

ORR's annual consumer report says things are improving for passengers but more must be done

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ORR has released its annual consumer report.

The regulator says train and station operators have made improvements to their services for disabled passengers, as set out in ORR's Accessible Travel Policy guidance.

It has found that all train operators are now able to book assisted travel with two hours' notice. This came about by ORR progressively reducing the notice period from 24 hours to the current benchmark over two years.

When it came to ORR's assessment of website accessibility, there was improvement and innovation, but still there was more to do. The main areas included the provision of station accessibility information and the use of screen readers and other assistive technology.

ORR conducted research into the experiences of disabled passengers when it came to booked assistance.

More than 5,200 passengers took part in the research, with overall satisfaction with the Passenger Assist service increasing to 87% this year.

Its research identified areas for improvement, including cutting the number of passengers who did not get the assistance they booked, those who were not met by staff at the station and the time taken to book using a telephone.

ORR says it will work with train and station operators on areas of concern to ensure improvements and help improve confidence for passengers using the service.

In the past twelve months, all train operators have also agreed to new delay compensation standards, making the process for submitting a claim clearer and simpler for passengers.

A new licence condition requires train operators to provide passengers with clear information both before and during their journey about their entitlements to compensation when there are delays, improve how they process claims for compensation for train delays, and publish data on how well they are meeting these obligations.

Stephanie Tobyn, interim director of strategy, policy and reform at ORR, said: “Throughout the past year we have held train and station operators to account for fair and transparent interactions with passengers, including on the quality of their passenger information, the services they provide for disabled passengers and how they manage delay compensation claims.

“In the year ahead, we will work with Government to support the establishment of Great British Railways and a better passenger experience, and will bring the Rail Ombudsman under ORR sponsorship”