



UK Government

Our Roadmap to an accessible railway



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Ministerial foreword

This government is focused on delivering real, measurable change; change that will improve people’s lives and strengthen our country.

Our plan for change is ambitious, but we are committed to delivering on our missions: Setting strong foundations, growing the economy, building an NHS fit for the future, making Britain a clean energy superpower, securing safer streets, and breaking down barriers to opportunity.

A railway fit for the future is a vital part of delivering on these missions. The railways underpin the economy and connect our people, businesses, and communities. But for too many people, particularly disabled people, the railway remains a system of barriers. That must change.

We are already delivering improvements: more step-free stations, improved passenger assistance, clearer travel information, and stronger performance monitoring. But we know that structural reform is needed. That’s why we are establishing Great British Railways (GBR) – with a focus on passengers’ needs. GBR will be underpinned by strong enabling legislation, transparent obligations, and clear lines of accountability.

Passengers must be at the heart of how the railway operates, benefitting from a more seamless experience, where accessibility is not an afterthought but central to every decision, from staff training to customer service. The rail network must be accessible by design. GBR's integrated approach will allow for better coordination of services, investments, and innovations, ensuring that improvements reach every corner of the network. Most importantly, GBR will embed accessibility into the heart of the railway – making sure everyone can travel confidently and with dignity. By putting passengers first and harnessing the opportunities of a truly unified railway, GBR will deliver a transport system that works for everyone, now and for generations to come.

This Accessibility Roadmap sets out how we are accelerating that change. It is a practical, transitional document – focused on what we can deliver now, while laying the foundations for the longer-term transformation that GBR will lead. This includes improvements to infrastructure and technology from stations to Welcome Points to bookings, but also support for people, and to improve the culture around accessibility by providing better training and upskilling and delivering more reliable passenger assistance.

The Roadmap is not the final word on accessibility, nor does it attempt to solve every challenge but it is a clear signal of intent: we are getting Britain moving, now, and we are doing so inclusively. The Roadmap also does not stand alone. It is one part of a coherent set of strategy and change plans that will move us to where we need to be. Improved accessibility on the

transport network is a key element of the Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS), which will set the long-term vision for transport in England and set commitments to deliver this parliament. We will also develop an Accessible Travel Charter, which will be co-designed with disabled travellers and the transport sector, and will complement modal accessibility plans, bringing together best practice across transport modes. The long-term outcomes that the Secretary of State requires for rail, including the approach to accessibility, will be set out in her Long-Term Rail Strategy (LTRS). Taken together with this Roadmap, these strategies will guide the rail industry and its partners on the path towards an accessible railway.

As Minister for Rail, I am proud to lead this work. I've spent my career in transport, and I know that an accessible railway works better for everyone. This Roadmap is a step forward. GBR will take us further. Together, we will build a railway that is inclusive, accountable, and fit for the future.



Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill CBE
Minister of State (Minister for Rail)



Introduction

The rail network is about much more than just getting from one place to another; trains are a vital part of our communities and a lifeline for many that couldn't otherwise travel. They open opportunities like jobs and education, they enable access to healthcare, and they connect people to friends and family.

All of this contributes to improving people's health and wellbeing, improving economic growth, and supporting thriving communities. We want everyone to have the ability to travel confidently by train, regardless of their accessibility needs, which means removing barriers that make rail travel difficult. The Accessibility Roadmap sets out the accessibility improvements being delivered ahead of the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR) with the aim of creating a more inclusive and accessible rail network. It demonstrates how the Department for Transport (DfT) is making meaningful improvements and delivering more accessible journeys in the near term. The Accessibility Roadmap covers England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Accessibility Roadmap is a transitional plan which sits alongside wider work on the design and establishment of Great British Railways (GBR). This includes legislation that will provide the foundation for the establishment of GBR, and importantly, the organisational design that will set out how GBR embeds accessibility, and the new passenger watchdog that will hold GBR to account.



The long-term vision as the context for this shorter-term plan

The long-term vision for the railway is one where all passengers can travel independently, safely, and with dignity. One in which accessibility is fully integrated into its design, operation, and culture.

In practice, this means:



A rail network where stations and trains are accessible, with reliable assistance services that work for passengers.



A rail network where accessibility is incorporated from the outset, not as an afterthought and integrated at every stage, from ticket booking to train travel, directly informed and determined through meaningful engagement with disabled people and their representative organisations.



Clear, accessible travel information to help all passengers navigate stations and trains easily.



A culture of excellent customer service, with well trained staff committed to supporting disabled passengers.



The ability to harness innovation, to remove barriers faster, making rail travel more inclusive by design.

It also means making progress on issues that affect every passenger, but which have a particularly significant impact on disabled passengers, including:



A simpler, fairer ticketing system with easy-to-understand information on available discounts and a consistent, accessible booking experience.



A more reliable train service, that guarantees a customer getting to the end of their journey every time.

We are committed to making the concerted effort across policy and delivery required to achieve this vision, and the Roadmap will create a foundation from which GBR can drive this forward. While there are elements such as the passenger watchdog and GBR which will take time to set up, this Roadmap sets out the priority areas and actions we are taking now.

The case for change

There has been significant progress made to improve the accessibility of the railway over the last two decades.

The Passenger Assist service, which helps passengers use train services and navigate stations, and Access for All which makes stations step free, have delivered tangible benefits to passengers. Assistance can now be booked with as little as two hours' notice before departure, and 1,431 stations (56%) provide a good level of step free access¹. Since the introduction of Rail Vehicle Accessibility Legislation in 1998, over 13,500² new accessible train carriages have been introduced across the network, with spaces for wheelchair users, accessible toilets and better information provision.

For many people, train travel is one of the most practical and direct forms of transport available and can offer a sense of freedom that other modes of travel often don't. However, for passengers with accessibility needs, using the railway can be a difficult and frustrating experience, where facilities and assistance too often fall short of what is expected, and barriers remain that prevent disabled people from travelling with confidence. Research suggests that disabled people take 25% fewer trips than non-disabled people (53% fewer in the case of rail)³. We want to change that, because delivering a more accessible railway makes sense at every level.

There are an estimated 16 million disabled people in the UK⁴ – a quarter of the population. Yet in 2021 the Department for Transport (DfT) estimated that 31% of the disabled population in Great Britain were non-users of rail⁵, and in a study undertaken in 2022, 34% of disabled passengers told Transport Focus they would use trains more in the future if accessibility improvements were made. At a time when growing passenger numbers is vital, not only to support the financial sustainability of the rail network, but also to reduce carbon emissions and drive inclusive economic growth, improving accessibility is more important than ever. Delivering on accessibility is essential to unlocking increased rail revenues and enabling broader economic benefits across the country.

Making the UK's railway system more accessible benefits everyone. Whether it's a disabled person, a parent with a pram, someone with a broken leg, a cyclist, an older person, or a traveller with heavy luggage; accessible infrastructure makes journeys easier, safer, and more inclusive for all.

However, while service improvements like easy-to-understand journey information, reliable assistance, or step-free access to platforms benefit everyone, they can be the difference between a disabled person travelling or not. These aren't just conveniences; they're necessities that enable participation in work, education, healthcare, and social life. A more accessible railway helps create a more connected, inclusive, and fair society, and directly benefits and boosts the economy.

What we have already achieved

Meaningful improvements are already being delivered across the rail network to improve the accessibility of train journeys.

31 Access for All projects have been delivered so far. An additional six Access for All stations are set to be completed this financial year.

- **Passenger Assist Phase 5 was launched in January 2025**, and over the next two years, this phase will continue to deliver improvements to book a ticket, request assistance and reserve a seat in a single transaction as well as enabling customers to directly communicate with staff.
- **Welcome Points were trialled at 37 stations.** The trial assessed the effectiveness of Welcome Points at providing a consistent focal point for passengers to access information and assistance, and as a means for contacting staff. This included an evaluation of how effectively Welcome Points' assistive technology provided passengers with accessible station and journey information, along with options to seek assistance.

- **The Station Accessibility Audit data was comprehensively updated** and used to refresh the National Rail Enquiries pages, providing passengers with clear, accurate information on the facilities that are available at stations. In addition, this data will support investment decisions and help improve journey planning for passengers.
- **An £800k Innovate UK** competition was launched to develop technology to provide audio and visual information for rail replacement services.
- **Travel announcements in British Sign Language (BSL)** were introduced at some of the country's busiest railway stations, and customer information screens provide deaf passengers with signed travel updates and the latest advice.
- **RDG established a clear and accessible appeals process for Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC) applicants**, allowing those denied the opportunity to challenge decisions by submitting additional documentation or clarifying their circumstances.
- **The Rail Ombudsman⁶ has taken steps to improve the user experience and accessibility of its complaints service in 2025**, in response to research commissioned by the ORR. This includes the rollout of a new accessible website that has a range of enhanced accessibility features and improved design.

Our seven priority areas and improvement plans for this roadmap

In the lead up to GBR being established and during this parliament, improvements in seven priority areas will be delivered. Key findings from recently published DfT research into the barriers disabled users and non-users face with rail travel, other publications, and the lived experience of disabled people and accessibility experts, have all been used to develop these priorities and improvements. These are set out below, in no particular order. Each action has a designated lead organisation that is responsible and accountable for its delivery and for reporting on progress and outcomes. DfT will work closely with these organisations to ensure that the Roadmap achieves its objectives.



Improving the accessibility of our stations and trains.



Improving the reliability of train services and key accessibility facilities.



Improving the consistency and reliability of Passenger Assist.



Improving customer information.



Improving the awareness of available concessions and improving the accessibility of retail channels.



How we will enact cultural change in the rail industry and ensure accessibility is prioritised.



Improving the monitoring of disabled people's travel experiences and how the industry is being held to account.



1

Improving the accessibility of our stations and trains

Many of Great Britain's 2,581 railway stations were constructed before modern accessibility standards were established, making them challenging to navigate for many disabled people.

