

News story: Work to improve disabled access to toilets on trains and at stations is underway

Work to improve disabled access to toilets on trains and at stations is underway following talks between Rail Minister Paul Maynard and senior rail industry representatives.

The Rail Minister met with senior executives after Paralympian Anne Wafula Strike highlighted the issue. Clearer information will be made available about the availability of accessible toilets in advance of journeys and the Department for Transport will work with train companies to see how staff training can be improved. Where facilities are out of order, we have challenged industry to make sure disabled passengers are informed before the train departs. Maintenance teams will also ensure accessible toilets are more reliable and fix them more quickly when problems arise, ensuring fewer toilets are out of service in the first place.

Rail Minister Paul Maynard said:

I take the issue of accessibility on our railways extremely seriously and these commitments from industry are just one step forward to improve things.

It is vital that all people, including disabled passengers, are able use public transport and I will continue to push train companies on this matter.

Paul Plummer, chief executive of the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), which represents train operators and Network Rail, said:

The rail industry wants to modernise what is often Victorian infrastructure to make it more accessible and to provide far better information to enable people with disabilities to travel with confidence.

When things go wrong, rail companies want to put them right, and we are keen to hear directly from people with disabilities to understand their experiences which is why the industry is already engaging more with disability groups to understand how we can improve.

It has been a requirement since 1999 that all new trains with toilets are built with accessible toilets as standard – all trains built before then must comply by 2020.

The meeting sought to identify and address the reasons behind the lack of provision of accessible toilets, as part of the government's ongoing commitment to reduce barriers to disabled people accessing transport services. The steps were agreed as part of the rail industry's continued strong engagement with disabled advocacy groups.

More than 150 stations have been upgraded under the [Access for All programme](#) to remove barriers to independent travel – this includes installing signs, ramps and lifts. A further 68 are in construction or development.

The Department for Transport will be publish its 'Accessibility action plan' later this year, which will address accessibility across all modes of public transport. In addition, Aviation Minister Lord Ahmad will be holding talks on access to air travel for disabled passengers.