

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

4th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Wednesday
22 September 2021

PE1869: Make it law for railway stations to
have step free access

Note by the Clerk

Petitioner Dillon Crawford

**Petition
summary** Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government
to introduce legislation that requires all railway stations to have step
free access.

Full petition <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1869>

Introduction

1. This is a new petition that has been under consideration since 20 May 2021.
2. A SPICe briefing has been prepared to inform the Committee's consideration of the petition and can be found at **Annexe A**.
3. While not a formal requirement, petitioners have the option to collect signatures and comments on their petition. On this occasion, the petitioner elected to collect this information. 16 signatures have been received.
4. The Committee seeks views from the Scottish Government on all new petitions before they are formally considered. This response is included at **Annexe B** of this paper.
5. The petitioner has provided a submission. This is included at **Annexe C** of this paper.

Scottish Government submission

6. In its written submission, the Scottish Government states that rail accessibility remains reserved.
7. It notes that the UK Government funds projects to improve accessibility, including through the Access for All and the Mid-tier programmes.
8. Access for All is a Department for Transport sponsored fund which enables eligible projects to be supported after consideration against a specified criteria. The Scottish Government explains that although it works closely with the Department for Transport to agree priorities, the final decision rests with the UK Government.
9. The Mid-tier programme is a Department for Transport fund to deliver accessibility improvements leading to small-scale enhancements such as tactile paving, handrails and Harrington Humps, which increase platform heights.
10. In its submission, the Scottish Government notes that by March 2019, Access for All had created step free access at 25 Scottish stations.
11. During the current rail funding period, 2019-2024, the Access for All and the Mid-Tier programmes will create step-free access at seven more stations: Anniesland, Croy, Dumfries, Johnstone, Port Glasgow, Uddingston and Anderston.
12. The submission highlights that, while reserved, the Scottish Government does fund accessibility improvements to stations as part of wider projects.
13. The Scottish Government further highlights that the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2), Phase 1 recommendations included a proposal to review accessibility across Scottish Stations.
14. The review has not yet concluded. As such, the Scottish Government is unable to comment on any potential outcome. It does highlight, however, that Project 12 of STPR2 reinforces the Scottish Government commitment to improve access for all to Scotland's Rail Network.
15. In its submission, the Scottish Government highlights accessibility improvements made as part of larger projects that it has funded. For instance, eight stations which now have step free access due to upgrades delivered as part of the electrification programme and the Aberdeen to Inverness Improvement project. A new fully accessible station is also due to be built at Robroyston.
16. The Scottish Government explains that it hopes to be able to deliver further accessibility improvements including at stations in Aviemore, Pitlochry, Nairn and Kingussie.

17. It also notes future accessibility improvements which feature within the rail pipeline including consideration of potential upgrades to existing stations as well as the creation of new fully accessible stations.
18. The Scottish Government submission also notes the ScotRail Passenger Assist service which provides assistance to those who need help when travelling on the ScotRail network.
19. It states that where there is currently no disabled access at a particular station, passengers can make arrangements with ScotRail for taxi transportation to/from the nearest manned station.

Petitioner submission

20. In his written submission, the petitioner notes that the Scottish Government states that all new stations will have step free access. He believes, however, that the Committee should look into this in detail.

Action

21. The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take on this petition.

Clerk to the Committee

PE1869: MAKE IT LAW FOR ALL RAILWAY STATIONS TO HAVE STEP FREE ACCESS

Petitioner

Dillon Crawford

Date Lodged

17 June 2021

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation that requires all railway stations to have step free access.

Previous action

I have contacted the Scottish Government but received no reply.

Background information

People who have disabilities and are unable to walk up steps are appalled that the Scottish Government is not doing anything to make sure they can access ALL Railway Stations in Scotland. This means that some people who can't drive are unable to get on a train either. The Scottish Government NEEDS to do more so that people are not disadvantaged due to their disabilities.

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: [PE1869](#)

Main Petitioner: Dillon Crawford

Subject: Make it law for all railway stations to have step free access

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to introduce legislation that requires all railway stations to have step free access.

Background

Scotland's mainline railway stations are owned by Network Rail, with the exception of Prestwick Airport station which is owned by the airport operators, currently Scottish Ministers. Network Rail is an arms-length public body of the UK Department for Transport. Network Rail directly manages Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central stations, all other Network Rail owned stations in Scotland are currently managed by Abellio ScotRail.

The majority of Scotland's railway stations were built during the Victorian age, the oldest station still in use in Scotland (Broughty Ferry) opened in 1838. These stations were built with little thought for accessibility and before the invention or widespread use of lifts. Some stations were built in constrained locations where retrofitting lifts or wheelchair accessible ramps is logistically challenging.

Scottish Government Action

All new railway stations opened in Scotland since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament have been built with step-free access, these are Alloa, Laurencekirk, Larkhall, Merryton,

Chatelherault, Blackridge, Caldercruix, Armadale, Conon Bridge, Shawfair, Eskbank, Newtongrange, Gorebridge, Stow, Galashiels, Tweedbank, Forres, Kintore and Robroyston.

Existing stations upgraded as part of Scottish Government funded electrification projects that now have step-free access include Stirling, Livingston South, West Calder, Addiewell, Fauldhouse and Cleland.

Confirmed new stations at Leven, Cameron Bridge, Reston and East Linton will be fully accessible. The Scottish Government is also considering accessibility improvements at Aviemore, Pitlochry, Kingussie, Nairn, Dunkeld & Birman, Shotts, Hartwood, Carstairs and at stations forming part of the Barrhead and East Kilbride line enhancement projects.

