

World Cup of Stations 2026: Accessibility

13 October 2026 · Doug Paulley

Summary

I scored the 20 “World Cup of Stations” finalists out of 110 and graded them from A to E. Leeds scores highest, at 83%, and gets grade B. So none of the finalists gets an A. (Leeds doesn't have Level Boarding; if it did it would score 95% and reach grade A.) I also awarded Kilmarnock, St Pancras International and Banbury grade B. I gave three stations grade C, nine get D and four get E. Bishopstone comes last, at 13%.

Lack of level boarding, limited step-free access and station staffing hold most stations back. St Pancras has level boarding on its Thameslink platforms, and Berney Arms probably has it from its Class 755 trains (but to what? It has no road access.) At every other station, wheelchair users need staff to deploy a ramp. But staff aren't always available! Some stations are never staffed, and are served by trains that may have no staff also.

National Rail Enquiries (NRE) lists staff help at Laindon and Basildon on weekdays until 9pm only, and c2c says its trains run without any staff on board, so a wheelchair user arriving later won't have anybody to deploy a ramp. c2c promises alternative accessible transport, such as a taxi, where a station is inaccessible to a passenger, but my experience is such railway taxis are... not a solution.

Network Rail, the operators, NRE and TfL each recorded long or repeated lift outages in the past year at St Pancras and Irlam, and repeated shorter ones at South Tottenham and Laindon. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) only publishes national lift statistics, so passengers cannot use its figures to compare one station's lifts with another's. I've attempted to fill part of that gap through operator notices and TfL's data.

I deduct a small, capped number of points for reported failures of lifts and assistance, because unreliability stops disabled people travelling, even though my sampling of those reports is far from scientific. I listed other single incidents as warnings beside each score.

Shortlist

Rail Delivery Group shortlisted 20 stations in five regional groups. Public voting runs from Monday 12 October to 23:59 on Sunday 18 October 2026, and Rail Delivery Group cuts each group to its leading station on the evening of Wednesday 14 October. See the [competition page](#).

Group	Stations
East Coast and East Midlands	Laindon, Basildon, Berney Arms, Leeds
Scotland	Kilmarnock, Saltcoats, Stow, Cardross
North West and West Midlands	Banbury, Haltwhistle, Hindley, Irlam
South	Brookwood, South Tottenham, St Pancras International, Bishopstone
Wales and the West	Par, Crediton, Yatton, Haverfordwest

Scoring

I scored each station out of 110 and reduced the score to a percentage, rounded to the nearest whole number. Step-free access, boarding and station staff make the majority (70) of the 110 points, because without them a disabled passenger may not be able to travel at all. I chose the weights; they are not an industry standard.

Criterion	Max	How points are awarded
Step-free access	30	Category A 30, B1 22, B2 15, B3 10, C 0
Boarding	20	Level boarding at every platform with every train 20; level boarding at some platforms, or probable but unconfirmed, 12; ramp 6; stepping-distance warning 3; none 0
Station staff	20	Staff at the station to help whenever trains run 20; most of the day 15; part of the day 12; unstaffed, or NRE lists staff help as unavailable, 0. Staff on trains are not counted here
Visual and hearing aids	8	Tactile platform edges 4, induction loop 2, audio and visual train information 2
Waiting facilities	4	Enclosed or heated waiting room, or indoor concourse with seating, 4; shelter and seating 2; shelter or seating only 1; none 0
Changing Places toilet	6	Only where a source other than the NRE station page confirms one
Accessible toilet	6	Open whenever trains run 6; RADAR key or limited hours 4; none 0
Other features	16	Help points 3, accessible ticket machine or counter 3, Blue Badge parking 3, set-down point 2, step-free route between platforms within the station 5 (a step-free station with one platform scores this in full)

I apply four kinds of adjustment, each once. I count staff on trains only through the driver-only adjustment, never through the station staff criterion.

Adjustment	Points
Driver-only trains call while the station is unstaffed, and the operator runs them with no second member of staff	-15
As above, but a second member of staff is rostered and usually on board	-8
Long or repeated lift outages in the past year, confirmed by an official source with at least one dated notice or report	-10
Repeated short outages in official data, or repeated outages in undated official notices	-5
Reported lift problem: one report, or a notice since withdrawn	-1
Reported lift problems on two or more occasions	-2
Assistance failure reported by one passenger	-2
Assistance failure documented by the media, a regulator or an operator	-4
No road access to the station	-15

Grades run A (85% and above), B (65% to 84%), C (50% to 64%), D (35% to 49%) and E (below 35%). I started from the NRE station page for every station. Where sources conflict on step-free access or boarding, I scored the more cautious figure. For station staff I used NRE's listed staff-help hours, unless the station operator publishes a different staffing policy; only TfL does, at South Tottenham. Unconfirmed minor items, and minor items where sources conflict, score half marks, rounded down.

The reported-reliability deductions rest on a small and unscientific sample: reviews, forums, the local and disability press, and a search of Twitter. I include the deductions because unreliable lifts and assistance stop disabled people travelling, but I keep them small. Lift deductions, official and reported together, cannot exceed -10, and reported deductions cannot exceed -6. I do not deduct for a report where an existing adjustment already covers the same risk, so e.g. the boarding failure at Bishopstone added nothing to its driver-only adjustment. I list other incidents, such as a blocked Blue Badge bay, as warnings; they do not change the score.

Results

The table lists the stations from highest score to lowest, with the raw score out of 110 in brackets. Nearly every station has no level boarding, so the main problem column has the second most significant weakness. The last column lists reported problems, with any deduction in brackets, and any warnings I did not score.

#	Station	Score	Grade	Main problem	Reported problems and warnings
1	Leeds	83% (91)	B	Ramp needed for every train, which rules out grade A; no help points	Not scored: National Autistic Society award reported on X but unconfirmed; a Euan's Guide reviewer found the lifts small and busy and rated the accessible toilet 1 out of 5
2=	Kilmarnock	73% (80)	B	Large step between train and platform	None found
2=	St Pancras International	73% (80)	B	Thameslink lifts closed for three months in 2026; ramp needed away from the Thameslink humps	Further lift outages reported on X (lift deductions already at the -10 cap). Not scored: platform B accessible toilets out of service on 13 October 2026; blocked drop-off bays reported on X
4	Banbury	72% (79)	B	Ramp needed for every train	Boarding refusal by a CrossCountry guard reported on X, February 2026 (-2); undated lift notice, since withdrawn (-1)
5	South Tottenham	61% (67)	C	Frequent short lift faults; no toilet	TfL Access lift-fault notices on X, June to October 2026 (-2). Not scored: NRE lists staff help as unavailable, while TfL says the station is staffed from first to last train
6	Yatton	58% (64)	C	Platform change via a road bridge; staff mornings only	Not scored: works vehicle in a Blue Badge bay for a week reported on X (March 2026)
7	Laindon	53% (58)	C	Driver-only trains with no staff help listed after 21:00 or at weekends	Lift outages in February and May 2026 reported in c2c posts on X (-2)
8	Stow	48% (53)	D	Unstaffed; no seating, toilets or Blue Badge spaces	None found
9=	Cardross	47% (52)	D	Driver-only trains after staff leave at 14:15; platform change via level crossing or stairs	None found
9=	Saltcoats	47% (52)	D	Driver-only trains after staff leave in the afternoon; stepped footbridge between platforms	None found
11	Basildon	46% (51)	D	Driver-only trains with no staff help listed after 21:00 or at weekends	Undated platform 2 lift notice, since withdrawn, and a lift outage in February 2026 reported on X (-2). Not scored: platforms propped since 2021
12	Brookwood	39% (43)	D	Steps to platform 2; 1:7 ramp to platform 1; no staff help	None found
13	Haltwhistle	38% (42)	D	Platform change by road; unstaffed; no help points	None found
14	Par	37% (41)	D	Stepped bridge to platforms 2 and 3	Not scored: Cornwall Council reports some people unable to use the railway there
15=	Crediton	36% (40)	D	Barnstaple platform reached via roads and a level crossing; unstaffed	None found
15=	Haverfordwest	36% (40)	D	Steps only to platform 2	Not scored: sloping platforms; Transport for Wales says no platform staff are available
17	Hindley	26% (29)	E	No step-free access until spring 2027	None found
18	Berney Arms	25% (27)	E	No road access	Level boarding inferred, not confirmed
19	Irlam	22% (24)	E	Lifts out of order; NRE still lists category B3	Lift outage "until further notice" in January 2026 reported on X (lift deductions already at the -10 cap)
20	Bishopstone	13% (14)	E	Stairs only to the platform; unstaffed, with driver-only trains	Not scored: NRE and Southern disagree on the step-free category; a past report of a passenger unable to board for lack of on-board staff, a risk the driver-only adjustment already covers

