



Transport Passenger Assist has been trialled on West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services and is due to be rolled out across the rail network from autumn 2019

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New passenger assistance app to be rolled out across the rail industry

A new passenger assistance app is due to be rolled out across the rail industry from autumn 2019.

London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railways are two of four train operators currently trialling the new system. The app will make it easier for customers to book help at stations and will give staff the tools they need to deliver a consistent and reliable service.

85% of customers are already satisfied with their passenger assistance experience, according to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). With this new technology, rail operators hope this can be improved even further.

The new Passenger Assist app, developed by Transreport, will have a number of benefits:

Customers will be able to book, change and cancel assistance quickly. They will also be able to create a user profile, specifying their personal details and the type of assistance they need.

Staff will be able to receive live information, including key details about the customer, so that they can anticipate and deliver changes that occur in planned assistance.

The system has been developed in collaboration with disability charities including Scope, RNIB and Anxiety UK and includes accessible features, such as the ability to change colour themes, fonts and text sizes.

Jon Harris, integrated transport and accessibility manager for West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway said, “We are committed to making our services accessible to everyone, and improving our passenger assistance service is a key part of this. Our trial of the Transreport app has been a really positive experience for all involved. This is a really great example of innovative ideas driving the industry forward and enabling us to work together to do what’s best for our customers.”

Sarah Ward, who uses a wheelchair due to a neurological condition and has Asperger’s Syndrome, has been trialling the app with West Midlands Railway since May.

Sarah said, “With the app, I’ve found everything so much easier. It’s great being able to do things, on the spot, literally at the touch of a button. I think that the app provides a really positive step in opening up rail travel to disabled people. It has enabled me to be much more flexible with my travel plans, and it’s given me much more confidence in making journeys.”

London Northwestern Railway recently featured in the National Rail ‘No boundaries’ art exhibition. The display, which toured major railway stations

around the country, was inspired by the freedom that train travel can bring to those facing various accessibility challenges. Artist, Emma Johns, travelled from her home in Long Buckby to St Ives in Cornwall by train, and used the journey as inspiration for her work.

Emma said, “It’s great to know that the rail companies are making such an effort for people with physical disabilities and also for those with disabilities that perhaps aren’t so obvious. I know there’s a long way to go, especially with provision for people who use wheelchairs, but I think the train journey can be all about a sense of freedom when it works.”

Robert Nisbet, Regional Director at the Rail Delivery Group, said, “We know we’ve got to do better to improve rail’s accessibility. We want everyone who has requested assistance to get the help they need, which is why we’re investing in this pioneering technology designed by top developers who have put our customers at its heart. A few taps of the app will give customers more control, help our people do their jobs better, and deliver on the commitment in our long-term plan to enable more people to benefit from travelling by train.”

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For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

About passenger assistance

1. Passenger assistance is aimed at anyone who needs help with their train journey, from people with disabilities to parents with prams to elderly people. The rail industry has committed to increasing access to the railway, supporting more people to travel by train, in their long-term plan to change and improve, [In Partnership for Britain’s Prosperity](#).
2. Customers will still be able to book using the national freephone number on **0800 022 3720**, which will forward them to the train company they need. By textphone, customers can use the free

textphone forwarding service on **60083**, which will send them the number they need. Customers can also book online at disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/travel-assistance/. If customers want to book by email or fax, they can contact their train company directly.

3. ORR's [Measuring Up: Annual Rail Consumer Report 2018](#) *states that 85% of passengers are satisfied with Passenger Assist, but when the service fails it can lead to significant anxiety, distress and at times loss of confidence.*
4. **Alan Benson, Chair of Transport for All says:**

“We are pleased that the rail industry is taking steps to improve the assistance they offer to Disabled and older passengers. Our Advice Line team still hears regularly from Disabled people sharing their stories of rail passenger assistance going wrong.

“This app as part of a wider overall Passenger Assist can really improve the journey experience of Disabled and older passengers, whether they use the app or not. We look forward to the rail industry backing this step change in the service our members receive”.

About National Rail 'No Boundaries'

Rail Delivery Group and National Rail have been working with Royal Association for Deaf people, Scope, Stroke Association and The National Autistic Society to launch an exhibition called No Boundaries, which will tour some of Britain's most iconic train stations.

The exhibition is designed to encourage travel without boundaries, thanks to the improvements in accessibility on Britain's railway and the support available to disabled people and their families and friends.

For more information and profiles of all the artists involved go to www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/news-offers/no-boundaries



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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