
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Lyndsey Melbourne
Head of Information and Analysis / Head of Profession for Statistics
Office of Rail and Road
(by email)

19 October 2021

Dear Lyndsey

I am writing to you following our recent review of ORR's [Disabled Persons Railcard](#) and [Passenger Assistance](#) statistics against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). We have undertaken these compliance checks as part of our wider review of statistics about the [Accessibility of Transport Networks](#).

We appreciate your teams' positive and effective engagement with us during the process and the enthusiasm expressed for the continued development of the statistics. From our stakeholder engagement we found a demand for more information about the accessibility of the rail network, and the types of passenger assistance available. By introducing further measures, these statistics could go some way to meet this demand. Our review found a range of positives on each set of statistics.

Each set of statistics is presented in various ways including traditional reports, spreadsheet tables and, as recent additions, Power BI data tools. This variety of outputs provides clear explanation and easy access for users. In our stakeholder engagement the openness and transparency of these outputs were praised. For the Passenger Assistance statistics, we are particularly pleased with the data tool which also includes information from surveys of assistance users and alternative transport provisions, and which can give breakdowns by train operators. We welcome the recent improvements you have made to the documentation supporting this tool, including a helpful explanation of blank fields. This is particularly important as we have heard from stakeholders that operator-level data are used to inform their decision making and so transparency around an operator's inclusion or exclusion is important.

We welcome the recent addition of a [Quality and Methodology report](#) covering both sets of statistics. This document provides a good overview of the quality assurance processes within ORR.

However, we consider that user confidence in the quality of the statistical outputs could be increased by including more-detailed information included relating to 1) the sources of the data before they reach ORR and the information journey from a passenger making the initial booking or purchase to their data point being included in your outputs, and 2) more information of the potential limitations of the given measures such as the potential reasons someone who is eligible may not purchase a railcard, or an explanation of the impact the lack of Turn Up and Go data has on understanding overall assistance volume. You may find it useful to refer to our [Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit](#).

From our stakeholder engagement sessions, we identified two areas where additional data would greatly improve the public value of the statistics by allowing users to gain a fuller understanding of the wider context in which Disabled Persons Railcards and passenger assistance are used:

- For the Disabled Persons Railcard statistics, further information such as railcard usage and information about those who hold railcards could help give a broader picture of the impact and reach of disabled persons railcards. We recommend working with the Rail Delivery Group to explore the feasibility of including this data.
- For the Passenger Assistance statistics, we found a demand for more information including the completion rates for requested assistance, information on Turn Up and Go assistance requests and types of assistance requested. It would be beneficial to investigate the feasibility of including this kind of information in future releases. We understand that the system for recording Turn Up and Go requests is currently being changed and we encourage you to be involved in this process to promote your data needs at the design stage.

We welcome your teams' enthusiasm for continuing to enhance the value and quality of these statistics. We are happy to provide any guidance we can during this process. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pont', with a short horizontal line underneath.

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead