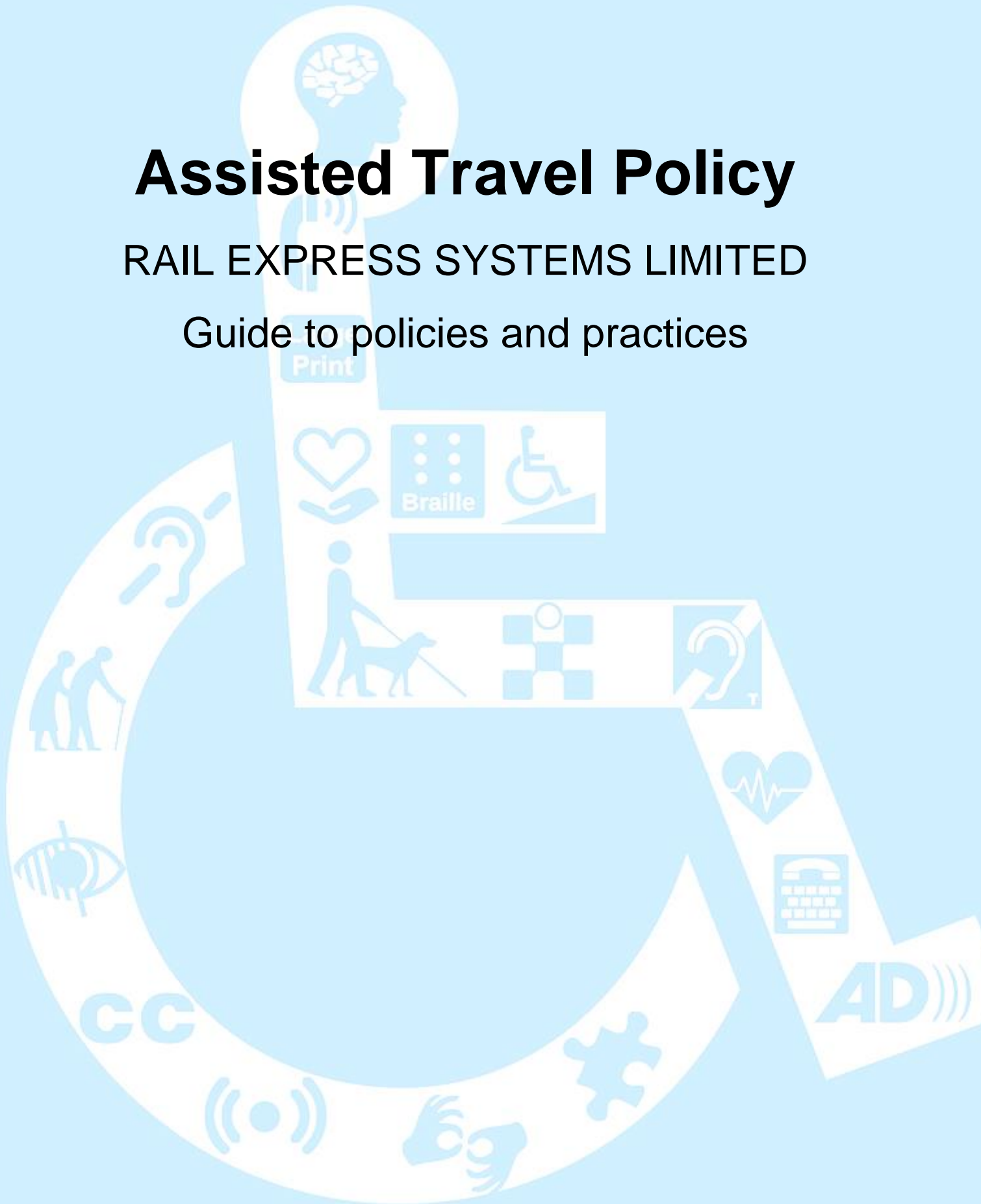


# Assisted Travel Policy

RAIL EXPRESS SYSTEMS LIMITED

Guide to policies and practices



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## Introduction

This policy document is intended to provide guidance on how Rail Express Systems Limited, hereinafter known as “RES”, will comply with legislation relating to the provision of rail transport services for those passengers who may be older, or are otherwise affected by some form of mobility impairment or disability.

