



The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2018-2019

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) is a statutory body established under the Transport Act 1985. It advises government on the transport needs of disabled people. The Department for Transport sponsors the Committee.

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The main body of this report covers the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This will be referred to as 2018-19.

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Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 125 of the
Transport Act 1985

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on
14 December 2023

HC 295

December 2023



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ISBN 978-1-5286-4613-0

E03037648 12/23

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

Contents

Chair's Introduction	3
What is the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)?	8
Activities in 2018 – 2019	9
Rail	9
Local Travel	11
Personal Mobility	12
Research and Evidence	14
Non-Visible Disabilities	15
Publications	16
Budget	17
Our Members	18

Chair's Introduction

Transport plays a crucial role in enriching lives and enabling us all to connect and be included. Making transport and the built environment accessible improves access to employment, education, healthcare and a social life for all. Yet when transport is not accessible it challenges many people's right to live their lives as they choose, denies many their hard-won legal rights, and costs our society dearly.

DPTAC's primary role is to ensure the interests of disabled people are front and centre in the decisions of ministers and officials within the DfT. What drives our advice and challenge is our vision that disabled people should have the same access to transport as everybody else, to be able to go where everyone else goes and to do so easily, confidently and without extra cost.

We devoted some time to ensuring we were organised through the activity of our Working Groups in the best way to influence the DfT. But our role is not just to wait to be asked for our advice. We are proactive in raising issues, offering advice and challenging the DfT and Ministers and other Departments and organisations.

The Inclusive Transport Strategy (ITS) was published in July 2018 following a great deal of input from DPTAC and many others over a long period of time. We welcomed this as a clear statement of the Government's aspirations for improving access across the transport sector and the

built environment and as a practical tool in setting realistic commitments for making transport more accessible. What brings the ITS to life are its clarity, ambition, and a set of practical actions. We were particularly pleased that the DfT listened to our advice and for the first time produced a strategy that concentrates on making door-to-door journeys accessible, many of which cut across different modes. This represents a significant move away from the historic silo approach of looking at different transport modes in isolation.

We have challenged the DfT to monitor and track improvements over time, to have clear deliverable outcomes, to use robust regulatory activity and enforcement by working with other regulators in the transport sector, and to provide easy access to redress for consumers when things go wrong.

Our focus over the coming years is to ensure that the strategy remains a living document that develops to reflect new challenges that arise such as around emerging technology and digitisation and continues to push boundaries and change poor behaviours in the sector. Crucially, the Strategy presents an opportunity to speed up the pace of change in a number of key areas, particularly around staff training, the availability of accessible information, and the ability for disabled people to secure redress when things go wrong.

The year also saw the launch of the Rail Ombudsman Scheme. DPTAC's advice helped to frame of the scope

of the Scheme, and we secured a clear mandate for the Scheme to include accessibility complaints and to be able to provide redress and also make practical recommendations for changes in policies and practices. DPTAC was also included in the formal governance structure as an independent body with a role in overseeing the Scheme's work, along with Transport Focus, London Travel Watch, the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) and the DfT.

During the year we held meetings with the Chief Executives and senior staff of the key transport regulators – Office for Road and Rail (ORR), Driver and Vehicle Standards Authority (DVSA), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). There is a wide difference of approach to regulation across these bodies, due in part to their different governing rules and statutes but also because of their differing appetites for taking regulatory risks. We hope our engagement will bring more consistency across the regulators in their approach to identifying and calling out accessibility challenges and delivering better outcomes for disabled people through more robust enforcement of existing accessibility regulations.

Over the year we also met with many other organisations and individuals as part of our work with stakeholders. These included the Air Travel Insolvency Protection Advisory Committee (ATIPAC); Which? the Essential Services Access Network (ESAN); National Infrastructure Commission (NIC); Campaign for better Transport

(CBT); Royal Society for Blind Children; Keith Williams – independent Chair, Williams Rail Review; Dr Alice Maynard – Williams Rail Review Expert Challenge Panel; Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV); and Transport Systems Catapult, to name a few.

