



GWR Accessibility News

2022-23 Look Back



Access to platforms
only



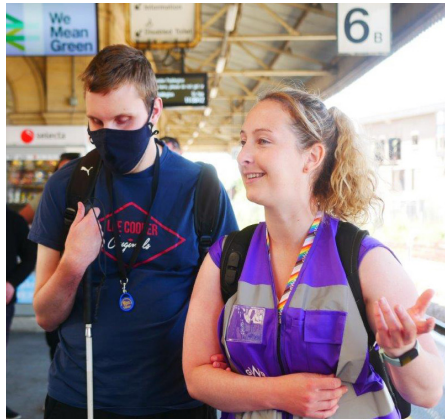
Travel training and 'Try a Train' trips

Our journey to trying something new started in 2021.

We employed a team of three Accessibility Mentors to run travel training for people with disabilities to help build their confidence in travelling by train. In our first year we saw over 450 people for these sessions.

Moving into 2022/23 this had seen huge growth with more than 1,700 people seen with over a month of this financial year left to run. The reach of these sessions has been incredible and the impact on the wider community has been immense. The number of educational establishments reaching out for this travel training has grown significantly, as we run sessions as part of their life skills learning. We have also seen a large increase in organisations supporting older adults, through dementia cafes or brain injury charities.

Our ambition is to provide an experience of what train travel is like in the hope that it stimulates a desire to explore, be independent, or achieve something new. We have seen that for many people, the unknown is a major barrier to travel, and by providing these experiences, in which we explain safe ways to travel, the assistance that's available and what is required may help ease those fears.



"Just wanted to let you know that it was absolutely fabulous, the children loved it! So much so that we have booked another day. I have to say our children LOVED yesterday."

School for children who are hard of hearing

"It was amazing! We had 4 severely disabled children that had never been on a train come as well as two terrified of trains. By the end they have all planned trips with their families as they love the train now especially the accordion connection bit. Everyone did amazing, it was very good training for the dogs as we managed the exchanges and even changed a train time. Our level of disability can be quite severe so the achievement for all involved was phenomenal, your staff and personnel were amazing throughout with our wheelchairs and special needs...We are so grateful, I cannot thank you enough the GWR staff were outstanding. WOW, thank you!"

Assistance Dogs Cornwall



Disability Awareness training

Looking ahead GWR will be running its latest round of Disability and Equality Awareness training.

This training brings the lived experiences from members of our Accessibility Panel to life, showing the impact that our colleagues can have on customers. We refresh this training every two years and this year we will be running face-to-face workshops after the last training was impacted by Covid.

Throughout the year, we will be hosting two three-hour sessions for our frontline teams. The first of these sessions will go live in April and will focus on:

- Our responsibilities as a train company
- Provision of assistance
- How we can work together to ensure successful assistance is provided
- Barriers to travel



This content has been created with help and input from our Accessibility Panel. They not only helped shape the topics but will help deliver the content through videos discussing their experiences.

We will then run a second workshop from October. This will give an opportunity to discuss and recap on what had been covered during round one of training. It will also allow us to go into more detail about disabilities and the practical ways we can assist someone. This will look at best practice and key thoughts on how people with different disabilities need different support to have full experience of travelling by train.



Passenger Assistance facts and feedback

Over the last year, we have been working hard to gather insights and feedback from customers about their Passenger Assistance experience. Here are some of the key highlights.

125,000

Passenger Assistance bookings up to period 11.*

35,500+

'Turn Up And Go' assistance requests to period 11*

4.32/5

Overall Passenger Assistance rating.

87%

Of Passenger Assistance customers feel very satisfied or fairly satisfied.

99%

Of Passenger Assistance customers felt staff were friendly.

96%

Thought staff made them feel confident about their journey.

98%

Felt staff were trained to provide the best possible assistance.

76%

Would definitely use the Passenger Assistance service in the future.

*Railway periods run in 4 week cycles from 1st April. Period 11 finished on the 4th February.

Positive feedback from Passenger Assistance customers

"As I am elderly they helped me and my friend without being patronising. They made me feel independent, which is quite good, and I appreciate that."

