

**Annette Egginton**

Head of Competition and Consumer Policy  
Directorate of Railway Markets & Economics

Email: [annette.egginton@orr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:annette.egginton@orr.gsi.gov.uk)

17 February 2016

Neil Craig  
Mobility & Inclusion Manager  
Great Western Railway

Dear Neil,

**Review of First Greater Western (trading as Great Western Railway) Disabled People's Protection Policy (Condition 5 of your Station Licence and GB Passenger Statement of National Regulatory Conditions)**

Thank you for providing updated versions of your Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP) documents for review. A copy of your revised DPPP is attached to this letter, and will be published on our website along with a copy of this letter.

I confirm that we have reviewed your DPPP against the 2009 Guidance "*How to write your Disabled People's Protection Policy: A guide for Train and Station Operators*" ('the Guidance') and can confirm that your revised DPPP meets the requirements of Condition 5 of your station licence and GB Passenger Statement of National Regulatory Conditions (SNRP).

We welcome your commitments to the following, which we believe could be positive for passengers:

- Providing passengers with a full refund for their journey if booked assistance is not provided;
- Providing free parking for passengers holding disabled parking badges;
- The independent research you carry out to monitor the quality of your assisted travel service; and
- The customer panels and stakeholder advisory group mentioned in your policy document which will allow you to look at ways to improve the things customers are concerned about.

We also welcome the steps you have taken to fully redraft both your passenger and policy documents, making them simpler, easier to read, and more user-friendly.

Since your DPPP was originally submitted to ORR we have had several exchanges in the intervening period in order to bring about the changes required to make it fully compliant

with the Guidance. We also sought views on your policies from Transport Focus, London TravelWatch and DPTAC.

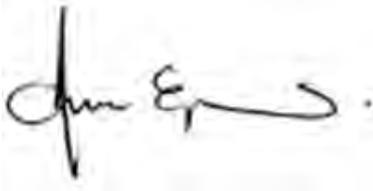
The main areas where you clarified your policies during our review were:

- **Passenger assistance:** The guidance states that operators are expected to provide assistance, when booked in advance, at any station during the hours that trains are scheduled to serve that station. You have clarified that assistance can be provided at all stations, not just staffed stations, when booked in advance. You have also clarified that passengers arriving at unstaffed stations who have not booked in advance can contact your assisted travel team using the number provided on the welcome posters in order to arrange assistance.
- **Alternative accessible transport:** The guidance states that operators must commit to providing alternative accessible transport. The needs of passengers regarding options such as taxis will depend on the specific needs of the individual passenger, and these should be discussed with the passenger. You have now clarified your policy and included the commitment to discuss each passenger's individual needs in order to provide suitable alternative transport.
- **Passenger information:** The guidance states that operators must give a commitment to providing up-to-date information about the accessibility of facilities and services at stations and on trains, including a commitment to update information within 24 hours of any changes and nominating one or more specific posts to be responsible for this. You have now confirmed that you will ensure information is updated on the National Rail Enquiries website within 24 hours and have nominated both your Customer Information Manager and Mobility and Inclusion Manager as the responsible posts.
- In addition, you have informed us that you are currently waiting for some amendments to the Stations Made Easy site in order to reflect recent changes at your stations and ensure that the information provided on the site reflects that provided in your stations matrix. Please could you inform us when this has been carried out. This should be within 3 months from the date of this letter.
- **Luggage:** The guidance states that operators must ensure that luggage assistance is provided when booked in advance. You have clarified your policy regarding assisting with luggage and confirmed that luggage assistance will be provided when booked in advance.
- **Facilities provided by third parties:** The guidance states that operators should state what actions they will take to ensure that services and facilities provided by third parties are as accessible as possible. You have clarified that you work with third parties to ensure facilities are accessible to passengers and have highlighted the specific work you are carrying out with local authorities and taxi associations on the provision of accessible taxis.
- **Scooter policy:** The guidance states that operators must state their policy regarding the carriage of scooters on their trains. You have clarified your scooter policy in times of disruption stating that passengers will be able to fold their scooters and have them carried on the alternative transport provided. You have confirmed

that staff will be available to help passengers fold and carry their scooters onto the alternative transport.

Thank you again for your constructive engagement throughout the review process. If you have any questions in the meantime, please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annette Egginton', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Annette Egginton**



---

Great Western Railway

---

# Making rail accessible: Helping older customers and people with a disability

December 2015



---

# What's inside?

About this document	4
A summary of our policy	8
Arranging support for your journey	12
Wheelchairs and mobility scooters	18
Where to find the information you need	22
Tickets and discounts	26
Making our stations accessible	30
Making our trains accessible	38
Arranging replacement transport	42
Helping you make connections	46
When our services are disrupted	50
We'd love to hear from you	54
Notes	56

# About this document



We know some of our older customers and customers with disabilities need support when they travel. So we want to treat them fairly, give them what they need to travel with us, and make sure they have a safe and enjoyable journey.

## **If you or someone you know needs support when they travel**

This document gives you everything you need to know about our Disabled People's Protection Policy. You'll 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 need

You can also read 'Making rail accessible: A guide to our policies and practices' to find out more.

## **If you need a copy**

You can request copies of both documents from all our staffed stations, at [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com) or from our Assisted Travel team.

If you need them in a different format, just let our team know. We have copies in a few different formats, including audio cd and easy read, and can send them out to you within 7 days.

