



# Accessible Travel Policy

ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL POLICY **APRIL 2020**

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## Welcome

**At the heart of our service is outstanding hospitality that reflects the best of Scotland. We understand that improving accessibility for disabled guests often results in benefits for all guests.**

This policy gives more information about our accessibility strategy and plans, and forms part of our overall Accessible Travel Policy. Our Accessible Travel Policy also includes;

- Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers – this summary leaflet gives key information for planning your journey and booking assistance,
- Station Accessibility Guide – this gives comprehensive information about the stations we call at, and
- Train Accessibility Guide – this gives you information about features on our trains.



### Our guests

In the rail industry, customers are generally referred to as 'passengers'. However, as we deliver a hospitality service, we consider our customers to be our guests and use this term in this leaflet.



### On board Hosts

These are our friendly members of staff who will greet and support you on board all of our trains. They will operate the on board ramps for you and assist you with luggage if needed. On each service, there is one train manager, one team leader and two or three on board hosts.



### Guest Service Centre

Our team of Guest Ambassadors work in the Guest Service Centre. Their job is to help you plan your journey, book tickets or rooms and give you any information about accessibility features so you can make informed choices.



# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.1. Booking and providing assistance

We commit to participating in Passenger Assist, the nationwide reservation system for booking assistance for train travel.

Our Guest Service Centre responds to requests for Passenger Assist and answers any questions as part of the booking process. Our Guest Ambassadors are trained and experienced colleagues who understand our Services. Each day, our Guest Service Centre reviews all Passenger Assistance reservations for the Caledonian Sleeper made through Passenger Assist to make sure that they have been made correctly and that appropriate assistance is in place on board and at the stations we serve. We commit to providing sufficient resources to maintain and improve the standards of Passenger Assist.

In order to book Passenger Assist, guests need to contact us by 10pm the day before the train is to due to leave its originating station. However, over the next few years we, along with all operators, will be reducing the notice period for booking assistance as follows:

- From 1 April 2021 you can book 6 hours before the train is to due to leave its originating station
- From 1 April 2022 you can book 2 hours before the train is to due to leave its originating station

You do not of course need to book assistance but given the unique nature of our services we encourage you to contact us in advance to discuss your access needs so we can help ensure a comfortable experience.

Please contact us 48 hours in advance for international travel bookings.

We do not manage any stations. All stations we stop at are managed by different train operators, who are responsible for staffing. We record all our bookings on a national database for Passenger Assist which station operators use to check what assistance is needed at their stations each day. Each station operator has different policies on what assistance they can provide and at what times. We can give advice on this for any guest's journey through our Guest Service Centre, including arranging meeting points for your assistance.

Although we do not have staff working at stations, we commit to providing assistance to our guests on and off our trains and on board our services when booked in advance through Passenger Assist.

The times that each station is staffed are listed on the relevant station page of the National Rail Enquiries (NRE) website. Our Guest Service Centre can look up any queries for you.

When you book assistance through our Guest Service Centre our team will review the accessibility levels of the stations you plan to use using the NRE website and check that they meet your needs.

## 1. Commitments to providing assistance

We can provide this information by post, on request.

When assistance has been booked in advance, we are committed to assisting you off the train as soon as possible on arrival at your destination, and within a maximum of 5 minutes wherever reasonably practicable. If assistance is being carried out by station staff, our on board hosts will ensure this is carried out as planned or will assist you off the train if there is a problem.

If you have not booked assistance and the station is not staffed on arrival, our on board hosts will help you on and off the train. You will need to be on the platform when your train arrives and get the attention of an on board host who will always step onto the platform and look for guests waiting to board at each station that our service calls at.

If the station is staffed on your arrival to board our services, the station team will provide assistance to you within the station where you have not booked this in advance, if they reasonably can. As we do not operate these stations we cannot control the delivery of this but we do work with the operators to find ways to improve guest experience. We follow agreed 'handover protocols' with other operators. For example, if your destination station is staffed we will phone them directly so they can be ready to greet you and give you additional support around the station if possible.

