

GWR

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Accessible Travel Policy

January 2020



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Commitments to providing assistance

Welcome to Great Western Railway (GWR). This policy document is designed to complement our 'Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers' leaflet. A copy of this can be found at all GWR staffed stations, as well as on our website at **GWR.com/PassengerAssist**.

We want everyone who travels with us to have a safe and enjoyable journey and this document gives you everything you need to know about our Accessible Travel Policy for elderly and disabled passengers. In this document you will find details of:

- our services and facilities
- how you can use our services and facilities
- what you can expect from us
- what happens if we can't give you the services or facilities you require

GWR is committed to continuous improvement of services and facilities for disabled people. All our trains have accessible facilities and many of our stations are fully accessible. At those stations which are not yet fully accessible we will continue to work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail to ensure we provide this wherever possible.

Recent improvements have been the installation of lifts at Newbury and Totnes stations and accessible ticket desk installed at Windsor & Eton Central, Weston-super-Mare, Moreton-in-Marsh, Exeter St Davids, Evesham and Yeovil Pen Mill.

Booking and providing 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, hidden disability or are elderly you can pre-book assistance with just one call to our dedicated team. We can make sure you get 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 24 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
- Ensure your destination is aware that you are travelling so that they can meet you on arrival

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, we'll suggest some other options to make your trip easier which might include getting you to

or from a station that is more accessible, free of charge.

Our Passenger Assist team are available between 0600 and 2300 every day except Christmas Day. They can also sell tickets and make seat reservations for your journey. 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**

Once they have arranged everything, they will send you an email confirmation of what has been booked.

If you can't give us 24 hours' notice of your journey, please speak with a member of our station or train staff when you arrive (or contact our Passenger Assist team) and we will do our best to support you. However, we can't guarantee we'll be able to give you the same level of help, as our staff may not be freely available when you need them and therefore assistance may take longer to be provided. We will still do everything we can to assist you onto the train and call ahead to your destination station with your assistance needs.

When you arrive at the station

It's best to arrive at the station in plenty of time for your train so you can let our staff know if you need any support. If you're travelling from London Paddington, which is managed by Network Rail, you need to go to the Customer Reception at the concourse end of Platform 1. The staff will tell the station team you have arrived and call the station at your destination, so the team there can meet you. When a train arrives at a GWR terminating station, we aim to meet you 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.



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 and the national rail website.

We would advise that you turn up to the station 30 minutes before travel. We can't guarantee we will be able to give you the same level of help, as sometimes, our staff may not be freely available when you need them. There also may not be any alternative transport available at short notice, so it may take longer to arrange your onward journey.

If you need help when you get to an unstaffed station, you can call our Passenger Assist team, who's 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.

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. Our team will consider the staffing levels on the train and at the station, together with the level of accessibility at the station in relation to the type of assistance you need. If our team believes there is a reasonable risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at a particular station or at any stage of your journey, they will provide an alternative journey plan, assistance or alternative transport to get you to your destination.

Ramps

We can help customers who use a wheelchair or mobility scooter on and off the train with a portable ramp, specially designed and tested for the purpose. All of our trains have ramps on board and we provide ramps on the platforms at the staffed stations they stop at.

Our station staff and train crew are trained to use the ramps safely and support you on and off the train. If you need a ramp and have pre-booked assistance, our staff will be ready to help you board. If you haven't booked assistance, please let station staff know that you need a ramp as soon as you arrive, and they will ensure you get on your train safely.

At some of our larger accessible staffed stations we can provide a wheelchair to help you as far as the train. For safety reasons, they cannot lift anyone into or out of a wheelchair, up steps or into a train seat.

Assistance at part-staffed and unstaffed stations

We're happy to support you from any of our stations, but some do not have staff available or are not accessible. Therefore, we would recommend you call our Passenger Assist team at least 24 hours before you travel. They will talk you through your journey options and find out what support you need. They can also arrange for you to get to and from a station that is inaccessible, at no extra cost.

When booking your assistance, our Passenger Assist team will discuss with you how we will meet your needs. If our team believes there is any risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at a particular station or stage of your journey, they will provide an alternative journey plan, assistance or transport to get you to your destination.

GWR is introducing dedicated mobile staff on our driver only routes in the Thames Valley. This is to provide assistance to passengers where there is no second person on board the train. They will be focused around our accessible stations on the route, that are otherwise unstaffed or staffed only during busier times of day. We would recommend booking assistance in advance through our Passenger Assist team who will be able to let you know what to expect.

If you need help when you get to an unstaffed station, you can either 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.

Journeys with connections

If you need to change trains on your journey, we can help you at staffed stations. If there are no staff at the station, you'll need to book some support with our Passenger Assist team.

If your journey involves changes or connections with other operators' services, our team will provide a single point of

contact for booking and arranging assistance. We aim to provide enough time during your journey so that you can make your connections.

Sometimes the arrival or departure platform for a train can be changed at short notice. When this happens, our staff will let you know and help you get to the new platform as quickly and safely as possible. We will also update aural and visual information at our stations, as quickly as possible, to help inform all passengers of any change.

If you continue your journey on other transport

We will provide assistance from when you arrive at the station to when you leave it. We can also point you in the right direction for other accessible transport – like buses or taxis – to continue your journey away from the station and make it as easy as we can for you. For example, we:

- Make sure the taxi rank and bus stops are clearly signposted around our stations
- Put up information about local taxis and buses – including accessible ones
- Have pick-up and drop-off points outside our stations (some with dropped kerbs) as near to the entrances and exits as possible
- Work with bus companies and local authorities to make sure there's step-free access between buses and trains, wherever possible
- Work closely with local authorities and taxi associations to provide, where possible, accessible taxis at ranks managed by GWR. Where accessible taxis are not locally available from the taxi rank we would source a vehicle from further afield via our taxi management supplier contract.
- Where access by Private Hire Vehicles to stations is regulated under contract with GWR, the terms of the contract will include, from the earliest opportunity, the requirement for the taxi operator

to provide wheelchair-accessible vehicles and a reasonable number of drivers trained in disability awareness. We will include this as a requirement in the new Contract being agreed by First Group Procurement.

Station facilities and services

We work with other train companies to make sure the national database, which keeps information about how accessible UK stations are, is correct. You can find the database at:

nationalrail.co.uk/stations

GWR are currently undertaking an audit of all stations to confirm and improve the information on the National Rail database and this should be concluded by 31st March 2020. This will ensure accurate and consistent wording with the following fields populated for each of our stations;

- Step free access note
- Assisted Travel
- Staff help available

Our Customer Information Manager and our Mobility and Inclusion Manager make sure the information about our stations is kept up to date. One of the ways they do this is by contacting National Rail with the details of any short-term or unplanned changes that could affect a customer's journey. They update this information within 24 hours of being notified of any changes. Information they pass on includes details of:

- Significant, temporary work that will affect a station's accessibility

-
- Any problems at stations that make them temporarily inaccessible – like lifts and toilets being out of order.

Alterations to facilities

Should the facilities on which you rely for your journey become temporarily unavailable on a train or at a station. We'll make sure the information is on:

- **GWR.com**
- Customer Information Screens
- National Rail Enquiries website

If we have your contact details and you have booked assistance, we will endeavor to contact you by telephone or email, this includes:

- Where a station has a physical constraint preventing use by some disabled people
- Where significant temporary works affects station accessibility
- Where changes to stations make them temporarily inaccessible (e.g. lifts or station toilets out of order)
- Where changes to train facilities materially affect disabled passengers — where reasonably practicable to do so.

Assistance with luggage

If you've booked some support for your journey, we can help you around the station with any luggage you have. However, we do not employ staff solely to carry customers' luggage and if you have not booked assistance, platform staff may have to attend to train safety before they can help you. Please bear in mind the weight, size and quantity of luggage and do not exceed the limits in the National Rail Conditions of Travel luggage policy.

Our staff must be able to lift the item(s) safely so please bring with you up to two large items (no heavier than 23kg) and one small item.

Seats on trains

When you book with our Passenger Assist team, it's a good idea to book seats or the wheelchair space on the train at the same time. All of our trains have priority seats at the end of each coach, they are near the doors and most can be booked in advance. Wheelchair spaces are available on trains, and our on-board staff will assist in ensuring these dedicated spaces give wheelchair users priority.

If you don't book ahead, there are some non-reservable priority seats and wheelchair spaces you can use. This is on a first come first served basis, where our staff will do everything they can to make sure you get a seat or a space for your wheelchair, whether you've booked or not.

If someone else is using the seat or space you booked, let

our staff know. They'll make sure you get your seat, or a different one, so you can carry on your journey as planned.

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.

Priority Seat Cards

There are clearly labelled priority seats on all of our trains, usually near the doors.

We always ask our customers to give up priority seats for people who need them more but it's not always obvious why someone needs a seat.

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 on **0800 197 1329** or go to **GWR.com**

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 your assistance dog to travel.

Our information screens and announcements

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

You can get up-to-date details of all the accessibility services and facilities we offer:

- At **GWR.com**
- On the National Rail Enquiries' journey planner, Stations Made Easy, at **nationalrail.co.uk/stations**
- By calling us on **03457 000 125***
- Or text relay on **18001 0800 197 1329**
- At our booking offices

* 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 Twitter 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***
- Or text relay on **18001 0800 197 1329**
- 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

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

Accessible Travel Policy documentation including alternative formats

To accompany this Accessible Travel Policy, we have a shorter and more concise leaflet available, which you might find helpful. The leaflet is called 'Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers'. You can find the leaflets in our ticket offices and leaflet racks at GWR staffed stations, and as a PDF on our website at **GWR.com/PassengerAssist**. Our website is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features.