---

Here's how to get in touch with them:

- call them free on 0800 197 1329
- dial Textphone free on 18001 0800 197 1329
- email [GWR.assistance@GWR.com](mailto:GWR.assistance@GWR.com).

Or go to [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com).

# A summary of our policy



---

We want to make all our trains and stations as accessible as possible for our older customers and people with a disability. So we listen to our customers to find out what they need for an easier journey.

Our Mobility and Inclusion Manager makes sure customers with a disability are heard across GWR by working with bodies that champion the needs of those customers. For example:

- Transport Focus
- London TravelWatch
- the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- the Department for Transport (DfT)
- the Office of Rail and Road

Our manager shares the information they gather with everyone at GWR. This allows us all to make accessibility a top priority. We can find out exactly what our customers with a disability need, as well as how to support them.

## **Improving our stations**

We've been doing a lot of work to make our stations more accessible, and will carry on making changes for as long as we have the franchise. For example, we're working with the DfT and Network Rail to add platform lifts and ramps through the DfT's Access for All project. We're also working with local authorities to find other ways to improve our stations, so we can make travelling by train more accessible.

---

### **Improving our trains**

We work hard to make sure the new trains we buy, and any existing trains we refurbish, comply with the 'European Technical Specification of Interoperability for Persons with Reduced Mobility' (TSI PRM). If this isn't possible, we ask for dispensation or exemption from the DfT – but only after we've exhausted all avenues to make the trains comply.

### **Making sure we're up to standard**

We're committed to following the standards set out in the DfT's 'Accessible design standards for railway stations: a code of practice'. Along with the standards given in the TSI PRM.

### **Going above and beyond**

Although we follow the guidelines for accessibility to the letter, it's not just a tick box exercise. We want to give customers more than a service that just meets the minimum legal standards for people with a disability.

So we constantly update our policy. We find out how we're doing by getting feedback from our customers – and by testing our service ourselves, with regular mystery shopping.

---

We also give all of our staff Disability Awareness training, so they understand more about disability and how it affects some of our customers. We train our customer-facing staff how to support the people who need help, so they can make sure they have a safe and enjoyable journey.

We've also signed up to the 'Guide Dog Travel Charter (2002)'. This means we're committed to work with Guide Dogs to help make it possible for all guide dog owners to travel safely, with no restrictions or extra cost.

# Arranging support for your journey



If you have a disability or mobility difficulties, you can book some support for when you travel with us. You just need to let us know 24 hours before your trip. Then we'll:

- 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

## **How to book support**

We follow the Association of Train Operating Companies' passenger assistance system. So with just one call to us, you can get all the help you need for your journey. We'll arrange everything, including changes and connections that involve other train companies.

We can also give you advice about the trains and stations you want to use, and how accessible they are. If they're not very accessible for you, we'll suggest some other options to make your trip easier.

---

To book your support, you can get in touch with our Assisted Travel team from 7am–10pm, every day except Christmas Day. They can also help you buy tickets and make seat reservations. You can:

- call them free on 0800 197 1329
- dial Textphone free on 18001 0800 197 1329
- email [GWR.assistance@GWR.com](mailto:GWR.assistance@GWR.com)
- book through [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)

Once they've arranged everything, they'll send you confirmation of the support you'll have on your trip.

### **If there are no staff to help you**

We're happy to support you from any of our stations. But some of our stations don't have any staff or only have part-time staff. And some of our trains are 'driver only'. If you need to use any of these stations or trains, it's best to call our Assisted Travel team 24 hours before. They can work out whether it's possible for you to take the journey you're planning and what support you need, and also make sure there's someone available to help you.

Even if you're happy to travel alone, it's always a good idea to check if the stations and trains you need are accessible for you. Then you can plan your journey and make sure you're taking the most accessible route for your trip.

---

### **If you can't book support before you travel**

We'll do our best to support you, but 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 if you need them, and there may not be any alternative transport available at short notice.

If you haven't booked support, and you need help when you get to an unstaffed station, you can call Assisted Travel. They'll do what they can to make your journey easier. You'll find their phone number on the welcome board at the station.

### **When you arrive at the station**

It's a good idea to get to 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 to and 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've arrived, and call the station at your destination so the team there can meet you.

If you've booked support, we aim to meet you as soon as you arrive at the station to start your trip – but it can take a bit longer if we're particularly busy. When you arrive at your destination station, we aim to meet you within 5 minutes. If you arrive at Paddington and there's no one to meet you, you can call 0207 922 6793 to let them know.

---

Our Assisted Travel team will tell you where to meet the person supporting you. It varies from station to station, but it could be at the:

- booking office
- customer information point
- ticket gates

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

If we don't manage to give you the support you asked for, please let us know by calling 03457 000 125. We'll make up for it by sending you vouchers – or adding an e-voucher to your online GWR account – for the full cost of your train journey.



# 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. But there are a few things you need to know.

## **Wheelchairs**

All of our trains can take manual or powered wheelchairs that:

- are no more than 700mm wide (or no more than 610mm in our first class coach L on our high-speed trains)
- 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, please don't go over 3–4mph. Also, please stay behind the yellow line until it's time to board.

## **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.

When you book with Assisted Travel, it's a good idea to book seats or wheelchair spaces on the train as well. Our team can give you details of the best options for your journey. Some of our trains have priority seats at the end of each coach, near the doors, that you can book in advance.

---

If you don't book ahead, there are some non-reservable priority seats and wheelchair spaces you can use – but it is first come first served. 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**

If you booked a seat or a space for your wheelchair and someone is using it when you arrive, let our staff know. They'll make sure you get your seat – or a different one – and can carry on your journey as planned.

