



Department for Transport

Tricia Ashton
General Manager
Docklands Light Railway
Castor Lane
Poplar
London
E14 0BL

Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Transport Minister for Roads and Security

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: [REDACTED]@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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It is extremely disappointing to see that the rail vehicles operated by Docklands Light Railway Limited (DLRL) will not meet the deadline to provide accessible trains for every passenger and every journey by the end of the year.

As an operator you have had ten years to prepare for the 31 December 2019 deadline set in the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulation 2010. It is deeply frustrating that disabled passengers will still be waiting into the next decade to see the accessibility improvements that will be delivered through the introduction of the new trains you have recently procured.

Let me be clear that we are absolutely committed to ensuring that all passengers can travel by rail with ease and confidence. The Secretary of State's powers to permit non-compliant vehicles to continue in operation have not been used lightly and should never result in detriment to the quality of disabled passengers' journeys.

However, our hand has been forced by your failure to meet this deadline, despite a significant period of time for you to prepare. Without an exemption, it would become necessary to remove non-compliant trains from service – which would have a disproportionately negative effect on the provision of services for all passengers.

I do recognise that you have made efforts to improve accessibility through the procurement of new trains which will replace the older B92 vehicles and through testing existing audio-visual door warning sequences.

It is for these reasons that I have reluctantly agreed to issue a strictly time-limited exemption to DLRL. But it remains the case that you must provide evidence to the Secretary of State to demonstrate that your introduction of new vehicles remains on track, and that DLRL is actively prioritising the needs of disabled passengers on your network. I have copied this letter to the Mayor of London for his information.

My position on these matters is unequivocal. You must urgently address the issue of providing accessible rail carriages. Delivering an accessible service for every passenger on every rail journey is essential to creating an inclusive and accessible railway. It must not be delayed any longer.

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON