

# Making Rail Accessible

---

Helping Older and Disabled  
Passengers

April 2024

Large Print edition

This page is intentionally blank.

# Contents

---

Introduction .....	4
Assistance - What is available and how to obtain it .....	5-9
What to Expect - Our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey .....	10-20
Common features found on our trains.....	21-25
Redress and compensation Passenger Assist - What to do if our assistance fails .....	26
Where to get more information and how to get in touch .....	27-29

Information correct at the time of issue - April 2024 and replaces the April 2023 edition of this guide.

Whilst every care has been taken to produce this information, First Greater Western Limited - T/a GWR - cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions once printed.

Issued by First Greater Western Limited.  
Milford House, 1 Milford Street, Swindon. SN1 1HL

# Introduction

---

Welcome to Great Western Railway (GWR).

We want everyone who travels with us to have a safe and enjoyable journey and this leaflet gives you a key overview of our Passenger Assist service for elderly and disabled customers.

You'll find details of:

- What assistance is available and how to get it
- What to expect from us and our commitment to you
- If things do not go as planned
- Where to get more information and how to get in touch.

---

# Assistance

---

What is available and how to obtain it.

## Booking Assistance

Passenger Assist is a national system used by all train operating companies, which allows us to make the necessary arrangements for your journey.

If you have a disability, non-visible disability or are older you can pre-book assistance with just one call to our dedicated team.

We can make sure you get all the help you need for your journey and will arrange everything, including changes and connections that involve other train companies.

You just need to let us know at least 2 hours before your trip and we will:

- Help you find your nearest station with the best facilities for you
- Help you plan the easiest route for your journey
- Make sure our staff know you're coming and what support you need
- Give you all the help we can along the way - around the station and on the train.

We can also give you advice about the trains and stations you want to use, and how accessible they are.

If they're not accessible for you, our **Passenger Assist Team** will talk you through your journey options and find out what support you need. We aim to ensure that you can make as much of your journey by rail as possible.

However, for those parts of the journey where this is not possible, we will arrange alternative transport that is accessible to you, to the nearest or most convenient accessible station, free of charge.

Our **Passenger Assist Team** are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except 25 and 26 December). Website and Passenger Assist app bookings will be processed during these operating hours.

Bookings made between 2200 on 24 December and 0000 on 27 December will be processed when our contact centre reopens on the 27 December.

They can help plan your journey, book your assistance, sell tickets and make seat reservations for you.

To contact them:

- Call them free on **0800 197 1329**
- Text relay on **18001 0800 197 1329**
- Email **Passenger.assist@GWR.com**
- Book through **GWR.com/PassengerAssist** or the **Passenger Assistance app** (by Transreport).

Once they've arranged everything, they'll send you confirmation of what has been booked.

## **For Immediate Travel**

You can turn up at any station that is accessible to you and request assistance onto a train from a member of staff. We recommend arriving 20 minutes before your train is due to depart, to ensure staff are able to provide the assistance required.

If a station is unstaffed and you require assistance, please call our **Passenger Assist Team**, on **0800 197 1329**, or alternatively use the help point located on the platform. We will provide the help you need as quickly as possible.

The accessibility features and staffing hours of all our stations are detailed on the National Rail Enquiries website at **Nationalrail.co.uk** or our own website **GWR.com/stations**

During times of disruption, or if you wish to travel to or from a station which you cannot access without assistance, it may be necessary to provide alternative transport (at no additional cost to you) to an alternative station. Please be aware this may take some time to provide whilst we source a vehicle appropriate to your needs.

## **Assistance available**

Passenger Assist offers a variety of help for our disabled and older customers. This includes:

- Booking assistance for getting on and off the train, as well as getting to and from the platform. This includes help at staffed stations connecting between train services and from the platform to the station entrance
- When booking your assistance, if your journey is to or from a station which does not have staff there all the time or has no staff, we will do our best to ensure you have the help and assistance you need. If our team believes there is a reasonable risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at any stage of your journey, they will provide an alternative journey plan, assistance or alternative transport to get you to your destination

- Requesting a ramp to be provided for getting on and off the train
- Requesting help with luggage. Please bear in mind the weight, size and quantity of luggage as our staff must be able to lift the item(s) safely. You may bring with you up to two large items (no heavier than 23kg) and one small item free of charge
- Making seat reservations, including for dedicated wheelchair user spaces or priority seats on trains, as well as other operators
- Providing information and reservations for travelling with scooters or other mobility aids
- Purchasing travel tickets (including, where available, cheaper advance fares). This can be done at the same time you call to book assistance, all within a single transaction
- Checking the accessibility and facilities on trains and stations across the UK rail network.