Breakdown

The below scoring table shows every criterion and adjustment I used, so readers can check each total. Aids for people with visual and hearing impairments are tactile edges + induction loop + audio and visual information. Scores for other features consist of help points + accessible ticket machine or counter + Blue Badge parking + set-down point + step-free route between platforms.

Station	Step-free (30)	Boarding (20)	Station staff (20)	Visual and hearing (8)	Waiting (4)	Changing Places (6)	Accessible toilet (6)	Other (16)	Base (110)	Driver-only	Lifts	Reported	Road	Total	%	Grade
Leeds	30	6	20	8 (4+2+2)	4	6	4	13 (0+3+3+2+5)	91	-	-	-	-	91	83	B
Kilmarnock	30	3	20	8 (4+2+2)	4	0	4	11 (3+1+1+1+5)	80	-	-	-	-	80	73	B
St Pancras International	30	12	20	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	4	14 (3+1+3+2+5)	90	-	-10	-	-	80	73	B
Banbury	30	6	20	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	3	13 (3+1+3+1+5)	82	-	-	-3	-	79	72	B
South Tottenham	30	6	20	7 (4+1+2)	1	0	0	10 (3+1+0+1+5)	74	-	-5	-2	-	67	61	C
Yatton	22	6	12	6 (2+2+2)	4	0	3	11 (3+3+3+2+0)	64	-	-	-	-	64	58	C
Laindon	30	6	15	8 (4+2+2)	4	0	4	13 (3+3+0+2+5)	80	-15	-5	-2	-	58	53	C
Stow	30	6	0	8 (4+2+2)	1	0	0	8 (3+3+0+0+2)	53	-	-	-	-	53	48	D
Cardross	22	6	12	7 (4+1+2)	2	0	0	11 (3+3+3+2+0)	60	-8	-	-	-	52	47	D
Saltcoats	22	6	12	7 (4+1+2)	4	0	0	9 (3+3+3+0+0)	60	-8	-	-	-	52	47	D
Basildon	22	6	15	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	4	11 (3+3+0+0+5)	68	-15	-	-2	-	51	46	D
Brookwood	10	6	0	8 (4+2+2)	4	0	4	11 (3+3+3+2+0)	43	-	-	-	-	43	39	D
Haltwhistle	22	6	0	8 (4+2+2)	4	0	0	2 (0+1+0+1+0)	42	-	-	-	-	42	38	D
Par	10	6	12	6 (2+2+2)	2	0	0	5 (3+1+0+1+0)	41	-	-	-	-	41	37	D
Crediton	22	6	0	5 (2+2+1)	2	0	0	5 (3+0+0+2+0)	40	-	-	-	-	40	36	D
Haverfordwest	10	6	12	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	0	2 (0+1+0+1+0)	40	-	-	-	-	40	36	D
Hindley	0	6	12	4 (2+0+2)	2	0	3	2 (0+1+0+1+0)	29	-	-	-	-	29	26	E
Berney Arms	15	12	0	7 (4+1+2)	0	0	0	8 (3+0+0+0+5)	42	-	-	-	-15	27	25	E
Irlam	10	6	0	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	0	8 (3+1+0+2+2)	34	-	-10	-	-	24	22	E
Bishopstone	0	6	0	8 (4+2+2)	2	0	0	6 (3+3+0+0+0)	22	-8	-	-	-	14	13	E

