



26th June 2020

Dear Aileen,

Thank you for the invitation to provide a written statement to the Special Committee on Covid-19 on the topic of the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities and the disability sector.

The request from the Special Committee highlighted a number of issues for consideration and under the heading of the impact of COVID-19 on daily life and services, focused on the accessibility of public transport and public sanitation facilities. This statement will therefore focus in detail on the public transport sector. However, the statement also provides brief information on the aviation, maritime and sport sectors.

The statement that follows is, as requested, presented as concisely as possible. Should the Committee require further data or information, I, and my colleagues in the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will be very happy to provide this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Graham Doyle'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Graham' being more prominent than the last name 'Doyle'.

Graham Doyle
Secretary General

The Secretary General is a Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015.

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1. Introduction

1. The emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic in the early months of 2020 has had unprecedented impacts across all sectors of the Department. Given the issues for consideration highlighted by the request from the Special Committee for COVID-19, this statement will focus in detail on the public transport sector.
2. DTTAS has worked since the outset of this crisis with partners across the public and the private sectors to ensure the continuity of essential transport, and the safe operation of these services, providing for the ongoing provision of vital health and food supplies to Ireland, and guaranteeing access to public transport for key workers.
3. Much of the work in early weeks of this crisis was focussed on ensuring the safe and continued operation of essential transport services. Along with most other sectors and businesses in the country, the Government's announcement on 24 March led to shut down across the rest of our sectors.
4. COVID-19 has been a profound and swift shock to the Public Transport sector. At the onset of the emergency in mid-March, there was a sharp drop in passenger numbers across all forms of public transport, falling by approximately 90% of normal levels. This situation continued until mid-May albeit with some upward movement since the implementation of Phase 1 of the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Business and Society. All operators are now reporting significant numbers of services that are operating at, or above COVID-19 capacity levels. On most days Dublin Bus, Go Ahead and Bus Éireann are all carrying over 30%, Luas is between 20% and 30% and Irish Rail are between 15% and 20% of pre-COVID-19 levels. In rural areas, Local Link is reporting that they are carrying between 40% and 50% of pre-COVID-19 numbers of passengers.
5. Since the beginning of the emergency, the Government has been clear that continued operation of the public transport sector is important and it designated public transport as an "essential service", recognising the importance of keeping the system running especially for carrying essential workers and other passengers making necessary journeys throughout the crisis period. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has been working with all transport operators to ensure service continuity. The majority of sub-vented PSO services continued to operate on a reduced schedule, with the aim of strengthening the robustness of service delivery for longer.
6. Measures were introduced across the public transport system, guided by NPHET and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, including enhanced cleaning regimes and social distancing measures. The public health advice regarding 2-metre social distancing on all public transport services constrains the carrying capacity of the public transport fleet to approximately 20% of their normal passenger capacity. In the case of a double decker bus this equates to c.17 passengers, while for coaches it is

c.12 passengers. In the case of trains and trams the restrictions mean that even less than 20% of normal capacity can be utilised.

7. The Government at its meeting on 25 June at which it confirmed the proceeding of Phase 3 of the Roadmap, agreed to permit the use of up to 50% capacity of the normal passenger-carrying capacity (seated and standing) of the public transport fleet and that other public health measures should be put in place. Public transport is a key facilitator of the Roadmap and demand for public transport will continue to rise as the country progressively unlocks business and other facilities with more people returning to work and greater recommencement of retail and leisure activities.
8. The other public health measures to be put in place are:
 - the mandatory wearing of face coverings on public transport, with certain exceptions, including people who have a disability that means using a face covering would be very difficult;
 - an extensive information campaign will be launched by the NTA in relation to the changed social distancing policy, to include a significant signage campaign and recommendation that all passengers should carry personal hand sanitisers; and
 - continued strong messaging that public transport capacity remains restricted and therefore should only be used for essential travel, with only those who absolutely have to travel at peak times doing so and encouraging staggered retail and office opening hours. People will continue to be encouraged to walk or cycle where practical, and organisations will be encouraged to continue to facilitate working from home.

