

Making Rail Accessible

Helping older and disabled people



South Western
Railway

NetworkRail

Introduction

It is important to us that all of our customers have an enjoyable, safe and comfortable experience throughout their journey with SWR. This leaflet has been created to explain what assistance is available to customers who want to travel with South Western Railway (SWR), using our trains and stations.



The following pages contain information on:

- How you can book assistance
- What assistance we can provide
– and what we cannot
- Where you can get more information
if you can't find it here

However often you travel, if you have a disability, reduced mobility or feel you may need extra support, we hope this leaflet answers any questions you might have.

We commit to ensuring that all customers who require assistance can make full use of our rail network as far as possible. We intend to do that by making it straightforward to use our stations and trains, and by making them as accessible as we can. We will provide you with the support you need, when you need it.

All station information for National Rail stations can be found at www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/default.aspx

This leaflet reflects our Accessible Travel Policy – you can find the full policy and procedures included on our website at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel or by calling us on 0345 6000 650.

We can send you a copy in a format that is accessible to you, upon request e.g. braille, or audio.

Passenger Assist

Passenger Assist is a national system supported by all train operating companies which allows operators to make necessary arrangements to assist customers with disabilities or restricted mobility.

Our Assisted Travel team will help you book the assistance you need in advance of any rail journey. They are available to help you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Assistance: what is available and how to get it

For immediate travel

Planning in advance isn't always possible so do not worry – you can turn up at any station that is accessible to you and request assistance onto a train from a member of our staff.

At a staffed station please approach any member of staff and they will do their best to make arrangements to assist you onto your preferred train. They can also assist you with buying tickets, onward travel information and information about our train service that day.

All our trains have guards who can assist you onto and off the train. If you are at an unstaffed station, you can use our Assisted Boarding Points service by either calling **0800 528 6599** or using WhatsApp on the same number. We will notify the guard of the assistance you require so that they can help you board the train. This service is free to use and available 24 hours a day (with the exception of Christmas Day and Boxing Day.) More information can be found at:

www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel

We will do our best to assist you on your journey, and make sure your needs are met. If we are not able to assist you fully, or if the station is not accessible to you, we will provide you with alternative accessible transport, such as a taxi, at no extra cost to you.

Please be aware that it may take a period of time to make arrangements if you haven't booked in advance, especially for any alternative transport.

For station information, please visit the National Rail Enquiries website:

www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/

When travel is being arranged in advance

You can book assistance with us for journeys involving multiple connections and train operators on the National Rail network up to 2 hours before travel.

Our Assisted Travel team is available 24 hours a day, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. They are available from 08.00 on 27 December, and are able to arrange assistance in plenty of time before the first train services on 27 December.

When booking assistance to board or get off a train to a part-staffed or unstaffed station, we will ensure that we will provide you with the assistance that you need. If a station is inaccessible to you, we will discuss options with you and may arrange alternative accessible transport, such as a taxi, to the nearest or most convenient accessible station – this will be at no extra cost to you.

Ways to book assistance for your journey

Call: 0800 5282 100

Text Relay: 18001 0800 5282 100

Online: www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel

Passenger Assist App: You can request assistance with the National Passenger Assist app. The app allows you to request any assistance you need, with any train operator.

WhatsApp: You can also contact us up to 10 minutes before your train is due to leave via WhatsApp from dedicated points on all our station platforms.
0800 528 6599.

The levels of assistance we are able to provide

There are a number of different ways we may be able to help you when you are travelling with us – some of which are:

- Help with planning your journey
- Getting through the station, to your platform and boarding the train
- Help with getting on and off the train – for example if you require guiding due to a visual impairment or if you are a wheelchair user and require a ramp
- Help with luggage
- Making a reservation for a seat, or wheelchair space with another operator. SWR do not have seat reservations
- Assistance to and from connecting services and onward transport within the station area
- Buying tickets
- Checking the accessibility and facilities available on the train and at the station

Our staff are trained to help all of our customers and provide the best possible assistance – that includes customers with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

SWR staff are trained to recognise the Sunflower Lanyard. This is a discreet way to let our staff know that you may need some additional help. You can pick up a free lanyard from our Flagship stations or our customer contact centre. More information on the Sunflower Lanyard scheme is available here: www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/sunflower-lanyards

While we will do everything we can to help you on your journey, we can not accompany you throughout it. We have guards on-board all of our trains, who can help with this. However, our staff are unable to provide personal care such as help with eating, taking medication or using the toilet. If you need this support when travelling we recommend travelling with a companion.