Station notes

Leeds (83%, B). Leeds is category A, with seven lifts and staff help around the clock. [Network Rail](#) lists a Changing Places toilet with a shower on the South Concourse, the only one I could confirm at any finalist. Leeds has no level boarding, so it scores 6 of 20 on that criterion and falls short of grade A. NRE states it has no help points. A powerchair user on [Euan's Guide](#) found the lifts small and busy and rated the single accessible toilet 1 out of 5, while other reviewers praised the assistance team. I could not confirm a National Autistic Society award reported on X in October 2026.

Kilmarnock (73%, B). Kilmarnock's lifts opened in 2019; before that, passengers could reach the platforms only up a long, steep hill or by steps. Staff help runs from 06:20 to midnight Monday to Saturday and from 07:30 to 23:40 on Sundays. Operator data warns that the step between train and platform is larger than at most stations, which costs Kilmarnock most of its boarding points. NRE lists no Blue Badge spaces, but other sources disagree, so I gave it half marks for parking. Passengers can borrow a wheelchair at the station.

St Pancras International (73%, B). St Pancras is category A Step free and staffed around the clock, with level-boarding humps beside the middle carriages on the Thameslink platforms; the other platforms need a ramp. [Network Rail](#) closed both Thameslink lifts from 15 June to mid-September 2026 because they had become increasingly unreliable, and in August 2025 [ITV London](#) reported a wheelchair user stranded for 40 minutes when one failed. On 13 October 2026 NRE said the platform B accessible toilets were out of service. Users on Twitter reported further lift outages from August to October 2026 and drop-off bays blocked by taxis and cars; I list these as warnings and have not scored them.

Banbury (72%, B). Banbury is category A, with lifts to every platform and staff help from 05:15 to 01:30 on weekdays and Saturdays and from 07:00 to 23:00 on Sundays. NRE confirms tactile edges, an induction loop and 12 Blue Badge spaces. During this research I saw an undated [CrossCountry](#) notice saying the lift between platform 3 and the overbridge was out of order "*until further notice*". The notice had gone by 13 October 2026 and NRE shows no lift message, so I count it only as a reported problem (-1). In February 2026 a passenger posted on Twitter that a CrossCountry guard refused to let them board although a ramp was waiting, delaying them an hour. I deduct 2 points for that report.

South Tottenham (61%, C). Two lifts serve the two platforms. NRE lists staff help as unavailable, but [TfL](#) staffs London Overground stations from 15 minutes before the first train until 15 minutes after the last, and I scored that policy. [Tube Alerter](#), which logs TfL's lift data, shows three lift outages and 99.2% step-free uptime over 90 days. TfL Access posts on Twitter reported faulty lifts in June, July, August and October 2026, which adds -2 as a reported problem. The station has no accessible toilet, and sources disagree on the induction loop.

Yatton (58%, C). Both platforms are step-free from their own car parks, but passengers changing platforms must use pavements and the B3133 road bridge. Staff help runs from 06:30 to 12:30 on weekdays and from 07:00 to 12:00 on Saturdays. GWR trains carry a guard, so no driver-only adjustment applies. A post on Twitter reported a works vehicle occupying a Blue Badge bay for a week in March 2026.

Laindon (53%, C). Laindon is step-free category A, with lifts. NRE lists staff help on weekdays from 06:00 to 21:00 only, and [c2c](#) says its trains are "*operated without any staff on board*", so the full -15 applies. Undated operator notices show two separate lift faults, which carry -5. c2c posts on Twitter reported further outages in February and May 2026, which add -2 as a reported problem. NRE lists no Blue Badge spaces.

Stow (48%, D). Stow opened in 2015 with level access to both platforms, tactile edges, an induction loop and help points. It has no staff, seating, toilets or Blue Badge spaces. The station has no ramp, so boarding

depends on the guard on the Borders Railway train. Every train has a guard, so Stow avoids the driver-only adjustment, but with nobody based at the station it scores nothing for staff.

