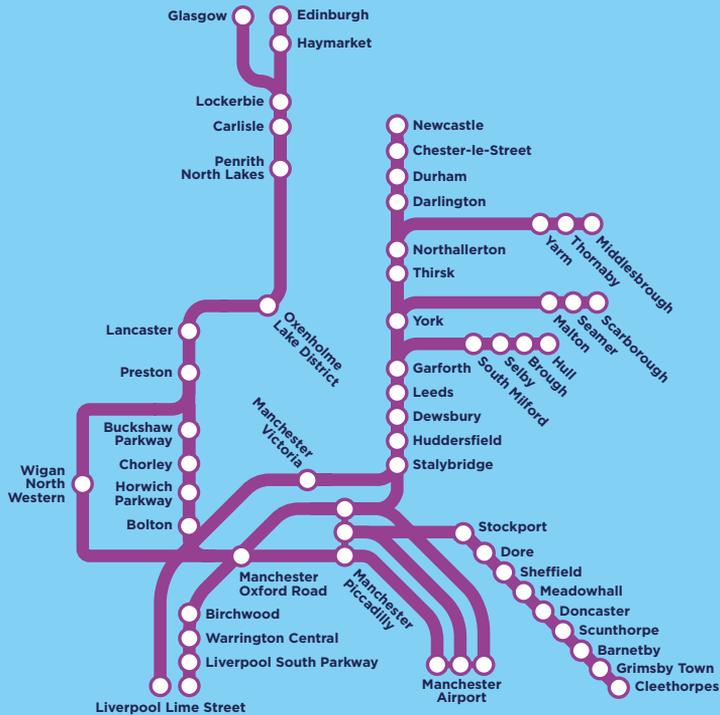


# Making Rail Accessible

Guide to Policies and Practices

## Route Map



# Contents

		Page
1	Our Strategy	4
2	Management Arrangements	4
3	Monitoring and Evaluation	5
4	Access Improvements	6
5	Working with Others	6
6	Staff Training	7
7	Emergency Procedures	7
8	Communications Strategy	8
9	Car Parking	8
10	Contact Us	9

## Introduction

TransPennine Express (TPE) is operated by First Group PLC. We provide intercity rail services connecting key Northern cities and towns on the following routes:

### North TransPennine

Manchester to Leeds extending south and west to Liverpool and Manchester Airport, and, to the north and east of Leeds, to Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Scarborough and Hull.

### South TransPennine

Services between Manchester Airport and Cleethorpes, via Manchester Piccadilly, Sheffield and Doncaster.

### North West and Scotland

Services between Edinburgh, Glasgow, Carlisle, Penrith, Lancaster and Preston via Wigan to Manchester Airport.

We currently manage 19 stations and call at 56 stations operated by other Train Operating Companies or by Network Rail. We operate three different types of rolling stock: four car Class 350s, three car Class 185s and two car Class 170s.

All but three of the stations we operate have level access and many other accessible features, as do many stations at which we call that are operated by others. We will continue throughout the franchise to look for ways to deliver further improvements in conjunction with our industry partners and stakeholders including, but not limited to, Network Rail, other Train Operating Companies (TOCs), the Department for Transport (DfT), Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs) and local authorities.

Station and train accessibility information is detailed in our passenger document:

**Making Rail Accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers**, which is available at staffed stations, on our website and through our Assisted Travel Team.

This policy has been produced based on guidance contained in:

**Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations** - A Code of Practice, issued by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland in 2015; and **How to Write Your Disabled People's Protection Policy**, published in November 2009.

Issuing and complying with a DPPP is a condition of our passenger and station operator's licences as required and approved by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

This policy and our Passenger's Charter set out our commitment and the measures that we are taking to meet the needs of disabled passengers as well as the reasonable adjustments we are making to comply with part three of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).

We will review the documents on an annual basis at the end of each anniversary year from their approval date. Customer comments and feedback on our DPPP are very welcome, and will be considered when these documents are reviewed. Feedback is logged by our Assisted Travel team who specialise in this area and comments are passed to the relevant manager for investigation. Data from this feedback is included in our periodic board report and is reviewed by our Executive team. We also continually review our stations and trains accessibility information to make sure that our customers are provided with accurate information.

## 1. Our Strategy

Welcome to 'Making Rail Accessible: guide to policies and practices', part of our Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). We know how important it is to get customers from A to B simply and with the least possible fuss. That is why we are committed to making reasonable adjustments that will improve access to the trains and stations which we operate, to benefit all passengers, including older and disabled passengers.

Our strategy is clear and simple – we recognise the needs and concerns of older and disabled passengers when using public transport and our goal is to provide services that are as accessible as possible.