Taking recently updated data from our (DfT's) audit, approximately 56% of stations and around 66% of the 1.3 billion journeys that take place on the network have step free access to platforms. Level-boarding (street-to-seat independence) is rare, present at just 4% of stations. To address this, the following actions are being taken:

a. Increasing the number of stations with step free access to the platform: (Delivery lead Network Rail, ongoing to 2029)

£373m has been committed over the next five years to deliver Access for All projects, providing step-free access from station entrances to and between platforms, alongside other essential accessibility upgrades. These works will increase the number of step-free stations across Great Britain from 56% to 58%. This improvement will make travel easier with step-free access available at stations covering an increased share of total rail journeys—from 66% up to 71% – based on 23/24 ticket sales. These improvements are coupled with step-free schemes at stations delivered through major rail investments such as the TransPennine Route Upgrade and East West Rail which will further increase the number of stations that are step free. A dedicated national programme office will maintain oversight of the programme’s delivery, with clearer and more transparent reporting of progress accessible to the public.

Reforming the Access for All Programme

To end the short-term, stop-start approach to accessibility improvements, we aim to transition to a rolling programme with a commitment of up to £70m per year. This sustained funding will enable more efficient long-term planning and delivery, providing greater certainty for the programme and the supply chain that supports it. As part of the establishment of Great British Railways, we will also undertake a broader reform of

the Access for All programme. This will be shaped through consultation with disabled people and local transport bodies, ensuring their voices directly influence how the programme develops in future.

b. A Minor Works budget, supporting multi-year projects: (Delivery lead: Network Rail and train operating companies (TOCs), rolling programme from 2025)

A multi-year Minor Works Accessibility Fund will provide sustained budgets for train operating companies (TOCs) to deliver small but important accessibility improvements across their networks. Though individually modest, these schemes can have a transformative cumulative impact on the confidence and independence of disabled passengers. Typical schemes include improvements to signage, seating, lighting, induction loops, tactile wayfinding, sensory pods, quiet spaces, and small-scale step-free route improvements. TOCs will be required to set out how they will use their annual allocations, identifying and prioritising schemes that address the most pressing gaps on their routes. This process will be guided by data from the national accessibility audit, with local priorities shaped through consultation with disabled passengers and community stakeholders, ensuring improvements reflect lived experience. Alongside this, Network Rail will deliver four more Changing Places – fully accessible toilets equipped with hoists by 2029 – ensuring passengers who require these specialist facilities are better supported to travel with confidence.

c. A long-term strategy for rolling stock and infrastructure:

(Delivery lead DfT, due end of 2026)

The long-term strategy for rolling stock and infrastructure, which the government expects to publish in 2026, will include our approach to improving level boarding and setting out what is needed from trains and infrastructure in the future, to allow people to board with greater ease. The strategy will take a whole-system view – considering not just fleet needs, but also the infrastructure consequences of future rolling stock choices such as platform compatibility and the opportunity to mandate that new trains be designed with floor heights that match the platform height.

- To inform this strategy, we are commissioning a comprehensive study of level boarding to identify and scope practical, cost-effective solutions for achieving level boarding across prioritised locations on the rail network. As part of this study, we will ask train operators to work with Network Rail Routes and Regions to identify and assess options for how early progress could be made on level boarding in the areas they serve. The study is a foundation for identifying key steps, milestones, and recommendations to accelerate progress, informing both long-term infrastructure investment and future rolling stock specification and planning.

- We will also require that all new train procurements will include requirements that ensures progress to be made on level boarding. The specific requirements to be included in future procurements will be informed by the outputs of the level boarding study outlined above. (This applies to those train operating companies for which DfT is responsible).

d. Inclusive design guidance for new and refurbished trains:

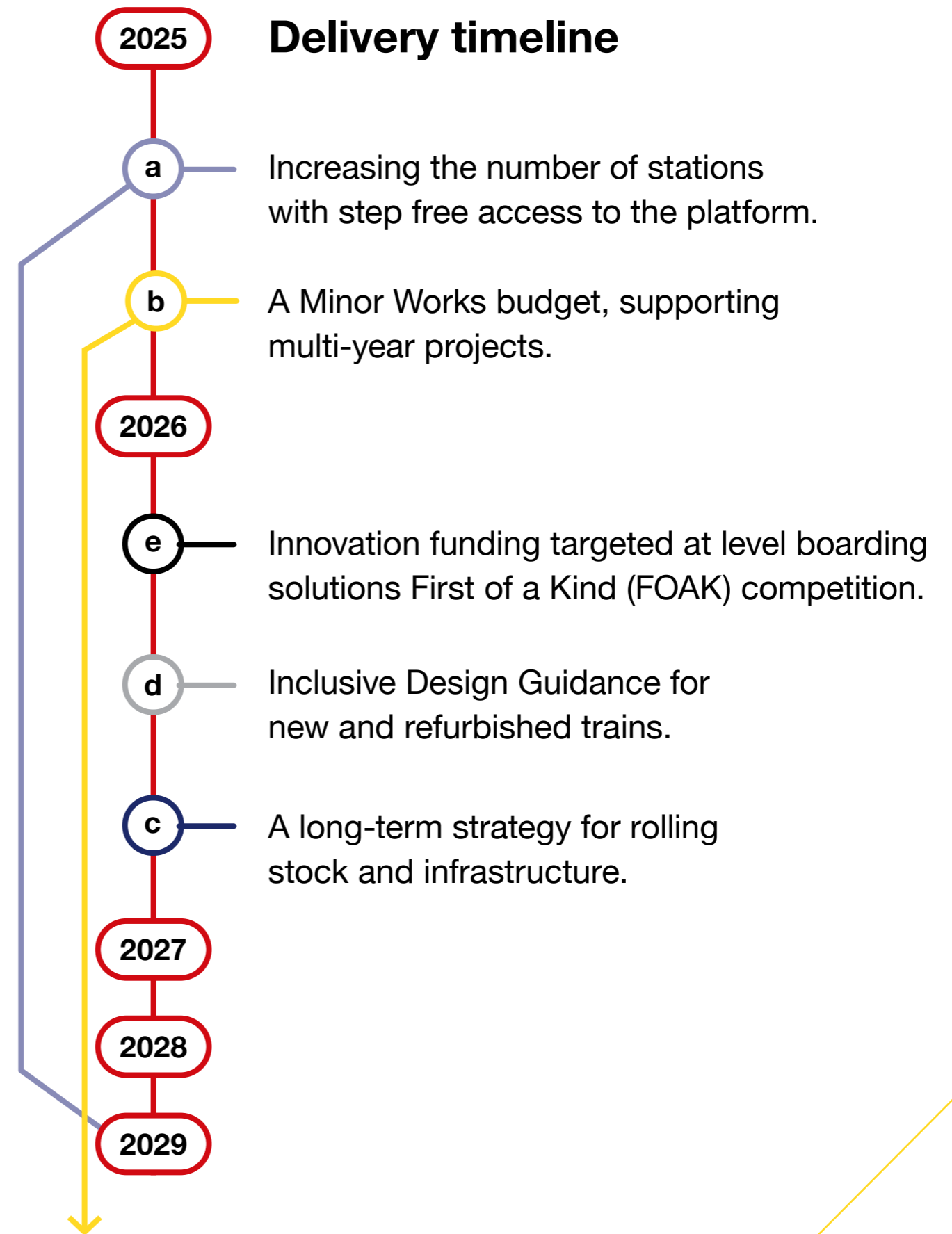
(Delivery lead Network Rail, due summer 2026)

A revised version of the Key Train Requirements for railway carriages (guidance for setting procurement specifications for new and refurbished trains) will include a dedicated accessibility chapter, co-designed in consultation with disabled people and representative groups. The guidance will codify best practice emerging from recent rolling stock procurements and ensure that the needs of passengers with a wide range of physical, sensory, and neurological needs are fully reflected. It will set expectations that go beyond minimum legislative compliance, positioning best practice and lived experience as the benchmark. Rail operators procuring new or refurbished trains will be required to refer to this guidance, ensuring that final design and specification decisions are informed by expert and passenger input. This will promote greater consistency and significantly improve inclusivity across the network.

e. Innovation funding targeted at level boarding solutions (First of a Kind (FOAK) competition, (Funding lead DfT, delivery lead, Innovate UK. Projects end by March 2026)

In partnership with Innovate UK, the Department for Transport has funded a First of a Kind (FOAK) competition, the focus of which is the Platform – Train Interface. Many of the proposals submitted are digital tools, apps, and technology platforms designed to measure, communicate and better understand the scale and location of gaps at the step between train and platform. While these projects will not in themselves deliver physical fixes, they will provide better evidence, data and insight to inform future investment decisions and identify where level boarding solutions are most urgently needed. In the longer term, this programme is intended to pave the way for market-ready solutions that can help reduce or eliminate boarding gaps across the UK rail network.

Delivery timeline



Case Study: Minor Works improvements in TransPennine Express Stations

TransPennine Express has been able to complete a significant number of accessibility improvements at stations across its network using its Minor Works funding.

- All its accessible toilets, including those at Cleethorpes, Dewsbury, Grimsby and other stations now feature shelves, hooks, mirrors, and disposable facilities which meet Colostomy UK's stoma friendly standards.
- New handrails, resurfaced ramps, colour-contrasting steps, anti-slip treads, and reinstated tactile paving were introduced at Dewsbury, Grimsby and Scunthorpe stations to improve safety and usability. Cycle ramps were also improved.

Chris Jeffery, TPE's accessibility lead, said:

“We're proud these upgrades make a real difference to our customers. Everyone should be able to travel with ease and confidence. These improvements are a vital part of our commitment to creating a more accessible and inclusive railway.”

What these improvements will mean for customers

More stations will become step-free, making it easier for many disabled people and others with access needs to move through the railway with greater independence and confidence.

This is especially beneficial for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, those using walking aids, and individuals with non-visible disabilities such as chronic fatigue or balance disorders, who may find stairs or uneven surfaces challenging. While level boarding remains limited, a new long-term plan and dedicated innovation funding will explore practical ways to close the gap between platform and train. New and refurbished trains will also be designed to higher accessibility standards, with clearer, more consistent features across the network, future proofed for level boarding expansion as platform work allows. A national, rolling programme will provide greater clarity on future improvements and ensure that disabled people and local communities help shape how accessibility evolves.

2

Improving the reliability of key accessibility facilities

Unreliable and faulty station facilities affect all passengers, but for disabled people, they can make travel impossible.