2. Public Transport

2.1 Policy

- 2.1.1 The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) has responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The DTTAS' policy for accessible public transport is embodied in the concept of *'Transport Access for All'* and is based on the principle of universal access to public transport.
- 2.1.2 Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (as amended), the NTA has statutory responsibility for promoting the development of an integrated, accessible public transport network.
- 2.1.3 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by Ireland in 2018. Amongst the obligations on State parties is the progressive realisation of public transport accessibility. This is the approach in Ireland in relation to progressively making older infrastructure accessible – see further details below.

- 2.1.4 DTTAS has consolidated all of the accessible public transport actions across a range of “whole of Government” strategies into its Accessibility Work Programme. The two key such strategies are the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 and the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024. The DTTAS Accessibility Consultative Committee, which includes representatives of the Disability Stakeholders Group, disability organisations and relevant State agencies, monitors implementation of these actions on a quarterly basis.

2.2 Infrastructure and Services

- 2.2.1 Accessibility features, such as wheelchair accessibility and audio/visual aids, are built into all **new public transport infrastructure** projects and vehicles from the design stage. Newer systems such as the Luas are fully accessible, as are all new buses purchased by the NTA.
- 2.2.2 A number of key new major public transport projects are proposed for delivery under the National Development Plan in the period to 2027 which will be fully accessible as part of the normal design.
- 2.2.3 However, work remains to be done on the retro-fitting of **older (legacy) infrastructure**, eg Victorian era train stations. DTTAS funds an on-going Retro-fit Programme, managed by the NTA, to:
- install accessible bus stops in rural and regional areas,
 - upgrade bus stops and bus bays at regional bus stations;
 - upgrade train stations to make them accessible to wheelchair users, and
 - provide grant support to increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis.
- 2.2.4 Budget 2018 included a multi-annual allocation of almost €28m for the Retro-fit Programme for the period 2018 to 2021. This ring-fenced funding is a trebling of the previous allocation under the Capital Plan. In 2020 funding is €7m and €9.8m in 2021. Under the NDP there will also be continued funding to retro-fit older public transport infrastructure.
- 2.2.5 In addition to funding under the Retro-fit Programme, in 2020 a ring-fenced rail lift refurbishment / replacement programme was established by the NTA, with funding of €3.3 million in 2020. The programme is to renew and replace life-expired lifts and lifts in poor condition, to ensure that the reliability and availability of lift access. Similar funding is envisioned for next year.
- 2.2.6 An overview of some of the main accessibility improvements and measures planned or underway is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 Impact of COVID-19 on daily life and services

Accessibility - Impacts and measures to assist people with disabilities

- 2.3.1 In relation to impacts and measures to assist people with disabilities on public transport during the COVID-19 emergency and enhanced cleaning measures, the NTA, in consultation with public transport operators, has advised the below.
- 2.3.2 In mid-March, all public transport services were reduced to a Saturday service. There were restrictions on all but 20% per cent of the seats to ensure social distancing measures. As of 8th June, most of the public transport timetables have returned to normal, but the 2m social distancing requirement means that the overall passenger capacity remains restricted to 20% of the pre-COVID-19 levels. It is still encouraged that public transport should only be used by essential workers or for other people making essential journeys.
- 2.3.3 The **wheelchair spaces** on Irish Rail, Dublin Bus, and on the city and town services of Bus Éireann and Go Ahead are kept free and are not restricted. Some of the **designated priority seats** are blocked off by COVID-19 signage in order to meet the mandated requirements on social distancing of 2m separation but where possible at least one priority seat is always kept free.
- 2.3.4 Drivers on Dublin Bus, Go Ahead and Bus Éireann direct people to the priority seat, if requested.
- 2.3.5 Floor decal stickers are being implemented on buses and coaches next week to highlight that the free priority seats are for those people who need them. There is also COVID-19 messages displayed on the buses asking passengers to keep the seats free downstairs for those who really need them.
- 2.3.6 Irish Rail has reported that there has been a slight increase in requests for **assistance** since April but it is still 15-21% of the normal level. A few wheelchair customers are travelling (essential workers etc) so ramps are provided and they self-board.
- 2.3.7 Irish Rail is monitoring loadings and increasing train sizes where necessary to ensure social distancing on board and seating available for all. Trains with on-board staff will assist in event where seats are utilised to near capacity. There is no knowledge of any issues regarding priority seating to date but staff monitoring numbers have been asked to report any such issues.
- 2.3.8 Irish Rail has to date recruited and trained 56 Customer Service Officers on intercity routes. Recruitment of further CSO's has been suspended due to COVID-19 but Irish Rail hope to return to the recruitment process soon assuming restrictions continue to be lifted. CSOs on intercity routes eliminate the advance notice requirement for people with disabilities on such services.

