

**This and the following 61 pages comprise Schedule 9 referred to in the  
foregoing Contract between the Scottish Ministers and Serco Ltd.**

**SCHEDULE 9 – CUSTOMER CARE & ACCESSIBILITY DELIVERY PLAN**

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## Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
AIS	Accessibility Information System
BSL	British Sign Language
CCC	Customer Contact Centre
CRM	Customer Relationship Management system
DPO	Disabled Person's Organisations
EC	European Commission
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment
GDPN	General Data Protection Regulations
HITRANS	Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership
IMO	International Marine Organisation
ISPS	International Ship and Ports Security
ITSO	Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MACS	Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
NEC	National Entitlement Card
PCP	Previous Comparable Period
PAMIS	Promoting A More Inclusive Society
PGI	Planned General Inspection
PMSC	Ports Marine Safety Code
SATA	Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance
SOP	Serco Operating Procedures
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers

## A6 Customer Care and Accessibility

### 1. Executive Summary

#### 1.1. Serco's Approach to the delivery of the Customer Care and Accessibility Delivery Plan

The purpose of this Customer Care and Accessibility Delivery Plan is to demonstrate our understanding of the objectives that Serco and Scottish Ministers have set for the operation of the Northern Isles Ferry Service, with respect to Customer Care and Accessibility. Our Plan provides a comprehensive approach to supporting customers who use the NorthLink services, through the provision of detailed customer care and accessibility systems, procedures and processes. We have provided a robust approach which indicates the degree of accessibility for each harbour, ferry and route and outlined our steps for satisfying all statutory requirements and explain how we monitor compliance with this Plan.

##### *Supporting the Scottish Government's high-level objectives*

Our Customer Care and Accessibility Delivery Plan takes into account the Scottish Government's (SG) high level objectives, specifically to be:

- Responsive to local needs and appropriate to the requirements of those using the service
- Resilient to social and commercial stresses
- Safe sustainable and efficient

We have used the information provided to bidders to analyse the service, by market sector, routes, ports and vessels to establish a proposal which will deliver service excellence at each stage of the customer journey supported by customer and stakeholder feedback.

This Plan has been structured around the ITT Vol 2 – A6, with a section explaining about the challenges of Customer Care and Accessibility as a whole, relating to technical, logistical and management challenges. We have then covered:

- The three sub-plans individually, which each contain our Approach and methodology, utilising the best practice we have developed over the last six and a half years on which our Proposals have been based
- Our Proposals for the new contract term.

We have set out the improvement proposals and show where there are areas of continuous improvement which will be targeted throughout the term of the new contract. The areas of continuous improvement may require TS, CMAL or third-party approvals, feasibility studies or business cases in order for them to be delivered, and thus are to be viewed as having the potential to be implemented.

Serco has an in-depth knowledge of the risks that could affect NorthLink's ferry services in relation to customer services and accessibility, and we have identified the high-level risks and the actions required to mitigate them, or to bring them to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

Customer care is an essential part of the overall customer. We have developed an end-to-end which Serco believes should be seen in the context of a customers' end-to-end journey, rather than just the period where a customer is in the care of the ferry operator. This end-to-end approach we call the 'Customer Journey'.

This Customer Care delivery plan demonstrates Serco's vision that all our customers, including those with specific needs, local residents, tourists or freight operators, are at the heart of everything we do as shown in our Customer Journey Wheel (see Figure 2).

We will deliver a safe, caring, reliable, easy-to-use service, which engages with customers throughout their journey, meeting their expectation, and driving continuous improvement. Our customer-led approach has been created to be aligned to Scottish Ministers objectives at all stages. Our objectives will promote the local economy, help protect the environment and partner with local communities and stakeholders. Serco's core values of Trust, Care, Innovation and Pride are central to our approach.

## 1.2. Key Improvements Proposed

A summary of key improvements covering customer care, complaint handling and accessibility is shown below:

- **World Host customer service training:** Train all customer-facing staff in the Scottish Government recognised World Host customer service training programme
- **Website and app 'chat' facility:** The web-based booking process will be further enhanced with the inclusion of a 'chat' facility to allow for potential customers to chat in text boxes with our operational team to overcome any query at the information or booking stage.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** We will further enhance our communications as part of the introduction of the NorthLink Ferries CRM system by pre-advising passengers directly of any disruption affecting a booking made attached to a passenger profile.
- **Extended Customer Contact Centre hours:** The Customer Contact Centre based in Stromness will continue to receive telephone reservation requests, from 05:30 to midnight on the relevant sailing days. The team taking the calls will also operate the chat facility to assist the conversion of sales online.
- **Redacted software enhancement:** The Redacted software will be enhanced with additional overlay processes to allow for an improved user experience. Using enhanced software, passengers will be able to make multi-sailing reservations in one booking and payment process.
- **Bring cars into the Aberdeen terminal earlier:** To further enhance the customer journey, we will bring cars into the Aberdeen terminal parking area earlier to reduce on street queuing in the harbour.
- **Overnight accommodation on Aberdeen vessel if sailing cancelled:** If a sailing is cancelled for those passengers sailing from Aberdeen or Lerwick and where the vessel is remaining in port, we will use the vessel to provide overnight accommodation and breakfast on a complimentary basis

### *Accessibility*

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group:** Create an internal EDI Group to care for customers with accessibility and equality needs, and review and monitor progress
- **Maintain 'Recite Me' accessibility software:** This has been introduced recently to allow for an enhanced booking service for those who have visual difficulties
- **Neatebox Accessibility technology:** We will introduce the Neatebox technology at all terminals to enable members of this scheme to advise reception staff of their specific disability on screen when entering the premises

### *Working in partnerships*

Maintain our **strong partnerships with stakeholders** and businesses across the Northern Isles, Caithness and Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire with a 'lead from the front' principle

headed by the Managing Director. Customer Care is a key section of the overall bid and in this context covers all profiles including islanders, tourists, disabled customers, freight customers and livestock operators. We have looked at each profile and believe whilst we are currently delivering high satisfaction levels, we will strive to increase these through the initiatives detailed in the tender. We understand that the expectations of travelling with NorthLink Ferries for each customer group will be very different and through our embedded knowledge of operating the service since 2012 and through the feedback gained from the iPad surveys, we have created this Customer Care proposal with many new initiatives to deliver an enhanced service level in the new contract.

## 2. Introduction

Customer Care is integral for our plans. In this context, this covers all profiles including our five broad definitions: islanders, tourists, disabled customers, freight customers and livestock operators. We have looked at each profile and believe whilst we are currently delivering high satisfaction levels, we will strive to increase these in the new contract.

To deliver the highest level of customer care Serco believe that employing and training teams who live locally and who are able to interact with islanders and tourists on a professional and friendly basis, will drive loyalty to the NorthLink services throughout the length of the contract.

We believe that a high level of customer service is key to a sustainable increase in tourism for the Northern Isles and the economic growth of the businesses who rely on the lifeline ferry service. Our staff will be trained in our Disability Awareness programme. We will ensure that our teams understand the specific personal behaviours required when co-operating with elderly customers or those with varying degrees of disability.

Discussions with Visit Scotland will in the new contract allow senior customer facing staff to become Visit Scotland Ambassadors to further improve the tourist experience when visiting the Northern Isles.

We will look to work with other transport providers by the introduction of the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager role. As an example, we will sell onward travel tickets in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire using the Grasshopper bus ticket both at the time of making a NorthLink reservation or when travelling onboard one of the Aberdeen arriving vessels.

The reservation system software will be upgraded to give an improved user experience. Our research has identified new software which will enable customers to make multi-sailing reservations in one booking and payment process. The website booking process will be upgraded to include a “chat” facility to allow for potential customers to text on screen with our operational team to increase the booking completion rate and reduce calls into the contact centre.

Our website will be accessible following the current recent introduction of the ‘Recite Me’ software. We also have the BSL interactive Sign Language Interpreter online service to ensure that all customers are able to use the online services provided by Serco NorthLink Ferries. We will continue to offer Accessible information to all users on the website with Google streetview imagery being available of each passenger terminal and all RoPax vessels.

The NorthLink booking app which has recently been introduced will also include an interactive “chat” facility from summer 2020 to enable customer to complete their booking if they have a specific query.

The Customer Contact Centre (CCC) based in Stromness will continue to receive telephone reservation requests. From July 2020, this service will be available from 08:00 to 20:00 will be extended to be in the new contract from 05:30 to 24:00 on most sailing days. The team taking



the calls will also operate the chat facility to assist the conversion of sales online and offer help to first time customers particularly tourists.

We will introduce a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool linked to the reservation system to allow pre sailing advice to customers which will include sailing status, upgrade opportunities and special events happening onboard or around the NorthLink network.

To ensure customers are aware of daily sailing information including any disruptions – the NorthLink website and customer app will highlight the current sailing status. Any sailings under review will be highlighted in advance so customers can make alternate travel arrangements. Where a sailing is cancelled customers will be contacted directly so that Serco can assist with making revised travel or accommodation arrangements. Our Twitter and Facebook feeds will continue keep the local communities, tourists and freight companies updated on any possible travel disruption

Proactive communication has been key to NorthLink Ferries success in the past seven years both internally and externally. Our team will maintain a consistent flow of information through the social media, app and website content. We are generally highlighting the beauty of the Northern Isles as a destination and a range of special events which happen in the local area and onboard but social media also enables us to quickly and efficiently communicate with passengers at times of disruption.

As an example of the increased profile which Serco has given to social media content and our monthly newsletter now has 14,965 subscribers. We will ensure that, subject to GDPR restrictions, operational updates with the sailing schedule are sent out daily each morning to advise media, key customers, NorthLink staff and interested stakeholders of the vessel sailing pattern for the next 24 hours, subject to GDPR restrictions.

As part of our Accessibility Information System (AIS), Serco will have dedicated pages on the NorthLink website detailing the services available for disabled and able-bodied passengers at each port and onboard each RoPax vessel.

All terminals will offer a hot drinks and vended snack service which will be serviced daily to ensure supply. In the winter season from November to March inclusive we will place the Scrabster terminal hot drinks machine on a free vend recognising the long journey undertaken to reach one of the most northerly points on the Scottish mainland.

Onboard our customer menus will be changed on a seasonal basis to reflect the local supply of food and drink available locally. The Serco policy of procuring sustainable food items from within a Redacted radius of the operating ports will be maintained and promoted via the onboard menus.

