

Stagecoach South Western Trains Ltd

Making Rail Accessible:

Guide to policies and practices

October 2010

SOUTH WEST TRAINS

Contents

Introduction	Page 3
1. Operators Strategy	Page 4
2. Management Arrangements	
Passenger License	Page 4
Accountability	Page 4
3. Monitoring and Evaluation	Page 5
4. Access Improvements	Page 5
5. Working with others	Page 6
6. Staff Training	Page 7
Ongoing Briefing	Page 8
7. Emergency Procedures	Page 8
8. Communications Strategy	Page 9
On the internet	Page 9
Station Facilities Website	Page 10
Databases of Access Information	Page 10
Signage	Page 10
9. Car Parking	Page 10

Introduction

- (i) Our DPPP comprises of two documents. This one (Making Rail Accessible: Guide to policies and practices) sets out how we will protect the interests of older and disabled passengers who use our trains and stations. The other document is a passenger leaflet, *Making Rail Accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers* and is available on line or at stations t
- (ii) We have written it in accordance with the requirements of both our Passenger Licence and Station Licence. It sets out how we will comply with our responsibilities under the legislation relevant to this area of our business. This legislation includes:
 - The Railways Act 1993 Section 71B
 - The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
 - The Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998
 - The Transport Act 2000
 - The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
 - DETR Transport 2010 Section 6.5
- (iii) Our DPPP is rooted in the principles set out in the Department for Transport (DfT) publication *How to Write Your Disabled People's Protection Policy: A Guide for Train and Station Operators November 2009*
- (iv) We have produced it in consultation with:
 - The Department for Transport (DfT)
 - Passenger Focus (PF)
 - London TravelWatch (LTW)
 - Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
- (iv) The networks known as South West Trains and Island Line Trains are operated as one company by Stagecoach South Western Trains Ltd. All the commitments in this document relate to both networks unless otherwise stated.
- (v) This document gives a detailed and accurate description of the services and facilities our older and disabled passengers can expect to receive from us. It also outlines our proposals and strategies for continuously improving these services and facilities. It is a "live" document, and as such we will review it internally every twelve months. Additionally we will update it in light of any relevant developments in policies, practices, facilities or changes to regulations as and when they occur.
- (vi) We will submit our DPPP documents to the DfT for review annually from the date of approval.

1. Operator's strategy

- 1.1 We are committed to meeting the travelling needs of our disabled passengers and providing excellent customer service.
- 1.2 We are committed to adopting the services, standards, and guidance contained in the current version of DfT's "Accessible Train and Station Design: A Code of Practice " (The Code of Practice).
- 1.3 We recognise that there are a wide range of disabilities that affect our passengers and that these disabilities require us to adjust the way we provide our service. Where practicable we will provide equipment at our stations to enable staff to make these reasonable adjustments and to offer excellent customer service to our older and disabled passengers.
- 1.4. In partnership with both Rolling Stock Leasing Companies (ROSCOs) and the DfT with regard to trains and both Network Rail and the DfT with regard to our stations, we will work to improve access to our services for older and disabled passengers. Until this is achieved we will make reasonable adjustments to our existing practices to make sure that older and disabled passengers can get to and from every station on our network, though this may mean using alternative means of transport where appropriate.
- 1.5 We will ensure that our facilities are designed to meet the standards of the Code of Practice and Technical Specification of Interoperability: Persons with Reduced Mobility (2008) in relation to:
 - the refurbishment of existing rolling stock;
 - new, renewed or enhanced facilities at stations and transport interchanges and
 - services provided at stations and on trains.

Should we not be in a position to meet these standards we will consult the DfT at the earliest stage in the design process so that suitable alternatives can be considered and dispensation from the Code of Practice will be sought once all other possibilities have been exhausted.

- 1.6 As a service-based business that relies heavily on the actions of the people we employ, there will be occasions when we fail to reach the standards set out in our DPPP. In recognition of this, we monitor our service so that we are aware of any such failures and can take appropriate action to guard against their re-occurrence.

2. Franchise Commitments and investment plans

- 2.1 We have a franchise commitment to spend £23.8million and £12.4million on station enhancements. This is to be spent by February 2013 and February 2012 respectively.