Travel Assistance Card

Our Travel Assistance Card is a free card for anyone who may need that extra bit of help and finds it difficult to ask. All our staff have been trained to recognise the card and if you show it to them, they will help you as best they can.

More information can be found at

www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/travel-assistance-card

You can get a Travel Assistance Card by:

- Visiting any SWR staffed station and asking a member of staff at the information point or ticket office (this includes London Waterloo, Clapham Junction, and Guildford stations which are managed by Network Rail)
- Downloading it from our website: www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/travel-assistance-card
- Completing the contact us form: www.southwesternrailway.com/contact-and-help/contact-us-form and we will send you one in the post
- Call our customer service team on **0800 5282 100** and we will send you one in the post

For more information, visit our Assisted Travel page on our website or speak to a member of our staff.



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

Before you travel

We will provide you the information you need to plan your journey, including information to help you understand how accessible it is.

Information about planning your journey and tickets can be obtained through the following options:

Phone: Call us on **0800 5282 100**

Ticket Office: visit one of our staffed stations. Station staffing information can be found on the National Rail Enquiries website:

www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/

Online: You can find journey information and purchase tickets on our website at www.swrailway.com

If you need some help in planning your journey or any other advice, then please visit at our website. If you cannot find what you are looking for, our Assisted Travel team are able to help.



Buying your ticket

Our team will be happy to help you with purchasing a ticket.

If you are at an unstaffed station or the ticket office is closed, we have Video Ticket Vending Machines. These connect you with staff in our Video Contact Centre who can help you buy your ticket, or book assistance for you, 24 hours a day.

You can also book assistance when purchasing tickets on the phone. Our assisted travel team can redirect you when booking assistance for you to book your tickets over the phone.

We have ticket gates at some stations so you will often need a ticket to get onto the station platform.

You should buy a ticket before boarding one of our trains, unless the ticket buying facilities are inaccessible to you.

The ways you can buy a ticket include:

Phone: Call us on **0800 5282 100**

Ticket Office: many of our stations have ticket offices. Opening hours can be found at www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/

Online: You can purchase tickets on our website at www.swrailway.com

Ticket vending machine: You can find these machines at all SWR stations. You can buy a ticket here using a debit or credit card and cash. You can also collect tickets you've bought online.

If you are unable to buy your ticket before boarding one of our trains because the facilities at the station are inaccessible to you, you can buy your ticket on-board, or at your destination. You will still be entitled to any fare reductions you could have received when buying at the station, such as a Disabled Persons Railcard discount.

Discounts and railcards

We participate in a number of national schemes that offer discounted fares without the need for a railcard, as:

If you are visually impaired

Visually impaired customers travelling with a companion are entitled to the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets:

First or Standard Class Anytime Single or Return: **34% off**

First or Standard Class Anytime Day Single: **34% off**

First or Standard Class Anytime Day Return: **50% off**

These concessions also apply to the companion but only if you are travelling together for the entire journey.

To get these discounts you will need a document confirming your disability that has been issued by a recognised body such as social services, local authority, guide dog ownership certificate, RNIB or Blind Veterans UK.

These discounts are only available from staff at our ticket offices or on board and cannot be purchased online or from Ticket Vending Machines.

If you are a wheelchair user and remain in your wheelchair for a rail journey

If you remain in your wheelchair throughout the journey and do not have a railcard, you are entitled to the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets:

First or Standard Class Anytime Single or Return: **34% off**

First or Standard Class Anytime Day Single: **34% off**

First or Standard Class Anytime Day Return: **50% off**

The same discount will apply for a companion travelling with you but only if you are travelling together for the entire journey.

Disabled Persons Railcard

If you have a disability you may be eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard. There are two types of this railcard – a one-year and a three-year railcard. You are entitled to a discount of up to a third on most rail tickets, as well as no minimum qualifying fare or time restrictions.



As well as that, one adult travelling with you, usually referred to as your companion, can get the same discount as you.