RES is the part of the DB group of UK companies which operates charter train services within the UK. In doing this it provides rail haulage services to a wide range of tour operators, special interest groups and other organisations, but does not itself market the trains nor sell tickets for the services which it operates. Neither does it operate any station nor provide services to its passengers at stations – for this it relies on the relevant station operator, typically a franchised Train Operating Company (“TOC”s) or Network Rail, or occasionally by independent licensed or license-exempt station operators. The latter may include stations operated as part of heritage railways

The rolling stock used by RES for its charter train services is chosen by its customers and is supplied by third-party organisations. Such vehicles are almost invariably exempted from most of the current accessibility requirements due to their age. Irrespective of any exemptions from applicable legislation, RES will use its reasonable endeavours to ensure suitable access is available for persons with reduced mobility or disabilities.

RES works closely with the rail industry, including both franchised and open access train operators, station owners and operators, and rolling stock providers, to ensure that so far as is reasonably practicable all passengers conveyed on its charter train services enjoy a travelling experience which is in no way inferior to that which would be provided by other train operators, without discrimination against persons with reduced mobility or other disabilities. In furtherance of this policy RES intends that its on-train passenger facing staff will have received suitable disability awareness training by September 2020<sup>1</sup> and will encourage its customers to provide such training to their own on-train staff.

This document is reviewed annually, with any changes being agreed with the Office of Rail and Road (the “ORR”). The latest version is available online on the DB Cargo website (<https://uk.dbcargo.com/rail-uk-en/industries/passenger-transport>). Alternatively, this document can be provided in printed or aural form on application to Rail Express Systems, Assisted Travel Policy, Lakeside Business Park, Carolina Way, Doncaster DN4 5PN (for the attention of the Communications Team), by e-mail to [Comms@deutschebahn.com](mailto:Comms@deutschebahn.com) or via social media to [twitter.com/DBCargoUK](https://twitter.com/DBCargoUK).

## Process Management and Monitoring

As noted above, RES’s Assisted Travel Policy document is reviewed annually, jointly by the Account Manager responsible for charter trains, the Contract Delivery Manager responsible for overseeing the operation of Charter Services, and by DB Cargo (UK)’s Legal and Regulatory Affairs Team, with input from relevant persons within Safety & Standards, Production, Engineering, Human Resources, and Communications Departments, plus our customer-facing on-train staff. Any changes proposed will be agreed with and signed off by the ORR.

Our reviews also include input from our tour operator customers, rolling stock providers, and relevant disability interest groups. We also encourage feedback from passengers, either via our tour operator customers, or direct by e-mail, by on-train survey forms or other means. Such customer feedback is categorised and remitted twice-yearly to the ORR in accordance with RES’s Licence conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequently delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. A revised training programme will be organised as soon as restrictions and training resource availability allows.

Where the issues highlighted are not under the control of RES then these will be passed to the relevant party for comment and response.

Relevant passenger feedback is shared and discussed at regular forums with all RES's Charter customers, with the aim of spreading best practice.

### **Station Accessibility and Assistance**

RES does not itself operate any stations. Instead it has contractual arrangements with all station operators on the National Network to provide access to stations for its charter train services. Those contracts ensure that the same level and standards of service are provided to Charter passengers at stations as would be provided to any other passengers travelling on franchised or open access services.

DB Cargo (UK) Limited ("DB Cargo"), a sister company of RES, is invariably consulted on any changes affecting the layout, facilities or operation of all stations covered by those contractual relationships, as proposed by station operators or other station stakeholders. DB Cargo views any such changes which improve accessibility to stations and hence rail services in a positive light and is almost invariably supportive. Equally, DB Cargo is likely to reject any such proposals which worsen accessibility. The nature of the standard station access template contract for Charter services prevents RES from having a direct say in approving or otherwise such changes to stations, so RES relies on DB Cargo to respond on its behalf.

Station operators are responsible for the safe operation of stations. In the case of staffed station platforms, RES's and/or its customers' on-train staff will assist station staff where required with the provision of assistance to passengers, usually but not exclusively in relation to the platform-train interface. To that end, all RES' Passenger Train Operatives<sup>2</sup> will have received suitable Disability Awareness Training by September 2020<sup>3</sup>.

