



Department
for Transport

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
Tel: 0300 330 3000

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: 280004

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Ian Cook

By email to: stepfreeaccess@virginmedia.com

Dear Mr Cook

Thank you for your email dated 17 February 2020 to Ministers at the Department for Transport about step free access on the UK's rail network and Flitwick station. Your correspondence has been forwarded to the Passenger Services team for reply.

Concerning the comment in your letter about the budget for the Access for All programme, the Government is absolutely committed to improving accessibility at railway stations and is delivering step-free routes at stations across Britain. More than 200 stations have been completed and a further 1500 stations have benefited from smaller scale access improvement such as toilets, automatic doors or tactile paving. This is in addition to access improvements delivered as part of other programmes; e.g. Crossrail will make 40 stations accessible.

Regarding Flitwick in particular, many stations date from a time when the needs of disabled customers were simply not considered and at present only around a fifth of our stations have step free access to every platform. Therefore, the situation at Flitwick station is unfortunately far from unique.

This is why we have extended our Access for All programme across rail Control Period 6 (2019 to 2024) with an additional £300m of funding from the public purse.

We asked the industry to nominate stations for the new round of funding and received more than 300 nominations. The Flitwick nomination was a strong one and the station only narrowly missed out. We received many more nominations than we were able to support at the time, making it difficult to justify this station's inclusion ahead of others that better met the criteria used.

We have also used £20m of the new funding to relaunch the Access for All Mid-Tier programme, which supports smaller scale access improvements with up to £1m of Government support, alongside confirmed third-party funding.

The Department asked the industry to nominate projects for the new funding by October last year, and we received nominations for over 100 projects covering more than 240 stations, including Flitwick.

The Department plans to announce successful projects in early spring 2020, and whilst we cannot guarantee a particular proposal will be included in the programme we can guarantee it will be considered equally along with other nominated projects across the country.

The Government's position is unequivocal. The industry must deliver an accessible service for every passenger on every rail journey to create an inclusive and accessible railway.

Thank you again for raising your concerns. We hope this reply has been helpful.

Yours sincerely

Correspondence Team, Passenger Services, Rail Group