Between April 2023 and August 2024, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) reported that 25% of audited stations in England had at least one broken help point. Over the six months, between October 2024 and April 2025, the ORR reported that there were 3.2 faults per lift on average. It is not just train cancellations, but also faulty equipment that can turn a planned journey into an abandoned one.

a. Improving lift and escalator performance: (Delivery lead Network Rail, underway, due to complete end 2027)

Network Rail is delivering improvements to the reliability and performance of lifts and escalators at stations across the entire rail network, reflecting its responsibility for maintaining all station lifts and escalators. This work will be supported by clear delivery targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor progress and ensure accountability. Network Rail has shared its improvement plan with the ORR, who will hold it to account for delivery. These improvements are essential for ensuring that disabled passengers and others who rely on step-free access can travel with confidence. The planned improvements will include the following:

- **Enhanced maintenance:** Comprehensive maintenance protocols are being introduced, prioritising lifts where their availability has the greatest impact on enabling passengers to access trains. This includes a £6 million programme of targeted upgrades to address the most common failure modes and reduce the frequency of breakdowns.
- **Reprioritising renewals:** Network Rail will reprioritise its renewals programme to ensure that the oldest, least reliable equipment is replaced first. Modern, more efficient alternatives will be installed to deliver better long-term reliability and reduce maintenance needs.

- **Increased investment in spare parts:** An additional £5 million has been invested in stocking critical spare parts for key lift and escalator components. This will reduce the number of service hours lost due to maintenance delays and enable repairs to be made more quickly.
- **Real-time status reporting:** All lifts will be equipped with real-time status reporting, allowing passengers to check whether a lift is operational before and during their journey. This will also improve response times by alerting maintenance teams to issues as they occur.
- **A new standardised lift design:** There are more than 700 different types of lifts operating on the railway which makes maintenance complex and expensive. Work will begin to reduce variation in lift design across the network, creating a more consistent passenger experience and enabling more efficient maintenance.
- **Contingency Plans:** Stations will be required to have clear contingency plans in place if lifts fail, ensuring passengers are not left unable to travel.

Case Study: why lift reliability matters

Lifts and escalators are vital for step-free access, but when they're out of order, they can disrupt or even prevent travel for disabled passengers.

Paralympian and wheelchair user, Anne Wafula-Strike shared her experience:

“**The lift at my local station was out of order and I missed an important meeting. If I'd known in advance, I could've planned around it.**”

To prevent experiences like Anne's, the improvements Network Rail are carrying out are essential, including making sure accurate data is available and accessible, such as when lifts are out of order.

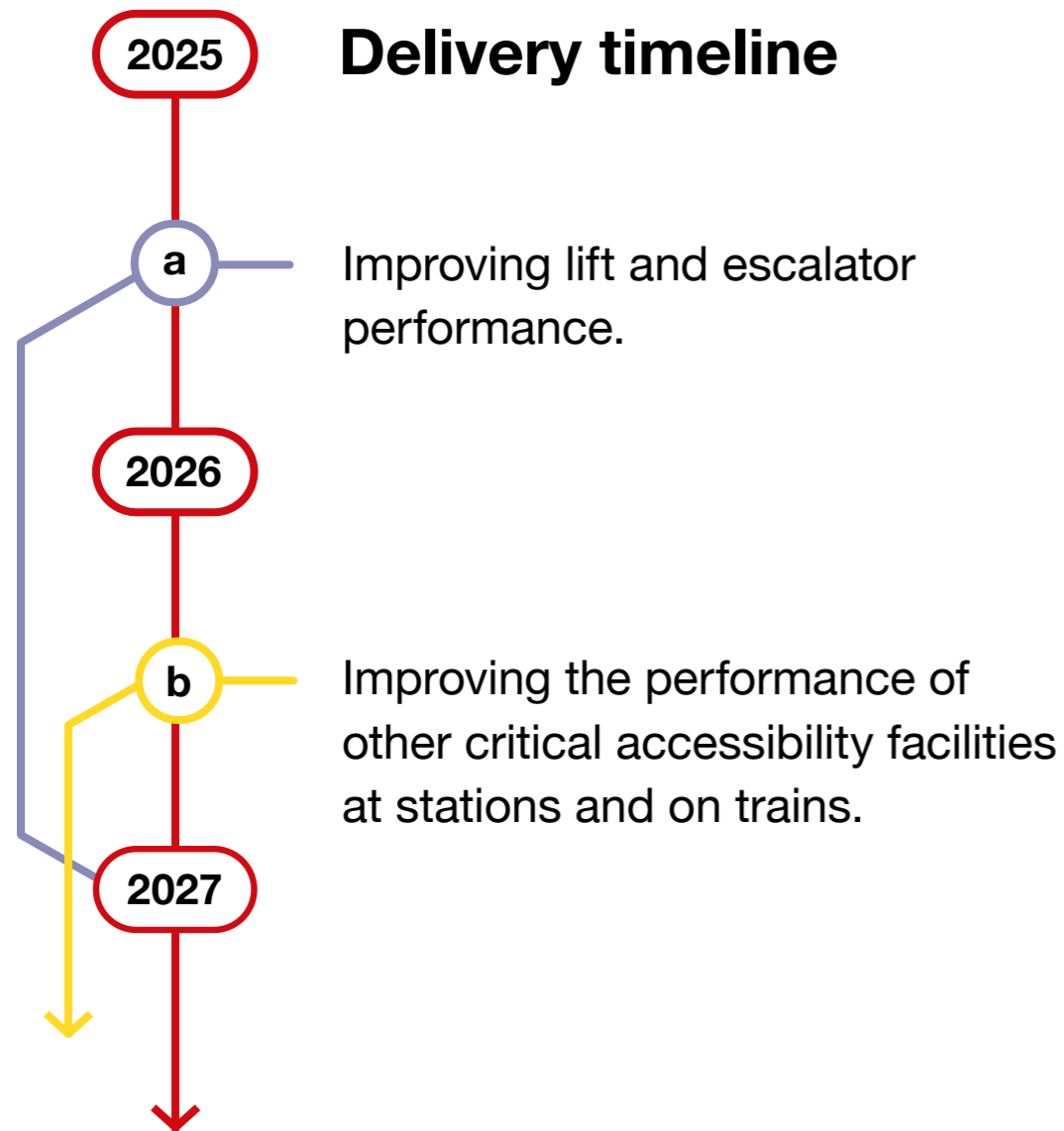


b. Improving the performance of other critical accessibility facilities at stations and on trains. (Delivery leads DfT and ORR, due to start 2026)

The way the quality and reliability of key accessibility facilities at stations and on trains are measured will be improved, reducing disruption and giving passengers greater confidence that essential features will be working when needed.

- **Help point improvements are underway following a review by the ORR** so passengers will be able to more consistently rely on them for information and assistance. These include:
 1. Better monitoring by operators, including remote monitoring, so faults are identified and rectified more quickly.
 2. Improved connections for help points in remote areas.
- As train companies are brought back into public ownership, we are **improving how accessibility facilities are monitored and maintained** at stations and on trains, to ensure they meet consistently higher standards, holding TOCs to account for their performance on a regular basis.

- We are identifying opportunities to prioritise the maintenance and rapid repair of key accessible facilities, such as lifts, help points/call-for-aid systems, and Changing Places facilities. This will focus on designating these key facilities at high-impact locations for mandatory maintenance checks and accelerated response times. This would ensure that essential services for disabled passengers are treated with the urgency they require.



What these improvements will mean for customers

As GBR is brought online, infrastructure and operations will be brought together which allows greater oversight and control of lift repair, maintenance, and reliability. In the lead up to GBR, the actions here, such as Improved performance reporting will pinpoint the least reliable lifts and those causing the most disruption, so investment and maintenance improvements go where they're needed most.

This is especially critical for people with mobility impairments, wheelchair users, people with non-visible disabilities such as autism or chronic pain, and people with assistance dogs who may rely on features like lifts to navigate stations safely.

Stronger regulatory oversight will hold Network Rail publicly to account, ensuring that lift and escalator reliability remains a top priority for accessible travel. Key station facilities will be more consistently available when customers need them, reducing journey disruption and removing the worry of vital services being out of order.

3

Improving the consistency and reliability of Passenger Assist

Passenger Assist is a service that allows passengers, particularly those with disabilities, older individuals, or those with reduced mobility, to request assistance for their journeys.

It is a vital service for many rail users who would otherwise be unable to travel. While overall satisfaction remains high, failures in the service can have serious consequences. The ORR's 2024–2025 report found that 11% of passengers reported receiving none of the assistance they booked. Demand for the service continues to grow, underscoring the need to improve delivery and ensure all passengers receive the support they require.



a. Delivering Passenger Assist Phase 5: will introduce a significant number of new features and services designed to improve the service for customers and the staff supporting them. The key changes being introduced, and the improvement they will bring, are detailed below (Delivery lead, Rail Delivery Group (RDG) ongoing until March 2027)

- **A station check-in capability:** Staff will be able to check passengers in when they arrive at a station using their Staff Mobile App. This will notify station staff at all other points on their journey of their arrival and location, helping ensure assistance is promptly provided at every stage and reducing the risk of a passenger not being met as expected.
- **Improved tracking of assistance:** Tracking of journey assistance at both departure and arrival stations will be enhanced. This will support more accurate reporting and better staff coordination, leading to a more reliable service.
- **Two-way messaging:** A two-way messaging feature will be introduced between passengers and staff. This will be used during service disruptions or in situations where immediate help is needed.
- **Improved handovers between different teams providing the assistance:** A new electronic handover process will be introduced where appropriate to allow

station staff to use their Staff Mobile App to notify staff at the next leg of the journey that a passenger is confirmed on board. This frees up staff to focus more of their time on assisting passengers and reduces the risk a passenger is not met.

- **Seat reservation via the app:** Passengers will be able to reserve seats and wheelchair spaces directly through the Passenger Mobile App, including setting seat preferences. This should mean customers get the seating arrangements they need more often.
- **Smarter booking management:** A new system will help staff easily identify and take appropriate actions to reduce or eliminate duplicate bookings and ensure staff resource is used efficiently and effectively to support customers
- **Improved resource allocation:** Train operating companies (TOCs) will gain better tools to manage and assign staff for assistance tasks. This will help ensure timely and effective support, both for pre-booked requests and Turn-Up-and-Go (TUAG) passengers.
- **Customised notifications:** Notification settings will be improved so passengers and staff can manage alerts according to their needs. Staff will also be notified of important updates to ensure timely actions are taken.

b. Industry standard training for passenger assistance:

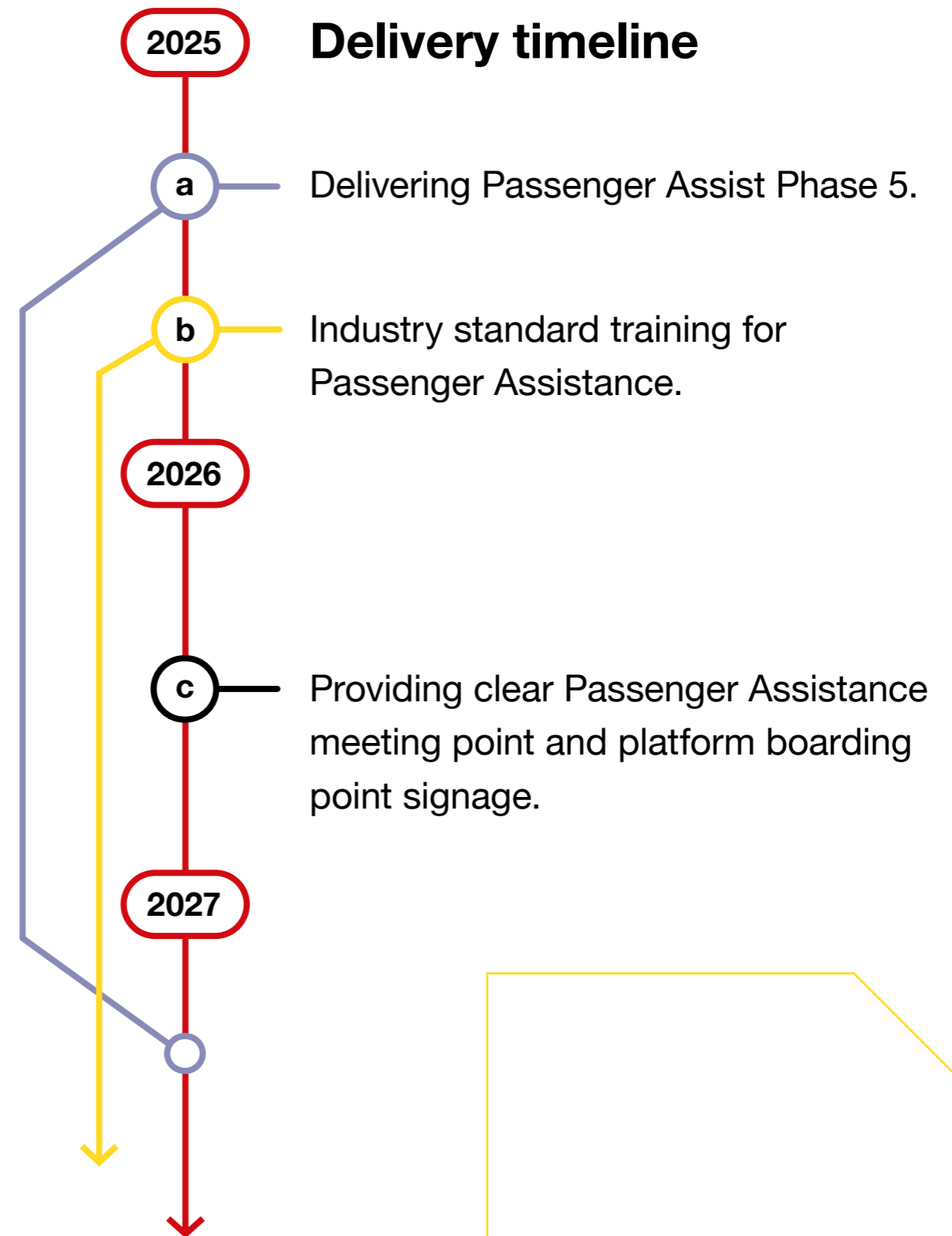
(Delivery will be led by Network Rail and RDG, piloting the new training in autumn 2025 ahead of wider roll out thereafter)

A new national training package will be developed to make sure the Passenger Assist service is delivered consistently, no matter which train company a customer is travelling with. This will help improve the consistency and quality of the experience for the many passengers (65%) whose journeys involve more than one train operator. The training will be delivered through an easy-to-access online platform, with short learning modules for all new staff and regular refresher training to keep standards high across the network.

c. Providing clear Passenger Assistance meeting point and platform boarding point signage: (Delivery will be led by RDG and Network Rail in partnership with Train Companies, due 2027)

Up to £7.5 million will be invested to install additional Passenger Assistance meeting points and platform boarding points, and to improve signage within stations so they are easier for passengers to find. This will ensure that assistance locations are clearly marked, consistent across the network, and visible from key station routes. The programme will also update wayfinding and signage standards, so that all new stations and major refurbishments adopt best practice in accessible design from the outset. These improvements will help passengers know exactly where to go for assistance, making journeys less stressful and more predictable.

Delivery timeline



Case Study: The importance of Passenger Assist during disruption

Clive Woods, a visually impaired passenger who travels with his guide dog, experienced significant delays while travelling from London due to unexpected disruption. The station was extremely crowded, creating a stressful and potentially disorienting environment. However, the response from the Passenger Assist team was exceptional.

Staff quickly located a quiet and safe space for Clive to wait, provided water for both him and his guide dog on a hot day, kept him regularly informed about service updates, and personally guided him to his train once services resumed. Despite the train being very busy, the train guard made sure Clive had a seat, ensuring his comfort and safety throughout the journey.

While delays are always challenging, Clive's experience highlights how vital the Passenger Assist service is—not only in terms of accessibility, but in providing reassurance, dignity, and personalised support during disruption. His journey is a powerful reminder of the difference that compassionate, well-trained staff can make.

What these improvements will mean for customers

These improvements will help reduce the level of missed assistance and give disabled passengers greater confidence when travelling by train. By making this vital service more reliable and consistent, more people, especially those who don't currently use the network or feel able to, can consider train travel a viable and accessible choice.



4

Improving customer information

Inconsistent information about station accessibility is a widespread issue. For many disabled people, reliable details about facilities such as lifts, ramps, and toilets are essential for planning and confidence when travelling.

A recent Transport for All report⁷ found that 38% of respondents reported that inadequate accessibility information had been a barrier to train travel, with some abandoning journeys after encountering unexpected barriers.

Common issues include unclear signage, inaccessible print or digital formats, and poor audio announcements—particularly affecting visually impaired and neurodivergent passengers.

A lack of British Sign Language (BSL) resources and over-reliance on audio also create significant barriers for deaf and hard-of-hearing travellers.

a. Welcome Point trial report and plan for roll-out of

Welcome Points: (Delivery lead RDG/DfT)

Supported by DfT, RDG undertook a trial to determine whether new Welcome Points would improve passengers' experience at stations by providing a consistent focal point for passengers to access information and assistance, and as a means for contacting staff. The trial, which concluded in April 2025, found that Welcome Points could effectively make travel information more accessible, bridging gaps left by traditional station audio and visual announcements. Following publication of the trial's report, DfT and RDG will proceed with planning for wider rollout of Welcome Points across the network, working with Train Operators and Network Rail to assess locations and final numbers of Welcome Points across the network.

b. Innovate UK competition: Accessible rail replacement journey information:

(Delivery lead DfT, due March 2026)

DfT has partnered with Innovate UK to fund an innovation competition focused on improving accessible information provision on rail replacement coaches. Funded projects have until March 2026 to develop and deliver market-ready products that make it easier for rail replacement coaches to comply with key regulations by providing accessible onboard audio and visual announcements.

c. Provide 360 degree virtual tours for better station navigation

at largest most complex station locations: (Delivery lead Network Rail, complete spring 2027)

To support more confident and independent travel, virtual 3D walkthroughs will be introduced at 250 of the busiest and most complex stations. These 360-degree digital tours are designed to help passengers, particularly those who may be anxious travelling, to navigate larger stations more easily. The tours will offer detailed visual guidance in advance of travel to key facilities such as toilets, lifts, escalators, and exits, which can often be difficult and stressful to locate, especially if the station is unfamiliar and very crowded.

A new rail and multi modal accessible journey planner

(Delivery lead RDG, due summer 2027)

A new accessible journey planner will launch in summer 2027, initially offering tailored information about rail journeys—including station facilities and onboard features such as accessible toilets, priority seating, and wheelchair spaces. It will later expand to include details on first and last mile connections, such as buses, trams, and active travel options, subject to data availability.

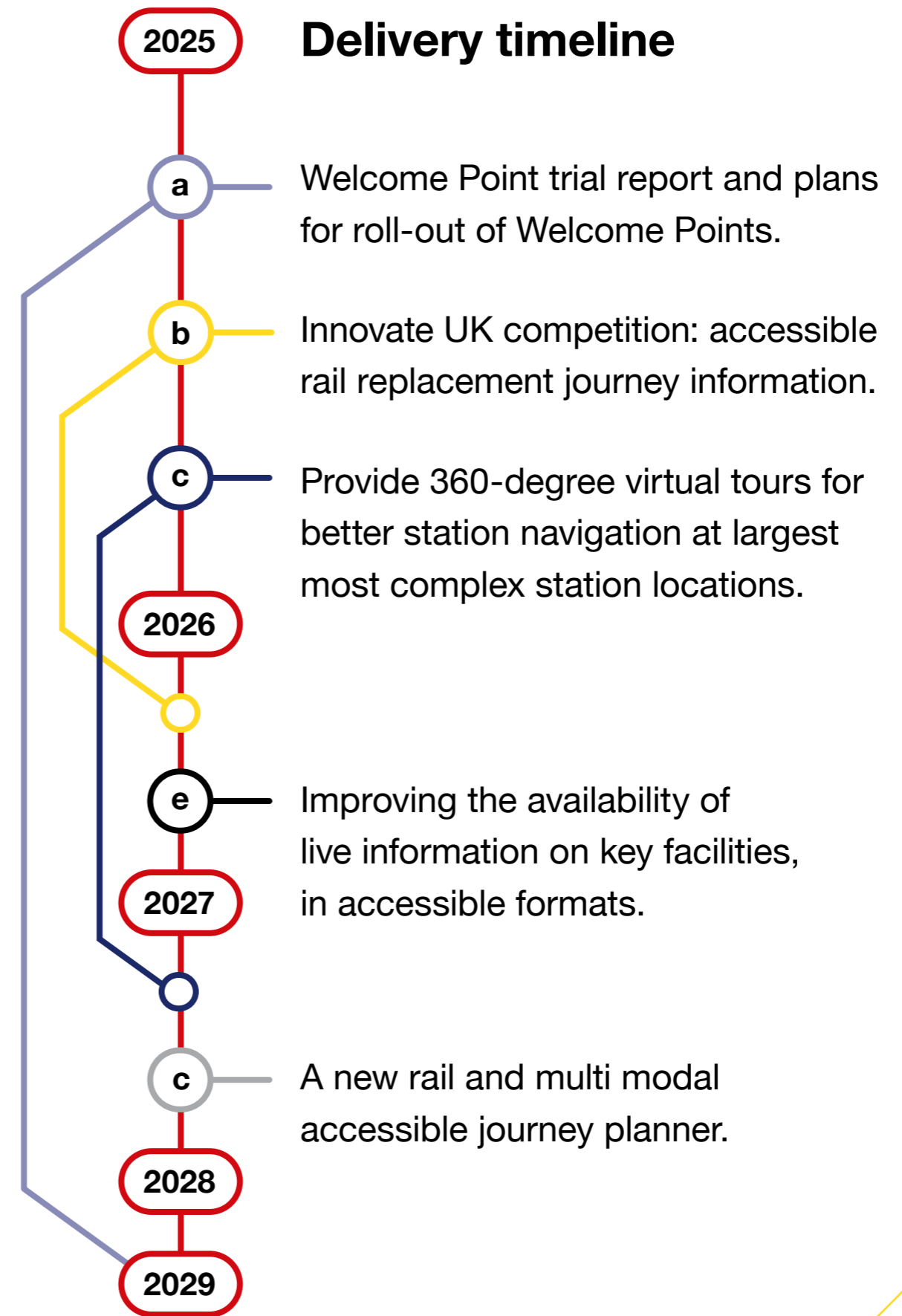
d. Improving the availability of live information on key facilities, in accessible formats: (Delivery lead Network Rail/ RDG, due 2026)

Several projects are underway to improve the live information available to passengers about essential station facilities such as lifts, escalators, and accessible toilets. This information will be accessible through multiple channels – including online platforms, station staff, and a new real-time British Sign Language (BSL) translation service – ensuring all passengers stay informed throughout their journey.

Planned improvements include:

- Real-time lift status updates with clearer, more consistent information and guidance on alternative routes when lifts are out of service.
- Undertake a feasibility study to scope real-time reporting for the availability of toilets (on trains and at stations) and car parking. A feasibility study will assess where technology is available and how it can be rolled out across the network.
- A new information service to provide live updates on station crowding or disruption, helping passengers plan or choose alternative routes where needed.

Delivery timeline



Case study: Virtual station tours make rail travel more accessible

Greater Anglia has created virtual tours for 19 of its busiest stations, with two more on the way, as well as tours of all its different train types. These interactive tours allow customers to explore station layouts in advance, helping them plan their journeys with confidence. For many passengers, especially those with access needs, this can be a game-changer.

Georgie Hill-Jones, who is autistic and has hearing loss, explains:

“**Just being able to know in advance what I’m going to find and where I need to go takes away so much of the stress and anxiety I usually feel when travelling. It’s made such a difference arriving at a station knowing exactly where I need to go.**”

By reducing uncertainty and building familiarity, these virtual tours are helping to remove barriers to travel and create a more inclusive experience for all customers.

What these improvements will mean for customers

Travelling by train will become easier and more reassuring for disabled passengers and anyone who needs extra support. These improvements will make it simpler to plan ahead and navigate stations, with clearer, more reliable information about key facilities like lifts, toilets, and accessible seating—both online and at the station. This is particularly important for people with visual impairments who rely on audio announcements and tactile signage, neurodivergent passengers who benefit from clear, consistent information, and those with anxiety or cognitive impairments who may need extra reassurance through real-time updates and step-by-step journey guidance.

New tools like the accessible journey planner and virtual station tours will help passengers feel more confident, especially when visiting large or unfamiliar stations. Real-time updates and better announcements, including on rail replacement services, will help ensure that everyone can stay informed and travel with greater ease and independence.

5

Improving the awareness of available concessions and improving the accessibility of retail channels

Navigating the UK's rail ticketing system can be difficult for many passengers, affecting both confidence and accessibility.

Complex fare structures, unclear ticket options, and inaccessible ticket machines all contribute to confusion. Awareness of available concessions is also low – for example, while over 271,000 Disabled Persons Railcards were in use as of October 2024, this is a small fraction of the 3.7 million people receiving Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which is just one of the qualifying disability benefits. To address this, the following actions are being taken.

a. Improvements to the Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC):

(Delivery Lead RDG, Due from March 2026)

Changes to the Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC) will be brought in to ensure more inclusive, affordable, and accessible travel for disabled passengers.

- **Expanding eligibility for the DPRC** to cover a wider range of disabilities, including both visible and non-visible conditions. Implementation will be in two phases in March 2026 and September 2026, based on the complexity of assessing the new criteria. The updated criteria will align with best practice in disability inclusion, ensuring that more people are supported in their travel needs and can benefit from discounted rail fares.
- To make the DPRC easier to access, RDG is committed to **enabling more retailers of rail tickets and products to sell the DPRC**. This expansion would give customers more flexibility and choice in how and where they buy their railcard and improve awareness of its benefits. While dates and uptake are subject to commercial discussions with retailers, RDG has completed all the necessary technical development to facilitate this change.

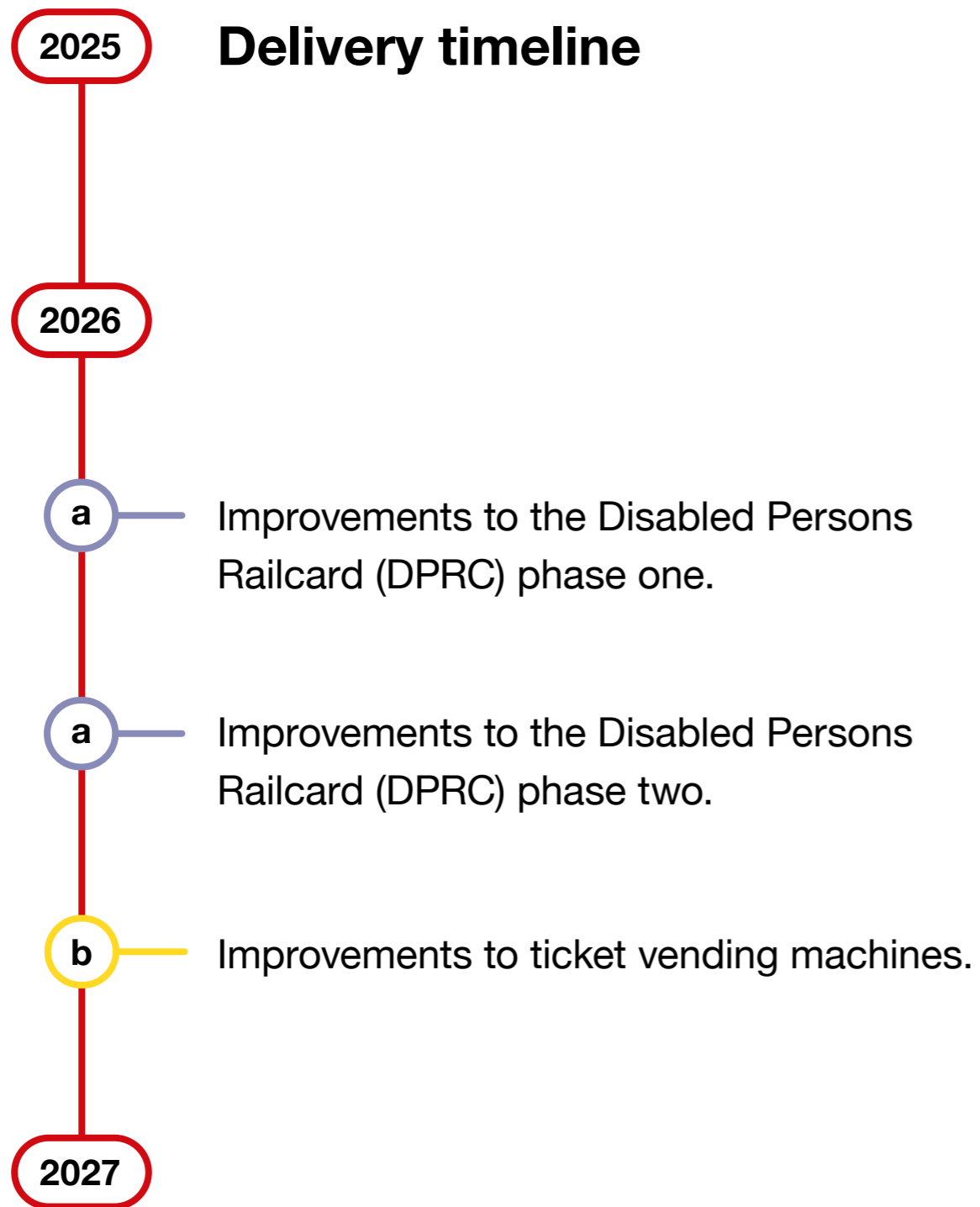
b. Improvements to ticket vending machines (TVMs):

(Delivery lead RDG, due end of 2026)

We are making enhancements to TVMs to improve functionality and consistency across the TVM network and with other retail channels. TVMs already provide an option for passengers who need to use cash or do not use smartphones (particularly high among disabled people). Enhancements take accessible design standards into account and improve consistency across TVMs, so that people know what to expect and are better able to purchase tickets independently. It will also include making advance tickets available for purchase on TVMs, the cost of which can be further reduced with a DPRC, enabling all passengers to get the best price for their journey.

c. GBR Online Retail Platform: (Delivery lead DfT/NR FTR, Delivery to be confirmed)

As announced on 22 January 2025, GBR will retail online, bringing together individual train operators' ticket websites, and the resulting platform will meet accessible design standards.



Case study: raising awareness of rail discounts through the Blue Badge scheme

To help more disabled people access travel discounts, Transport Scotland includes information about the Disabled Person's Railcard in a booklet provided to all new Blue Badge holders. This simple step is making a big difference.

Margaret Carruthers, who has a non-visible disability and doesn't regularly use the train, shared how it impacted her:

“**Knowing I could access a discount on rail travel, something I always thought was more expensive than driving, has made it possible for me to use the train. It's now a more affordable, enjoyable, and sustainable option for me. If I hadn't applied for a Blue Badge, I would never have known I was eligible.**”

By raising awareness at the right time, this initiative is opening up rail travel to more people.

