



Building accessibility into the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station

November 2009

Contents

	Page
1. Executive summary	3
2. Introduction	5
3. Methodology	6
4. Key findings / detailed analysis	7
5. Conclusions	17
6. Recommendations	18
7. Acknowledgements	19

Appendices:

A. Review form analysis	20
B. Matrix of recommendations	24
C. Volunteer checklist	28

1. Executive summary

Birmingham New Street rail station is due to undergo significant redevelopment work to make the station a more pleasant place for passengers. The station is currently unpopular - only 54% of passengers are satisfied with the overall station environment, in stark contrast to other major stations on the rail network such as Manchester Piccadilly which show 89% of passengers are satisfied.¹

In developing the design for the redevelopment of New Street (“the Gateway project”), Network Rail is working with an access consultant and engaging with a number of disability groups. Passenger Focus has an objective to ensure that passengers’ needs and aspirations are included in the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street and to this end worked with Network Rail to identify the problems that are currently encountered by passengers with individual accessibility needs using the station. On Friday, 31 July 2009, an accessibility review was undertaken – co-ordinated by Passenger Focus and facilitated by Network Rail.

We took a group of passengers, each with individual accessibility needs, gave them a checklist (see Appendix C), and spent the day looking at various aspects of the current station. Tasks were set, such as finding information, buying a drink or ticket. The volunteers’ experiences were recorded and discussed during a focus group and this feedback forms the basis of this report. The report follows a “Journey Sequence” through the building from the car-park, or public transport drop-off point through to the departure platforms, suggesting practical solutions to barriers to access or hazards in each section of the sequence.

Wayfinding is currently a big problem – particularly for those who are sight-impaired. Also, the location of the lifts and passenger assistance office are currently inappropriate and the arrangements for taxis, drop-off and accessible transport links need attention. The group also suggested several improvements that might be made in the shorter-term such as the type of signage used on toilet access gates and the colour of the zebra crossings in the car-park.

With consideration to attention to detail and the recommendations of this report, steps can be made to make Birmingham New Street more accessible for all, including passengers with heavy luggage and young children in buggies. Passenger Focus recommends that contact is maintained with key disability groups and also with the group of passengers that worked with us on this report in order to give feedback to Network Rail over the life of the Gateway Project. We would welcome any accessibility improvements that can be made to the station in advance of the final completion to improve things for passengers in the short-term while works are ongoing.

“The walk-through at New Street station was a really useful addition to our work to understand the needs of passengers with mobility or sensory impairment. We are already exploring ways to increase accessibility within the information centre in response to feedback received on the day. We want to really transform the travelling experience for all, and we are pleased to work with Passenger Focus to put accessibility at the heart of the

¹ National Passenger Survey Spring 2009, Passenger Focus

Gateway project.”

Carol Stitchman, Head of Design for the Birmingham Gateway Project at Network Rail

2. Introduction

Passenger Focus expects stations to be welcoming and convenient, providing a suitable and pleasant gateway to the railway and to the town or place of destination. They have for too long been the Cinderella of the network, with vital refurbishment funding held back during lean years when almost all available funding was spent on maintaining train services. Across the UK rail network there is still a backlog of neglect to rectify, to bring stations' fabric and facilities up to passengers' expectations and to make them more accessible.



Birmingham New Street station is one of the United Kingdom's most significant rail stations. It serves the needs of business, leisure and local / regional commuter passengers. It is also a key interchange station, with many passengers using the station to change between services to and from destinations further afield.

Network Rail and funding partners Birmingham City Council, Advantage West Midlands and Centro have been working together to take forward the Gateway Project. The project aims to regenerate the station buildings and surrounding area to improve the overall passenger experience and create a modern focal point for Birmingham. The plans include safe and comfortable airport-style departure lounges, more accessible platforms and additional space at concourse level where a new atrium will bring in natural light.

Passenger Focus is of the opinion that the views, experiences and aspirations of passengers must be considered during the planning, design and delivery of any development work at stations to ensure that they meet passengers' needs now and well into the future. This report is intended to highlight existing accessibility problems within Birmingham New Street station so that these can be taken into account during the redevelopment. It is the result of a joint piece of work, facilitated by Network Rail and co-ordinated by Passenger Focus, which set out to better understand where improvements to the station can be made.

3. Methodology

Passenger Focus and Network Rail jointly hosted an event on Friday, 31 July 2009 which brought together several passenger volunteers at Birmingham New Street station. Each of the passenger volunteers had varying accessibility and other needs:

- three of the volunteers were blind, one accompanied by an assistance dog
- one volunteer uses a wheelchair
- one volunteer is deaf and was accompanied by two interpreters
- one volunteer has limited mobility.