There are ramps at all of the step-free staffed stations that we serve. We also have portable ramps on all of our trains which our on board hosts will use if they are helping you on or off the train (for example at an unstaffed station we call at). A ramp will always be available whether you have booked assistance in advance or not.

Whilst we do not operate any stations, we are very mindful that our service will often call at stations during the night when stations are not staffed. We will explain this to you as part of the process for booking assistance so you know what to expect.

We work closely with the operators of stations which our services call at to improve the experience of our guests. If you book assistance through Passenger Assist you can plan assistance for a journey which involves more than one operator all in one booking. The booking process will check you have enough time to make connections.

As we do not operate any stations, our on board hosts are unable to assist you beyond the platform, onto the station concourse or connecting transport. **Please see section 1.2.2** of this document for more information on station accessibility. The best place to find information on any temporary limits on accessibility is the station page of the NRE website – you can access this yourself at [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations) or contact us and we would be happy to check for you. In any case, we will check this as part of the process if you book assistance with us through our Guest Service Centre.

## 1. Commitments to providing assistance

If you are travelling with luggage, we are happy to help you. However, we are only aware you will need help if you have booked the service through Passenger Assist. If you aren't able to book, we will offer help whenever we can but cannot guarantee it. There is no charge for helping with your luggage. Please consider the weight, size and quantity of your luggage as there is limited space available on board and they must be a safe weight for our staff to lift. If possible, please only have:

- one item of hand luggage (that you must be able to hold on your lap if necessary); and
- up to two items of luggage each no bigger than 30cm x 70cm x 90cm.

Everyone needs a reservation to travel on the Caledonian Sleeper, in addition to your ticket. You will be assigned a room or seat as part of this process.

There is a dedicated wheelchair space in our seated coach. Guests are allocated a coach based on their destination because the train divides along the route. Priority for the wheelchair space is given to guests who have reserved the space in advance.

Assistance dogs are warmly welcome on board. Please let an on board host know how we can make your dog comfortable eg providing water. If you are travelling with us in seated accommodation, please contact our Guest Service Centre in advance to reserve a seat next to you at no additional cost to enable your dog to sit safely at your feet. Subject to availability we will upgrade you to a classic room free of charge.

## 1. Commitments to providing assistance

### 1.2.1. Accessible Travel Policy documentation including alternative formats

Our leaflet 'Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers' is available:

- on the leaflet racks at stations which our services call at
- on our website as an accessible PDF
- in alternative formats, such as audio, on request within 7 days
- on request by post from our Guest Service Centre
- in prominent locations such as tourist information centres

This policy document is available:

- on our website; and
- by post on request within 7 working days free of charge.

Any posters or signage at stations relating to our services are at a height which means they can be easily read by wheelchair users and guests of short stature.

### 1.2.2. Stations and train accessibility information

Although we do not operate any stations, we commit to seeking up-to-date information on a regular basis about accessibility features of stations we call at directly from the operators. We will keep this up to date and make this information available:

- on our website **[www.sleeper.scot](http://www.sleeper.scot)**; and
- by post on request within 7 working days free of charge.

We will publish a Station Information Guide by 1 May 2020. This guide will provide a comprehensive range of information about the stations our services call at including the availability and accessibility levels of toilets, waiting areas, staffing hours and help points. We are working with the station operators to source all the information we need about their stations to ensure accuracy. We commit to verifying the accuracy of the information contained in the guide as part of our annual review of our Accessible Travel Policy. In the meantime, we will keep our website up to date and continue to do this. Although we have effective information-sharing channels with the station operators, we also commit to asking them in writing, every four months, to review and confirm whether or not there have been any changes to the information we publish about their stations.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance

## 1.2.3. Passenger Journey Information

The Caledonian Sleeper service runs during the night so we do not issue audio or visual announcements, except during an emergency. Our trains have a public address system on board. If you wish to receive audio or visual updates during the journey (for example to let you know that you are approaching your stop), you can request this when you board from our on board hosts and they will speak to you at the appropriate time, giving you sufficient warning to leave the train.