What these improvements will mean for customers

Buying tickets and accessing discounts will become easier and more inclusive. More people will be able to benefit from the Disabled Persons Railcard, thanks to expanded eligibility and wider availability through third-party retailers. A new online retail platform will replace the many separate train company websites, and accessibility considerations will be fully accounted for in delivering this. These changes aim to reduce confusion, improve confidence, and make rail travel more accessible for everyone.



6

Improving the monitoring of disabled people's travel experiences and how the industry is being held to account

While organisations such as the Office of Rail and Road, train operators, and Network Rail monitor disabled passengers' experiences, gaps remain in how this data is collected and reported.

Complaints can be difficult to make, meaning important feedback is often lost, and limited data on un-booked assistance makes it hard to track service failures. A clearer understanding of when and why things go wrong is essential for driving meaningful improvements and helping the industry meet its accessibility commitments.



a. Improvements to Passenger Assist data collection and the introduction of a new Performance Benchmarking Framework. (Delivery will be led by the ORR, due autumn 2025)

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is committed to working with industry to improve how data is collected, published, and used to build a stronger evidence base on the experiences of disabled passengers. In July 2025, the ORR published the first statistics on volumes of recorded Turn-Up-and-Go assists. The ORR is introducing a new benchmarking framework for Passenger Assist. The framework is designed to rank operators on the quality and consistency of assistance provided across the network, and to assess the capability of the poorest performers to improve. The first benchmarking report will be published in autumn 2025, and the assessment will inform the ORR's decisions on any further regulatory action. Train Operating Companies (TOCs) will be required to include actions to address Passenger Assist failures in their Annual Business Plans, focusing on improving service quality and reducing missed assistance.

b. Updated research into the experiences of disabled rail users and non-users (Delivery lead, DfT due end of 2025)

A two-stage research project is underway to deepen our understanding of the barriers disabled people face when travelling by train, including the perspectives of both users and non-users. The first, qualitative stage, featuring interviews and accompanied journeys, was completed in May 2025⁸. The second, a national quantitative survey, will publish its findings in early 2026. The research will provide detailed, nationally representative survey data on the barriers to rail travel, including what prevents passengers from using rail, with results able to inform many longer-term improvements beyond the scope of this initial Roadmap

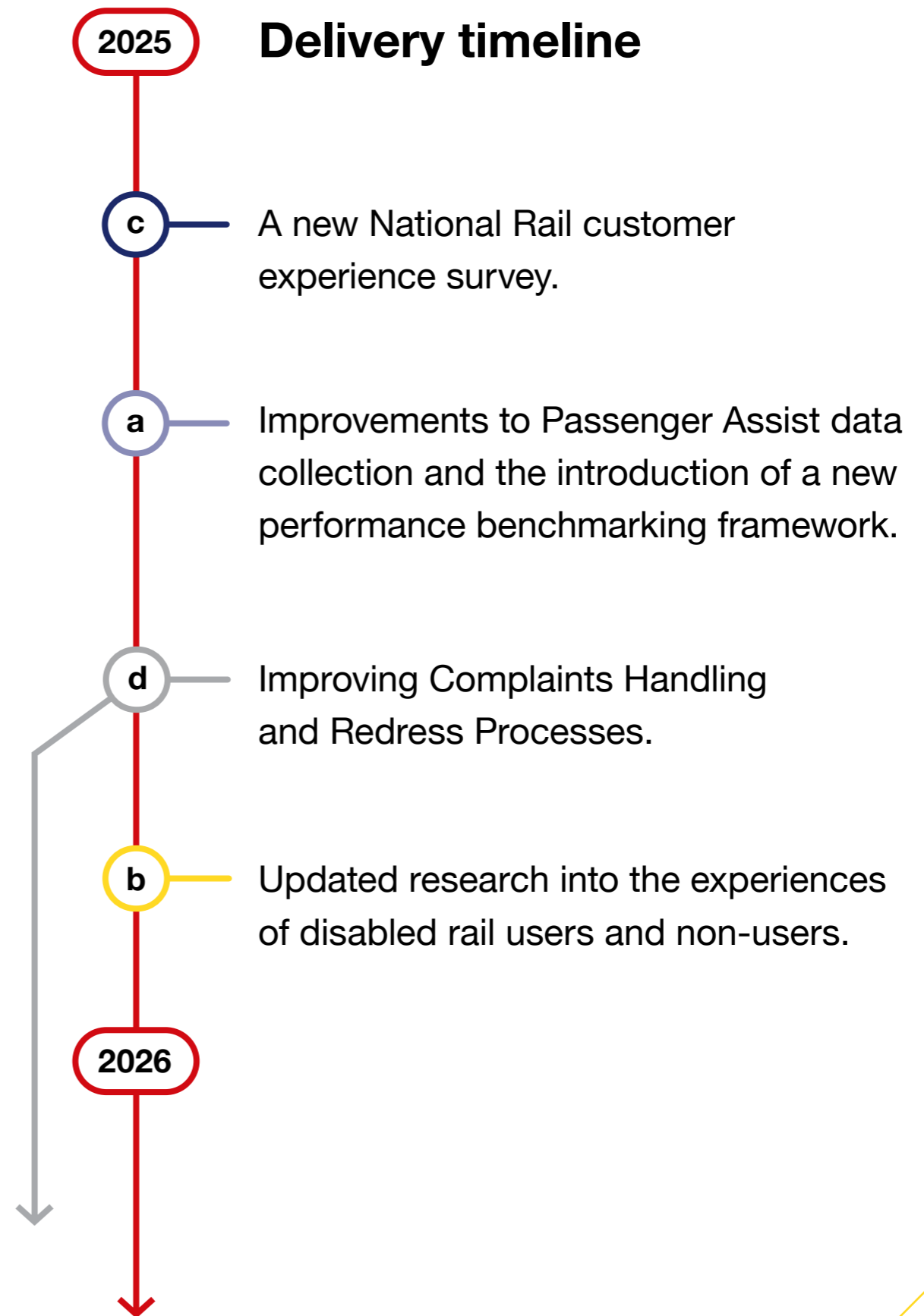
c. A new National Rail Customer Experience Survey (Delivery leads DfT/RDG, due summer 2025)

A new National Rail Customer Experience Survey will launch in July 2025, offering regular, in-depth insights into disabled passengers' experiences at the key stages of their journey—from planning and booking to station, onboard, and staff support, especially during disruption. These insights will help us design more targeted and effective service improvements.

d. Improving complaints handling and redress processes

(Delivery lead, ORR, due autumn 2025 and ongoing)

Every year the ORR will review the steps that operators are taking to improve access to their complaints handling processes for disabled passengers and to learn from complaints to address accessibility issues, feeding into a process of continuous improvement. Redress is a way that operators can seek to put things right for a passenger where they have failed to deliver a service to an appropriate standard. Earlier this year, ORR consulted on proposals to amend requirements relating to the provision of redress for passengers where booked assistance fails. The outcome of the consultation will be published in Autumn 2025.



Case study: accessibility insights from the Rail Customer Experience Survey (RCXS)

The Rail Customer Experience Survey (RCXS) is a comprehensive, industry-wide initiative aimed at gathering consistent, robust insights into the customer experience across the UK rail network. One of the critical focus areas of the RCXS is accessibility — understanding the experiences of disabled passengers and those with mobility or health needs, from journey planning to arriving at their destination.

It captures whether passengers searched for accessibility information before travelling, how easy it was to find, and what channels they used. It tracks who they travelled with including carers, assistance animals and mobility equipment and records the type of assistance needed, whether it was booked, delivered, and how satisfied passengers were at each stage. The survey also gathers feedback on station access (signage, lifts, step-free routes), onboard facilities (seating, luggage space, wheelchair access), and whether assistance was missed due to delays. Demographic and health data helps identify how different conditions impact travel, and whether passengers used a Disabled Persons Railcard.

What these improvements will mean for customers

The Rail Customer Experience Survey will give us crucial insights into real passenger journeys, helping us target improvements where they matter most. The comprehensive and up-to-date research into experiences of disabled rail users and non-users will shine a light on what's holding people back from travelling by train and provide evidence-based insights on how to improve disabled people's experiences of rail. These findings will directly shape Great British Railways' long-term strategy to make rail travel more accessible for everyone.



Accessibility data across the sector

What is it called?	What data is collected?	Who by?	What's it used for?
National Rail Customer Experience survey	In-depth insights into passenger's experiences at the key stages of their journey	Network Rail	NR use the data from the survey to design more targeted and effective service improvements
Updated research into the experiences of disabled rail users and non-users	The perspectives of both disabled users and non-users when travelling by train	Department for Transport	DfT use the research to inform longer term improvements to rail services
Periodic insights into Passenger Assist	The number of booked and un-booked assistance requests included those that were completed fully, partially or not at all. The booking channel used and type of assistance requested is also recorded	Rail Delivery Group	RDG use the data to improve the rail experience for customers requiring assistance. The ORR use the data to measure demand and performance of the Passenger Assist service, identify trends or shortfalls in service delivery and ensure improvements under the Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) framework. Data is also used to inform the ORR's Performance Benchmarking Framework

Accessibility data across the sector

What is it called?	What data is collected?	Who by?	What's it used for?
<p>'Stated Preference' research, on accessibility improvements</p>	<p>How much passengers value different types of accessibility improvements</p>	<p>Network Rail</p>	<p>NR use the data collected to strengthen future funding and investment decisions</p>
<p>Station Accessibility Audit</p>	<p>Assessment of railway station infrastructure with a focus on accessibility. This includes evaluating the availability and usability of facilities such as toilets, ticket offices or machines, seating areas, parking bays (including size), and step-free access features such as ramp gradients</p>	<p>Department for Transport – Train Operating Companies maintaining data</p>	<p>The data is used by the rail industry to identify barriers to accessibility, prioritise improvements, and provide clear, reliable information on station accessibility to members of the public</p>

7

How we will enact cultural change in the rail industry and ensure accessibility is prioritised

A deeper challenge lies in the rail industry's culture around accessibility. It must be seen as a core part of the passenger experience – not an add-on.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility, embedded across all roles and levels of the industry, from policy and planning through to frontline service delivery.

