

**Consumer Policy Team  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Office of Rail and Road  
One Kemble Street  
London  
WC2B 4AN**



or email them to:

**[DPPP@orr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:DPPP@orr.gsi.gov.uk)**



Please send them back by:

**31 January 2018**

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