



December 2023

## Welcome! to the Smarter Information, Smarter Journeys (SISJ) Newsletter

The SISJ team's ethos is "to deliver value for customers in a collaborative way and provide customers with all the information they want, when and how they want it". All of this comes from working as one team – being united, inclusive, transparent and open. Within this "one team" approach, we do not just mean the core SISJ programme team but also our industry stakeholders. Working collaboratively as a cross-industry enlarged team, means together we put ourselves in the customers' shoes and discuss customer insights and trends to ensure at the outset we land on the right customer information outcomes. It's a partnership approach - from understanding issues together, to agreeing action, to overcoming challenges and collectively agreeing funding and deliverables.

The SISJ team continues to engage and link into the 'Brilliant Basics' quick wins work that the Customer Information Group is delivering. With SISJ focusing on the longer-term, strategic customer information improvements, together we work in tandem, to enhance the customer journey experience.

## 2023 Key Highlights

2023 has been a great year for the SISJ Programme. The team has had many successes and we would like to share some of these with you:



## Key Updates

### On-Train Passenger Announcements via GSM-R project (OTPA)

Industry approval has been secured to move forward with the On-Train Passenger Announcements (OTPA) via GSM-R project and funding approved by Network Rail to deploy this capability to 2,000 cabs. As illustrated in this [video](#), OTPA will deliver improved customer experience through bespoke targeted real-time announcements direct from TOC Control to passengers on-board trains.

In the last few months, the project team has been working hard to identify solutions to technical challenges, which had emerged during the project development phase. We are pleased to report that through extensive investigations with our technical partners, solutions have been found and endorsed across the industry.

Through a business trial, OTPA will be rolled out in 2,000 cabs of driver only operated (DOO) trains prioritising third rail fleets from early 2025. Following a successful trial, if additional funding is secured, further rollout will be extended on a TOC-by-TOC basis again prioritising DOO trains.

### Darwin evolution – new modernised solution

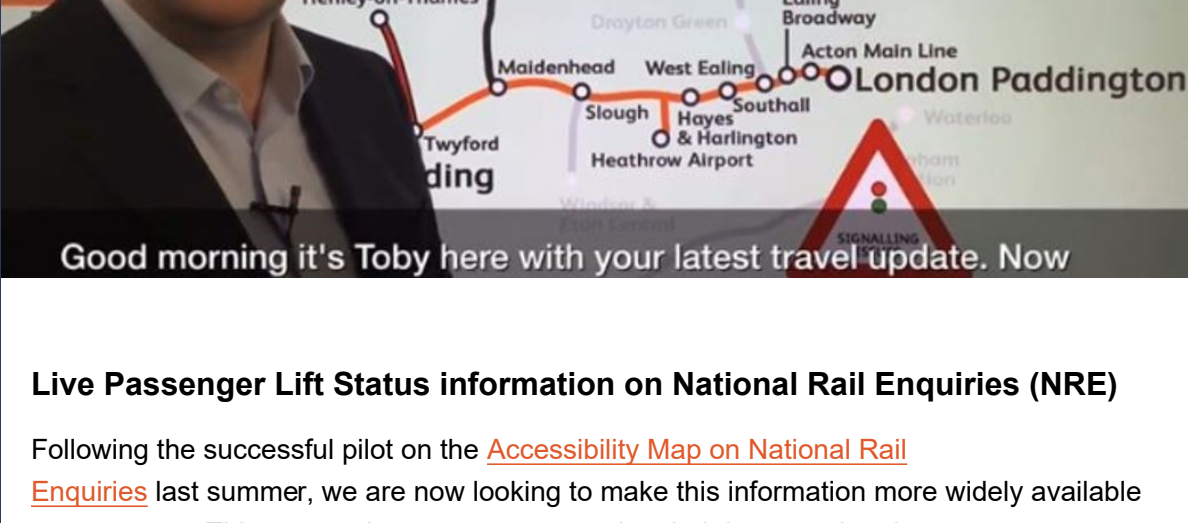
Darwin is a critical industry system and plays a key role in providing real-time information to customers on the status of their trains. It is vital it continues to be fit for purpose and future proof. Therefore, SISJ has committed to safeguarding and improving Darwin by modernising it from its current architectural platform to a new modernised solution. This new infrastructure is crucial, as operationally Darwin:

- Powers all Customer Information Screens across the network
- Serves essential industry and third-party digital channels including desktop/mobile websites and applications
- Services over eight billion Live Departure Application Programming Interface (API) requests yearly and half a million interactions every 30 minutes

In November, the Darwin Evolution Business case was taken to the Schemes and Services Board (SSB) for approval. The SSB approved funding and work to advance Darwin will begin in January 2024.

### Visual Disruption maps

A trial will start in the new year that provides customers with live visual information and advice on what to do during disruption. The concept involves a presenter stood in front of a map of the network explaining the disruption that is happening and providing advice to customers on what to do. This information will be in video format accessible via X (formerly Twitter), Totem screens at Network Rail managed stations in the trial, National Rail Enquiries, and on TOC digital channels of those operators participating in the trial.



### Live Passenger Lift Status information on National Rail Enquiries (NRE)

Following the successful pilot on the [Accessibility Map on National Rail Enquiries](#) last summer, we are now looking to make this information more widely available to customers. This means that customers can plan their journeys in advance more effectively, as they can check before travelling the status around >85% of station lifts where live lift data is available. We continue to work closely with colleagues in Network Rail to increase the 85% availability.

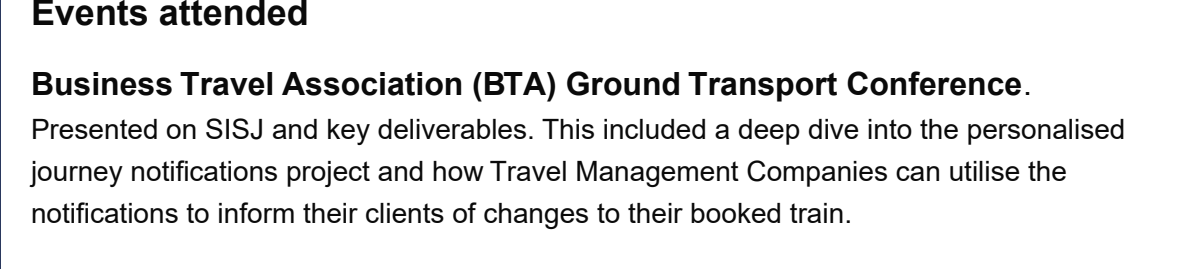


A new **screenreader-friendly** version of the National Rail Accessibility Map has also been launched. This version is text only, without the actual map itself or any zoom or pop-up features. Customers using screen readers are now able to access the same information as those using the main map but instead can more easily **hear** the accessibility status and features for all National Rail served stations in Britain.



## Other important SISJ programme information

- **Replacement of sold-out messaging:** This project aims to provide customers with clear information on seat reservations and allow customers to make informed booking decisions by providing warning messages when seats are no longer available on services which offer reservations. We are pleased to report that the project has now received industry guidance on the preferred option to develop. Next the SISJ team will conduct customer research and engage with train operators and third-party retailers to confirm requirements. This work will provide customers more information when they book and allow them to travel on the service that best suits them.
- **Visual information on-board trains.** We aim to provide better visual information on-board trains, particularly to help passengers who are deaf or who are experiencing hearing loss. Requirements will be used to propose changes to future on train passenger information systems standards and guidance.
- **Service Bulletins.** Funding for this project (previously known as warning symbols) has been secured and work is underway. Customers will be able to immediately see which service bulletins are relevant to their journey, as they include information on short-notice timetable alterations and accessibility information. Third party retailers will be able to make use of the new symbols, ensuring a large proportion of rail customers are reached.
- **Retailers' Engagement forum.** During the summer, the Retailers' Engagement Forum was launched. Each month subject matter experts come together and provide details on all aspects of rail retailing, with the aim of improving customer information. Members are kept informed of ongoing SISJ actions, including developments to core information services that are consumed by Retailers.
- **National Rail Communications Centre (NRCC).** New roles have been created at the NRCC to help drive forward more accurate, consistent customer information during disruption and identify ways to improve current processes. Roles are additional quality auditors, industry liaison manager, information controllers and a training and development manager.