2019 saw the setting up of a new Disability Unit within Cabinet Office, and the announcement in the Government's manifesto of a National Strategy for Disabled People. We will be keeping our sights on how both initiatives develop over the coming year. Our work in the initial stages of developing the new Disability Unit was to ensure that access to transport was a key given and that government across many departments beyond the DfT understands that transport connects people to housing, employment, education, health and social care, and leisure and is a fundamental tool in delivering wellbeing.

DPTAC remains focused on making sure that the Department delivers accessibility for disabled people in all areas of its work, that it understands and takes full account of the interests of disabled people in the way it develops policy, plans its strategy, carries out its monitoring, regulatory and enforcement work, and in the way it helps and guides consumers and the industry.

I would like to thank all the Members of DPTAC for their incredible insight, persistence, expertise and commitment to DPTAC's vision over the year. Without all those individuals who served on DPTAC during the year and in

the past, we would not have been able to carry out our work as effectively as we have.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KR', is positioned above the name 'Keith Richards'.

Keith Richards
Chair, DPTAC March 2018

What is the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)?

DPTAC is an Expert Committee¹ established by the Transport Act 1985. It provides advice to, and scrutinises the work of, the Department for Transport concerning the transport needs of disabled people.

DPTAC is currently comprised of a Chair and 15 members. It must meet a minimum of four times a year.

In order to focus on particular areas of transport, the membership of DPTAC is divided into five sub-groups: Rail, Local Travel, Personal Mobility, Research and Evidence, and Non-Visible Disabilities. Each sub-group had a Lead Member, who is responsible for their group's work programme.

All DPTAC activities are aligned with their Vision Statement, that “disabled people should have the same access to transport as everybody else, to be able to go where everyone else goes and to do so easily, confidently and without extra cost”.

1 Classification Of Public Bodies: Guidance For Departments “Expert Committees – committees of independent specialists, administered from within a department.”

The 2018/19 year has been particularly eventful for accessible transport, with the publication of the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport Strategy (ITS) in July 2018. DPTAC has been fully engaged with the development and monitoring of the actions set out in the ITS, and this role will continue into 2019/20 and in future years.

The Department for Transport provides DPTAC with a Secretariat function, which currently consists of two officials based within the Department.

Activities in 2018 – 2019

Rail

The workload of the Rail Group is currently split into five categories: stations, trains, customer service, research and reviews, and information and ticketing.

In terms of stations, the Rail Group provided advice on the nomination criteria for Network Rail's Access for All programme. The Group is pleased that £300 million has been granted for station enhancements for 2019-24.

For trains, the Group worked throughout the year to review and provide detailed input into individual applications for Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulation (RVAR) exemptions. The Group anticipate more

exemptions in the following year as operators work to meet the 2020 RVAR deadline.

The Group has also advised on two main customer service projects in 2018/19. The first involved updates to the Passenger Assist programme, the second was the launch of the Rail Ombudsman. The proposed updates to Passenger Assist were welcomed by the Group as they have the opportunity to provide an immediate real-world impact on disabled rail passengers. As such, the Group will continue to monitor the Rail Delivery Group's (RDG) Passenger Assist progress closely. The Group also welcomed the launch of the Rail Ombudsman, and will continue to monitor the scheme, ensuring disabled passengers' issues are treated fairly.

For research and reviews, the Group provided input into Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) consultation on revised Disabled Persons Protection Policy (DPPP) guidance, and into the Williams Rail Review. Revised DPPP guidance presents the opportunity for a modernised and more consistent experience for disabled passengers, and the Group looks forward to reviewing ORR's final report in 2019/20. In terms of the Williams Rail Review, the Group has engaged with the independent Chair, Keith Williams, and members of the Review's Expert Challenge Panel to ensure disabled passengers are a key component of the Review's recommendations. The Group intend to continue this engagement in 2019/20.