2.2 Accessibility improvements undertaken as part of the £12.4 million franchise commitment include: -

- Guildford – (Provision of a low counter ticket window, widened entrance to gateline, refurbished DDA toilet facility)
- Kingston – (New station entrance with automatic sliding doors and provision of DDA low counter ticket window *)

- Bracknell – (New forecourt incorporating DDA drop-off bays, new station entrance with sliding doors and DDA low counter ticket window *)
- Woking – (Refurbished DDA toilets and provision of DDA low counter ticket window).

2.3 Accessibility improvements undertaken as part of the £23.8million franchise commitment include: -

- Replaced/upgraded all station "Help Points" to incorporate induction loops*
- Refurbished DDA toilets e.g. Alton*
- Commenced a programme of replacing station seats with DDA compliant seats*
- Replaced anti-slip surfacing at 30 stations*
- Forecourt improvements at Farnborough incorporating accessible drop-off areas and raised tables
- Commenced a programme of replacing station signage (all stations).
- Fencing improvements at Egham to stop visually impaired passengers walking under the bridge.

* *Linked/Part funded by DFT*

2. Management Arrangements

Passenger License

- 2.1 Establishing and maintaining our DPPP is a condition of our Passenger licence (Condition 6: Provision of Services for Disabled People) and Station Licence.

Accountability

- 2.2 For compliance purposes the Customer Service Director is currently accountable for both the Passenger Licence and the Station Licence.
- 2.3 Accountability for owning and developing our DPPP rests with our Customer Service Director (working closely with the Head of Customer Service). Acting as a Sponsor, he/she will liaise with the relevant managers working on the specific tasks to achieve compliance that the document necessitates. Compliance will be a feature of the South West Trains management review process.
- 2.4 The principal vehicle for achieving this will be via the annual Customer Service Functional Plan, which will include a number of work-streams dedicated to improving the service we offer our older and disabled passengers.
- 2.5 The Access and Integration Manager is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and compliance with DPPP. This will largely be achieved through communication with the relevant managers and their teams. The implementation of developments in train and station design will be achieved by close liaison with the respective project teams.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 3.1 We will regularly review our policies and procedures to make sure that they take account of the needs of our older and disabled passengers. We will endeavour to seek feedback about their journey experience either by e-mail or by phone (in the case of visually impaired passengers who book with us.)
- 3.2 We will continually monitor all customer correspondence relating to our delivery of assistance and are committed to working with stakeholders to improve the service we provide.
- 3.3 We will also seek feedback on our services and facilities at various local Access Group meetings held throughout the South West Trains network. these include Wandsworth Mobility Forum, Woking Access group and Guildford Access group and act on their members' feedback to make improvements.
- 3.4 We will also hold an annual Stakeholder conference to update local user groups on Accessibility improvements and changes. The Stakeholder conference also seeks feedback from the user groups and their members to ensure a two way dialogue is maintained.

4. Access improvements

- 4.1 The DfT has set aside £370 million to pay for Major Works at stations. This will create an accessible route from one entrance to, and between, all platforms at selected stations across the national rail network. This "Access for All" programme will be delivered by Network Rail.

Works at Weybridge, Kingston, Haslemere, West Byfleet, Havant, Fratton, Fareham and Southampton Airport Parkway are completed.

The Access for All work at Clapham Junction is due for completion by the end of 2010. Clapham Junction will then become a completely step free interchange point. There is also work planned for 2011 to provide step free access into the station with a new booking hall, ticket vending machines and accessible toilets

- 4.2 Access for All also contains a Small Schemes Fund, which invites bids for station accessibility improvements. The DfT has the ability to match fund schemes up to a value of £250k, dependent upon station patronage. We have submitted relevant bids to this scheme and have 25 successful scheme bids with works to improve facilities completed at Walton on Thames, Alton and Woking and a number of further schemes underway and which will be completed in 2010. We expect to submit further bids in September 2010, for delivery during 2011.
- 4.3 Below a table of works to improve accessibility as part of the South West Trains station refurbishment programme 2010

Station	Accessible Toilet	Accessible Ticket office window	Other
Aldershot		To be installed	
Andover		To be installed	
Axminster	To be installed		

Christchurch	To be installed	To be installed	
Crewkerne	To be installed		
Eastleigh	To be installed	To be installed	
Petersfield	To be installed		
Poole	To be refurbished		
Portsmouth and Southsea		To be installed	
West Byfleet	To be installed		

4.4 National Station Improvement Programme Schemes

The National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP) is a DfT backed programme to deliver improvements to 150 medium sized stations in England and Wales. As part of the programme the following South West Trains stations will see improvements over the next 12 months.

