

# TransPennine Express announces leading-edge access enhancements

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TransPennine Express (TPE) has said it is launching three initiatives to further improve rail travel accessibility.

TPE says it is the first UK rail operator to launch GoodMaps. The tool helps those in need of some additional support navigate train stations across the North.

Described as a 'Sat nav for the inside', this technology helps guide people safely around stations, outlining features such as platforms, toilets, the ticket office and the nearest coffee shop.

GoodMaps have been created for seven stations on the route between Hull and Manchester Airport: Hull, Brough, Selby, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Stalybridge and Manchester Airport and can be accessed for free via the GoodMaps Explore app.

In what TPE adds is another rail industry first, customers looking to book assistance can benefit from a new WhatsApp service making it even easier, and providing another option, when booking Passenger Assist prior to travelling.

The new service is monitored seven days a week between 6am and 11pm (except Christmas Day and Boxing Day) and can be accessed at: 07812 223 336. Anyone requesting assistance is asked to message 'Assisted Travel' to the number and a member of staff will help make the booking.

TPE has also set up a new [Facebook group](#) to build an online community where customers can connect, share ideas and provide feedback that will help drive further improvements.

Accessibility and integration manager for TransPennine Express, Natasha Marsay, said: "It's so important that rail is fully inclusive for all our customers and we are over the moon to be introducing not one but three new initiatives that will make things easier for elderly or disabled customers.

"We've recently been awarded Inclusive Transport Committed status as part of the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme, and are thrilled that our efforts to make rail more accessible have been recognised in this way.

"I'd encourage our customers to try these new initiatives out for themselves and I invite people to get in touch and join our new Accessibility Facebook group, where together we can work to discuss new ways of supporting the communities we serve."

Vice president Europe at GoodMaps, Neil Barnfather, said: "We have been delighted to work with Natasha and TPE on delivering this game changing solution to passengers accessing the railway network. For decades, assisted travel has been limited to pre-arranged facilitation of segmented journey portions. TPE has recognised the value in empowering commuters to be autonomous and providing true independence. In doing so it has not only radically enhanced the experience for passengers with a disability, it has enhanced the experience for all users of the railway. We look forward to continuing the partnership across the broader rail network, and delivering additional features to the existing implementation over the coming months."

Director of operations for Guide Dogs, Peter Osborne, said: "Having the confidence to independently travel as a blind person is hugely enhanced by the application of groundbreaking technology such as GoodMaps. Train stations can be difficult places to get around and I congratulate and thank TPE for creating an environment we can all access."