

# Making rail accessible



## Helping older and disabled passengers

Valid from April 2026



ThamesLink/

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GTR run the largest rail network in the country, operating services across the south-east of England.

### **Southern**

Extensive network from London to stations across Sussex and Surrey, the south coast and suburban 'metro' services across south London and to Milton Keynes via Watford Junction.

### **Thameslink**

Network of services linking many stations north of London such as Bedford, Cambridge, Peterborough, St Albans with destinations south of the River Thames via St Pancras International such as London Bridge, East Croydon, Sutton, Gatwick Airport, Brighton, Horsham, Sevenoaks and Rainham (Kent).

### **Great Northern**

Services from London King's Cross to Peterborough, King's Lynn via Cambridge and suburban services from Moorgate towards Hertford North, Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.

### **Gatwick Express**

Direct services between London Victoria and Gatwick Airport (and some services towards Brighton).

Detailed timetable information for all of our services is available from National Rail Enquiries.

We want all our customers to use our network with complete confidence and know that help is available at all stages of their journey.

This leaflet, 'Making Rail Accessible' provides you with a practical guide to travelling on our services, explaining how we assist older and disabled customers and the standards of service you can reasonably expect.



We will explain how you can find details of the assistance available as well as facilities and information available to help you to plan and enjoy your journey.

Our commitment to helping our customers includes:

- Assistance at our stations and on our trains, or when making connections
- Alternative accessible transport when our stations or trains are inaccessible
- Clear, consistent and up-to-date customer information both ahead of, and during your journey
- A range of discounts to reduce the cost of travel for disabled people and a companion
- A range of support resources to help you to travel confidently and comfortably with us including our Travel Support Card - a free card designed to help anyone who finds it difficult to ask for help when travelling - and our pictorial Communication Guide designed for those with hearing impairments, limited English or other challenges when communicating

# Assistance what is available and how to get it

We will support you travelling from any of our stations during the hours that train services are timetabled. Staff are available at the majority of our stations and on many of our trains. When travelling from unstaffed stations, staff based at our control centre are also available and can be contacted via our network of Help Points by using the emergency button. If you need assistance as a disabled customer, please don't hesitate to use the emergency button. Our staff at the control centre are always happy to support you on your journey.

Whilst some customers wish to make arrangements with us in advance, there is no obligation to do so. Indeed, we estimate that 75% of our disabled passengers travel without booking assistance and this is a trend we are proud of. As outlined below, many of our stations and trains are staffed. If not, you can contact our Control support team via help point (located at unstaffed stations) or via freephone number (**0808 168 1238** or text **07970 511077**). They will identify a solution that enables you to reach your destination - this may, for example, involve us sending staff from another local station to deploy a ramp, or we may provide an accessible taxi. In any case, our staff will discuss your preferences and needs with you.

If you book assistance, we participate in a national system called 'Passenger Assist' that sends booking information to stations, so staff know you're coming. If your journey involves a change of train onto another operator's service, our Assisted Travel team can book assistance for the whole journey for you, as a single point of contact.

You can request Assisted travel at any point during your journey. To make sure we have staff available to help you, we recommend you book two hours in advance of travelling. You can contact us to request Assisted travel at any time of the day. If your journey involves another train company, we may need to confirm part of your journey with them. This might depend on their contact centre opening hours. If this is the case, we will discuss options with you.

When you book assistance, our Assisted Travel team will consider your individual needs (based on what you tell us) to identify a suitable journey for you. They will also consider the facilities available at the station (for example, if it has steps) and whether staff are available where needed. For a booked journey, we will make sure that the staff (whether station or on board) are aware of and available to assist you in line with the booked arrangements.

If the station you wish to travel from is inaccessible for any of these reasons and any mobility aid you plan to use can be accommodated on our train service, we will provide alternative transport at no additional cost to you beyond the rail fare. Many rail replacement buses and coaches are unable to accept mobility scooters (see *Wheelchairs/Powerchairs & Mobility Scooters* section below for further details). It may be possible to store your mobility scooter at some stations, for collection later. We strongly recommend that you check with our Assisted Travel team whether this is possible at your planned departure station before you travel.

