## RTP0007

## Written evidence submitted by The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

**About RNIB**

In the UK there are 350,000 registered blind or partially sighted people. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is the UK’s leading sight loss charity and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people. We have expertise in public transport issues thanks to extensive evidence and research on the experiences, perspectives and needs of blind and partially sighted people in travelling by rail.

### Summary

The British rail system needs to change: performance is not good enough for passengers, particularly disabled passengers, including those with sight loss. It misses opportunities to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted customers, is fragmented, and lacks clear accountability.

The evidence below indicates that what would most benefit British rail passengers – and potential passengers – with sight loss falls into some broad categories:

* Consistency and uniformity across the rail network, across physical and digital infrastructure and staff resources, for an experience that’s reliably suitable wherever and whenever a passenger with sight loss is travelling
* Clear accountability, to reduce the current complexity of private and public priorities in rail travel
* Communication between staff and passengers with sight loss that is respectful, two-way and productive

1. Public transport services are vital to getting around and leading an independent life. Driving a car or getting on a bike is rarely if ever an option for people with sight loss. Despite its importance, rail travel continues to present blind and partially sighted people with substantial access barriers.

2. The disconnects and inconsistencies in the provision of accessible travel put many blind and partially sighted people at a significant disadvantage compared to sighted people. The consequences are to constrain and limit the ability of an individual with sight loss to contribute to society and the economy.

### Digital ticketing

3. Digital ticketing excludes a significant number of blind and partially sighted people cannot travel at all if no human assistance is available. One member of an RNIB focus group said of their local station that it “is not manned on a Sunday so I am unable to travel on a Sunday. I cannot buy a ticket from the machine so I need help from the time I arrive at the station.”

4. Transport websites and apps are often inaccessible: frequently difficult to navigate, unintuitive, and malfunctioning for users of screenreaders or magnification software. 96.3 per cent of the top one million homepages in 2023 had detectable Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2 failures.[[[1]](#endnote-2)]

5. 66 per cent of participants in RNIB research [[[2]](#endnote-3)] said they only “occasionally” or “never” used technology such as a smartphone to support them on public transport journeys. Even blind and partially sighted people who do have smartphones report not taking them out of their pocket or bag whilst out in public, due to concerns about potential loss, damage or theft. As one focus group participant told us about needing to rely on their iPhone for digital tickets: “I feel vulnerable, as I could be an easy target for someone who wants to steal a phone. If I knocked into someone and dropped my phone and broke it, it would be a disaster as I am reliant on the speech output, which only works effectively on units like the iPhone, which are really expensive and I cannot afford to keep buying new ones. I rely completely on my phone to contact people who could help me, as finding staff or a help button is often not practical for me. Losing or breaking my phone or having it stolen could leave me in a very difficult situation.”

6. Even those passengers with sight loss who do use personal devices to manage their rail tickets report specific difficulties with using digital tickets that sighted people do not face.

* People with sight loss face significant challenges aligning the ticket on their device with the scanner to get through ticket gates.
* Screenreader users report extra stress when asked to produce their ticket, as it can take longer to navigate a phone with a screenreader than sighted people are used to and it may be extra challenging to properly hear the relevant details of their ticket in a crowded or noisy environment.
* People with sight loss have their phones set up to be accessible to them: features such as particular colour combinations or a particularly bright/dim screen, can be challenging for the sighted train guard to read. As one person told RNIB: “if the conductor wants me to show my ticket, I can find this difficult and I have to remember to increase my screen brightness.”

7. More charging points would provide greater accessibility for blind and partially sighted people traveling by rail. “I rely on my phone for so many accessibility features, which can quickly drain the battery. Many of the trains I travel from don’t have charging sockets, which causes me major anxiety that I will not be able to display my ticket when necessary. I was told by an assistant at New Street in Birmingham that if my phone ran out of charge, I’d have to buy another ticket. This has added greatly to the stress I feel about it.  I have had to resort to asking the assistance people at Peterborough station if I could charge my phone in their office.”