Leaflets and other printed materials

We display our printed information clearly at our stations, and make sure the display is accessible for people in a wheelchair. If you can't find what you need, please let one of our team know and they will do their best to provide what you need. If you need a copy documents are available on line at **GWR.com**, from all our staffed stations, or from our Passenger Assist team.

If you need them in a different format, please let us know. We have copies in a few different formats, including audio, large print, Welsh & braille and can send them out to you within 7 days.

Here's how to get in touch with our Passenger Assist team:

- Call them free on **0800 197 1329**
- Dial text relay free on **18001 0800 197 1329**

- Email **passenger.assist@GWR.com** or go to **GWR.com**

Our Mobility and Inclusion Manager represents us at the quarterly Rail Delivery Group Disability Group meetings and is actively involved with many of the associated working groups.

They work with local charities and local access groups to ensure that disabled people are aware of our Accessible Travel Policy and the service that is available to support customers wishing to travel by rail.

They also meet with representatives of local authorities, and many other groups with links to transport and disabilities.

Stations and rolling stock accessibility information

We ensure that accessibility information relating to our stations and trains is readily available to you and kept up-to-date. In order to achieve this, we maintain information in an online format which can be easily accessed via personal mobile devices, as well as in accessible formats. We provide the same information to National Rail Enquiries for their website.

Stations

Information about the accessible services and facilities that are available at our stations can be found on our website, at **GWR.com/stations** and on request. This will include details about; disabled parking, staffing hours, accessible toilet provision and accessibility of the station and platforms.

Trains

You can find a brief description of what facilities our trains have, and the routes they generally take, in our rolling stock information booklet that can be found on our website **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)** and on request. This includes our Night Riviera sleeper train, which has an accessible sleeping berth.

Passenger journey information

Online, at stations and on trains

We know that some passengers don't travel frequently, and may not know where or how to access important information, particularly during times of service disruption. This section explains how we will communicate accurate, clear and consistent information, especially if you have a hidden disability.

Train departures and arrivals information

We commit to providing you, wherever possible, with clear and consistent aural and visual information: both at the platform and on the train.

Stations – aural and visual information

Many of our stations have a combination of customer information screens and automated public announcements providing accurate, clear and consistent aural and visual information. We give up-to-date information about trains, delays and other disruption on our information screens and with announcements as often as we can. Should the facilities on which you rely for your journey become temporarily unavailable on a train, for example the accessible toilet, we will make sure the information is on our Customer Information Screens and that both station and on-board staff are aware. Our staff will then be able

to discuss with you and provide alternate travel options as required.

If you have trouble reading our information screens or hearing our announcements, please let a member of staff know. They can tell you if you need to be on a different platform and help you get there safely if you need some support.

Trains – aural and visual information

We are committed to providing important aural and visual travel information in a variety of means so that it can be accessed as easily as possible. Our on-board staff are trained to give announcements and all of our trains provide automated information throughout the journey. 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.

All our trains have a PA system for the train crew to give updates during the journey and all our trains also have scrolling passenger information screens, as well as automated announcements (except our Night Riviera sleeper service). You can find out more information about our trains in the rolling stock information booklet found at **[GWR.com/PassengerAssist](https://www.gwr.com/PassengerAssist)**

During all the 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.

Our train crew, or the drivers on 'driver only' trains, give

customers the latest information about delays or other disruptions. The crew can help customers make other arrangements if they need to and for 'driver only' trains, the staff at the station will help instead.

Our help points

We've fitted accessible help points on the platforms of all our stations. Each one gives the latest information about train times and can be used for emergency calls or to get information about the station or the train service.

All our help points feature audio frequency induction loops for our customers with hearing difficulties and feature buttons of different sizes and colour's for customers who are blind or partially sighted.

Connections and wayfinding

Our staff will provide you with information on how to make connections with other modes of transport both prior to your journey and when travelling on our trains and through our stations. We also provide onward connection information and local maps on posters at many of our stations. When planning our services, we consult with all local authorities that our services run to, through or near. This is so we make sure the needs of local communities inform any decisions we make concerning service provision.

Ticket offices, information points, help points and our customer service centre

You can obtain information about the services provided by GWR and all other train companies at our ticket offices or clearly signed information points at some of our larger stations (usually open at the same time as the ticket office). We will provide details of fares, timetables, connections and confirmation of bookings made by Passenger Assist (including bookings by other train operators).

Information regarding other forms of transport from the station is available from our staff, or they will be able to advise you where this information can be obtained. Further detail of the information facilities available at our stations can be found on our website GWR.com/stations. We will ensure that up-to-date information regarding the services we provide is available to other train companies and station operators. This includes information regarding delays, diversions or other events that may affect your journey. For up to date train running information on the day of travel please follow us on Twitter **@GWRHelp** or visit our website: **GWR.com**

Leaflets regarding our services and those of other train operators who serve the station, are also available and placed at varying heights to be accessible to you. We also

provide information on station posters which give you information about local services/transport available from that station. You can also use the station Help Points to speak to an operator to gain information and assistance from staff.