### **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 Assisted Travel team on 0800 197 1329. Or go to [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com).

---

### **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 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.

# Where to find the information you need



---

We know how important it is for you to have plenty of information when you travel by train. So here's how you can find the details you need for your next trip.

## **Information about accessibility**

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

- at [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)
- at [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations)
- on the National Rail Enquiries' journey planner, Stations Made Easy, at [www.nationalrail.co.uk/75001.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/75001.aspx)
- by calling us on 0800 197 1329 or type talk on 18001 0800 197 1329
- at our booking offices

## **Information about your journey**

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

- at [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)
- on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/GWRUK](http://www.facebook.com/GWRUK)
- on our Twitter account, @GWRHelp
- by calling our Assisted Travel team on 0800 197 1329
- by calling National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50 or textphone 0845 60 50 600
- by calling National Rail Enquiries' Welsh language service on 0845 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 0871 200 49 50, which will tell you the latest train times (calls cost 10p per minute from a BT landline but calls from other operators and mobiles may be higher)

### **How we make sure the information is up to date**

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 [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations).

Our Customer Information Manager and Mobility and Inclusion Manager make sure the information about our stations is 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. The information they pass on includes details of:

- the stations we can’t make accessible because of a physical restriction
- 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
- any changes to our trains that will affect a customer’s journey – for example if we have to use inaccessible coaches on a train that usually has accessible coaches



# Tickets and discounts



## **Booking your tickets with our Assisted Travel team**

If you book some support with our Assisted Travel team, they can also book your tickets for you. If there's enough time, they'll send them to your home before your trip.

You'll be able to pick your tickets up from a machine or a ticket office at the station not long 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
- [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)
- other train operators and their ticket offices

If you can't 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.



---

### **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. 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 inspectors can make sure you have the right tickets.

For more details on the discount and how to get a railcard, go to [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk).

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

If you're aged 60 or over, you can get a Senior Railcard. It's valid for a year and gives you a third off standard and first class tickets across the UK. You can find out more:

- at your local ticket office
- from National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50
- at [www.senior-railcard.co.uk](http://www.senior-railcard.co.uk)

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

If you don't have a railcard, and you're registered blind or partially sighted or you travel in a wheelchair, you can get a discount on Anytime tickets:

- 34% off first class and standard Anytime singles or returns
- 34% off first class and standard Anytime day singles
- 50% off first class and standard Anytime day returns

Your travelling companion can also get this discount.

---

Find out more at [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations/44965.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/44965.aspx).

### **Blind or partially sighted passengers**

If you're blind or partially sighted, you also need to know that:

- you can only get the Anytime discount if you travel with someone else – if you travel alone, you need to have a railcard to get a discount
- you can also buy an adult season ticket that allows a companion to travel with you for free – it doesn't have to be the same person for each journey
- you need to have evidence of your visual impairment with you when you buy your ticket and when you travel – it needs to be from a recognised organisation like social services, a local authority, The Royal National Institute of Blind People or Blind Veterans UK

# Making our stations accessible



We work hard to make sure all of our stations are as accessible as possible for our older customers and people with a disability. Here's how.

## **Accessible entrances and exits**

We work with Network Rail and the DfT 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 consult Transport Focus and local access groups first. They let us know whether it will affect accessibility. We also get permission from the DfT. And if we do close an entrance, we make sure there's another clear way in and out of the station.

## **Clear information**

We know how important it is for our customers to have the information they need for their journey. So we offer plenty of information in a variety of different ways to suit all of our customers – including people with a disability.

## **Our booking offices and customer information points**

Our booking offices and customer information points are the easiest places for customers with a disability to get the information they need. For example:

- the staff at each one can give you details about the facilities, services and level of accessibility at all railway stations in the UK

- the staff at our customer information points can also answer questions about your journey – including train times and connections
- many of our booking offices have induction loops and low-level counters – and we'll add more of these facilities as we refurbish each office

### **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 helps customers speak to someone if they need information or help in an emergency.

At 75 of our stations, the real-time train information is given on a screen at the help point. At all other stations, the help point has a 'Next train' button people can press to hear the information.

All of our help points feature audio frequency induction loops for our customers with hearing difficulties. And the buttons are different colours and feel different to the touch for customers who are blind or partially sighted.

### **Our information screens and announcements**

We give up-to-date information about trains, delays and other disruptions on our information screens and with announcements as often as we can.

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.

### **If any of our equipment breaks down**

We work hard to make sure all of our accessible information equipment works properly. If there's ever a problem, we get it fixed as soon as we can. And we make sure the information you need is available from our staff, posters and the Assisted Travel team in the meantime.

### **Leaflets and other printed materials**

We display all of our printed information clearly at our stations, and make sure the display is accessible for people in a wheelchair.

If we run out of anything, please let one of our team know and they will get you what you need.

### **Signs**

Our booking offices and customer information points at our larger stations are usually on or near the main concourse – and we always signpost them clearly. At smaller stations, we put signs on each platform to show customers exactly where the information points are.

---

## **Our 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 'Accessible train station design for disabled people: a code of practice' (Code of practice) when it comes to accessibility. And they all give a discount for people with the Disabled Persons Railcard, and their companion.

## **Our 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.

## **Toilets**

Many of the accessible toilets at our stations are part of the RADAR National Key Scheme – so you need a specific key to use them. You can find out more about this, and how to get a key, at <https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org/radar-nks-key>.

