

Friendly Communities

Age Friendly Steering Group

Summary Report

Leeds Train Station

27th June 2023



The Age Friendly Steering Group (AFSG) conducted a site visit to Leeds Train Station in June 2023, building upon prior consultations in 2020 and 2021 regarding the station's transformation into a sustainable travel hub. The group's visit aimed to assess the station's age and dementia friendliness, provide recommendations for improvements, and understand the upcoming development plans.

Background and Purpose: The AFSG was invited by Network Rail's Associate Sponsor for Leeds Area Improvements, James Moy, to revisit Leeds Train Station as part of ongoing consultations on its development. Previous consultations had led to changes in station plans, particularly regarding accessible seating. The June 2023 visit sought to understand the next phase of development, evaluate the station's current state from an age and dementia-friendly perspective, and offer recommendations for significant enhancements, given the upcoming extensive construction.

Feedback from the Visit: Several key issues were highlighted during the site visit:

1. **Journey to the Meeting Point:** Some bus stops had been moved far from the station, causing difficulties for passengers, especially those with sensory or mobility issues. The limited seating along the walk was problematic.
2. **Route to the Station:** Road closures and operational issues with traffic lights presented accessibility challenges, particularly for individuals with mobility aids or wheelchairs. Clear signage helped direct commuters to the station.
3. **Dark Neville Street Entrance:** Issues related to parking and gate closures were noted at this entrance, which some found the entrance underused and intimidating.
4. **Taxi Accessibility:** Private hire taxi accessibility remained a concern. The drop off point is often congested and is difficult to access due to road closures

cutting off East Leeds. While some improvements were noted, challenges persisted.

5. **Ticketing:** Questions arose about using digital ticket machines, with staff support being essential for those unfamiliar with the process. Concerns were raised about the potential closure of physical ticket offices.
6. **Seating and Handrails:** Accessibility and availability of seating and handrails were examined. While indoor ramps had handrails, outdoor slopes required further evaluation. Seating options in various areas of the ground level of the station were appreciated. The seating on the upper level was difficult to find, needs to be more accessible and requires better signage.
7. **Deaf/Hearing Impaired Facilities:** The installation of hearing loops and BSL video stands was seen as a positive development, though the presence of an onsite interpreter as part of the passenger assistance team would further develop accessibility.
8. **Toilets:** Accessible and free-to-use toilets were welcomed, though some suggested enhancements such as contrasted toilet seats and minor repairs.
9. **Lighting:** Concerns about insufficient lighting at the Dark Neville Street entrance were raised as people felt it was quite ominous and scary. It also presented issues for people living with dementia due to the shadows.
10. **Signage:** Signage improvements were noted. It was highlighted that intuitive waymarking is essential whilst the station is being developed.

Age and Dementia Friendly Recommendations:

Physical Environment:

- Improve seating and associated signage on the upper level.
- Install bus company information stands with bus company staff.
- Ensure bus stops are relocated to City Square
- Add signage indicating cash options at ticket machines.
- Provide additional private hire taxi drop-off points.
- Extend free car parking time.
- Ensure consistent and accurate information from multi-story car park staff.
- Maintain a physical ticket office with trained staff and cash options.
- Improve signage during developments.

Respect and Inclusion:

- Encourage businesses at the station to sign up for Age and Dementia Friendly Schemes.
- Include more age-positive imagery in resources and marketing.
- Raise awareness of passenger assistance services with Neighbourhood Networks.
- Appoint an Age Friendly Ambassador.
- Ensure consistent and friendly service from staff.
- Offer BSL interpreters at the passenger assistance team.
- Enhance the passenger assistance waiting room.

- Increase signage for designated seats outside the waiting room.
- Encourage businesses to sign up for Age and Dementia Friendly schemes.
- Install free water refill points.
- Add more accessible seating on the upper floor.

Communication and Information:

- Update maps and guides with accurate information.
- Provide clear signage on glass/transparent doors.
- Establish a single, clear telephone number for the train station.
- Publish opening hours in non-digital formats.
- Ensure staff are available to support people using the ticket vending machines
- Increase awareness of available support through the Passenger Assistance Service.
- Provide hard copies of the Network Rail's Guide to Leeds Train Station.
- Update resources available in Braille.

We have prioritised 10 Age and Dementia Friendly Actions

1. **Fulfil the 2023 Age and Dementia Friendly Actions** as an Age and Dementia Friendly business and encourage all onsite businesses to also sign up to the scheme. This could be done via a Friendly Communities stall and sign-up day in the Train Station.
2. **Enhance Bus Accessibility:** Ensure that when bus stops are relocated, they are close to the Train Station to support the Leeds Travel Gateway and that there is a bus company stand within the train station.
3. **Ticket Office and Cash Options:** Ensure that a physical ticket office with trained staff remains during opening hours and that passengers have an option to purchase a ticket with cash.
4. **Phone Number:** Have one phone for the train station with a trained staff member who can signpost.
5. **Signage and Maps:** Ensure intuitive waymarking is in place during developments. Update maps and issues raised with the signage.
6. **Training for staff:** Provide Age and Dementia Friendly training for all station staff to enhance understanding and support for passengers with diverse needs.
7. **Communication Campaign:** Launch a communication campaign to raise awareness about the train station's accessibility features, services, and guides, targeting older adults and people living with dementia through Neighbourhood Networks and memory support groups.
8. **Add Age Positive Imagery:** To have more inclusive age positive imagery within the station, resources and marketing. Examples can be found via the [Age Positive Image Library](#)
9. **Additional Sheltered Taxi Pick Up/Drop off Points:** When developments allow add more private hire taxi points and sheltered roofs to the taxi/pick up drop off points.

10. **Accessible Waiting Rooms:** Ensure waiting rooms, including those for assisted travel have automatic doors and are comfortable, accessible and well-marked.

These actions focus on improving physical accessibility, communication, and support services to make Leeds Train Station more age and dementia-friendly

Conclusion: The Age Friendly Steering Group's visit to Leeds Train Station in June 2023 revealed various challenges and opportunities for improvement. It however also showcased many of the improvements and positive developments like the improved seating, signage and the accessible free toilets. We request a meeting to discuss our recommendations and express an interest in conducting another site visit after the ongoing construction works are completed. Our recommendations aim to make the station more age and dementia-friendly, ensuring accessibility, inclusivity, and clear communication for **all** travellers.