Hounslow – Project to be completed November 2010

- New ticket office with new split level ticket window incorporating new accessible toilet, new ramp to gain access to the London bound platform and new ramp to gain access to the highway.

Southampton Central – Project to be completed December 2010

- New enlarged booking hall incorporating new ticket office with a split level ticket window. In addition, an additional automatic door entrance will be installed together with new retail outlet. The project is in partnership with Southampton City Council.

Southampton Central (Town Centre side) – Project to be completed December 2010

- Major £3m refurbishment project commences 2010/11. The project will incorporate new accessible toilets, enlarged booking hall, new station entrance.

Honiton - Project to commence early 2011

- In partnership with Devon County Council the station will be completely refurbished. Works will include a new toilets, enlarged booking hall, allow for level access to platforms, new automatic door and new retail outlet.

Wimbledon - Project to commence early 2011

- In partnership with London Borough of Merton Council the station forecourt is being reconfigured to improve interchange for taxis, drop off as well as access for pedestrians.

Earlsfield- Project to commence 2010/11

- Network Rail leading the scheme which incorporates new Passenger lifts under the Access for All programme
- In addition to new lifts the station booking hall will be enlarged and secondary 'tunnel' opened up to ease congestion.

Wandsworth Town - Project to commence early 2011

- In partnership with Wandsworth Borough Council a new station building is being provided at the front the station (replaces ticket office on the island platform).
- The scheme which is being delivered by Network Rail incorporates a new low counter ticket window, small booking hall and automatic doors

- 4.5 Within the franchise we have ring-fenced an annual amount of money for developing small-scale disability-related access schemes. The Access and Integration Manager will work with local organisations and disability groups, including DPTAC, to make sure that the schemes are targeted to benefit disabled people and remove barriers to access.
- 4.6 During 2010 we will be introducing clearer signage on our rolling stock for priority seating. This will make it easier for people to identify the priority seating and the passengers it is intended for.
- 4.7 Our Access and Integration Manager has worked to build a good working relationship with both the South West Trains Estates team and is able to provide advice and explore alternative options where it is not possible to meet the standards set out in the above Code of Practice. Should we not be in a position to meet these standards, we will consult the DfT at the earliest stage, so that suitable alternatives, including dispensation, can be considered.

5. Working with others

- 5.1 We will consult with many organisations that represent the interests of older and disabled passengers - including DPTAC, the DfT, London TravelWatch, Passenger Focus, Guide Dogs, RNID, Hearing Dogs, MS Society, Age Concern, Deafblind UK, Macular Degeneration, National Autistic Society, Shopmobility. This is to make sure that we stay informed of the needs of older and disabled passengers and that these needs are considered in all of our plans.
- 5.2 The Access and Integration Manager will continue to attend local Access meetings across the South West Trains network, actively promoting the rail network and acting on feedback. Try the Trains days will continue at South West Trains stations to encourage older and disabled people to come and try the train in an environment that is welcoming and informative.

6. Staff Training

- 6.1 The South West Trains Retail Training Team is committed to delivering training, which gives our front line employees the skills, tools and knowledge so as to provide exceptional care and customer service to all our passengers.
- 6.2 The staff groups who work with our passengers face to face, on a daily basis, are:
 - Rail Operators/ Passenger Assistants (Waterloo)
 - Guards
 - Commercial Guards
 - Revenue Protection Inspectors
 - Customer Service Assistants
 - Catering Stewards (contractor)
 - Ticket Office Clerks
 - Customer Service Officers and Advisors
 - Travel Safe Officers
 - Customer Communication Security Centre Operators

All existing customer-facing employees have had disability awareness training and we will continue to train new entrants on this course. We are aiming to deliver a 'Disability Awareness Refresher' course to ensure that the knowledge and skills of the staff groups listed above are kept up to date.