8. Outbound and return digital tickets have very similar information on them so are easily confused for one another, especially in a rushed or stressful environment. Thus, blind and partially sighted passengers face time pressure, difficulties getting through ticket barriers and potential hostility from staff when an incorrect ticket is shown. This problem of quickly and correctly identifying tickets is compounded when passengers have split their journey with the purchase of multiple tickets, a tactic which can, crucially, save money but leaves the passenger with more individual tickets to select between.

9. To make digital ticketing infrastructure inclusive to people with sight loss would require:

* A consistent uniform website and app experiences for journey planning, real-time information, ticket purchases, and passenger assistance
* clear fonts (like Arial), with changeable font size – the websites and apps must be usable at high levels of magnification
* contrast always at least 7:1
* website colour adjustment options, so colours can be adjusted to whatever is most accessible to an individual
* consistent layout, so a website or app is predictable from one page to the next
* haptic response from touchscreen Ticket Vending Machines
* capability for audio navigation initiated by connecting headphones to ticket vending machines, mimicking familiar screenreaders like Apple’s VoiceOver to reduce the cognitive demand of blind and partially sighted rail passengers learning an entirely new interface just for rail-ticket purchase
* a privacy screen around card terminals and ticket machines – because blind and partially sighted people report that in situations where they are unable to risk-assess their environment, they are reluctant to get their bank cards or phone out
* wherever the ticket vending machine is placed should be away from direct sun, weather, excessive noise, etc. to minimise the effects of glare, moisture, and other environmental factors that increase the difficulty of interacting with the machine.

### Contactless ticketing

10. Consistency in location and appearance, with good colour contrast, would significantly improve the ability of people with sight loss to locate and use the scanners for contactless tickets. Currently, finding contactless readers on mainline rail stations is significantly more difficult for people with sight loss than finding Oyster card readers on the Underground, which have a much more consistent location and make good use of a bright contrasting colour.

11. People with sight loss face significant challenges aligning a contactless ticket/payment method with the scanner to get through ticket gates. This often necessitates the person with sight loss locating staff at the ticket gates, which can be very challenging. One member of an RNIB focus group said, when thinking about all aspects of rail travel, that their one wish would be for staff to have more visible uniforms that stand out against the background.

12. An audible indicator of a “tap” on a contactless scanner would make contactless tickets more accessible to people with sight loss. RNIB has received concerns from blind and partially sighted people about unknowingly failing to “tap in” or “tap out” when the ticket gate opens for them but the tap has not properly registered. This leads to the individual finding out only later via e-mail that they have, for example, ended a journey they never started, and the resultant potential for fines. This can be a significant cause of distress when the person with sight loss did not knowingly or intentionally evade the fare.

13. Audible indicators on contactless scanners would also assist passengers unable to see whether the gate has opened, who currently need to reach out and feel for it. Reaching like this can be a struggle when the person with sight loss is also holding their phone/ticket, white cane or guide dog harness, ordinary bags or luggage. A focus group member explained what using a smartphone is like as a screenreader user: “I need both hands to work through information: one hand to hold the phone and the other to swipe down. It is not as simple as just looking at the screen and tapping in a certain place!” All these stresses are compounded by the awareness that the blind or partially sighted passenger may be holding up other people in the queue behind them.

### Fare simplicity

14. The current complex system of fares means that tickets bought from ticket vending machines frequently cost more than they need to[[[3]](#endnote-4)], which is a particular concern for people with sight loss who struggle to use digital interfaces – websites, apps, or ticket vending machines – that are inaccessible to them.

15. Many options other than buying a ticket from a member of staff also fail to allow for the concessions available to blind and partially sighted people, further increasing the difficulty of accessing the correct fare. For example, a ticket that will give up to 50% off travel for a blind person and their companion is little known, impossible to buy from a ticket vending machine, and seems to be only available from ticket offices.