Where station platforms are unstaffed our on-train staff will provide suitable assistance to joining or alighting passengers. However, those staff may not be able to assist passengers beyond the confines of the station platform.

RES maintains a list of stations with details of their accessibility for persons with reduced mobility. This list is shared with RES's tour operator customers and is incorporated by reference in this Policy document and the Guide. The list is sourced from external sources, usually provided by Network Rail and station operators, and RES cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies therein. In every case, however, RES would advise that passengers should assure themselves that station accessibility will be suitable for their needs before committing to travel on any charter train service.

Standard station equipment will normally include wheelchair ramps. However, such ramps are not necessarily a "one size fits all" item, being specified by the station operator to be compatible with rolling stock working franchised services which call at the station. As noted later, such ramps are not always compatible with rolling stock used for charter train services, so each RES Charter train will include at least one vehicle containing a wheelchair ramp suitable for use with that stock.

### **Rolling Stock Design and Provision**

With very few minor exceptions RES neither owns nor controls passenger rolling stock and thus relies upon third-party owners or its tour operator customers to provide the vehicles to be operated on RES's Charter train services. RES is conscious that rolling stock available for use on Charter train

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<sup>2</sup> Passenger Train Operative ("PTO") is the current equivalent to the traditional train Guard.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequently delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Training dates to be rearranged once the current National Emergency is over and training resources become available.



services will often not conform in all respects to the latest accessibility regulations, the relevant legislation being the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010 (the “**RVAR**”).

For vehicles built after 1998 the Railways (Interoperability) Regulations 2011 incorporate into UK law the European accessibility standard – the technical standard for interoperability for persons with reduced mobility (the “**PRM-TSI**”). Without exception all rail vehicles currently used for RES’s Charter trains were built prior to 1999. Irrespective of any exemptions from relevant legislation, RES will use its reasonable endeavours to ensure suitable access is available for persons with reduced mobility or disabilities and will encourage its tour operator customers to source accessible rolling stock whenever possible.

In most cases Charter train rolling stock is unsuited to the conveyance of passengers using and confined to mobility scooters, and in many cases the same will apply to wheelchair users. RES will require its tour operator customers to advertise this fact when promoting their services.

All brake vans on trains operated by RES contain wheelchair ramps to enable wheelchair or mobility scooter access to the train, subject to certain restrictions as noted later. As noted earlier, these ramps are required because ramps at stations may be unsuitable due to the bespoke nature and dimensions of rolling stock operated by RES. Moreover, due to the nature of those rail vehicles passengers may have to move to standard seating accommodation as corridors and internal doorways are generally too narrow to permit through movement of non-folding wheelchairs or mobility scooters. Any assistance required may need to be provided by the passengers’ carer(s), or by the tour operator’s on-train stewards. RES’s tour operator customers are required to confirm that one of these options will, if required, be available for any affected passenger.

Due to the age and design of rolling stock used on RES Charter train services there will generally be no disabled toilet provision. Tour operators will be required to advise its customers accordingly.

### **Staff Training**

RES currently employs Passenger Train Operatives (“**PTOs**”), all of whom have received disability awareness training or will receive refresher training. In future all such staff will receive bi-annual refreshers with staff new to the role receiving an in-house briefing from DB Cargo’s Human Resources team) before participating in the next scheduled external training refresher course. A small number of “back room” staff will also receive the same training.

Our training objectives will be in accordance with the ORR’s guidance issued in July 2019, and will include:

- An introduction to the term disability and how it covers a wide range of different people with different impairments, which may or may not affect the way they travel by train.
- An appreciation of the relevance of various forms of mobility impairment or other disabilities to use of rail travel, whether actual or perceived.
- Staff will be encouraged to:
  - Challenge misconceptions about disabled people and disability;
  - Understand the relationship between disability, in its various forms, and age;
  - Discuss the concept of psychological barriers and the various physical barriers to access and inclusivity;
  - Consider attitudinal barriers to access and inclusion; and
  - Recognise the current prevalence of different disabilities in Great Britain.

