

Railways for All

The Plan to Make Great Britain's Railways More Accessible



March 2006

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A few words by Derek Twigg Rail Minister

We are going to make the railway easier to use.

Many stations have old buildings.

It will take a long time to bring these up to date and make them more accessible to everyone.

To do this, the Government has said it will spend much more money (£370 million) over the next 10 years.









The Government plans to make the whole railway better for everyone including disabled people.

In 2005 there were more than 1 billion passengers making journeys. That is the highest number for 40 years. Britain has the fastest growing railway in Europe.

Even so, we know that there are some problems. It can be hard for disabled people to make journeys. With around 10 million disabled people across the country, it is important that we remove barriers to access.

This plan talks about what the railway will do to make things better.









Derek Twigg Rail Minister

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It looks at:

• Giving better information about journeys to people

• Making stations more accessible

• Making sure there are more accessible trains

Making sure staff are trained well

This is the first plan to make the railways more accessible. In the future all new railway plans will take full account of disabled people's needs.









1 The Report

1.1 Why this is happening

This plan sets out how the railways will become more accessible in Great Britain. Our aim is to make it easier for everyone to make more journeys. We can do this by making the stations and trains and other services better. More disabled people will find it easier to travel to jobs. They will be able to get out and about more.



1.2 Background

There are around 10 million disabled people in Great Britain. The Government thinks that disabled people's needs should be part of all the plans that are made. It is also important that people can afford to use transport.

In the 1980s British Rail set up a group of disabled people to tell them how to make access better.

There are a number of laws that set out how the railway has to be more accessible. In law, all trains are to become more accessible by 2020.







1.3 Plan

This plan looks at how to make all parts of the railway system more accessible. This includes:

information, tickets and booking (reservations) lacksquare

• station buildings and platforms

• train carriages

• good staff training











The plan looks at how to spend £370 million. This is from a government programme called Access for All. The plan looks at how some of that money will be spent over the next 3 years to 2009.

The ideas being used are based on research that was done in 2005. We talked to a lot of people about how to make things better.

The plan is about making the stations better and making sure people can make more journeys.





2 An Accessible Railway

2.1 Disability in Great Britain

Accessibility is important to everyone. 2 out of 3 disabled people are over the age of 65. Older people are also living for longer.

Transport is important for giving access for people to get to jobs or get out and about. A lot of disabled people use public transport (buses and trains). 6 out of 10 disabled people have no car so it is hard for disabled people to just get up and go somewhere. Disabled people do not make as many journeys as other people because it is hard.

2.2 Great Britain's Railways

The Department for Transport are in charge of the railway in England. In Scotland it comes under the Scottish Executive. In Wales it comes under the Welsh Assembly.

The tracks, signals and stations are owned by Network Rail. Most stations are rented out and looked after by private companies.

These companies rent their trains and pay Network Rail to use them on the tracks.









Taking bookings and anything to do with tickets is done through a group that are made up of all the companies.

This group plays a big part in making sure that good plans about accessibility are stuck to by the train companies.

The train companies deal with passenger services. The Department for Transport gives firms a contract that lasts for 7 to 10 years based on how good they are. The contracts are given at different times so they don't all run out at the same time.

This gives a chance for the Department for Transport to see other jobs that they think the train companies could do. This may be things like making stations or trains more accessible.

The Government has said there is an extra £370 million to be spent on making better access to stations. This funding is known as the Access for All funding and is on top of the other money the railway gets. This funding goes on over the next ten years to 2015.











To work out how the Access for All funding should be spent, people were asked for their views and ideas in 2005. They talked to people from the railway, local government, disability groups and disabled people themselves. What they said has been used to make this plan. You can see what people said on the Department for Transport's website.





www.dft.gov.uk/access

2.3 The Disability Discrimination Acts

The Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 and 2005) said that there should be access to all services for disabled people. This includes trains. At the end of 2006 this will also cover services on a train.



