

# Heritage Alliance Accessibility action plan consultation Response



15 November 2017

The Heritage Alliance is England's biggest coalition of heritage interests, bringing together well over 100 mainly national organisations supported by over 7 million members, friends, volunteers, trustees and staff. From historic houses and museums to archaeological sites, canals and historic vehicles, the Heritage Alliance's diverse membership owns, manages and cares for the vast majority of England's historic environment.

A general issue in relation to accessibility is the lack of public transport in 'the final mile' is a serious issue for some parts of the heritage sector's ability to cater for disabled people and others who rely on to public transport. The locations of many heritage attractions are often remote from stations or main bus routes. The problem is often exacerbated by the non-running of Sunday bus services. This excludes disabled people from experiencing these attractions. It is harder for attractions to justify spending money improving their offer for disabled visitors where there is not the infrastructure in place to allow disabled people to easily visit. Disabled people's inability to visit such attractions will also have a negative economic effect as they are unable to visit and spend money.

Buses, councils and owners of attractions should work together to ensure a proper service allowing these places to be visited by all. Improved service provision may require further Government investment. Addressing this issue would both benefit disabled people and encourage a shift to public transport rather than polluting private cars.

We have responded to particular [consultation questions](#) which are relevant to the historic environment below:

**Action 8: We will continue to roll-out station access improvements for which funding has been allocated, and deliver the Access for All programme in full, building on the significant progress that the programme has already made. We will continue to seek to extend the Access for All programme further in the future. We would welcome your feedback. Do you agree or disagree with the action proposed? Are there any other areas which require further attention? Please explain why.**

We welcome moves to improve disabled facilities at railways stations. However, it should be borne in mind that it is not only listed railway stations which require sensitive treatment. Non-listed historic stations are non-designated heritage assets but still deserve sensitive intervention. This has not always been done in the past, harming the stations and their settings. It would be good practice to consult local communities on proposed changes to their local stations to ensure any harm is kept to a minimum.

**Consultation Question 15: How can the Department for Transport support Community Transport Operators further?**

Community Transport Operators could be used to enable disabled people who are travelling from outside their home area to visit historic or other attractions. However, many such schemes require someone to be registered to use them. Registration and payment would not make sense for a one-off visit. If there was mutual recognition of the schemes this could boost disabled people's ability to travel to new places and visit historic attractions or friends.

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