Our stations and trains are largely accessible, but we are committed to continuous improvement. Our planned improvements are outlined in section four of this document. We are also committed to looking at ways we can continue to make it easier for older and disabled passengers to access our services by working with organisations such as the DfT, Transport Scotland, Rail North, Transport Focus, PTEs and ITAs, Local Authorities, Local Access Panels and other groups in order to identify the requirements of our passengers, and seek external funding to deliver improvements. We have active partnerships with Disability Rights UK, RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss, as well as with many local advocacy groups and colleges.

Our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy recognises the importance of working positively with the communities that we serve and this takes the form of social, environmental and charitable engagement and support. We will maintain and enhance existing relationships and develop new links. We have built a strong relationship with Disability Sport Events (DSE); we will work with York College on its Pathways Independence and Learning Initiative providing free travel and management time; we have plans in place to work with St Helens Council to support their travel awareness course. These actions help people back into work, benefiting them and the region's economy. We will welcome travel training on our network, by all local accredited organisations.

Additionally we also help a variety of organisations within our area who provide sports, care or education to people with a variety of disabilities.

We will continue to monitor all aspects of our policies to make sure that they are current, reflect our efforts and build on best practice within the industry. We welcome feedback on this policy which is kept under regular review.

## 2. Management Arrangements

Disability awareness is an integral part of our business activity. Our Customer Experience Director is responsible for the company's DPPP, and will ensure that the policy is integrated into business plans at the planning stages of all projects.

The Franchise Manager and Customer Relations Manager work together to develop and ensure delivery of our policies and procedures with regards to accessibility. This includes ensuring that accessibility issues are considered for any changes made to our services or network. This will include involving passengers and advocacy groups in design and navigation exercises regarding train interiors, ensuring that they are easy to get on and move around. We undertake assessments of our trains and stations to ensure that we are compliant from a safety perspective but can also offer the best service possible for passengers with different access needs.

Where our DPPP 'Helping Older and Disabled Passengers' document says we will provide a service or meet a standard at stations, on trains or in our customer service, we have quality control systems in place to ensure that these are provided. Our policies meet or exceed the DPPP and DfT Code of Practice and our quality systems maintain and raise the standards. Our quality systems operate at all levels:

- There are 19 business objectives in the Business Plan, each with a set target to drive improvement. The KPI areas are based on the EFQM model to ensure there is a balanced approach to reporting across the business.
- Our station and on-board staff carry out quality checks and report them to the Service Desk which has a Service Level Agreement for fixing faults. Reports of these go to the responsible manager.

- Our Complaints Handling Process analyses and channels all feedback, whether praise, suggestion, comment or complaint, back to the responsible manager to be followed up for action and monitoring.
- From the start of 2017, our 'Find It and Fix It' customer tool will be available for our passengers to notify us of faults they see, and these notifications will be routed directly to the Service Desk with the same Service Level Agreement for fixing, and into the same reporting system for maintaining and improving standards.

Disability awareness and customer service training coupled with regular briefings to our employees mean we can meet our obligations to disabled and older customers and help them enjoy their journeys with us. Our staff are all trained to recognise our 'Blue Assist' on trains and stations, which helps improve communication for those who may have difficulty travelling.

TPE's cross-functional Customer Experience Management Group meets regularly to review customer results and progress against actions to improve customer service, including accessibility improvements. Where appropriate, we evaluate the business case for accessibility improvements using such tools as the Passenger Demand Forecasting Model (PDFH).

## 3. Monitoring and Evaluation

We record all instances of customer contact with our Assisted Travel team including praise and complaints broken down by the reason.

Our Franchise Agreement commitments include:

- monitoring of reservations for seating accommodation for and/or the provision of assistance to, persons with disabilities which are made through the Passenger Assistance service;
- record whether such seating accommodation and/or assistance is actually provided, and
- provide records to the Secretary of State, when requested.

We also encourage customers using our Assisted Travel Service to give feedback via an email survey or to contact us by telephone or in writing with their feedback. The information we receive is recorded and used together with all the information from other sources to measure and improve performance.

We undertake a 5% callback of all calls to the Passenger Assist team and a 5% follow-up survey after the journey to take feedback on our customers' experience.

This information is analysed and evaluated every period in order to address any immediate priorities and integrate long term needs into our planning. It is also analysed to inform training needs.

We set ourselves targets to reduce the number of complaints about accessibility issues as part of our customer service business objective and monitor our progress against this on a four weekly basis. In 2014/15, there were 28.6 million journeys on our services and we received 0.39 complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys relating to accessibility issues. This compares favourably to our internal target of 0.41.