16. People with sight loss are frustrated at their exclusion from cheaper fares: some TOCs offer deals exclusively on apps like Seatfrog, but screenreader users cannot get past the first page of the Seatfrog app.

17. Blind and partially sighted people report being frustrated at the inaccessibility of the information they need to make travel and purchase decisions for themselves. One told RNIB: “I never understand the pricing system. I have sometimes been given multiple tickets for one route because that works out cheaper? That is confusing for everyone but more so for the VI community. I can't read signs and leaflets easily so I'm completely baffled.”

18. How mainline rail interacts with regional travel passes is also little-understood and not easily accessed by blind and partially sighted people. A focus group participant from Greater Manchester gave the example of a train journey they frequently took to West Yorkshire, doing it for years before a staff member in their local ticket office told them that the Greater Manchester travel pass they held would cover part of their journey and they should only be paying from the point where they left Greater Manchester – leading to a ticket that isn’t from the station they’re departing from, which thus cannot be bought from a ticket machine but only from staff.

19. Considerations of the “best fare” or “best journey” might be starkly different for a blind or partially sighted person than for what an app, ticket vending machine, or website might expect. For some people with sight loss, the “best fare” needs to consider the cost of taking a taxi to the station that may not be nearest but is the most accessible for them. And a focus group member talked about a journey they took from Norwich to Kent via Cambridge as that was the most accessible route for them, but it caused problems in attempting to claim Delay Repay when the system didn’t acknowledge this route even though their ticket was valid.

### Train punctuality

20. Delays and cancellations have a disproportionate effect on rail passengers with sight loss. A late train reducing connection time is a nuisance for anyone, but people with sight loss often take longer to move between platforms or around a concourse because of the greater cognitive load that navigation places on them.

21. The effects of delays and cancellations on blind and partially sighted people can be severe: “I rely heavily on public transport. Train is often the only option for medical appointments and for work. Trains running late have resulted in me having to abort hospital appointments in London and once I ended up being 3 hours late for an interview. Understandably, the interviewers were not impressed and I did not present well, given how stressed I was in getting there.”

22. Blind and partially sighted people express intense concerns over what happens to booked passenger assistance if a portion of their journey involves a delayed or cancelled train. One says: “On a long journey back from Scotland my train was stopped at Newcastle and cancelled... Therefore all that carefully booked travel assistance went out of the window. I suddenly was a blind person, alone in a station I did not know, lost in the system. I had to stand up and ask for sighted help from one of the many other people whose journeys had also suddenly stopped. One took me to a member of staff, who was massively busy dealing with the chaos. She was very kind and after a three hour delay and moving onto two more trains we finally left Newcastle. In amongst all this, I needed to try to let Kings Cross know that I was coming and needed a sighted guide to get back to St Pancras.”

23. Late-running trains currently omit some stops in an effort to make up the time to their final destination. This has a disproportionate effect on passengers with sight loss, who may be waiting for a train that’s now not going to their destination – and with little access to information about when or where their next train will be, or how to get to whichever platform they now need. Sometimes the late-running train appears but does not stop at the station where a passenger with sight loss is waiting, and there is no accessible information about what’s happened to the service. A focus group member said “I have to check everything, even just before the train leaves; you get so little notice if you want one of the stations that’s going to be skipped,” and these checks necessitate display boards, apps or websites that are inaccessible to many people with sight loss. These timetable changes are often made on extremely short notice, which adds to stress and inaccessibility – there is less time to locate or get help from a member of staff.

24. Passengers can face very long waits due to disruption, especially later at night, which also is a time when a person might be tired from a long day, anxious to get home, missing meals, eager to see family, and facing long waits. A focus group member from a rural area says: “you can wait a good couple of hours to get your connecting train if it’s late at night and you miss one out on the branch lines.” Some people report feeling more vulnerable because of their sight loss: many have even less useful vision in the dark, they are concerned about the higher likelihood of anti-social behaviour or drunkenness on stations at night, and there are also fewer staff or fellow members of the public around if someone should need to ask for help.