Stations

It is against the law for anyone working in the railway service to discriminate against disabled people. Since 1999 they have had a duty to look at their rules and how they work. They also have to give aids to help access if needed. If there are barriers getting in or around buildings and stations they have had to work out how to do things in a way to make them as accessible as they can be.



Since October 2004 they have had to think about getting rid of barriers. All station operators already give access to their services. But what is seen as okay today may not be good enough in the future. The operators have to keep looking to make sure it stays okay.

Trains

All new trains have had to be made accessible since 1999. These rules were made by talking to disabled people about what was needed.

The rules cover getting on to the train and what it's like on-board. This is about where people sit and the toilets. There also has to be good ways of getting information and spaces for people to stay in their wheelchairs. There need to be good handrails and colour contrasting for people who have visual impairments.

Over 4,300 train carriages meet these rules at the moment. By the end of 2006 the rules should cover older trains that are being brought up to date. They will have to look at their rules, and stamp out any discrimination. They will also have to make sure there are aids for people who need them.









2.4 Disabled People's Protection Policy

There are rules to protect disabled people who use the railway. The rules say how disabled people will be given a good service. They also say what is accessible about the stations. This information is available to disabled people from the National Rail Enquiries Service:





08457 48 49 50

and online at



www.nationalrail.co.uk

This is so that people can find out about their journey in advance.



2.5 Rules about stations, trains and carriages

There are also rules on what has to be put in place to get best access. All new stations and any changes to stations or train carriages should meet what is said in the rules. There can be some exceptions. This would be where it is thought the changes to make are too big a job because the station is built in an odd way or the costs are out of the question.



2.6 European Law

There are two European laws being made which are about rail travel for disabled people. One is about access for people who have physical impairments which affect their mobility. The other is about passenger's rights.

These laws cover how the railways work across Europe. They are expected to come out in 2007.

2.7 Making Access to our Railways Better

The transport system can only be good if we look at all parts of it. We have looked at all the parts of making a journey to make sure everything is thought about. This includes:

• finding information, buying tickets and making bookings (Chapter 4)

 access to station buildings and platforms (Chapter 5)









• good staff training (Chapter 7)

to 2009 to ensure that making access better is part of the whole plan of the railway.

This looks at what we will do over the next 3 years

• the accessibility of train carriages (Chapter 6)









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3 How will this Happen?

3.1 Introduction

All parts of the railway can help in some way to make access better. This section looks at what each organisation does and how they are planning to make access better.

The Department for Transport has set up a group of all the different organisations to talk about how to make sure the plan happens.

3.2 Department for Transport

The Department for Transport does a number of jobs that could help make access better. These are:

setting out the overall railway plan

 setting out what private firms have to do to get contracts







managing the private firms that already have contracts

putting information out and keeping to the rules

Overall Railway Plan

The railway plan has to keep looking at what is happening and what still needs to be done. It needs to sort out what to spend the money on. Making the railway accessible will always be on the list of the things the railway has to do in the future.

New Companies

The Government has to make sure they get good value for money when they choose companies to take on contracts.







RULES

At the moment there are 3 stages:

• Checking that the companies are able to apply

• Asking the best companies to bid for the contract

• Talking to the company that is likely to get the contract

At the first stage lots of questions are asked about how the company has dealt with access issues in the past.

At the second stage the Department for Transport must have made it clear what is wanted from the company. The companies are also asked to put forward their own ideas.

This allows the Department for Transport to work out the best ways of making access better.











Managing the companies

The train companies are managed by the Department for Transport. One of the jobs is to make sure they do things well and on time. The Department for Transport may ask for new jobs to be done as time goes on. They make sure all the changes are made and all the repairs are done.

3.3 Transport Scotland

In Scotland 'Transport Scotland', looks after the railway plans. They are an agency of the Scottish Executive. They look after ScotRail who are the only train company in Scotland.

Looking at the needs of disabled people is something that happens all across England, Wales and Scotland. They will make things better in much the same way.

3.4 Welsh Assembly

The Welsh Assembly Government will choose its own train companies in Wales from April 2006. It can also put money into new railway projects over and above what is already happening.