More information regarding all national train services is available by contacting National Rail Enquiries. You can call them on **03457 48 49 50*** and their website can be found here: **nationalrail.co.uk**.

Alternatively, TextDirect: **0345 60 50 600***

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

Accessibility standards for our website

We know that our website needs to be easy for everyone to use, including those with a disability. We use the web content accessibility guidelines to help achieve that standard wherever possible. Our website includes many features that help to make it accessible such as colour considerations and easily resizable fonts. We meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when it comes to providing services online. You can find out more about this at

[Gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps)

We're always looking for ways to improve our website and we'll continue to follow these accessibility guidelines where possible, which includes the use of an independent site audit to check compliance and highlight recommendations for improvement.

Accessibility features on our website

To improve navigation for text-only browsers, people who use screen readers and keyboard navigation, we use:

- Style sheets
- Font sizes and colours
- Forms, tables and links

- Scripting and browsers

Questions or feedback about our website

We are always open to receiving feedback about our website, and any suggestions you have for improvements when it comes to accessibility. If you'd like to give us feedback, or ask a question, here's how to get in touch with our Passenger Assist team:

- Call them free on **0800 197 1329**
- Dial text relay free on **18001 0800 197 1329**
- Email **Passenger.assist@GWR.com** or go to **GWR.com**

Ticketing and fares

Booking your tickets with our Passenger Assist team

If you book some support with our Passenger Assist team, they can also book your tickets for you. You will be able to collect your tickets from the station, or if you are planning your journey in advance then we can send them to you in the post.

We are committed to selling tickets impartially and to providing accurate information and advice about your journey and ticket options, irrespective of which train operating company provides the service. 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.

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.

Buying your own tickets

You can also buy your tickets from:

- our station ticket offices
- our self-service ticket machines
- **GWR.com**

- other train operators and their ticket offices
- on the GWR app

If you can't buy a ticket before you get on the train, due to your disability, 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**
- Email: **Disability@raildeliverygroup.com**
- Call: **0345 605 0525***
- Minicom/Textphone: **0345 601 0132*** (for people with hearing impairments)

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

For more details on the discount and how to get a railcard, go to **Disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk**

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 tickets across the UK. 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**
- Email: **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 Return – 50% off

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

Ticket machines

We've fitted self service ticket machines at many of our stations over the last few years. All of them are designed to comply with the Department for Transport's 'Accessible train station design for disabled people: a code of practice' and they 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.

Ticket gates

Some of our stations have automatic ticket gates. This means you need a valid ticket to get on to the platforms. There's always at least one wider, manual gate for people in a wheelchair and people with reduced mobility. There will always be a member of staff to help you when the gate is closed. Otherwise, the gate will be open so you can get through.

Purchase of advance tickets

Where advance tickets are available for purchase (via any of the available channels, including online, at the ticket office or via telecommunications), you are advised to check

that the required facilities (for example; accessibility of the train type, availability of wheelchair space or First Class accommodation) are available before purchasing tickets.

Booking assistance when purchasing tickets

When buying tickets through our Passenger Assist team with a Disabled Persons Railcard, our staff are trained to ask you if you require assistance with any aspect of your journey. They will be able to arrange assistance and tickets as part of the same transaction.

Alternative transport

Arranging replacement transport

Some of our stations may not be fully accessible to you, due to constraints of the location. We are always happy to arrange other transport for you if you are unable to use the station to make the journey you wish.

You can check the accessibility of your local station through **[GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations)**

If your local station or the station you need to get to isn't accessible, you can call our Passenger Assist team at least 24 hours before you travel. They will talk you through your journey options and find out what support you need. We aim to ensure that you are able to 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.

Sometimes, if the platform you need isn't accessible, we may ask you to go to the next accessible station, then come back to your destination station to a more accessible platform. We only do this if there are frequent trains to your station, and we never charge you more.

If we run a replacement bus service

If we need to put on a bus service to replace a particular train, we provide accessible options wherever we can, but not all the vehicles we use are fully accessible. Factors

that we considered when considering our rail replacement vehicle type are:

- Route suitability of the Vehicle / Operational constraints
- Capacity of vehicle
- Luggage Capacity (In particular Long distance routes and Airport Flows)
- Seat Belts
- Distance of the route
- Vehicle availability in the area

If we have disabled customers unable to use the replacement transport, we will arrange a taxi for them instead.

Arranging a taxi

If you've booked with Passenger Assist, and you need a taxi instead of your train or replacement bus, we can organise an accessible taxi free of charge. We can book these from a range of firms and we will make sure the staff at the station you're going to know you're coming in a taxi, so they are expecting you when you arrive.

If you haven't booked a taxi in advance, let us know as soon as you can and our staff will book one for you, but we can't guarantee there will be one available right away.