Our iPad surveys will continue to be used during each crossing to gain timely, accurate and relevant feedback directly from users of the service. Customers will continue to be offered these surveys towards the end of their journey to allow for feedback and reflection on their journey and to be able to offer suggestions for improvements. As part of the introduction of a new CRM system from October 2020, we will introduce post journey surveys to all customers in the form of an easy to complete online survey. To ensure we have a robust feedback process, we will be enhancing the reporting process of the surveys of the whole customer journey. Redacted

We will introduce a functional ITSO Smart Ticketing solution for foot passengers to meet in line with the Scottish Ministers' milestones.

If a sailing is cancelled for those passengers sailing from Aberdeen or Lerwick and where the vessel is remaining in port, we will use the ship to provide overnight accommodation and breakfast for the first night on a complimentary basis. This service which was introduced by

Serco ensures that customers are cared for at the port of departure and do not have the cost of additional accommodation.

Many journeys over the year will be made for medical reasons or unfortunate occasions such as funerals or unwell friends and family. We will assist customers during these difficult times and make all necessary arrangements for the travel to be as stress free as possible.

To ensure that all customers are aware of pre-planned timetable variations, for example during annual dry-docking we will notify all regular users via the Serco NorthLink Newsletter. The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will ensure that connectivity arrangements to and from other transport providers are in place during these periods.

We are aware of the missing link between the Scrabster ferry terminal and the services of ScotRail at the Thurso train station. Redacted

Continuing our proactive approach to accessible travel opportunities in Scotland, Serco NorthLink Ferries will work closely with the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA). New Changing Places areas onboard in association with PAMIS (Promoting A More Inclusive Society), have already been introduced onboard the Hjaltland and Hrossey and in the new contract we will install similar onboard the Hamnavoe.

To ensure that the facilities offered both ashore and onboard meet and exceed accessible travel legislation, Serco will continue to work with Transport Scotland's 'Accessible Travel Fund' to identify innovative ways to ensure an improved accessible infrastructure can continue to be enhanced across the NorthLink network. We will attend regular meetings, to ensure that the customer service experience is seen as exemplary for customers travelling with special requirements.

The SESTRan Thistle Assistance Card will continue to be recognised across the NorthLink network and our teams trained to recognise the importance of this Scotland wide initiative.

From July 2020 we will continue to meet and exceed the Scottish Ministers targets and policies for ferry travel in Scotland.

## 2.1. Key Improvements summary

We detail in Table 1 the key initiatives for improvement. Table 1 details the most important initiatives with many more contained in the proposal section. These key initiatives are in addition to the ITT mandated requirements which are contained in the Proposals section.

Table 1: Key initiatives for improvement

#	Key Improvement	Narrative
1	<b>World Host customer service training</b>	Train all customer-facing staff in the Scottish Government recognised World Host customer service training programme
2	<b>Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group</b>	Create an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) group, meeting quarterly covering all accessibility and equality needs
3	<b>Improving the quality of customer surveys</b>	We will use the new CRM system to improve the quality of post journey surveys.
4	Redacted <b>software enhancement</b>	The Redacted software will be enhanced with additional overlay processes to allow for an improved user experience. Using enhanced software, passengers will be able to make multi-sailing reservations in one booking and payment process.

#	Key Improvement	Narrative
5	<b>Website and app chat facility</b>	The web-based booking process will be further enhanced with the inclusion of a “chat” facility to allow for potential customers to chat in text boxes with our operational team to overcome any query at the information or booking stage.
6	<b>Website ‘Recite Me’ accessibility software</b>	‘Recite Me’ accessibility software has been recently introduced to allow for an enhanced booking service for those who have visual difficulties with normal websites.
7	<b>Extended Customer Contact Centre hours</b>	The Customer Contact Centre based in Stromness will continue to receive telephone reservation requests. This service currently available from 08.00 to 20.00 will be extended to be in the new contract from 05.30 to midnight on the relevant sailing days. The team taking the calls will also operate the chat facility to assist the conversion of sales online.
8	<b>Customer Relationship Management (CRM)</b>	We will further enhance our communications as part of the introduction of the NorthLink Ferries Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system by pre-advising passengers directly of any disruption affecting a booking made attached to a customer profile.
9	<b>Bring cars into the Aberdeen terminal earlier</b>	To further enhance the customer journey, we will bring cars into the Aberdeen terminal parking area earlier to reduce on street queuing in the harbour.
10	<b>Overnight accommodation on Aberdeen vessel if sailing is cancelled</b>	If a sailing is cancelled for those passengers sailing from Aberdeen or Lerwick and where the vessel is remaining in port, we will use the ship on a discretionary basis to provide overnight accommodation and breakfast on a complimentary basis.
11	<b>Neatebox Accessibility technology</b>	We will introduce the Neatebox technology at all terminals to allow members of this scheme to advise reception staff of their specific disability on screen when entering the premises.

## 2.2. Understanding the challenges of the Customer Services and Accessibility Delivery Plan

We have identified the challenges in the table review and will continue to review this approach during the new contract managed by our Customer Services Director.

Table 2: Challenges – Customer Care and Accessibility

Customer Care	
Technical	Redacted
Logistical	
Management	

Table 2: Challenges – Customer Care and Accessibility

Customer Complaints Process	
Technical	Redacted
Logistical	
Management	
Accessibility	
Technical	Redacted
Logistical	
Management	

### 3. Customer Care – CCA1

#### 3.1. Approach to Customer Care – CCA1

Our approach to customer care is shown in Figure 1.

Redacted

Figure 1: Approach to Customer Care – CCA1

Redacted

To structure our approach to deliver excellent customer experience and go the “extra nautical mile”, we will use the Customer Journey Wheel to structure our interactions with all of our customers as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Customer Journey Wheel showing each journey stage and how the customer experiences the NorthLink service

3.1.1.1. What our customers would like to see in the future

NorthLink customer satisfaction for the calendar year 2018 shows that 98% of those customers completing the survey rated the service as good or excellent. This increased to <sup>Redacted</sup> including the “Fair” rating. Our analysis shows that the top three drivers of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction are shown in Figure 3.

We have therefore used the ITT requirements, customer and stakeholder feedback to shape our proposals as detailed in our proposals section 3.2.



Figure 3: Top 3 drivers of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction

### 3.1.1.2. Our analysis of our customers, requirements and key initiatives

We recognise that each customer is unique but for ease of reference we have used the 5 customer types shown in Figure 4.

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Redacted

*Figure 4: Customer type segregation*

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### 3.1.1.3. Our team to deliver this strategy

We have designed a streamlined team to manage customer experience in the new contract. From Commencement Date, this will be led by the Redacted with a summary

of key roles as shown in Table 3 and Table 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6 . The Customer Services Director will have overall responsibility for the customer journey stages and touchpoints for all customers.

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Redacted

*Figure 5: Customer Services Organisation – Shore-based*

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Redacted

*Figure 6: Customer Services Organisation – Onboard*

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**Table 3: Our streamlined team to manage customer experience – On Shore**

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On shore

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Customer Services Director	Redacted
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Senior Customer Contact Supervisor

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Customer Contact Assistants

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On shore

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Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager	Redacted
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Customer Services Manager (Ports)

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Customer Services Supervisors – (Ports)

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Customer Services Assistants (Ports)

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Table 4: Our streamlined team to manage customer experience – Onboard

Onboard

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Onboard Services Manager (Hrossey / Hjatland) Purser (Hamnavoe)	Redacted
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Passenger Services Supervisors

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Passenger Services Assistants

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Exec Chef

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Chef

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Effective communication is a mandatory requirement of the IMO STCW regulations, therefore all of the NorthLink staff onboard will communicate in English as the language of the operation. Where there is any doubt about the ability to speak English, we will ask the staff to undertake training and the results confirmed using a recognised approval test such as 'Marlin's test platform for 'Maritime English Testing'.



3.1.1.4. Our investment to improve the customer journey following the steps of our Customer Journey Wheel

Redacted

Figure 7: Customer journey – supported by improved technology

3.2. Proposals for Customer Care – CCA1

3.2.1.1. Reconciling the ITT requirements with Customer Journey Wheel

In designing our proposals to meet the ITT requirements, we have used our Customer Journey Wheel (see Figure 2) as the base on which all of our proposals structured. This has also been used to articulate how we will improve our systems, procedures and processes to deliver a customer experience that goes the extra nautical mile.

3.2.2. Proposals for ticket sales

Ticket sales are a key part of the 'Before the Journey' stage. In the new contract, we will maintain the existing ticket channels (website, app, telephone, contact centre, and BSL Interactive Sign Language interpreter Service) and invest in them to make it easier for customer to buy a ticket and offer new channels e.g. Smart Ticketing.

For each requirement of the ITT, we have put the key customer journeys in a table and identified using ticks which journey stage the proposals will improve in the new contract. Our key proposals and the key stages of the customer journey are shown as follows.

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

### 3.2.2.1. Investing in our booking system

The Redacted software will be enhanced with additional overlay processes to allow for an improved user experience. Using Redacted software, customers will be able to make multi-sailing reservations in one booking and payment process. This will create a database for all ticket types and ancillary products such as cabins, meals, kennels and include sales of ancillary tourist-related services such as onward travel in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire using the Grasshopper tickets.

Currently Redacted of visitors access our website on a mobile device, and we predict this number to increase in the new contract. Therefore, we anticipate that the number of telephone calls will reduce during the contract period. We predict a continued increase in bookings being made using website and app, particularly with the chat facility being available. Our Customer Contact Centre (CCC) team in Stromness will be allocated to active customer service and selling roles to improve the overall customer experience.

The CCC will be supported by our Travel Trade team who will promote and take bookings for the coach and bus group tours market, attracting tourists to the Northern Isles. Redacted

### 3.2.2.2. Options for customers to make bookings at terminals and Kirkwall booking office

We recognise that our customers for whatever reason might not have access to technology and therefore booking a ticket will be possible and promoted via our passenger terminals and Kirkwall booking office.

### 3.2.2.3. Ensuring customer types are respected when booking

As part of the ticket sales process, when allocating available space on the vehicle deck, we will ensure that we respect customer needs, for example freight users, livestock demands on peak days and late summer movement periods, in addition to customer vehicles. We will aim to sell the space allocated per category on a first come first served basis, and as the sailing date approaches will adjust the allocation to maximise the deck lane usage.

We are conscious of time sensitive freight, requiring an early arrival at the port, particularly into Aberdeen. We will ensure that allocation of space is managed accurately by the Freight team, to ensure that the needs of our customers' who are shipping freight and livestock are met.

### 3.2.2.4. Introducing Smart Ticketing

Smart Ticketing for foot passengers, will be rolled out to customers who have concessionary cards and then to all foot passengers, as shown in Table 5. Redacted , our customers

travelling by foot will be able to load purchased tickets to travel onto smartcard at departure ports and have them validated upon boarding. This will enable the vessel manifest to be created by reconciling these digital tickets in real time with the booking and reservation system providing us enhanced information to improve the overall customer experience.

Table 5: Introducing Smart Ticketing

Stages	Details
Redacted	Smart infrastructure in place and proven
	Smart concessionary products tested and available
	Smart commercial products tested and available
	All paper based concessionary products transferred to Smart
	Commercial food passenger products only available as Smart products

3.2.2.5. Extending the hours of the CCC to make it easier for customers to buy a ticket

On Commencement Date, to meet expectations from our customers of increased availability, we will introduce an enhanced cascade system for calls to be answered from 05.30 through to midnight by terminal teams in Aberdeen, Lerwick, Stromness and Hatston. This will increase the coverage on the days when there is an evening Hatston arriving vessel by an additional seven hours (58%) per day and at weekends all year by four hours (+33%). CCC increased opening hours are shown in Figure 6.



Increased opening hours will make it easier for our customers to book a ticket.

From the Contract Start Date onwards			
April to October (inclusive)		November to March (inclusive)	
Monday to Friday	05.30 through to 24.00	Monday and Tuesday	05.30 to 20.00 (No evening arrivals into Hatston)
Saturday and Sunday	08.00 to 24.00 (note w/e Hamnavoe sails at 09.00)	Wednesday to Friday	05.30 to 24.00
-	-	Saturday and Sunday	08.00 to 24.00

Figure 8: Extending the hours of the Customer Contact Centre to make it easier for customers to buy a ticket

3.2.2.6. Offering a live chat option via the website and app

We will continue to promote the NorthLink booking app for ticket sales which has recently been introduced and received very positively by our customers. Responding to the increasing demand from our services by mobile devices, Redacted, we will introduce live-






chat facilities via our website and app to ease the booking process for customers with any specific question performed by our Customer Contact Centre. The new chat system will include a call back system where our team in the Stromness office or cascaded ports, will be able contact the potential customer to assist and talk through any query.

The introduction of a chat function will allow for potential customers to correspond with our operational team. Redacted

Redacted

### 3.2.3. Proposals for advice on sailing status

Sailing status i.e. online, delayed or cancelled, is key information at the following stages of the Customer Journey Wheel and outlined below.

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

We will maintain the robust systems, procedures and processes in place at NorthLink Ferries today. A summary on how information is comprehensively communicated to our customers is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Customer communications

	Normal Operations	Sailings under review	Actual cancellation
Operations Update Approved by the Redacted Redacted	Redacted		

.....

	Normal Operations	Sailings under review	Actual cancellation
NorthLink Website and app using the approved operations update	Redacted		
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook) using the approved operations update			
Contact Centre using the approved operations update			
Port of departure using the approved operations update			
Freight and Livestock customers			

We will continue to review how we can improve information to customers during the relevant journey stage, summarised below:

Improvement	Customer Journey Stage
Ensuring sailing status is available from Traveline Scotland's website	Before the Journey
Investing in our CRM to send personalised alerts to customers	Before the Journey
Investing in Passenger Information Screens	At the Harbour Onboard

### 3.2.3.1. Ensuring sailing status is available from Traveline Scotland's website.

From Commencement Date, Serco NorthLink Ferries will be a member of Traveline Scotland and collaborate in the initiative by supplying daily information on the sailing status of each service. The Traveline "Journey Planner in a Box" will be available from the NorthLink Ferries website. The processes and procedures will be managed by the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager.

### 3.2.3.2. Investing in our CRM to send personalised alerts to customers

The new CRM system, which will be in place from October 2020, will allow us to send email and telephone information on journey experience, as well as sailing status, to customers who have pre-booked to provide more timely information.

### 3.2.3.3. Investing in Passenger Information Screens at ports and on our vessels

By August 2021, our projects team will install passenger information screens in each of 5 terminals and one on each of customer vessels to provide real time updates to customers. The content will be managed centrally by the Customer Contact Centre team in the Stromness office to provide consistent real time information, which due to the extended opening hours can be updated between 5.30 and 24.00. Processes and procedures for managing these screens will be added to the relevant handbook and the team will be trained on how to input this information. Our new real-time information screens will enable customers onboard to see the status of the NorthLink Ferries vessel sailings. This will be supported by status updates from other transport providers via Traveline Scotland.

## 3.2.4. Proposals for availability of onboard services

Onboard services are a key part of the onboard customer journey stage.

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

### 3.2.4.1. Onboard inspection process

We will continue to maintain the current procedures and processes in the Hotel Operations Procedures. From Commencement Date, the Redacted Manager of each vessel will

continue to undertake a departmental inspection including a cleaning inspection. The Master's inspection is undertaken once per week with any defects or issues recorded and actioned for repair. Defects identified in between inspections will be notified to the Redacted Manager who will implement repairs either through the vessel maintenance team or a nominated maintenance company.



### 3.2.4.2. Bringing cleaning and security teams directly employed by NorthLink

To ensure consistency of staff engagement throughout the customer service delivery, we will bring security and cleaning in-house. This will ensure that all of our customer facing services will be under the Redacted

The inhouse cleaning will be the day to day management responsibility of the Redacted of each vessel from Commencement Date while the security team will be managed by the Redacted ; more detail is in Delivery Plan B3-OM3 – Security.

### 3.2.5. Proposals for availability of on-shore facilities

The shore facilities will be the first impression, and integral to the ‘At Harbour’ journey stage, that many of our customers will have of the Serco NorthLink operation. Our proposal will ensure that the level of customer service is consistent through the whole customer journey.






Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

#### 3.2.5.1. Regular inspection process

We will maintain the inspection process in the new contract Redacted at each port who is responsible for the management of the terminal. Each terminal has a Planned General Inspections (PGI) once per month with any defects recorded and actioned for repair. Defects identified in between inspections will be notified Redacted who will implement timely repairs either through the harbour authority or a nominated maintenance company. Full details of our investment at on-shore facilities are in the Delivery Plan PF2 - Vessel Facilities and all items will be inspected and reviewed under the Planned General Inspections.

### 3.2.6. Proposals for care of stranded passengers

The proposals for care of stranded customers impact the following Customer Journey stages as shown as follows:

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

#### 3.2.6.1. Continuing best practice

When there is disruption and cancellation, we take the following steps to look after customers and will continue to do so in the new contract Redacted

- Prioritisation of vulnerable customers
- Ensuring provision of refreshments and food, if appropriate
- Being proactive in providing alternative transport options, including via another route if it is an option
- Building relationships with accommodation providers surrounding the ports to support customers’ secure accommodation if needed
- Leveraging resource in the business, but outside the immediate port, to ensure NorthLink has the ability and capacity to deal with a large amount of people

During the current contract we have significantly reduced cancelled services by varying departure times and strived to run services by being as flexible as possible in the event of disruption caused by either weather or technical reasons. During such times we ensure that our customer facing teams are bolstered in the terminals and in the contact centre to deal with additional telephone calls and social media interaction. This process will enable the team to offer additional support and advice to those customers and their friends and families who are affected.

Our key approaches to managing customers during disruption are detailed as follows:

*Aberdeen, Stromness, Lerwick*

- Weather delay – We bring the sailing forward and back to adapt weather conditions and maintain a daily sailing wherever possible. This has been welcomed by all of customers particularly islanders. If a sailing has been delayed, then customers can board at the same time and sailing occurs in the next weather window and the customer isn't inconvenienced by the delay in arrival time and would rather reach their destination than to wait for another 24 hours to travel.
- If vessel is cancelled, booked customers can stay on the vessel overnight, on a complementary bed and breakfast basis. Customers can use this service and travel on the next available sailing and with no cost to change their booking. This service, introduced by Serco, has been welcomed by the island community in the current contract.

*Freight and Livestock customers*

- Our freight team liaises regularly with freight customers to discuss any delays or cancellations to sailings and manage bookings to enable movement of time sensitive goods at the earliest possible opportunity. Our freight team will ensure that livestock operators are pre-advised of any weather disruption via the operational updates. Our request is that livestock is held back from delivery to the NorthLink Lairage facilities until a sailing is confirmed to be departing.

*Disabled customers*

- This is particularly important for those customers with mobility concerns therefore the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will ensure that at each port, staff will make every effort to assist with making the connections as originally planned by the customer.

3.2.6.2. Proposals for restitution

In all cases of delay or cancellation we will be sympathetic to the actual or perceived loss which the disruption may cause to each customer. We will review reservation affected on a case by case basis and refund or move bookings to alternate sailings as agreed with the passenger. Our proposals for restitution are further explained in the Customer Care and Accessibility Delivery Plan (CCA2).

3.2.6.3. Continuous improvement to reduce inconvenience to our customers

Following a service disruption, the Redacted and associated team will

undertake a review of the actions taken and associated customer impact. The outcome of delays will be reviewed at departmental meetings to ensure this process is continuously improved. All new initiatives will be added the relevant policy manual.



*"Please pass on to those in higher places [who ought to get to know] our praise for the truly awesome customer service we received in Aberdeen Ferry Terminal on Thursday [1st March] after a longer than usual journey from Kirkwall, courtesy of the weather. The staff were dealing with a number of enquiries from passengers in an unhurried and considerate way, giving due attention to each person; this was even more noticeable when we returned in the late afternoon to catch the ferry back to Kirkwall which was delayed until 11 pm. Again each person was given the attention needed, the staff handling some rather difficult customers with unfailing politeness and answering all queries, including onward journey concerns.*

*Our thanks to the team in Aberdeen"*

### 3.2.7. Proposals for journey experience

This section describes our proposal for management of the customer journey experience. The initiatives described in other sections in this plan will contribute significantly to keeping high levels of customer experience. They will be supported by initiatives in this section and shown as follows.

Initiatives	Customer Journey Stage
Staff Training (World Host and Visit Scotland plans)	Across all journey stages
Free vending of coffee at Scrabster	At the Harbour
Maintaining a high quality of food and drink onboard	Onboard
Improving transport integration between ferry and other modes of travel	Before the Journey Getting to the Harbour

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey
					

#### 3.2.7.1. Introduce a Customer Charter

To summarise our offer and detailing how we can help customers, we will introduce a Customer Charter and update this annually. The Customer Charter will provide a more comprehensive view of the NorthLink's customer proposition and set the tone for our operation of the NorthLink network following in the footsteps of our Charter introduced at Caledonian Sleeper.

#### 3.2.7.2. Investing in training for customer facing staff

We will provide WorldHost training for all of our customer-facing staff. This will allow our staff to further improve their excellent level of customer care and be aware of the needs of different customer types.

The Redacted Director will work with Visit Scotland to assist with the training of our

senior onboard customer-facing staff to be Visit Scotland ambassadors. To improve the level of hospitality offered by our onboard team, Redacted we will ensure that the senior

passenger management team onboard are members of the Institute of Hospitality and apply the standards of this recognised industry body to further improve our service levels.

3.2.7.3. Offering customers free drinks in the winter months at Scrabster port  
All terminals will continue to have refreshment facilities including hot drinks and snack vending machines; more details can be found in the Delivery Plan A3-PF1 Passenger Facilities. In the winter season from November to March inclusive, we will place the Scrabster foot passenger waiting room hot drinks machine on a free vend recognising the long journey undertaken by island customers to reach one of the most northerly points on the Scottish mainland.

3.2.7.4. Continuing to provide excellent Food and Drink to our customers onboard

We have transformed the food and drink offer onboard in the current contract and this is consistently received positively by our customers. We will continue to improve this in the new contract managed by the Onboard Services Officers/Purser (Hamnavoe) as outlined in more detail in Delivery Plan A3-PF3 Catering. Through our close relationship with the food and drink associations in both Orkney and Shetland, each season our chefs are able to identify new innovations to introduce into the onboard menus. This process ensures that customers will continue to experience a taste of the Northern Isles as soon as they step onboard the vessel, whether this be Shetland chocolates in the premium cabins, Orkney wines, whiskies and gins in the bars or Shetland salmon and Orkney steaks in the onboard restaurants.

3.2.7.5. Improving the journey experience to get to and from our ports

Recognising the importance of end to travel, the new role of Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will lead on transport integration The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will work closely with ScotRail, Stagecoach, First Buses, local taxi drivers and community transport providers to ensure that all journeys are made without interruption. The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will collate data on passenger flows and their route planning to identify where improvements can be made. This will be reviewed and approved by the Redacted

3.2.7.6. Helping our customers to travel car-free

To offer our customers the ability to travel without the car, the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will work with local car hire and car-share schemes to enable customers to travel on the ferry without taking their vehicle freeing up space at busy times on the car deck. We will also look to work with companies who encourage e-motoring using electric or hybrid cars. Redacted

Redacted, the Redacted Manager will ensure the ports are entered into SatNav and

What3Words to allow for easy navigation for first time customers to the NorthLink network. Our Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will work with Caithness Transport Forum, Caithness Chamber of Commerce, ScotRail and HITRANS to improve transport connections between transport modes, i.e. bus, train and coach and the ferry.

3.2.7.7. Proposals for customers who cycle or walk to and from our harbours

From our discussions with Redacted we have identified a number of improvements that we will incorporate within the new contract. These will include:

- Improved signage to the ports in partnership with Redacted
- Work with the harbour authorities to make safe cycle routes to and from the NorthLink Ferry terminals
- Introduce covered cycle racks at all NorthLink terminals
- Have cycle maintenance kits available at each port including tyre pumps
- Allow for customers with e-bikes to charge their cycle batteries on site

- Have local area cycle route maps available
- From Hatston to Lerwick we will promote that the NorthLink Ferry is part of the 'UK National Cycle Route 1' and the European 'Eurovelo route 12'.
- Have available cycle hire service details and have these available for collection from the NorthLink Terminals
- We will promote local cycling events such as the Aberdeen section of the national 'OVO Cycle Tour' series

The new role of the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager working with Redacted will undertake the following improvements for customers who access our ports by foot:

- Improved signage to the ports in partnership with Redacted
- Work with the harbour authorities to make safe walking routes to and from the NorthLink Ferry terminals
- Have local area walking maps available upon request from terminal staff
- Work with local walking groups to introduce visitors to the island walks.

### 3.2.7.8. Car Parking

To reduce congestion around Aberdeen port and reduce stakeholder complaints about this congestion, car drivers will be able to board the vessel up to 2 hours 30 minutes before departure rather than the current 2 hours before departure. This will also allow for the vessel to be ready to sail earlier ensuring that the schedule is maintained, particularly in the winter months.

At ports, the on-site controlled parking lanes will be operated in accordance with the Ports Marine Safety Code (PMSC) and the International Ship and Ports Security (ISPS) legislation. Car passengers will be able to access these areas under the supervision of our security and marshalling teams.

### 3.2.8. Proposals to improve experience for disabled people

From our experience of engaging with stakeholders in the current contract and through our work on Transport Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework steering group we have worked with many Disabled Person's Organisations (DPOs) and understand that they wish to be not treated differently, only to be able to enjoy the same service and facilities as all customers. Our key proposals are summarised here, with more detail in Section CCA3 - Accessibility.

A summary of our proposals is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Proposals to improve experience for disabled people

Categorisation	Initiatives
Staff training	<p>We will invest in disability awareness training for all customer facing staff, which will be refreshed annually. The effectiveness of this training will be reviewed regularly by our Redacted</p> <p>From our work with Transport Scotland, we will introduce the SEStran Thistle Assistance Card will be recognised across the NorthLink network and our teams trained to recognise the importance of this Scotland wide initiative A6 CCA3a as part of wider disability awareness.</p>

Categorisation	Initiatives
Information	<p>Redacted is a free app, designed by a Scottish company, which can be downloaded to a personal mobile phone to enable disability information to be sent via Bluetooth to our reception team's existing computer. This removes the customers' need to explain personal disability information in front of other customers. Neatebox app is available to anyone with a Smart device and is currently being rolled out across NorthLink. We will promote this innovation going forward in the new contract and monitor its uptake as part of our newly formed EDI committee managed by our Redacted Director.</p> <p>We will also maintain 'Recite Me' accessibility software has been recently introduced to allow for an enhanced booking service for those who have visual difficulties with normal websites.</p>
Accessibility Information Systems	To ensure that all harbour/port and vessel facilities meet and exceed current legislation, the NorthLink Ferries Accessible Information System will be periodically reviewed as part of the Port and Vessel inspection process to indicate the level of access for all people with a disability. This information will be published on the NorthLink Ferries website, and in printed form from Commencement Date and managed by the Redacted Director. Progress will be reviewed as part of EDI Group.
Vessel facilities	We have a comprehensive investment programme described in Delivery Plan A3-PF2 Passenger Facilities.
Harbour facilities	The Redacted Managers (ports) will be responsible for maintaining the harbour facilities and fixing and rectifying faults. More detail on harbour facilities is shown in A3-PF1-Passenger Facilities Delivery Plan

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey

### 3.2.9. Customer satisfaction surveys on all facilities

Customer satisfaction surveys are currently conducted during the Onboard stage through the successful iPad surveys. Using our new CRM system, we will introduce surveys to capture feedback after the journey to allow more detailed customer feedback. The key stages of the Customer Journey are shown as follows.

Before the Journey	Getting to the Harbour	At the Harbour	Onboard	Onward Journey	After the Journey

#### 3.2.9.1. Using survey iPads for customer information

Each vessel is equipped with iPads to allow customers to feedback on the service in an easy to use and interactive manner. The feedback is collected regularly and reviewed at a director level meeting. The questions follow the customer journey through each stage of the Customer Journey Wheel (see Figure 2). In the new contract, we will also promote the facility for these iPads to be used for customer information onboard, e.g. Redacted

As part of our staff becoming Visit Scotland ambassadors, we will offer to Visit Scotland that our ambassador staff host the Visit Scotland annual survey. This will help provide valuable input into on trends in the Scottish government visit.

Redacted

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Redacted

*Figure 10: Power BI screenshot*

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### 3.2.9.2. Using this information to drive improvement within the business

Customer feedback is part of the daily information available for managers to be able to discuss with their specific team members and take action as required. Corrective action from this feedback forms part of the continuous improvement processes and will continue to do so in the new contract.

### 3.2.10. Post journey incidents

#### 3.2.10.1. Helping our customers after their journey

Should there be any incident which affects onward travel for our customers, our staff, as part of our comprehensive customer training will be trained to assist and offer the use of company facilities e.g. phone to customers to allow contact with affected friends and family.

#### 3.2.10.2. Delays due to weather

Where a customer may have missed their connections to other forms of public transport due to a weather delay, our staff will assist in helping each customer to maintain that connection to reach their final destination as quickly as possible. Where the delay is for technical reasons, we will seek to ensure customers reach their destination as swiftly as possible and refund reasonable costs associated directly with the delay.

### 3.2.10.3. Maintaining Lost Property

Property lost onboard when discovered is logged in the vessels' records. The item is then forwarded to the shore office in Kirkwall for holding prior to a repatriation following Serco contacting the customer. When the CRM is rolled out from July 2020, we will include lost property database as part of CRM.

### 3.2.10.4. Following up on incidents in the car park

If there is any damage to a vehicle in the long stay car parks, we will assist with the investigation along with the carpark owner for example Orkney Island Council or Shetland Island Council or the delegated port operators and again this information will be recorded in our CRM system from October 2020 onwards.

## 4. Risks and Mitigations

Serco has identified areas of risk which will be monitored consistently throughout the new contract.

Table 8: Risks and Mitigations

	Risk examples	Mitigations
a	Ticket Sales Main Redacted system fails	Redacted
	Power failure at terminal and the booking system is unavailable	
b	Advice on sailing. Incorrect information given verbally or online.	
c	Availability of onboard services. One section of the onboard service becomes unavailable through damage or refurbishment.	
d	Availability of on-shore services. Partial reduction in passenger terminal facilities due to damage or refurbishment	
e	Care of stranded passengers Vessel sailing cancelled	
	Vessel diverted to alternate port	
	Late arrival of vessel misses onward travel connection	
f	Journey experience	

	Risk examples	Mitigations
	Serco to deliver customer service excellence at all points of the journey	Redacted
g	Customer service for disabled passengers. All services available for disabled and able-bodied passengers	
h	Customer service satisfaction surveys on all facilities iPad survey to cover all areas of the Customer Journey Wheel. Surveys to be completed on all sailings External survey company introduced	
i	Post journey incidents Follow up any travel interruptions with the affected customers Complaints subsequently reported	

## 5. Customer Complaints – CCA2

### 5.1. Approach to Customer Complaints

Our approach to operating a Customer Complaints Process are based on the existing extremely successful procedures in place within the Serco NorthLink Ferries Local Operating Procedure Redacted which will be maintained.