3.5 Network Rail

As the owner of nearly all of the 2,500 stations in Great Britain, Network Rail has a key part to play in keeping stations up to scratch. They are given money to keep things in good order.

Network Rail will take a lead on putting in place the 10 year Access for All programme. Over the next 3 years £100 million will be spent to make stations better.

3.6 Train Companies

Train companies have to look after the stations and all the things that passengers come into contact with. This includes general decoration, signs, lighting, customer information systems, help points, loud speaker systems and closed-circuit television.

The companies are the best people to deal with local passengers. They also know what is needed at the stations along their routes.









* #

Each company will be working at stations of different age and state of repair. Also each place will have different ways of making things work. Access for All will give funding to 'Small Schemes' so that companies can think of good local ideas to bid for (see more in Chapter 5.4).

3.7 The Group of Train Companies

There is a group that speaks up for all the train companies. They run a number of things to help the railway work well:

• National Rail Enquiries Service (phone)



08457 48 49 50

National Rail website



www.nationalrail.co.uk







• A ticket booking system

• Disabled and Senior Persons Railcards

There has been a lot of effort to make all these things work well over the past few years. There is still more to be done (see Chapter 4).

3.8 Local Government

Local Government has a large part to play in saying what people want from the railway to make access better and help the community. They can ask for money to help projects at local stations (see Chapter 5.4).









3.9 Other Groups

Across Britain, there are other groups who depend on the stations for their business. For example, the airports, business people and local industries. Those people can also apply for money to improve access if they think of good projects.

3.10 When will access be better?

All these changes cannot be made overnight. When the railways were first made they did not bear disabled people in mind. Now everything has to be built on and changed. The law has made sure that the changes start. The changes are not just about buildings and trains but also about people and rules.

By working together all the groups that have been talked about are helping to make access better. Access will now always be part of any new railway plan.



LAW





4 Improving Information, Getting tickets and Help.

It is important to make passengers feel like they will be able to have a good journey. This can be done by giving the right information on journeys, booking tickets and knowing you will get help.

4.1 Sorting out Journey Choices

There are now a number of ways to find out train times and sort out which journey would be best.

Stations

Timetables give information about when trains are running and what route they go. They can be seen and downloaded at the different train company websites. Where there are staff at a station, they can be asked what the different choices are.

Big stations have a travel centre. The staff here should be able to help plan and book a journey.









www.nationalrail.co.uk

The nationalrail.co.uk website is the main point for all train information. It holds lots of information about planning a journey, which trains are running, tickets and booking and information about the stations.

This website also gives a national map for people with mobility needs. It shows how accessible each station is. It also shows information about the Disabled Persons Railcard. It sets out the rules for taking powered scooters and other mobility aids.

This phone number is for the **National Rail Enquiry Service.** This gives train times and can put the caller through to buy tickets make bookings. They can put people through to the Disabled Persons Railcard helpline and all train company booking lines for assistance.

08457 48 49 50













0845 60 50 600

(National Rail Enquiry Service Text-phone)

This telephone number gives text-phone access to the National Rail Enquiry Service.

Train Company Websites

These websites give a lot of information. They tell people about up to date engineering works (where there is work being done on the tracks). Most of these help passengers to book tickets. A list of train company websites is kept up to date by

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www.nationalrail.co.uk

www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

4.2 Station Access

How accessible a station is can be about what the place is like and if there are staff there. It is important to know whether to book help with the journey. The rail industry has made its information easier to get hold of. Most information can be found by phoning the numbers above or going on the websites. Many of these have made guides to stations and train access.

4.3 Money off Travel

Web Site

There are a lot of railcards that can give money off travel. Information on railcards can be found at most stations where there are staff and through websites below. These cards can be found across Great Britain:

• For disabled people there is the **Disabled Persons Railcard**

This gives a disabled person and another person, a one-third discount (money off) on most rail-fares. A form has to be filled in to make sure the person should be able to have the card. This can be done on-line or at a station, and then has to be sent off.