### Fragmentation

25. Consistency is paramount to the safety and autonomy of people with sight loss, and the fragmentation of the British rail network results in a very inaccessible system. Stress at not knowing what to expect is a major theme among passengers with sight loss.

26. The proliferation of apps affords blind and partially sighted passengers no consistency: none are perfectly accessible, but they are all inaccessible in different ways. For example, Avanti’s seat selector tool isn’t accessible with VoiceOver (the screenreader on Apple devices), while LNER’s is. One person said they find LNER’s app the most accessible to them, but it works less well when they are booking tickets for non-LNER services.

27. Blind and partially sighted people feel strongly that they should not have to be experts on knowing who runs which trains or staffs which stations, but consistently report that it does make a difference to their experience. The different train operators are understood to have different cultures: some are more disability-aware, others are not. Staff training, digital infrastructure and physical infrastructure should be as consistent as possible across the network, without passengers needing to concern themselves with which entities are responsible for different aspects their journey.

28. Fragmentation leads to a lack of accountability. One focus group member reported it taking three attempts for them to claim compensation for a problem they’d had with a train journey “as there were different networks to go through. There was a bit of passing the buck, and it did take time,” and another said, “My partner and I were on a train that terminated early. When I tried to figure out how to continue my journey, Avanti blamed Northern and Northern blamed Avanti. We never did figure out who was supposed to help, we ended up just going home and missing a very expensive concert my partner was really looking forward to.”

### Communications on trains, at stations and on smart devices

29. Again, rail passengers with sight loss suffer from inconsistency: “Some trains have excellent announcing, others there is no announcing stations, or the staff announce in a voice which is not clear.” Passengers with sight loss struggle when the announcements aren’t consistent: sometimes none happen until the doors have been opened – leaving them very little time to react and safely reach the door if they wish to alight – and other times there are no announcements at all so blind and partially sighted people can easily become disoriented and lose their sense of where they are on their journey.

30. If a train journey lacks clear audio announcements for any reason – a technical fault, too much background noise, etc. – passengers with sight loss struggle to know where the train is or even whether they are on the right train. One focus group member said that without audio announcements, “If the train stops at signals it is hard for me to know that this is not a station. I was once told to sit down by a train manager, because she saw me feeling around the train for the door button. I didn’t realise I wasn’t at a station, and all the stopping and starting and having no audio announcements meant I was very stressed and confused about where I was.”

31. Many blind and partially sighted passengers report preferring staff interactions to digital communications. “I do feel safer and reassured when I know there is a guard around. When there is a guard they will often help me off the train. This is reassuring because I can't see which station I am at. I do try to listen to announcements but in a noisy train this can be difficult and I often have to resort to asking fellow passengers. The announcements are not always clear or at a volume that you can actually hear them.”

32. Communication of platform alterations is often not done with sufficient time to be accessible. There is an expectation that everyone knows where the new platform is and can immediately get there, but people with sight loss often do not. Blind and partially sighted people – particularly those who are rather young or old, smaller, or with mobility difficulties or other impairments – report stress at the hazard of groups of people all moving very quickly together to a new platform, in a direction the passenger with sight loss may not even know, and at a speed they may be less be able to keep up with.

33. Much information at stations is only available in standard-size print on leaflets and posters. A focus group member said: “I've never seen a leaflet available in large print. So when they advertise changes to the pricing structure, the visually impaired community can often miss those advertisements.”

34. Communication on smart devices about disruptions is often considered either totally inaccessible or not worth the effort required to access it. “Finding out whether there are delays or cancellations on the app can be tricky. I have done this in the past, but I probably wouldn’t waste time doing that myself as I find this time-consuming. Often there’s a bit of a delay too with updating the information online compared to the realtime information.”

