



Department
for Transport

Action Plan: Information on Rail Fares & Ticketing

Progress report

Moving Britain Ahead

December 2017



Rail Delivery Group



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Foreword

The Action Plan was one of my first actions as Rail Minister. I wanted to improve ticketing information for passengers and make it easier for people to choose the best value fare for their journey. This report sets out the progress we have achieved over the last year, and applies my test: whether we are making a day-to-day difference for the travelling public.

The Action Plan has achieved a number of valuable outcomes. As a result of work the Rail Delivery Group has done – in collaboration with the Action Plan partners – more Advance Purchase tickets will be available on the day of travel, industry ticketing jargon has been cut back, and the information supplied to passengers is being improved. Indeed over 1 million Advance Purchase tickets have been sold following this change. The way forgotten railcards are handled has been made more passenger-friendly.

A substantial amount of value has been generated simply by the act of Government, the Office of Rail and Road, the rail industry and consumer and passenger representatives coming together with a determination to drive change. I would like to thank everybody who has been involved in these successes.

There are two key areas which we need to persevere with into a second year. Work to date on the fares trials and ticket vending machine improvements has identified some challenges that need more time to be addressed. These are important actions, and I remain determined to see progress and work with partners as necessary.

I also acknowledge that our work is by no means done. For example, the recent issue [highlighted by Transport Focus](#), of the sale of advanced tickets conflicting with engineering works, has increased my resolve to act as a champion for consumers. I am pleased to say the industry is already developing plans that will address this and the broader issues underlying it. I remain committed to improving the passenger experience on the railways, and will continue to work with industry and other stakeholders to do so.

The Action Plan also included the first of a programme of engagement and action to realise my ambition to ensure that people with physical and hidden disabilities have the same access to transport and opportunities to travel as everyone else. I will be returning to this theme in the New Year as the Department considers the responses to the [consultation](#) on an Accessibility Action Plan.

Paul Maynard MP, Rail Minister

Introduction

1 In December 2016 a working group comprising the Department for Transport, Which?, the Rail Delivery Group, the Office of Rail and Road (the rail regulator) and Transport Focus launched the 'Action Plan for Information on Rail Fares and Ticketing'. The aim of the plan was to set out clear steps to improve fares and ticketing for passengers. Representatives of the working group have met monthly to provide oversight and monitor progress on achieving the actions. Transport Focus and Which? have played an important role as observers: ensuring the voice of the passenger – and consumer – is heard. The ORR, also an observer, has provided valuable insight into competition and consumer affairs and accessibility issues, and action it was taking was presented in the Action Plan in context.

2 The Action Plan was structured into four themes to reflect the ticket buying process:

- How you chose your ticket
- What you buy
- Where to buy your ticket, and
- How to buy your ticket.

3 This report summarises progress in each of these areas. For each action, the report asks: 'What difference has this action made for the passenger?'

Next steps

4 This Action Plan has delivered tangible progress to improve the passenger experience of fares and ticketing. The procedures for [forgotten railcards](#) have been refined and improvements to ticket vending machines and train operator websites now means it is easier for passengers to choose the best value ticket for their journey.

5 However there remains more to be done beyond the timescales of the Action Plan. The DfT continues to work with the industry to implement the RDG's [10 Point Plan](#) for ticket vending machines and refine plans for trials of fares simplification initiatives. All of the working group members are committed to completing these actions and are giving consideration to continuing joint monitoring arrangements into a second year.

6 We are already considering how we can go further. For instance, the industry will build on the progress to date by working to ensure that customers are kept informed of the upcoming availability of advance tickets when looking to book ahead to save money, and that they are kept informed of planned disruption due to engineering works and provided with the best alternative choices for a comfortable journey.

7 It is also important to take stock. We will review the Action Plan and assess its impact on the issues it was designed to tackle, and we will consider how best to use existing monitoring surveys and metrics in this process.