#### 5.1.1. Current level of complaints

Responding to complaints, suggestions and compliments is an important element of customer service for any business, particularly transport operators. The current low level of complaints is an indicator of the effectiveness of the ferry service we operate.

Serco has revitalised the process of receiving and responding to comments, using feedback to improve our business continuously. One of our key aims is to improve the customer experience, and we have looked at the entire customer journey (see Customer Journey Wheel in Figure 2) to allow us to identify further initiatives that will drive customer satisfaction at each touch point and therefore improve the customer journey.

#### 5.1.2. Our success in reducing complaints

We respond to complaints through a standard process within the KPI requirements of 5 days to acknowledge and 14 days to respond with a detailed answer and resolution. We are performing well within these targets, see Section 0.

Since 2012, we have consistently improved the customer complaints performance over the period of the current contract through a thorough upgrade of our processes, procedures and methods through which customers can register a complaint. The results have been extremely

impressive highlighted by the fact that the level of complaints received from was Redacted in 2012 down to Redacted in 2018.

Our reporting analysis shows that the total volume of correspondence being received for the whole year of 2018 was Redacted. This was broken down to show that out of the correspondence received, we can categorise the content as either negative, positive or neutral.

Customer feedback type	Number	%
Negative	Redacted	
Positive		
Neutral		
Total		

The ratio per overall passenger number to the correspondence type, Positive, Negative or Neutral, received is as follows.

Correspondence type	Correspondence: No of Customers 2017	Correspondence: No of Customers 2018
Positive	Redacted	
Negative		
Neutral		

### 5.1.3. Making it easier for customers feedback and resolve issues through onboard surveys

At the start of the current contract, NorthLink Ferries was using a paper-based customer feedback system implemented by the previous operator with each A4 sheet entry being scanned and the results being available consolidated in a PDF format. This system proved to be cumbersome and required a valuable resource to scan the incoming responses.

Serco introduced the iPad survey to allow passengers travelling onboard to feedback their thoughts on the service in an easy to use and interactive manner and now iPads are on all vessels. The content questions are able to be updated in house to ensure that the research is appropriate to the service standards. By moving to an online process, the results can be instantly fed back to the management team to allow for immediate action, or praise of the service, to be given to our teams across the business.

The questions follow the whole Customer Journey Wheel (see Figure 2) from initial contact with the NorthLink operation through to booking, arrival at the port, check-in, embarkation, onboard service and facilities. The results will continue to be used to feedback to the customer service teams to ensure standards are met, maintained and continuously improved.

As an example of the output of the iPad surveys, the satisfaction rate analysis of the full year January to December 2018 is shown as 98%. This figure relates to those customers completing the survey rating the service as good or excellent, and 99% satisfaction including the 'Fair' scoring which demonstrates the low levels of customer complaints. This data is a powerful visualisation of current performance against our touchpoints as indicated on the Customer Journey Wheel. Our onboard survey results for overall experience are shown in Figure 11 and Figure 10.



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Redacted

*Figure 11: Customer rating of overall NorthLink journey experience*

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#### 5.1.4. Responsibility and Escalation

Complaint handling and response will continue be the overall responsibility of the Redacted Director. As of today, significant complaints will be escalated to the Managing Director to ensure that an appropriate response and action is put in place. A summary of our escalation process is shown in Figure 12, which will continue in the new contract.

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Redacted

*Figure 12: Complaints escalation process*

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We will continue to respond to complaints in a swift, accurate and empathic manner, so as to improve customer satisfaction throughout the life of the new contract. Our procedures and processes ensure that the volume and subject matter of each complaint are recorded, so that progress on resolving issues can be tracked, using the information about the complaint for the purpose of continuously improving the service. We treat all feedback as positive contributions to the further development and enhancement of the NorthLink service. This categorisation allows for trend analysis to highlight where action is needed to be implemented.

Our approach is to pre-empt complaints and rectify them at source through continuous interaction with our customers at all touch points identified in the Customer Journey Wheel.

## 5.2. Proposals for receipt and recording of customer feedback

We will maintain the current and efficient process, for receipt and recording of customers' complaints to achieve the contractual KPIs relating to complaints. This process is summarised in Figure 10.

Redacted

Figure 13: Process for dealing with complaints

### 5.2.1. How complaints are recorded

Complaints are received from a number of sources and the following table shows how complaints are received, recorded and acknowledgment sent to customers.

Form received	Received	Recorded	Acknowledgement provided to customers
Correspondence	Redacted		
Website			
Social media			
Telephone			
In person			
Customer Surveys			

### 5.2.2. How complaints are recorded in person

At any stage of the customer journey, our staff are open to feedback whether this be positive or negative. Through our training programme, frontline staff are empowered to try to resolve issues on the spot e.g. the relevant supervisor or manager has the authority to refund or replace the service they are overseeing to resolve at source. Any significant complaint will be escalated immediately to seek resolution. However, if this is not possible then a complaint will be taken and sent to the Redacted and entered into the Correspondence Log.

Redacted

### 5.2.3. Tracking complaints using a Correspondence Log

Each complaint is recorded onto the Correspondence Log Redacted

5.3. Proposals for the assessment of complaints, including quality management of process

#### 5.3.1. How complaints are assessed

Redacted

#### 5.3.2. Training our staff to resolve with complaints

Redacted

The NorthLink Quality Management System Redacted outlines the procedures staff take to bring each complaint to a conclusion. We will conduct comprehensive KPI tracking of complaints which is used to monitor customer correspondence (see Figure 11). We have included this to demonstrate the data and level of detail that is recorded and used as part of KPI and annual complaint reporting to Transport Scotland.

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Redacted

*Figure 14: P12 – Period 12 and CY7 Contract Year To Date*

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#### 5.4. Scheme for restitution

We will continue with the current effective Customer Complaints procedure and a process for restitution where this is seen to be appropriate and as detailed in our operating procedures Redacted . We will ensure that we comply also with the requirements of the

Passenger Welfare Guide which covers EU Passenger Rights Regulation No.1177/2010 c.

### 5.4.1. Refreshment compensation process

Our refreshment compensation process to customers in relation to delayed departures is shown in Table 9. This will be maintained in the new contract.

Table 9: Refreshment compensation process

Delayed departure by:	Complimentary offer
More than 90 minutes	A light refreshment such as a bottle of water or a hot beverage.
Four hours or more	A snack/light meal voucher, equivalent up to the value of £6.00.
Eight hours or more	A meal voucher, equivalent up to the value of £12.00.
Every four hours thereafter	As stated above; a snack or meal voucher up to the values provided.

Where at all possible, a resolution of any complaint will be made at the time of travel. The onboard teams are empowered to take immediate action to resolve any complaint.

### 5.4.2. Restitution regarding food, cabin, damage to property

Should this not be possible and following an investigation of the complaint, NorthLink will make an informed decision regarding restitution. This will be maintained in the new contract.

Table 10: Examples of the forms of restitution food, cabin, damage to property

Issue	First stage	Restitution
Redacted		

Reports back to customer within acceptable timescales

### 5.4.3. Processes to report back to customers who have provided feedback

The Serco NorthLink complaints procedures outlines within acceptable timescales. Acknowledgement of a complaint will be within the agreed target which is currently five days from receipt. The average response time during 2018 was Redacted

Redacted

Redacted

As is the case today, investigation and formal response will be within a maximum of 14 days to allow for contact with the appropriate NorthLink team member. The actual response time for 2018 was Redacted

As can be seen from the following, which is presented to TS as part of the monthly contract review sessions, we track current numbers of correspondence received with the Previous Comparable Period (PCP) – for example December 2017 against December 2018. Redacted

## 5.5. Proposals for the review of decisions

As is the case today, the Redacted Director will analyse all communications received from customers Redacted

The monthly data will be compiled and reviewed by the Redacted to ensure that all responses are appropriate and in accordance with Serco's policy and conform to the contract service level agreed.

Redacted

## 5.6. Proposals for the appeals process

As a result of the reporting processes in Figure 13, the Managing Director will be aware of any unresolved issues and action a further response as required, giving the final position of Serco

In the event of a customer not being satisfied with the actions, response or recompense offer from NorthLink following a complaint, an escalation be made to Transport Scotland Ferries Unit in Edinburgh as detailed in the NorthLink Ferries Passenger Welfare Guide, which is available in paper form onboard, at ports and online. This document also details the EU Passenger Rights Regulation No. 1177/2010 concerning the rights of passengers travelling by sea and inland waters.

The decision will be one for Transport Scotland to make and to go back to the customer with the final resolution. Redacted

## 5.7. Proposals for the collection of aggregated casework records, analysis and performance reporting to Ministers and as a public annual report

### 5.7.1. Customer feedback being part of the contract performance monthly meetings

We provide the required information in a collection of aggregated casework records, analysis and performance reporting, agreed with Ministers and then submitted as an annual report. This information is covered in the Performance Monitoring Contract Section 5.1 – 'Customer and Passenger Feedback'.

Performance statistics of complaints, comments, observations and commendations will be available for review and any recommendation for improvement made by TS will be embraced as part of the monthly contract performance meetings.

As per the contract requirements, Serco will respond to complaints and all correspondence within the Performance Regime in Schedule 13 Part 1, section 1.1.2 as shown in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Performance Regime – customer complaints and correspondence

Description	Target	Timescale
The Operator must comply with the Performance Measures and reporting requirements detailed in Volume 3 Schedule 13. The Performance Measures address:	Serco will respond to complaints and all correspondence within the Performance Regime in Schedule 13 Part 1, section 1.1.2	From Commencement Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability of the Ferry Service</li> <li>• Punctuality of the Ferry Service</li> <li>• Compliance</li> <li>• Reporting (including financial performance)</li> <li>• Customer complaints</li> <li>• Smart Ticketing</li> </ul>		

Should TS or the Scottish Ministers require further detail on any specific complaint this will be made immediately available by NorthLink. We will provide an open and transparent analysis of NorthLink’s operations for scrutiny throughout the new contract.

### 5.7.2 Using the new CRM to streamline complaints

The current contract using an Excel-based system so that customer complaints, comments, observations and commendations are received either before, during or after travel. As the new CRM is introduced from October 2020, this system will be used for customer complaints.

All correspondence will be categorised into areas of responsibility and the specific manager accountable within the business, whether this be Customer Service, Operational or Technical, will make a direct contact with the customer whether this be a travelling customer, a freight operator or livestock farmer – to empathise and seek to resolve issues within the shortest possible timeframe.