35. Adding an announcement at station stops to indicate which side of the train doors will open on, as on some Underground lines, would aid accessibility for passengers with sight loss as it can be challenging to determine where to go. It would help remove some of the pressure people feel to move in the correct direction quickly, as they approach one of the more hazardous elements of a rail journey: the platform-train interface.

36. Passengers who’ve had assistance on to a train should be particularly sought out if problems develop on that train. This would mean greater safety and less anxiety for blind and partially sighted people when something happens on their train that they don’t understand. It would avoid problems such as the one shared here: “I had a horrendous experience once when I had been put on the train by passenger assistance but it was very loud on the carriage. There was an announcement that the train would be terminating at the next stop due to an issue but I wasn’t able to hear it because of the noise. Everyone ended up getting off but I didn’t know what was happening. It was a station I wasn’t familiar with. The announcement just wasn’t clear or loud enough.”

### “seamless” multimodal journeys

38. Because connections are few and far between in rural areas, blind and partially sighted people’s commutes to work or school can involve, for instance, a once-an-hour train and a once-an-hour bus. Thus, rail delays can leave a person with sight loss waiting almost an hour at a bus stop or paying for taxis that they struggle to afford. The long wait is frustrating and stressful; one focus group member said as a single parent they don’t get to feed or see their children on days when their commute home from work is delayed in this way.

39. Long waits at bus stops can be not just tedious but dangerous. Blind and partially sighted people report that waiting at a bus stop alone in the dark can feel hazardous and makes them more vulnerable: “I wouldn’t put myself in that situation. The train has put me in that situation.”

40. The physical infrastructure interconnecting other modes with rail travel can fall short of accessibility. For instance, one focus group member said of the experience of getting to bus stops after alighting a train: “The bus stops at Norwich station are across a really shambolic and chaotic part of the station forecourt: uneven surfaces, open space, few things in the environment which I can consistently use as wayfinding points, random tactile pavement not really used conventionally so not that helpful or consistent. I find it really hard to find a safe and simple route where I feel confident I’ve got to the right place.”

### The process of claiming compensation

41. The attempts to claim compensation most often reported to RNIB are related to Delay Repay, and despite the disproportionate effect that delays have on people with sight loss, the process is inaccessible to them at every stage.

42. Many people with sight loss report not being able to complete the compensation process without sighted support, which reduces their independence and likelihood of being able to claim compensation at all.

43. Those unable to fill in a paper form are left reliant on online options. Blind and partially sighted people report the online Delay Repay form is partially or completely inaccessible. The process itself is opaque to people who aren’t able to access the information about it. One focus group member said: “I’ve found it hard getting the right website, as so many commercial enterprises share similar names to Delay Repay and I’m not even sure this is the right name of where you are supposed to go to claim back.”

44. Many blind and partially sighted people report issues with having to provide photographs of their train tickets as part of the claim. Without sighted support, the ticket can be out of shot or not clear enough to read the details, and this has led to claims being rejected.

### Staff training

45. Again, blind and partially sighted people report intense inconsistency in the interactions they have with staff. While a focus group member reported that some staff “help me on and off the train, inform me of train delays and help find a seat on the next train,” the same person reports “staff totally ignore me,” refuse to help with wayfinding, and expect them to manipulate their own ticket to exit via the ticket gate, which as documented here in paragraph 13 is difficult or impossible for many people with sight loss to do without sighted support.

46. The inconsistency in interactions with staff can have a severe impact on blind and partially sighted people’s willingness and ability to travel; as one said: “This has made me wary as I travel, wondering what the staff will be like today.” People with sight loss report that a negative experience puts them off travelling again.

