



# Accessible Travel Policy

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# Commitments to providing assistance

South Western Railway (SWR) is operated by a joint venture between First Group and MTR. We provide a mixture of rail services across the South West running from Dorset, the South Coast and metro lines towards London Waterloo. Our services are divided into 3 main service groups:

## Long Distance

## Metro Outer suburban

## Local and Island Line

This policy document has been designed alongside our customer leaflet – titled “Making Rail Accessible”. This Accessible Travel Policy is available on our website and our Making Rail Accessible customer leaflet can be found at all of our staffed stations as well as on our website. As all licensed train operators are required to do, this document explains our policies and our approach to providing assistance for customers with restricted mobility, a variety of disabilities and those requiring assistance, for example:

- Those with visual or auditory impairments or learning disabilities
- Those whose mobility is impaired as a result of arthritis or other temporary or long-term conditions
- Those with non-visible disabilities which may not be immediately apparent to others
- Older people
- Those accompanying disabled children in pushchairs or wheelchairs
- Disabled customers requiring assistance with luggage

The purpose of this document is to help you plan your journey when travelling with us, understand what services we offer and how we plan to meet your expectations when travelling with us. You will find information on a variety of areas including getting assistance with us and facilities that we have.

## Booking and providing assistance

### Our Assisted Travel team

Our Assisted Travel team is available 24 hours a day to help you book assistance with us and all Train Operating Companies in Great Britain, as well as to provide information on how your journey may be impacted due to changes such as engineering work. To book assistance or find our information about your journey, you can get in touch with the team by:

- Phone: 0800 52 82 100 (freephone)
- Text Relay: 18001 0800 52 82 100

Our team is available every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

## Passenger Assist System

a. We are part of Passenger Assist which is a national system that all train companies are part of. This system allows operators to make arrangements as required at all points along the journey for anyone who has a disability and requires assistance. We are committed to using this system and will provide assistance to anyone who books in advance. SWR staff will provide this assistance at all of our managed stations, and also at London Waterloo, Clapham Junction and Guildford stations, which are managed by Network Rail. At other stations, whether they be managed by another Train Operating Company or Network Rail, their staff will provide the same assistance.

Whether you are making a non-stop journey or one that involves changes, we will book the assistance for you in one transaction – even if your journey involves more than one train company. Our team will check the station accessibility information, which will also be available on the National Rail Enquiries station web pages, as well as arrange assistance to directly connecting modes of transport (e.g. buses, underground, metro and trams).

We will discuss your individual requirements when you get in touch to make sure we can provide assistance that best suits your needs. Once booked, we will give you a Passenger Assist reference number and confirmation email (or post on request when adequate time to send). Keep this with you when travelling so that staff on stations and trains can identify your booking.

When you book assistance we can also sell you tickets for your journey. We will redirect your call to the team who sell tickets and then we can book your assistance in line with your journey.

You can also book assistance on our website or the SWR app. There is a webform to book your assistance here: <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel>. The webform is located towards the bottom of the page. If you are requesting immediate assistance via our app for travel on another train operator we will do our best to pass your request on as quickly as possible. However, we would advise you to contact that train operator directly as they are better able to communicate with their front-line teams.

You can download the SWR App from the Google Play store or the iPhone App store. This is free to download.

When getting off the train, particularly at a terminus station, we will help you leave the train as soon as possible. Sometimes we cannot get to you immediately, but you will be assisted off the train within five minutes of the train's arrival time.

We are committed to improving our Assisted Travel provision and will review internal processes from time to time, as well as reporting the necessary data to the Regulator, the Office of Rail and Road.

## **Booking notice period**

At the time of this document being published, assistance can be booked and guaranteed up to 4 hours in advance.

By April 2022 we will have further reduced that notice period to 2 hours before travel, in line with all other train operators as a national policy.

Our trains and stations can be very busy and we strongly encourage customers arrive in good time in order to be assisted. Although only a guide, we would recommend arriving at the station 20 minutes prior to your departure train, however, we would encourage customers to seek advice about their stations to ensure that they have enough time to get to the train. For example, customers requiring assistance at and through London Waterloo should leave more time to make their way through the station compared to a small station like Wareham.