Cardross (47%, D). Ramps lead to each platform, but passengers can cross between them only by a level crossing or a stepped footbridge. Staff help is available from 07:25 to 14:15, Monday to Saturday. ScotRail runs Helensburgh line trains as driver-only, with a ticket examiner who may not always be on board, so -8 applies. Sources disagree on the existence of an induction loop.

Saltcoats (47%, D). Saltcoats has level access to both platforms, but only has a stepped footbridge between them. ScotRail cut the ticket office hours in 2025, and staff help now ends between 13:00 and 16:00 depending on the day. Ayrshire Coast trains have driver-controlled doors and a rostered ticket examiner, so -8 applies. Sources disagree on the induction loop.

Basildon (46%, D). Inspections in 2021 found serious defects and movement in both platforms, which have been propped ever since, and c2c is now [procuring their renewal](#) together with both lifts. An undated station message on [Northern's journey planner](#) said the lifts between platform 2 and the entrance were out of order, and told passengers from the London side to change at Pitsea or Benfleet and come back. I count it, together with a c2c post on Twitter about a lift outage in February 2026, as a reported problem (-2). NRE lists category B1, although operators say lifts serve both platforms. Staff help ends at 21:00 on weekdays while driver-only trains keep running.

Brookwood (39%, D). Brookwood is category B3: passengers reach platform 1 by a steep ramp at a gradient 1:7, and platform 2 can only be reached via steps. The ticket office opens on weekday and Saturday mornings, but both NRE and [South Western Railway](#) say staff help is not available; the guard, who is on every train, is supposed to give assistance. The accessible toilet is only open when the ticket office is open.

Haltwhistle (38%, D). NRE lists category B1. A stepped footbridge links the platforms, and the step-free alternative is a road route of unstated length. [Northern](#) lists ramped waiting rooms on the platforms. The station is unstaffed and has no help points; Northern serves it with trains that carry guards.

Par (37%, D). Platform 1 is the only step-free platform; a stepped bridge leads to platforms 2 and 3 for trains to London, Plymouth and Newquay. A planned lift depends on closing a £2.2 million funding gap. Staff help runs from 07:20 to 14:10 on weekdays only. The local MP has criticised the limited assistance hours and the lack of accessible parking.

Crediton (36%, D). The Exeter platform is step-free, but passengers needing step-free access can only reach the Barnstaple platform by local roads and a level crossing. The station has no staff, Blue Badge spaces or accessible ticket machines, and NRE lists no information screens. [GWR](#) tells passengers needing help to find the on-board staff. Tactile platform edges are still being installed.

Haverfordwest (36%, D). Platform 1, used by most trains, is step-free; platform 2 has steps only. The ticket office opens from 07:00 to 13:30, Monday to Saturday. [Transport for Wales](#) warns that the platforms slope, tells wheelchair users to apply their brakes, and says no platform staff are available.

Hindley (26%, E). Hindley has no lifts, help points or induction loop, and its staff leave at 12:40 on weekdays and 13:40 on Saturdays. A [£6.5 million scheme](#) to add two lifts and a footbridge began in February 2026, but is yet to be completed. The Friends of Hindley Station run volunteer support for “people with additional needs.” Sources disagree on tactile paving.

Berney Arms (25%, E). The station has no road access, and Greater Anglia advises wheelchair and scooter users not to use it. Class 755 trains have a low floor and a sliding step designed to give level boarding at standard-height platforms. Greater Anglia lists no ramp here, so level boarding is likely but unconfirmed. The station has no shelter, seating, toilet or ticket machine.

Irlam (22%, E). Irlam's lifts opened in 2025 under a £5.75 million scheme. On 13 October 2026 [NRE](#) carried a message that the lifts between platform 2 and the underpass were out of order, and a separate [Northern](#) notice had reported all the lifts out of order. NRE still lists category B3 and says there are no lifts, so I scored step-free access and the route between platforms cautiously. The station is unstaffed, with shelters only and no toilets. A post on X reported an outage "*until further notice*" in January 2026.