We have designated Caledonian Sleeper Information Points at most of the stations we call at which provide real-time departure information, in addition to customer information screens. Our new Information Points also offer live video-calling to our staff and this operates two hours before and after our trains call at the station.

There are also Help Points at the stations too. You can use these 24 hours a day for timetable information or to speak to someone who can contact us directly.

If your train is expected to be disrupted (for example due to planned engineering works) our Guest Service Centre will contact you in the way you said you would prefer when you booked assistance. If you would find this useful please get in touch and ensure we have your correct contact details. We will explain the expected impact of the disruption and discuss the options for alternative arrangements.

We do not issue audio announcements throughout the night so as not to disturb guests' sleep. If you are staying in a room, you can request a wake-up call or be notified of delays if you wish. Staff will visit your room personally if the intercom is inaccessible. The same applies to guests in our seated coach. Our seated coaches have visual information screens for station stops.

We strive for you to have a comfortable and relaxing journey. If you experience a problem on board our trains, please tell a member of staff who will try to find a solution to minimise any inconvenience. If you find a fault at a station, please let our Guest Service Centre know so we can raise it with the station operator. If there are any restrictions in use of our on board accessibility features, such as a serious fault with an accessible room you have booked, we will contact you in advance via your preferred method of communication to agree an appropriate resolution.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.2.4. Information points, help points and contact centres

As promoted in our leaflet, you can get all the information you need to plan and prepare for your journey with us from our Guest Service Centre.

We have designated Information Points at most of the stations we call at which provide real-time departure information, in addition to customer information screens. Our Information Points also offer live video-calling to our staff two hours before and after our trains call at the station.

If you book assistance, we will agree a meeting point with you. Larger stations usually have a designated place (eg a booking office or mobility assistance lounge) but if there are not staff on duty at a station we will usually agree to meet you on the platform as the train arrives. The meeting point will be confirmed in your booking confirmation.

There are also Help Points at the stations too. You can use these 24 hours a day for timetable information or to speak to someone who can contact us directly.

If staff are not on duty at stations that our service calls at, any ticket gates are locked open to enable you to access the platform with ease.

All of our telephone services, for example the Guest Service Centre, include a text relay service. We currently use Next Generation Text.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.2.5. Websites

We are working with Shaw Trust to improve the accessibility of our website. The website will be tested by users who themselves are disabled and use assistive technologies such as JAWS, NVDA screen readers, Dragon voice activation software and Zoom Text magnification. We are aiming for WCAG Level AA in 2020 and will then explore further improvements.

We have a dedicated page on our website called “Accessible Travel” which can be accessed from our homepage. This page includes the following:

- a clear and simple summary of Passenger Assist
- the contact details to book Passenger Assist and purchase a ticket
- information on discounts such as railcards
- a list of our on board facilities, particularly features within accessible rooms
- a link to download our Accessible Travel Policy and details of how to get this in alternative formats
- information on how to make a complaint and seek redress if your booked assistance was not provided

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.3 Tickets and fares

The easiest and cheapest way to buy a ticket to travel on the Caledonian Sleeper is directly from us. At the same time we can also address access needs and book assistance if needed. When you book tickets with us, we will send you an e-ticket by email. You can either show this to staff on your phone or print them out before you travel. If this is not accessible for you, we can post your ticket to you on request.

Alternatively, you can use a valid National Rail ticket provided you also have a reservation to travel on the Caledonian Sleeper. You can buy National Rail tickets from ticket machines at stations, which can apply discounts for Disabled Persons Railcard holders. These tickets must be valid between stations served by Caledonian Sleeper for part or all of your complete rail journey.

You cannot buy or collect dedicated Caledonian Sleeper tickets from station ticket machines. We will send you an e-ticket by email to present on your phone or to print at home if you prefer. We can send this ticket to you but post if this is not accessible for you.

If you are a disabled guest and unable to purchase a ticket before your journey, you can buy this from us on board without penalty with any eligible discounts. However, please remember that our wheelchair spaces and accessible rooms are subject to availability.