You can find details about this railcard and how to get one at:

Website: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Email: disability@raildeliverygroup.com

Call: 0345 605 0525

Minicom/Textphone: 0345 601 0132
(for people who are hard of hearing)

Senior Railcard

If you are aged 60 or over you are eligible for a Senior Railcard. There are two types of this railcard – a one-year and a three-year railcard. You are entitled for a discount of up to a third on most rail tickets. You can find details about this railcard and how to get one at:

Website: www.senior-railcard.co.uk

Email: railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk

Call: 0345 300 0250

At stations: You can use any form of national identification which shows your name and date of birth, such as a Driving Licence or Passport.

Other railcards are available that may be more suitable to you. You can visit www.railcard.co.uk for further information.

Linking your railcard to your Oyster card

You can link any railcard to an Oyster Card at any London Underground station or London Overground ticket office. Staff at some London Terminal stations are also able to do this for you. More information is available on the National Rail Enquiries website.

Once linked, you will be discounted the appropriate fare on each Oyster transaction. Unfortunately, it is not possible to link this discount with a Contactless bank card or other payment method, such as Apple or Android Pay.

Please be aware that Freedom Passes and the associated discount to London Boundary Zone 6 are only valid after 09:30 Monday to Friday on SWR train services.

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters

We provide wheelchair spaces on all our trains for wheelchair users. You are welcome to use these spaces if your wheelchair fits within the following dimensions and the combined weight of the user and chair is less than 300kg:

Width: 700mm Length: 1200mm

If your wheelchair does not fit within these dimensions, unfortunately you will not be able to travel on our trains.

All our trains, except those used on the Island Line on the Isle of Wight, have two dedicated wheelchair spaces in each wheelchair area. These are located next to the Accessible Toilet. On the Island Line, there is one wheelchair space in each wheelchair area. There are no wheelchair spaces in First Class.

Customers using mobility scooters require a permit to travel on SWR trains. The combined weight of the scooter and user must be under 300kg.

Mobility scooter dimensions

Your scooter should fit within the following dimensions:

Width: 700mm (70cm) Length: 1200mm (120cm)

You may apply for a permit on our website at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/wheelchairs-scooters-and-ramps or by contacting our Customer Relations team.

You may travel on your scooter by travelling in the wheelchair space on our trains.

This is the only place scooters can go on our trains and must not be stored in vestibules or obstructing aisles as these provide emergency exit routes.

If you can transfer to the seat, we would encourage you do to so rather than travelling on your scooter as this may be safer and more comfortable for you.

If your scooter application is rejected, we will explain why. We will try to work with you to accommodate you on our services as best we can.

If you do not hold a scooter permit, colleagues may refuse you to travel with us. However, they will do all they can to help you and may request that you fold your scooter in order to use our train services.

All our stations with step-free access have a scooter size-guide vinyl so that you can discreetly measure your scooter, ensuring we can accommodate you safely on our trains.

Please be aware that other train operators may or may not require a permit to use a scooter on their trains. Please check with all the operators you intend to travel with, before you begin your journey. Each operator will provide details on their website and/or in their Accessible Travel Policy.



VIAVI
↑ Way out
↑ Taxi

Help at the station

Station facilities

We are responsible for 187 stations on the rail network and we will continuously improve the facilities available at those stations. This includes, but is not limited to, lifts, ramps, escalators, accessible counters, induction loops at ticket counters and elsewhere, toilets and accessible toilets, waiting rooms and shelters, and accessible seating. You can find information about these facilities and what is available at our stations

on our website as well as (for our stations and for those of other train operators) at the national rail website: www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations

We work with other train operators and Network Rail to ensure that facilities are maintained and improved at other stations we stop at but do not manage.

At a staffed station

When you arrive at a station, if you need assistance, please make yourself known to station staff. Staff will be available from the information point, ticket office or platform at an SWR station. They can be identified either by a blue or orange tabard if on and around the station, or they will be wearing a name badge and SWR blue uniform if in the ticket office.

The meeting point for pre-booked Passenger Assist at all SWR stations varies but is usually the ticket office, Information Point or gateline. You can find the location of the meeting points at stations on our website at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/at-the-station/station-details or from National Rail Enquiries at www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/

If you have pre-booked assistance with us, we recommend you arrive at the station at least 20 minutes prior to the departure of your train (some stations may advise more than this – you will be told when booking assistance). If you arrive by car or taxi, we can help you from the station car park drop-off area or a blue badge parking space. We can't help if you are outside the station area. If you haven't booked assistance, there may be a wait at the station if our staff have other safety critical duties to carry out.