Giving you the transport and information, you need

If we need to run replacement transport, we always work hard to give you clear information through, information screens, signs and announcements. We also always make sure staff are available to answer questions and help you on your journey.

We understand that a disruption to our services or facilities can have a big impact on customers with a disability. So if there are any problems, we do everything we can to keep the impact to a minimum, and make sure you can get to where you need to be.

If you need information during your journey, our social media team can help. You can contact them on twitter @ **GWRHelp** or via WhatsApp on 07890 608043 between 0700 - 2300.

If trains are cancelled or delayed

In cases of delay, disruptions and emergencies, we will ensure that the rail replacement services and taxis provided are accessible wherever possible.

Disability awareness for Alternative Transport Providers

Taxi Providers

All our contracted taxi drivers are given disability awareness training to ensure that they understand the needs of disabled customers and how best they can provide assistance.

Bus/Coach Operators

Our contracted Bus and coach suppliers receive disability awareness training as part of the driver's initial training and ongoing as part of their Certificate of Professional Competence training.

Wheelchairs and mobility scooters

If you use a wheelchair or a mobility scooter, we're happy for you to travel with it on our trains. However, there are a few things you need to know.

Wheelchairs

All of our trains take manual or powered wheelchairs that:

- 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)

On the platform

When you're using a wheelchair on the platform, do not exceed speeds of 4mph. Also, please stay behind the yellow line until it's time to board and secure the wheelchair brake when you don't need to move.

On the train

Once you're on board, you can use the wheelchair space. If you can, you can also sit in a seat on the train so you can travel more safely and comfortably.

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

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)**

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

On the platform

When you're using a scooter on the platform, please don't go over 3–4mph. Also, please stay behind the yellow line until it's time to board.

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 on to the train.

If you need to fold your scooter to get on the train, please fold it before the train arrives so you're ready to board. Please also make sure you can take the scooter on and off the train yourself. If you can't, it's best to make sure you have someone there to help you with it.

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 accessible staffed 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 and safely stored, 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 don't have a permit

We can still take your mobility scooter if it can be folded down – to no bigger than an average large suitcase – because it can go in the luggage rack. Please see luggage section for details of size and weight limits.

Further points

Please also note that for safety reasons, members of GWR staff are unable to lift or physically maneuver the scooter. It is your responsibility to ensure that you can control your scooter and that you can board and alight the train safely. Although we can book assistance on other train companies' services, their scooter policies may differ, including the requirements for scooter permits. We can advise you of these requirements or provide contact details for the relevant train company to ensure your scooter is permitted. This should be done prior to making your journey, if you intend to travel with another train operating company.

Delays, disruption to facilities and emergencies

What we do when there's disruption

We try to let our customers with a disability know in advance about anything that could affect their journeys. Wherever possible, we share information with local groups and councils, as well as customers with a Disabled Persons Railcard who have opted in for updates, in the areas where travel will be affected.

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

Disruption

Disruption to facilities and services can have a significant impact on both your accessibility and your level of confidence in travelling on the railway. If you've booked some support through Passenger Assist, 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, especially if you have a hidden disability. They 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 passengers when disruption does occur.

We have Help Points at all our unstaffed stations, which can connect you to someone who can help provide journey information for you.

Sometimes a train's departure platform must be changed, often at short notice. Such a change will be shown on the customer information screens and will be announced aurally as soon as possible. When a change occurs, our staff will provide assistance and information to help you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible, as efficiently as possible.

When disruption causes the cancellation or alteration of train services, we will provide you with accessible substitute transport. This will be done without additional charge. Our rail replacement team has contractual arrangements with bus and taxi operators across the GWR network, including securing, wherever possible, the provision of accessible vehicles. When train services are replaced with buses, we will endeavour to secure accessible buses from local operators. When this is not possible, we will book a taxi that is accessible to you. Our staff, supported by our rail replacement team, have the authority to do all that is reasonably practicable to arrange suitable substitute services for you in such circumstances.

If you require any support or information during disruption, we would advise speaking to staff. However, if they are not available, you can get in contact with us through either:

- Using the Help Points at each station
- Twitter using **@GWRHelp**
- WhatsApp on **07890 608043**
- Calling Passenger Assist team on **0800 197 1329**

Disruption to our facilities

We work hard to make sure all of our accessible information equipment works properly. If there's ever a problem, we fix the fault as soon as we can. We make sure the information you need is available from our staff, posters and the Passenger Assist team in the meantime.

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. We train all our train crew on evacuation

procedures and our staff will supervise any action that needs to be taken in the event of an emergency, either at a station or on a train.

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.

In order to minimise the risk of causing injury to you in an evacuation, we will only evacuate wheelchair users during an emergency if the situation is life threatening. Based on the type of incident and the risks involved, we will move you to a safer part of the train until arrangements can be made to move the train to the nearest station. We will endeavour to make sure that you are always accompanied. If it becomes necessary to evacuate a train between stations, we will work closely with the emergency services to attend and provide assistance with the evacuation.