Two of the volunteers' carers also joined us on the day, each contributing to the review by bringing their own perspective to using the station.

The passenger volunteers, their carers, and representatives from Network Rail and Passenger Focus were split into groups and each given a task sheet, which measured the experience of using different aspects of the station. The site visit took the form of a journey

sequence that would be made by any passenger, starting with arrival / drop-off at the station and proceeding to the furthest point on the station.



The groups were set tasks such as purchasing a ticket, finding out information and buying a drink and the experiences of each group were discussed during a focus group following the walk through of the station.

The outputs of the event are summarised in this report.

4. Key findings

The following summarises the key findings of the volunteers that took part in the day.

Front car-park / drop-off area

Currently, a passenger car-park is provided at the front of the station by the Bull Ring entrance. Further multi-storey car-parking is located to the rear of the station.

Signage in the area to the front of the station is poor and this caused confusion over whether the area was actually the station car-park, a short-stay car-park or drop-off facility.

The whole area is cluttered, poorly lit, busy and noisy which reduced users' feeling of personal safety. Wheelchair users are not easily visible to oncoming traffic and users who have visual and hearing-impairments are unable to see / hear the potential dangers. This is compounded by a general lack of control in the drop-off area which creates a dangerous environment and can cause passengers to feel vulnerable - particularly if their mobility is restricted or they have a "hidden disability".

There are only three dedicated bays marked out for blue badge holders at the front of the station and these are located randomly rather than grouped together and well sign-posted. The bays don't have the required hatching to be Code of Practice compliant. Two of the bays are located in the middle of the car-park and passengers using them have to cross lines of traffic to get to the station entrance.

Whilst the blue-badge bays are wider than the spaces for non blue badge holders, there is no additional space lengthways – a problem for passengers who use folding wheelchairs or have assistance dogs, who would have to stand against the moving traffic to remove wheelchairs and assistance dogs from the tailgate of their car.

The pay machine in the car-park area is mounted on a step and is not easily accessible for a wheelchair user. The step also causes a trip hazard for sight-impaired users. Whilst the machine does have tactile buttons, it was not possible to tell what the buttons were for, or the difference between various slots on the machine. There is also no signage to show that 20 minutes of short-stay parking is free of charge

The drop-off area for taxis is positioned next to a pillar which obstructs where a ramp for wheelchair users would need to be deployed. It is also difficult for visually-impaired people to know where to queue for the taxi rank.

A lack of drop kerbs causes further difficulty for wheelchair users being dropped off at the station.

The zebra crossings across this area to the station entrance do not have a tactile surface.

“Many blind passengers wouldn’t feel confident using this area of the station”

The use of a boom gate on the main passenger car-park can provide an obstacle for passengers with hearing-impairments if further help is required when accessing the car-park.

Recommendations:

- ensure better control within drop-off and taxi areas
- ensure the pay machine is accessible – correctly located on a level surface, usable for visually-impaired and at a height that is accessible for wheelchair users
- distinguish the blue-badge bays, move them closer to the station entrance and ensure that they are well sign-posted
- ensure bays have sufficient width and length
- create easy to locate, safer routes from the car-park to the station entrance for passengers with additional needs
- where boom gates are used, ensure that help points make use of both audio and visual communication
- ensure crossings have tactile surfaces
- continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication of taxi rank / bus stops and other key aspects of the station).

Walking and wheelchair access

The main entrance to the station, opposite the Bull Ring, is accessed by crossing the car-park / drop-off area. There is also a further passenger entrance to the rear of the station.

Neither entrance to the station is completely step-free – the front entrance has a single step from the car-park area and the rear entrance has several steps to negotiate. Drop kerbs are provided at the front entrance but it was felt these are in an illogical order.



Arriving at the front entrance to the station is likely to be a challenge for passengers who are sight-impaired. The ability to orientate oneself with the entrance doors was difficult because of the general noise, hustle and bustle in the drop-off

/ taxi area. With the main station doors closed it was not possible to hear the internal “sounds of the station” which would give someone who is sight-impaired an indication of where the doors are.

There are zebra crossings in this area but as they were painted yellow it was not clear who had priority when using them. General signage in this area was also very poor.

Recommendations:

- continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication by doors and key aspects of the station)
- ensure entrances are step-free where possible and provide drop kerbs at the station entrance
- ensure zebra crossings conform to standards to ensure appropriate use
- improve signage.

Other transport links

Taxis pick-up and drop-off at the main station entrance. Bus connections from the station are located on the road to the side of the station but are not well sign-posted.