### 5.8. Key outcomes and continuous improvements

Correspondence of all types including complaints are an indication of customer satisfaction and as such are a window to the business. Therefore, complaints are an essential reading for the whole management team to identify areas for improvement.

Using our database of complaints as well as reports from the E-Marketing team on social media and feedback received on ships, will be regularly reviewed by the Redacted Director to

identify areas for continuous business improvement and discussed at the regular customer experience meetings.

We will pay attention to repeat complaints particularly any which involve customers with accessibility issues and will investigate why the issue has recurred. The relationship between the Redacted the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager and

frontline staff, who will escalate some of the complaints, will help identify solutions and generate accurate response data.

## 6. Risks and Mitigations

Table 12: Risks and Mitigations

#	Risk	Mitigations	Owner
1	Customers do not approach staff to make their feelings known and send correspondence subsequently which increases dissatisfaction and creates the need for additional resource	Redacted	
2	Incorrect information is received which does not accurately reflect the operation		
3	A complaint is received after the onboard team has left the vessel and are on leave. The risk is that the complaint may not be able to be resolved within the KPI timescales		
4	Reporting of incoming complaint or correspondence is delayed due to resource issue such as annual leave, sickness		
5	Customer is not satisfied with the response received or level of restitution		

## 7. Accessibility – CCA3

### 7.1. Approach to optimising accessibility

Serco supports the Scottish Government's commitment to building a fairer Scotland. Through our customer-led approach at NorthLink, we ensure that our services are accessible to all customers, contributing to our delivery of a safe and efficient service. We are dedicated to ensuring our customer service is of the same high quality for older and disabled customers who may require assistance as it is for able-bodied customers. We take account of all impairments, such as physical, sensory, speech and language, specific learning difficulties and cognitive impairments.

In this Delivery Plan we have included the recommendations of:

- Mobility and Access Committee (MACS) for Scotland Annual Report 2017–18
- The MACS documents “MACS Toolkit – Improving Accessibility at Ferry Terminals – March 2018”
- MACS Response to the Consultation on the Future of Smart Ticketing in Scotland



- The European Regulation (EU1177/2010 annex iv) concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterways

This is in addition to the specific Disabled Persons' Organisation's recommendations which Serco will work collaboratively towards achieving throughout the new contract.

#### *Incorporating the objectives of MACS*

The MACS ferries and airports workstream workplan 2018-2019 states that, in relation to ferry operators, MACS intend to:

- Build relationships with colleagues at Transport Scotland Ferries Unit and support their work with the Scottish Ferries Services Ferries Plan 2013-2022.
- Continue to build relationships with ferry operators and ferry terminal providers to offer advice and promote improved accessibility.
- Seek opportunities to develop ferry services and ferry terminals which standards do not meet the minimum requirements for accessibility.
- Celebrate and acknowledge good practice by identifying and sharing achievements.

#### **7.1.1. Working collaboratively with stakeholders**

Previous work with SATA and MACS has developed the services to be compliant with their needs. An example of this was a review of a ferry with a visually impaired traveller and waste bins were removed from positions near handrails, and assistance bars in the disabled toilets were changed to a dark colour to show a contrast from the lighter bathroom decks and bulkheads. Shower heads were left in a lower position in the accessible cabins for use by wheelchair users.

We have a holistic approach to inclusion at Serco NorthLink Ferries from when the customer first makes their booking to their arrival at their final destination. Our approach is to build on this current best practice and continuously improve the services focusing each day on the key customer touchpoints, as shown in our Customer Journey Wheel, Figure 15.

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Redacted

*Figure 15: Serco's Customer Journey Wheel, showing each journey stage and how the customer experiences the NorthLink service*

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### 7.1.2. Supporting integration with other forms of transport

Serco supports the Scottish Ministers' commitment to improve transport integration in Scotland and to contribute to the Scottish Government's purpose of achieving sustainable economic growth. Working with other transport operators, such as ScotRail, Stagecoach and First Group, we have designed our services to run in correlation with their timetables. This makes it easier for our customers to travel using a variety of connecting modes, for example the elderly, those travelling with young children and those with accessibility needs.

Serco promotes an inclusive approach in respect of all forms of disabilities, following the social model of disability. We understand there can be barriers in society and these falls into three categories: environment, people's attitude and organisation. We show our support to this approach through our collaboration with Transport Scotland (TS), by sitting on the steering committee to create the Scottish Government's Accessible Travel Framework legislation. We have implemented the contents of this document throughout the current contract at NorthLink.



*Figure 16: Transport Scotland's 'Going Further' document, which NorthLink is dedicated to delivering*

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In 2016, the former Transport Minister Humza Yousaf launched the 'Going Further' document, which details the 10-year plan for accessible travel in Scotland. Serco NorthLink Ferries sat on

the steering group for this publication and will deliver the contents of this policy, as a joint project with other key transport providers in Scotland.

### 7.1.3. Ensuring our staff are trained and supported to deliver an excellent customer experience

Our staff and contractors have a vital role to play in ensuring easy and appropriate access for everyone to the NorthLink services. Through our staff training we cover areas such as staff compassion, awareness of issues and reducing any perceived social stigma to ensure appropriate accessibility for all customers. This is essential to ensuring a smooth transition from shore to ship, during the voyage, on disembarkation and the onward journey for any customer with a disability.

### 7.2. Proposals for maximising accessibility

We will use the 'Customer Journey Wheel' to provide the framework for ensuring our services are inclusive across the journey lifecycle. We will use an innovative approach to identify and implement solutions for customers with varying forms of disabilities, to improve our services which will be captured in our continuous improvement programme. Our approach will equally cover proposals for elderly customers, those travelling with young children and those customers with a temporary disability, e.g. broken leg. This is summarised by journey stage in Table 13.

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Table 13: Journey stage summary

Journey stage	Our proposals for customer experience
Redacted	

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Journey stage

Our proposals for customer experience

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Redacted

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Redacted

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### 7.2.1. How we will manage accessibility

From Commencement Date, we will appoint a Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager at NorthLink, who will operate at a senior level in the business. The Customer Service and Transport Integration Manager will have responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and will have a leading role in taking forward timetabling, information and infrastructure activities. This will improve integration with a focus on providing ample time for modal exchange for those with mobility challenges. The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will draw on evidence relating to customers views concerning integration and work with other transport service providers, councils and Regional Transport Partnerships, to implement measures to meet ferry customers' needs (whether independently or working in partnership with others). The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will prepare annual plans, identifying how they will measure improvements in integration and monthly reports on progress against these targets.

#### 7.2.1.1. Creating an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group

From September 2020, we will create an internal working group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This will be made up of key people across the business chaired by the Redacted to review all issues relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### 7.2.2. Guide Dogs for the Blind

We have and will continue to work closely with the 'Guide Dogs for the Blind' organisation using the vessels as a training area for new dogs in training. Guide, hearing, medical alert or emotional support dogs are welcomed in all areas of the vessels.

### 7.2.3. Accessibility Policy at NorthLink

Our existing Accessibility Policy, which details all arrangements currently in place will be refreshed and continue into the new contract. Serco will deliver the Accessibility Travel Framework jointly with other key transport providers in Scotland. Through our regular discussions and meetings with MACS we will review their guidance publications for transport providers and implement changes to our procedures where required.

The Serco Accessibility Policy at NorthLink has been developed for customers who may require assistance and is available on the NorthLink website. This policy shows our customers, who have varying degrees of disability, what they can expect when travelling with us.

An extract from our NorthLink Accessibility Policy, available in all passenger terminals or online, is as follows:

*Serco NorthLink Ferries values all passengers who wish to travel on NorthLink services and has attained very positive feedback from customers and various bodies such as Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS) and the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA), who represent those with additional needs.*

*We will operate our services with a focus on customer care on all vessels and at all ports, which customers and representative organisations will continue to rate very highly.*

#### 7.2.4. NorthLink's Inclusion Guide

As is the case now, we will ensure that all customers have an easy and comfortable journey with us regardless of any physical or sensory impairment. We are acutely aware of the importance of the services which we operate for the Northern Isles and as such we endeavour to make our services as inclusive as possible. We have published our Inclusive Travel Guide which details our accessibility services at each stage of the customer journey. This document covers all aspects of the journey and encourages customers to discuss any of the services with the NorthLink team in advance of travel.

#### 7.2.5. Creating an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

We will create an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group with representatives for ship and shore offices to ensure all areas of the business are inclusive and in line with Serco Group policy, meeting quarterly. The responsibilities of the group will be:

- To identify specific improvements that can be made
- Champion their proposals
- Gain approval for their implementation
- Review customer feedback
- Review accessibility audits and reports
- Identify specific improvements that can be made
  
- Agree when an EqIA is required and allocate responsibility for its completion
- Review EqIAs conducted on new proposals
- Identify and support applications to the Accessibility Access Fund
- Present findings for budget approval
- Monitoring of initiatives
- Assist in the implementation of new initiatives



*Figure 17: Our Inclusive Travel Guide which details our accessibility services at each stage of the customer journey*

### 7.3. Proposals for Staff training

We will build on the customer-facing training delivered successfully at NorthLink since 2012.

Case Study	Rolling out accessibility training at NorthLink
<p>The following training has taken place already in 2019</p> <p>On 18 February 2019, teams onboard MV Hamnavoe hosted an Access Panel Orkney session where staff were provided with disability awareness training. During the two-hour session, staff were able to experience what it's like to have a disability by wearing glasses that simulated blindness, used wheelchairs and crutches and had their hearing dampened. Redacted of Access Panel Orkney said:</p> <p><i>'The aim of our session was to let staff experience disabilities first-hand so they can empathise with passengers' needs. All of us running the training have a disability so we were able to provide first-hand examples of what accessible travel is like for us. We were delighted to be welcomed on board to provide this training and it's great to see a company like Serco NorthLink Ferries take accessibility for passengers seriously.'</i></p> <p>The MV Hjaltland also hosted a 'Making Connections' workshop on Friday 22 February 2019. The workshop looked at how passengers navigate potential barriers when changing from one mode of transport to another. Making Connections brings disabled people together with transport operators to discuss, address and plan how travel connections can be made easier.</p>	

From Commencement Date, our Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will work with Redacted to review the design and delivery of our training programme for disability.