1. How you choose your ticket

Summary table

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
Action 1 - Reducing the use of rail industry jargon	We will use less jargon on Ticket Vending Machines, websites and tickets, and include easily available information to explain terminology.	We will provide clear names for tickets and definitions that passengers understand. We will remove terms such as “Any Permitted” and “London Terminals” except where they actively help customers understand a ticket's validity and in such cases that they are properly explained. We will develop an online ticket restrictions look-up tool for customers.	First changes to be implemented from May 2017 and all actions to be completed by end-2017	RDG & train companies	COMPLETION DUE IN 2018
Action 2 - Warning when Advance tickets are running low	Train operators will make information available to inform customers when Advance tickets for long distance operators are running low to ensure that customers don't miss out on the best price if there are only a few left.	Customers will be informed when there are fewer than nine Advance tickets available at a certain price.	April 2017	RDG & train companies	COMPLETED
Action 3 - Cheapest fare information	When purchasing a ticket, customers will be told if they could get a cheaper ticket by changing the time of travel.	All retailers to include options for finding the cheapest fare for online/ app ticket purchases by May 2017. Ticket vending machines will tell customers when they are configured to sell off-peak tickets so that the customer will know that	May 2017	RDG & train operating companies	Online / app completed in May 2017 30% ticket vending machines

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
		by waiting (e.g. in 15 minutes) they can purchase a cheaper ticket or by going to the ticket office.			completed, remainder due in early 2018

Action 1 – Reducing the use of rail industry jargon

Background

- 1.1 The rationale behind this action was to make it easier for passengers to better understand the conditions attached to tickets by removing some of the railway jargon and abbreviations used to describe them. Some of the abbreviations and technical terms that are used within the fares system have been used in the public domain (e.g. on tickets and on ticket vending machines) without adequate explanation. For example some 'London Terminals' tickets are only valid to a single London Station, such as York to Kings Cross. This action rewrites or replaces them with more user-friendly terminology.

What we did

- 1.2 This activity has resulted in train companies eliminating close to 200,000 uses of industry jargon to date, as well as improving the way that stations in a common group or location are described. Work remains to complete some planned activity and this will take place during 2018. The rail industry has a number of legacy IT systems owned or managed by separate suppliers and the scale and complexity of this undertaking has resulted in progress taking longer than initially scoped.
- 1.3 The RDG has also developed a tool to allow passengers to look up the specific restrictions of their ticket. The final version of this tool will go live at the end of the year. This will allow, for example, passengers to look up what times their ticket is valid. This tool will form part of the process of buying a ticket online so that passengers can have more accurate and specific information.
- 1.4 The changes made to date have been incorporated into all of the rail industry systems, including the '[My Ticket](#)' page¹ on the National Rail Enquiries website.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 1.5 A passenger may not be able to choose the most appropriate ticket - or may board a train they are not entitled to use - if they are not able to fully appreciate the terms and restrictions of their ticket. Reducing jargon will mean it is easier for customers to understand the information presented to them on ticket vending machines, websites and tickets. And with the updates to rail industry systems, customers should now be able to more easily identify exactly when their ticket can be used at ticket vending machines and on all train company websites.

Action 2 - Warning when Advance tickets are running low

Background

- 1.6 Advance Fares have been offered on an increasing number of routes by train companies to encourage increased rail usage by making fixed quotas of cheap tickets available. Train companies release their cheapest fixed-time Advance tickets, which are limited in number, around 12 weeks before departure. However, passengers often had no way of knowing when these quota controlled tickets were about to run out with the potential to miss out on making a money saving purchase.

¹ See Action 4 below

- 1.7 The RDG and train companies committed to introduce a notification of low advance quotas, on long-distance operators' websites, where there are nine or fewer Advance tickets available at the quoted price.

What we did

- 1.8 This action was completed in April 2017, with eight long distance operators now showing notification of low advance quotas on their websites: Cross Country, East Midlands Trains, Grand Central, Great Western Railway, Greater Anglia, Hull Trains, Virgin Trains East Coast and Virgin Trains West Coast)
- 1.9 In addition, six shorter distance operators have also introduced the notification of low advance quotas on their websites: Great Northern, London Midland, South Eastern, Southern, Thameslink and TransPennine Express.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 1.10 The new, timelier information will help customers to decide the best time to buy. They should now be less likely to miss out on low-priced Advance tickets.

