

# Merseyrail launches new forum to improve accessibility services

October 26, 2020



Merseyrail has teamed up with Network Rail and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to launch a new accessibility forum to engage with customers with accessibility needs and organisations that represent them.

The first meeting of the forum took place last month with service users and representatives from 17 organisations across the voluntary sector that support people with accessible travel needs on the rail network.

Attendees were updated on changes made due to COVID-19 including continuing to provide passenger assistance and guidance around face covering exemption.

They were also updated on the new Merseyrail trains, step-free access across the network and potential new stations.

There was also an update from Network Rail on the roll-out of a new Passenger Assistance web application across the UK rail network.

The new fleet of Merseyrail trains will feature sliding step technology, enabling passengers to use the train with step-free access and without the need for assistance. This will make Merseyrail the most accessible, traditional network in the country.

There was a consultation around Merseyrail's current accessibility travel training for front-line staff and attendees fed back on how this could be improved further.

Greg Suligowski, Head of Customer and Stakeholder at Merseyrail, said: "At Merseyrail we pride ourselves on being one of the most accessible rail networks in the country. It was fantastic to bring together so many of our key stakeholders from across the City Region in what was a successful first meeting. The forum provides an opportunity to share ideas and gain valuable feedback from those that use our services, including those that rely on assistance to travel.

"We are always looking for more organisations or individuals to join the forum and anyone interested should contact our Customer Relations team at [comment@merseyrail.org](mailto:comment@merseyrail.org) or by calling 0151 555 1111."

Wendy Booth for the charity Bradbury Fields, said: "I am delighted to be able to represent Bradbury Fields Services for Blind and Partially Sighted People on this Merseyrail accessibility forum.

"It is a great opportunity to have a positive input in representing the particular needs of our service users, influencing the policies of Merseyrail and exploring the possibility of training their staff on the issues relating to visually impaired users.

"It was also good to see such a variety of organisations represented at the meeting on behalf of their service users & members, and it is a fantastic opportunity for Merseyrail to lead the way in providing a service which meets the needs of all."

Justine Shenton, Sefton Older Persons Forum Co-ordinator at Sefton Advocacy, added: "Many of our members enjoy using the train in normal circumstances and we find Merseyrail staff are always willing to help.

"We are very keen to be involved in the future on access issues and our forums work in partnership with Sefton Council on our Age Friendly Agenda. It is a shame that so many excellent programmes have had to come to a halt because of the current situation, but we are very keen to work with Merseyrail on confidence building."

More information on Merseyrail's Assisted Travel service can be found here:

<https://www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/assisted-travel.aspx>.

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