



OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD

Accessible buses and coaches when the trains can't run

What do you think?



easy
read

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Introduction



The Office of Rail and Road is a Government organisation that makes sure the railways are run properly.



We want all railway services to be accessible to everyone.



We check that train companies have good rules so that their staff do things in the right way.



We have been looking at what happens when a train can't run, and the train company arranges a bus or coach for passengers instead.



We have 5 **proposals** for train companies.



A **proposal** is an idea to make a change.



We are proposing some new things that train companies can put in their rules about how to arrange buses or coaches when the train can't run.



We want to know what you think about these proposals.



Please tell us what you think by reading this document and answering the questions that start on page 14.



We need your answers by Friday, 14 February 2020.

When a train can't run



Sometimes a train can't run because something has happened.



If the train can't run, the train company has to arrange a bus or coach to take the passengers instead.



Arranging buses and coaches

Train companies will hire buses and coaches from local bus and coach companies.



Thousands of buses and coaches are hired every year by train companies.



Some passengers will need the bus or coach to be accessible because they have a disability.



Buses are good for short journeys, but coaches are better for long journeys.



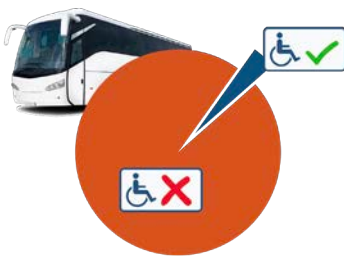
Most buses are now accessible to everyone, but only a few coaches are fully accessible.



Sometimes the train companies can't arrange an accessible bus or coach because there aren't any available.



If this happens, the train company will arrange a taxi or minibus as an alternative.



Last year train companies hired over 55,000 coaches. Only 175 of these were accessible.



We think that there are only about 1600 accessible coaches in England.

Accessible coaches



The law says that most **public service** coaches must be accessible to disabled people by 31 January 2020.



Private hire coaches don't have to be accessible.



Public service is when the coach is running a service that is open to anyone. There is usually a timetable. Everyone has to be able to use the service.



Railways are a public service.



Private hire is where someone hires a coach to take certain people to a certain place.



Coaches are used for private hire for nearly all of the time. The law says they don't have to be accessible for this work.



But when the coaches are used because a train can't run, it is a public service and they should be accessible.



Who checks?

The Office of Rail and Road is not responsible for checking that coaches used for public services are accessible.



Another Government department called the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency are responsible for checking this.



What can we do?

With these proposals we are looking for ways to make sure that the coaches that rail companies use are accessible.



We would like coach companies to buy more accessible coaches.



We could tell train companies that they must only provide fully accessible coaches. But:



- It could mean that a train company doesn't provide any coaches at all because there are only a few accessible ones available



- It is not our responsibility



But it could also mean that coach companies buy more accessible coaches for train companies to hire.

If train companies know in time that a train can't run



Often the train can't run because of some repairs or improvement to the railway track.



The train companies will usually know about this beforehand.



Christmas, Easter and bank holidays

Many repairs take place at Christmas, Easter and bank holidays.



Train companies should plan to provide good accessible buses and coaches at these times.



Repairs to track

The railway track belongs to a Government company called Network Rail.



Sometimes Network Rail and the train companies don't agree on the best time to repair the track.

Giving information to disabled passengers



Passengers who will need a fully accessible coach have usually booked **Assistance** for their train journey.



Assistance is when a passenger has booked some help to get on and off their train.



If a train can't run, the train companies should contact people who have booked Assistance and arrange the best transport for them.



Train companies could also put more information on their company website and on the **National Rail Enquiries** website.



National Rail Enquiries is a website which gives you information about railway services:
www.nationalrail.co.uk

Our proposals



These are our ideas for changes to the rules about how train companies arrange buses and coaches when trains can't run.

Proposal 1



Train companies must try to get hold of accessible buses and coaches when the trains can't run.

Proposal 2



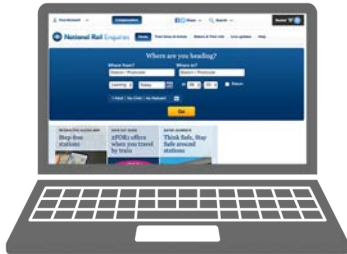
Train companies must show that they have tried to hire accessible buses and coaches, when they know 12 weeks beforehand that the trains can't run.

Proposal 3



Train companies should contact passengers who have booked Assistance and work out the best option for them when the trains can't run.

Proposal 4



Train companies should put information on their websites about the buses and coaches they are using when the trains can't run.



Proposal 5

Train companies should work with the Government and bus and coach companies to find ways to get more accessible coaches.

What do you think?



Please tell us what you think by answering these questions.



Question 1: Please tell us any other issues about accessible buses and coaches that we haven't mentioned?





Question 2: How can train companies make sure that passengers get an accessible bus or coach when the train can't run?

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Question 3a: What do you think about the buses and coaches that you have used when the train couldn't run?



Question 3b: If you have a disability - was the bus or coach accessible to you?



Question 3c: What sort of transport would you prefer when the trains can't run?



Question 4: Have you any information about the number of disabled passengers who need a bus or coach when the trains can't run?

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Question 5: Do you have any information about how Network Rail and train companies agree on the timing of engineering works?



Question 6: The Government's Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is responsible for checking that only accessible coaches are used for public service work.

Are we, at the Office of Rail and Road, right not to check this ourselves?



Question 7: How can train companies encourage coach companies to buy more accessible coaches?



Question 8: What other ways could train companies help to get more accessible coaches when the trains can't run?



Question 9: What are the good and bad things about each proposal?

Which is your favourite proposal?

Which proposals should we use?



Question 10: Are there any other ways we could help train companies to use accessible coaches when the trains can't run?



Question 11: Are there any other things we need to think about to achieve the best result for everyone?



Question 12: Do you have any other comments?

Thank you



Thank you for telling us what you think.



Please now post your answers to:

**Consumer Policy Team
Office of Rail and Road
25 Cabot Square
London
E14 4QZ**



or e-mail them to: **ATP@orr.gov.uk**



We need your answers by Friday,
14 February 2020.

For more information



If you need more information please contact us by:



Email: **ATP@orr.gov.uk**



Post:
**Consumer Policy Team
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One Kemble Street
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