Action 3 - Cheapest fare information

Background

- 1.11 Passengers are not always confident that they have bought the cheapest fare for the journey they want to make.
- 1.12 Ticket vending machines typically do not sell off-peak tickets when they are not valid, so as to minimise confusion. But passengers are not always aware that they can save money if, by waiting a short time, they could purchase an off-peak ticket instead of a peak ticket and, as a result, passengers could be paying more than they need to.
- 1.13 The purpose of this action was to make customers aware of better value fares, both online – through 'cheap fare finder' tools – and at stations when buying from ticket vending machines.

What we did

- 1.14 By May 2017, train companies had added or improved the information on their websites and apps to advise customers of how to find the cheapest fares through easy-to-use online tools.
- 1.15 The ticket vending machines changes formed part of the Ticket Vending Machines 10 Point Improvement Plan. Many ticket vending machines were reconfigured in September 2017, slightly later than planned, with the final tranche due in early 2018.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 1.16 Customers now have better information to find the cheapest fares and determine whether that ticket meets their needs. In addition, there is now 'cheap fare' information on all train company retailing apps.
- 1.17 When all ticket vending machines are upgraded in early 2018, passengers will be less likely to find that they have missed out on a cheap off-peak ticket because of the way the ticket vending machines will be configured.

2. What you buy

Summary table

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
Action 4 - 'Plain English' ticket information	Online customers will get a plain English explanation of the ticket they have chosen before making final payment.	National Rail Enquiries will provide a link directly to the industry "What can I do with my ticket?" tool. Ticket retailers will embed this service in their online ticket purchase process.	August 2017	RDG & train operating companies	COMPLETED
Action 5 - Advance tickets on the day of travel	Customers will be able to purchase cheaper Advance tickets on the day of travel from longer distance operators (currently only possible for Cross Country customers).	This will be available from six train companies and the rail industry will ensure that sale and use of Advance tickets is managed so that customers making last minute reservations do not impact on customers already using the booked service.	Adoption by TPE, Northern, VTEC, and VTWC by April 2017, and by East Midland Trains by Sept. 2017	RDG, train operating companies & DfT	COMPLETED
Action 6 - Fares trials	The industry will run a small number of pilots, which can be quickly put in place, to test some key strategic principles that could form the basis of fares reform.	The pilots will be designed to address simplicity of information and clear value fares for the customer. The pilots will be monitored and assessed by the DfT, industry, and passenger and consumer groups.	May 2017	RDG & DfT	PLANNING PROCESS TO CONTINUE IN 2018

Action 4 – ‘Plain English’ ticket information

Background

- 2.1 For many people the interaction they have with the railway when buying a ticket can influence how they view the journey itself. The rail industry needs to work to make sure passengers get the best deal – this must involve accurate, simple, information at the time of purchase. With the number of tickets purchased online growing, increasing confidence in this sales channel is important.

What we did

- 2.2 The RDG implemented a tool on the National Rail Enquiries website, branded as ‘My Ticket’. This allows the customer to find out everything they are entitled to do with their selected or purchased ticket. It has also made this tool available as a data service to third party developers.
- 2.3 This new functionality tells customers when off-peak is, what services their ticket is valid on, what routes they are allowed to travel on, what stations their ticket is valid to or from, and has links to information such as the National Rail Conditions of Travel and other information pages.
- 2.4 Since this new tool has been added, the 'My Ticket' page on the website has been viewed over 40,000 times, which is a 50-fold increase on previous levels.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 2.5 With the new facility on the National Rail website, passengers can get a clearer, simpler explanation of what the ticket they are about to purchase allows them to do. This means they can be more confident they are choosing the most appropriate ticket for their journey.

Action 5 - Advance tickets on the day of travel

Background

- 2.6 Advance Purchase tickets can save passengers money but traditionally could not be bought on the day of travel itself. Arriva Cross Country introduced so-called 'Advance Purchase on the Day' (or 'APOD') tickets in 2014, and has since sold one million of these. The Action Plan set out to extend this scheme to further long-distance operators thereby increasing the number of routes on which passengers could save money on their tickets.

What we did

- 2.7 By September 2017, six other train companies had introduced 'APOD' tickets: Trans Pennine Express, Northern, Virgin Trains East Coast, Virgin Trains West Coast, Greater Anglia, and East Midland Trains.
- 2.8 In addition two further train companies - Grand Central and Caledonian Sleeper - have also introduced 'APOD' tickets: going beyond the original commitment.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 2.9 Customers are now able to purchase cheaper Advance tickets on the day of travel from nine train companies. This means that passengers are not disadvantaged by buying their ticket at short notice. Since the extension of this scheme to the further 8 train companies, this new scheme has sold over 1 million 'APOD' tickets.