## **Sunflower lanyard scheme**

GWR participates in the Sunflower Lanyard and help card scheme. This is a project that is designed to assist customers with non-visible or hidden disabilities.

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard or showing people your sunflower help card discreetly indicates to people around you including staff, colleagues and health professionals that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.

Supporting the Sunflower scheme is our way of showing customers that we care about everyone that uses our network and we want to make it as easy as possible for them to travel with us.

The lanyards and help cards are available free of charge by contacting our **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329**.

We also provide a travel assistance card for those customers who need or prefer to communicate non-verbally. You can customise them to suit your needs and show staff how you would like them to help you.

They can be downloaded from our website at **GWR.com/PassengerAssist** under the "Supporting passengers with hidden disabilities" section.

# What to expect

---

Our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey.

## **Before you Travel**

### **Journey Planning and Information**

We know how important it is for you to have plenty of information when you travel by train, both before and during your journey. It is our aim to provide you with information that is accessible, accurate, relevant, consistent, up-to-date and easy to understand.

### **Information about accessibility of our stations and trains**

Information about the accessible services and facilities that are available at our stations can be found on our website, at [GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations) and on request.

This will include details about; Blue Badge parking, staffing hours, accessible toilet provision and accessibility of the station and platforms.

You can find a description of what facilities our trains have, and the routes they generally take, in our Facilities Guide information booklet that can be found on our website **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

You can also obtain this information by calling us on 03457 000 125\*, or text relay on 18001 0800 197 1329.

\* Standard network charges apply. Calls from mobiles may be higher

## Information about your journey

You can get the latest Information about train times, including delays and planned improvement work:

- At **GWR.com**
- On our Facebook page: **facebook.com/GWRUK**
- On our X account: **@GWRHelp**
- By calling our Passenger Assist team on **0800 197 1329**
- By calling National Rail Enquiries on **03457 48 49 50\*** or textphone **0345 60 50 600\***
- By calling National Rail Enquiries' Welsh language service on **0345 60 40 500\***
- Using the Train Tracker™ text service - text 'dep' then the station you need to **84950** to get real-time information (texts cost 25p plus your normal network rate)
- By calling the Train Tracker™ speech recognition system on **03457 48 49 50**, which will tell you the latest train times\*

Our booking offices and customer information points are the easiest places for customers with a disability to get the information they need. Many of these are equipped with induction loops and low-level counters.

Our staff can give you details about the facilities, services and level of accessibility at all railway stations in the UK, as well as answering your questions about your journey - including about train times and connections.

We also provide a GWR app, which provides up to date journey information.

\* Standard network charges apply. Calls from mobiles may be higher

## **Ticketing and Fares**

If you book some support with our **Passenger Assist Team**, they can also book your tickets for you. If seats are reservable, they can reserve seats and wheelchair spaces for you.

For services without reservations, the **Passenger Assist Team** will still book your assistance for your whole journey and our station and onboard team will help you find a suitable space on the train.

You will be able to collect your tickets from any station that has a ticket office or ticket vending machine, or if you are planning your journey in advance, then we can send them to you in the post.

We aim to ensure that disabled customers travelling in family groups or with companions, are booked to sit close together, wherever practicable.

On trains that are not reservable, staff on the train or at the station will assist you in finding suitable seats.

We are committed to selling tickets at a fair price, whether the ticket is for our network or not, and to provide you accurate information and advice about your journey and ticket options.

Our ticket office staff and **Passenger Assist Team** are familiar with the accessibility of our various types of rolling stock, and they are trained to ensure that the tickets you purchase will be appropriate for your journey.

We are exploring options with the providers for our Ticket Vending Machines to improve information and where this is not possible have placed labels on the machines to make customers aware of the need to ensure that tickets purchased will be appropriate for a journey. Our website provides similar information for ticket sales.

You'll be able to pick your tickets up from a machine or a ticket office at the station two hours after you book them. If you do, you'll need the card you paid with and the booking reference. Station staff can also help you collect your tickets if necessary.

## **Buying your own tickets**

You can also buy your tickets from:

- Our station ticket offices
- Our self-service ticket machines
- At **GWR.com**
- Other train operators and their ticket offices
- On the **GWR app**.