47. Rail staff fail to provide consistent and appropriate sighted guiding. One person with sight loss reported: “Some staff seem to have problems with guiding. In London, I was once placed on something which resembled a dog lead. Another lady kept telling me ‘We're going over there’ ” – “over there” being language that is recommended against when interacting with a person who has sight loss, as it’s unclear and disorienting; all staff should be trained to know this.

48. There is currently a lack of consistent awareness among staff of how to respectfully and usefully interact with people who have sight loss. Staff training should cover sight loss awareness training – co-produced and co-delivered by people with sight loss, undertaken by senior management as well as frontline staff, as recommended in the UK Government’s Inclusive Transport Strategy. This might prevent situations such as what one focus group participant told RNIB: “I once had a staff member in the ticket office get really angry with me, because my guide dog circumnavigated the queue and took me straight to the counter [as guide dogs are trained to do]. She accused me of deliberately jumping the queue and told me I should read the signs and queued. She was so rude I ended up making a complaint [but when I asked how to complain] I was handed a printed complaint form. I told the manager who had come to deal with things that I couldn’t fill this in. He then asked ‘How do you communicate then!’ ”

49. Too often, staff are surprised that people with sight loss are travelling alone. As one focus group member told RNIB: “A staff member asked me why I didn’t use the ticket machine to get my ticket. I explained that the machine didn’t talk, and he tried to qualify his question by assuming that I wouldn’t be travelling alone, so the person that he thought I’d be with could do it!”

50. Conversely, staff also frequently assume that if a passenger with sight loss has a companion, the companion is able to provide all the assistance needed. A focus group member said: “I’ve booked assistance for both myself and a sighted companion, who has a hidden medical condition which means she is not able to lift things. She can see, but needs assistance herself to carry luggage if she is guiding me. I have lost count of how many times assistance staff have given her judgemental looks, or just walked away, assuming she is able to manage. I book support for her for a reason and she shouldn’t ever be put into the position of having to explain why she needs support, especially when this has already been done.”

51. Disabled people report negative feelings, “like I’m a burden,” for requesting assistance. One person with sight loss told RNIB: “Staff really need to know that disabled travellers have the right to turn up and go. So many staff members ask if I’ve booked assistance and on the rare occasions I have not been able to, they have made me feel really guilty about having to ask for assistance and being an inconvenience. I have every right to live spontaneously and planning is not always possible.” Another focus group member repeatedly emphasised their desire “not to feel like a burden,” adding “we’re just trying to live independently and do the things we want to do.”

52. Many people with sight loss report difficulties with accessing the toilet on trains, some so severely that they never do so at all. One blind person reported to RNIB: “I have never learnt to use the loo on board a train and never found anyone to show me. There is a button to close the door, but does this lock it? It would be nice if guards asked if we know where the loo is and do we know where the door lock is. I should pluck up courage and ask but a bit of customer care would be nice.” Another blind person said that when new rolling stock is added, the staff using it should get new training on things like the toilet location and its operation, where luggage can be stored, whether and where there are bins, and other things that will be obvious to sighted people but difficult or impossible for passengers with sight loss to determine.

53. What blind and partially sighted people say they want consistently in their interactions with rail staff:

* staff making the effort to locate and approach the passenger with sight loss
* staff introducing themselves
* staff offering assistance but avoiding a “one size fits all” approach – taking blind and partially sighted people’s word for what kind of assistance they require, including none at all
* staff never assuming that a travelling companion can or will provide all assistance required
* staff avoiding dehumanising language about disabled people when speaking to other staff, such as “another one!” or “an assist”

### Assistance

54. The overwhelming message from people with sight loss who use passenger assistance is that while the experience is often positive, there are still crucial aspects which require attention. Reports of blind and partially sighted people being left on station platforms are common. Attention is required especially if the journey involves unstaffed stations, disruption, connections, or multiple train operators.