For people aged 60 or over, there is the **Senior Persons Railcard**



www.senior-railcard.co.uk

which gives a one-third discount on most rail fares. This can be asked for at staffed stations and by telephone to the National Rail Enquiry Service.

More information on other ways to get money off can be found in the 'Rail Travel for Disabled Passengers' guide (see 4.8).

4.4 Buying Tickets

Tickets can be bought before travel in a number of ways:

• In person at a station ticket office, travel centres or travel agents, or by machine. Many big stations have a machine to buy tickets from.









• Online, before you travel, at



or through other railway websites.

Tickets should be bought before travel. Sometimes there are extra charges if they are not. As part of the Disabled People's Protection Policy, if a disabled person is not able to buy a ticket before they travel, due to their disability, then they can still get money off their tickets (through railcards) when they buy them on the train.



4.5 Making a Seat or Wheelchair Space Booking

Seats can be booked on most long-distance routes. They cannot always be booked on rural or just out-of-city routes. Seat bookings need to be made when the ticket is bought.



People who need to can also make wheelchair space bookings. The train companies have to help as much as they can to make sure people who use wheelchairs can use all their trains.

4.6 Booking Help for a Journey

There is booking service. Passengers who may need help on their train journey are asked to contact National Rail Enquiry Service or telephone a train company direct. Some of these can be contacted through their website and help will be sorted out.

The booking service is there to make sure staff can help disabled people to and from all trains on their journey. Passengers need to book this help at least 24 hours before they go. If not, the staff will still try to help. There is still work being done to see how the service can be made better as so many people have said how important it is.

4.7 Finding out about work on the tracks that may cause delay

Information on planned work is given at the stations. It can also be found through the other services above. The works may mean that there are more stops or different routes are taken. Sometimes there is a bus running instead of a train.











There will always be transport put on to allow people to get to the end of their journey. If one way is not accessible for you then another way will be found.

4.8 More Information

Information on access to the rail network is on:

There is a guide called 'Rail Travel for Disabled Passengers' which is kept up to date each year. It is available in different formats.

www.nationalrail.co.uk

4.9 Conclusion

The rail industry wants to give as good a service to disabled people as to anyone else. Giving the right information and having lots of ways of getting and booking tickets all help with this. All the time this plan is happening, we will keep making the access to information we have better.











5 Making Stations More Accessible

5.1 Background

The rail network in Great Britain has about 2,500 stations. These are all different. Some are large and have a lot of shops. Some are very quiet. Most were built over 100 years ago. Each one has different access problems for disabled people. A key point in the plan is to make access to stations better to take away the barriers to travel.

5.2 Access for All

The £370 million Access for All money is there to make our stations more accessible through to 2015. The Department for Transport has a duty to make sure the money is used well. From April 2006 the Access for All funding is split into two parts:

- £35 million per year is to make access better at the busiest stations. This will make these stations step free. This is done by Network Rail.
- £7 million per year will be given as Small Schemes funding. These projects are to be helped by other groups like train companies and Local Authorities.













5.3 Making sure there is an 'Accessible Route'

What is an 'Accessible Route'?

Stations can be difficult places to get around. Each station's layout is likely to be different. For people who do not know the station, it can be worrying, especially late at night or in bad weather. There should be a good amount of lighting, clear signs and clearly marked buildings to help the station be more accessible to everyone.

Steps are real barriers to people in wheelchairs. They also make journeys hard for many older people and for people with pushchairs and heavy or awkward luggage. Ramps can help with a short set of stairs but long and steep ramps can put people off.

Long routes between a train and the station exit are also not good. Seats need to be set out for people to rest.

In the station buildings, a good clear, well lit and signposted route has to be given. People with low vision and those with learning difficulties may find the journey hard.









The point is that all passengers will gain from stations being more accessible.

Some barriers can be overcome by having enough staff. Even so, there is still equipment and aids and changes to buildings that are needed. Some stations have staff that help with lifts or crossings; others have passenger buggies to drive people between the train and where they need to leave the station.