Other train operators may have a different booking notice period to SWR. However, from April 2020, all train operators must guarantee any assistance booked by 10pm the night before travel. From April 2021 this will further reduce to 6 hours before travel. This does not supersede SWR's 4 hour booking notice period.

## **Assistance without having pre-booked**

We appreciate that it is not always possible to book assistance prior to travel. We will provide you with assistance if you turn up at the station without having pre-booked. There may be a wait as staff may have other safety critical duties to carry out, such as security checks around the station, however, we aim to provide you with the assistance you need with a minimal delay to your journey.

If the station you are travelling from is unstaffed, you can obtain assistance by:

- Pushing the help button located on the platform
- Calling our assistance travel number (24 hours) which can be found on posters by the station entrance
- Waiting on the platform and approaching the guard
- Request assistance via the SWR app on your smartphone or tablet

You can find out all the information you need to about our stations on our website or the National Rail Enquiries website.

## **Providing assistance at stations throughout the entirety of the train service**

We will provide you with the assistance you need at all of our stations throughout the train service for the day. When pre-booking your assistance with our Assisted Travel team, we will ensure to make you aware of the accessibility information for both your departure and destination stations. This can be sent to you via email and post, however, if receiving information via this method, please allow 2-3 working days for this to arrive. If you have any other transport to connections to make, such as connecting train or bus services, our team will make sure to factor this into your booking with us.

## **Assistance at part-staffed or unstaffed stations**

All SWR stations have help points which are answered by our control team, 24 hours a day. Our control team can pass on any information to our Assisted Travel team to enter into the Passenger Assist system. All stations also have an information poster, located by the main entrance to the station, which details the telephone number for our Assisted Travel team, again staffed 24 hours a day. At unstaffed stations, or stations where there are no assistance staff, our guards will assist you onto and off the train. If you require further help through the station, our Assisted Travel team will discuss the best options with you. As with any journey, we would encourage all customers to research their journey before they travel. You can access information about our stations either on our website, the National Rail Enquiries website, by calling our contact centre, or by speaking to any member of SWR staff. All contact details can be found at the end of this document.

## **Getting assistance information to our station staff**

Our station staff will receive your assistance information in the early morning of the day of travel. They will ensure that they adhere to the ORR's handover protocol and each station has a dedicated assistance number which SWR and all other TOC colleagues will call to inform the station of any customer requiring assistance. In addition, and where appropriate, our guards will call ahead to staffed stations informing them of any passengers on board who require assistance when leaving the train. Station staff responsible for making and receiving calls for passenger assistance information include but are not limited to; Station Managers, Station Control Points and Platform Staff. These colleagues will make assistance information calls to both SWR managed and other TOC or Network Rail managed stations.

If you are travelling to an unstaffed station and require assistance between the train and the station exit, our colleagues will discuss the best options with you. If you are pre-booking assistance with us, our contact centre colleagues will discuss these options with you, or if you haven't booked assistance, our guard will discuss best options. It may be that you have to travel to an alternative station where station colleagues can find alternative transport for you, at no extra cost. If you only need assistance to board and leave the train, our guards are able to help you to do this, even when it's busy.

If you are travelling from another operator's network, their trains call at our staffed stations and our station colleagues are able to assist you on and off their trains.

## **Following the ORR's Handover protocol for Passenger Assistance**

When travelling between staffed stations, our colleagues are able to follow the ORR's Handover protocol. More information can be found on the ORR's website for this protocol. We are trialling the protocol with the ORR to better inform them of the intricacies of different operations with different train operators and the role of our guards within the handover protocol will become more certain with the completion of the trial.

We will continually monitor this and look for ways to improve our communication methods within SWR. We hope to take full advantage of the new Passenger Assist system that is currently under development.

## **Ramps**

If you require a ramp to board or leave the train, our guards and trained station staff will be able to assist you. Please make yourself known to staff at the station, or the guard and they will be able to assist you. At stations where we are unable to deploy the ramp, for instance, due to infrastructure obstacles such as support columns, colleagues will discuss the best options for you and we may need to take you to the nearest step-free station where arrangements will be made to get you to your destination station.