Accessible taxis are in abundance at the station but information about where to find other forms of accessible transport was less clear.

“There appeared to be a single focus on car and taxi but no local public transport inter relationships”.

Recommendations:

- improve provision of information about transport links from the station
- ensure information about transport links is provided in a range of formats
- improve signage and way-finding to other transport links.

Ticket office

The ticket office is located within the station doors directly opposite the Bull Ring entrance. The office has multiple windows and a simple queue system.

The ticket office does not generate much noise (for example, aural queuing is not used). As there is currently no aural indication of where the ticket office is, it is difficult to locate for visually-impaired passengers. Our volunteer assistance dog user ultimately had to attract the attention of staff to guide him to the office (this was after some wait, as staff were not forthcoming).

The staff in the office were not geared up to help passengers who are hearing-impaired. After some initial gestures from our volunteer the staff member was able to look for a pen and paper but this was not readily to hand.

Recommendations:

- make sure the ticket office is easy to locate for passengers who are visually-impaired
- ensure staff are trained in disability awareness and are available on the concourse to assist passengers where required
- ensure staff are prepared to deal with the needs of passengers who have a disability.

Information centre and customer reception

The information centre is located to the left of the main passenger concourse, separate from the ticket office. The customer reception is located to the right of the booking office.

There is currently a large advert for a train operator directly above the doors to the customer service centre. This was misleading, causing one of our volunteers to believe it was a particular train operator's customer service office rather than for all train operators.

Within the information centre there is currently a lowered ticket office window for passengers who use wheelchairs and staff were visible. However, the queuing system in use had no aural announcements and so it was not possible for our visually-impaired volunteer to tell whether the queue was moving forward. It was also very difficult to hear the adviser calling for the next person to come forward as they are behind a glass window.

The queue system should have clear visual indicators for the benefit of users with hearing-impairment.

People queuing to use the information centre are controlled by tape barriers. The tape is located above waist height and there is nothing to detect at ground level for longcane users / assistance dogs. The uprights for the barrier do not colour contrast strongly with the floor on which they are standing. These tapes and uprights constitute potential tripping hazards for blind and partially-sighted people.

Staff were very helpful and it was possible to hear them clearly. However, the length of queue time could be a problem for passengers with hidden disabilities such as arthritis and care should be taken to keep queuing to a minimum.

Recommendations:

- ensure the queuing system has both aural and visual indicators
- take care over the placement of advertising within the station to ensure passengers are not misled
- replace the tape barriers with rigid colour barriers that can be detected at floor level
- monitor and reduce queuing times.

Shops / cafes

Cafe Ritazza is the only cafe with seating on the station (not within the Pallasades shopping centre). Other, non-seated, retail outlets exist departure side of the ticket barrier.

The seating area around the cafe is fenced with portable fence panels. This type of barrier prevents assistance dogs from walking under it and was deemed suitable. However, the entrance between the fencing to the coffee shop was at the wrong end of the queue which caused one of our blind volunteers to approach the counter at the wrong end. This appeared



to upset other customers and also meant that other customers had to negotiate around our volunteer and assistance dog whilst carrying hot drinks in a relatively cramped space due to the position of the tables at the counter end.

Whilst the tables were very close together, there was

room for a wheelchair and our user was able to access the cafe without too much difficulty.

Our volunteers gave a mixed reaction to the staff at Cafe Ritazza – the staff reacted positively to our wheelchair user but were less prepared for dealing with our assistance dog user. This may be because they were unaware of our volunteer's disability if they could not see the dog below counter height. It was felt that disability awareness training should be provided to all staff working at the station including those of businesses based in the station.

It was felt that more accessible and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant seating should be provided on the station concourse for all passengers to use.

There were a couple of announcements made that were difficult to hear whilst sitting at the back of the cafe.

Recommendations:

- provide additional passenger seating areas on the station concourse, both sides of the ticket barriers. This should be accessible and DDA compliant
- businesses based on the station should train their staff in disability awareness
- reduce clutter / improve spacing between tables
- ensure announcements can be heard clearly in all areas of the station.

Ticket machines

Ticket machines are located on the main station concourse opposite the ticket office.

It was felt that the ticket machines were located in the right place. Whilst they are easy to use for anyone without sight-impairment, the touch screen made them inaccessible for anyone who is blind. Our assistance dog user was unable to locate where the ticket machines are as they are relatively silent when used.

Nor were the machines completely accessible for anyone who uses a wheelchair – the main display was accessible and within reach but it was not possible to see the smaller card



payment screen as it was too high. This meant that it was not possible to use the machine to pay by card and our volunteer had to abandon the transaction and go to the ticket office.