Providing guidelines in different formats

To make it easier for people with learning difficulties or disabilities, and for people who don't understand English, we use pictures to make our guidelines as clear as possible.

Our train crew can give out Braille versions of our safety leaflets to blind or partially sighted customers. At the moment, we can't provide Braille versions on our 'driver only' services. But you can get a free copy from our Passenger Assist team on **0800 197 1329** before you travel.

Station facilities

Left luggage

We don't have any facilities for storing luggage at any of our stations.

If you're using London Paddington, which is managed by Network Rail, there's a Left Luggage Office on Platform 12 with step-free access. It's run by the Excess Baggage Company and open 0700 to 1100, Monday to Sunday.

Disabled parking

We've set up a programme to make sure all of our station car parks have a suitable number of designated parking bays for customers with a disability.

If a car park has fewer bays than the number specified in the Code of Practice, we report on the average weekly usage of the bays in the car park and review this every six months.

Whenever we find there's a significantly larger demand for more bays in a certain car park, we add more, and we address any bays that currently don't meet the dimensional guidelines for wheelchair access, when renovating carparks.

We locate these spaces in the most suitable place to ensure you will have easy access to our stations. Usually these spaces are located as close to the main station entrance as possible. Spaces for Blue Badge holders are marked with the International Symbol for Access on the

ground.

Making sure the bays are used properly

If we find people without a current International Blue Badge using a designated bay, they will get a Parking Charge Notice or, in exceptional cases, we will prosecute them under Railway Byelaw 14.

The Blue Badge scheme

Parking is free for all customers displaying a current International Blue Badge at a GWR managed station. If there aren't enough designated parking bays, customers with a disability can park in a non-designated bay free of charge, as long as they display their current International Blue Badge in their vehicle. At car parks that are monitored by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) there may be additional procedures required, so please see local signage.

Third party provided facilities

We're always working hard to improve the accessibility of station facilities provided by a third party. For example, we work closely with local authorities and taxi associations to provide, where possible, accessible taxis at the ranks managed by GWR. We also encourage the owners of shops or cafés at our stations to make them as accessible as possible. While it is recognised that third-party service providers have their own responsibilities under the Equality Act, our sub-leases with our tenants contain a standard clause that compels them to comply with all relevant statutes to ensure that any services and facilities provided

by others at our stations are as accessible as possible.

Replacement facilities

We will provide, wherever possible, reasonable replacement facilities for you that are accessible when the level of accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided (e.g. toilets, shelters, as a result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities).

Station entrances

Accessible entrances and exits

We work with Network Rail and the Department for Transport to provide step-free access to our stations where we can.

If we're considering closing an entrance to one of our stations, even temporarily because of things like building work, we always consider the needs of disabled people and where necessary would consult with Department for Transport, Transport Focus and local access groups first. We will also comply with the agreed code of practice with regards to mandatory standards regarding unobstructed progress during building works. If we do close an entrance, we make sure there's another clear way in and out of the station.

Redress and compensation

What to do if our assistance fails

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:

- visiting **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**

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

Where assistance has not been provided due to a delay, and both Delay Repay and Assisted Travel 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](https://www.gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights)**

Strategy and management

Strategy

We know some of our older customers and customers with disabilities need support when they travel. We want to treat them fairly, and make sure all our trains and stations are as accessible as they can be.

We have made a commitment to an ongoing programme of improvement to accessibility for as long as we have the franchise.

Whatever work we do, we do it with the Equality Act in mind and ensure it's in line with the standards set out by the Department for Transport in 'Design Standard for Accessible Railway Stations' (Code of Practice). We also work with the standards from the European 'Technical Specification of Interoperability for Persons of Reduced Mobility' (PRM TSI). Whilst we will exhaust every possible avenue, should we not be able to meet these standards on stations, we will consult with the DfT at the earliest stage in the design process so that suitable alternatives can be considered, and dispensation sought from the Code of Practice.

GWR will continue to invest in several schemes, up to the end of the current franchise on 31 March 2020, to improve the facilities for disabled customers, these include:

- Installation of two powered doors (onto platform and main entrance door) at Bridgwater

- Improvement of wayfinding on the Severn Beach line
- Accessible waiting shelter provision at Swindon, Stapleton Road and Taunton
- Improvements to stairs at Castle Cary
- Improvements to step free walking route between platforms at Truro
- Staircase improvements at Bugle
- Replacement treads on the footbridges at Dorchester West and Maiden Newton

GWR is committed to the continuous improvement of services and facilities for disabled people. We believe that when you travel with us you should expect high standards of service on your journey. We work alongside our industry colleagues ORR, Network Rail, local authorities, DfT, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Community Rail Partnerships, Rail Ombudsman and other stakeholder organisations, especially those representing all customers, to further improve the services, products, facilities and information we provide. We believe that you have the right to safe, comfortable, punctual and seamless journeys, and we will work to broaden accessibility and equality on GWR throughout the franchise.