- 2.3.9 On Bus Éireann regional coach routes there is a booking system in place. Since the 1st of April there has only been 4 wheelchair space bookings - two did not turn up and in the case of the other two bookings the driver did not have to come in close contact with the passenger as the type of vehicle allows wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access. There have been no bookings requested on the wheelchair lift type of coach.
- 2.3.10 Go Ahead has reported that there have been no bookings for wheelchair spaces or assistance since before 1st April.
- 2.3.11 Luas have Customer Assurance Officers in Pink High Visibility vests on the platforms and trams to assist all passengers. If Luas is contacted they can arrange assistance for people but keeping in line with public health guidance.
- 2.3.12 Dublin Bus **Travel Assistance Scheme**¹ has been suspended in line with HSE advice on social distancing. Dublin Bus keep the travel assistant email and phone covered for anyone looking for advice or information and there has been some enquiries to the team mainly from people with visual impairments. They are planning to do video calls to disability units so that assistance can be given to talk people through where to sit and getting off at the centre doors. It is planned that the Travel Assistance Scheme will be back doing actual assists on the 10th of August once it is in line with public health guidance.
- 2.3.13 In rural areas, all **Local Link** Rural Regular services continued to run as normal. All Demand Responsive (DRT) day time services also continued to run but many were redeployed for 'collect and deliver' services, delivering critical medical, food and other supplies from pharmacies and local shops to those vulnerable members of the community who were unable to travel.
- 2.3.14 Services were suspended across the DRT evening services network and the pilot Community Transport Services scheme was also repurposed as a 'collect and deliver' service. It is planned to reinstate DRT evening services from 29th June onwards in line with the proposed lifting of restrictions under Phase 3 of the Government's Roadmap. Due to social distancing requirements, the pilot Community Transport Services scheme which utilises cars as opposed to buses, will remain primarily as a 'collect and delivery' service until further notice, due to social distancing requirements.
- 2.3.15 Daily demand for Local Link services, in line with other public transport, was typically between 10% and 20% of what it was prior to mid-March. As a result of the gradual easing of restrictions in Phases 1 & 2 of the Government's Roadmap, some recovery in passenger numbers is

¹ The Travel Assistance Scheme is funded by the NTA and managed by Dublin Bus. Through the Scheme people with disabilities can avail of assistance and practical advice on how to travel independently on journeys on Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead, DART or LUAS, within the Greater Dublin Area.

apparent in recent weeks. This is evident on both Rural Regular services and DRT services across the Local Link network. The NTA has informed DRT passengers that due to reduced capacity of vehicles and an increase in passenger numbers, all passengers must pre-book or confirm their travel plans on the day prior to travel.

- 2.3.16 The situation remains however that public transport capacity with existing social distancing requirements is significantly reduced. Mitigation measures introduced by the NTA to date in relation to Local link include the introduction of additional services as well as extra fleet to cope with capacity issues.
- 2.3.17 Whilst it is a requirement that all contracted services for Local Link are wheelchair accessible, some of the additional fleet contracted on an emergency basis may not be wheelchair accessible. Every effort is being made to ensure that these vehicles are only deployed on routes where there is no known wheelchair passengers travelling.