Whilst complaints related to accessibility are typically few on our network, we are committed to learning from these events and improving our service to disabled and older customers. We have set ourselves periodic targets to ensure that complaints in this category remain low, and we will publish our performance and new targets in our Customer Report every six months.

We also follow best practice in the industry by undertaking:

- quarterly customer satisfaction surveys;
- complaints monitoring regarding assistance as well as all other complaints monitoring;
- regular mystery shopper exercises to test services and facilities;
- feedback and service development exercises with local access groups and our own Accessibility Forum led by Disability Rights UK;
- analysis of Passenger Assist booking data to track trends in assisted booking and to monitor growth and usage;
- visits and information calls to local disability service centres to spread knowledge and understanding of Passenger Assist, the DPPP and the accessibility of rail;
- travel training access for all local accredited representative groups.

## 4. Access Improvements

We will comply with the TSI-PRM (Technical Specification for Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility) and the Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing rolling stock and facilities at stations. If for any reason we are unable to meet the standards in the TSI-PRM or Code of Practice, we will apply for derogations against the TSI-PRM, and/or dispensations from the Code of Practice, after every effort has been made to ensure compliance.

We also follow ATOC's 'Guidelines for Development Management for Stations' and the DfT/DPTAC Design Standards for Accessible Stations in planning new works, including considering the Equalities implications of all plans. Since our stations are largely accessible, we have the opportunity to focus on small but significant accessibility improvements. Recent consultation with local disability advocacy groups has formed the basis of our plans:

Feedback	Our initiatives to address the feedback
More than half of people with hearing difficulties who use trains find it difficult to communicate with staff in ticket offices behind glass screens.	We will remove glass screens in the ticket offices of Hull and Huddersfield.
Eight out of ten people with hearing difficulties say there is not enough information to let them know if a platform has changed; nine in ten are unable to hear announcements on-board.	We will make wholesale improvements to passenger information - with new PA and information screens on stations by April 2018 and on all trains with real-time information streamed from Darwin, the railway's real-time trains and signalling management suite.
Blind and visually impaired passengers find screens difficult to read and announcements unclear: "I find the train notice boards to be very difficult to read - in some cases if the sun is shining the information is not visible."	
The website and booking channels are not accessible for customers with learning difficulties: "They should speak to people with a learning disability. We can tell them how it should be and show them how to make it easier to navigate." <b>Mencap User</b>	We will redesign the website in consultation with our Accessibility Consultation Forum users.

Beyond this, our candidate NSIP (National Station Improvement Programme) Access schemes include low ticket counters and accessible 'Changing Places' toilets. We will also work with partners Rail North and with operators of stations at which we call to seek match-funding for NSIP schemes, such as more level boarding of trains. We will draw on our engagement with local stakeholders to prioritise investment. Our plans will be published in our six monthly Customer Report.

We will continue to provide free alternative transport where a disabled customer wants to travel to an unstaffed station. Our Passenger Assist team is trained to discuss individual needs with passengers to ensure that the appropriate assistance is provided, with as much of the journey by rail as possible. The team's calls are recorded and monitored for performance.

## 5. Working with Others

We recognise the importance of working in partnership in order to make continuous improvements to the accessibility of our stations and trains for people with disabilities. As a result, we will continue to work and consult with organisations such as Department for Transport, Rail North, Transport Scotland, Transport Focus, Passenger Transport Executives/Integrated Transport Authorities, local authorities and advocacy groups in order to anticipate the requirements of all our passengers, including those with disabilities. From early in the new

franchise, TPE will have an Accessibility Consultation Forum, which is a special group for people who have all the usual questions about travelling by train but also more - some because they are disabled or elderly and others, for example, don't have English as a first language.

We will also work with other transport service providers and advocacy groups to make sure that the needs of disabled passengers are incorporated into any jointly planned integrated transport initiatives, and we are open to consultation with any groups wishing to contribute to this process.

TransPennine Express also promotes accessibility by partnering with the charity Blue Assist, who have helped promote this scheme in consultation with groups representing those with various disabilities. This scheme is designed to help people easily explain the help they need using a simple blue card, with space for them to write on. A mobile phone app is also available, which can speak the words typed out.

Our staff are trained to recognise Blue Assist cards and will offer any assistance that passengers may reasonably require, whether relating to a mobility issue or other need. Cards are available at all staffed TPE stations.

## 6. Staff Training

We are committed, through the provision of training, to ensure that accessibility issues are understood both by staff, who deal directly with passengers, and by all those in management. Disability awareness training will therefore be part of our learning and development schedule which is available to all managers and staff who work directly with passengers.

