



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1575](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Alex Scott MBE

**Subject:** Accessible Rail Travel

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take more steps to make the ScotRail fleet accessible to the visually impaired, including standardising buttons on ScotRail's fleet and providing high visibility clothing for its station workers.

### Background

Rail vehicle accessibility legislation, which is a reserved matter, can be summarised as follows:

- mainline trains built from 1999 to 2009 have to comply with standards set out in the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 (RVAR 1998), unless exemptions have been granted by the UK Department for Transport
- mainline trains built from 2010 onwards have to comply with the Europe-wide Persons with Reduced Mobility: Technical Specification for Interoperability (PRM TSI)
- non-mainline rail vehicles, including underground trains, trams and some heritage railways must comply with the standards set out in the UK Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2010 (RVAR 2010). Any refurbishment of older mainline trains must also meet these requirements
- rail vehicles built before 1999 do not at present need to comply with any accessibility legislation although operators may choose to make improvements for the benefit of their passengers.

The UK Department for Transport sets the overall policy on accessibility across all transport modes. The UK rail accessibility policy is set out in [Railways for All: The Accessibility Strategy for Great Britain's Railways](#). This policy states that:

“The DDA 2005 [Disability Discrimination Act 2005 – now succeeded by the Equality Act 2010] requires the setting of an end date, which must be no later than 1 January 2020, by which time all trains must comply with the RVAR. A limited exemption regime exists, which has

mainly been used in the past for trains that were already in the design or construction phase when the RVAR was first introduced. In the future, exemptions will most likely be for innovative features that do not comply with the RVAR but which may improve access for disabled travellers and need to be tested in service. We also expect to exempt all existing vehicles on heritage and tourist railways which would otherwise not be able to operate after the end date.”

The RVAR 1998, RVAR 2010 and PRM TSI all establish standards for the location, illumination and design of powered door controls in trains.

Current ScotRail rolling stock is leased from three rolling stock leasing companies, [Angel Trains](#), [Porterbrook](#) and [Eversholt](#) and complies with the relevant accessibility regulations, as set out above.

### **Scottish Government Action**

The [ScotRail franchise agreement](#), between Abellio and the Scottish Ministers, specifies the classes of rolling stock to be used for the provision of ScotRail services. The franchise agreement also requires Abellio to provide a uniform to all staff that are required to wear one. Staff are expected to wear uniforms where supplied. The design of the uniform, and the wearing of high visibility clothing for non-safety reasons, is a matter for Abellio.

### **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not considered issues around rail vehicle accessibility.

**Alan Rehfisch**  
**Senior Research Specialist**  
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