Improving access and services on GWR

We will be improving access and services as follows:

- **New Passenger Assist app:** We will support the Rail Delivery Group roll-out the national Passenger Assist app, which will enable you to book Passenger Assist journeys, letting our staff know you are coming.
- **Passenger Assist Survey:** we will continue to conduct a monthly survey of our Passenger Assist service, to complement the ORR's national survey of Passenger Assist users, to help us better understand your needs, and make improvements to our customers' journeys.
- **Closer professional collaboration:** GWR will work closely with our customers and stakeholders across the network to help improve the service further.
- **Greater station investment:** we will continue to invest in accessibility features for our stations, until the end of our current franchise

Management arrangements

Executive responsibility

We think about accessibility in everything we do. We make it part of our business planning, and keep track of our progress by measuring, reporting and adjusting to make sure we're meeting our accessibility goals. Here's how we do it.

Our Business Assurance Director is responsible for our Accessible Travel Policy, and makes sure:

- We review it every year
- We include it in our business plans and at the planning stages of all our major projects
- We consider what people with a disability need at every stage of our work
- People with a disability are represented at board level and communications from the board can be cascaded, with the rest of the organisation, through the Managing Directors Monthly telephone conference calls and internal publications.

Our Engineering Director is responsible for making sure that whenever we refurbish our trains, we do it in line with:

- Our Accessible Travel Policy
- The standards set out in the Code of Practice
- The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations
- The PRM TSI.

Giving our staff everything they need

We make sure all our managers and staff know their responsibilities to our vulnerable customers, which includes customers with a disability, with training programmes, online learning modules, internal publications, online information and briefings.

We will provide regular briefings that are given to frontline managers and safety critical employees. All employees receive updates on the company's policies and procedures relating to disabled customers, diversity and inclusion, through their regular briefing sessions.

All staff receive disability awareness training. Additionally, we train all staff who work directly with customers to give them the skills and knowledge they need so they know exactly what to do when it comes to meeting the needs of our customers.

Protecting and improving your access to rail services is an integral part of our business strategy and is supported by the GWR Board of Directors. Accountability for owning and developing our Accessible Travel Policy rests with our Business Assurance Director. Acting as a sponsor, this role will liaise with relevant managers throughout GWR, to ensure compliance with the Accessible Travel Policy.

The Mobility and Inclusion Manager, working closely with local managers, is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and compliance with our Accessible Travel Policy. This will largely be achieved through communication with the relevant managers and their teams, alongside

customer satisfaction surveys, post travel research and periodic reports.

Monitoring and evaluation

To make sure that the provision of services to customers with disabilities is not overlooked and to monitor and evaluate our commitment within the Accessible Travel Policy, our Passenger Assist Survey will complement the ORR's national survey of Passenger Assist users and help us better understand customer needs.

Our key performance indicators are:

- Total number of customers who have booked assistance;
- Total number of customers who have booked assistance and were satisfied/dissatisfied;
- Total number of complaints we received about issues relating to disabled travel;
- Total number of complaints received as a percentage of the booked journeys; and
- Total number of employees who have received disability awareness training

The progress the company makes on current issues related to disabled travel will be discussed in a report to the Board of Directors. The Customer Service Centre team will review and investigate any complaints or feedback from our disabled customers and provide a detailed response. This will ensure that any failures in our commitments are identified and resolved as quickly as possible.

We will review this policy and report to the ORR with details of the achievements of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled customers and any difficulties we have encountered with the implementation of this policy.

Access improvements

We are committed to complying with PRM-TSI (Persons with reduced mobility technical specification for interoperability) and the Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing trains and facilities at stations. We also commit to applying for derogations against the PRM-TSI and/or dispensations against the Code of Practice when necessary, after every effort has been made to comply with the relevant requirements.

Trains

From 1 January 2020 all our services are provided by trains that are accessible and compliant with PRM-TSI. The only exception being some older rolling stock which will be coupled with compliant accessible carriages and a few trains with minor matters for which we have exceptions agreed for from the Department for Transport.

The trains that are non-compliant are our class 143 trains, but these will always operate with a compliant and accessible train attached to it, which customers with reduced mobility will be able to use. These trains will primarily run on the Paignton to Exmouth route but also the Barnstaple branch line. These 143 trains will no longer be in service past 2359 on 31 December 2020.

Stations

Access varies across all the stations we operate. In accordance with the DfT's Access for All programme and in partnership with the DfT, Network Rail, local authorities and businesses we will work to secure funding for and

develop an ongoing strategy to improve the accessibility of our network in accordance with the standards required by the Code of Practice. Details of the accessibility at each individual station can be found at **[GWR.com/stations](https://www.gwr.com/stations)** and **[Nationalrail.co.uk/stations](https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations)**

We've been doing a lot of work to ensure our stations are accessible and plan to carry on making changes for as long as we have the franchise. We are working with the Department for Transport and Network Rail to add platform lifts and ramps wherever we can. We also work with local authorities to find other ways to improve our stations, so we can make travelling by train more accessible. Our aim is to improve accessibility at all our stations and we will do so as funding is made available. Some of the stations outstanding require substantial civil engineering work.

