



## 23rd Meeting of the Accessibility Consultative Committee (ACC)

Online via MS Teams at 11:00 hrs on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

### Attendance

Kevin Doyle (Chair)	Dept. of Transport (DoT) - Public Transport Corporate and Services Division (PTCSD)
Akriti Brady	DoT- PTCSD
Priscilla Wolf	DoT- PTCSD
Nigel Grogan	DoT- PTCSD
Dermot Murphy	DoT- PTCSD
Imelda Condon	DoT- Maritime Safety Policy Division
Annette Costello	Disability Stakeholders Group (DSG)
Elaine Howley	DSG
Naomi Rooney	National Transport Authority (NTA)
Sarah O'Donnell	Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)
Deborah Maguire	Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR)
Joan Carthy	Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA)
Brendan O'Donnell	County and City Management Association (CCMA)
Eleanor Ryan	CCMA
Niamh Fawl	National Disability Authority (NDA)
Naomi Oldenburg	NDA
Chantelle Smith	National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)
Julie Helen	Inclusion Ireland
Brendan Lennon	Chime
Una Power	Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
Hugh Creegan	National Transport Authority (NTA) - for Presentation

### Apologies

Breda Farrell	Department of Transport
Geraldine Browne	Road Safety Authority (RSA)
Sue Shaw	Irish Senior Citizens Parliament



<b>1. Introductory remarks</b>	
"Tour de Table" and Apologies	The Chair welcomed Julie Helen as the new Inclusion Ireland representative, and Akriti Brady as Eilis O'Connor's successor and new chair of the ACC.
Minutes of meeting on 10th March 2021	Draft minutes circulated 24 May 2021 and agreed.
<b>2. <a href="#">Presentation by NTA on its Accessibility Programme (presentation linked)</a></b>	
Key Points from presentation Q & A  (Detailed actions on Appendix I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Advance Notice</u> – When will “no-notice” travel be possible? NTA: this would be difficult to achieve, though is an aspiration.</li><li>• <u>Bus Stop poles</u> – Uniformity of colour and yellow bus poles are useful for visually impaired persons. NTA: Poles have been designed with a large yellow/green headplate at the top of the pole and a yellow carousel along the central section of the pole. The pole itself is stainless steel as this does not rust.</li><li>• <u>Bus stop carousel</u> – Standard height, can it be seen with a low vision aid. The NTA consulted with the NCBI. Carousels were made larger and showed more information and placed at a height suggested by the IWA guidelines</li><li>• <u>100% accessible fleet</u> – But difficulties including with turning space flagged with NTA.</li><li>• <u>Low floor buses</u> – It was unclear from the presentation photographs if there were bright yellow markings on the steps as markers for OAPs with impacted vision. NTA: will double check that these are included and report to the ACC.</li><li>• <u>Wheelchair accessible taxis</u> – Issues include use of non-compliant short ramps, vehicles not available or not stopping for PWDs, and varying level of service. Suggestion: give an accessibility weighting to the tender process for taxi services, for example by the HSE. NTA would support such a proposal but it's a decision for the HSE and the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). The NTA have regulations regarding wheelchair ramps and have prosecuted SPSV drivers for failure to comply with providing the correct equipment. All complaints received are investigated.</li></ul>