Recommendations:

- continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication by ticket machines and key aspects of the station)
- ensure ticket machines are tactile and can be used by those who are sight-impaired
- ensure machines are at correct height to allow full use of the facilities they offer
- provide the necessary tickets requested for disabled passengers and companion.

Toilets

The toilets are located between the entrances to platforms on the departure side of the ticket barrier. No toilet facilities are provided on the arrival side of the barrier.

Access to the toilets is controlled by a turnstile or gate with a bell to attract staff attention if gate access is required. The bell was not obvious to find but once found, some staff were helpful whilst others were very unhelpful.

Overall the toilets appeared to be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant – specific cubicles provided in the men's and ladies' toilets each had emergency cords, additional

room and an emergency access. However, the unisex toilet, which allows carers to assist, did not lock. Our wheelchair user had difficulty with the unisex toilet as it would not lock and instead opted to use the cubicle in the ladies toilet but found this to have minimal handrails and so was not ideal.

No aural indication of where the toilets are. This meant that locating them was a challenge for our visually-impaired volunteers.

Toilets should be provided on both sides of the ticket barriers.

Recommendations:

- continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication by toilets and key aspects of the station)
- ensure baby change facilities are separate from accessible toilets
- ensure unisex toilets are provided for disabled passengers
- ensure toilets can be unlocked from the outside in an emergency
- clearly indicate where the bell is for attracting staff to the access gate
- ensure all staff have disability awareness training
- ensure toilets are provided on both sides of the ticket barriers.

Platforms and platform access

The most obvious access to the platforms is by stairs and escalator. Lifts are provided to the left of the Bull Ring entrance but access is down a poorly lit route lined with large refuse bins.

Lifts each serve two platforms and on leaving the lift, it is not possible for someone who is blind or visually-impaired to tell on which side the platform is that they need.

Platform edges have coloured painted edges and a tactile strip but the width of the platforms was not wide enough in places – our assistance dog user took up most of the width of the platform. There should also be more DDA compliant seating along the length of the platform – it was not immediately clear where this was and again could be a problem for passengers with a hidden disability such as arthritis who can't stand for lengthy periods of time. Seating would reassure visually-impaired passengers that they are waiting in a safe area.

The stairs could do with being wider to cope with the volume of passengers going up and down which makes use difficult for someone with a hidden disability. Visually-impaired passengers would benefit from colour coding of stairs and escalators.

Locating the exit when on the platform was not always easy.

Recommendations:

- continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural identifier of each platform, location of the lifts and other key aspects of the station)
- colour-code up / down escalators and stairs
- ensure sufficient space at platform level
- increase width of stairwells
- improve signage on the platforms (for example, location of exits).

Shelters and waiting areas

Waiting rooms and shelters are not well sign-posted. The seats are not very comfortable and could present discomfort for passengers with hidden conditions such as back problems. Door access to the waiting rooms was too narrow for most wheelchairs and there was too little room within to manoeuvre.

Recommendations:

- improve signage
- ensure seating is ergonomically designed to improve comfort
- ensure waiting rooms are accessible and are of appropriate size.

Lifts

The main passenger lifts from concourse level are to the left of the Bull Ring entrance. The lifts only serve the platforms and not the upper Pallasades shopping centre level.

Passenger lifts at ground level are accessed from what appears to be mainly a staff area. The environment is dark and intimidating, with industrial wheelie bins and goods cages from the shops immediately in front of the lift doors. This creates a hostile environment for passengers.

The controls in the lift are too high for wheelchair users and, although audio and Braille was provided inside the lift not all the announcements were clear. Our visually-impaired volunteer found the buttons to control the lift but they were not “obvious” so perhaps more could be done to indicate where these are (tactile floor area perhaps). The lifts are spacious and there is ample room for wheelchair users.

In the event of a lift break down the help point relies solely on an audio system which is unsuitable for someone who has a hearing-impairment.

Recommendations:

- re-position the lifts within public areas of the station

- improve signage to the lifts
- provide lift access to and from the concourse to all platforms
- investigate ways to identify the location of lift controls within the lift
- ensure lift announcements are clear and aural
- ensure lift controls are accessible and visible from wheelchair height
- ensure lift help points / safety system allows both audio and visual contact with the control centre, with a screen large enough to allow two way communication of written messages.

Printed and audio information and signage

Printed information and signage throughout the station is patchy. The inclusion of advertising caused confusion and it sometimes took a long time to find the basic information. It is also difficult to find information about the surrounding area.

Signage in the station is provided on the concourse at ceiling level and some of these signs are difficult to read as the text was small.