"Staff were absolutely lovely and made me feel very comfortable and accommodated"

"Passenger assistance was excellent. I was met before I left the train and was assisted off the train to the taxi rank outside the station. The passenger assistant stayed with me and helped me into the taxi with my luggage. Once again I was assisted with courtesy and respect"

"Very grateful for the assistance service provided as probably won't be able to undertake the journey without it. Thank you to everyone concerned"



Contact Centre

On the 1st April 2022, GWR moved the Passenger Assist contact centre to 24/7 operations. This helps to provide even more flexibility for our customers that require assisted travel for their journeys. The Passenger Assist team can also support on the day of travel by providing travel advice to our customers when contacted. The move to 24/7 operations has enabled GWR to reduce the minimum time to book assistance from 6 hours' notice to only 2 hours.



Working with the industry

A customer's journey may include more than one train company, as well as other modes of transport. We understand that for a journey to be fully accessible, all elements of a customer's journey need to work. Therefore, we work closely with other train operators, as well as other transport providers, to ensure we provide a consistent and accessible journey for all our customers.

Collaboration with the Rail Delivery Group has led to the introduction of a Passenger Assistance app that customers can use to book assistance. This helps provide an alternative method of booking assistance, further helping to increase the independence of our customers. This app communicates with our systems and ensures colleagues are aware of the assistance request. We will continue to work with the industry on upgrading this system to help provide more independence and a better customer experience for passengers.

Accessibility Panel

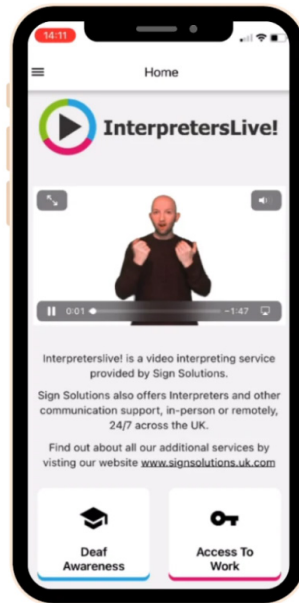
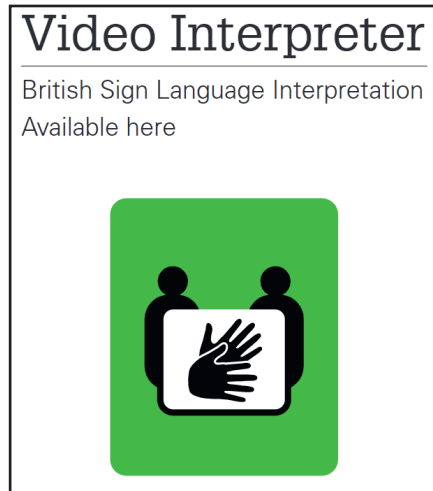
At GWR we have revamped our Accessibility Panel. This panel consists of various disabled customers and disability groups that help advise GWR on future projects and initiatives we introduce. The panel meets monthly and has a key focus on ensuring any new projects are designed to incorporate all our passengers despite the barriers disabled people face. The Accessibility Panel have already played a key part in helping us design our new disability awareness training for the business.



British Sign Language (BSL) App

GWR have recently released an app-based service that provides live British Sign Language Interpretation. We have partnered with Sign Solutions and the app has been rolled out across the whole company, meaning everyone will have access to this service and will be able to offer help to people for whom BSL is their first or preferred language.

This will provide customers for whom BSL is their first or preferred language the opportunity to converse with our staff in their own language. Not only will this make accessing information and services easier for the customer, it will also provide our staff with a platform to communicate vital information (during disruption, for example) to customers who previously may have been missed. We are delighted to offer this service and hope it helps our customers who use BSL.



Autism Accreditation

GWR are 1 of 10 transport operators across the whole of the UK to undergo an assessment to become autism-friendly certified by the National Autistic Society (NAS). To obtain the award, we must review and improve our accessible services, accessible information & accessible environments.

As part of the accreditation 600 colleagues along our Plymouth – Penzance route are currently completing autism awareness training through the NAS platform. In addition, a number of GWR initiatives have been launched including sensory packs, emergency sensory support, guides to travelling, virtual station tours, 'sound bites', assistance cards and an expansion on our offer of awareness trips (Try a train).

The award is aimed to improve the customer experience for autistic people. Delivering autism-friendly travel experiences remains a priority for the year ahead. As a result, we will continue to work on the recently launched projects while monitoring our mystery shopper reports, accessibility panel, and overall assisted travel feedback.



GWR