- 6.3 There is a one-day disability awareness course included within the introductory training of all employees entering service in customer-facing roles. It focuses on the knowledge, skills and tools that are necessary to enable our employees to assist our passengers with disabilities in the best possible way.
- 6.4 The course aim is to build delegates' knowledge and skills to enable them to best meet the needs of older and disabled passengers; and do this in accordance with both the law and South West Trains' commitment to give our customers the best service they have ever had.

The course objectives are, that by the end of the session delegates will be able to:

- explain how social factors (such as attitude and design) can be seen as "disabling" people who have impairments.
 - explain how they can carry out their day-to-day duties in line with the DDA – being in customer service roles we have legal duties that impact on us.
 - be able to demonstrate how to safely assist a passenger who is using a wheelchair in accordance with SWT's recommended methods.
 - be able to demonstrate how to guide a visually-impaired passenger in accordance with SWT recommended guidelines.
 - be able to describe a variety of "invisible" impairments (such as degenerative conditions, long term illness, mental illness, incontinence) and the appropriate techniques to assist passengers who have them.
 - be able to describe a variety of techniques they can use to aid communication with passengers who have communication-related impairments (such as learning difficulties and hearing impairments).
 - be able to explain both where to find and how to use the resources/aids South West Trains provide to assist passengers with disabilities.
- 6.5 All managers of customer-facing employees also receive the one-day disability awareness training.
- 6.6 These managers, and others who are not in a customer-facing role but who perform duties which might impact on disabled passengers, also receive (written/verbal) briefings on disability issues from the Access and Integration Manager.
- 6.7 The Employers Forum on Disability's publication "Welcoming Disabled Customers" which presents issues of disability awareness in an easy to understand way is issued to all attendees of the one-day disability awareness course.

- 6.8 The Customer Service Centre staff also receive a 3 week comprehensive in house telephony course that includes details on how to communicate with callers who may have an impairment.

Ongoing Briefing

- 6.9 Briefings on disability issues, on either new matters of policy (for example, a change in the law) or as refreshers of core issues are inserted into the briefing cycles of all customer-facing employees.
- 6.10 During 2009, our internal internet site, which all employees have access to, was updated with additional briefing material and useful information about disability awareness.

7. Emergency Procedures

- 7.1 Details appropriate for assisting disabled passengers in emergencies can be found in the Health & Safety Manual. A summary of our policies and practices in assisting disabled passengers in such circumstances follows.
- 7.2 Our staff will supervise any action that needs to be taken in the event of an emergency either at a station or on a train. Our staff will identify the most expedient route and method for evacuating the location they are responsible for. They will also identify alternative routes and contingency arrangements if predetermined routes are not available.
- 7.3 Should an incident occur, frontline employees will use their disability awareness skills and judgement to anticipate the needs of passengers with disabilities and communicate any instructions. At stations or on trains that are fitted with Passenger Information Systems, emergency information will be provided in both visual and aural formats should circumstances permit.
- 7.4 In accordance with the nature of the incident, our staff are trained to take into account the need to identify and deal safely with:
- Passengers with mobility/visual/hearing impairments, including those in wheelchairs and;
 - Passengers who are older or who may be infirm;
 - Passengers with young children and
 - Passengers whose first language may not be English.

This will involve communicating with disabled passengers to ascertain what their capabilities are.

- 7.5 In the event of an incident on a train, except when the train is at a station platform, we will not evacuate wheelchair users unless there is an immediate life-threatening situation. This is because there is always a risk of causing injury to people with physical impairments in an evacuation.
- 7.6 Whenever possible we will move the passenger to a safer part of the train until arrangements can be made to move the train to the nearest station. We will endeavour to make sure that they are accompanied at all times.
- 7.7 If it becomes absolutely necessary to evacuate a train between stations, we will seek advice from the Emergency Services to ensure expert assistance is provided.