- 2.10 This new benefit for passengers has not come at the expense of other passengers: no one find themselves being asked to move by customers who have booked 'APOD' tickets. Train companies have different ways of doing this, depending on what is most appropriate for their services. Some ensure that only previously unreserved seats are made available, some ensure that blocks of non-reservable seats are maintained and clearly notified to passengers, whereas others prevent seats from being booked mid-journey.

Action 6 - Fares trials

Background

- 2.11 The Action Plan announced a small number of pilots to test key strategic principles that could form the basis of fares reform and to understand how passengers might adapt their travel patterns to new fare structures. The fare trials are intended to strengthen the evidence base to improve policy-making in this area.
- 2.12 Three trials were proposed by industry, which are described in the table below.

Trial	Description
Leg-based pricing	Passengers are often frustrated when a direct fare exceeds the sum of fares for journeys between intermediate stations (an issue referred to as 'split ticketing'). This trial has been to understand how it might be possible for ticketing systems to issue tickets on the basis of individual component 'legs', rather than for an end-to-end journey. This could form the basis of a new approach to selling tickets which would avoid 'split ticketing' issues.
Route simplification	Existing regulation requires every operator to offer a ticket that is available on all permitted routes. Operators are free also to issue tickets that are only valid on some routes, and these are often cheaper. On the proposed test London to Sheffield route, tickets for any permitted routes are more expensive than those for faster direct routes which means the choice of tickets is potentially confusing. There is a risk that some consumers might inadvertently buy a more expensive ticket than they need. This trial is to simplify the routeing options so that passengers only pay for the flexibility that they need.
Single-leg pricing	On a number of routes, the single fare is priced close to the return fare. This favours passengers wanting to make return trips. This trial is to understand how reform to fares and fares regulation could mitigate this effect and gather evidence on how passengers will react to changes.

What we did

- 2.13 We have made limited progress. The DfT has established a framework that enables operators to discuss the trials within the context of competition law, and planning for the changes needed to fares has taken place with evaluation frameworks developed. However more work is needed before the trials can be implemented and fundamental challenges exist around balancing the financial position of train companies and any cost implications for passengers. We shall renew our efforts into 2018 and review this separately later in the year. Fares reform remains a personal priority of the Rail Minister.

3. Where to buy your ticket

Summary table

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
Action 7 - Information for third party developers	We will provide better and more targeted information to website and app developers to enable them to develop new products and services for consumers. This information includes timetable and fares data and live running information.	The rail industry will ensure that more raw data is available to third party developers (e.g. retailers, CityMapper) so that they can create better and consistent consumer facing products (e.g. information on how busy trains are, and on performance of individual routes). The industry will engage with other third parties to publicise this opportunity.	December 2017	RDG	COMPLETED
Action 8 - Opening up the ticket retail market	We will take steps to open up the ticket retail market, enabling third party retailers to play a greater role, and removing barriers to entry for new market entrants. This should lead to increased competition, and better outcomes for consumers.	RDG to reform its governance, including implementing a new process for consulting third party retailers on decisions that will impact them. RDG will develop a transparent process to share board meeting outputs with third party retailers. Third party retailers will have access to all permanent fares and the data underpinning them. There will be improved oversight to ensure “temporary” fares meet existing regulations. DfT, RDG and recent market entrants will work together to identify regulatory changes to simplify framework and reduce barriers to entry for new entrants.	June 2017	DfT & RDG	COMPLETED

Action 7 - Information for third party developers

Background

- 3.1 The ORR has highlighted the importance of third party developers in driving innovation in ticketing. For example, third party retailers were the first to introduce mobile apps to buy tickets which in turn has encouraged the train companies to be innovative. Third party retailers rely on having easy access to the information that train companies produce about their services and products but historically this information has been harder to access.