55. Regular travellers with sight loss end up with distinct impressions of which stations or which TOCs/SFOs have better or worse passenger assistance based on their experiences. Passengers travelling through a station operated by Southeastern and London North Eastern Railway (LNER) tend to be significantly more satisfied with the service received than those travelling with other Station Facility Owners. Satisfaction is often lowest where South Western Railway, West Midlands Railway, Chiltern Railway, Transport for Wales and/or Govia Thameslink Railway were the SFOs in charge of the station where the assistance was received. [[[4]](#endnote-5)]

56. Therefore, blind and partially sighted people intending to use passenger assistance report always having to prepare themselves for potential failure of that assistance. One said: “You often have to think of a plan B when travelling to certain stations, for if passenger assistance doesn’t turn up or if something else goes wrong. I change at Wigan rather than Preston because there’s fewer platforms at Wigan, so I can manage easier if I don’t get my assistance there.” Another focus group member said: “I don’t think passenger assistance staff fully understand how you feel when you’re on that train. You can have long train journeys worrying if somebody will be there to meet you at the other end. I feel needy, as though I’m pestering the staff, asking if support is arranged and in place. But nobody else on the train has to sit and worry whether they will be able to get where they’re going or not.”

57. More problems are reported with Turn Up And Go than with booked assistance – starting at the point of asking for it. “Staff also really need to know that disabled travellers have the right to turn up and go. So many staff members ask if I’ve booked assistance and on the rare occasions I have not been able to, they have made me feel really guilty about needing assistance and being an inconvenience. I have every right to live spontaneously and planning is not always possible.”

58. Communication could easily be improved between passengers and staff providing assistance. Blind and partially sighted people expressed frustration at the inability to communicate directly with assistance staff, in the event of a disruption such as an incoming train being cancelled so they’ll miss a connection at an onward station. Avanti have a WhatsApp service that could be usefully rolled out as a national, consistent service that does not depend on a certain operator.

59. Another kind of communication failure regarding assistance: a focus group member expressed frustration that staff do not make use of information the passenger adds to their booking in the Passenger Assist app. “Every time they ask me if I have a reserved seat, and I have always put that information in the booking. How do they know my name without also knowing my seat number? Guiding to my seat is one of the big reasons I need assistance. I used to look up my seat number again for them on the spot, but I quickly got fed up of that: when I meet them and they’re already walking me to my train, I’m hanging on to their arm and my cane… It’s really difficult to get my phone out or get my tickets out in the busy station, much less read the seat number off them. The assistance staff are always carrying around a piece of paper which seems to have all the details on it of the people they are going to assist, why don’t they consult that instead of asking me all the time?”

60. Even though from a legislative point of view the operator may be able to say they have provided 'assistance' by replacing staff with a telephone help pod, the reality for people with sight loss can be that the service is now less accessible than before. “Putting braille on help buttons in stations is no use to me, as I need help finding them to start with. I have no vision, so it wouldn’t matter how big it is, I will never find it. It would be really helpful if these things were always in a set place near the door for example. Braille is only useful once you have your hand on it, so at a distance, it makes no difference. Having some kind of tactile wayfinding on the floor to guide someone towards the point could be useful.”

1. [] WebAIM, 2023. The 2023 report on the accessibility of the top 1,000,000 home pages. [WebAIM: The WebAIM Million - The 2023 report on the accessibility of the top 1,000,000 home pages](https://webaim.org/projects/million/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) [Accessed 16 July 2023]  [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. [] RNIB, 2023. Inclusive Journeys: Improving the accessibility of public transport for people with sight loss. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. [] [Train station machines can charge more than twice the price of online tickets - Which? News](https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/train-station-machines-can-charge-twice-the-price-of-online-tickets-asfbN6V5xda8). [Accessed 11 April 2024.] [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. [] [Experiences of Passenger Assist report 2022 to 2023 (orr.gov.uk)](https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/2022-2023-passenger-assist-report-by-mel.pdf) [Accessed 11 April 2024.]

**April 2024** [↑](#endnote-ref-5)