People have said it is really important to have clear, well lit and signposted routes which give access to facilities (like shops and toilets) and platforms. These routes need to be accessible to all people. This is called an 'accessible route'. All the stations will be looking at how to make accessible routes.

The £35 million per year Access for All money is to make an 'accessible route' which will give step-free access to stations. This will mean more people can use more stations.










Where to put the money first

We have worked out how many disabled people there are in each area, and how many people use each station. Because of this we can plan which stations need to be made accessible first. The busier stations in areas where more people say they are disabled, will be top of the list.

In the first 3 years half of the stations we spend money on will be in London and the South East. The rest will be spent across the rest of Britain. We think that by 2009 all those stations will have an accessible step-free route.

We will be keeping people up to date on the Department for Transport website



The choice of where to put the money after the first 3 years will be a job for the new group which will be asked to make sure things are planned well. The Access for All funding must go where disabled passengers of the future are going to need it.





5.4 Small Schemes

The Small Schemes money is there to help fund good new ideas. They need to take into account the needs of local communities. This money should also help train staff. It will also be used to cover any extra costs from the changes to the stations.

Each year we will ask the train companies, local government and others to make bids for it.

5.5 Other points about access

The gap between the platform and the train is a worry for many disabled people. It can stop people from using the trains, especially people who are visually impaired. Many new trains, have a ramp on the train. Otherwise there are ramps that staff can put in place at stations. The staff have to be trained to use them.







Changes to platforms are hard because of the need to alter everything around it, like waiting rooms. Changes to the rails may mean that changes have to be made to big lengths of track and signalling equipment. Both of these cost a lot of money.

Many platforms are curved. High speed or goods trains that need a lot of space may pass the platforms. At these platforms there may be big gaps that need a ramp to cover.

5.6 Tactile Paving

There has to be tactile paving at all platform edges. This paving has flat topped bumps. The surface warns people who may be visually impaired when they are getting near the edge.

The paving itself does not cost a lot but it does cost quite a lot to put it in place. Because platforms are used throughout the day, the work has to take place around everything else going on, so it takes a long time. While work is going on, spaces have to be left to allow people to get to toilets, shops, waiting rooms and ticket offices.

Even so, it is very helpful for visually impaired people. It will be looked at as part of making an 'accessible route' under the Access for All funding.











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5.7 Stair Lifts

Passenger stair-lifts mean people who find it hard do not have to use stairs. But they can only be used when staff are there and there is no safety risk. They are not very good for stations where there are a lot of people around.

Some stations may be able to have stair lifts. But they would need to show they were not too busy and there were enough trained staff to use them.

5.8 Mobility Scooters

Train companies do not have to carry scooters. In fact they did not want to because of the size and difficulty of moving them.

However, scooter design is getting better with smaller, lighter and easier scooters being made. Because of this the railways will now take smaller scooters if they can be folded and taken on board as luggage.

Some companies will carry other scooters but it is up to them to say yes or no.









Information on what each company does about carrying scooters can be found on the website under the Disabled Passengers section:



www.nationalrail.co.uk

Or you can contact the National Railway Enguiries Service. There is new research coming out about this later in 2006, which might help new rules be made.

5.9 Conclusion

During the next 3 years, around £100 million will be spent at the busiest stations in Great Britain. This is the first part of the Access for All programme. It will make a big difference to the railway network in a short space of time.

The Small Schemes funding will go to good new ideas and local areas to meet the needs of the local community. In 3 years we will have spent up to £20 million on these projects.

The rail industry is keen to do all this work and has already started.







6 Making Trains more accessible

6.1 Overview

Britain has around 12,000 train carriages. Over a third have been made in the last 6 years so they are accessible. In order to be accessible, carriages have to have:

• Boarding ramps, to help wheelchair users to get on and off trains.

• Accessible seats for disabled passengers that are easy to get to.

• A set number of spaces for wheelchair users









Wheelchair accessible toilets where a train has toilets

 Good travel information which can be seen as well as heard

- Good colours for contrast for handrails and doors for people who are visually impaired.
- 6.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act sets out that these rules can be used for older trains when they get upgraded. All trains will have to meet the rules by 2020. The government will also be able to warn and fine train companies who do not follow the rules.