What we did

- 3.2 The fares, routing and timetable information is now free for developers to access. The RDG has made a number of additional data feeds, including the 'My Ticket' tool, and web services available to third parties. Access to these has also been made easier through a simpler and easier-to-find 'self-service' process for developers to sign up to the RDG data portal. Many feeds have been made free from charge. The portal includes a detailed developer pack.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 3.3 Time will tell, but as third party developers have access to more industry data, and more of it for free, we hope they will be able to develop better and more targeted products for customers. The improved liaison with third party retailers, highlighted in Action 8 below, will allow them to report back on the effectiveness of this additional information provision.

Action 8 - Opening up the ticket retail market

Background

- 3.4 In its [Retail Market Review](#) publication the ORR highlighted the key role that third party retailers are playing in improving ticketing for passengers. Third party retailers can offer different ways to access information about rail fares and journeys and provide more choice in where and how to buy tickets. They are playing an increasingly important and influential role in all areas of the rail ticket retailing landscape. However, third party retailers have found it difficult to influence important decisions that affect them, and have cited areas where decisions made by the industry place third party retailers at a relative disadvantage compared to retailing activities conducted by train companies.

What we did

- 3.5 The RDG has reformed its governance structure to give third party retailers direct representation. It now shares its outputs with the wider third party retailers' community through regular liaison meetings. Separately, the industry has recently formed Third Party Rail Retailers Association (TPRRA) to represent third party retailers which will provide third party retailers with a stronger voice. The RDG has re-started regular meetings with corporate travel providers (known as Travel Management Companies or TMCs). These will be held two to three times per year.
- 3.6 Some of the specific issues raised by third party retailers have been addressed. Permanent fares data is now available to third party retailers for free, with no licensing costs, saving each current, or prospective, third party retailers around £30k

per annum. The rail industry's new computer system for ticketing and fare processing includes controls to ensure that temporary fares, which only train operators can sell, cannot be retained longer than they are permitted to be. The ORR is monitoring access to discounted fares and tickets on demand.

- 3.7 The DfT conducted a questionnaire survey with existing and prospective third party retail market entrants. Some of the issues raised are beyond the immediate scope of the Action Plan. However they have been shared with all parties in the Action Plan Implementation Working Group for them to reflect on and consider. The DfT will work with ORR and RDG on how we can take forward the issues raised. A synopsis of the survey results is to be found at Appendix A.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 3.8 This action is intended to be future facing, so we will have to wait to assess how effective it has been. However we expect that customers should benefit from an innovative and competitive market for ticket retail, in both the individual and corporate market segments.

4. How to buy your ticket

Summary table

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
Action 9 - Clear and understandable choice of tickets from ticket vending machines	Customers should have access to a clear and understandable choice of tickets when buying from vending machines, including information on relevant cheaper options that could be bought by waiting a short time or travelling on a different service.	RDG will produce a transparent roadmap of current capability to identify what can be done in the short term. This will include delivery of the 10 Point Plan which will make cheaper options clearer, and will include clearer information on when a ticket can be used. DfT and RDG will collaborate on a strategy to ensure a consistent high quality customer experience of ticket vending machines, including the role of the Ticket Vending Machines Design Guidelines; and consider whether these contain principles which should form the basis for obligations in future franchise agreements.	July 2017	RDG, Train Operating Companies, & DfT	COMPLETION DUE IN EARLY 2018
Actions 10 - ORR review of train company websites against industry code of practice	Train operator websites will be reviewed against existing industry code of practice to ensure that they are fully compliant in meeting the required standards for customers.	ORR will carry out an audit of train company websites for compliance with the existing industry code of practice. The ORR will publish its findings together with any required action by train operating companies.	March 2017	ORR	COMPLETED