The demographics of our customers will be recognised. Redacted

From July 2020 onwards, all customer-facing staff at NorthLink will be trained in Disability Awareness covering the following:

- Appropriate words to use when referring to different disabilities
- Tips for improving communication with disabled customers
- Common disabilities that customers may have, and appropriate ways to offer assistance
- How to be more aware of their own feelings, misconceptions and biases when serving disabled customers
- The value of accessible tourism, and why disabled customers are such an important market
- Identify tourism opportunities that are accessible to disabled customers
- Refresher training will be provided to all customer facing staff.

### 7.3.1. Extending training to customer facing contractors

Our approach will also extend the training to contractors working on customer-facing tasks will be required to attain the same levels of disability awareness training. Weekly onboard drills will continue to include the actions necessary to assist disabled customers in an emergency.

### 7.3.2. Ensuring disability awareness is considered as part of induction training

Training will continue for booking and check-in, and our staff will ensure that, when a booking is made by a disabled driver or passenger, a note will be placed in the booking to ensure that the driver/passenger's requirements are met. The passenger will be given an identifier tag to hang from their vehicle, in addition to our normal destination vehicle hanger. This ensures that our vehicle deck crew can identify that this vehicle should be placed as close as possible to the lift, to take passengers from the vehicle deck to the passenger area. All new staff will be advised of this procedure during their initial induction training.

Our people will be visible and attentive at all times and stages of the journey, especially for those passengers who may not be used to the movement of a passenger ferry when at sea in inclement weather. Our people will through Disability Awareness training understand that proactiveness in these situations will reduce accidents and increase customer satisfaction levels.

### 7.4. Proposals for information dissemination through timetable and booking reservation systems

#### 7.4.1. Information will continue to be in large print

Information will continue to be developed with large print availability online for timetable and booking reservation systems, in printed form and available from our staff to ensure that passengers with special requirements when making the initial enquiry, travelling to the port or when onboard can understand the nature of the journey.



### 7.4.2. Making information accessible via the NorthLink website

The NorthLink website using the 'Recite Me' accessibility software will be compatible for those passengers with visual impairments allowing for ease of use on laptops, tablets or mobile phone devices.

#### Case Study 'Recite Me' available on the NorthLink website

'Recite Me' is now available on the NorthLink website. These tools are now available for use and allow our visitors to the website to do the following:

- Increase font sizes and styles, including Open Dyslexia
- Use a magnifying glass option
- Sharpen screen contrast
- Superimpose a ruler on screen to assist concentration
- Enable text to be spoken in a number of languages including Scots Gaelic

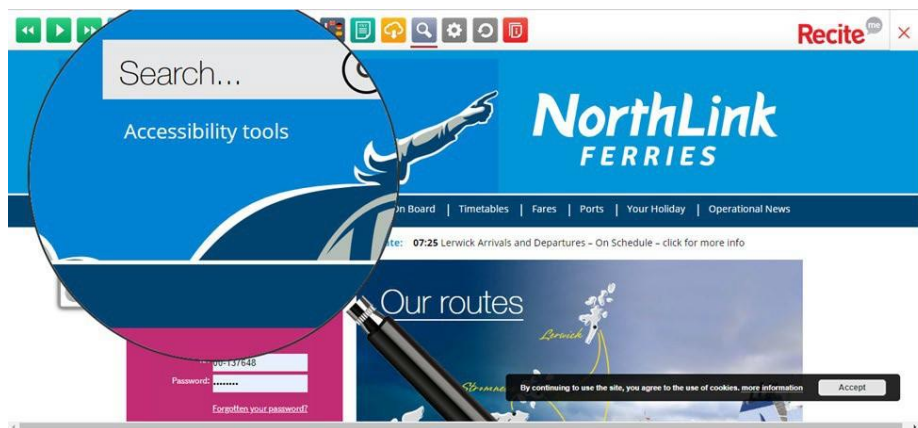


Figure 18: A sample page from our NorthLink website, showing the magnifying glass accessibility tool

### 7.4.3. Information available via Euan's Guide

We will continue to promote the accessibility of our facilities via Euan's Guide which has been received very successfully.

#### Case Study: NorthLink Ferries from Euan's Guide

*"A wheelchair accessible ferry trip from Aberdeen to Lerwick during storm Brian. Great facilities and excellent staff who were always willing to help and very friendly."*

Simply Emma - October 2017

*"Great, enjoyable and accessible ferry."*

Pavement Boy - January 2018

*"Great ferry which I used for my trip to Lerwick, Shetland. Great accessible restaurant and bar. Amazing staff, can't speak highly enough of them."*

Gordon Lawtie - March 2018

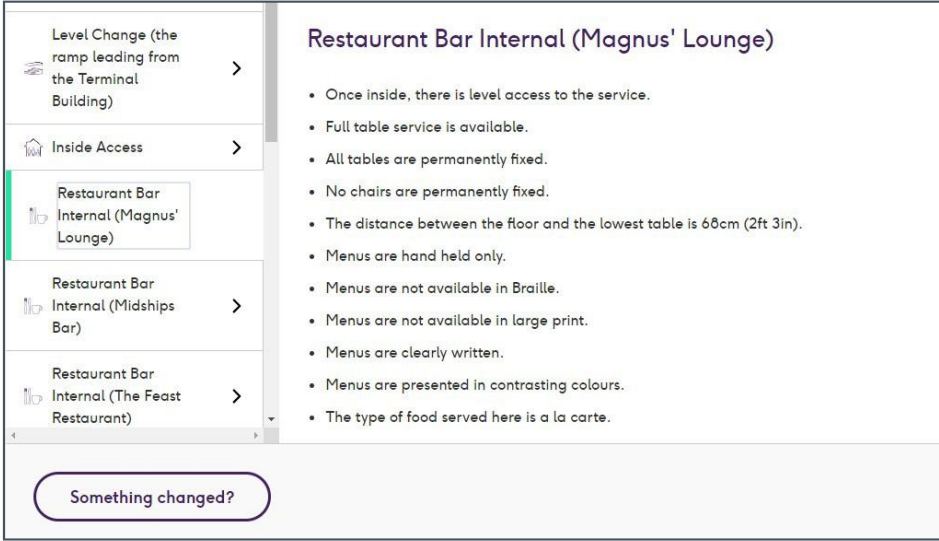


#### 7.4.4. Making Information available via 'Disabled Go'

We will continue to maintain the information available via the 'Disabled Go' website which has been received positively by our customers.

**Case Study:** Promoting information on our services via 'Disabled Go'

Sercos NorthLink has been accredited by the 'Disabled Go' organisation who publish details of the facilities and access arrangements for those with disabilities on their website, allowing our customers to plan their journey ahead. The 'DisabledGo' website details the services available in the terminals and vessels of Sercos NorthLink Ferries ([www.disabledgo.com/access-guide/aberdeen-city-council/northlink-ferries-ferry](http://www.disabledgo.com/access-guide/aberdeen-city-council/northlink-ferries-ferry)).



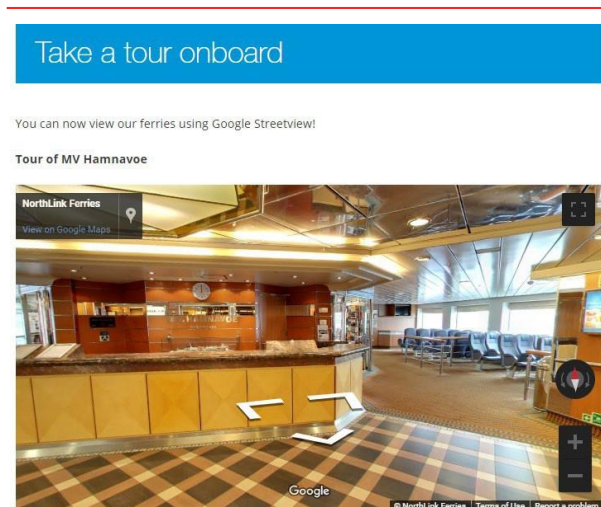
The screenshot shows a website interface with a sidebar menu on the left and a main content area on the right. The sidebar menu includes items like 'Level Change (the ramp leading from the Terminal Building)', 'Inside Access', 'Restaurant Bar Internal (Magnus' Lounge)', 'Restaurant Bar Internal (Midships Bar)', and 'Restaurant Bar Internal (The Feast Restaurant)'. The main content area is titled 'Restaurant Bar Internal (Magnus' Lounge)' and contains a bulleted list of accessibility features:

- Once inside, there is level access to the service.
- Full table service is available.
- All tables are permanently fixed.
- No chairs are permanently fixed.
- The distance between the floor and the lowest table is 68cm (2ft 3in).
- Menus are hand held only.
- Menus are not available in Braille.
- Menus are not available in large print.
- Menus are clearly written.
- Menus are presented in contrasting colours.
- The type of food served here is a la carte.

At the bottom of the page, there is a button that says 'Something changed?'.

#### 7.4.5. Information available via Google Streetview Tour

The Google Streetview tour (see Figure 19) will continue to be available on our website to allow for a tour of the vessel online prior to making the reservation. We will include in the new contract a visualised walking route from the Aberdeen Railway station to the NorthLink ferry terminal Redacted, as well as Scrabster and Hatston.



#### 7.5. Proposals for the Accessibility Information System (AIS)

Sercos NorthLink Ferries will produce an Accessibility Information System (AIS) to show the degree of accessibility for each of the ports and vessels we operate. Working closely with the relevant harbour authorities and MACS, the Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will document and publish the results on the NorthLink Ferries website alongside the port information.

Figure 19: An example of booking online at the NorthLink website using large print and how to view our ferries through Google Streetview

### 7.5.1. Content of AIS

Table 14: Details covered by the Accessible Information System (AIS) document.

Location	AIS will cover
Arrival to the port	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using wheelchair</li> <li>• Using Mobility scooter</li> <li>• On foot</li> <li>• By car, including parking</li> <li>• By coach</li> </ul>
Port arrival facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening times</li> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• Doorways</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Staff availability</li> <li>• Car check-in arrangements</li> </ul>
Terminal Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting area</li> <li>• Toilet facilities</li> <li>• Low-level desks</li> <li>• Hearing loops</li> <li>• Information screens</li> <li>• Audible announcements and information</li> </ul>
Vessel access for embarkation, disembarkation and emergency escape:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency escape</li> <li>• Vehicle loading close to the lifts</li> <li>• Lifts and access from the vehicle deck</li> <li>• Wheelchair and mobility scooter access</li> <li>• Walkway access</li> <li>• Staff assistance availability</li> </ul>
Onboard facilities for vessels:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reception desk</li> <li>• Public areas</li> <li>• Lifts</li> <li>• Seating</li> <li>• Cabins, including accessible cabins</li> <li>• Restaurants and Bars</li> <li>• Toilets and Changing Places facilities</li> <li>• Announcements and Information</li> <li>• Staff training</li> </ul>

### 7.5.2. Maintaining robust processes and procedures in place to review AIS

The Accessibility Information System will be continuously reviewed by our operational staff on a daily basis in completion of their normal duties. The port inspection process will include monitoring the AIS.