6.3 How different rules work together

The new rules for European trains are expected to come into place in 2007. The Department for Transport is looking at how they will work with the rules for Great Britain.









7 People

7.1 Introduction

Staff have a big part to play in making the railways more accessible. They give information to people, as well as help on platforms and on board trains.

Staff are seen as important especially when there are delays or things happen out of the blue. They make people feel safer about travelling. We have set out some key points to work on over the next 3 years:

 Make sure we have good and regular staff training.

 Look to see if we should have extra platform staff. This is especially where now they are helping people with ramps for a lot of trains during the day, but not all of them.









• Help the train companies make sure stations are safe and secure.

• Encouraging railway operators to employ more disabled people.

7.2 Training

Having good and accessible trains and stations is only part of the plan. It is very important that staff are trained to work well with disabled people. Staff need to have Disability Awareness Training. That can do a lot to make the train service better for disabled people.

The Department for Transport thinks that training is very important. They are looking at making a plan for training staff to meet the needs of disabled passengers.







7.3 Platform Staff

Staff give a lot of help on platforms. Because the stations are all so different, this means the job can be very different. Around 200 of the busiest stations have platform staff at all times of the day. But half of all stations may have no staff, especially in rural places.

In some cases staff are needed to use lifts, drive buggies or help people cross tracks. We are going to look at the need for extra platform

staff, especially where staff can only give step-free access (ramps) to trains for part of the day.

7.4 Safety and Security

Disabled passengers often feel unsafe when using public transport. They feel better if there are staff at stations and on trains.

It is up to the train companies to make the stations safe for people. In future the companies getting new contracts will be expected to make sure the stations are secure. They will also be expected to keep the stations in good repair.

All of these things make people feel safer when they travel.





Platforms 1,3,4,5,6







7.5 Jobs with the Railway

In the past the railway has employed very few disabled people. Some of has been about the Health and Safety rules.

Disabled people having jobs would also help the railway get better at understanding the needs of disabled people. There is a call for equality in the workplace. Rail companies are looking at their policies so they can employ a wider range of disabled people.

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What the words mean

The table below explains some of the words used:

Access for All	is the funding to make the railway more accessible.
The Disability DiscriminationActsexpected for disabled people.	
Department for Transport	is the Government department that looks after transport. Taking care of the railway in Scotland is sorted out by the Scottish Executive through Transport Scotland.
Disability Awareness Training	is where staff are trained on the experiences and needs of disabled people
Disabled People's Protection Policy	is a public statement of what the train companies do in terms of services for disabled passengers.
Disabled Person's Railcard	allows money off travel.
www.nationalrail.co.uk	is Britain's main website for Access for All train information. The company owns and looks after the workings of the Great Britain rail network.
National Rail Enquiry Service	is a public information service. It gives help on timetables and other questions about the railway. It is paid for by the Train Operating Companies. Ring 08457 48 49 50 .

Network Rail	is the company that looks after the railway tracks, signalling and stations for the Government in England.
Scottish Executive	is the Scottish Government.
Tactile Paving	is where raised bumps on the ground warn people who are visually impaired.
Train companies	are the firms that run the passenger services on the rail network.
Transport Scotland	is the new national transport organisation for Scotland. It looks after the rail and major road networks in Scotland.
Traveline	gives a public transport information service through a single telephone number: 0870 608 2 608 .
Welsh Assembly Government	is the Welsh Government.

How to get in touch

For more information on this plan please contact:

Railways for All Mobility and Inclusion Unit Department for Transport Great Minster House 76 Marsham Street London, SW1P 4DR





miu@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Website

This plan, along with all the documents mentioned in the plan can be seen at the Department for Transport's website:



www.dft.gov.uk/access

Alternative Formats

You can ask for a copy of the original plan. An audio CD of this plan is also available.



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www.inspiredservices.org.uk





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