Enhanced cleaning on vehicles and in train stations/bus stations

- 2.3.18 Irish Rail have increased their cleaning regime for their turnaround and nightly cleaning staff which have increased by 10-15%. This is to ensure that all common touch areas such as buttons, grab handles, tables, toilets, windows and driving cabs on their fleet and touch points in Stations, are cleaned to as high a standard as possible. They are in a procurement phase to provide a trial of hand sanitiser for customers at stations, and also trials of a microbe shield on their carriage fleet.
- 2.3.19 Dublin Bus have the internal of their buses cleaned thoroughly at least twice a day.
- 2.3.20 Go Ahead follow a four stage cleaning process daily which includes cleaning of the vehicle followed by disinfecting, chemical fogging sprayer, ATP testing to ensure that surfaces are clean.
- 2.3.21 Bus Éireann have a daily cleaning regime and between trips on their buses including the touch points such as hand rails, bell buzzers and ticket machine areas. Inter trip cleaning is also carried out in their stations, depots, key interchanges and city centre locations.
- 2.3.22 Luas has a deep cleaning regime which takes place daily but they also include an additional disinfectant wipe-down of all touch points and the drivers' cabs. Luas also allows the opening of the platform-side doors at every stop automatically, so the buttons do not need to be pressed by passengers to open them.
- 2.3.23 In line with other public transport services, an enhanced cleaning regime has been introduced across the Local Link network including increased in-service cleaning, paying particular attention to the driver area and customer touch points.

2.4 Interim Mobility Intervention Programmes

- 2.4.1 During the COVID-19 period of maximum restrictions, when all but essential workers were required to stay at home, there were dramatic declines in the numbers of people travelling each day. Car traffic fell to about 30% of pre-COVID 19 levels, bus usage on city services dropped by 90% and rail usage reduced by about 97%. As the restrictions ease under the Government's Roadmap, the numbers of people travelling and moving around have started to increase again. The capacity on public transport due to social distancing requirements is still approximately 20%. This means that with fewer people being able to travel on public transport, more people will need to be accommodated on other modes. While many who can do so will continue to work from home, there will be more people who will choose to walk or cycle into the city or travel by car.
- 2.4.2 The NTA has been working with local authorities to develop mobility intervention programmes designed to encourage more walking and cycling, to assist with social distancing and to try and ensure that both public transport and private car is available to those who cannot use a different mode. These programmes are particularly relevant to our major cities; however, the NTA has written to all 31 local authorities to offer technical and financial support to any local authority considering introducing similar on-street measures to enable larger towns etc. to function under the new circumstances arising from the COVID-19. This support offered by the NTA to local authorities has, in recent days, been complemented by the issuance of a joint Circular from the Department and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and DTTAS informing them of the publication of a new Interim Advice Note. This Interim Advice Note is available to view on the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets website (www.dmuirs.ie) and provides guidance to local authorities in relation to the implementation of COVID-19 related mobility interventions. The Advice Note includes guidance that designers should ensure that measures align with the principles of Universal Design and consider the needs of people with disabilities.
- 2.4.3 An example of the type of programme being developed by the NTA and local authorities is the 'Interim Mobility Intervention Programme for Dublin City' as developed by Dublin City Council (DCC) and the NTA. DCC has responsibility for implementing the Programme, the transport-specific objectives of which are:
- To improve pedestrian safety through the provision of additional space for movement and enhanced pedestrian areas;
 - To enable more people to cycle by providing safer cycling facilities;
 - To provide additional space at many bus stops in order to facilitate social distancing while waiting;
 - To accommodate a certain level of car use, calibrated with other transport needs; and

- To implement various bus route changes required to enable the roll-out of cycling and walking measures while still maintaining a strong public transport network

- 2.4.4 One of the measures introduced to improve pedestrian safety is alteration to the timing of signals so as to reduce the time pedestrians have to wait to cross the road and so alleviate any queuing at crossings and some have been adjusted to provide, in the city centre, automatic activation of a pedestrian crossing signal during daytime hours.
- 2.4.5 While there are a range of measures proposed under the plan, it is intended that the proposals will not diminish or reduce any of the accessibility arrangements already in place for people with disabilities. While initial interventions will largely be through temporary materials such as plastic bollards and barriers, it may be possible that more physical widening of footpaths can be achieved in later phases, which would allow more accessibility elements to be considered. Measures implemented will be subject to on-going review and, where feasible, modifications can be accommodated where necessary. The Programme is being implemented by DCC on a street by street basis as it evolves and could take months to complete.
- 2.4.6 Members of the Irish Wheelchair Association, Public Participation Network, NCBI, Independent Living Movement Ireland and Voice for Vision Impairment, were invited to look at a trial modular bus stop fitted in the North Circular Road and a footpath widening on Nassau Street to gain their insight in what improvements were necessary. DCC has published its contact point for the Programme, COVID-19mobility@dublincity.ie, so that individuals and groups can contact DCC directly to outline any specific concerns which they have about the implementation of the Programme.