We can also carry luggage onto the train – maximum two items up to 23kg each. Please try where possible to book this in advance through our Passenger Assist team. You can also bring a small item with you if you are able to carry it independently.

When the train arrives, we will make sure you are successfully boarded with any luggage that you may have. We will help you to a seat or to a wheelchair space as required. All staffed stations have portable ramps and, where there is not one, we keep ramps on board our trains. We will deploy these for you if you need step-free boarding. If you think the ramp would make boarding easier for you, let the team know when booking assistance (or let a member of station staff know on the day as early as possible).

At stations without any staff

SWR has many stations which are either part or unstaffed. At stations with only a ticket office, these staff are not able to provide physical assistance, but they can arrange for help to be provided by our train guards who will help you on and off the train.

We recommend standing by the Assisted Boarding Point on the station. If you haven't managed to pre-book your assistance, please use the Help Point or our Assisted Boarding Points service to contact us.

Please note, guards cannot assist you in getting to or from the car park or other assistance on the station due to the limited time that trains stop at stations.

Getting off the train

When you get to your stop, we will make sure you can get off the train. Where appropriate, we will make sure a member of our team is there to help you to the next part of your journey.

Help Points at stations

All SWR stations have Help Points which are answered by our control team, 24 hours a day. They can be used to:

- Request live train service updates
- Get assistance if you require help boarding or leaving the train
- Report accessibility issues or station faults



How to use a Help Point:

1. Press the **Information button** for non-emergency support (e.g. requesting a ramp or checking train times)
2. Press the **emergency button** only in case of urgent safety concerns
3. Follow the operator's instructions and stay near the Help Point if assistance is being arranged or tell the operator where you will be

For more information on where on the platform the Help Points are, please refer to the National Rail Enquiries website.

Ticket gates

Some of the stations we serve have ticket gates before you reach the platform. At each gate line there is at least one wider, accessible gate. When the gates cannot be staffed they are locked in the open position.

Help on the train

Our staff will take everyone's individual requirements into account and do what they can to provide assistance that best suits you. Please ask any member of our on-train team if you need assistance and they will do all that they can to help. Our on-train teams will do their best to allow you and any travelling companions to sit together.

Seat reservations

Unfortunately, we do not offer any seat reservations on our trains.

Every carriage on all of our trains have priority seats for those with reduced mobility, who are pregnant or less able to stand. These seats are signposted on our trains. These priority seats have additional legroom to make them easier to use.

We have wheelchair spaces on all of our trains. All wheelchair spaces are in Standard Class and have two companion seats. Our guards and station staff will do what they can to ensure you are sat with your companion(s). These seats are non-reservable and treated as priority seats and we will ask someone to give up these seats if needed.

We will ensure that wheelchair spaces are prioritised for wheelchair users at all times. Should you need one of these spaces, our on board or station staff will make sure the space is clear for you to use when you board.

Audio and visual information

To help you know where you are on your journey and what is going on throughout, all of our trains have both audio and visual announcements. Our entire fleet of trains have automated information screens that will display information about the calling pattern of the train, safety information and information in the event of disruption. The guard is also able to use the Public Address (PA) system to make manual announcements.

If the information is unclear or you think you missed something important, please ask a member of our on board crew.

Train facilities

You can find out information about the different facilities available on our trains on our website, including the availability of priority seating, number of wheelchair spaces, and accessible toilets by train type at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel

Assistance on arrival

When you get to your destination, staff will help you to get off the train as soon as possible.



If things do not go as planned

Delays and disruption

Sometimes things outside of our control means that there may be disruption to your journey. We will do everything we can to make it as stress-free as possible and to ensure you are able to continue your journey and that you are not left stranded.

We will make sure to keep you up to date through our website, social media and announcements (both on the train and at the station).

If the disruption means that your original assistance is no longer possible for whatever reason, we will do what we can to get in touch with you before you arrive so that we can help you re-plan your journey and re-arrange that assistance. If necessary, and you are no longer able to travel by rail, we will arrange alternative accessible transport for you. This would be at no extra cost to you.

Our staff, both on the station and on the train, will help you as required and have been trained to assist all of our customers. They will communicate disruption either over public address systems or in person.