8. Communications strategy

- 8.1 The services and facilities South West Trains offers older and disabled passengers will be promoted in the leaflet "Making Rail Accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers", our derivative timetable publication "Train Timetable and guide to bus and ferry services", and on our website. The leaflet entitled "Making Rail Accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers" contains an overview of our service, a map of access to our network, and a table detailing every station on South West Trains with accessibility services and facilities.
- 8.2 Our Assisted Travel number **0800 5282100** is a freephone number staffed 06.00 to 22.00 everyday and text phone **0800 6920 792**.
- 8.3 We will produce an 'Access Update' every six months, aimed at our stakeholders providing information about the work we are doing to improve our service to disabled passengers. Our Access and Integration Manager will ensure that this is distributed to interested parties.
- 8.4 Our Customer Service Centre will supply key literature (Assisted Travel/Passengers' Charter/Railway Byelaws/Making Rail Accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers in large print, audiotape, CD and Braille free of charge. We also have the capacity to supply any of our marketing literature in large print on request. Our Access Update is available in the above formats, plus a screen reader-friendly version, free of charge.
- 8.5 We will work with other train operators to look to standardise descriptions and symbols used on the access map of our network in order to provide consistency and ease of reading for passengers.

On the Internet

- 8.6 On South West Trains, our website is designed to be compatible with browsers and add-on devices used by a wide range of people with disabilities. This website has been audited by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and AbilityNet "See it Right" standard. The website is built to achieve DDA Level 2 Compliance.

Station Facilities Website

- 8.7 The facilities, services and accessibility at all our stations are available on www.nationalrail.co.uk as well as core content that is available from southwesttrains.co.uk. This information includes our solutions for travelling to and from stations that are currently inaccessible to wheelchair users and some passengers with mobility-impairments. In accordance with the DfT's Railways for All programme we will, in partnership with the DfT and/or other parties endeavour to secure funding to improve station access for older and disabled people.
- 8.8 We are committed to supporting the ATOC (The Association of Train Operating Companies) which provides detailed station information on its National Rail website and Stations Made Easy website. We will work with ATOC and other train operators to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- 8.9 As part of our ongoing work to improve the quality of information on this website our Access & Integration Manager has reviewed the information about each station with the local management teams and will ensure that this information is added to the database by December 2010.

Databases of Access Information

- 8.10 The full text of our Making Rail Accessible: guide to policies and practices will be available in hard copy in a full range of alternative formats from our Customer Service Centre. A copy of the guide will also be available on our website.
- 8.11 We will update and maintain the information contained on the National Rail Website and on the Rail Journey Information Service (RJIS) national station database. This information is available on the internet from www.nationalrail.com and to other railway employees through both the national RJIS Station Information Database and the Assisted Passenger Reservation Service (APRS).
- 8.12 Through the use of XML feeds (direct links to our website, which display information from other websites), we will integrate station information available on the National Rail website within southwesttrains.co.uk. We will also include basic plans of the station and details of its geographic location.

Signage

- 8.13 All South West Trains stations are undergoing a complete signage programme to bring all the signage in line with 'Accessible Train and Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice'

9. Car Parking

- 9.1 At every station that has a tarmac or concrete surfaced car park for passengers, designated parking spaces will be available for blue badge holders.
- 9.2 We will locate these spaces in the most suitable place to ensure disabled users have easy access to our stations. Usually these spaces will be located as close to the main station entrance as possible.

- 9.3 Passengers who have a disability that makes it difficult or impossible for them to use the car park ticket machines can purchase their ticket at the station ticket office. Our employees will then notify our car park contractors that a ticket has been purchased.
- 9.4 All our spaces for blue badge holders in tarmac or concrete surfaced car parks are marked with the International Symbol for Access on the ground. When we redevelop our car parks we will ensure that the bays for blue badge holders are compliant with the guidelines given in the Code of Practice.
- 9.5 We are satisfied that the present number of spaces for blue badge holders meets current demand at all of our car parks.
- 9.6 Where we provide marked bays for blue badge holders, which are within the chargeable parking area, the normal car parking rate will apply.
- 9.7 Our staff monitor the occupancy of our spaces for blue badge holders at every South West Trains Station where the number of spaces provided does not meet the criteria set out in the Code of Practice. Where a growth in demand is shown in the monitoring figures, we will endeavour to increase the number of spaces.