Bishopstone (13%, E). Southern's data rates the station category C, although NRE says category A; I scored the more cautious figure. The only access is by stairs from the footbridge to the platform. The station is unstaffed. Southern rosters an on-board supervisor on every train and runs without one only in exceptional circumstances, so -8 applies. The Friends of Bishopstone Station state there is no disabled access from the trains or platform. I have not deducted for a press report of a passenger unable to board for lack of on-board staff, because the -8 already covers that risk.

Boarding

St Pancras has level boarding at some platforms and Berney Arms probably has it (for what it's worth). None of the stations has level boarding at every platform with every train.

Level boarding means the train floor meets the platform with a gap small enough to cross without a ramp.

Step-free boarding means access to the platform without a step, which may require boarding the train by ramp.

Unassisted boarding means getting on without staff help, which level boarding usually allows, and a ramp never does.

At St Pancras, [AmcoGiffen](#) built raised humps on the Thameslink platforms beside the middle carriages of the Class 700 trains, as it did at Farringdon, City Thameslink and Blackfriars. The humps give level boarding at those doors only. The East Midlands Railway and Southeastern platforms still require portable boarding ramps at St Pancras, as do Southeastern's Class 395 trains.

Greater Anglia's Class 755 trains are the only trains serving Berney Arms; their low floor and sliding step are designed for [level boarding at standard-height platforms](#). Greater Anglia expected up to 70% of the platforms these trains serve to allow level boarding, and keeps manual ramps at the rest. [Greater Anglia's station page](#) lists no ramp at Berney Arms, which points to level boarding, but it does not say so outright. The page also says the conductor helps passengers on and off, so I cannot assume unassisted boarding.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no level-boarding trains or humps at the other 18 stations. NRE station pages carry no boarding information at all, and operator feeds say only whether the station has a ramp. Kilnarnock carries a warning that the step between train and platform is larger than usual.

The government said on 28 September 2026 that new Great British Railways trains should provide [unassisted level boarding](#) wherever possible. The commitment covers new trains, not those serving these stations now.

Staffing

I count only staff based at the station under the station staff criterion. I count staff on trains only through the driver-only adjustment, which applies where driver-only trains call while the station is unstaffed, because the driver does not leave the cab to put out a ramp. The size of the adjustment depends on whether there's usually a second member of staff on board.

c2c says its trains are "operated without any staff on board" ([Making Rail Accessible leaflet](#)). NRE lists staff help at Laindon and Basildon on weekdays from 06:00 to 21:00 only. Their ticket offices also open at weekends, closing between 20:45 and 21:45, but trains keep running after that. The leaflet tells a passenger

needing assistance when the station is unstaffed to call c2c from a help point, and promises alternative accessible transport, such as a taxi, where a station is inaccessible to them. I still apply the full -15 at both stations, because a taxi to another station (a) is unreliable, stressful and unpleasant and (b) replaces the train journey rather than getting the passenger onto a train.

ScotRail runs its electric services round Glasgow as driver-only with a ticket examiner rostered, including the Helensburgh line through Cardross and the Ayrshire Coast trains to Saltcoats. ScotRail has said a [second member of staff](#) will always be on board, but trains [can run without one](#), and ScotRail then faces a penalty while the train still runs. The Cardross evidence dates from 2010 and none of it names the Saltcoats line, so I apply the reduced -8 at both stations.

Southern rosters an on-board supervisor on every train through Bishopstone but runs without one in exceptional circumstances. The ORR found trains without a supervisor [1.2% to 1.8% of the time](#) in the months it checked, so I apply -8 at Bishopstone. The [Sussex Express](#) reported a disabled festival organiser unable to board a Seaford to Brighton train because no on-board staff were there to deploy the ramp.

London Overground and Thameslink trains are also driver-only, but staff work at South Tottenham and St Pancras whenever trains run, so neither station carries the adjustment. The remaining stations are served wholly by trains with a guard.