Consistency in the quality of announcements within the station is a problem – some volunteers struggled to make out what was being said at concourse level. The use of zonal announcements at concourse level also causes difficulty for vision-impaired passengers.

During times of disruption or service failure (for example, short-notice platform alterations or lifts / escalators / toilets out of order) there seems to be a tendency to rely on audio announcements to advise passengers and this can cause difficulty for passengers who are hearing-impaired.

Research undertaken by the RNID found that 39% of rail passengers who are hearing-impaired find it difficult to obtain information during their journey and that whilst 32% of hearing-impaired passengers said someone else usually gets the information for them, this is only the preferred choice for 13% of people.²

A combination of aural and visual communication would therefore be of benefit to passengers who are hearing and visually-impaired.

Recommendations:

- ensure information is provided in a variety of formats
- ensure advertising does not conflict, cause confusion with, or take priority over essential information
- improve signage / larger font size
- ensure announcements are consistently aural in all public areas and provide visual alternatives

² Annual Survey Report 2008, RNID

- ensure Customer Information Systems (CIS) are adequately resourced to give information at short-notice and regular intervals.

Security

Passenger help points were not readily identifiable on the station and there appeared to be only one public telephone. However, where help points are to be provided these should provide for both audio and visual contact.

Whilst CCTV was provided it is not always obvious to passengers so more could be done to highlight its presence to reassure passengers.

There were plenty of staff on the station but there was confusion over who they worked for. There was not an obvious British Transport Police or security presence.

There was no need for any alarms to be triggered at the station on the day of the walk through. However, alarms should provide both aural and visual indication which should be heard / seen within all public areas of the station.

Recommendations:

- promote CCTV and other security measures within the station to improve passenger perception
- increase the number of phones / help points
- where help points are provided these use audio and visual communication
- clearly identify staff / of those, which are there to help passengers
- ensure alarms are both aural and visual.

General facilities

The mobility office is poorly located and badly sign-posted and this led to difficulty in locating where to get help accessing the station / trains.

There are no facilities for assistance dogs within the station. This can cause difficulty for passengers who rely on them.

- improve location / visibility of the mobility office and improve signage to the office
- provide a designated assistance dog relief area within the station
- ensure step-free access throughout concourse level including within toilets.

5. Conclusions

Birmingham New Street station is accessible for the vast majority of passengers. However, for those who have a disability, such as restricted mobility, sight or hearing-impairment or a hidden disability such as arthritis or back problems, the station is a challenging, daunting and sometimes hostile environment.

Basic tasks like making your way to the station entrance or finding information are unnecessarily difficult due to the poor provision of station facilities which, compounded by the large volume of passengers using the station, the noise, hustle and bustle, leads to a less than pleasant passenger experience. The station also lacks facilities for assistance dogs which can be a problem for passengers who rely on them and a focus on the disability awareness skills of staff who work at the station would also be of benefit. Yet, an increased focus on attention to detail could help to alleviate many of the challenges faced by the volunteers who took part in this project.