If you wish to travel from an unstaffed station, for example, we will work with you to find the best option for your journey, considering factors such as the availability of on-board staff, sending staff from other stations (including mobile staff) or, if necessary, we will arrange alternative transport.

We commit to staff our Assisted Travel team in a way that we will answer calls as quickly as possible; we aim to answer calls within 60 seconds with most of them answered within five minutes. We aim to respond to online booking requests within two hours.

When the booking has been made, we will send you a confirmation of the journey details, normally by email (information can be provided by post or alternative format such as large print by request). Where sent by email, there will be a link to a short survey form to enable you to let us know how satisfied you were with the booking and journey. These surveys are anonymous and used as a measure of our customer satisfaction, so will not generate a response following submission.

We are working with partners within the rail industry, such as other train operators, to introduce innovative solutions that will enable us to reduce the notice period for pre-booking assistance. We commit to the recommended booking period of two hours.

Our Assisted Travel team can be contacted every day (except Christmas day from 12.01am to 11.59pm). For further details regarding how Assisted Travel can help, please see the Before you travel section below. Their contact details are available at the end of this booklet.



# What to expect our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey

## Before you travel

Assistance and extra help are available at each stage of your journey if you need it.

We recognise the importance of easy to understand and accurate information when planning your journey so that you can travel with confidence. Our Assisted Travel team can provide a wide range of information before you travel. This includes:

- Advice regarding how you can obtain support during your journey to suit your needs, including information regarding Priority Seating, Baby on Board badges, our Travel Support Card and Communication Guide.
- Help with planning your journey. Our Assisted Travel team can identify how we can tailor support to your specific needs. For example, we can explain how we provide boarding assistance using ramps for people who need boarding assistance such as wheelchair or scooter users or how we can assist blind and visually impaired customers. They can also discuss options to support customers with non-visible disabilities and what resources we can offer e.g. for autistic people or people with dyslexia and cognitive impairments.

We have progressively introduced a range of resources to support accessible travel including:

- **Aira App** - Launched in partnership with Thomas Pocklington Trust, provides navigational guidance for blind and visually impaired customers and is now available at all of our managed stations.
- **Easy Guides** (also available in Easy Read format) - Aimed primarily at providing people with learning disabilities with increased confidence to travel.

- **Convo** (formerly known as 'SignLive') - Connects users with trained interpreters who provide British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation via a smartphone when interacting with our station and contact centre colleagues.
- **Sanitary Bins** - Provided in all of our male toilet cubicles, in partnership with Prostate Cancer UK.
- **Train Audio Guides** - Aimed at blind and visually impaired customers describing our trains. Additional guides describing our Southern Class 171 and 377 and Great Northern Class 717 trains as well as an updated Thameslink Class 700 guide were published late 2025.
- **Information Points** - We continue to invest in digital Information Points, having introduced 14 at our stations. These interactive screens provide a variety of functions such as displaying the station layout, train running and onward travel information with accessible features such as BSL platform information, a screen flip function and contrast settings.
- **3D Station Maps** - We have continued to build on our initial trial of 3D station maps at some of our key stations. We will maintain momentum into 2026, expanding their use and exploring further enhancements to increase interactivity and customer benefits.
- **Auracast Trial** - We are planning a trial of Auracast at Brighton for launch early 2026. This will enable passengers with compatible devices to connect directly to the Public Address system. This will be accessible via hearing aids, smartphones, or Bluetooth headphones, allowing customers with hearing loss, as well as neurodivergent people who choose to wear headphones to reduce the sensory impact of the station environment, to receive real time announcements and reducing the chances of missing critical travel information.
- **Welcome Point Trial** - As part of an industry wide collaboration, we have supported the Welcome Point trial at two of our stations. The project has proven successful, and there is now a shared industry ambition to expand this initiative further in 2026 and beyond.