In addition to these Scottish Government funded improvements, the UK Government is supporting major accessibility improvements at Anniesland, Croy, Dumfries, Johnstone, Port Glasgow and Uddingston stations and minor improvements to Anderston station during the period 2019-2024, through the GB-wide [Access for All programme](#).

Equal opportunities legislation is largely reserved to the UK Parliament, including legislation governing railway station accessibility.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not considered legislation on railway station accessibility, as this is a reserved matter.

Key Organisations and relevant links

- **Network Rail:** Owner and operator of GB rail infrastructure, although day-to-day management of all but the largest stations is handled by rail franchise holders – Abellio ScotRail in Scotland.
- **Transport Scotland:** Responsible for setting Network Rail strategic direction in Scotland and specifying/funding Scottish rail enhancement projects.

- **Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland:** Considers issues around disabled people's travel needs and advises Scottish Ministers on these matters.
- **Transport Focus:** Rail passenger representative body.

Alan Rehfisch
Senior Researcher
June 2021

SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at spice@parliament.scot

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

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Annexe B

Scottish Government submission of 17 June 2021

PE1869/A

Thank you for your request seeking Scottish Government consideration on legislation requiring all stations to have step-free access.

Rail Accessibility remains a reserved matter to the UK Government under the Devolution Settlement, The Scotland Act 1998 (as amended by the Scotland Act 2012). [Schedule 5 to the act](#) sets out those matters which are reserved to the UK Parliament, Rail transport can be found within Part II, Head E.

It is however the policy of the Scottish Ministers to have all rail matters, including accessibility, fully devolved to the Scottish Government to enable us to better deliver for Scotland's rail users.

The Department for Transport sponsored fund, Access for All, enables eligible projects to be supported after consideration against a specified criteria. While we work closely with the Department for Transport to agree priorities, the final decision rests with them.

The Access for All programme, by March 2019, created step free access at 25 Scottish stations. Over the course of the current rail funding period (2019-2024) the Access for All and Mid-Tier programmes will deliver step-free access at Anniesland, Croy, Dumfries, Johnstone, Port Glasgow, Uddingston and Anderston.

The Scottish Government however remains committed to improving access at stations beyond the UK Government programme and where possible, we look to improve accessibility as part of wider rail investments.

Our vision is that all disabled people can travel with the same freedom, choice, dignity and opportunity as other citizens. When making decisions about which stations to improve, we prioritise in terms of need and available budgets across the whole of Scotland.

The [Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, Phase 1 recommendations](#) included a proposal to review accessibility across Scottish Stations.

Whilst it is too early to comment on any outcome to the review, [Project 12](#) reinforces the Scottish Government commitment to improve access for all to Scotland's Rail Network.

Examples of where we accessibility improvements have been achieved through larger projects are:

- Stirling – Dunblane – Alloa and Shotts electrification programmes delivering step-free access at Stirling, Livingston South, West Calder, Addiewell, Fauldhouse and Cleland stations.
- Aberdeen to Inverness Improvement project provided two new fully accessible stations, Forres and Kintore benefitting from enhanced active travel and public transport connectivity.

Further the Scottish Government contributed funding, through the Scottish Stations Fund, for a new fully accessible station to be built at Robroyston, connecting Scotlands two largest Cities for the residents of Robroyston and Millerston.

Throughout 2019-2024, the Scottish Government plan to deliver step-free access at Aviemore, Pitlochry, Nairn and Kingussie rail stations. Additionally, working jointly with Network Rail, accessibility improvements will also be delivered at Carstairs as part of a package of major renewals. The renewals project is fully funded by the Scottish Government. These improvements, whilst planned, are all subject to affordability constraints.

Future accessibility improvements which feature within the rail pipeline include:

- Shotts & Hartwood, Network Rail has been engaged to carry out feasibility studies, the aim of which is to identify options for improving accessibility at the stations.
- East Kilbride & Barrhead Enhancements, accessibility improvements are being considered as part of these larger projects. The East Kilbride Enhancements will also relocate Hairmyres station and make it fully accessible.
- New fully accessible stations are planned at Dalcross, Levenmouth (Leven and Cameron Bridge), Reston and East Linton. In addition developers are in discussion with Transport Scotland for a new

station at Winchburgh.

- Accessibility improvements for Dunkeld & Birnam station are being considered as part of the A9 Dualling Pass of Birnam project. Once an option has been agreed for this road project, Transport Scotland and Network Rail will consider accessibility improvements to the station in more detail.

ScotRail's Passenger Assist service provides assistance to those who need help when travelling on the ScotRail network. Where there is currently no disabled access at a particular station, passengers can make arrangements with ScotRail for taxi transportation to/from the nearest manned station.

Passenger Assistance can be requested from ScotRail in a variety of ways, such as free-phone, free deaf phone, visit to staff stations, or via an online form.

Travellers in Scotland can now book Passenger Assistance with 1 hours' notice. This compares with many other UK train operators still requiring 6 hours' notice.

Annexe C

Petitioner submission of 8 September 2021 PE1869/B: Make it law for all railway stations to have step free access

I thank the Scottish Government for responding to my petition, I have one point to make.

1. In the response by the Scottish Government, it states that the UK Government is in charge of the railways in Scotland. Although the Scottish Government are saying that all new stations will have step free access, I believe the Committee should look into this in detail.

I understand the Committee has the final decision but I urge them to look into this further.