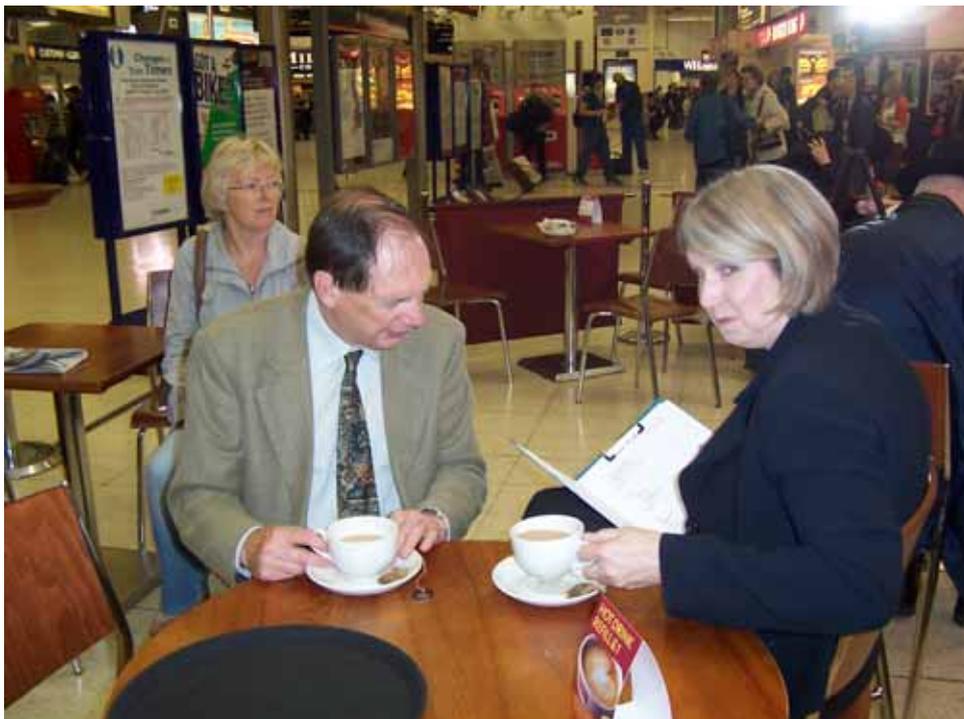


6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, Passenger Focus makes the following recommendations:

- Consider and act on the recommendations made throughout this report to improve the access and usability of Birmingham New Street station
- Embrace recognised best practice, continue to work with specific disability groups such as the RNIB, and include passenger feedback when developing solutions to the problems identified by passengers during this exercise
- Ensure that passengers continue to be engaged throughout the project, including groups and organisations representing disabled people
- Maintain contact with the group of volunteers that assisted this report so that they may offer feedback on design ideas and proposals
- Undertake a further review of Birmingham New Street following completion of the Gateway Project.

Passenger Focus would welcome any accessibility improvements that can be made to the station in advance of the final completion to improve things for passengers in the short-term while works are ongoing.



7. Acknowledgements

We thank Network Rail for inviting us to undertake this work and for providing the financial backing to allow this research to go ahead.

We are extremely grateful to Richard West, Ann Bates, John Wellsman, Paul Bryce, Stephen Brookes and Henry Skinner, the volunteers involved in the site visit and Focus Group, whose input and views have been invaluable and will make a difference to passengers using Birmingham New Street well into the future.

If you have any queries about this report or require further copies please contact Ashley Grumble, Passenger Link Executive, Passenger Focus, 5th Floor, Wellington House, 39/41 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 1LQ.



Appendix A

The table below captures the volunteers' findings of each aspect of the station. Every passenger has differing needs and so there is disparity between the suitability and accessibility of each aspect of the station – what may be appropriate for one passenger is clearly not for another. This reinforces that care must be taken to ensure that, where possible, solutions are found to meet all passengers' needs and usability testing should include a wide variety of passengers.

Definition

- ✓ - Volunteer found aspect acceptable
- ✗ - Volunteer found aspect unacceptable
- - Not applicable to the volunteer

	Sight-impaired	Assistance Dog User	Hidden Disability	Hearing-Impaired	Wheelchair User
Parking					
Location of station car-park appropriate	•	✗	•	✗	✗
Designated clearly marked blue-badge bays	•	✓	•	•	•
Smooth surface	•	✓	•	•	✗
Well lit	•	✗	•	•	•
Secure	•	•	•	•	✗
Accessible pay machines	•	✗	•	•	✗
Lift access if more than one level	•	•	•	•	✓

Drop off area					
Designated space	•	✓	•	•	•
Dropped kerbs	•	•	•	•	✗
Close enough to entrance	•	✗	•	•	•

Walking and wheelchair access					
Well sign-posted	.	.	✓	.	X
Step-free	X	.	✓	.	.
Clutter-free	✓	.	✓	.	X

Other transport links					
Accessible taxi availability	✓	✓	✓	.	X
Accessible bus availability	✓	.	X	.	X
Information about other transport types easily found	✓	.	X	.	✓

Ticket office window					
Counter height accessible for wheelchair users	.	✓	X	.	.
Induction loop	.	✓	X	.	.
Staff easily visible for lip reading	.	✓	X	.	.
Enough space for wheelchair / assistance dogs	.	✓	X	.	.

Information centre					
Is the counter height accessible for wheelchair users	✓	.	X	.	✓
Induction loop	.	.	.	.	.
Doors easy to negotiate	✓	.	X	.	.
Enough space for wheelchair users	✓	.	.	.	✓
Staff easily visible for lip reading	.	.	.	.	✓

Shops / cafes					
Counter height accessible for wheelchairs	.	✓	.	.	✓
Induction loop	.	✓	.	.	.
Doors easy to negotiate	.	X	.	.	.
Enough space for wheelchair	.	X	.	.	✓
Staff easily visible for lip reading	.	✓	.	.	.