Further details at:

**[www.southernrailway.com/support-whilst-travelling](http://www.southernrailway.com/support-whilst-travelling)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/support-whilst-travelling](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/support-whilst-travelling)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/support-whilst-travelling](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/support-whilst-travelling)**

**[www.gatwickexpress.com/support-whilst-travelling](http://www.gatwickexpress.com/support-whilst-travelling)**

- Assistance with getting on and off the train
- Explaining the accessibility of the national rail network and the facilities available at the station and on the train
- Help with luggage
- We do not offer seat reservations on our trains. However, we can make seat reservations and book dedicated space on services operated by other train companies
- Advice for wheelchair (including powerchairs) and mobility scooter users, including boarding with scooters or other mobility aids

Our Assisted Travel team is not just available to book journey assistance. They can also provide information before your journey, including:

- The accessibility features on our trains
- Station accessibility and staffing details
- Train times (including temporary timetables)
- How to purchase tickets (including discount information)
- How to obtain information and support during the journey
- How to raise a complaint or recognise great service from our teams

The team can provide information by post on request. They can also arrange for information (including this leaflet) to be provided in alternative formats such as large print.

Our website and apps also show timetable information including live train times, and information regarding any current or future significant changes to train running information, such as short-term disruption or planned improvement works that may impact on our timetable.

Information regarding the accessibility features at each of the stations that our trains stop at is available at both National Rail Enquiries and our websites.

**[www.southernrailway.com/stations](http://www.southernrailway.com/stations)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/stations](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/stations)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/stations](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/stations)**

**[www.gatwickexpress.com/stations](http://www.gatwickexpress.com/stations)**

We have also introduced a series of videos (which include captions and BSL) to highlight how we make rail accessible at all stages of the journey - 'Planning your journey', 'What's available at the station', 'Getting on board' and 'Arriving at your destination' - available on our Assisted Travel pages as follows:

**[www.southernrailway.com/assisted-travel](http://www.southernrailway.com/assisted-travel)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/assisted-travel](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/assisted-travel)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/assisted-travel](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/assisted-travel)**

**[www.gatwickexpress.com/assisted-travel](http://www.gatwickexpress.com/assisted-travel)**

## **Tickets**

We offer a range of options for purchasing tickets to suit all customer needs and preferences. Customers can buy tickets online, at ticket offices, from ticket machines and from on-board staff (where available).

If disabled customers are unable to purchase a ticket at a station before they travel due to our facilities being unavailable, they can buy a ticket without penalty at their destination or from on-board staff (where available). We will also ensure that any reduction they are entitled to is applied, such as the applicable discount for Disabled Persons Railcard holders.

Ticket machines are available at all our stations. These are low level for the convenience of wheelchair users and other disabled customers. They are enabled to issue tickets at the reduced rate for holders of a Disabled Persons Railcard and the holder's companion.

Many of our stations have automatic ticket gates, and where these are in place, there will always be at least one wide gate that is designed for disabled passengers. When a station with automatic gates is unstaffed or staff are not in attendance at the gates, we will leave these gates locked open.

### **Purchasing tickets in advance of the journey**

We will provide information to customers to advise them of any restrictions on our services that may mean they cannot make use of any tickets purchased in advance (such as accessibility of rolling stock or due to no wheelchair spaces in first class).

Further information or help on purchasing tickets can be found on our websites, or by speaking to a member of station or on-board staff.

We support the industry-wide schemes for our customers as follows:

### **Disabled Persons Railcard**

Customers who have a Disabled Persons Railcard are entitled to 1/3 off rail travel for them and a companion whenever they travel.

Further details on the Disabled Persons Railcard, including eligibility criteria and how to apply and other discounts, can be found at:

Website: **Disabled Persons Railcard |  
Official Retailer | National Rail  
(disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)**  
Email: **railcardhelp@nationalrail.co.uk**  
Telephone: **\*0345 605 0525**  
Minicom/  
Textphone: **0345 601 0132**

\*Calls cost no more than calls to geographic numbers (01 or 02) and may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

**There are alternative discounts available for those with some disabilities, who do not have a Disabled Persons Railcard.**

**For those who are blind or visually impaired**

If you are blind or visually impaired, you and one adult companion travelling with you are eligible for the following discounts:

| <b>Ticket type</b>                              | <b>Discount on adult fare</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| First Class/Standard Anytime Singles or Returns | 34% off                       |
| First Class/Standard Anytime Day Single         | 34% off                       |
| First Class/Standard Anytime Day Return         | 50% off                       |

**Season tickets for blind or visually impaired customers**

You can also buy one adult Season ticket that enables a companion to travel with you on National Rail services only, at no extra cost (so two people travel for the price of one). It doesn't have to be the same person travelling with you on every journey.