A review into the Disabled Persons Railcard was the most significant work conducted on accessible information and ticketing in 2018/19. This work is derived from an ITS action to review the eligibility criteria for the card. This has been done in collaboration with DfT and RDG. Work is ongoing, and DPTAC will continue to provide comments and advice as the review progresses.

Local Travel

The Local Travel Group was split into two core working areas for 2018/19: buses and taxis.

From audio-visual (AV) equipment to driver training, the Group has worked on a range of bus issues throughout the year. Specifically, the Group responded to the DfT-led consultations on both AV equipment and open bus data. In terms of the former, the Group welcomed the proposed introduction of the legislation requiring the fitting of AV systems in buses. As well as those with visual impairments, there are many other people who will benefit from the assistance of announcement systems. The Group also welcomed the bus open data consultation. The Group responded to the consultation and agreed that, whilst the task of collating and continually producing quality data is difficult, providing better quality accessible information about bus services will help disabled people, and will build confidence for disabled bus passengers.

The Group has also explored the issue of wheelchair spaces on buses following the *Paulley vs FirstGroup PLC* ruling by the Supreme Court. The Group hosted a wider stakeholder event to understand DfT's work on wheelchair spaces, and to explore potential actions that can be taken to ensure wheelchair users are given priority when travelling via bus. The Group will continue to monitor the impact of the Supreme Court ruling into 2019/20.

The Group's work on taxis covered both taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs). In 2018/19, the Group made recommendations to the DfT-appointed Task & Finish report on Taxi and PHV licencing. The Group believes the report had some helpful recommendations regarding taxi licensing and the safety of passengers but offers very little with regard to accessibility. Furthermore, the Group considers that work to progress accessibility for taxis has been slow. As such, the Group drafted a "position paper" to outline their stance on the issue and aims to publish this in 2019/20. Going into the next year, the Group will also be working on their response to the consultation on statutory guidance for taxis and PHV licencing authorities.

Personal Mobility

The Personal Mobility Group split their work into three categories for 2018/19: vehicles, the public realm, and assistance.

In terms of vehicles, the Personal Mobility Group monitored the developments of the Motor Insurance Directive, and the effect of the *Vnuk* ruling in the European courts. Additionally, the Group responded to two consultations on connected and autonomous vehicles led by DfT and the Law Commission.

For the public realm, DPTAC published a 'position statement' on Shared Space. We welcomed the government's pause on development of Shared Space schemes, as announced in the ITS, and is awaiting Transport Scotland's publication of research on this issue. The Group was involved in the Steering Group for the research being undertaken on both the 'Inclusive Mobility' and 'Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces' documents. Additionally, the group provided advice on the Cycle to Work Scheme and the Highway Code Review.

Blue Badges have been a focal point to the Group's work on assistance throughout the year. Primarily, this involved working with DPTAC's Non-Visible Disabilities Group to provide active input and involvement into the eligibility changes to Blue Badge applications. Additionally, the Group hosted a Task and Finish Group to address the issue of Blue Badge holders who need to use their Blue Badge in more than one location. Work is ongoing in this area and will continue into 2019/20.

Research and Evidence

The Group worked on various research projects throughout the year. This was mainly in three specific areas of work.

The first was contributing towards the scope, and being involved on the Steering Group, for the “Value of Accessibility” research project. This aims to quantify accessibility enhancements across multiple modes of transport, and the Group will continue to monitor progress of this in 2019/20.

The second was the ITS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The Group contributed directly to the Framework and provided expertise on the timescales and practicalities of the proposals. This is an important piece of work, as it will support DfT in understanding and acting upon the impact of its ITS actions. It is important, therefore, that DPTAC has had, and will continue to have, the opportunity to provide comments and advice as the evaluation work commences.