Ticket machines					
The machine located in a convenient place	✓	.	.	.	.
Easy to use	✓	.	.	.	X
Machine accepts cards and cash	✓	.	.	.	✓

Toilets					
Designated toilets compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)	✓	✓	✓	.	.
Emergency cord	✓	✓	✓	.	X
Easy to manoeuvre lock	✓	✓	X	✓	.
Emergency release door lock	✓	✓	X	✓	.
Room for carer to assist	✓	✓	✓	.	.
Smoke detectors with flashing lights	✓	X	.	.	.

Platforms and platform access					
Platform edge has tactile paving / colour painted edge	✓	.	✓	.	.
Well lit	✓	.	X	.	X
Lift access	✓	.	X	.	✓
Stairs with enough width and colour-contrasting rails / edges	✓	.	X	.	.
Doors into services wide enough with no step	✓	.	✓	.	.

Shelters / waiting areas					
Type suitable	✓	.	✓	.	X
Size suitable	✓	.	✓	.	X
Available on all platforms	✓	.	.	.	.
Comfortable seats	✓	.	X	.	.

Lifts					
Controls at accessible height	✓	✓	✓	.	X
Controls and lift well lit	✓	.	X	.	X
Audio, written and Braille instructions / messages	✓	✓	.	✓	X
Room for easy wheelchair movement	✓	.	✓	.	✓

Printed / audio info and signage					
Text / font / graphics clear to see	.	.	✓	.	✓
Other formats provided	✓	.	.	.	X
Height / location of signs appropriate	.	.	✓	.	.
Colour appropriate	.	.	X	.	✓
Announcements clear and aural	✓	.	X	.	X

Security					
Help points accessible	✓	.	✓	.	X
Public payphones	✓	.	.	.	.
CCTV	✓	.	✓	.	X
Good lighting	✓	.	X	.	X
Staff available / visible	✓	.	✓	.	✓
BTP presence	X	.	X	.	✓

Appendix B

The table below summarises the recommendations made within the body of this report.

Area	Recommendation
Front car-park / drop-off area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure better control within drop-off and taxi areas • ensure the pay machine is accessible – correctly located on a level surface at a height that is accessible for wheelchair users • separate out blue-badge bays, move them closer to the station entrance and ensure that they are well sign-posted • ensure bays have sufficient width and length • create easy to locate, safe routes from the car-park to the station entrance for passengers with additional needs • where boom gates are used, ensure that help points make use of both audio and visual communication • ensure crossings have tactile surfaces • continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication of taxi rank / bus stops and other key aspects of the station).
Walking and wheelchair access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication of doors and key aspects of the station) • ensure entrances are step-free where possible and provide drop kerbs at station entrance • ensure zebra crossings conform to standards to ensure appropriate use • improve signage.
Other transport links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve provision of information about transport links from the station • ensure information about transport links is provided in a range of formats • improve signage and wayfinding to other transport links.
Ticket office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure the ticket office is easy to locate for passengers who are visually-impaired

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure staff are trained in disability awareness and are available on the concourse to assist passengers where required • ensure staff are prepared to deal with the needs of passengers who have a disability.
Information centre and customer reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the queuing system has both aural and visual indicators • take care over the placement of advertising within the station to ensure passengers are not misled • replace the tape barriers with rigid colour barriers that can be detected at floor level • monitor and reduce queuing times.
Shops and cafes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide additional passenger seating areas on the station concourse on both sides of the ticket barriers • businesses based on the station should ensure their staff are trained in disability awareness and are available on the concourse to assist passengers where required • reduce clutter / improve spacing between tables • ensure announcements can be heard clearly in all areas of the station.
Ticket machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication by ticket machines and key aspects of the station) • ensure ticket machines are tactile and can be used by those who are sight-impaired • ensure machines are at correct height to allow full use of the facilities they offer.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural indication by toilets and key aspects of the station) • ensure baby change facilities are separate from disabled toilets • ensure unisex toilets are provided for disabled passengers • ensure disabled toilets can be unlocked from the outside in an emergency • clearly indicate where the bell is for attracting staff to

	<p>the access gate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure all staff have disability awareness training • ensure toilets are provided on both sides of the ticket barriers.
Platforms and platform access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work with the RNIB to consider ways to improve orientation for visually-impaired passengers using the station (for example, a system to provide aural identifier of each platform, location of the lifts and other key aspects of the station) • colour code up / down escalators and stairs • ensure platforms are of sufficient width • increase seating along the platforms • increase width of stairwells and some platforms • improve signage on the platforms (for example, location of exits).
Shelters and waiting areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve signage • ensure seating is ergonomically designed to improve comfort • ensure waiting rooms are accessible and are of appropriate size.
Lifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-position the lifts within public areas of the station • improve signage to the lifts • provide lift access to and from the concourse to all platforms • investigate ways to identify the location of lift controls within the lift • ensure lift announcements are clear and aural • ensure lift controls are accessible from wheelchair height • ensure lift help points / safety system allows both audio and visual contact with the control centre, with a screen large enough to allow two way communication of written messages.
Printed and audio information and signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure information is provided in a variety of formats • ensure advertising does not conflict, cause confusion with, or take priority over essential information • improve signage / larger font size • ensure announcements are consistently aural in all public areas and provide visual alternatives • ensure Customer Information Systems (CIS) are adequately resourced to give information at short-