Action	What will we do for customers?	How will it happen?	Published timescales	Owner	Outcome
Action 11 - Ongoing audit of train company websites by RDG	Train operator websites will be monitored by the RDG, and best practice will be promoted to all train operating companies.	RDG will monitor train operating company websites on an on-going basis and take steps to promote best practice.	Quarterly	RDG	COMPLETED
Action 12 - Easy access to simple Terms & Conditions	Customers will have access to all relevant terms and conditions in a simple to understand format when choosing and buying ticket	As well as clear access to relevant terms and conditions during the buying process retailers will have access to and signpost where to find any additional information. We will engage with passenger groups / focus groups to ensure these are understandable and accessible.	June 2017	RDG & DfT	COMPLETED
Action 13 - Refund for forgotten railcards	Where a customer holding a valid Railcard forgets it at the time of travel, they will on the first occasion be able to claim back any additional expense, including the cost of any extra fare and any penalty fare issued.	In a similar manner as for when a Season Ticket left at home, customers will be able to provide proof of their Railcard online, by post or at the ticket office of the train company that they travelled with in order to obtain a refund or cancellation of additional charge, including the cost of any extra fare and any penalty fare issued.	February 2017	RDG	COMPLETED
Action 14 - DfT work with Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	We will work with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) to assess what we can do to improve the experience for disabled and vulnerable passengers and build awareness of passenger rights, acting on research from Transport Focus, ORR and DfT, including through the franchising process.	We will work with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) to assess what we can do to improve the experience for disabled and vulnerable passengers and build awareness of passenger rights, acting on research from Transport Focus, ORR and DfT, including through the franchising process.	December 2017	DfT	COMPLETED

Action 9 – Clear and understandable choice of tickets from ticket vending machines

Background

- 4.1 Ticket vending machines were originally designed to be 'queue busters' allowing passengers to make quick, straightforward purchases at the train station as an alternative to using other means such as ticket offices. Nowadays, however, around one third of passengers use them to buy tickets and the range of products on offer has introduced complexities that can lead to customers not readily being able to make the best choice.
- 4.2 Recent ORR research into ticket vending machines has shown that passengers are not always able to purchase the most appropriate ticket from a ticket vending machine. Some of the “mystery shoppers” used to conduct research selected tickets that were more expensive than the ones they needed or that did not have the required flexibility, and could have been subject to a penalty fare.

What we did

- 4.3 The RDG is producing a document detailing the current ticket vending machines estate to identify gaps and opportunities for future developments. This document lists all 3,400 live ticket vending machines, their supplier, software version and functionality, and identifies whether it is consistent with the [Design Guidelines](#) for ticket vending machines that the RDG has drawn up. It has been made available to stakeholders to identify deficiencies in core functionality that might disadvantage customers.
- 4.4 Six of the ten 10 Point Plan actions were completed in full for existing machines or are currently being rolled out where old machines are being replaced with new.
- 4.5 The scale of the changes that need to be made to accomplish the 10 Point Plan means that progress will continue beyond the immediate one year timescale of the Action Plan. The remaining actions in the ticket vending machines 10 Point Plan are in progress, and the RDG has undertaken to complete these by early 2018.
- 4.6 The DfT has required prospective bidders for the South Eastern franchise to commit to adopting the RDG's current Design Guidelines for ticket vending machines in all upgrades, and expects to do so for future franchise competitions as well.
- 4.7 In 2018 the RDG will develop and deliver a roadmap of future ticket vending machines development, to allow suppliers to gain an understanding of the future requirements for the machines.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 4.8 Improvements delivered in 2017 means that:
 - Operator short codes have been eliminated on all ticket vending machines, so that they display, for example, ‘Virgin Trains East Coast’ instead of VTEC
 - Digital onscreen labels or screen savers which explain what tickets a ticket vending machine does and does not sell have been included on all machines that are not currently being replaced with new ones.
- 4.9 The ongoing progress in 2018 will mean that ticket vending machines will display:
 - improved ticket validity information

- a link to RDG’s “What Can I Do with My Ticket?” functionality
 - a list of which group stations a customer’s ticket is valid to or from, and
 - an on screen notification that makes clear to customers where a ticket vending machine has been configured to sell off-peak tickets only at certain times
- 4.10 These improvements mean that passengers are benefiting from tangible near-term progress, while the development of a future roadmap aims to lead to further modernisation of ticket vending machines.
- 4.11 We need to keep up our efforts in this area. The Rail Minister recently met with ticket vending machine suppliers to emphasise to them the importance of making improvements to increase passenger confidence that they are buying the right ticket. The ORR’s ticket vending machines research has only underscored how important it is that customers are able to buy the most appropriate ticket for their journey, and the ORR will carry out follow up research in 2018, to help us to track progress.
- 4.12 The Department and, separately, the ORR are also considering how the market for ticket vending machines can be strengthened and deepened. The ORR [announced](#) in October that it was conducting a review into the market for the supply of ticketing equipment and systems.

Action 10 - ORR Review of train company websites against industry code of practice

Background

- 4.13 The ORR commissioned an [audit](#) of train company websites to help understand the extent to which these websites provide the information that passengers need to make informed decisions when buying a train ticket and whether the information they give is suitably prominent, clear, and timely. It did this by conducting an assessment against the industry’s [Code of Practice](#) on retail information for rail tickets and services

What we did

- 4.14 The audit found that most of the information is provided that passengers are likely to need when planning journeys and buying tickets.
- 4.15 There were some instances of some information not always being available or suitably prominent. The ORR has written to train companies to highlight the general findings of the audit and recommended that they review these in the context of their own websites and consider what actions they can take to improve the information they provide to passengers.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 4.16 The audit acknowledges good practice that train companies can build on as well as considering what actions they can take to improve the information they provide to passengers. This report will feed into the rail industry’s new website audit process (see Action 11, below) so that passengers will benefit from consistent standards across the network. The ORR will monitor the delivery of improvements and may undertake a further review: it intends to publish an update in December 2017.

Action 11 - Ongoing audit of train company websites by RDG

Background

4.17 This action builds on the ORR audit process, highlighted in Action 10 above.

What we did

4.18 The RDG has identified, and agreed with train companies and stakeholders, a set of guidelines and recommendations for train company websites to be audited against. For example train company websites should include a link to compensation information and the claims process within one click of the train company's website homepage.

4.19 The first audit will commence at the end of 2017. The results of the audits will be published to ensure transparency in its commitment to make continuous improvements in the customer experience.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

4.20 As the first audit is in the process of being conducted it has not been possible to measure the effectiveness of this action. It is envisaged that customers will benefit from continued improvements in the presentation of information on fares and ticketing on train company websites.

Action 12 - Easy access to simple Terms & Conditions

Background

4.21 The [National Rail Conditions of Travel](#) (NRCoT) sets out many of the rights and obligations that passengers have when they travel on the rail network. However, since it is comprehensive it is also a lengthy document which can deter passengers from understanding their rights.

What we did

4.22 The RDG has created a '[one stop shop](#)' of ticket information on the National Rail Enquiries website that answers in a single place questions such as "where can I buy my ticket?", "what are my compensation rights?", and "how can I exchange my ticket?". This facility was introduced on the National Rail Enquiries website in January 2017.

4.23 All train companies have now committed to either include and clearly signpost the same information within their own sites, or to link directly to the National Rail Enquiries' 'My Ticket' page. Customers have a clear link to NRCoT in the buying process.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

4.24 Since the introduction of the 'one stop shop' page it has been viewed over 2.5 million times, meeting a customer need for easily accessible ticket information. All train company websites now also give customers direct access to relevant terms and conditions during the buying process.

Action 13 - Refund for forgotten railcards

Background

- 4.25 Railcards enable passengers to purchase a ticket at a discount. They must be carried when travelling to prove entitlement to this scheme. Failure to show a railcard on demand meant passengers could receive a penalty fare notice or be required to buy a new, full fare, ticket. It was felt that customers who make an honest mistake by forgetting their railcard should be able to have any additional costs refunded if they travelled without their railcard.

What we did

- 4.26 In February 2017, the rail industry announced that railcard holders who forget to take their railcards with them will, on the first occasion, now be able to reclaim any additional expense they incur for the omission if they subsequently provide proof of the railcard.

What difference has this action made for the passenger?

- 4.27 The advantage of this new rule is that it is there if you need it. Since January 2017 the average number of passengers claiming a refund for a forgotten railcard has varied but has been up to as many as 100 passengers on some occasions. To ensure that the new procedures are well publicised, the RDG has added this provision to the railcard website FAQs and intends to include it in when updated versions of the National Rail Conditions of Travel are released.

Action 14 - DfT work with Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Background

- 4.28 Every passenger should be able to use the rail system with confidence and ease. There are over twelve million people in the United Kingdom who identify as having some form of physical or hidden disability or impairment. It is a DfT priority that public transport is designed and delivered in an inclusive manner so that the needs of people with disabilities are considered and incorporated at all times.
- 4.29 We are also committed to ensuring that transport providers and staff provide clear information on their services, and that information on passenger rights, for example when passengers do not receive the service they should expect, is readily available and easy to access.