If, due to your disability you are unable to buy a ticket before you get on the train, you'll be able to buy one (with any discount you're entitled to) on the train or at your destination, without penalty.

## **If you have a Disabled Persons Railcard**

If you have a Disabled Persons Railcard, we'll give you a discount when you buy your tickets online or at the ticket machine.

One adult accompanying you can also travel at the reduced fare. At the ticket office, you just need to show your Railcard when you buy them. You also need to carry your Railcard when you travel, so our ticket inspectors can make sure you have the right tickets.

Full details on how to get a Railcard can be found on:

- Website: **[disabledpersons-Railcard.co.uk](http://disabledpersons-Railcard.co.uk)**
- Email: **[disability@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:disability@raildeliverygroup.com)**
- Call: **0345 605 0525\***
- Minicom/Textphone: **0345 601 0132**  
(for people with hearing impairments).

## **If you have a Senior Railcard**

If you're aged 60 or over, you can get a Senior Railcard. This gives you a third off standard and first-class Anytime, Off-Peak and Advance fares tickets.

You can buy it online, on the phone or at any staffed station with your passport or UK driving licence as proof of age. You can find out more:

- At your local ticket office
- From National Rail Enquiries on **03457 48 49 50\***
- At **[senior-Railcard.co.uk](http://senior-Railcard.co.uk)**
- Email: **[Railcardhelp@Railcards-online.co.uk](mailto:Railcardhelp@Railcards-online.co.uk)**

\* Standard network charges apply. Calls from mobiles may be higher

## **If you don't have a Railcard**

### **If you are visually impaired**

If you are a visually-impaired person travelling with a companion and you do not hold a Railcard, the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets apply for both of you:

- First/Standard Anytime Single or Return - 34% off
- First/Standard Anytime Day Single - 34% off
- First/Standard Anytime Day Return - 50% off.

No concession applies if you are travelling alone and you do not hold a Railcard.

To obtain these discounts, a document confirming your disability, issued by a recognised institution (for example, Social Services Department, Local Authority, Guide Dog Ownership certificate, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) or Blind Veterans UK) is required.

Season tickets - you can be issued with one adult season ticket to cover two persons; the two travelling for the price of one. A different companion may travel with you on different days.

## **If you remain in your wheelchair for a rail journey**

If you remain in your wheelchair throughout the journey and you do not hold a Railcard, you will be given the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets:

- First/Standard Anytime Single or Return - 34% off
- First/Standard Anytime Day Single - 34% off
- First/Standard Anytime Day Return - 50% off.

The same discount will apply to one person travelling with you.

## **Ticket machines**

We've fitted automatic ticket machines at many of our stations over the last few years. All of them are in line with the DfT's 'Design standards for accessible railway stations: a code of practice' (Code of practice) when it comes to accessibility. All give a discount for people with the Disabled Persons Railcard, and their companion.

Some stations also have 'ticket collection only' machines to allow tickets bought in advance online or over the telephone to be easily collected.



## Wheelchairs

Wheelchairs can be carried, in the designated spaces, on all of our trains so long as they fit within the following dimensions:

- Are no more than 700mm wide
- Are no more than 1200mm long (including the footplate)
- Weigh 300kg or less (including the weight of the customer).

If your wheelchair exceeds the above dimensions, please contact our **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329** as they may be able to reserve you on a train which can accommodate your wheelchair.

## Mobility scooters

If you have a mobility scooter, we're happy for you to bring it with you, as long as you have a permit.

We can take most scooters that:

- Are no more than 700mm wide
- Are no more than 1200mm long
- Weigh 300kg or less (including the weight of the customer)
- Have an anti-tip device.

No GWR trains can safely carry mobility scooters outside the limitations set out in this policy.

You can find out more and apply for a permit by calling our **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329** or go to **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

When you're using a scooter on the platform, please don't go over 4mph and for your own safety, please stay behind the yellow line until it's time to board. Also please take any luggage off your scooter before the train arrives, so it won't affect the balance if you use the ramp. Our staff can help you take the luggage onto the train.

If you need to fold your scooter, and it would be easier for you to use a wheelchair to get on the train, just let us know. Most of our stations have a wheelchair on the platform. We can arrange for a member of staff to help you to the train if you need to use it.

## **On the train**

Once you've got your scooter on board, please sit in a seat on the train if you can, so you can travel more safely. Please also follow any advice our staff give you to make your journey safe and comfortable.

