

Accessible Travel Policy

April 2024



**Easy
Read**

Great Northern

GN

GATWICK EXPRESS

SOUTHERN

ThamesLink/

WE'RE WITH YOU

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| Our aims | 4 |
| Booking and giving help..... | 6 |
| Help at our stations | 10 |
| How we provide information..... | 18 |
| Tickets..... | 29 |
| Each stage of your journey | 34 |
| At the station | 38 |
| Other accessible transport..... | 43 |
| Wheelchairs, powerchairs and mobility scooters..... | 44 |
| Emergencies..... | 46 |
| Putting things right..... | 47 |
| Making sure our railway is accessible | 49 |
| Checking..... | 52 |
| Making things better | 54 |
| Working together | 56 |
| Staff training | 58 |
| Contact us..... | 60 |

Introduction



Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) runs:

- Southern Railway.
- Gatwick Express.
- Thameslink.
- Great Northern Railway.



We want to make sure everyone can use our trains and stations.



This policy will tell you about:

- How we help older and disabled people to use our railways.
- How to get help to use our railways, if you need it.



Our aims



We want our railway to:

- Be **accessible** to everyone.

Accessible is when a place is easy to get into or around, or when something is easy to use.



- Include everyone.

We want everyone to have the confidence to travel on our railway, whatever their needs.



We will:

- Make sure we can help people at all stages of their journey.



- Treat all customers as individuals and give them support that is right for each person.



We will also:

- Make our trains and stations as accessible as possible.



- Train our staff so they can help people in the right way.



- Work with other railway companies to help people access all railways.



- Look for new ways to help our customers.

Booking and giving help

Assisted travel



Assisted travel is where our staff help you to get on and off the train and to get around the stations.

You can book your assisted travel beforehand but you don't have to.

If you have booked assisted travel



We are part of a national system called '**Passenger Assist**'.

Passenger Assist sends information to all the stations you are going to, so the staff are ready to help you.



You can book Passenger Assist by:

- Telephone.



- Website.



- Passenger Assistance by Transport mobile **app**.

An **app** is a computer programme you can download onto your phone, tablet or computer.



Our Assisted Travel Team can tell you about the stations you are going to and help to make any arrangements.



Booking assisted travel

If you contact our Assisted Travel Team by phone, most calls are answered within 2 minutes.



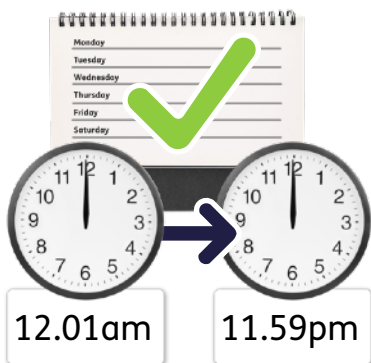
If you book assisted travel online, we aim to deal with it within 2 hours.



When you have booked assisted travel, we will send you an email, or a letter if you have asked for one, to confirm the details.



You can book assisted travel up to 2 hours before you need to travel



You can contact our Assisted Travel Team 24 hours a day, every day except Christmas Day.



Southern/Gatwick Express

- Phone: 0800 138 1016
- Text : 0800 138 1018

ThamesLink/



Thameslink/Great Northern

- Phone: 0800 058 2844
- Text: 0800 138 1018

Help at our stations



We look after 239 stations. Some are more accessible than others. Some have staff and some don't.



You should try to get to the station 20 minutes before the train leaves so we can check if there is someone to help you get off at the other end.



Any of our staff can help you.

All stations have a meeting point where you can meet the help that you have booked.



If you haven't booked any help

You can ask any member of staff to help you get to where you want to go.



If there are no staff at the station

You can contact us at the Help Point.



We will help you get to where you want to go either:

- On a train.
- Using some other transport.



Our staff on the train will look out for anyone who needs help to get on or off the train.

There are ramps on most trains.

If the staff on the train changes



When the staff on the train change, they pass on information about anyone who needs help to the new members of staff.