Recent improvements have been implemented at the following stations in the last 12 months:

- Lifts implemented at Newbury and Totnes stations
- Improved car park facilities, including more blue badge spaces and safer access routes, at Tiverton Parkway, Kemble, Gloucester, Didcot Parkway and Westbury.
- Accessible ticket desk installation at:
Windsor & Eton Central, Weston-super-Mare,
Moreton-in-Marsh, Exeter St Davids, Evesham and
Yeovil Pen Mill
- Improvements to stairs at St Erth and Mortimer
- Provision of an accessible waiting shelter and entrance

gate improvements at Exton.

Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

We work with a variety of groups and committees to make travelling with us, and on public transport generally, better for older people and people with a disability.

Consulting on issues that affect people with a disability

We consult with the Department for Transport, Transport Focus, London TravelWatch, TravelWatch South West and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. We also use mystery shoppers with disabilities who feed back to us on all aspects of our services.

We also work with:

- Members of Parliament
- Members of the National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Government
- Local government members and officers at Unitary, County, District and Parish level
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community Rail Partnerships and Rail User Groups
- Station adoption groups
- Passenger watchdogs

- Charity and Community groups
- Customers through our Advisory Board and Meet the Manager events.

Our Customer Panels

We hold customer panels across our network and aim to visit each of the regions we operate within – the East, London, Central, the West and South Wales at least once a year.

We try and hold them in a central location and away from the station. The meetings provide an opportunity for those who use our services to tell us what they think and for us to share information about current issues and what is happening across the network.

Our customer panel is open to all customers. You don't need to be part of any particular group - it is individual experiences of GWR we want to hear about.

Our Advisory Board and other stakeholders

In preparing our accessibility and inclusion proposals for GWR and the development of our accessibility policies, we consulted with a cross-section of disability stakeholders. Alongside this, key organisations that represent the interests of customers with disabilities – including ORR, DPTAC, DfT and Transport Focus.

We arrange meetings with other stakeholder groups as often as we need to. We hold two conferences a year, an annual Stakeholder Conference and an annual Community Rail Conference, and annual networking event for

members of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

What we discuss at the meetings varies – and sometimes the groups will set their own agenda for what they want to talk about. These meetings are a great way for us to find out what people think of our services.

We will actively promote the availability of Passenger Assist, meeting local disability groups and making promotional material such as the Assisted Travel leaflet “Helping make rail accessible for elderly and disabled” available to stakeholders highlighting and promoting the service available to them.

Having access to the expertise of our customers and stakeholders, as well as the feedback they give us, is really important. It helps us develop our services, look at ways to improve the things our customers are concerned about, and give all our customers the best possible experience.

Staff training

At GWR, we provide our staff with the tools and information to do their job. One important aspect of this, is providing an extensive disability awareness training course. This course covers various areas of disability, as well as:

1. Understanding disabled people and their everyday challenges: challenging misconceptions and understanding barriers to access and inclusion.
2. Equality Legislation: exploring and understanding the Equality Act 2010.
3. Defining Disability: an introduction to the various definitions of disability and the appropriate terminology.
4. Recognising passengers who need assistance: exploring physical and non-physical impairments to enable staff to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance.
5. Railway Regulatory Framework: understanding regulations and policies that are relevant within the railway industry
6. Passenger Assist: how it works for disabled passengers and the staff's role in delivering the service
7. Communication: finding a way to communicate with disabled people with patience, respect and dignity.

8. Accessibility in stations: the identification of accessible features at the stations where staff work as well as at the key destination stations on the network
9. Providing safe assistance: duties and process to ensure that both staff and passengers remain safe at all times.

This one-day bespoke training course is part of our corporate induction training. We have also been re-training existing front-line staff, to ensure they have attended the most relevant and up-to-date course we provide. This training course was delivered and designed with the input and involvement of various disabled and elderly people, to ensure we provided a true reflection of the needs of our customers. This training will be continually reviewed, and refresher training provided, currently every two years.

In addition, our employees also undertake disability training as part of any safety critical training, competency management assessments and local safety briefings. We will ensure that staff receive the training relevant to their roles with regards to:

- The use of equipment provided to assist people with disabilities, such as ramps, wheelchairs and induction loops
- Communicating with people with different disabilities.
- Communicating clearly by phone with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding.

Our Passenger Assist team also receive specific briefings relating to their job role, such as; using a text-phone and checking databases to ensure the best possible journey advice is given to customers with disabilities.

At the time of submitting our Accessible Travel Policy for review we ensured that all statistics, legislation and language used in our disability training course are up to date.

The training we provide will ensure all of our staff have the skills and knowledge to enable them to best meet the needs of customers with a disability.