We're always looking to install more accessible toilets at our stations. And whenever we refurbish any, we always look to make them more accessible.

---

## **Station seating**

The seating at our stations varies in age, style and accessibility. You can find details for the station you need at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk), and their Stations Made Easy tool.

Whenever we change or refurbish our seating, we make sure it's in line with design standards for accessible railway stations Code of practice.

## **Luggage**

If you've booked some support for your journey, we can help you around the station with any luggage you have.

You can bring up to two pieces of luggage no bigger than 30 x 70 x 90cm each. You can also bring one piece of hand luggage to put on your lap if you need to.

## **Storing your luggage**

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

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 7am to 11pm, Monday to Sunday.

---

## 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. Lots of our trains have ramps on board. But for the ones that don't (for example 'driver only' trains) we provide ramps on the platforms at staffed stations they stop at.

Our station staff and train crews are trained to use the ramps safely, and support people with a disability on and off the train. If you need a ramp, and you've booked some support through our Assisted Travel service, a member of staff will be ready to help you when you arrive at the station. If you haven't booked support, please let the staff know if you need a ramp as soon as you arrive. They'll help you get on your train safely.

When you need to get off the train, our train crew will either help you get off with a ramp themselves, or arrange for the station staff to help you instead.

At some of our larger stations we can provide a wheelchair to help you if you need to use it as far as the train. Our staff will only be able to help you on to the train with a ramp. For safety reasons, they cannot lift anyone in to or out of a wheelchair, up steps or in to a train seat.

---

## Facilities provided by third parties

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 make sure there are plenty of accessible taxis at our ranks. We also encourage the owners of shops or cafés at our stations to make them as accessible as possible.

## Security

Many of our stations have the Secure Station Accreditation. It's a national scheme, led by the British Transport Police (BTP) with the DfT. It sets good practice and accredits individual stations which have worked with the BTP and other local partners to make the station safer. It's designed to not only make stations more secure, but to reassure passengers and staff that rail companies are always looking for ways to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

# Making our trains accessible



---

We do everything we can to make it safe and easy for our older customers and people with a disability to travel on our trains. Here's how.

## **Information screens and announcements**

All of our trains have a PA system for the train crew to give updates during the journey. And some of our trains also have scrolling passenger information screens, as well as automated announcements – you can find out which ones in Appendix A. By 2020, we hope all of our older trains will have automated screens and announcements too.

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. For 'driver only' trains, the staff at the station can help instead.

## **Seats and wheelchair spaces**

You'll find the information you need about priority seats and wheelchair spaces on page 18.

---

## Priority Seat Cards

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 need to sit down when you travel, you might be able to get one of our Priority Seat Cards. Then, when you ask someone for their seat, you can show your card without any embarrassment or having to explain anything.

They're free, and you can apply for one if:

- you have a disability or medical condition that affects your ability to stand comfortably or safely on a train
- you're registered as having a visual impairment
- you're expecting a baby
- you're over 65
- you're travelling with a child under the age of 3

For more details about how to apply, go to [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com) or call 0800 197 1329.

## If you have a guide dog or assistance dog

We're more than happy to welcome you and your guide or assistance dog on our trains.

We don't usually let dogs in the buffet cars. But you can bring your registered assistance dog in – just let the train crew know. We're also happy for you to have your dog stay in your sleeping car accommodation with you at no extra cost.

---

## Getting refreshments

If you want to buy snacks or drinks on your journey, but you can't get to and from the buffet car easily, our train crew will be happy to help. They can arrange for some refreshments to be brought to your seat.

## Information about our coaches

You can find a brief description of what facilities our trains have, and the routes they generally take, in Appendix A.

# Arranging replacement transport



We'd love it if all of our stations and trains were fully accessible for all of our customers. Unfortunately this just isn't possible – for example, some of our stations have physical restrictions that mean we can't make improvements to them. But we're always happy to arrange other transport for you if you can't use the station or train you need.

## **When we'll arrange different transport for you**

If your local station or the station you need to get to isn't accessible, it's a good idea to call our Assisted Travel team 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 accessible, free of charge.

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 ever need to put on a bus service to replace a particular train, we provide accessible options wherever we can. At the moment, not all the buses we use are fully accessible. So if we have customers who need an accessible option, we can arrange a taxi for them instead.

---

## **Arranging a taxi**

If you've booked with Assisted Travel, and you need a taxi instead of your train or a replacement bus, we can organise an accessible taxi. Cabfind books our taxis for us, as they can book them from a range of firms with accessible vehicles.

We'll make sure the staff at the station you're going to know you're coming in a taxi, so they can meet you when you arrive.

If you haven't booked support in advance, let us know as soon as you can if you need a taxi. Our staff will book one for you, but we can't guarantee there will be one available straightaway.

## **Giving you the transport and information you need**

It's a good idea to let us know about your journey in advance, so we have enough time to arrange everything for you. We can make sure there's an accessible bus or taxi, and let our staff along the route know you're coming so you have support at the start and end of your trip.

If we do need to run replacement transport for you, we always work hard to give you clear information – via screens and announcements. We also always make sure staff are on hand to answer questions and help you on your journey.



# Helping you make connections



## **Changing trains**

If you need to change trains on your journey, we can help you whether you booked support with us or not. But this is only at staffed stations. If there are no staff at the station you need, you'll need to book some support with our Assisted Travel team. You can find out more about arranging this on page 12.

## **When a platform changes**

Sometimes the platform for a particular train can change 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.

## **If you continue your journey on other transport**

We can point you in the right direction for other accessible transport – like buses or taxis – if you're travelling on from the station. And we 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 well) 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
  - make sure all of our station car parks have a suitable number of designated parking bays for customers with a disability – you can find out more in 'Making rail accessible: A guide to our policies and practices'
  - run a taxi permit system at many of our stations to make sure at least one (there's usually more) accessible taxi is working on the rank – if there isn't one, we ask Cabfind to arrange one for us



# When our services are disrupted



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 trains are cancelled or delayed**

We put on alternative transport, along the same route as the affected train, as quickly as possible. There's more about other transport on page 42.

If you've booked some support through Assisted Travel, we'll let you know if anything is going to seriously affect your journey as soon as we know. As long as we have your contact details, we'll be in touch to make different arrangements if we need to.

## **Keeping you informed**

If any of the accessibility services or facilities are not available on a train or at a station, we'll let you know. We'll make sure the information is on:

- [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)
- our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/GWRUK](http://www.facebook.com/GWRUK)
- our Twitter account, @GWRHelp
- the National Rail Enquiries website within 24 hours of when we find out

---

### **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 of 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.

### **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 Assisted Travel team on 0800 197 1329 before you travel.

### **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. And we train all of our train crew on evacuation procedures.

---

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.

---

# We'd love to hear from you



---

We're always keen to hear any feedback on the support we give and how it affects customers who travel with us.

If you'd like some more information on the support we offer, or you'd like to tell us about your experience of our support, we'd love to hear from you. You can write to our Mobility and Inclusion Manager at:

Mobility and Inclusion Manager  
GWR  
Customer Experience Suite  
Plymouth Railway Station  
North Road  
Plymouth  
Devon PL4 6AB

### **Other aspects of our service**

If you have feedback about any other aspect of our service, here's how you can get in touch:

Write to:

GWR  
Customer Support  
FREEPOST RSKT-AHAZ-SLRH  
Plymouth PL4 6AB

Email: [GWRfeedback@GWR.com](mailto:GWRfeedback@GWR.com)

Phone: 03457 000 125

**GWR**

---

Great Western Railway

---

# Making rail accessible:

## A guide to our policies and practices

December 2015



---

# What's inside?

Our strategy for customers who need support	4
Making accessibility a priority	8
Measuring our progress	14
Improving access for our customers	18
Offering appropriate car parking	22
Working with other organisations	24
Training our staff to support customers with a disability	30
Our emergency guidelines	34
Our communications strategy	38
We'd love to hear from you	44

# Our strategy for customers who need support



---

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 of our trains and stations are as accessible as possible.

So we've made a commitment to an ongoing programme of improvement when it comes to accessibility – for as long as we have the franchise.

Whatever work we do, we do it with the Equality Act in mind. And we make sure it's in line with the standards set out by the Department for Transport in 'design standard for accessible railway stations: a code of practice' (Code of practice). We also work with the standards from the 'European technical specification of interoperability for persons of reduced mobility' (TSI PRM).

## **What work will we be doing?**

Some of the minor work could include:

- adding more signs
- fitting handrails on the stairs
- adding ramps for step-free access to platforms, and making sure existing ramps live up to the Code of practice wherever we can
- colour contrasting on the edges of stairs
- fitting extra accessible seating and better waiting shelters

- 
- adding more induction loops in our ticket offices
  - providing accessible ticket windows
  - putting in dropped kerbs next to drop-off zones
  - marking designated Blue Badge car parking bays clearly

There's more information about some of the work we've done since 2014 on page 19.

### **Our Disabled People's Protection Policy**

Our Disabled People's Protection Policy is made up of two documents:

- 'Making rail accessible: Helping older customers and people with a disability'
- 'Making rail accessible: A guide to our policies and practices'

You can find them both, in various formats, at **[www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)**.

Every year, we update these documents and get them signed off by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). At the same time, we give the ORR details of our Disability Awareness training, and the number of staff who've had the training in the last year.



# Making accessibility a priority



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.

## **Executive responsibility**

Our Head of Customer Engagement is responsible for our Disabled People's Protection Policy, and makes sure:

- we review it every year
- we include it in our business plans and at the planning stages of all of our major projects
- we consider what people with a disability need at every stage of our work, by consulting with our Customer Experience Steering Group and Special Projects Planning Group
- people with a disability are represented at board level – and details of what they need are shared with the rest of the organisation through monthly managers' 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 Disabled People's Protection Policy
- the standards set out in the Code of practice
- the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations
- the TSI PRM

### **Giving our staff everything they need**

We make sure all of our managers and staff know their responsibilities to customers with a disability – with training programmes, internal publications, online information and briefings.

We train all our staff and managers to make sure they understand our Disabled People's Protection Policy.

We also train 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 serving older customers and customers with a disability. There's more about our training on page 30

### **Reporting our progress**

To keep track of how we're doing with accessibility, we send a report to the ORR every year. It gives details of our progress and any problems we've had meeting our goals and delivering our promises. There's more detail about how we measure our progress on page 14.

---

### **Getting involved with our industry representation**

We're part of the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) Disability Group. And we get involved with any working parties set up by the group to find ways to improve accessibility for rail travellers across the country. You'll find more on how we work with other organisations on page 24.

### **Making sure we're up to standard**

We need to make sure our services and facilities for customers with a disability are in line with our Disabled People's Protection Policy and the Code of practice. To do this:

- we run regular mystery shopper exercises to test our services and facilities for people with a disability
- we include our stations matrix in 'Making rail accessible: Helping older customers and people with a disability' – this, along with the information on the National Rail's Stations Made Easy tool, is designed to show customers what facilities we have at our stations so they can plan their journey
- we have an Assisted Travel service for customers who need support – they book tickets, seats or wheelchair spaces, and assistance getting on and off trains and around stations, and arrange the easiest possible route

- we ask customers to give feedback and suggestions to our Assisted Travel team – they can email, call us or take part in customer surveys – then we collate the feedback to keep track of what customers think, and make changes where we need to
- our Quality Improvement team runs regular surveys about the facilities at our stations and on our trains – they send the results to each head of department so they can see any problems and put them right
- we do feasibility studies and business plans for all of our projects, schemes and improvements so we can assess the overall return on investment – we also give the information to our stakeholders if external funding is involved



# Measuring our progress



We want to know we're doing everything we can to make travelling by train easy for all of our customers. So it's important to monitor our Assisted Travel service, and make sure it works for as many people as possible.

## **Finding out how we're doing**

We've arranged independent research to monitor the quality of our Assisted Travel service. The study helps us:

- identify what is and isn't working
- find out what's important and how it affects a customer's experience
- make recommendations about what we need to improve
- make sure any extra measures we need are being put in place properly

We also hold interviews with different customers every month to make sure the results are fair, and not being influenced by a single event. We ask the questions over the phone so we can collect answers to specific questions, as well as any other comments the customer wants to make.

The results go to our Mobility and Inclusion Manager and Head of Customer Engagement. They give our senior and line managers details of any causes for concern, so they can address them and fix them wherever possible.

---

### **Keeping track of our Assisted Travel success**

The periodic reports about our Assisted Travel team help us to monitor:

- the number, description and type of any complaints we get
- the number of times the assistance has not gone to plan and what happened
- information about why we didn't provide the service and facilities we promised in our Disabled People's Protection Policy
- how our customers feel about the service

We also gather information from customer letters and feedback, as well as meetings with our Customer Panels, disabled passenger groups and other organisations. We share the findings with the relevant line management teams and our Mobility and Inclusion Manager, so they can make changes where they need to.



# Improving access for our customers



We're committed to adopting the services and standards set out in the Code of practice, as well as the TSI PRM.

## **Improving our trains**

We work hard to make sure the new trains we buy, and any existing trains we refurbish, comply with the TSI PRM. If this isn't possible, we ask for dispensation or exemption from the Department for Transport – but only after we've exhausted all avenues to make the trains comply.

We're also working on adding an accessible toilet to each train in our Class 166 fleet at the moment. And we're moving the wheelchair space close to the accessible toilets.

## **How we've improved our stations since 2014**

Since the last version of our Disabled People's Protection Policy in May 2014, we've:

- improved the footbridge at Par station
- fitted new automated doors to the platform waiting rooms at Bristol Parkway station
- installed a new accessible waiting shelter and new handrails to the existing platform access ramp at Carbis Bay station
- fitted new handrails to the existing platform access ramp at Cheltenham Spa station

- 
- installed a new accessible waiting shelter on platform 2 at Lympstone Village station
  - made the handrails and treads better on the subway stairs at Plymouth station
  - fitted new automated doors to the ticket hall, as well as a new counter, at Cookham station
  - installed a new accessible waiting shelter on platform 2 at Kintbury station
  - fitted new handrails on both of the platform approach ramps at Reading West station
  - installed a new accessible toilet at Goring and Streatley station
  - installed new accessible waiting shelters on platforms 1 and 2 at Theale station
  - improved the access to the waiting rooms and ticket office, and added a new counter, at Tilehurst station
  - built an access ramp to the westbound platform at Keynsham station
  - installed new lifts and built a footbridge at St Austell station



# Offering appropriate car 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 every six months.

Whenever we find there's a significantly larger demand for more bays in a certain car park, we add more. And all of our bays meet the current dimensional guidelines for wheelchair access.

## **Making sure the bays are used properly**

If we find people without a disability using a designated bay, they will get a Penalty 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. 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.

# Working with other organisations



We work with all sorts 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 and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. We also work with:

- Members of Parliament
- Members of the National Assembly for Wales
- local government members and officers
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Chambers of Commerce
- community rail partnerships
- rail user groups
- station adoption groups
- passenger watchdogs
- Customer Panels
- our Advisory Board

---

## **Our Customer Panels**

Our Customer Panels are made up of people who travel with us regularly, and they're people of all abilities. Each panel member represents a geographical area of our network too.

We specifically advertise for customers with a disability to join our panels. And we've recruited several members with varying mobility issues, including people who use a wheelchair.

Other customers can email all of our panel members directly about something they're concerned about. Our panels meet three times a year with our senior managers and then report on the issues raised by our customers every month.

We use the information to find trends in the feedback, and help panel members speak with the "customer's voice" when they look at plans for the future.

## **Our Advisory Board and other stakeholders**

Our Advisory Board, chaired by Lord Richard Faulkner, meets with directors six times a year. It's made up of stakeholder representatives from across the network, who are also regular customers.

We arrange meetings with other stakeholder groups as often as we need to – unless the group sets a quarterly meeting schedule.

---

We keep the board and groups up to date on our progress, and ask them if they want to send a representative to our Annual Stakeholder Conference and our Annual Community Rail Conference.

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. For example, we asked people for their views on the temporary changes to our services during our £7.5 billion modernisation of the Great Western mainline.

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 of our customers the best possible experience.

## **Monitoring customer satisfaction**

Our Customer Satisfaction Monitor also helps us find out what customers think of us. We hear from a representative sample of customers across our franchise area, throughout the year.

We run a qualitative research programme that brings together these different types of customer. We discuss topics under a 'pulse' programme of research and activities like interviews, accompanied visits and train clinics at our depots.

Every meeting is designed to explore specific issues our customers raise with us. For example, we worked with the Department for Transport to assess our new Super Express trains. We involved a range of customers, including those with restricted mobility and visual impairments, to make sure the trains meet the very latest European standards for accessibility.

### **The role of our Mobility and Inclusion Manager**

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

They also meet with representatives of local authorities, and many other groups with links to transport and disabilities. These include organisations like Guide Dogs and the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).



# Training our staff to support customers with a disability



All of our management and customer-facing staff have completed our award-winning, customised training course – Putting Customers First.

As we mentioned on page 10, we also train all of our customer-facing employees to anticipate the needs of customers with a disability. They have Disability Awareness training as part of their induction to GWR, as well as a refresher course at least every four years.

We train front-line staff, who deal directly with customers, how to use the equipment we offer to support customers with a disability. And we train them in assistance and communication techniques so they can give each customer what they need wherever possible.

## **Our Disability Awareness training**

The aim of our Disability Awareness course is to help our staff build up the knowledge and skills to support customers with a disability. It helps them understand:

- the concept of disability in its widest sense
- the definition of a disability as described by the Equality Act
- the aim of the Equality Act and what it means for GWR – both the organisation and its staff
- the barriers caused by attitude and behaviours
- the importance of GWR's Disabled People's Protection Policy

- 
- GWR's Scooter Policy and Priority Seat Policy
  - how to use wheelchair ramps safely
  - the practicalities and etiquette of assisting people who use a wheelchair
  - the wide range of visual and hearing impairments that can affect people differently and how they travel by train
  - that first impressions are sometimes misleading, and the majority of disabilities are not obvious straightaway
  - the impairments that can affect a person's ability to process information, and look at ways to present information to make it easier for customers with communication-related disabilities to understand

We also encourage our staff to learn British Sign Language so they can communicate with customers with a hearing impairment.

---

### **Making our training as effective as possible**

We're always looking for new ways to run our training programs, for example

e-learning packages, to make them more effective. This is so our staff engage better, and can help us improve our services and facilities for everyone who travels with us.

One element that's made our training more effective, is a DVD we made with children and young people with a disability, and their families. It's designed to help our customer-facing staff understand the needs of customers with a disability, and encourage them to give the best possible customer service.

# Our emergency guidelines



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 of 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.

### **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.

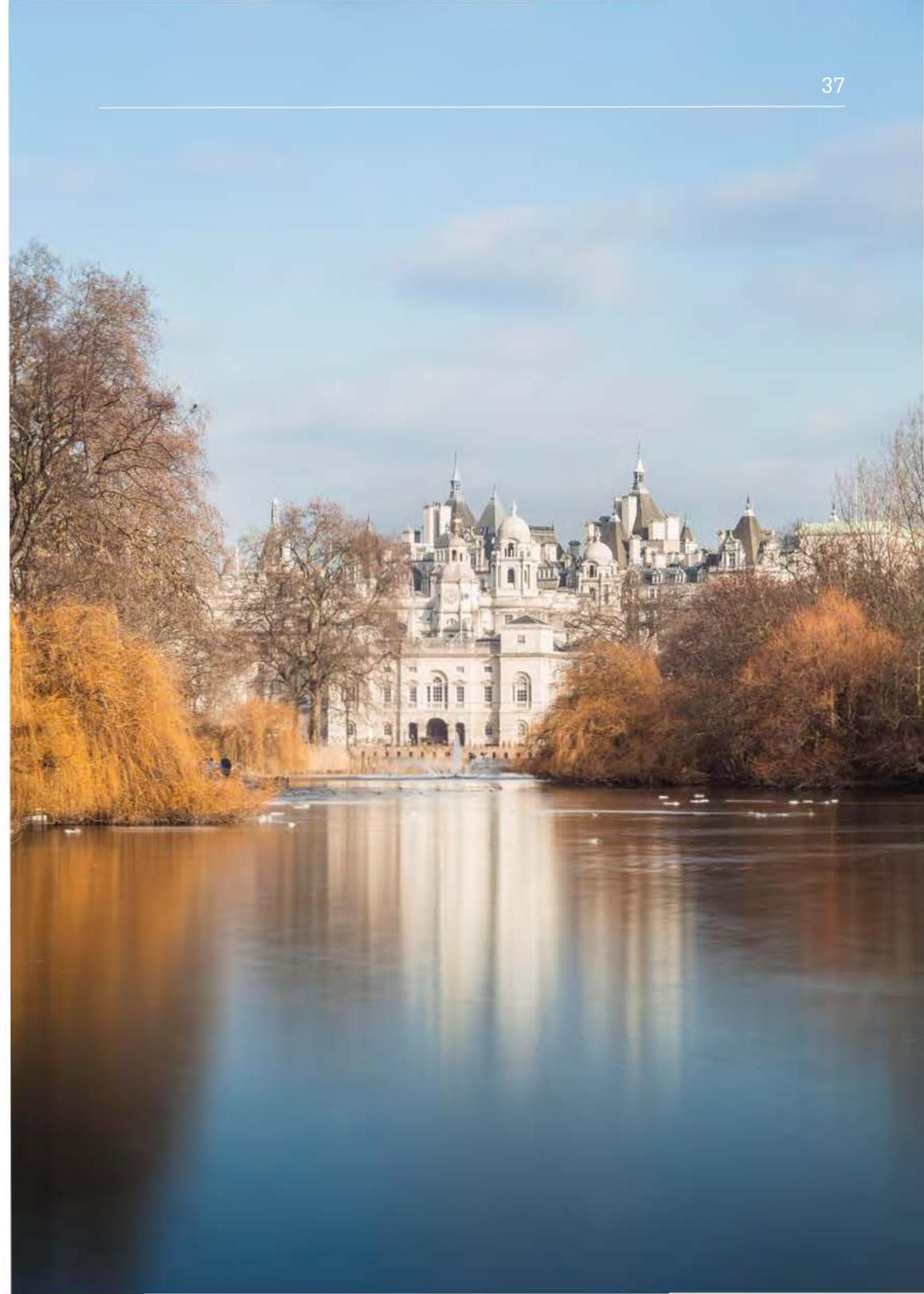
Our train crew can give out Braille versions of our safety leaflets to blind or partially sighted customers. At the moment, we can't provide Braille versions on our 'driver only' services. But you can get a free copy from our Assisted Travel team on 0800 197 1329 before you travel.