Real cultural change goes beyond improving training or meeting service standards. It requires a more inclusive approach to service design—one that involves people with lived experience in shaping products and services and moves beyond compliance as the sole measure of success. It also demands a better understanding of, and ability to measure, the broader benefits and value of a truly inclusive railway.



a. Making sure staff have the necessary skills and training to deliver inclusive services: (Delivery leads: Network Rail and RDG, launching 2027)

Rail staff are a vital part of delivering assistance to passengers, and providing disability and equality training is mandatory as part of each rail operators Accessible Travel Policies (ATPs). Currently this training varies across operators, which can lead to inconsistent service. Delivering consistent, high-quality training equips staff with the skills and knowledge to perform at their best and deliver the sort of service passengers expect and deserve.

- A new, comprehensive disability equality training programme will be developed and rolled out across the rail network, building on the requirements established by the ORR. Crucially, it will be co-designed and delivered in partnership with disabled people to ensure it reflects real lived experiences. The training will be regularly updated and will cover key topics, including:
 - The barriers disabled people face when using the railway
 - Equality and accessibility legislation
 - Railway-specific regulations

- Best practice for providing assistance and delivering inclusive customer service in stations and on trains. This approach will help staff better understand passenger needs and deliver a more consistent, respectful, and accessible service.

- We are currently evaluating the potential implementation of a new Accreditation Scheme for inclusive service (BS ISO 22458 BSI Kitemark). This would apply to train companies as they come into public ownership. This initiative would replace a previous government-led recognition programme called the Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme and aim to ensure that the effective and consistent integration of commitments outlined in this Roadmap, including improved staff training and provision of inclusive services.

For passengers, this means that train companies would be independently assessed against a recognised British Standard to ensure they provide services that meet the needs of all customers. This will give passengers greater confidence that their needs are being understood and met, whether in booking travel, receiving assistance, or using facilities on board and at stations.

b. New ‘Stated Preference’ research, on accessibility improvements: (Delivery lead, Network Rail, due to be published autumn 2025)

For the first time, the rail industry has carried out dedicated stated preference research to better understand how much passengers value different types of accessibility improvements. This type of research asks people to make choices between different travel scenarios, helping to reveal which improvements matter most to them and why. The results will provide strong, evidence-based insight into which changes have the biggest impact on passengers’ experiences and support wider government goals to grow and modernise the railway. This information will be used to strengthen future funding and investment decisions, ensuring resources are focused where they deliver the greatest benefit.

c. Industry Standards, tools and training for Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs): (Delivery lead, Network Rail due 2026)

Consistency in the way the rail industry assesses the impacts of decisions on disabled people will be improved, by standardising the approach to Diversity Impact Assessments (DIAs) across all projects and services. This will mean that a passenger-focused and consistent approach to assessing the impact on disabled people will be delivered by making current tools, standards, and training more widely available to rail operators, and setting clear policies for how and when disabled people should be consulted during these assessments.

d. Strengthening Accessibility Panels to embed the perspectives of disabled passengers in day-to-day delivery: (Delivery lead: Network Rail/DFTO TOCS launching 2027)

To ensure the perspectives of disabled passengers are consistently embedded across the rail system, actions will be taken to enhance the impact and effectiveness of existing accessibility panels. This approach will embed the perspectives of disabled passengers in both the day-to-day delivery and long-term improvement of rail services. Additionally, a strengthened panel structure will be established across the network to further support this objective.

- **Regional Accessibility Panels:** Network Rail and train operators will work towards establishing Joint Regional [Alliance] Accessibility Panels to advise on regional priorities. These panels will include disabled people, representatives from disabled people’s organisations, and rail industry stakeholders. By bringing together operational and infrastructure decision-makers with direct lived experience, these panels will support the co-design of improvements tailored to regional contexts. TOC panels will feed into the regional panels.

- **National Accessibility Panel:** A National Accessibility Panel will be established to oversee and advise on nationally significant issues affecting disabled passengers across the UK. This panel will be composed of:
 - Disabled people and representatives from national disabled people’s organisations
 - Chairs of the regional panels including Transport for Wales
 - The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
 - The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

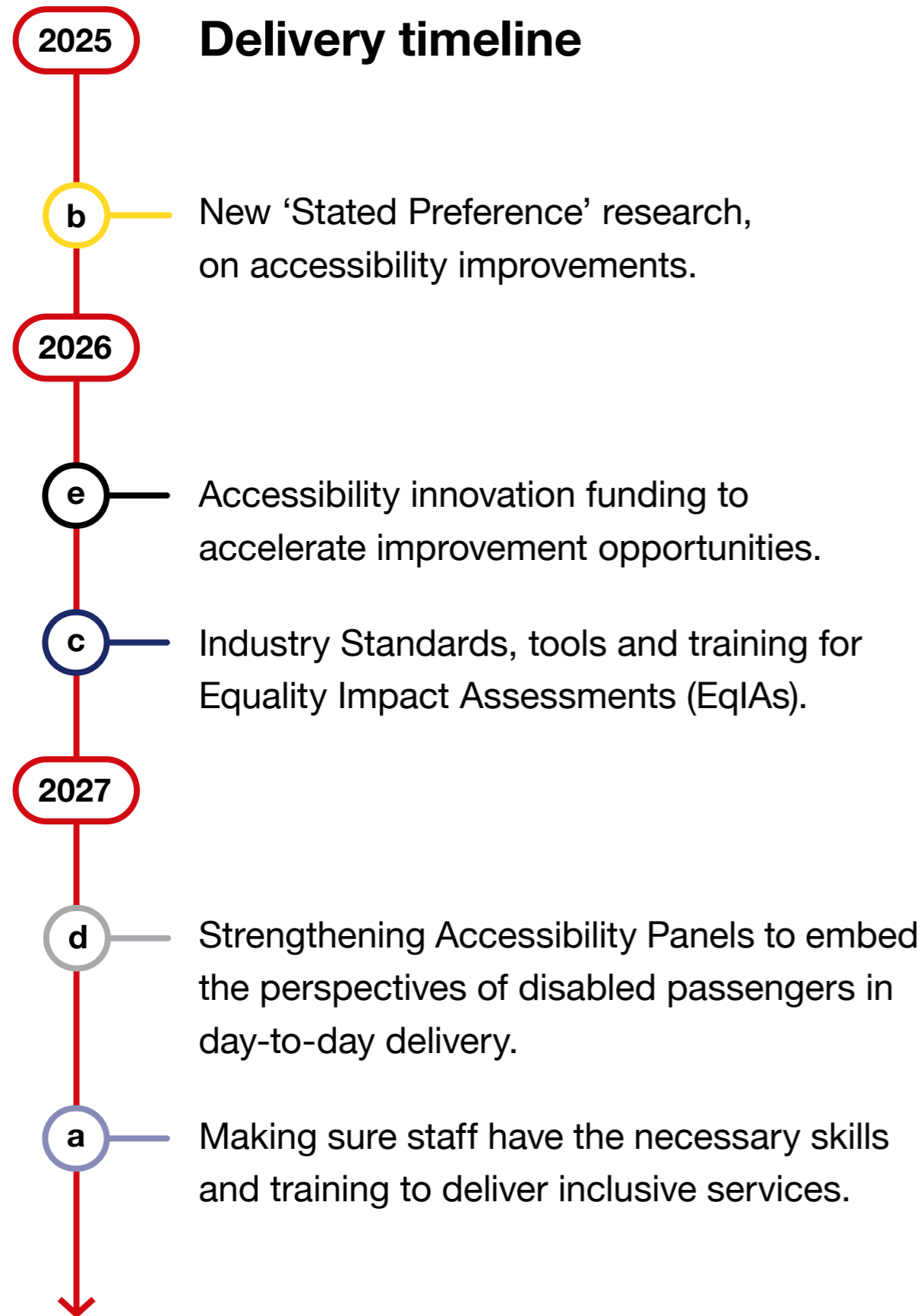
By linking local, regional and national discussions, the panel will improve communication across the system and bring greater consistency, urgency, and coordination to accessibility issues that affect passengers nationwide.

Together, these panels represent a cultural and structural shift in how accessibility is approached—moving beyond consultation toward a meaningful, system-wide partnership with disabled people at every level. This new structure will ensure there is a clear route for input, escalation, and action, helping to deliver a railway that truly works for everyone.

- e. **Accessibility Innovation funding to accelerate improvement opportunities:** (Delivery lead Innovate UK with support from GBRX launching 2026)

We will launch a funded competition to help drive forward inclusive, innovative solutions to accessibility issues across the railway. This fund will support the development, trial, and scaling of new technologies, service models, and infrastructure approaches that remove barriers to travel for disabled people. To ensure the fund delivers meaningful impact, the National Accessibility Group (NAG) will play a key role in helping to shape scope and themes and determine how the fund is used, ensuring projects reflect the real-world needs and experiences of disabled passengers, prioritising:

- Pilot schemes that improve independent travel, information access, and assisted travel
- Innovations in wayfinding, space management, and digital support tools
- Projects that clearly demonstrate they have been co-designed with disabled people.



What these improvements will mean for customers

Passengers will see a shift in how the railway thinks about accessibility—moving from a compliance task to a core part of delivering great service. Staff will be better trained, disabled people will have a stronger voice in decision-making, and future improvements will be shaped by lived experience and robust evidence about the wider economic value of improving accessibility.



Case study: inclusive service standards

Greater Anglia is proud to have achieved ISO 22458 which is the BSI kitemark for design and delivery of inclusive service. They applied for the kitemark as they wanted to formally recognise the work being done to support customers with accessibility and vulnerability needs. But more than just a badge of honour, ISO 22458 became a catalyst for cultural change, turning accessibility from a departmental responsibility into a company-wide mindset.

From day one, the board and senior leadership were fully behind the accreditation. With a three-year funding commitment locked in immediately, the message was clear that this mattered. That top-level support gave teams across the business the confidence and motivation to take ownership and embed inclusive thinking into their everyday work.

Nir Barak, Greater Anglia Environment and Energy Manager explained:

“Accessibility is no longer treated as a special request. What used to be seen as “extra” is now just how Greater Anglia does things. The culture shifted from delivering support on request to assuming everyone deserves seamless access, always. Whether they’re on the front line or behind the scenes, there’s a shared understanding that inclusion isn’t an initiative, it’s part of the company’s identity. That shift in mindset has been just as valuable as the certification itself.”