Reservations for wheelchair spaces and accessible rooms need to be made by contacting our Guest Service Centre. It is not possible to book these on our website. The reason for this is to prevent a potential guest from buying a ticket online and making plans only to then find that another operator has reserved the space for someone else under the Passenger Assist system. We are also aware that, because our accessible rooms are comparatively very spacious, they are potentially open to abuse by being booked by guests without access needs. We keep this policy under regular review and consult with our Accessibility Panel.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.4. Alternative accessible transport

We want to welcome as many disabled and older guests as possible, however we are very mindful that there are additional considerations for safety and comfort when travelling on an overnight service. In turn, we take care to think through the consequences of a potential breakdown in a disabled or older person's ability to access the service in the way that was expected.

As part of the journey planning and assistance booking process our Guest Service Centre will talk with you regarding:

- Accessibility of the stations you plan to use;
- Accessibility of our trains including rooms, toilets and shower facilities
- Staffing levels at the stations you plan to use

From these discussions, it might become apparent that we need to arrange alternative accessible transport for you at no extra cost, eg if you wish to use a station that is inaccessible to you (for example, because of stairs). Alternative accessible transport will take you between the inaccessible station and the nearest or most convenient one that is accessible to you.

When we organise rail replacement services because of planned or unplanned disruption, we draw on a range of suppliers to coordinate vehicles given the remote locations and night-time nature of our services. We will always ensure there is an accessible option for you. For this reason, we will discuss your needs before booking rail replacement, giving you the added choice to re-book your travel with us or explore other travel options based on your individual access needs.

We are aware that travelling long distances by road or staying in a hotel might be difficult for a disabled or older person. For this reason, we encourage you to contact our Guest Service Centre to discuss your needs in advance, our policy is to be open and transparent and to enable you to make informed decisions.

Please be aware that accessible taxis are usually unable to carry scooters and so we cannot guarantee the arrangements set out above can be offered to scooter users. If you are a scooter user, we will explore and discuss with you what options are available. This will include understanding if your scooter can be folded and whether your scooter can be safely secured in a vehicle under the manufacturer's recommendations. If neither of these options are possible, we will work with you to look at alternatives eg support you to travel home (securing your scooter safely overnight) and arranging transport for you to collect your scooter the next day or as soon as practicably possible.

## 1. Commitments to providing assistance



### 1.5. Scooters and mobility aids

Like most trains across the UK, we can carry wheelchairs, scooters and rollators which are no larger than 70cm x 120cm and a combined weight of guest and wheelchair/scooter of 300kg. Guests are asked to check the size and weight before travelling to avoid disappointment.

Scooter users can stay in the scooter if they wish but may prefer to transfer to a seat.

Please note the restrictions in 1.4 above regarding alternative transport for scooter users.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.6. Delays, disruptions and emergencies

We understand that disruption to facilities and services can have a significant impact on accessibility and on the confidence of disabled people in rail travel. Where disruption happens we do everything possible to ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to continue your journey.

In cases of planned disruption, we do everything we can to secure accessible rail replacement vehicles. Given the rural locations of our services and unsociable hours of operation, sometimes we depend on accessible taxis to meet the access needs of our guests. This is an issue that is always high on the agenda of discussions with our rail replacement suppliers.

We do not manage any stations along our route so we are unable to escort guests to connecting trains. If our train is re-platformed at short notice and you are due to be met by staff at that station, we will make sure you are assisted off the train in time and wait with you until the staff member arrives.

Our on board hosts and staff in the depot who check and maintain our trains report any serious faults in our accessibility features. Where a fault impacts our ability to deliver an accessible facility, we will contact any disabled or older guests before they travel to explain and discuss the options.

Where rail replacement services are not accessible for you we will organise alternative accessible transport suitable for your needs **(see 1.4 page 12)**.

Where you have booked assistance in advance for a journey departing the next day (or further notice) that because of disruption is no longer appropriate, our Guest Service Centre will contact you in the way you said you would prefer to be contacted. They will tell you about the anticipated disruption and discuss what alternative arrangements might need to be put in place at no additional charge. If you would find this useful please get in touch and ensure we have your correct contact details.