3. Aviation

- 3.1.1 Airline traffic has now fallen by 90% across Europe, bringing activity and associated revenue to an all-time low. Passenger numbers declined rapidly, with most airports seeing reductions of 99% or more.
- 3.1.2 A Code of Practice for safe air passenger management in light of COVID-19 is being developed through the coordination of the National Air Transport Facilitation Committee, led by the Department. This Code of Practice reflects European best practice as set out in EASA/ECDC Guidelines published on 20 May. In line with this, entry to airport terminals is restricted to those who are arriving or departing, with the exception of people accompanying or picking up a passenger requiring assistance - persons with reduced mobility or unaccompanied minors.
- 3.1.3 Ensuring specific requirements for persons with reduced mobility is primarily a matter for the entity responsible for implementing public health safety measures under the Code, i.e. airports

and air carriers, in line with national public health guidance concerning COVID-19 measures and EC 1107/2006. The Commission for Aviation Regulation is the National Enforcement Body for EC 1107/2006 which concerns the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air.

4. Maritime

- 4.1.1 The resilience of the maritime sector has been a notable feature of the ongoing pandemic which has negatively impacted all transport sectors. However, while shipping continued to operate, Ro-Ro passenger operators (ferries) have seen reductions in passenger number of up to 98% due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions by Government on travel.
- 4.1.2 The ability of ferry operators to adapt and successfully apply public health guidance over the last number of month's positions them well for a recovery in passenger numbers. DTTAS has been working with stakeholders including ferry companies, ports, and the HSE to coordinate the development of an agreed protocol to facilitate a safe and gradual restoration of maritime passenger transport as countries start to lift restrictions. The Guidelines for Accessible Passenger Transport which are referenced in the forthcoming protocol, contain a range of practical advice and information and continue to provide a key support to all those involved in providing maritime passenger transport services throughout the crisis, including passenger vessel owners and operators, port operators and local authorities.

5. Sport

- 5.1.1 The Sports Capital Programme (SCP) is the primary vehicle for Government support for the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment throughout the country. Applications for the most recent round of the SCP funding in 2018 included, for the first time, a major focus on people with disabilities. For example under the most recent round of the programme 45% of maximum assessment marks were only available to projects from disadvantaged areas or those that were focused on people with disabilities. It is also a condition that all gym equipment funded must accessible to people with disabilities.
- 5.1.2 The Department has also published a guide to accessible gym equipment and promotes on its website guides, produced Cara – Sport Inclusion Ireland, to accessibility in wider aspects of sports provision.
- 5.1.3 While COVID-19 has had a major effect on sports clubs and groups in terms of their activities and fund raising, the Department has continued to pay out grants through the Programme.

Appendix 1: Accessibility improvements and measures planned or underway

Heavy Rail

- **Stations:** Since 2007, 17 rail stations have been built to accessibility standards. 118 of the 144 rail stations on the network have all platforms accessible and in the remaining 26 stations one platform is accessible. The Retro-fit Programme upgrades around three stations yearly.
- **Fleet:** All rail fleet is accessible internally. Due to the platform train interface (gap) advance notice is required if wheelchair users need assistance in alighting/boarding. In May 2019, Irish Rail announced the initiation of a tender process for 600 electric /battery-electric powered DART carriages. The tender scoring for the new fleet will award higher scores to carriage builders who provide the best platform train interface solution for accessibility.
- **Advance notice** for customers requiring assistance has been reduced on the DART network, Northern, Maynooth and Cork commuter lines. Irish Rail is rolling out Customer Service Officers on all Inter-city routes which will eliminate the advance notice requirement for people with disabilities on such services. Irish Rail is developing a smartphone accessibility app to address some of the key communication breakdowns that occur when providing assistance to persons with disabilities.
- **Audio/visual announcements** are available on all intercity and commuter rail services. 47% of the DART fleet is in need of upgraded Passenger Information Systems (PIS). The NTA has approved funding for the replacement of the DART PIS (audio/visual system). Irish Rail intends to award the contract in 2020 for installation on 17x4 car sets in 2021.