The third project was the preparation for the launch of DfT’s intended 2019/20 Public Awareness Campaign. The Group actively contributed towards this project by providing input into the pre-campaign scoping phase and attending workshops to provide an understanding of attitudes towards disability. The Group hopes their input ensures the campaign adheres to its ITS commitment to: “promote ways of positively interacting with disabled

people to promote a supportive travelling experience and reduce instances of disability related hate crime on transport”.

The Group also worked in cross-collaboration with other DPTAC sub-groups by providing input into their workstreams. This cross-cutting work was particularly advantageous for the research on Shared Space, and the “Railway for Everyone” projects, which supported the Personal Mobility and Rail Groups respectively.

For 2019/20 the Research and Evidence Group will restructure to form as a cross-cutting group. This will enable the Group to identify and contribute towards the research and evidence work being undertaken within the other groups, and thus enable DPTAC to work more collaboratively more easily.

Non-Visible Disabilities

The Non-Visible Disabilities Group is a cross-cutting group, meaning it has less structured meetings than the other sub-groups, but it also works more collaboratively, and its members are represented on all the other DPTAC Working Groups.

For 2018/19, a significant part of the Group’s work was working with DfT on the revised guidance for Blue Badge eligibility. This work was conducted through cross-collaboration with the Personal Mobility Group, which enabled DPTAC to draw from their breadth of

expertise and contribute proactively towards such a challenging issue.

Additionally, the Group has worked with the DPTAC Rail Group, DfT, and the Rail Delivery Group to review the eligibility criteria for the Disabled Persons Railcard. The Group hopes that this will result in a fairer distribution of rail cards, and that this will fall in line with DPTAC's ambition to ensure disabled people are able to travel "without extra cost".

The Group also worked on areas that were not within the remit of another group's workstream. This included advice on DfT's disability awareness training scoping document and attending meetings with DfT officials to identify how a potential national passenger assistance card could be developed. Both workstreams contribute directly towards ITS actions.

Publications

DPTAC "position statements" are intended to consider the views of all members, with the aim of producing one clear, distinct stance on a particular issue. These may be DPTAC's final considered position on a particular issue or may be an interim position pending further research or other engagement work. Two of these statements were published in 2018/19.

The first was DPTAC's position on Shared Space. This is a contentious issue and DPTAC made 12

recommendations within their statement, which included the need for further research and a pause on future Shared Space schemes until the research has been concluded. DPTAC welcomed the government's subsequent actions in addressing this issue as set out in the ITS. DPTAC will provide input into Transport Scotland's Shared Space research during 2019/20.

The second position statement was on extending the Blue Badge eligibility criteria. DPTAC firmly stated that use of the Personal Independence Payment's (PIP) 'planning and following journeys' criteria was not adequate for assessing those who should be eligible for a Blue Badge. DPTAC instead suggested using another PIP criterion 'cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant' as a more appropriate method. This suggested a balance between extending the eligibility criteria for those who need it and ensuring limited Blue Badge parking spaces are not frequently used by those who do not require such a space. Additionally, DPTAC expressed their view that the independent assessor role should remain independent. It is hoped DPTAC's position has been fully considered, and the Members look forward to reviewing published guidance in early 2019/20.

Budget

DPTAC's budget for the financial year 2018-19 was £163,588, the expenditure was £153,462.

Our Members

This section includes information on all members of DPTAC during 2018/19.

Chair Keith Richards

Members Bryan Matthews
Chris Price
Dave Partington
David Chrimes
David Mapp
Helen Dolphin
Jessica Uguccione
Matthew Smith
Mike Brace
Niki Glazier
Roger Mackett
Sharon Brennan
Sue Sharp
Tanvi Vyas
Will Bee

Observers

The Office of Disability Issues
Northern Ireland, Department for
Infrastructure
Transport Scotland
Welsh Government

Mobility and Access Committee for
Scotland
Confederation of Passenger Transport
Mental Health Action Group

E03037648
978-1-5286-4613-0