## **If you're not eligible for a permit**

We can still take your mobility scooter if it can be folded down - to be no bigger than an average large suitcase - because it can go in the luggage rack. Our staff can help you take the luggage onto the train.

## **At the station**

Our website contains information about the facilities and accessibility features at every station we manage. You can also find information on station facilities on the national rail website:

- **[GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations)**
- **[Nationalrail.co.uk/stations](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations)**

If you've booked assistance, please let a member of staff know when you arrive at the station for your journey. It's best to arrive at the station in plenty of time for your train. When the train arrives, we will make sure you, and any luggage, are successfully boarded, seated or in a wheelchair space.

We have portable ramps at all our accessible staffed stations and on all trains. The staff will then tell your destination station that you are travelling, so the team there can meet you when you arrive.

We have designated meeting points at all our staffed stations. These are for customers who have booked assistance to know where to meet our staff and information on their location can be found at **[GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations)** and the National Rail website.

Where assistance has not been arranged in advance, please speak with a member of our station or train staff and we'll do our best to support you. However, we can't guarantee we'll be able to give you the same level of help. For example, our staff may not be freely available when you need them, and there may not be any alternative transport available at short notice, so it may take longer to arrange.

If you need help when you get to an unstaffed station, you can call our **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329**, which is also on the welcome board at the station or press the information button on the platform help point and speak to someone who can help assistance or transport to get you to your destination.

## **On the train**

We have an in-depth guide to all our trains and the facilities on them, which can be found on **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

---

# Common features found on our trains

---

**Designated Wheelchair Spaces** - these spaces are prioritised for wheelchair/scooter users and our on-board staff will ensure the area is kept free for users.

**Accessible Toilet** - accessible toilets are situated near the wheelchair spaces.

**Seats / Priority seating** - there are clearly labelled priority seats on our trains, usually near the doors.

If you're disabled, pregnant, 65 or over, or travelling with a child under 3 and you need to sit down when you travel, you are eligible for a Priority Seat Card. That way, when you ask someone for their seat, you can show your card without having to explain anything.

To check if you can get a card, call our **Passenger Assist Team** or go to **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

## **Assistance on arrival**

When a train terminates at a station, we will help you to alight from the train as soon as practical and within five minutes of the train's arrival time. This assistance may be provided by GWR station colleagues, other train operating staff or from our onboard staff.

## **Trains - aural and visual information**

We are committed to providing important aural and visual travel information in a variety of ways so that it can be accessed as easily as possible.

Our on-board staff are trained to give announcements and all our trains provide automated information throughout the journey (except the Night Riviera service).

Most of our trains also have scrolling information screens, that provide journey information of that service. If your disability means that you are unable to hear the on-board announcements, please advise a member of staff so that alternative arrangements can be made.

During all journeys on our trains, our announcements let customers know what the next station is. We make these announcements in plenty of time for customers with a disability to get ready to leave the train safely.

We want your journey to be as comfortable and stress-free as possible. If there are any aspects of your journey that you are not sure about, or if you require further support, please ask the station or train crew who will do their best to help.

## **Assistance Dogs**

We're more than happy to welcome you, and your registered ADUK guide or assistance dog on all our trains, including on our Night Riviera service where your dog can stay in the berth with you for no extra cost.

If you book assistance through our **Passenger Assist Team**, they will reserve the seat next to you in seated accommodation, wherever possible, to ensure adequate space for the assistance dog.

We also offer a card that you can place on the seat next to you to alert other customers that your dog is under the seat.

This can be downloaded from our website at [GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist) and can be found under the useful downloads section.

## **If things do not go as planned**

We try to let our customers with a disability know in advance about anything that could affect their journeys. If there's an unexpected problem, we always try to let our customers know as soon as we can, through:

- **GWR.com**
- Our customer information screens, help points and station announcements
- Our email, social media and text alerts
- On the National Rail Enquires site.

We will assist you at times of disruption, delay or emergency and provide compensation should we fail to provide your booked assistance. Where disruption and delays do occur, we will do everything we can to ensure that you are able to continue your journey.

If you've booked assistance, we'll let you know if anything is going to seriously affect your journey as soon as we can. If we have your contact details, we'll be in touch to make different arrangements if we need to.

Our staff are trained to anticipate your needs and will communicate news of any service disruption and provision of alternative transport to you via the Customer Information Systems or, where possible, in person. On train staff will continually monitor the train they are working on and will help assist and advise customers when disruption does occur.