**To be eligible**

Please take evidence of your visual impairment with you to prove your eligibility. It must be either a CVI/BP1/BD8 certificate or documentation from a recognised institution, for example, Social Services, your Local Authority or Blind Veterans UK. Tickets can be purchased from staffed National Rail station ticket offices.

**For those who are staying in their own wheelchair**

If you are staying in your own wheelchair during a journey, you can get the following discounts below. Discounts are available on adult and child fares.

If you have a companion travelling with you, they are also eligible for the same discounts. Tickets can be purchased from staffed National Rail station ticket offices.

| <b>Ticket type</b>                              | <b>Discount on adult fare</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| First Class/Standard Anytime Singles or Returns | 34% off                       |
| First Class/Standard Anytime Day Single         | 34% off                       |
| First Class/Standard Anytime Day Return         | 50% off                       |

### **Senior Railcard**

Customers who are 60 or over can buy a Senior Railcard. This gives a discount of up to 1/3 off most rail fares in the UK. Some restrictions apply in Southern England in the morning peak period, including on our services so please check before travelling.

Further details on this concessionary scheme can be found at:

Website: **Senior Railcard | Official Retailer | National Rail ([senior-railcard.co.uk](http://senior-railcard.co.uk))**

Email: **[railcardhelp@nationalrail.co.uk](mailto:railcardhelp@nationalrail.co.uk)**

Telephone: **0345 3000 250**

### **Ticket machines**

Ticket machines are available at all our stations. They are enabled to issue tickets at the reduced rate for holders of a Disabled Persons Railcard and the holder's companion.

### **Ticket gates**

Many of our stations have automatic ticket gates and, where these are in place, there will always be at least one wide gate. When a station with automatic gates is unstaffed, or staff are not in attendance at the gates, we will leave these gates locked open.

### **Purchase of advance tickets**

We will provide information to advise you of any restrictions on our services that may mean you cannot make use of any tickets purchased in advance. For example, none of our trains have wheelchair spaces in first class.

Our staff are briefed to make sure you are not offered a ticket you cannot make use of. Where advance tickets are available for purchase, we will advise you that all wheelchair spaces on our trains are only within standard class accommodation. If the journey involves another train operator, they will also check if that operator provides wheelchair spaces within first-class and advise you accordingly.

### **Wheelchairs/powerchairs and mobility scooters**

We recognise the importance of accessible travel for wheelchair, powerchair and scooter users. Mindful that our station facilities vary widely, with the majority having a gap between the platform and train, our policy is designed to ensure wheelchair, powerchair and scooter users can travel safely. Further guidance regarding our policy is available from our Assisted Travel team or on our websites.

All our trains and boarding ramps are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, powerchairs and scooters safely within the designated spaces on-board provided they are no greater than the following requirements:

Width: 700mm

Length: 1200mm

Weight: 300kg (including the user).

Scooters must also have a turning radius of no more than 1500mm.

If your mobility aid is not compliant with industry-wide standards of size and weight, we will not be able to supply alternative transport.

Many rail replacement buses and coaches are unable to accept mobility scooters. It may be possible to store your mobility scooter at some stations for collection later. We strongly recommend that you check with our Assisted Travel team whether this is possible at your planned departure station before you travel.

Scooter policies do vary between train operators. Some may not allow you to take your scooter on board. If travelling with another operator, please ask our Assisted travel team or check their scooter policy at **[nationalrail.co.uk](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk)** or by calling **08457 484950**.

For further guidance on travelling with a scooter, please see our Scooter and Wheelchair guide available on our website or contact Assisted Travel.

We are always happy to assist you to board and alight from our trains using manual boarding ramps.