If you already travelling with us when disruption happens with no advance warning, our on board hosts will discuss this with you and coordinate any arrangements that need to be made to get to you to your destination. If you have not yet boarded the train and are waiting at an unstaffed station, please contact us for more information via an Information Point or Help Point.

We understand that you may need additional assistance in an emergency. All of our on board staff are trained in these procedures, particularly relating to evacuation. In most cases, it is safer to stay on the train if there is an incident. However, our on board hosts will help all guests off the train (including those with mobility issues) if there is risk of danger to life. We will then also organise onward travel for you and accommodation if appropriate.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.7. Station facilities

We do not operate any stations, however we understand station accessibility may be a key issue in planning your journey and so our Guest Service Centre can provide you with the information you need. At a strategic level, we keep station facilities (eg sufficient Blue Badge parking) under review in our discussions with station operators.



### Accessible shower facilities

On board our trains, there are only en-suite shower facilities in Club rooms. There are no shower facilities provided for guests in our seated coach or accessible rooms.

Whilst there are no accessible shower facilities on board our trains, guests staying in accessible rooms can use the accessible shower facilities at London Euston, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Fort William, Dundee, Leuchars, Perth, Stirling and Inverness free of charge. These are gender-neutral facilities. Our Guest Service Centre can provide further information.



### Left Luggage

There are staffed left luggage facilities with step-free access the following stations

<b>Glasgow Central</b>	Monday to Saturday 6am to midnight. Sunday 7am to midnight
<b>Edinburgh Waverley</b>	Monday to Sunday, 7am to 11pm
<b>Inverness</b>	Monday to Sunday, 7am to 9pm
<b>London Euston</b>	Monday to Sunday, 7am to 11pm



### Parking

You can find information about parking facilities, including Blue Badge Bays, in our station accessibility guide.

# 1. Commitments to providing assistance



## 1.8. Redress

If you experience a problem, please let our on board hosts know so we can try to resolve the issue immediately.

When assistance has been booked in advance, confirmed and not provided to you, please tell us and we will investigate this thoroughly. When you contact us with any complaint (by phone, post or email) we aim to respond fully in 10 working days. If there is a reason we can't do that, we will keep you updated until we can respond.

After we have investigated the matter, we will explain to you why assistance was not provided to you and what steps will be taken to ensure it doesn't happen again. We may also offer compensation, eg a full or partial refund. Alternatively or additionally, you may want reassurance that our staff training programmes have been updated to help stop the issue happening again. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure we do the right thing.

We will own and coordinate any claim about assistance which failed if you were travelling on, or due to travel on, one of our train services. If you booked assistance with us for a journey to travel with more than one operator (including our services) you only need to make one claim. We will coordinate the response for you unless the bulk of the failed assistance was provided by another operator, in which case they may respond to you directly. If we make arrangements for the claim to be passed to another operator, we will ask your permission first.

## 2. Strategy and Management



### 2.1. Strategy

Consultation is paramount. We actively seek feedback from our guests and our new Accessibility Panel is an essential part of our planning processes. We understand that the unique nature of our service makes it a convenient and appealing option for disabled travellers. We strive to ensure that our service is accessible to all guests and actively seek to improve our facilities.



### 2.2. Management arrangements

We consider accessibility in everything we do and recognise this is part of a cycle of continuous improvement. Our Guest Experience Director has overall responsibility for our Accessible Travel Policy.

Our Guest Experience Director makes sure that accessibility is a central part of our business plans and of the planning stage of all relevant major projects. This involves leading a culture of valuing inclusion in all areas of the business. We consciously lead accessibility from the Guest Experience division of the business because we understand that standards must go beyond 'minimum standard accessibility' and consider the whole experience of a valued disabled guest.

In terms of implementing our policy, the following colleagues report to the Guest Experience Director:

- Head of Guest Experience Service Delivery
- Head of Guest Experience Support
- Guest Experience Relations Manager
- Learning and Development Manager

All of our managers and staff receive disability awareness training which includes outcomes to ensure they understand their role in fulfilling this policy. Our on-board team, who provide assistance and information to our older and disabled guests everyday, are actively encouraged to suggest improvements. These are recorded and reviewed by our Guest Experience Director personally.