- Travel Assistance Programme – This needs to be a nationwide service. NTA: Objective is to roll it out nationwide.
- NTA Transport Users Advisory Group (TUAG) – Group to be used to consult with wider stakeholder demographic to include all Users of transport. NTA: The NTA will review the workings of the TUAG to ensure the effectiveness of it. Requests for participation is planned to be advertised in coming months.
- Bridge in Edgeworthstown (Photos from the presentation) – Needs proper marked steps for visually impaired. NTA: confirmed that bridge is not completed yet and will ensure that Irish Rail have included that as part of their works.
- Lift call push button – Should be in standard location, at same height. NTA: This is decided by the manufacturer, they are usually in the same place, wired into the regular buttons. NTA to check with Irish Rail the locations of the Lift Call push button.
- Accessible bus stops and shared spaces– NTA needs to reconsider the safety of the shared space. NTA: Bus stops and locations where there are interactions between pedestrians, cyclists and buses, there is no perfect solution that removes all conflict points. The NTA are working to achieve a balanced solution that best addresses all needs.
- BÉ announcements – Route and destination should be stated when getting on & off the bus. NTA: Visual and Audio announcements are available to just over 50% of the stops serviced by Bus Eireann. The NTA is working with Bus Eireann to improve this with the aim of providing audio/visual information for all their stops. As part of that the NTA are working them on the renaming for each stop on the upgrading of the technology systems.
- Irish Rail signs in stations – Irish text is in bright white, English in pale blue - which is harder to read. NTA: agreed to check with Irish Rail.
- New bus fleet – The NCBI and ACC members would like to see the new bus fleet. NTA: Agreed and viewings will be organised by NTA in July 2021.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Local Authorities</u> – Meaningful and proper consultation with disability groups is required. NTA: working on draft guidance which plans to incorporate the need to consult with people with disabilities for all NTA funded projects, which is already a condition of funding grants to the Local Authorities.</li><li>• <u>Shared spaces</u> – Issue of shared spaces was raised. Safety of pedestrians/passengers in shared spaces is paramount, and councils should consult with PWDs, as unsafe shared spaces can cause fear and inhibit movement.</li><li>• <u>Mystery Shoppers</u> – Request for the anonymised findings of the survey, how many PWDs engaged as mystery shoppers and criteria to become a mystery shopper. NTA: NTA to share these findings with the ACC - The NTA currently tenders this service, and the current contract is until year end 2021. NTA to look into how they can better include PWDs in this.</li><li>• <u>Wheelchair spaces on buses</u> – One member stated there were issues with restraint straps, turning space, sometimes you are facing the passengers and are “on display”, and the wheelchair can move with the brakes on. NTA: there is training required by the Transport Operators to make the straps operate well for passengers, provided the mechanism is alright. If it is a case that the mechanism is wrong, the NTA will look into fixing the mechanism.</li></ul>
<p><b>3. Accessibility Work Programme (WP) Progress Report</b></p> <p><b>NTA</b></p> <p><b>TII</b></p>	<p>The Work Programme covering the period, <a href="#">March 2021 to June 2021</a> was circulated to ACC members on 26 May 2021. The Secretariat had made a concerted effort to get it out to members a week in advance based on agency updates it had received by then.</p> <p>The vast majority of the Actions in the Work Programme, and in both the NDIS and the CES, are related to Public Transport and are assigned to the NTA. These were covered in the NTA presentation earlier.</p> <p>The Chair explained that TII was waiting for an update which they did not have in time for inclusion in the WP which had been circulated to the ACC in advance of the</p>



	<p>meeting. The Chair confirmed that the TII updates would be included in the published version of the WP.</p> <p>Action: A lot of the tolls are unmanned, and if there is a difficulty with getting through, some drivers cannot reach the help button. TII will check and respond on this issue.</p>
<p><b>4. Department updates (on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021)</b></p>	<p><b>COVID-19 pandemic and Public Transport services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pandemic has had a profound impact on the Public Transport sector. Since the beginning of the crisis the Government has been clear that continued operation of the Public Transport sector is important, and it has been designated among the essential services that are to carry on. In response to this, Public Transport services, including Local Link services in rural areas, have continued to operate throughout the crisis, albeit with reduced timetables in some cases.</li><li>• Since the return to Level 5 in late December 2020, and the associated 25% capacity restrictions, 50% capacity has been introduced since the end of May, a number of operators are operating a revised service. Most, but not all, PSO operators have introduced revised timetables across many routes (with some increased services at peak times) to reflect the lower levels of passenger demand. From 8 March 2021 Dublin Bus has largely returned to its normal Monday to Friday schedule, to deal with the increased levels of demand arising from the partial reopening of schools. Further, the NTA has advised that other operators will provide extra vehicles on routes where they know schools' activity will lead to increased demand. The NTA is engaging with Public Transport operators to determine the practical implications for Public Transport provision, as COVID-19 restrictions are eased in Ireland.</li><li>• 100% capacity planned to be introduced at the beginning of August. The NTA are working closely on the pinch points in the system.</li></ul> <p><b>Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021</b></p>