## Events attended

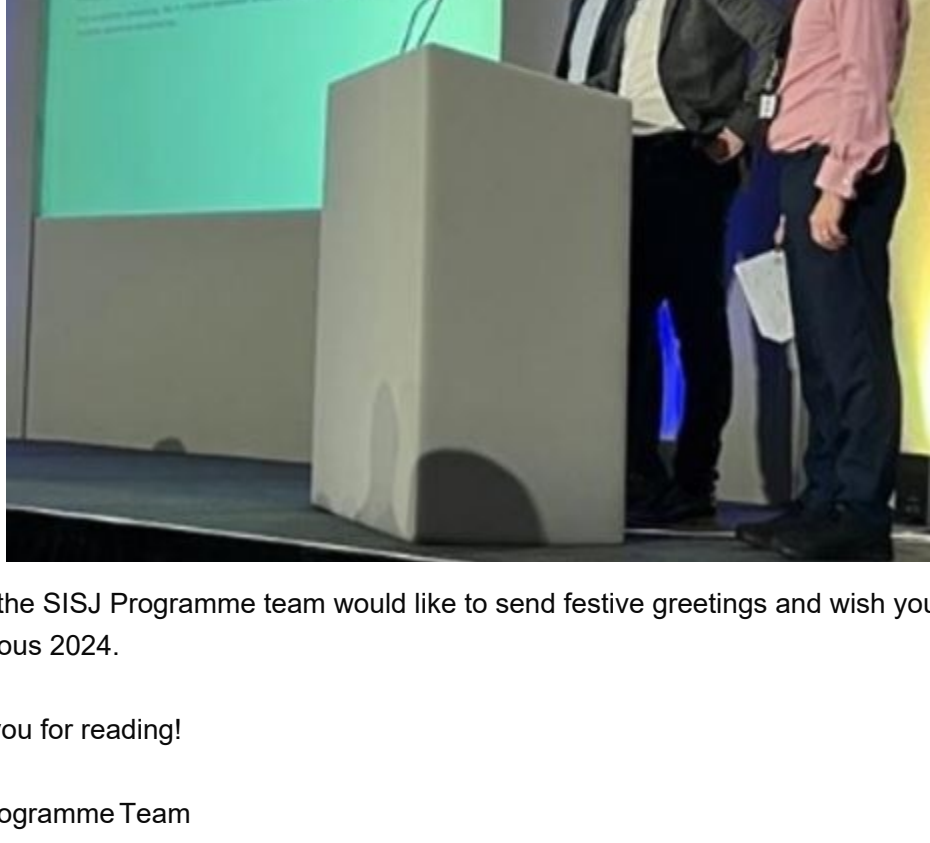
### Business Travel Association (BTA) Ground Transport Conference.

Presented on SISJ and key deliverables. This included a deep dive into the personalised journey notifications project and how Travel Management Companies can utilise the notifications to inform their clients of changes to their booked train.



**Network Rail lead stations conference.** Wide range of colleagues visited the SISJ stand where SISJ team members outlined the programme plus key projects and deliverables.

**Network Rail train planners conference.** Presented to Network Rail Train Planners on the programme scope as well as the successful implementation of the Personalised Journey notifications solution.



Finally, the SISJ Programme team would like to send festive greetings and wish you all a prosperous 2024.

Thank you for reading!

SISJ Programme Team

To hear more about SISJ V2 and its initiatives:

- Listen to the team's [podcast](#)
- Visit the [SISJ website](#)
- Contact a member of the SISJ Team: [SISJProgramme@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:SISJProgramme@raildeliverygroup.com)

[Contact Us](#)