

Disabled people have say on rail services in East Anglia at inaugural meeting

March 15, 2021



Six disabled rail users who will help shape the future of rail services in East Anglia have now been recruited and met for the first time to discuss how they can help make the railway more accessible.

Rail operators Greater Anglia and c2c have just set up an Accessibility Panel, including six specially recruited disabled rail users representing a range of different needs, and representatives from the train companies.

The aim of the new Panel is to give local disabled people the chance to influence how future policy is shaped and help train operators make changes that will improve rail journeys for disabled people.

Greater Anglia Accessibility Manager Rebecca Richardson said: "I'm delighted that, alongside our colleagues at c2c, we have now held the first meeting, welcomed our new members and agreed on how to take the panel forward so that together we can work to improve rail journeys for our disabled and older customers."

c2c Customer Experience Manager Alex Whybro said: "I am really pleased to have launched this new panel

with the team at Greater Anglia and our panel members. We want to ensure that rail services in East Anglia are as accessible as possible and I am confident that the panel can really make a positive difference.”

The new joint Accessibility Panel will meet four times a year and will be made up of people with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

The scope of the panel is to provide consultation on business policy with people who share a passion for accessible transport.

Further information can be found online at www.greateranglia.co.uk/accessibility

Photo credit: Greater Anglia

Panel members



Jim Watt – Jim is Visually Impaired with severe sight loss. Prior to becoming involved with the consultation on the design and accessibility features of Greater Anglia's new trains, he had not travelled by train for over 40 years but, following a trip to Switzerland where he advised on the design, colour palette and contrast elements of the new trains' design he has since become an ambassador for rail.



Peter Carr – Prior to an accident in 2005 which left him with a spinal cord injury and physically dependent on a wheelchair, Peter had developed a career in construction and property especially within the University sector. He now advises many high profile clients on all aspects of accessibility, inclusivity and innovation and says he has learnt a great deal along the way. Being a part of various groups for over 15 years has given him the opportunity to help make a step change in what is ‘accepted’ in terms of accessibility and to drastically raise the bar in this worldwide forum.



Sarah Baxter – Sarah lives with a number of hidden disabilities and represents the experience of being a commuter with these health challenges for the panel.



Chris Fawcett – Chris works for a global education company and is the Chair of their employee representative group for disability and accessibility. Being severely sight impaired, he has lived experience of commuting daily to and from London on Greater Anglia trains with a disability. He is truly passionate about accessibility and disability equity in all aspects of society.



Jess Plant – Jess is a disabled self-advocate, who has a number of different disabilities, including autism, mental health conditions, and physical health conditions. She is also a carer for a family member who is disabled. These experiences make her passionate about making both the physical environment and services provided accessible to all people. She has previously worked with disabled people through her work at charities and at a housing association and is a member of the Access Association.



Dominic Lund-Conlon – Dominic is the Accessibility and Inclusion Manager at the Rail Delivery Group. He has worked in transport policy for 10 years on a variety of challenges, both customer and strategy focused. As a person with lived and professional experience, Dominic focuses on inclusive solutions that empower customers to control their journey with confidence and dignity. Recent projects include developing the industry A&I Strategy, the Passenger Assist Improvement Programme and supporting members to achieve Accessible Travel Policy outcomes.



Alex Whybro – Alex is the Customer Experience Manager for c2c. He focuses on maintaining and improving the quality of service provided on the c2c network which includes managing and monitoring compliance with the c2c Accessible Travel Policy.



Rebecca Richardson – Rebecca is the Accessibility Manager for Greater Anglia, she oversees the operator's commitments to accessible travel and works at a local and national level to remove barriers faced by older and disabled people when travelling.