What we did

- 4.30 Existing research on fares and ticketing and awareness of passenger rights was supplemented with a workshop with DPTAC to provide further feedback and to elicit specific proposals to introduce into the franchising process.

What difference has this action made for passengers?

- 4.31 Since the start of the Action Plan further work on accessibility has been conducted by the DfT and the ORR. This work has considered accessibility from an across-the-board perspective and is part of a significant focus on accessibility.
- 4.32 DfT is currently reviewing all of the obligations it includes in Franchise Agreements related to accessibility as well as the way franchise competitions are assessed. This

will include introducing a section in bids devoted to accessibility to ensure that accessibility is considered throughout all parts of a passenger's end-to-end journey. The dedicated delivery plan will be introduced in early 2018 and will feature in all franchise competitions from then onwards.

- 4.33 In November 2017 the ORR published the results of its research into [Assisted Travel](#) services, together with a consultation seeking views on how Assisted Travel can be strengthened.
- 4.34 In August, the DfT launched a consultation on its draft Accessibility Action Plan. The Plan set out 48 specific commitments for improving accessibility across all modes of transport, including the rail system, and sought to address a range of barriers to travel highlighted by people with disabilities or impairments. The consultation closed in November 2017. Over one thousand responses were received which are now being analysed to inform the final Plan and shape our strategy for inclusive travel.

Annex A: Summary of responses received to third party retailer questionnaire

DfT and Third Party Retailers Questionnaire June 2017 Synopsis of replies	
Question 1	How can innovation in the ticket retail market be encouraged?
Reply	<p>Key points</p> <p>Innovation requires opportunity and incentive. Incentive is about earning money from innovation.</p> <p>Ticketing innovation that does not meaningfully increase demand would merely undermine train companies' income.</p> <p>There needs to be more transparency in the charges levied on third party retailers.</p> <p>An independent body should be responsible for third party retailing.</p> <p>The licensing process needs to be simplified.</p> <p>Consider allowing more than 1 train company on trunk lines.</p>
Question 2	What barriers are there for new market entrants into the ticket retail market?
Reply	<p>Key points</p> <p>There is a burden caused by the accreditation system.</p> <p>The cost of accreditation is another barrier.</p> <p>Lack of information on Rail Delivery Group (RDG) costs prevents effective budgeting.</p> <p>The need for innovation going to RDG's Settlement, Assurance and Financing Committee (SAFC) limits innovation.</p> <p>Train companies setting fares and ticket types that third party retailers can sell is a barrier.</p> <p>Underlying commission structure for third party retailers.</p>
Question 3	What issues currently hamper innovation by existing third party retailers?
Reply	<p>Key points</p> <p>The accreditation process needs to be fully documented and transparent.</p> <p>Issues with consistency of self-accreditation process.</p> <p>There needs to be a review of charges and fees levied by RDG.</p> <p>Need for greater access to the national online ticketing systems - National Reservations System (NRS), Live Sales Management (LSM) and Central Booking Office (CBO)</p> <p>Need to establish one point of approval for innovation.</p>

	<p>Call for independent review of third party retail system. Need for an independent accreditation service as an alternative to RDG / Rail Settlement Plan (RSP) who control ticketing system accreditation and access rights. All rail journeys should be based on a single fare. Train companies are at different stages of technical developments.</p>
Question 4	<p>What regulatory changes would you suggest are necessary to simplify the retail and ticketing framework and reduce barriers to entry for new entrants? To what extent would they be addressed by the recommendations identified by the ORR in its Retail Market Review?</p>
Reply	<p>Key points Need to simplify accreditation system. Appointment of a consumer champion and removal of RDG control of third party retailing. All train companies' fares and products should be made available to third party retailers. Need to offer third party retailers net fares. Need to consider both multi-modal travel and first and last mile issues.</p> <p>Importance of an independent member in train companies' decision-making process.</p>
Question 5	<p>How can engagement with third party retailers be facilitated?</p>
Reply	<p>Key points Formation of Third Party Rail Retailers Association to enable RDG and DfT engagement Frequent engagement. Office of Rail and Road (ORR) should have an independent oversight role on third party retailing, which would also be an escalation point. Need for transparency in fees charged by RDG.</p>