At unstaffed stations you can call our **Passenger Assist Team**, whose phone number is on the welcome board at the station or press the information button on the platform Help Point and you'll be able to speak to someone who can help.

You can also get in contact with us by either:

- X using **@GWRHelp**
- WhatsApp on **07890 608043**
- Calling **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329**.

## **If there's an emergency**

Keeping our customers safe is our priority. So, when it comes to handling an emergency, we do everything we can to give customers the support they need.

We display safety information in all our trains about what to do in the rare event of an emergency. Our evacuation guidelines are either in the areas by the doors, on the coach walls or alongside the seats.



## **Supporting people with a disability in an evacuation**

Our emergency plans for our stations and trains include information about how to support people with a disability in an emergency.

If there's an emergency, the safest option is nearly always for customers to stay on the train until our staff have fully assessed the situation. If we need to evacuate the train, the safest place to do it is at a station.

So, unless the situation is life-threatening, we ask our customers with a disability to stay on the train until the emergency services arrive.

Our stations have evacuation plans which take into account the needs of disabled customers.

In an emergency, trained staff, and the emergency services if necessary, will help you get to a safe place. If we need to evacuate a station, we will use the station Public Address system to alert you.

# Redress and compensation

---

Passenger Assist - What to do if our assistance fails.

## **If we don't give you the support, you booked**

All individual train operating companies have their own recompense policies, which can be found within their own Accessible Travel Policies. If you travel with GWR and your booked assistance fails, you will be compensated. If GWR fail to provide your booked assistance this will be 100% of the cost of a single ticket, or 50% if a return ticket is held.

If another train company was responsible for the failure, you can contact them directly, or we can liaise with them on your behalf and provide you with a full explanation in response, including why it happened and what mitigating actions we intend to take as a result.

The compensation scheme set out above does not limit or exclude your other legal rights to compensation under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, or Equalities Act 2010. If you believe this applies to your journey, please contact our Customer Support Team who we will take each case on its merits and respond appropriately.

You can contact our **Customer Support Team** through either:

- **GWR.com** and filling in our online form
- Calling **03457 000 125\***
- Emailing **GWR.Feedback@GWR.com**
- Write to us at **Freepost GWR CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

Where assistance has not been provided due to a delay, and both Delay Repay and Passenger Assist redress could apply, you will be entitled to whichever value is the highest but will not be able to claim both.

For information regarding your rights when you are travelling as a consumer, including under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, see **Gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights**

\* Standard network charges apply. Calls from mobiles may be higher

---

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

---

## **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 from our **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329** or online at [GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)

## **Accessibility Panel:**

GWR hold a regular accessibility panel comprising of disabled customers and users of Passenger Assist, with whom we can consult on accessibility issues, such as options for access improvements, raising awareness of assisted travel and developing new initiatives.

Customers that would like to be involved in this should e-mail **MobilityAndInclusion@GWR.com** or speak with the **Passenger Assist Team** on **0800 197 1329**.

## **Stations and trains accessibility information**

Available from our website at:

- **[GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations)**
- **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

## Day of travel queries or issues

- WhatsApp on **07890 6080430**
- X using **@GWRHelp**
- **0800 197 1329**.

## Passenger Assist service

- **0800 197 1329** open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except 25 and 26 December)
- **Text Relay: 18001 0800 197 1329** (for people with hearing impairments).

## National Freephone Passenger Assist service

- **0800 022 3720**
- **0845 60 50 600** textphone/minicom.

## Feedback or complaints

You can contact our **Customer Support Team** through either:

- **GWR.com** and filling in our online form
- Calling **03457 000 125\*** open 0800-2000, 7 days a week (except 25 and 26 December)
- Emailing **GWR.Feedback@GWR.com**
- Write to us at **Freepost GWR CUSTOMER SUPPORT**.

\* Standard network charges apply. Calls from mobiles may be higher

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

- Website: **[railombudsman.org](http://railombudsman.org)**
- Email: **[info@railombudsman.org](mailto:info@railombudsman.org)**
- Phone: **0330 094 0362**
- Textphone: **0330 094 0363**
- Post: **Freepost - RAIL OMBUDSMAN.**

To download a GWR network map, visit **[Gwr.com/Stations](http://Gwr.com/Stations)**

This page is intentionally blank.

This page is intentionally blank.