RES will also encourage its tour operator customers to provide suitable training to its own on-train staff with the expectation that there will be, where possible, at least one person on each Charter train, in addition to RES's PTO, with the necessary knowledge to render assistance where necessary to disabled persons or persons of reduced mobility.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

RES undertakes occasional joint exercises with the emergency services to inform and improve those organisations' and the rail industry's responses to railway incidents. These exercises are typically focussed on incidents involving passenger trains, and so are particularly relevant to RES's Charter train operations. In future exercises will specifically encompass procedures for the evacuation of passengers with impaired mobility or a variety of disabilities. RES's on-train staff already participate in these exercises, and where appropriate RES will invite its tour operator customers to participate, or share its knowledge gained.

### **Wheelchair and Mobility Scooter Users**

RES aims to make provision for occupants of folding wheelchairs and certain mobility scooters in at least one vehicle of all Charter trains which it operates. Accordingly, the brake vans of all RES Charter trains convey wheelchair ramps, as noted previously. Where wheelchairs are unable to access the passenger compartments of vehicles passengers may need to remain in their wheelchairs and travel in the brake van if they are unable to transfer to normal seating accommodation with, or without, assistance. However, not all such brake vans may be licensed to carry passengers, and therefore it will not be possible to accommodate such passengers in certain circumstances.

Furthermore, even where such brake vans are licensed for passenger use, charter trains often call at stations with short platforms where the brake van is not adjacent to the platform. In these circumstances passengers may be unable to access their wheelchairs at origin or destination stations. RES will liaise with its tour operator customers to order to mitigate these restrictions.

All wheelchairs and mobility scooters, where conveyed, must be of the folding variety to enable them to be moved to and stored within a suitable passenger compartment or saloon where specific space is provided.

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters should not exceed the following dimensions (when unfolded):

- Width: 700 millimetres
- Length (including footplates): 1200 millimetres
- Weight (loaded): no more than 230kg (36 stone), which is the safe limit that many of our ramps can carry

We can only accommodate standard designs of wheelchair and mobility scooter. Unfortunately, some larger chairs or scooters are too wide and heavy to traverse the ramp into our carriages.

Some powered scooters are effectively road vehicles and are unsuitable for carriage in heritage vehicles. This is because many mobility scooters have wider turning circles than wheelchairs occupying the same space and tend to be heavier and therefore are not appropriate to take on board trains with the confined space in the carriages.

We do undertake however to carry those models of scooter that can be folded down into lightweight and manageable components and those that fit within the wheelchair size above.

It is the passenger's responsibility to load the scooter on and off the train and we ask the disabled passenger or their travelling companion to ensure that the scooter is folded down ready for boarding prior to the train's arrival. Assistance may be requested from either a member of the station staff or train crew. The folded scooters can be stored safely in the luggage compartments.

For reasons of safety, powered wheelchairs and scooters must not exceed 2 mph on station platforms and **must not** go near the platform edge.

### **Assistance Animals and Carers**

RES is happy, where practicable, to accommodate carers and suitable assistance animals on its Charter train services, subject to any requirements and restrictions of its tour operator customers, and of the rolling stock employed. Passengers wishing to be accompanied by a carer or their assistance animal must contact their tour operator to discuss whether this will be possible.

### **Visual and Aural Impairment**

RES will encourage rolling stock providers to modify their vehicles to conform, where practical, with current standards relating to visual and aural disabilities. This will include fitment of visual display and public address systems, and other appropriate modifications.

RES will require its tour operator customer's train managers, either directly or through their other on-train staff, to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to keep passengers with visual or aural impairment advised in enough time of, for example, impending station calls, of service disruptions, or other relevant information.

### **Disrupted Travel and Onward Transport**

RES's Charter trains services are never planned to operate on routes or at times when the national network is suffering planned disruption. Therefore, RES never needs recourse to the use of accessible alternative transport in such circumstances. Moreover, any road services operated in conjunction with RES's charter trains are by definition "tour services", so the Passenger Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (2000), as generally applicable to rail-replacement services, do not apply to RES's charter trains.

However, when, during unplanned disruption to the rail network, rail replacement services are required, RES will, and will encourage its tour operator customers to, cooperate with other rail industry parties to facilitate onward transport of passengers, whether by use of its own or other TOCs' train services, or by use of emergency road transport procured by the relevant franchised TOC. If such arrangements would fail to deliver RES's passengers to their destination in a reasonable timescale then RES will endeavour to, by agreement with its tour operator customers, procure suitable alternative transport, or in extreme cases, accommodation.