On our Thameslink route, level boarding areas are available at London St Pancras, Farringdon, City Thameslink, Blackfriars and London Bridge. These enable wheelchair and powerchair users to easily use our trains without staff needing to provide a manual boarding ramp. Staff are always available at the level boarding areas. Please speak to our staff at the level boarding areas before boarding, so they can make arrangements for you to be assisted off the train at the destination (or interchange) station.

### **Assistance with luggage**

We will provide assistance with luggage for disabled and older customers within our stations and when boarding and alighting trains where reasonably practicable. This service is free of charge.

As a guide for your own safety and that of our staff, you may take up to two items of luggage which should not exceed 30 x 70 x 90cm in size and a single item of hand luggage. It is recommended to have pull-along cases and follow airline recommendations of not exceeding 23kg per bag.

### **Step-free stations map**

To help you to plan your journey, we have produced a map showing all the stations served by our trains, which shows the level of step-free access available at each station. You find the map at the end of this leaflet.

### **Station accessibility information**

Information regarding the accessible features at all stations that we operate is available via our websites and on National Rail Enquiries.

## At the station

We operate c240 stations. These vary widely with regards to physical facilities and staffing levels (ranging from unstaffed, staffed for part of the day, through to staffed at all times). Network Rail and other train operators manage some stations on our network where your train may call, and we work closely with them to deliver the assistance and facilities you need for your journey with us.

At larger stations, dedicated information points are available with clear signage to help you find them on the concourse. These information points usually have counters suitable for all users including wheelchair/powerchair and scooter users. There are leaflet racks and information screens, also accessible for all customers.

### **At a staffed station**

If you have chosen to book assistance, a clearly marked Meeting Point is provided to help you locate our staff. Our Assisted Travel team will advise you of the location of the Meeting Point in the booking confirmation.

For unbooked assistance, please contact any member of staff. They will be able to understand your requirements and will work with you to ensure that you can reach your destination.

Whether you chose to pre-book your assistance or prefer more flexibility, where possible we recommend arriving 20 minutes before your train's scheduled departure time. This is to allow us to make sure arrangements are in place at your destination (or interchange) station such as the availability of staff and lifts. If there is insufficient time to check these arrangements, we may assist you onto the next available train.

When the train arrives at our managed stations, our staff will help you off the train. We aim to meet all customers promptly on arrival. It may take up to five minutes assisting you off the train at its final destination, for example if it arrives on a different platform at short notice and staff need to reposition themselves with a ramp. We also work with our industry partners who manage other stations where our train services terminate to achieve the same.

Our station staff are also able to provide a wide range of assistance and information such as:

- Help and advice on tickets
- Assistance with getting on and off the train
- Assistance around the station and to the platform
- Help with luggage at staffed stations
- Help through the station and to your platform at staffed stations
- Boarding and alighting with wheelchairs/ powerchairs, scooters and mobility aids
- Assistance to and from connecting train services and onward transport such as bus, tram and taxi within the station area

### **At unstaffed stations**

When travelling from an unstaffed station, you can speak directly to our off-site support team at our control centre via a Help Point. They are available whenever we are scheduled to run trains at that station.

Help Points are normally located at the station entrance or on the platform, primarily at unstaffed/ partially staffed stations.

Typically they consist of a white circular wall mounted unit with two buttons and a speaker (fitted with an induction loop).

- The blue button (information) is for general enquiries such as train running information
- The green button (emergency) is for emergencies and immediate assisted travel support

You are also able to speak directly to our Control support team by calling freephone **0808 168 1238** or text **07970 511077**. Welcome Posters at all stations at an accessible height for wheelchair users provide these numbers.

Whether you chose to pre-book your assistance or prefer more flexibility, where possible we recommend arriving 20 minutes before your trains scheduled departure time. If you are travelling from an unstaffed station and haven't booked assistance, please arrive at least 20 minutes before the train's departure time and contact a member of staff via a Help Point or by using the above freephone number. This will ensure sufficient time to arrange assistance.

Our Control support team will ensure that you can reach your destination whether by train or if necessary, by providing alternative accessible transport.