## **Changes in arrangements**

When things change, such as during disruption, our staff will do everything they can to help you continue your journey. We will communicate news of any disruption, including (when known) information on alternative transport and where this can be found. They will look out for anyone that might need some additional support during disruption.

Our staff will help you transfer between platforms if the platform changes as soon as they can, taking into account other safety-critical duties such as train dispatch. If our staff are not able to help you, they will do their best to explain why and endeavour to find a colleague who can.

At unstaffed stations operated by other train companies, processes will be in place to help adapt your journey. Please see the relevant operator's Accessible Travel Policy for further detail on how this will be done.

## **Assistance with onward travel – trams, trains, tube, buses and taxis**

We'll help you between trains and other modes of transport, such as trams, buses, metro trains, underground trains and taxis, within the boundaries of our stations.

We specify in our contracts with taxi and bus companies that provisions be made for disabled customers whenever possible, and we prioritise companies with accessible vehicles in our negotiations. In order to gain a taxi licence, taxi drivers must adhere to S51(2) Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act 1976 – Part II BDBC Private Hire Driver (PHD) Licence Conditions where a driver will provide reasonable support with luggage into and from the taxi to the customer's destination, as well as providing support to enter and leave the vehicle. We cannot comment on the level of Disability Awareness training that taxi drivers receive as this varies across local authorities. We encourage customers to contact us if they have any feedback on any part of their journey with us, including alternative transport provision.

If a wheelchair accessible taxi is not available on the forecourt of one of our stations with a taxi rank, staff at our stations can help disabled customers to arrange their own accessible taxi where necessary. We also have information posters at our stations that give details of other transport operators which serve the station.



## Station facilities and services

We will keep information regarding our services as up to date as possible (there may be times during disruption when this is not possible) and customers requiring assistance will be able to find information on limitations or restrictions to access. Our Information team keeps information up-to-date and liaises with our Station and Property teams to ensure information is correct and up to date.

This information will be provided and kept up to date on the National Rail Enquiries website, including the Station Journey Planner regarding accessibility, including:

- Level of accessibility from station entrance to platforms
- The step-free access category and step-free access notes
- Staffing hours and assistance availability
- The type of assistance that staff are able to provide
- Meeting points for assistance
- Ramps for train access
- Accessible waiting rooms, toilets and set-down/pick-up points

This information is also available on our stations pages on our website, or at National Rail Enquiries at [nationalrail.co.uk/stations](http://nationalrail.co.uk/stations) which also includes stations not served by SWR.

## Alterations to facilities

If facilities we operate become unavailable, such as due to a fault, we will update our system as soon as possible (and within 24 hours) of the fault being identified. This information will be included on journey planning through National Rail Enquiries. Where this impacts the ability to carry out assistance, and where we have contact details for a customer, we will aim to contact you in advance to let you know about the facility being out of order and how we can best proceed. Problems may include:

- Any physical constraints at the station which may restrict access for some customers
- Any maintenance works being carried out
- Any temporary faults which may restrict access, such as lifts being out of order.

If a facility on board a train is out of order, such as an accessible toilet, that impacts your ability to travel, we will do everything we can to let you know. Where possible, our team will pro-actively contact you to help re-arrange your journey. This may not be possible as sometimes these facilities go out of use at short notice while in service.

Where possible, we will give you an estimate for when the facility will be back in service. This will not be possible for trains due to the fact trains operate different services every day, but our maintenance team aim to not send trains into service with any facilities out of use.

## Assistance with luggage

If you require help with your luggage we will be happy to help you with this. We do not have staff dedicated to carrying customers' luggage and although you do not need to book assistance in advance for help with your luggage, you may wish to do so as there may be a wait for your assistance if our staff need to attend to safety-critical duties before they can help you.