Delivery timeline

	2025	2026	2027
Improving the accessibility of our Stations and Trains	<p>Increasing the number of stations with step free access to the platform (ongoing to 2029)</p> <p>A Minor Works budget, supporting multi-year projects (ongoing to 2029)</p>	<p>Innovation funding targeted at level boarding solutions First of a Kind (FOAK) competition</p> <p>Inclusive Design Guidance for new and refurbished trains</p> <p>A long-term strategy for rolling stock and infrastructure</p>	
Improving the reliability of train services and key accessibility facilities	<p>Improving Lift and Escalator Performance (ongoing to 2027)</p>	<p>Improving the performance of other critical accessibility facilities at stations and on trains (ongoing to 2029)</p>	
Improving the consistency and reliability of Passenger Assist	<p>Industry Standard Training for Passenger Assistance (ongoing to 2029)</p> <p>Delivering Passenger Assist Phase 5 (ongoing to 2027)</p>	<p>Providing clear Passenger Assistance Meeting Point and Platform Boarding Point signage</p>	

Delivery timeline

	2025	2026	2027
Improving customer information	<p>Welcome Point trial report and plans for roll-out of Welcome Points (ongoing to 2029)</p> <p>Provide 360 Degree Virtual Tours for Better Station Navigation at largest and most complex station locations (ongoing to 2027)</p>	<p>Improving the availability of live information on key facilities, in accessible formats</p> <p>Innovate UK Competition: Accessible Rail Replacement Journey Information (ongoing)</p>	<p>A new Rail and Multi Modal Accessible Journey Planner</p>
Improving the awareness of available concessions and improving the accessibility of Retail channels	<p>Improvements to ticket vending machines (ongoing to 2026)</p>	<p>Improvements to the Disabled Persons Railcard (DPRC) phase one and two</p>	

Delivery timeline

	2025	2026	2027
<p>Improving the monitoring of disabled people’s travel experience and how the industry is being held to account</p>	<p>A new National Rail Customer Experience survey</p> <p>Improvements to Passenger Assist data collection and the introduction of a new Performance Benchmarking Framework.</p> <p>Improving Complaints Handling and Redress Processes (ongoing to 2029)</p> <p>Updated research into the experiences of disabled rail users and non-users</p>		
<p>How we will enact cultural change in the rail industry and ensure accessibility is prioritised</p>	<p>New ‘Stated Preference’ research, on accessibility improvements</p>	<p>Accessibility Innovation funding to accelerate improvement opportunities</p> <p>Industry Standards, tools and training for Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)</p>	<p>Strengthening Accessibility Panels to embed the perspectives of disabled passengers in day-to-day delivery</p> <p>Making sure staff have the necessary skills and training to deliver inclusive services</p>

Next stop: Great British Railways

This government has set a clear ambition for our railways: to make them fit for Britain's future, and Great British Railways (GBR) sits at the centre of the governments' plans.

GBR will be a new publicly-owned company that will be the core of the reformed rail industry and will be responsible for both the infrastructure and the services that run on it.

How does the Roadmap fit with GBR?

The actions set out here in the Roadmap show that we are not waiting for GBR – more inclusive, more accessible journeys are something we are working towards now, something this government has been very clear about. But this Roadmap can only take us so far. The context is shifting as we transition towards GBR, and while many of the challenges remain the same, the opportunities to address them are different. As we look to develop a railway fit for Britain's future, the government is also developing longer-term strategies, including the Long-Term Rail Strategy (LTRS) and the

Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS). Once established, GBR will also need to set out its own strategic plans for delivering on accessibility that take full advantage of an integrated operator. There remains a significant amount of work and engagement with disabled people to finalise these propositions, but we are committed to delivering a more accessible railway.

What can we expect from GBR?

GBR will consolidate the current fragmented industry landscape and act as a 'directing mind' for the railway, able to set a clear and consistent customer focused direction for the industry that has not been possible under the existing arrangements. As GBR will be responsible for the whole system, including both stations and the trains operating on them, it will also be able to leverage its procurement power, deciding at a much larger scale how to purchase and prioritise resources.

This means more efficient delivery, better use of data and insights, and the ability to look at the whole picture. It will also mean consistent standards across the network, improving services, and helping address current pain points (such as Passenger Assist handover between rail operators).

Importantly it will also strengthen accountability and transparency, by making it clear who is responsible for performance and passenger experience issues.

However, there is much that is still in development. Earlier in 2025 we ran a public consultation on the legislative proposals that will enable us to set up GBR. Our response to that feedback is set out in the consultation response⁹. The feedback we heard from disabled passengers and accessibility organisations helped to shape our final proposals.

This response makes it clear that accessibility has been, and remains, at the heart of GBR's design and the reformed railway.

There are details still in development, some of which require parliamentary process, or public consultation, but at this stage the consultation response is clear:

- GBR will be subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when it carries out its public functions, including operating passenger services and managing network infrastructure in Great Britain
- The Railways Bill will include a passenger and accessibility duty in primary legislation to ensure GBR factors in the needs and interests of disabled passengers when carrying out its statutory functions
- We are creating a new passenger watchdog that will have an explicit role in accessibility by monitoring how services are delivered to disabled passengers and advocating for improvements where issues arise

- GBR will also be required to comply with the terms of its license, and although the details of that license are subject to public consultation and policy work, accessibility will be a vital and non-negotiable part of these requirements, including engagement with accessibility stakeholders
- GBR will make sure the voices of disabled people are included in its decision making, with board level representation. Detailed design of involvement at an operating level is still to be confirmed but will be an important consideration.

Future areas to consider

This Roadmap sets out the actions being taken now to deliver a more accessible railway, but it also provides a foundation for GBR to build on. This focused scope means that in preparing the Roadmap, stakeholders have identified areas that fall outside of that scope. This does not mean that nothing is being done on these, or that they are not important. These issues, such as improving consistency across Accessible Travel Policies (ATPs), considering where and how we account for broader population trends and pressures, and how we ensure efficient and effective resourcing for example, are active areas of consideration and will continue to be for GBR.

Glossary

Access for All A government-funded programme aimed at providing obstacle-free, accessible routes to and between train station platforms. This typically includes installing lifts, ramps, and carrying out associated refurbishments to improve station accessibility.

Accessibility Refers to the ability for all customers — regardless of disability or personal circumstances — to travel independently, without facing barriers or issues caused by design, service delivery, or infrastructure.

Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) A policy developed by each licensed train and station operator outlining the services and facilities available to disabled passengers, how to request assistance, and what to do if something goes wrong. ATPs are reviewed and approved by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which also monitors compliance.

Glossary

British Standard (BS) A set of technical specifications or guidelines developed by the British Standards Institution (BSI), ensuring that products, services, and systems are safe, consistent, and high quality across various sectors, including transportation.

Concession A reduced fare or discount offered to specific groups of people, such as disabled passengers, older adults, or students.

Department for Transport (DfT) The UK government department responsible for managing the transport network in England and overseeing certain aspects of transport in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It is led by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Glossary

Disability Under UK law, a person is considered disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative impact on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. This includes progressive conditions and certain impairments that are automatically recognised under the Equality Act.

Disabled Persons Railcard A discount card offering one-third off rail fares for eligible disabled passengers. If travelling with another adult (e.g. a carer or companion), both passengers receive the discount. Valid across the UK rail network.

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) An independent expert committee created under the Transport Act 1985. It advises the government on the transport needs of disabled people, working toward the vision that disabled people should have equal access to transport.

Glossary

Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) Also known as an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), a DIA ensures that policies, services, and decisions do not disadvantage individuals or groups and that they promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Great British Railways (GBR) A new public body that will oversee the rail network in England, manage fare revenue, plan services, and set fares and timetables. It will also be responsible for rail infrastructure in Scotland.

Help Point A communication point usually located on station platforms or concourses, allowing passengers to contact staff for train information, assistance, or in case of emergency.

Glossary

Innovate UK The UK's national innovation agency that supports businesses in developing new products, services, and technologies. It provides funding and resources to foster innovation and growth.

Network Rail A public sector organisation under the Department for Transport that owns and maintains the railway infrastructure, including tracks, signals, bridges, tunnels, and many major stations.

Office of Rail and Road (ORR) The independent regulator for Britain's railways, ensuring safety, economic performance, and compliance with standards. It also monitors National Highways.

Operators A general term for Train Operating Companies (TOCs) that run passenger train services and manage stations leased from Network Rail.

Glossary

Passenger Assist A free service that provides help to older and disabled passengers travelling by train. Assistance may include help with boarding, alighting, carrying luggage, and navigating stations.

Passenger Assist App A mobile application that allows disabled passengers or their carers to book assistance for train journeys across Great Britain.

Rail Delivery Group (RDG) A membership organisation for passenger and freight rail companies. RDG manages key services such as the Passenger Assist system, National Rail Enquiries, and the Disabled.

Service Quality Regime A set of standards and performance measures designed to ensure high-quality service delivery. In the rail industry, this includes customer service, reliability, cleanliness, and accessibility.

Glossary

Station Infrastructure The physical and technical elements that support station functionality and accessibility—such as lifts, ramps, accessible toilets, help points, audio announcements, and waiting areas.

Step-Free Access Refers to stations where passengers can access platforms without using stairs or escalators, thanks to lifts, ramps, or level access.

Train Operating Companies (TOCs) Licensed companies responsible for running passenger train services and managing station facilities. TOCs operate under contracts or franchises granted by government authorities.

Transport Focus An independent watchdog representing the interests of transport users across the UK. It conducts research and campaigns to improve services and advocate for passengers' rights.

Glossary

Transport for All A disabled-led organisation that campaigns for an inclusive transport system. It works with members to advocate for equal access and influence policy decisions.

Transport for Wales A not-for-profit company wholly owned by the Welsh Government, delivering transport infrastructure and service projects across Wales.

Transport Scotland The Scottish Government's national transport agency, responsible for delivering transport policies, projects, and planning across Scotland.

Turn Up and Go (TUAG) A flexible assistance service allowing passengers to request help on arrival at a station, without pre-booking. Availability may depend on staff presence and station facilities.

Endnotes

- 1 A or B1 Classification, Accessibility Audit data, ORR
- 2 DfT, Annual Report Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations Exemption Orders: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/643e8b0922ef3b000c66f3fc/rvar-annual-report-2020-print.pdf>
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- 6 The Rail Ombudsman is an independent service that passengers can use to resolve complaints about rail service providers. ORR holds the Rail Ombudsman to account for delivery of its contractual requirements and provides guidance and support to ensure the service continually evolves and improves over time.
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