

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee: Response to Williams Rail  
Review 'Call for Evidence' 18/01/2019.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Transport. It advises the government on transport legislation, regulations and guidance and on the transport needs of disabled people, ensuring disabled people have the same access to transport as everyone else.

Use of the rail network by disabled people still falls well short of the use made by non-disabled people and, that whilst there has been good progress in improving accessibility there is still a long way to go. As such accessibility needs to be embedded more centrally and more fundamentally in any future organisation structure;

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence to help inform the review. In this short submission we wish to highlight the case for increasing access to the UK rail network for disabled people and for improving the journey experience. There is an urgent need for more evidence to be gathered to increase the level of understanding of how and why too many disabled people are currently provided with a lower level of service than non-disabled passengers, or are excluded altogether from accessing rail services. It is crucial that a 'root and branch' review begins from the basis of knowledge from evidence. In particular, there are three specific areas of focus where this unmet need should be taken into account, and where the Review could propose clear, robust and practical solutions:

- a railway that is able to offer good value fares for passengers, while keeping costs down for taxpayers;
- improved industrial relations, to reduce disruption and improve reliability for passengers and,
- a rail sector with the agility to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

The submission highlights five key areas which DPTAC believes should be taken into account as the Review progresses. Whilst we do not hold any specific evidence, the following areas list where DPTAC has previously called for evidence to be gathered to understand the impact of various things spanning policy, structure and operations, to improve access for disabled people.

These areas are:

- 1) The effect of 'at station' and 'on train' staffing levels as enablers to support disabled passengers to make a journey on the UK rail network.
- 2) The lack of robust accessibility criteria being included in the franchise decision making process.
- 3) The lack of a national approach to develop a dedicated programme of long term work to improve accessibility levels at stations, and immediate surrounding areas.

- 4) The remit and of other Government funded agencies (for example, Office for Road and Rail) to work collaboratively with the rail sector to improve the journey experience of disabled rail users.
- 5) Provision of means to improve the confidence of disabled passengers to make a journey by rail including options to promote spontaneous travel, information provision, and fares and ticketing options.

In conclusion, DPTAC would welcome the opportunity to further contribute to the review as it progresses.