Help getting off trains

Our staff will help you get off a train if you need them to.



At some stations on Thameslink, the doors of the accessible carriage will be level with the platform.

Mobile support team



Some of our stations don't have any staff. But we want to try and make sure there is still someone available to help you.



At these stations, if you contact us 20 minutes before you need to leave we will send someone to help you to get on the train.



Usually, this will mean a member of staff travelling from another station to meet you.



You can contact the mobile support team:

- At the Help Point.
- By phone for free: 0808 168 1238
- By text: 07970 511 077



Our Mobile Support Team is close by. They will come and help you.



We are making the mobile support service available at 51 more stations over the next few months.

You can find out more about the Mobile Support Team at these websites:



- Southern:
www.southernrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam



- Thameslink:
www.thameslinkrailway.com/mobileassistanceteam



- Great Northern:
www.greatnorthernrail.com/mobileassistanceteam



- Gatwick Express:
www.gatwickexpress.com/mobileassistanceteam



Help to get your next train

Our staff will help you to get to your next train, bus or taxi.

Information about our stations



We put up-to-date information about our stations on the National Rail Enquiries website:

www.nationalrail.co.uk



Help with luggage

We will help disabled people with their luggage. This is free.

You may take 2 items of luggage and 1 piece of hand luggage.

23kg



Each bag that you take with you must not weigh more than 23kg.

Wheelchair spaces



All our trains have wheelchair spaces in standard class.



We do not have any wheelchair spaces in First Class.



You can't book a wheelchair space, but our staff will help you if they are full.



Priority seating

Priority Seating is where other people should let a disabled, pregnant or older person have the seat.



You can't book a seat on any of our trains, but you should be able to get a priority seat if you need one.



We can give you a card to show other people that you need a priority seat.

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome on all our services.



You can ask for water for your dog at stations with staff.



We support the National Rail 'Assistance dog under a seat' card, which you can get for free from:

www.nationalrail.co.uk/

How we provide information

Easy Read leaflet



We have an Easy Read leaflet called 'Making Rail Accessible'.

This gives more information about our accessible travel.

You can get this leaflet at all staffed stations.

Information about stations



There is information about accessible trains and stations on our websites:

- Stations:
 - Southern:
www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/station-information





● Stations:

- Thameslink: www.thameslinkrailway.com/stationaccessibility
- Great Northern: www.greatnorthernrail.com/stationaccessibility
- Gatwick Express: www.gatwickexpress.com/stationaccessibility



● Trains:

- Southern: www.southernrailway.com/fleetaccessibility
- Thameslink: www.thameslinkrailway.com/fleetaccessibility
- Great Northern: www.greatnorthernrail.com/fleetaccessibility
- Gatwick Express: www.gatwickexpress.com/fleetaccessibility

Map



From each website there is a button that takes you to a map which gives you up-to-date information about how easy it is to use each station.

Keeping our staff up-to-date



We provide regular information to our staff so they are up-to-date.

This includes information about how accessible our stations and trains are.

Up-to-date information for customers



We want to make sure customers can get up-to-date information about their journey.



Our staff regularly check stations and trains and make sure information is available to customers.



For example, if an accessible toilet stops working, our staff will aim to tell people as quickly as possible.

Information during the journey

During your journey, you can get up-to-date information from our:



- staff



- telephone numbers



- Help Points



- **App.** An **App** is a computer programme you can download onto your phone, tablet or computer.

You can also get information during your journey from Twitter accounts:



- Southern:
[@SouthernRailUK](https://twitter.com/SouthernRailUK)



- Gatwick Express:
[@GatwickExpress](https://twitter.com/GatwickExpress)



- Thameslink:
[@TLRailUK](https://twitter.com/TLRailUK)



- Great Northern:
[@GNRailUK](https://twitter.com/GNRailUK)

Information about trains

At most stations there are:

- Screens that give information about trains.
- Spoken announcements and information.