	<p>The Plan includes future electrification in Cork Commuter Rail, providing significant capacity increases on the Cork Area Commuter Rail network, including construction of a through platform at Kent Station, line doubling between Glounthaune and Middleton, and re-signalling, with a view to future electrification.</p> <p><b>Department of Health COVID-19 updates</b> DoT will continue to forward to ACC all updates received from Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.</p> <p><b>Scooter Mobility policy – Bus Éireann (BÉ)</b> DoT met recently with BE to discuss accessible public transport. ,BÉ gave a presentation on its accessibility plans which included an update on its scooter mobility policy. Action DoT to circulate the BÉ presentation to ACC</p>
<b>Date of next meeting</b>	Next meeting is set for 1 September 2021, which is two weeks prior to the next NDIS Steering Group meeting on 15 September 2021.



## Appendix I - Meeting Actions

### a) Actions from ACC meeting on 10th March 2021

	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1	DoT End of Year report 2020	Secretariat to circulate.	Published on the <a href="#">Gov.ie website</a> , link sent to ACC on 02/06.
2	DoT Annual Report 2019 will be published shortly	Secretariat	To be published shortly.
3	Strategic Research Analysis Division – The effects of Covid 19 on Public Transport services	Secretariat	<a href="#">This report has been published</a> , link sent on 02/06.
4	The Secretariat to arrange a meeting with 3 members of the ACC to discuss their specific ongoing concerns	Secretariat	Completed.

### b) Ongoing/longer term actions from previous ACC meetings

	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1	Bamford Bus Company (new owners of Wright Bus) had to close due to COVID-19 restrictions during 2020, so this work has been delayed. The NTA plan to bring a modified vehicle to the IWA for their input once it is safe to do so before the next order of 89 buses are modified.	NTA	Viewing organised by NTA on 21 July 2021.
2	New single deck buses manufactured by Volvo will incorporate the changes suggested - turning space, tip-up seat, and handrails, and the older Volvo single deck buses will be retrofitted.	NTA	The first vehicle has arrived in Ireland and again, will be brought to the IWA for viewing when it is safe to do so.
3	NTA to invite all ACC members who wish to do so, to visit prototypes of new fleet and retrofitted buses once public health guidelines allow it.	NTA	Viewing organised by NTA on 23 July 2021.



4	<u>BÉ's new policy on motorised scooters and motorised wheelchairs</u> Circulate BÉ's new policy when finalised.	Bus Éireann re new policy.	BÉ update awaited. Action carried over. DoT to circulate recent BÉ presentation on accessibility.
5	<u>Connolly Station/Busáras/Luas</u> Undertake high level review to identify possible solutions to address problems in the vicinity of Connolly Station / Busáras / Luas. TII and NTA to discuss setting up of a multi-agency interchange group.	NTA and TII	Action carried over. (There have been no developments since the last meeting.)

**c) New Actions agreed at meeting**

	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible</u>
1	TII to advise ACC when MetroLink workshop taking place	TII
2	TII to advise when MetroLink public consultation taking place	TII
3	TII to update on the assistance available to drivers who cannot reach the 'help' button for assistance, since a lot of the tolls are unmanned, and if there is a difficulty with getting through.	TII
4	DoT to ask DCEDIY when the next meeting of its Working Group is established under NDIS Action 104	DoT
5	NTA will check with the services section to see if they can release the anonymised findings of the mystery shopper audit.	NTA
6	Standard position, height and location of lift call button	NTA
7	Standard height and position of bus stop carousel	NTA
8	NTA to update ACC on the yellow steps for the new low floor buses	NTA
9	NTA to update ACC on the grey Local Link bus poles	NTA