Redacted

### 7.5.3. Ensuring that new investment, where is applicable is added to AIS

As a new initiative, additional seating will be introduced on all passenger walkways from the terminal building to the vessel to allow for a resting place for those who may benefit from a short break.

### 7.6. Proposals for vessel facilities

We will approach our proposal with the aim to provide suitable and appropriate facilities for disabled passengers and to build on the current services which are as follows:

- The three RoPax ferries, Hjaltland, Hrossey and Hamnavoe, were designed and constructed with the requirements of disabled passengers in mind. The Orkney Disability Forum and Disability Shetland were engaged throughout the build process, and PAMIS (Promoting a More Inclusive Scotland) in the refurbishment programmes in 2019.
- Passenger vessels have wheelchair access available to all internal sections of the vessel and between decks by a passenger lift. There are Braille signs located at the entrance to the lifts which are 107 cm off the deck floor.
- General internal doorways are of the required legislation width that allows wheelchair access.
- Four specially designed cabins have wider, automatically opening doors, for easier access on the Aberdeen-based vessels Hjaltland and Hrossey, and two cabins on the Hamnavoe on the Pentland Firth route.
- Larger floor space in the specially designed cabins to assist manoeuvrability, low level access to toilet and shower facilities, wider beds and, in some, hoist arrangements; all disabled cabins have televisions and tea and coffee making facilities.
- Accessible toilets are available on all of the RoPax vessels.
- Public area disabled toilets and shower facilities, designed to the PAMIS Changing Places specifications, are available on the Aberdeen vessels.
- The lounge, restaurant, cinema and public seating areas all have available wheelchair spaces designed into the floor plan, to provide wheelchair accessibility.

Our objective is that passengers with any form of disability will have a positive journey experience when travelling using Serco NorthLink Ferries. From the entrance to the port, drop-off point and parking facilities, including designated Blue Badge areas, to the terminal buildings and entry points to the vessel, we will be compliant with the expectation of MACS and SATA representatives.

We will continue to be proactive and amend services and facilities onboard to encompass feedback from entries in 'Euan's Guide' (see Section 7.4.3) and directly from travelling customers.

## Case Study Rolling out 'Changing Places' toilets

In the spring of 2019, the Hjaltland and Hrossey vessels have been altered to now include a 'Changing Places' toilet, shower and changing area in association with PAMIS (Promoting A More Inclusive Scotland). This facility has automatically opening doors and a non-threshold shower access. In 2020 we will introduce the same facility onto the Hamnavoe.



In the Mobility Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) Annual Report 2018 the committee stated:

*“The lack of accessible toilets and Changing Places was also identified as one of the most important aspects for improvement on all modes of transport.”*

The Customer Services and Transport Integration Manager will work with Transport Scotland and Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) to put a Continuous Improvement Programme in place to best optimise use of Transport Scotland's Accessibility Improvement Fund throughout the life of the new contract.

### 7.7. Proposals for harbour facilities

#### 7.7.1. Access for wheelchair users

All foot passenger terminal buildings have low-level ramped access for wheelchair users. Access from the terminals to the vessels is accessible for wheelchairs through the use of passenger lifts and covered walkways. This makes it possible to use motorised wheelchairs for embarkation from terminal to vessel and vice versa. The vessel crew and shore-side staff are available to assist passengers in wheelchairs or with walking difficulties to access or leave the vessel or when moving between various areas on the vessel.

#### 7.7.2. Offering a helping hand with luggage

We operate a luggage system in all our ports, where customers are able to stow their larger items onto specially made trolleys prior to embarkation. These trolleys are then loaded onto the vehicle deck of the vessel and are available to customers on disembarkation at the port of arrival. This system, along with customer service staff support, removes the need for passengers to carry heavy items of luggage while using our services. Airport-style luggage trolleys are also available on each site for use by customers during both embarkation and disembarkation, and assistance will be given where required, by ship and shore-side customer service staff. We understand that island customers come to the mainland to visit shops not available in Orkney or Shetland so the potential for increased luggage on the northbound trips from Aberdeen is increased.

### 7.7.3. Ensuring the needs of all customers are needed

From Commencement Date we will also ensure the following facilities are available for customers.

Elderly customers	Elderly customers may also require specialist care and assistance on arrival and the Serco team at NorthLink will be proactive in asking whether help or more information on the embarkation process may be required.
Tourists	The accessible tourism market to the Northern Isles, particularly from other European countries, is important to Serco. To assist single drivers, Serco staff at NorthLink will assist with ticket issuing at the drivers' side of the vehicle.
Wheelchair users	Lower desks will be available at all passenger terminals to assist the reception process, particularly wheelchair users. These will remain clear of work items and unobstructed.
Visually impaired customers	Audible floor indications will be activated in all passenger lifts both ashore and onboard. Braille buttons will be on all buttons to indicate the floor levels.

### 7.7.4. Ensuring accessibility in all weather conditions

We will ensure safe access to the vessel, particularly in the winter months through clear arrival signage and well-lit walkways. As part of the port procedures, the Redacted Managers

will review the access and egress to terminals, passenger access systems, car parking areas and ensure slip hazards are eliminated from the terminal facilities.

### 7.7.5. Installing Neatebox technology

Neatebox technology will be introduced to ensure that all customers who have registered for this service will be able to benefit from NorthLink staff being made aware of their specific disability and associated requirements on entry to the passenger terminal and onboard. The information is stored on the customer's mobile phone and transmitted to the NorthLink Ferries desktop computer when in Bluetooth range.

### 7.7.6. Maximising the opportunity presented by Transport Scotland Accessibility Access Fund

We will maximise the opportunity presented by the Transport Scotland Accessibility Access Fund to make improvements to the port and vessel infrastructure. This fund has previously been used both ashore and onboard to increase the services for disabled travellers provided across the NorthLink Ferries operation. Proposals will be discussed and approved by EDI Group (see Section 7.2.5).

We have benefitted from Transport Scotland's Accessibility Travel Fund to make improvements to the port and vessel infrastructure to increase the services for elderly and disabled travellers provided across the NorthLink operation. We have used the fund, for example, to lower reception counters, put braille signage onboard the vessel including all cabin doors, audible lift announcements and increased lift button definition and the introduction of the Changing Places facilities on the Hjaltland and Hrossey vessels in conjunction with PAMIS.

## 7.8. Key outcomes and continuous improvements

The key outcomes in relation to accessibility are:

- Improved customer satisfaction data for older and disabled customers. This will be measured using iPad survey results, scoring, customer praise and complaints)
- Reduced complaints in relation to accessibility using the correspondences log reporting system to assess improvements

- Positive stakeholder activity to encourage older and disabled customers to use the service across the contract through positive press reporting of the facilities and via relevant DPO associations

We will regularly monitor performance using Serco's Continuous Improvement Methodology. The key steps of this methodology have proved the following:

- Identification of ideas through proactive communication with all interested parties including DPOs, the NorthLink staff, and following review of current processes
- Development of options
- Budget allocation to ensure that delivery of ideas
- Develop granular detail of how to implement
- Update Serco NorthLink Ferries Local Operating Procedures
- Train staff in processes
- Implement
- Review

Applying this methodology will create robust solutions and create the buy-in of all users given their involvement in the process. This is a circular process which allows input at all stages, builds a strong engagement with all parties and increases the potential for project success.

Northern Isles Ferry Service

7.9. Summary of our proposals for Customer Care and Accessibility

Table 15: Summary of our proposals for Customer Care and Accessibility

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
<b>CCA1 Customer Care</b>					
Senior passenger management team onboard are members of the Institute of Hospitality	Redacted				
Extending the hours of the CCC to make it easier for customers to buy a ticket					



Proposals

Timing and duration

Responsibility

Stakeholders  
involved

Assumptions/  
dependencies

Method for measuring results

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Introduce Web/app  
chat facility

Redacted

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Proposals

Timing and duration

Responsibility

Stakeholders involved

Assumptions/dependencies

Method for measuring results

Membership of Traveline Scotland  
Operational updates to Traveline  
Traveline “Journey Planner in a Box” available from website.

Redacted

Senior customer facing staff become Ambassadors of the regions in association with Visit Scotland

Install Real-time information screens

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
Introduce a Customer Charter	Redacted				
Accessibility Information System					
From November to March, Scrabster terminal hot drinks machine on a free vend					
Install cycle parking and pumps at ports					
ITSO Smart ticketing					
<b>CCA3 Accessibility</b>					
Create an Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group					
Dementia support through 'Making Connections' Go-Upstream organisation					
Staff training in disability awareness					
Recognise the SESTran Thistle Assistance Card					

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
Invest using the Accessibility Improvement Fund BSL interactive Sign Language Interpreter online service.	Redacted				
Extend Google Streetview to cover Scrabster and Hatston Visualisation of route between Aberdeen railway station and terminal Meet regularly with Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) New Changing Places areas onboard in association with PAMIS Recite Me website software for visual and learning difficulties and multilingual access including Scots Gaelic (Gaidhlig).					

Proposals	Timing and duration	Responsibility	Stakeholders involved	Assumptions/dependencies	Method for measuring results
<p>Google Maps link on website for driving directions.</p> <p>SatNav and What3Words navigation addressing.</p> <p>Offer of free valet parking for disabled drivers</p>	Redacted				

## 7.10. Risks and Mitigations

The following Table 16 shows the risks and mitigations for CCA3.

Table 16: Risks and Mitigations

#	Risk	Mitigations	Owner
1	A significant failure of a key piece of equipment precludes use by disabled customers. There is potential for disabled customers not having access to the terminals, vessels or facilities	Redacted	
2	The vessels are diverted to an alternative port which may have different facilities for disembarking passengers with disabilities. There is therefore potential for the passenger to not being able to disembark the vessel		
3	Shore terminal becomes unusable through fire or flooding. The impact is customers not being able to access the passenger terminal to embark or disembark the vessel and not being able to travel		
7	Lift in terminals fail and are unusable for embarkation or disembarkation. The impact being that Customers may not be able to access the vessel to sail		