Many of our Southern trains have either a Conductor or On-Board Supervisor (OBS). They are trained to step onto the platform when the train arrives to ensure that anyone on the platform who requires assistance is assisted. We provide ramps at all accessible platforms and most of our trains.

### **Mobile Assistance Team**

We have completed our progressive roll out of this service across our network to cover 51 stations. Whilst some of the staff will be based at these stations, in most cases they will travel to them from a local 'hub' station.

We ask unbooked passengers who require boarding assistance to contact our Control support team 20 minutes before their train is due to depart. You can contact the control team either via the Help Point ('emergency and assisted travel button') or via a freephone number (**0808 168 1238** or text **07970 511077**).

Information is provided at each of these stations to raise awareness of these arrangements. The control team will then arrange appropriate assistance (usually sending mobile staff who are based a short distance from these stations).

For the latest information regarding the Mobile Assistance Teams and the stations which they cover, please visit:

**[www.southernrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam](http://www.southernrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/mobileassistanceteam](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/mobileassistanceteam)**

### **Inaccessible stations**

If you wish to travel from a station that is inaccessible to you due to a physical feature, (such as steps to platforms or the lift being out of service), we will identify the most appropriate journey option based on your specific circumstances. In this situation, we would provide a suitable taxi to take you free of charge to the nearest accessible station. You can find information on the level of step-free access at stations on our websites or from National Rail Enquiries.

## On our trains

It is important for us that you feel comfortable when travelling on our trains. So, we know how essential our accessibility features on our trains are. Features available to you include:

- Priority seating on all trains
- Accessible spaces with 'call for aid' alarms
- Audible and visual information systems
- On-board boarding ramps (on most of our trains)
- Accessible toilets (on most of our trains)

A summary of the accessibility features of each type of train used on our services is available on our website.

### **Seats and accessible areas on our trains**

All of our trains have accessible areas featuring, for example, wheelchair space, luggage racks, Priority Seating and easy to reach passenger alarms. Most of our trains have accessible toilets.

We also provide Priority Seating areas on all of our trains for disabled, pregnant and older customers and those carrying infants. We also acknowledge that customers may have a temporary need for a Priority Seat, for example, during medical treatment. Priority seats are clearly labelled on our trains and in many cases are designated with contrasting seat fabric. They are normally located close to doors, so they are more accessible to passengers who need them.

To make it easier for customers who may need a Priority Seat, we have a Priority Seat card scheme to support requesting a Priority Seat from other customers.

Our staff will assist you to a seat on the train if required and take all reasonable steps to ensure these areas are available to customers who need them.

Further details on obtaining Priority Seat cards are available from our websites or Assisted Travel team.

All our trains have wheelchair spaces within the standard class seating area only, which are marked on the outside of the carriage. We do not have wheelchair spaces within first-class areas. Wheelchair spaces aren't reservable, although our staff will do all they can to enforce wheelchair users' priority of wheelchair spaces. If all wheelchair spaces are occupied, they will work with you to identify the best option to enable you to reach your destination.

Our staff are briefed to make sure customers are not offered a ticket they cannot make use of (for example, due to no wheelchair spaces in first class).

All our trains and boarding ramps are designed to accommodate wheelchairs, powerchairs and scooters safely within the designated spaces on-board provided they are no greater than the dimensions stated above.

We understand travelling by train when pregnant can be tiring and uncomfortable. Our Baby on Board badges make it easier letting other customers know that you need a seat. The badges are freely available from our Assisted Travel team and through our website.

We know that having access to an on-board toilet is vital to customers and accessible toilets are available on most of our trains. When assisting you at stations and on board, staff will always check that the accessible toilet is working at the time of boarding. If it is not, they will work with you to find an alternative solution such as assisting you to an alternative part of the train or an alternative service.

For train accessibility information please see:

**[www.southernrailway.com/fleetaccessibility](http://www.southernrailway.com/fleetaccessibility)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/fleetaccessibility](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/fleetaccessibility)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/fleetaccessibility](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/fleetaccessibility)**

**[www.gatwickexpress.com/fleetaccessibility](http://www.gatwickexpress.com/fleetaccessibility)**

## **Assistance dogs**

Assistance dogs are welcome on all of our trains free of charge. We can also provide drinking water for assistance dogs at staffed stations.