All our guards and station staff have smart devices so they can help you re-plan your journey and check the accessibility of that journey if the route is different from the one you had originally planned to take.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, station and/or train staff will safely carry out any evacuation as needed. Staff will keep you informed and advise of what will be happening throughout the process.

All our trains and stations have evacuation plans that take into account the needs of disabled passengers and our staff and emergency services are aware of these.

Redress and compensation

We will make every effort to ensure your experience of using Passenger Assist is positive.

When you have booked assistance and it has not been delivered at either one of our stations or on the train you were travelling on or due to travel on, we want to hear from you so we can investigate what has gone wrong. We will provide you with appropriate redress for your journey on a case-by-case basis. Redress might take the form of:

- A refund for the cost of that leg of your journey
- An apology
- Financial compensation
- A gesture of goodwill, which might include a refund for your ticket, rail travel vouchers, or other gift
- A combination of some or all of the above.

If you were travelling on another train company's service, we will coordinate the response on their behalf, or in some circumstances we may wish to pass your claim directly to them but with your permission.

How we'll handle your complaint

When you get in touch with us, we'll make sure your concerns are taken seriously. Here's what you can expect:(bullet as follows)

- We'll look into what happened so we understand the issue fully.
- We may ask you for a little more detail if it helps us resolve things quickly.
- We'll get back to you — either by phone or in writing — with a fair response and, if appropriate, an offer to put things right.
- If compensation is due, we'll work with you to arrange payment in the way that suits you best.
- We aim to respond within 20 working days; however, some redress claims may require more details investigations. If this is the case, we will update you within 20 working days of our progress.

We will always comply with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and in line with National Rail Conditions of Travel. We will provide an explanation of what happened and what we will do to ensure the problem doesn't reoccur.

If we have not reached a satisfactory conclusion to your claim, you may take this up with the Rail Ombudsman. More information can be found at the end of this leaflet.

Where to get more information

Large Print and Easy Read are available on our website

Get in touch with our team at **0345 6000 650** and they will arrange for it to be sent to you within seven working days.

Our Accessible Travel Policy

This document sets out in more detail our commitments and standards of service provision, as well as relevant policies and practices, with regards to disabled people using the rail network. It is available both online at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel and in Large Print and Easy Read formats available from our team at **0345 6000 650**.



Stations and trains accessibility information

Trains information is available on our website and to download from www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel

Our stations information is available on our website stations pages at www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/at-the-station/station-details and on the national rail enquiries website at www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations

Assisted Travel and day of travel queries

Phone: Call **0800 5282 100**

(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Text Relay: **18001 0800 5282 100**

(Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

How to contact us via social media

Twitter: [@sw_help](https://twitter.com/sw_help)

Facebook Messenger: South Western Railway

How to provide feedback or make a complaint

Please call our team on **0345 6000 650**, or fill out the contact-us form on our website:

www.southwesternrailway.com/contact-and-help/contact-us

You can also contact us by post at

Freepost: South Western Railway

Please use any of the above methods to contact us if:

You would like to provide feedback regarding accessibility on the SWR network.

If you are not happy with the way the complaint is dealt with, please contact the Rail Ombudsman on:

Website: railombudsman.org

Email: info@railombudsman.org

Phone: **0330 094 0363**

Post: **Freepost – RAIL OMBUDSMAN**



Visit us at southwesternrailway.com

- Buy tickets online
- See live train information
- Find out about special offers and days out
- Plan your journey
- Find train times



Free Travel alerts southwesternrailway.com/alerts

Register with us for up-to-date information about train



X [@SW_Help](https://twitter.com/SW_Help)

Follow us on X and be the first to know what's happening



[Facebook.com/SWRailway](https://facebook.com/SWRailway)

For information about our network and details of



Customer Service Centre

0345 6000 650

Our UK-based team are available
Monday to Friday 08:00 - 20:00, Saturday 09:00 - 18:00
and Sunday 09:00 - 16:00

- Give us your comments and suggestions



Assisted travel | Text Relay

0800 5282 100

This is a Freephone service for older and disabled passengers (open 24 hours a day). We recommend booking assisted travel at least 2 hours before your journey.



National Rail Enquiries

South Western Railway Limited. 4th Floor, South Bank Central,
30 Stamford Street, London SE1 9LQ. Company number 03266760.



Please Recycle