Our staff have had training in making announcements as clearly as possible.

Finding your way around our stations



We have clear signs to help you find your way around our stations.



We also have information about nearby bus stops and town centres.



We work with airports to make sure there is clear information about trains and flights.

**CANCELLED
DELAYED**

Delays and cancelled trains

There will be times when there are delays or cancelled trains.

You can get up-to-date information from our:

- Staff.
- Telephone numbers.
- Help Points.
- App.
- Twitter accounts.
- Websites.





Engineering works

When we make repairs or improvements to the railway, this is called engineering works.

**CANCELLED
DELAYED**

Some trains may be delayed or cancelled. There may be buses to replace the trains.



We will give you information about engineering works before you travel so you can make any arrangements you need.



You will be told about any engineering works when you book your assisted travel.

If there is any unplanned work, our staff will do their best to give you information in ways you can understand.

Information points and help points



At larger stations there will be an information point where you can ask a member of staff for the information you need.



At smaller stations you can ask the staff at the ticket office.



At stations that have no staff, there is a Help Point, where you can speak to someone who will give you the information you need.



At some stations you can also speak to someone through a free telephone number.

Our staff



We make sure our staff have up-to-date information about:

- What is available at each station.



- The times of trains.



- Toilets on our trains.



- The price of tickets.



- Using other railways.



- Accessible travel.

**CANCELLED
DELAYED**

- Any delays or cancellations.



Websites

We want as many people as possible to use our websites.



We will make sure our websites are accessible to everyone.



We will make sure that the information on our websites is accessible.

Tickets



You can buy tickets:

- Online.



- At ticket offices.



- From ticket machines.



- From staff on trains.

If you can't buy your ticket before you travel, you can buy it from staff on the train or when you get to the end of your journey.



Money off

There is money off the price of a ticket for disabled people.



Discounts are available for blind and visually impaired customers who travel with a companion.



Our ticket office staff can help you with buying this discounted ticket.



Sometimes it might be cheaper to buy a full price ticket in **Off-Peak** times or an Advance ticket.

Off-Peak is times of day outside of the busiest times to travel.

Disabled Persons Railcard



If you get a Disabled Persons Railcard you will get a third off the price of your ticket and the ticket of the person who is travelling with you.

You can get more information about this railcard by:



- Website: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk



- Email: disability@raildeliverygroup.com



- Telephone: 0345 605 0525



- Textphone: 0345 601 0132



If you stay in your wheelchair the whole journey

You can get money off the price of your ticket if you stay in your wheelchair for the whole journey.



Senior Railcard

If you are over 60 you can buy a Senior Railcard.

This gives you a third off the price of most tickets.



You can get more information by:

- Website:
www.senior-railcard.co.uk
- Email:
railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk
- Telephone: 0345 300 0250



Ticket machines



There are ticket machines at all our stations.

You can get money off tickets with your Disabled Persons Railcard from these ticket machines.

When you buy your ticket beforehand



We will tell you about anything that isn't accessible when you buy your ticket.



We will not sell you a ticket that you cannot use.



If your journey takes you onto a train run by a different company, we will check that it is accessible.

Each stage of your journey



We understand that you need good and easy information when you plan your journey.



Our Assisted Travel Team can give you:

- Advice about how you can get support during your journey.



- Information about:
 - Making sure you get a seat.



- Travelling with a baby.



- A card that explains what support you need.



- A guide to help you communicate.



Our Assisted Travel Team can also give you:

- Support that is right for you.



- Information about what is available at each station.



- Advice about booking seats with other train companies.



- Advice if you use a wheelchair or a mobility scooter.



Our Assisted Travel Team can also tell you:

- What is available on the trains.



- If there are staff at each station.



- The times of trains.



- How to buy tickets.



- How to get support and information while you are on your journey.



- How to make a complaint.