We support the Assisted Dogs Travel scheme, supported by Assistance Dogs UK. The scheme helps assistance dogs and their owners to travel comfortably and safely on our trains by giving a 'protected space' for the dog. Cards can be obtained free of charge from **National Rail Enquiries - Travel**.

## **Ramps**

Portable ramps are available at our stations and on board our trains. The ramps are specifically designed for use on our trains so that anyone with reduced mobility can safely be assisted on and off our trains.

# If things don't go as planned

We understand the impact that disruption to our services can have on all customers. Our staff will always work with you to ensure your individual needs are met and you can complete your journey - whether on an alternative train or via suitable (and accessible if required) replacement transport.

We will ensure that information is provided and available to you, including through:

- Announcements at our stations and on our trains
- Information screens at our stations and on our trains
- Our staff at our stations, on our trains and off-site
- Up to date information regarding live timetable information and advice via our websites and apps, as well as National Rail Enquiries

Passenger alarms are fitted to all of our trains and can be used for contacting the driver during emergency situations or circumstances such as:

- If the ramp isn't deployed at your destination station
- Disruption resulting in the train not stopping at your destination station

During periods of significant disruption, our control team will, if necessary, deploy additional staff from head office roles to support our rostered station teams.

If you have booked assistance through Passenger Assist, during disruption, we will make all reasonable efforts to contact you, using the contact details provided when the booking was made, to offer journey support.

We also understand the importance of providing reliable facilities at stations for disabled customers, including lifts, information screens and toilets. Where such facilities are not available (e.g. during refurbishment works), we will make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative facilities or travel arrangements for you. Details regarding these changes are available from Assisted Travel, National Rail Enquiries (Station Information) and at our stations.

Up to date (live) information including lift availability is available on each of our websites:

**[www.southernrailway.com/serviceupdates](http://www.southernrailway.com/serviceupdates)**

**[www.thameslinkrailway.com/serviceupdates](http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/serviceupdates)**

**[www.greatnorthernrail.com/serviceupdates](http://www.greatnorthernrail.com/serviceupdates)**

**[www.gatwickexpress.com/serviceupdates](http://www.gatwickexpress.com/serviceupdates)**

### **Alternative transport**

Our assisted travel team will always consider the provision of rail replacement transport during planned engineering works when advising you or booking your assistance. They will also proactively contact you if after making the booking they become aware of planned engineering work. When doing so, they will discuss the best journey plan if the booking you have made needs to be re-planned.

Whether the reason for providing rail replacement transport is due to planned engineering works or an unplanned incident, we will always do everything we can to provide accessible rail replacement buses, and in the majority of cases, accessible vehicles are provided. In circumstances where we are unable to do so, e.g. due to lack of availability of accessible coaches or the use of a minibus, we may as a last resort provide a suitable taxi to enable you to complete your journey. Both our assisted travel and customer facing teams will always identify an alternative journey plan to enable you to reach your destination.

Whether you have booked or not, our staff are always briefed to enable you to make your journey when rail replacement transport is provided. If they are aware of any delay in providing this transport within 30 minutes, they will keep you informed and maintain regular contact with you as required.

## **Feedback - If something goes wrong with your assistance**

We want every passenger to travel with confidence and to receive the assistance they've booked. Sometimes, things don't go to plan, and if that happens, we want to hear from you so we can put it right.

If your assistance wasn't delivered as expected, please contact our Customer Relations team as soon as possible. Let us know what happened, include your ticket or proof of purchase if you can, and we'll review what went wrong.

Each case is looked at individually, and depending on what happened, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an apology,
- a gesture of goodwill,
- a refund or partial refund, or
- other appropriate compensation

We'll also explain why things went wrong and what we're doing to prevent it happening again.

If your journey involved more than one train or station operator, you only need to contact us, we'll liaise with the other company on your behalf. Where another operator is responsible for the main part of the assistance failure, we will transfer the case to them promptly and make you aware we have done so.