Our Guest Experience Director champions accessibility within our business and ensures all senior leaders within the business are fully aware of the requirements of their own teams in fulfilling our accessibility commitments and obligations.

In 2019 we began introducing our new trains with enhanced levels of accessibility and options for guests with access needs. The whole fleet was replaced in 2019. In terms of return on investment, at this stage we monitor ticket sales and focus on customer experience and feedback.

## 2. Strategy and Management



### 2.3. Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure the standards and commitments in this policy are consistently achieved, we have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place.

We record all feedback, including complaints and compliments, received from our guests about accessibility. These may relate to the journey planning process (including booking assistance) or the journey experience. Our Guest Experience Director reviews these personally.

To proactively source feedback from disabled and older customers we have:

- Implemented a survey programme on a guest's experience (including any assistance booked and/or delivered) which aims to secure feedback from 10% of guests who have booked assistance for our services.

We also monitor:

- the number of ticket sales for our services using a Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC); and
- Passenger Assist bookings made by guests and delivered by staff (whether booked or not).

To enable the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to independently monitor our progress we commit to sharing our performance data. As part of our annual review we provide the ORR with details on key actions we are taking in order to improve our performance.



### 2.4. Access improvements

Access to the stations we serve, and the facilities and assistance available, varies considerably. Most of the stations that we serve were built in the 19th century when inclusion of disabled people was rarely considered. Key improvements have been made at a number of stations across the National Rail network and we will work with station operators to continue to improve the stations we serve. We have processes and policies in place to combat inconsistency and maximise a disabled guest's experience, such as providing assistance and/or alternative accessible transport.

Any improvements we make will meet the Persons of Reduced Mobility Technical Specification (PRM TSI) and the Joint Code of Practice. If this is not possible, we will apply for derogations against the PRM-TSI and/or dispensations against the Joint Code of Practice, after every effort has been made to comply with the requirements.

## 2. Strategy and Management

Since we took responsibility for Caledonian Sleeper services in 2015, we have implemented a range of significant improvements.

- In 2019 we introduced new trains with: accessible rooms, wheelchair spaces in seated coaches and intercom in rooms to contact on board hosts
- In 2018-19 we installed Caledonian Sleeper Information Points at most stations we serve which also offer video calling.
- We have invested in waiting rooms at stations operated by ScotRail. Remote activation means the facilities can be opened for use when our services operate.
- In 2018-19 we installed accessible shower facilities at Stirling, Perth, Leuchars, Fort William and Dundee, in addition to our existing facility in Inverness.

We have initiated a full project review of accessible travel on our services, in line with the introduction of our new trains. We will report on this in our update of this policy next year.

We plan to introduce the following initiatives in 2020:

- A tool for guests with non-visible impairments to signal to our hosts that they may need assistance. This is likely to include a range of options such as a wearable item (eg the Sunflower Lanyard) or a discreet card (eg the JAM card). We will consult with our Accessibility Panel to select appropriate initiatives. Work on these schemes will take place throughout 2020, with the aim to have them in place and operation by October 2020.
- A trial of vibrating pillow pads (to alert Deaf guests in the event of an emergency alarm) will be conducted by 31 June 2020.
- An initiative where we offer all guests with access needs a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). This will ensure that we identify each guest's individual needs and ensure these are understood by our hosts. We plan to seek consent of the guest to keep it on record so that it does not need to be completed on each journey unless circumstances change. We aim to have the PEEP in operation by 1 July 2020.

We have a budget of £25,000 a year for minor work to improve access at stations. Each year, our Guest Experience Director, working with our new Accessibility Panel, plans how we will spend this in consultation with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Network Rail and the relevant train operators managing the stations.

## 2. Strategy and Management

### 2.5. Working with disabled guests, local communities and local authorities

In 2020 we launched our Accessibility Panel who meet at least twice a year. The Panel is comprised of:

- Guests who have travelled on our services and potential guests who might have identified barriers to using our services
- People who have experience of receiving assistance from us to use our services
- People with visible and non-visible impairments
- People who experience a range of access barriers (related to a range of impairments and to characteristics such as age, income and confidence levels).
- Organisations who represent people across a range of disabilities

The purpose of the Accessibility Panel is to be an internal sounding board for us on accessibility issues, to critique our plans and propose ideas for improving the experiences of our disabled and older guests. They also help us to prioritise our investment plans and advise on how to raise awareness of assisted travel by signposting us to influential organisations in their networks.