	notice and regular intervals.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote CCTV and other security measures within the station to improve passenger perception • increase the number of phones / help points • where help points are provided these use audio and visual communication • clearly identify staff / of those, which are there to help assist passengers • ensure alarms are both aural and visual.
General facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve location / visibility of the mobility office and improve signage to the office • provide a designated assistance dog relief area within the station • ensure step-free access throughout concourse level including within toilets.

Appendix C

Accessibility review for Birmingham New Street Station

Volunteers to walkthrough the station and look at the following:

Please tick each area as you review it and add any comments you wish to make highlighting any areas of concern.

Where you are asked to purchase a ticket / drink, the person accompanying you from Passenger Focus will cover the cost.

Areas to review

Parking

- Station car park - location
- Designated clearly marked disabled parking bays
- Smooth surface
- Well lit
- Secure
- Accessible pay machines and clear signs regarding how to pay at station
- Lift access if more than single level

Comments

Drop-off area

- Designated space
- Dropped kerbs
- Close enough to entrance

Comments

Walking and wheelchair access

- Well sign-posted
- Step-free
- Clutter-free

Comments

Other Transport Links

- Accessible taxi availability
- Accessible bus availability
- Information about other transport types easily found

Comments

Ticket office window

(If you can't use the ticket machines please try and purchase the cheapest single ticket from Birmingham New Street to Duddeston or Adderley Park – the fare should be £1.40.

If you are able to purchase a ticket from the ticket machine then ask at the ticket office window for information about your journey home)

- Is the counter height accessible for wheelchair users
- Induction loop
- Staff easily visible for lip reading
- Enough space for wheelchair users / assistance dogs

Comments

Information centre

(ask advice about best way of getting home from Birmingham)

- Is the counter height accessible for wheelchair users
- Induction loop
- Doors easy to negotiate
- Enough space for wheelchair users
- Staff easily visible for lip reading

Comments

Shops/cafes (buy a drink – Passenger Focus will cover the cost, ask for a receipt)

- Is counter height accessible for wheelchair users
- Induction loop
- Doors easy to negotiate
- Enough space for wheelchair users
- Staff easily visible for lip reading

Comments

Ticket Machines - try to purchase the cheapest single ticket from Birmingham New Street to Duddeston or Adderley Park- the fare should be £1.40.

- The machine located in the right place
- Easy to use
- Machine accepts card and cash

Comments

Toilets

- Do they have designated disabled toilets compliant with DDA recommendations

Does the disabled toilet have:

- Emergency cord
- Easy to manoeuvre lock
- Emergency outside door lock opener
- Room for a carer to assist if required
- Smoke detectors with flashing lights

Comments

Platforms and Platform Access

- Platform edge has tactile paving / colour painted edge
- Well lit
- Lift access
- Stairs with enough width and coloured rails / edges
- Are doors into services wide enough with no step

Comments

Shelters-waiting areas

- What type (waiting room / plastic shelter)
- Size
- On all platforms
- Comfortable seats

Comments

Lifts

- Height of controls OK
- Controls and lift well lit
- Audio and Braille instructions / messages
- Room for easy wheelchair movement

Comments

Printed/audio Info and Signage

CIS / leaflets / posters / wayfinding signs

- Text / font size / graphics OK
- Other formats, for example, braille
- Height / location of signs OK
- Colour OK
- Announcements clear and audible

Comments

Security

- Help points
- Public phones
- CCTV
- Good lighting
- Staff available / visible
- BTP presence

Comments

Name _____

Contact Details

Address

Postcode

email address

Tel number

Signature

Date

Please state type of disability, for example, wheelchair user, blind / partially-sighted, assistance dog, deaf / hard of hearing, mobility-impaired.

Thank you very much for taking part today, we value your input.



© 2009 Passenger Focus

Passenger Focus
FREEPOST (RRRE-ETTC-LEET)
PO Box 4257
Manchester
M60 3AR

0300 123 2350
www.passengerfocus.org.uk
info@passengerfocus.org.uk

Passenger Focus is the operating
name of the Rail Passengers Council