You can get in touch online, by phone, by email or by post. If you need support completing a claim, we can help.

If you're not satisfied with our response, you can contact the Rail Ombudsman for free independent advice at **[railombudsman.org](https://www.railombudsman.org)**.

# Where to get more information and how to get in touch

Our Accessible Travel Policy complements this booklet (Making Rail Accessible). It sets out in detail our policies and approach when providing assistance for older and disabled customers and how we meet our regulatory obligations. The policy document is available on our website alongside information about the accessibility features of our stations and our trains.

Making Rail Accessible booklets are also available at all staffed stations that our trains call at as well as on our websites.

Copies of this booklet (Making Rail Accessible) are available at all staffed stations that our trains call at or from our Assisted Travel team and websites (in PDF format). Easy read and audio versions of our ATP Policy and Making Rail Accessible are also available on our web sites. We aim to provide alternative format documents to you within seven working days. If this is not possible, we will advise you within seven days of the delivery timescale for providing the information in the appropriate format.

We will ensure that accessibility information relating to our stations and trains is readily available to you and kept up to date. This is available on our websites in PDF format which is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features (for example, Adobe Reader). We can also provide train and station information by post on request, including in alternative formats such as large print.

## **Access Advisory Panel**

The Access Advisory Panel (AAP) comprises a voluntary group of disabled customers with a wide spectrum of impairments to support and challenge us in delivering accessible services. The AAP are our critical source of insight in many respects. We meet with our AAP bi-monthly, with frequent interaction and discussion between meetings. They have direct input into our project planning processes, offer best practice and are consulted on all aspects of delivering accessible services to shape the delivery of those services. As regular customers on our network, they also provide ongoing journey reports to assist with improvement work. Our AAP also engage with our staff to encourage excellent performance both during their journeys, at panel meetings and station visits.

Further details regarding the panel are available on our websites. More information regarding the panel and the work we do with disabled people to improve accessibility can also be provided via Assisted Travel.



# Contact details

## Customer Relations

Our customer facing staff will do everything they can to resolve any concerns, so please ask them for help in the first instance.

If for any reason you do wish to make a complaint about your experience with us, you can contact our Customer Relations team. We will always try to resolve your complaint to your reasonable satisfaction. However, if you are unhappy with our response, you have the right to appeal to the Rail Ombudsman (contact details below).

Available 7.00am to 8.00pm every day except Christmas day.



Southern and Gatwick Express

Telephone: **03451 272 920**

NGT Text: **0800 138 1018**

Email:

**comments@southernrailway.com**

**customerservices@gatwickexpress.com**

ThamesLink/

Great Northern

Thameslink and Great Northern

Telephone: **0345 026 4700**

NGT Text: **0800 138 1018**

Email:

**customerservices@thameslinkrailway.com**

**customerservices@greatnorthernrail.com**

X (formerly known as Twitter)



@SouthernRailUK

@GatwickExpress

@TLRailUK

@GNRailUK

## Assisted Travel

Our assisted travel team are available for booking assistance and providing journey information for disabled customers.

Our assisted travel helpline is open **24 hours a day**, except on Christmas Day 12.01am to 11.59pm.



Southern and Gatwick Express

Telephone: **0800 138 1016**

NGT Text: **0800 138 1018**

ThamesLink/

Great Northern

Thameslink and Great Northern

Telephone: **0800 058 2844**

NGT Text: **0800 138 1018**

## National Freephone Passenger Assist

**0800 022 3720** or text **60083**. For textphone/minicom, please dial **0845 60 50 600**.

**[nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations/plan-assistance.aspx](http://nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/plan-assistance.aspx)**

## Post

GTR

PO Box 8644

Derby DE1 9RQ

## Rail Ombudsman

Website: **[railombudsman.org](http://railombudsman.org)**

Telephone: **0330 094 0362**

Textphone: **0330 094 0363**

Email: **[info@railombudsman.org](mailto:info@railombudsman.org)**

Post: **FREEPOST -  
RAIL OMBUDSMAN**