Urban Bus

- **Fleet:** All Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann and Go Ahead urban fleets are wheelchair accessible. Approx 68% of the Dublin Bus fleet has a space for both a wheelchair and a buggy which will rise to 100% as the fleet is replaced.
- **Bus Stops:** All bus stops in Dublin, regional cities and towns are wheelchair accessible.
- **Audio/visual announcements:** Available on all Dublin Bus and Go-Ahead fleet.

Regional and Rural Bus

- **Fleet:** **Bus Éireann** fleets in town services in Sligo, Athlone, Dundalk, Drogheda, Navan and Balbriggan are wheelchair accessible. Approx 89% of Bus Éireann's coach (longer distance high floor) fleet is wheelchair accessible. This increases as vehicles are replaced.
- A new type of low floor bus, for **PSO regional commuter routes up to 50km**, allows wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access and has a dedicated wheelchair space (seats do not need to be removed). In 2019, the NTA took delivery of 52 of these new buses and plan to go to tender this year for 40 more vehicles.
- Approx. 80% of **Local Link** service trips are either fully or partially accessible. The NTA has now conditioned that all new Local Link services tendered must be wheelchair accessible.

- **Bus stops:** Under the Retro-fit Programme there is a programme to deliver accessible bus stops in 43 rural towns (one stop in each direction) with a population of 5,000, by 2021. Pre COVID-19, 12 stops were completed.
- **Bus stations:** Bus Éireann commenced Accessibility Audits on 12 of its bus stations and reviewed the outside area of 4 of their bus stations to incorporate an accessible bus stop, set down area, accessible parking spaces and safe pedestrian facilities. Works to install accessible bus stops outside of Cavan, Monaghan and Drogheda stations, funded under the Retro-fit Programme, were completed last year. Similar works commenced at Ballyshannon and Sligo stations.
- **Audio/visual announcements:** Bus Éireann fleet has, since 2015, been fitted with multimedia screens which show route progress and stop information. A project is underway to roll out on-board audio and visual announcements for all 6,000 bus stops in rural and regional areas – all stops now live in Waterford, Sligo, Athlone, Galway, Tralee and Limerick networks. BÉ hopes to finish the stops in the GDA, eg Route 133 (Wicklow-Dublin) and Cork later this year.

Commercial licenced bus services

- In 2019, the NTA initiated a public consultation on proposals for accessibility requirements for commercial licenced bus services – no such requirements exist at present. accessibility licence conditions for new licences and on renewal of existing licences will be determined following the outcome of the consultation.

Taxis – Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV)

- Since 2010 the regulatory framework for SPSVs requires that new taxi or hackney licences may only be granted for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs).
- The WAV Grant Scheme, funded under the Retro-fit Programme, and operating annually since 2014, provides grants for the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as WAVs.
- The number of WAVs has increased from 4% in 2014 to 14.7% currently.
- Under the 2019 WAV Grant Scheme, 1,044 grant assisted vehicles were added to the fleet, 912 of which were associated with new vehicle licences.

Other Accessibility Measures

- The **Travel Assistance Scheme** allows people with disabilities to avail of assistance on how to travel independently on Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead, DART or Luas, within the GDA.
- In 2018, the Minister appointed **people with personal experience of disability** to the Boards of the NTA, CIÉ, Bus Éireann, Irish Rail, and Dublin Bus. Individuals representing people with disabilities have also been appointed to the Taxi Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Railway Safety Advisory Council (RSAC).
- The **Just A Minute (JAM) Card** was launched in 2019 with the NTA, Dublin Bus, Go Ahead, Irish Rail, Luas, Bus Éireann and Local Link becoming Jam Card friendly. It assists people with a communication barrier to tell others discreetly that they need a little extra time.

- Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go Ahead, Irish Rail and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (Luas) each have an **Access Officer** and all, except Go Ahead who are planning to establish one, have a **Disability User Group** in place.
- In 2019 the NTA appointed a **Public Transport Accessibility Manager** whose role includes establishing a formal engagement process with key disability representative groups to ensure the needs of those with a disability are considered in all major public transport improvement plans.