Lifts

Eight of the stations have lifts. Two of them carry the full -10 and two carry -5, and reported problems take a further 1 or 2 points off four of them. The ORR publishes national figures: [4.03 faults per lift](#) from April to October 2025, each taking 19.4 hours on average to repair, and [3.07](#) from October 2025 to March 2026. Its statistics leave out lifts not owned by Network Rail, including those on St Pancras's high-speed side, and the ORR [does not publish station-level figures](#), so the public cannot use them to compare one station with another.

I therefore took station evidence from Network Rail, operator notices, NRE station messages and TfL's lift data. I count outages that were reported only on Twitter, and notices since withdrawn, as reported problems, within a combined lift cap of -10.

Station	Evidence	Official	Reported
St Pancras International	Thameslink lifts closed from 15 June to mid-September 2026 after Network Rail described them as increasingly unreliable; a wheelchair user stranded for 40 minutes in August 2025 (ITV London); further outages from August to October 2026 reported on X	-10	0 (at cap)
Irlam	NRE station message on 13 October 2026: lifts between platform 2 and the underpass out of order; a separate Northern notice reported all lifts out of order, within about 18 months of opening; an outage in January 2026 reported on X	-10	0 (at cap)
South Tottenham	Three outages and 99.2% step-free uptime over 90 days in TfL's data (Tube Alerter); TfL Access notices on X from June to October 2026	-5	-2
Laindon	Two separate faults in undated operator notices; c2c posts on X about outages in February and May 2026	-5	-2
Basildon	One undated notice about the platform 2 lifts, gone by 13 October 2026; c2c post on X about an outage in February 2026; both lifts due for renewal with the platforms	0	-2
Banbury	One undated CrossCountry notice about the platform 3 lift, gone by 13 October 2026	0	-1
Leeds	Escalator outages with lifts available; no lift outages found	0	0
Kilmarnock	No outages found	0	0

Public comment

Most public comment concerns the busy stations, and most of it is about lift failures. I searched Euan's Guide, RailForums, local and disability press, council and parliamentary records and campaign groups, and I used Grok to search Twitter posts from the past year. I have not checked those posts one by one. Reported failures of lifts and assistance carry a small, capped deduction, which I explain under Scoring.

Disabled people's groups in Leeds criticised moving the taxi rank to Bishopgate Street in the station-front rebuild. The Access and Use-Ability Group [protested](#) that the only step free access to it would be via two lifts.

Six [Euan's Guide reviews](#) give St Pancras an average of 3.58 out of 5; they praise the staff but criticise the accessible toilets and wayfinding. [RailForums](#) users describe the low-level lifts as frequently out of service, and one user on X called the contest a "*World Cup of broken lifts*".

Cornwall Council's transport cabinet member said users had reported that the lack of an accessible bridge at Par left some unable to use the railway ([Cornish Times](#)). Hindley's local MP described step-free access as a [long-standing campaign](#) of councillors and the Friends of Hindley Station.

The Twitter search found no relevant posts about ten stations. Quiet rural stations generate few posts and busy ones many, so the sample favours the quiet stations. I therefore capped the reported deductions at -6 and kept them small; no station loses more than 3 points to them.

Limitations

My scores are a structured judgement for comparing these 20 stations, not an official rating. I checked the data on 13 October 2026. The scores cover physical access, boarding, staffing, facilities and recorded lift reliability. They do not measure wayfinding, the sensory environment, cognitive accessibility, how well booked assistance works or the quality of help on the day, all of which matter to disabled passengers.

NRE and operator data disagree on Bishopstone (category A against C), Basildon (B1 against lifts to both platforms) and Irlam (B3 and "no lifts" despite its new lifts). I awarded the more cautious score each time. Sources also conflict on tactile paving at Hindley, Par and Yatton, on the induction loops at Cardross, Saltcoats, South Tottenham and Berney Arms, on Blue Badge parking at Kilmarnock and on whether Haltwhistle has a staffed ticket office. I gave those minor items half marks, and Haltwhistle nothing for staff. Most operator pages copy the same industry feed, so agreement between them is not independent confirmation.

