



# Understanding Travel Challenges and Solutions

Train the Trainer  
Rail Modules

# Understanding Travel Challenges and Solutions

This module is for anyone who works in the rail industry, to support them to provide an accessible and inclusive service to people who are disabled and people with reduced mobility (PRMs). It can be used as a standalone module or with others.

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Delivery can be informed by a range of other modules, such as the core module **What is Disability?** and the rail module **Rights and Duties**. If you can, show or share the short animated videos, which carry memorable messages about supporting disabled people and PRMs.

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Suggested timings are given below. Depending on delivery and delegate numbers, the content in this module could be delivered in 75–145 minutes.

# Learning Objectives

- 1 Providing staff with an understanding of the experiences of disabled people and PRMs
- 2 Helping staff to provide practical, accessible and inclusive support to disabled people

# Guidance to Accompany Slides

# ORR Data on Assistance and Travel Challenges

**Suggested timings:** 10–20 minutes

**Purpose:** To highlight that there is regular,  
**evidence-based analysis of the barriers** faced by  
disabled passengers.

After reading the text on these three slides, encourage discussion, for the whole group or in pairs first, of how systems and processes can affect people's experience of travel.

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Encourage people to put into their own words what difficulties (including delay and discomfort and uncertainty) to journeys for work and leisure might mean for them — how it might make them feel.

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## Anxiety

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** Provide insight into the **anxiety** that delay, discomfort and uncertainty, plus the attitudes of others, may create for anyone and why this might be more likely to be the case for many disabled passengers.

# Autism-spectrum conditions

**Suggested timings:** 15 minutes

**Purpose:** To ensure that delegates understand good practice in interacting with, and providing practical assistance to someone with an autism-spectrum condition.

People with an autism-spectrum condition are very diverse. Not all neurodiverse people experience the same barriers while travelling and the same solutions will not necessarily work for all of them. Roughly half of those with an autism-spectrum condition also have learning disabilities or difficulties or cognitive impairments.

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## **Specific travel barriers include:**

- Sensory overstimulation
- Physical proximity of (too many) other people
- Difficulties in obtaining information
- Lack of training of transport staff
- Anxiety and stress
- Issues relating to hidden disabilities
- Need for a particular type of seat
- Difficulties in accessing concessionary travel

You may want to prepare for delivering this session by learning more about autism-spectrum conditions. You can visit [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) and watch videos such as [www.facebook.com/watch/?v=327161914601878](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=327161914601878) or [www.autismspeaks.org/blog/5-activities-understand-autism](http://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/5-activities-understand-autism).

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Point out that some people will find travel more or less challenging in different circumstances due to crowds, noise, light sensitivity and changes to their plans or routine. Some people find travel impossible for these reasons.

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Remind delegates that people with these traits who are likely to face at least substantial difficulties in using transport services are likely to number around 1.5 million people in Britain, based on Government estimates.

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You can thank anyone who shares with colleagues insight from lived experience, either from professional or personal experience or from family or friends.

# Dementia

**Suggested timings:** 10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **encourage understanding of the increasing prevalence of dementia** and associated cognitive impairments, and the fact that many people find navigating and remembering information more difficult in the earlier stages of such conditions or simply as they get older, but with the right support can remain independent despite this.

You can find out more about dementia by watching this video **Dementia from the inside**.

Use the videos and content from other modules to explore the fact that it may not be immediately obvious that someone is struggling with memory issues, reading rail maps or understanding changes to services.

Ask people how staff can be proactive and sensitive in approaching to offer support and what other staff, such as those making announcements, can do to support people.



# Information and Communication

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore barriers** relating to information and communication.

Remind delegates that communication difficulties could be due to literacy issues, a visual or hearing impairment, a learning disability or having limited understanding of English.

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Getting things right for these groups helps them, but also helps everyone move around the transport network safely and efficiently.

# Physical Travel Barriers

**Suggested timings:** 5–20 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore barriers** relating to the physical environment — stations and trains.

You could switch to some of the animated video content at this point and encourage delegates to share their responses to what they hear, exploring how frustrating and frightening travel can be for those who face significant physical barriers.

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## Accessible Toilets

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore the importance of accessible toilets** to disabled people.

Humour is fine. You can point out that many disabled people have to overcome taboos about the risk of being out for long periods of time without access to a toilet, but encourage people to imagine what it feels like to be in circumstances where you could end up feeling humiliated by not having access to a toilet when you are far from home.

# Wheelchair Space

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore the importance of active management of the wheelchair space** on trains.

You can encourage delegates to think about the difference between what is essential and what is a preference. For a wheelchair user, if the space is being used by others for luggage, to stand or for pushchairs, they cannot travel safely — or at all — on the train. They have no choice. Other passengers may prefer to put their luggage in a space near to a door, but they have the choice to move it elsewhere to ensure that a disabled person can travel.

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If platform staff are involved in the training, do they have experience of having to defuse confrontations or ask passengers to move, or move their luggage? What experiences can they share?

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If senior staff are undertaking the training, how do policy, communication and staff training underpin people's rights?

# Audio-visual Announcements

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore the importance of real-time, accurate information** for all passengers, including those with physical and sensory impairments.

You can encourage delegates to think about how inconvenient and/or frightening it is to wait on the wrong platform following a change and then miss your train or not to know there had been a cancellation.

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How would they feel? Frustrated? Angry? Miserable?

# Travel Solutions

**Suggested timings:** 5–10 minutes

**Purpose:** To **explore potential solutions** to the challenges disabled people face.

Encourage delegates to remember the ‘barriers’ approach to tackling disability challenges and not to think about the ‘problem’ being with what someone isn’t able to do, see, hear, understand, but how physical infrastructure, policies, written and audible communication and staff respond to people who have different requirements.

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Use the data on the two slides to explore what a difference more inclusive, accessible services can make to disabled passengers — not just during journeys but in their lives more broadly.

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You can thank anyone who shares with colleagues insight from lived experience, either professional or personal, or that of family or friends.

# REAL

**Suggested timings:** 5–20 minutes

**Purpose:** Depending on the time available, use this slide to **summarise key messages**, and remind people about the Respect, Empathise, Ask, Listen theme of the training.

You can use the train the trainer notes on REAL here and/or in other sections of the training.



REAL

Respect

REAL

Empathise

REAL

Ask

REAL

Listen

**REAL** Passenger **REAL** Person



Department  
for Transport