When we recruit new employees into customer service roles, and whenever they are moved or promoted, their initial training will include disability awareness. Further training, like the use of ramps and other equipment such as induction loops, is provided as part of ongoing coaching and mentoring by local managers. Wider training on our customer culture and customer service also helps staff to perform their duties confidently and to assist older and disabled passengers.

Our disability awareness training includes an introduction to British Sign Language and this section of the training is facilitated by deaf trainers, to enable our employees to better understand the needs of disabled customers who use our services. These same trainers also run drop-in sign language classes around the network.

We routinely produce staff briefings on aspects of accessibility or changes to legislation in order to keep our staff informed and able to provide the best possible service for our disabled passengers.

We support our employees to gain NVQs in customer service, further demonstrating our commitment to service excellence.

Any staff who answer telephones will be trained in communicating clearly with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding.

The number of staff who have received training during the year is reported to the ORR when we submit our DPPP for review.

## 7. Emergency Procedures

Our staff are trained in evacuation and safety procedures to ensure that the needs of all our customers are considered at all times and particularly at times of emergencies. Our policy is not to move disabled passengers before the emergency services arrive, unless they are in a life threatening position. Our policy applies to both our station and train environments.

If an emergency takes place on-board, the conductor will take responsibility for the safety of all passengers, and if there is another member of staff on-board, the conductor will appoint them to assist passengers to exit the train when it is safe to do so. If there is no member of staff to assist, the conductor will ask another passenger to assist. If any passengers use a wheelchair, again the conductor will appoint a member of staff or another passenger to stay with them until the emergency services can evacuate passengers safely from the train.

Likewise at our stations, we have identified a number of strategically placed disabled people's refuge points, where disabled customers can wait until the emergency services can perform a safe evacuation away from the station.

## 8. Communications Strategy

As part of our ongoing communication strategy, copies of our Passenger's Charter are available at all staffed stations that we serve. Copies are also distributed to local community outlets such as libraries and travel centres and the document is also available from our website for download, and can be obtained by writing to us at:

**Assisted Travel Team**  
**TransPennine Express**  
**Customer Relations**  
**Admail 3878**  
**FREEPOST**  
**Manchester**  
**M1 9YB**

These documents will be made available in other formats such as Audio, Large Print, Braille and Easy Read and Audio on request within seven working days from the date we receive the request. Please contact us through our website for more information on our plans to improve accessibility.

### 8.1 Telephone

We provide free telephone and text phone numbers for our disabled customers to allow them to contact us to arrange their travel, including making advance requests for travel assistance. Customers with reduced mobility can also use these numbers to give us feedback, buy travel tickets, make enquiries on accessibility of stations and trains, make reservations, and arrange onward travel with other train operators or to obtain a copy of our policy and customer documents.

During times when our Assisted Travel team is busy or the office is closed, clear automated recorded information is activated informing customers when the next Advisor is likely to be available or the opening times of the Assisted Travel team.

### 8.2 Website

Our website is designed to conform to Level A standard of the W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. We are committed to making the site as accessible as possible. The site currently includes many features found in AA sites such as colour considerations and easily resizable fonts. We will continue to make improvements to ensure our site conforms to these guidelines.

### 8.3 Signage

We have good working relationships with local authorities and use our regular meetings and communication structure to ensure that stations within their areas are clearly signposted. We will follow the guidance in the Code of Practice, Royal National Institute for Blind People Sign Design Guide and Rail Safety and Standards Board's Wayfinding good practice guide where possible.

## 9. Car Parking

We offer free car parking to disabled passengers who display an International Blue Badge holder's permit in the car windscreen. We ensure that parking for Blue Badge holders is in accessible locations close to the station and that spaces are of the correct size. If designated parking spaces are unavailable for any reason, disabled customers displaying an International Blue Badge holder's permit may park for free in our pay and display car parks.

We monitor the use of these spaces to ensure that they are sufficient to meet demand, and to discourage non-Blue Badge holders from parking in them. If people are found to be parking illegally, we will issue a Parking Charge Contravention Notice (PCCN). If we find that the spaces assigned are not sufficient to meet demand, we will, wherever possible, introduce an appropriate number of additional spaces.

All of our car parks have closed circuit television (CCTV) which is linked to our Control Centre. These are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The provision of pick-up and set-down points for cars and taxis is reviewed frequently, to ensure these are as close to our station entrances as reasonably practicable.

## 10. Contact us

We welcome feedback on our DPPP. Our contact address is:

**Assisted Travel Team**  
**TransPennine Express**  
**Customer Relations**  
**Admail 3878**  
**FREEPOST**  
**Manchester**  
**M1 9YB**