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New map to give more confidence to disabled rail passengers

The rail industry is launching a new interactive map which will make it easy for passengers to find out about accessibility at stations, helping to boost their confidence to travel by train. This is part of the industry's wider programme of work to improve access to rail and deliver long-term change.

The new '[Access Map](#)' has information about all stations across Britain and allows people to, at a glance, identify whether any station in the country is accessible so they can plan according to their needs and have smoother and more reliable journeys. Passengers can search for specific stations or view

anywhere in Britain using Access Map, which clearly displays:

- whether stations have step free or partial step free access
- what facilities are available at a station, including accessible toilets and changing places
- where alternative accessible stations are for on-the-go planning.

Ensuring customers know what to expect at any station will give them greater confidence to travel by train. Access Map is compatible with accessible features on iPhone, Android and desktop computers, including for visually impaired people. It is also being developed as an app, which will be released in the coming months to make it even easier to use on the go, at the touch of a button.

This new map is one part of the rail industry's long-term plan to increase access to the railway, supporting more people to travel by train.

Across the London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway networks, there are already a number of initiatives underway to improve accessibility.

- 85% of the train operators stations are already step free, with a number of current and future projects to make further stations accessible to all. These include ongoing works at Lichfield Trent Valley, Stechford and Tring. Funding from the Department for Transport's Access for All scheme will also benefit Worcester Shrub Hill, Smethwick Rolfe Street and Kings Langley by 2024.
- Two new fleets of trains will be introduced onto the various London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway routes from 2021. All these new trains will be fully accessible.
- Accessible toilets are currently being fitted to Class 323 trains on the Cross City line – which is the busiest commuter route outside London.
- A new door-to-door travel planning service called 'Ask Annie' is being trialled, to improve travel confidence for the over 65's and those who are not familiar with using public transport on a regular basis.

The rail industry is also trialling a revolutionary app and upgrading back-office computer systems used by booking centres and station staff to speed

up booking assistance. From November, people will be able to set up user profiles and spend far less time on the phone booking assistance. London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway have been at the forefront of trialling this new system at stations during its development.

Beginning next year, rail staff will start using the upgraded systems and by summer 2020, the customer app will go live, helping passengers have more control over their journey.

The rail industry has delivered over £500 million of improvements since 2006 and after the government announced £300 million of additional funding, it will make 73 more stations accessible by 2024.

Robert Nisbet, Director, Regions & Nations at the Rail Delivery Group, said: “Our new map will help to boost passengers’ confidence when they travel by train, eliminating the element of surprise and giving them the reassurance that comes with planning a journey and knowing what to expect.

“We know we need to go further and the rail industry is driving bigger changes to make the railway accessible for everyone. We’re investing billions of pounds into thousands of more accessible carriages, developing an app to speed up booking assistance, and upgrading infrastructure to make stations across the country more accessible.”

The Rail Delivery Group worked in collaboration with train companies and the Department for Transport to create Access Map.

Transport Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani said: “I am delighted to see this new interactive map launched, marking an important step towards our aim of providing disabled passengers with the information they need to travel independently – a key commitment in our Inclusive Transport Strategy. However, we know there is more to do, which is why earlier this month we announced the 73 stations across the country which will receive a share of £300 million Access for All funding to improve disabled access.”

Accessibility Campaigner Sarah Ward said: “Knowing in advance what features are at a station before I get there increases my confidence hugely. I think the map will be beneficial for a whole range of people. The more information you can have before you travel, the easier it is. The rail industry

has delivered over £500million of accessibility improvements since 2006, with 75% of journeys now made through step-free stations.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Access Map is available at <http://accessmap.nationalrail.co.uk/>.
- Every train company and Network Rail is providing the information about stations – they regularly audit their stations and any updates will be reflected and updated within the map and National Rail’s ‘[Stations Made Easy](#)’ as they do this. Each station within the Access Map also links to its Stations Made Easy page for updates/announcements.
- Access Map provides further information when you click into each station, including details on when staff are available to provide assistance.
- [The number of passenger assists has risen by a third](#) over the past 5 years with 1.3 million booked assists made 2017-18.
- There are currently 239,000 [Disabled Persons Railcards](#) in circulation, and this year, 7.5 million journeys were made on them.

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit [westmidlandsrailway.co.uk](https://www.westmidlandsrailway.co.uk) or [londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk](https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk)

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 70 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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