Websites

There is information about how accessible stations are on these websites:



- National Rail Enquiries:

www.nationalrail.co.uk



- Southern:

www.southernrailway.com/stationaccessibility



- Thameslink:

www.thameslinkrailway.com/stationaccessibility



- Great Northern:

www.greatnorthernrail.com/stationaccessibility



- Gatwick Express:

www.gatwickexpress.com/stationaccessibility

At the station



We have 239 stations, but your train may also stop at a station run by a different company.

We work with the other companies so that you get all the help you need.



At larger stations

At larger stations there are information points with a counter that is accessible for everyone.



There are leaflets and information screens that are accessible for everyone.



At stations with staff

There is a meeting point where you can meet the staff who are going to help you.



The Assisted Travel Team will tell you where the meeting point is.

If you haven't booked assisted travel, ask any member of staff to help you.

Get there early



You should arrive at the station 20 minutes before the train leaves. This will give us enough time to arrange help for you to get off at the other end.

Help getting on and off



When our staff help you to get on the train, they will contact the station where you are getting off to tell them what help you need.

Station staff

Our station staff will be able to help you with:



- Tickets.



- Getting on and off the train.



- Getting around the station.



- Luggage.



- Finding your next train, bus or taxi.



Left luggage

Left luggage is where you leave your luggage for a while.

We have a left luggage service at a few main stations.



It is run by a company called Excess Baggage.



You can find out more by:

Website: www.excess-baggage.com

Phone: 0800 524 4822



Disabled parking with a blue badge

We have car parks at most of our stations.



These will have spaces for disabled people with a blue badge.

If all the disabled spaces are taken, you can still park for free anywhere else with a blue badge.

Other accessible transport



If the railway can't run, we will provide a bus to take you on your journey.

We will try to make sure this bus is accessible to you.



But if you can't access it, we will provide another way for you to get where you are going.

This may be an accessible taxi.

Wheelchairs, powerchairs and mobility scooters



All our trains and boarding ramps are able to take wheelchairs, powerchairs and scooters.



Your chair or scooter should be no bigger than 700mm wide and 1200mm long.



It should be no heavier than 300kg, when you are on it.



Scooters must be able to turn round in 1500mm.



Tell the person you buy the ticket from that you have a wheelchair or scooter.



They will check this is okay with any other railway companies that you plan to use for your journey.

Emergencies



If there is an emergency, our staff will help you to get to safety.



There is information on stations and in trains which explains what to do in an emergency.



Our staff are trained to help disabled people get out of a station or train in an emergency.

Putting things right



We are committed to giving customers a good service.



But if things go wrong we will try to put them right.



If you want to make a complaint you can phone us, email us, text us or use the online form on our website.



Please contact us as soon as possible if you didn't get the assistance you needed.



Please show us your train ticket and tell us what happened.



We will try to find out what went wrong.

If you are still unhappy

If you are still unhappy after making a complaint to us, you can contact the Rail Ombudsman. The Rail Ombudsman is independent and deals with complaints about railway companies.



- Website: www.railombudsman.org



- Phone: 0330 094 0362



- Textphone: 0330 094 0363



- Email: info@railombudsman.org

Making sure our railway is accessible



All our managers are responsible for making sure that our railways are accessible.

Access Advisory Panel



We have a group of disabled people who help us to make sure our stations, trains and information are accessible.

The group is called the Access Advisory Panel.

You can find out more about the Access Advisory Panel by going to:



- Southern:
www.southernrailway.com/accesspanel



- Thameslink:
www.thameslinkrailway.com/accesspanel

You can find out more about the Access Advisory Panel by going to:



- Great Northern:
www.greatnorthernrail.com/accesspanel



- Gatwick Express:
www.gatwickexpress.com/help-and-support/listening-to-you/access-advisory-panel



Mystery shoppers

We pay disabled people to go on journeys in secret and then write reports about how good the service was.



Money for changes

We make improvements to our stations every year to make them more accessible.



Try a train

We have a scheme where groups of disabled people can have a go on a train. This helps them to be more confident about travelling by train.