I scored South Tottenham's staffing from TfL's policy rather than NRE; on NRE alone it would score 45%, grade D. I gave Berney Arms 12 boarding points for probable level boarding; scored as a ramp station, it would fall to 19%.

The reported-reliability deduction rests on a small, unscientific sample and is indicative only. Without it, Banbury would score 75%, South Tottenham 63%, Laindon 55% and Basildon 48%, which wouldn't take any of the stations across a grade boundary.

I gave Changing Places credit only where another source confirmed one, which may undercount some stations. I found no such confirmation for St Pancras, for example.

I could not check some evidence directly, for example level boarding at Berney Arms, and tweets. The ScotRail driver-only evidence dates from 2010. I could not find published platform heights or stepping distances for most stations, so my boarding scores are coarse.

Sources

I read every station's [National Rail Enquiries](#) page on 13 October 2026 and list it under that station.

Topics

Competition: [Rail Delivery Group - World Cup of Stations](#); [Time Out - 2026 shortlist](#).

Boarding: [AmcoGiffen - Thameslink platform level access](#); [Wikipedia - Class 755](#); [London Reconnections - level boarding](#); [RailForums - level boarding at St Pancras](#); [GOV.UK - level boarding commitment for new trains](#).

Staffing and driver-only trains: [c2c - Making Rail Accessible leaflet](#); [The Herald - ScotRail driver-only operation](#); [RailForums - Strathclyde ticket examiners](#); [Railnews - ScotRail driver-only dispute, February 2010](#); [Railnews - ScotRail driver-only dispute, March 2010](#); [Philip Haigh - Southern on-board supervisors](#); [TfL - London Overground staffing](#).

Lifts: [ORR - passenger lifts statistics](#); [ORR - lifts factsheet, October 2025 to March 2026](#); [Accessible Link - station lift data](#).

Autism and neurodiversity: [Network Rail - autism-friendly stations pledge](#).

Tweets: a Grok search of posts on X, October 2025 to October 2026. Findings from it feed only the capped reported-reliability deduction and the warnings.

Stations

Banbury: [National Rail](#); [CrossCountry - service updates](#).

Basildon: [National Rail](#); [Northern journey planner - Basildon station message](#) (message no longer shown on 13 October 2026); [Find a Tender - platforms and lifts renewal](#).

Berney Arms: [National Rail](#); [Greater Anglia](#).

Bishopstone: [National Rail](#); [Southern data via Lumo](#); [Heritage Open Days - Friends of Bishopstone Station](#); [Sussex Express - Seaford line boarding failure](#).

Brookwood: [National Rail](#); [South Western Railway](#).

Cardross: [National Rail](#); [ScotRail](#).

Crediton: [National Rail](#); [GWR](#).

Haltwhistle: [National Rail](#); [Northern](#).

Haverfordwest: [National Rail](#); [Transport for Wales](#).

Hindley: [National Rail](#); [Wigan Today - step-free scheme](#); [Community Rail Network - Friends of Hindley Station](#).

Irlam: [National Rail](#); [Northern](#).

Kilmarnock: [National Rail](#); [Story Contracting - lifts scheme](#); [AccessAble](#).

Laindon: [National Rail](#); c2c leaflet under Topics.

Leeds: [National Rail](#); [Network Rail](#); [Euan's Guide](#); [Disability News Service - taxi rank protest](#); [Yorkshire Evening Post - taxi rank](#).

Par: [National Rail](#); [Cornish Times - footbridge](#); [Cornish Times - funding gap](#).

Saltcoats: [National Rail](#); [ScotRail](#); [ScotRail ticket office changes \(Scottish Parliament\)](#); [Transport Focus - ScotRail ticket offices](#).

South Tottenham: [National Rail](#); [Tube Alerter](#); TfL staffing under Topics.

St Pancras International: [National Rail](#); [Network Rail - Thameslink lifts closure](#); [Thameslink - lift refurbishment](#); [ITV London - lift stranding](#); [Euan's Guide](#); [RailForums - lifts](#).

Stow: [National Rail](#).

Yatton: [National Rail](#); [GWR](#).