Accessibility consultants with lived experience of disability are commissioned to regularly critique our progress and provide expert advice in improving access to our older and disabled guests.

Our Guest Experience Director works with and involves groups representing disabled people and other stakeholders such as Mobility Access Committee Scotland.

We address accessibility issues as they arise during our regular stakeholder meetings with regional transport partnerships in Scotland, local authorities, councils and community rail partnerships and interest groups. We also invite our guests and interested stakeholders to give us feedback at our 'Meet the Manager' events every three months, by contacting our Guest Service Centre or via our website.



## 2. Strategy and Management



### 2.6. Staff training

All of our on board hosts and colleagues in our Guest Service Centre receive disability awareness training every year. This half day course, called 'Just Ask', was developed with a specialist disability organisation and an accessibility specialist. A key outcome is for staff to communicate clearly and feel confident to respectfully ask guests with a range of access needs and impairments how they can best meet individual needs. Staffs also learn about key equipment (such as ramps and in-room intercoms).

The training also includes guidance on assisting guests with visible and non-visible impairments. We provide an annual report to Transport Scotland and the ORR on the training our staff have received.

By July 2021 we will implement a new comprehensive training programme with enhanced learning outcomes, including

- Understanding disabled people's everyday challenges
- Equality legislation
- Defining disability
- Recognising guests who need assistance
- Rail regulatory framework
- Passenger Assist
- Communication
- Station accessibility
- Providing safe assistance

We are conducting a gap analysis, comparing our current course with the new learning outcomes. This will be finalised in February 2020. Our Accessibility Panel will support us to identify any specific outcomes relevant to our unique sleeper service which are important for guests with access needs, for example how to complete a personal emergency evacuation plan. We will also conduct a review of what training is in place by our rail replacement suppliers. At present we do not provide taxi companies with training, as this is not practical. However, if we were to receive a complaint or concern from a guest about a bus or taxi driver's behaviour we would investigate this thoroughly and establish what training they have received. Depending on the circumstances we might offer to share training materials with the company the driver works for.

## 2. Strategy and Management

As a minimum we will ensure that by July 2021:

- all new staff, including senior and key managers, receive training in the first six outcomes as part of their induction
- all new staff who interact with guests receive training in all nine outcomes as part of their induction
- our existing staff, who interact with guests, receive refresher training which achieves consistency with the new outcomes
- agency and temporary staff receive a condensed version of the course to include the last three outcomes (where practicable)
- Staff at our Guest Service Centre receive a bespoke version of the course to include the last three outcomes **(see below)**.

We commit to providing refresher training at least every two years. However, we provide our staff with an annual training programme and we are required to ensure this covers content of this Accessible Travel Policy. This annual programme is ideally suited for existing and refresher training.

In terms of new staff, we expect to designate at least one full day to disability equality and the outcomes above in the classroom environment. This will include interactive learning (eg through quizzes, exercises and discussion) as well as a robust evaluation system to monitor effectiveness.

We recognise that as we do not have a staff presence at stations, a great deal of support and advice is provided by our Guest Service Centre. This course will be bespoke to their role and specifically include guidance and exercises which include case studies and scenarios they might have to deal with eg asking appropriate questions about access needs to ensure a disabled person can travel with us comfortably when planning a journey and how to responsibly manage the process in real-time of a guest needing support at an unstaffed station.

Our programme will ensure the voices and stories of disabled people are heard by staff and will be developed in consultation with disabled people. We plan to create bespoke videos for the programme to enhance the learning experience by hearing directly from disabled people.

As part of our review and planning in early 2020 we will carefully consider how we can deliver the most effective training on an annual rolling programme. We hope to have this new course ready to run as a pilot by July 2020, when we will also report to the ORR on our progress.



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