Steering group

We have a group of senior managers that look at how accessible our railway is.

They suggest changes to the board of directors.



Government

We work with the government to make our railway as accessible as it can be.

Checking



We check that our railway is as accessible as it can be.



We do this by:

- Looking into any complaints that people have made.



- Looking at what passengers have told us.



- Talking with the Access Advisory Panel.



- Listening to the mystery shoppers.



- Asking people what they think.



- Meeting with other railway companies.

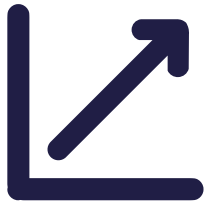


- Checking our stations and trains.



- Listening to independent organisations that check on the railways.

Making things better



We want to carry on improving our stations and trains.



We have money which can be used for:

- Making toilets accessible.



- Improving the places you get dropped off at a station.



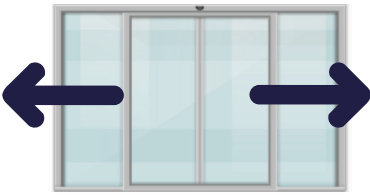
- Better ways to give information at stations and on trains.



- Better information desks.



- Better signs.



- Automatic doors.

Working together



We are working with different organisations to find out more about what people want.

These organisations include:



- Transport Focus - an organisation that speaks up for passengers:
www.transportfocus.org.uk



- London TravelWatch - an organisation that speaks up for passengers in London:
www.londontravelwatch.org.uk



- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) - a group that helps the Government think about accessible transport:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disabled-persons-transport-advisory-committee



- Local councils.



- Groups of people with learning disabilities that speak up.



- Groups of people who use the railways.



- Schools and colleges.

Staff training



We train our staff to understand more about what disabled people need.



Our staff get training in:

- Understanding disabled people.



- The law about disability.



- What disability means.



- Helping disabled passengers.



Our staff also get training in:

- Laws about running the railway including assisting customers.



- How the Passenger Assist system works.



- How to communicate with all our customers.



- How to make stations more accessible.



- How to help people safely.

Contact us



Please contact us if you:

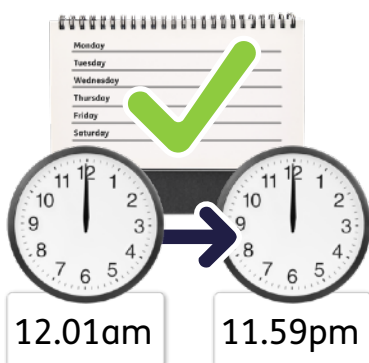
- Need more information.



- Want to tell us something about our service.



- Are unhappy with anything.



Our telephone lines will be answered 24 hours a day, every day, except Christmas Day.



Southern/Gatwick Express

- Phone: 03451 272920
- Text : 0800 138 1018
- Email:
comments@southernrailway.com

ThamesLink/

Great Northern



Thameslink/Great Northern

- Phone: 0345 026 4700
- Text: 0800 138 1018
- Email:
customerservices@thameslinkrailway.com
customerservices@greatnorthernrail.com

Assisted travel



Our Assisted Travel Team will:

- Give you information.
- Book tickets for your journey.
- Arrange any help you need.





Southern/Gatwick Express

- Phone: 0800 138 1016
- Text: 0800 138 1018

ThamesLink /

Great Northern



Thameslink/Great Northern

- Phone: 0800 058 2844
- Text: 0800 138 1018

Twitter



- Southern:
[@SouthernRailUK](https://twitter.com/SouthernRailUK)



- Gatwick Express:
[@GatwickExpress](https://twitter.com/GatwickExpress)



- Thameslink:
[@TLRailUK](https://twitter.com/TLRailUK)



- Great Northern:
[@GNRailUK](https://twitter.com/GNRailUK)



Post

- **Govia Thameslink Railway**
PO Box 10240
Ashby-De-La-Zouch
LE65 9EB