### **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. And we train all of our train crew on evacuation procedures.

---

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 communications strategy



We work hard to make sure we give the right information about our services to all of our customers, and potential customers too. This includes providing it in a range of different formats.

## **Our policy documents**

This document and 'Making rail accessible: Helping older customers and people with a disability' are available in several alternative formats on our website – including audio CD and easy read. You can get copies by contacting our Mobility and Inclusion Manager or our Customer Support team. Their contact details are on page 45. They'll send you the information you need in the format you ask for within seven working days.

## **Other service information**

We want to keep our customers up to date with every aspect of our service. So we make sure there's plenty of information available through our:

- timetables
- leaflets and posters
- press releases
- multi-media contact
- product advertising
- [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)

- 
- the ATOC and National Rail Enquiries websites
  - Facebook ([www.facebook.com/GWRUK](http://www.facebook.com/GWRUK))
  - Twitter (@GWRHelp)

We give details of our Assisted Travel service on our Facebook page – we often promote the service with posts, as well as tweets on Twitter.

### What we do when there's a 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 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:

- [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com)
- our customer information screens, help points and station announcements
- our email, social media and text alerts

---

### Getting in touch with our Assisted Travel team

Our Assisted Travel team can give details about the support they offer and the best ticket options on 0800 197 1329. They're open between 7am and 10pm every day except Christmas day. Customers with hearing difficulties can use our textphone – 18001 0800 197 1329.

### Accessibility standards for our website

We want to make our website, [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com), easy for everyone to use – including people with a disability. So we use the Level A standard of W3C's 'Web content accessibility guidelines'. This standard is supported by the RNIB and the Disability Rights Commission.

Our website also includes many features found in Level AA sites, like colour considerations and easily resizable fonts. Our pages use valid XHTML and CSS. We check this regularly to keep the quality of the code high and make sure we meet the standards. And we work hard to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 when it comes to providing services online. You can find out more about this at [www.disability.gov.uk/dda/](http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda/) and [www.drc-gb.org/](http://www.drc-gb.org/).

We're always looking for ways to improve our website and we'll continue to follow these accessibility guidelines as much as possible.

---

### **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'd love to hear what you think of our website, and any suggestions you have for improvements when it comes to accessibility. So if you'd like to give us feedback, or ask a question, here's how to get in touch with our Assisted Travel team:

- call them free on 0800 197 1329
- dial Textphone free on 18001 0800 197 1329
- email [GWR.assistance@GWR.com](mailto:GWR.assistance@GWR.com).

Or go to [www.GWR.com](http://www.GWR.com).

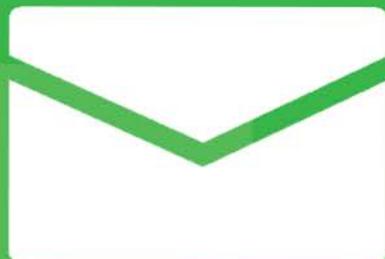
---

### **Clear signs**

We're always looking for ways to make it easier for customers to find their way around our stations and trains. So we follow the standards and guidance about station signs in the Code of practice. We also follow the guidelines in 'Wayfinding at stations: A good practice guide', published by the Rail Safety and Standards Board.

Whenever we find inadequate signs that fall within the responsibility of a local authority, we work with the team at the local authority to fix the problem and make the signs clearer.

# We'd love to hear from you



We're always keen to work with more organisations that represent customers with a disability. And we're happy to explain how we give support to the people who need it when they travel. We also welcome any feedback on the support we offer and how it affects customers who travel with us.

If you'd like some more information, or you'd like to tell us about your experience of our support, we'd love to hear from you. You can write to our Mobility and Inclusion Manager at:

Mobility and Inclusion Manager  
GWR  
Customer Experience Suite  
Plymouth Railway Station  
North Road  
Plymouth  
Devon PL4 6AB

### **Other aspects of our service**

If you have feedback about any other aspect of our service, here's how you can get in touch:

Write to: GWR  
Customer Support  
FREEPOST RSKT-AHAZ-SLRH  
Plymouth PL4 6AB

Email: [GWRfeedback@GWR.com](mailto:GWRfeedback@GWR.com)

Phone: 03457 000 125



**GWR**