Please be considerate of the weight and size of your luggage, as well as how much luggage you bring with you. We ask that you refer to National Rail Conditions of Travel luggage policy which sets out these restrictions; this ensures that our staff can safely lift these bags. This states that you may bring with you up to two large items (generally weighing between 15kg and 23kg) and one small item free of charge.

Luggage items should be:

- Large items should not exceed 30 x 70 x 90 cm
- Small items should not exceed 25 x 45 x 70 cm

All of our trains have overhead luggage racks so please be mindful of other customers if a bag is occupying a seat, if your bag is small enough, please ask a member of staff to help put it into the overhead rack. Our diesel trains (Class 158 and 159) and Class 442 trains have dedicated luggage spaces at the end of each carriage. These should be used for large items of luggage.

## **Seats on trains**

All seats on our trains are non-reservable, which includes the wheelchair spaces. We offer these seats on a first come, first served basis. If you do require a seat, our station staff and guards are able to help you to find one, and all train coaches have priority seats which offer more legroom in order to help to get in and out of them. If you do require a seat and don't feel confident in asking another customer to vacate their seat for you, please ask our staff to help you. If you have booked assistance with the SWR Assisted Travel team, colleagues will make you aware that none of SWR's services is reservable.

We offer our Travel Assistance Card which can be obtained from staffed stations, via our website or customer relations. This card is designed to help customers who may struggle with verbal communication or who may find it difficult to ask, and you can tailor the information inside to suit your needs. Our staff are trained to recognise this card, and best efforts have been made to train colleagues at other Train Operating Companies and Network Rail at the stations in which we operate to recognise the card. We also welcome customers who may have the Transport for London "Please offer me a seat" badge. We hope that all customers are kind to each other in offering their seat to somebody who needs it more than they do.

Our wheelchair spaces have a companion seat adjacent to them. If this seat is already occupied, please speak to our station staff or guard who will be able to help and ensure that you and your companion can sit together. Please note that our Class 455 and 456 trains do not have a dedicated companion seat. These trains will be replaced with new Class 701 trains by December 2021 which will have companion seating.

## **Assistance Dogs**

We welcome all types of assistance dogs onto our trains. We offer an Assistance Dog seat card which is available free of charge either through our website or contacting our customer relations on 0345 600 0650. This card is a visual cue for other customers to be mindful that there is an assistance dog under the seat and, where possible, not to sit in that seat.

## Passenger information and promotion of Assisted Travel

We aim to provide information to all customers that is as accessible, accurate, relevant, consistent, up-to-date and easy to understand as possible that helps provide our customers with assurance and confidence at every stage of their journey, including when journey planning prior to departure.

### Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet for customers – Making Rail Accessible

Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet, entitled 'Making Rail Accessible' will be available from the following:

- on display on leaflet racks and provided at ticket offices at all staffed stations called at by our train services. This will be available at a height suitable for wheelchair users to access
- available online on our Assisted Travel page as a PDF or Word version
- provided in alternative formats, on request, within seven working days
- available on request via our Customer Contact Centre

We will work with key stakeholders across our network, such as local accessibility groups and local authorities in order to publicise the material, as well as for these organisations to have access to printed materials. This may include NHS clinics, local libraries and DVLA centres. We will work with local councils to find the best way to reach potential customers.

All information on Assisted Travel can be found on our website:

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel>

### Stations and train accessibility information

We will keep our rolling stock and stations accessibility information up-to-date and made available to customers. This will be available on our Assisted Travel page on our website. It will be available as a PDF but you can request a copy in an alternative format which will be issued to you within seven working days at no extra cost to you.

We would encourage all customers to visit the dedicated station page on The National Rail Enquiries website for up-to-date information regarding an SWR managed station.

If you are at a staffed station, all our staff have mobile devices and they will be able to access the National Rail Enquiries website on their mobile device (permitting that there is a mobile signal or WiFi coverage.)

SWR has a dedicated step-free map which shows each station on the network in which it calls. This is available on our website in a dynamic form, allowing customers and staff to see live information regarding facilities at the stations, including the availability of the toilets and lifts. There is also a downloadable PDF version of this step-free map. All information is available on our Assisted Travel page on our website.

## Passenger journey information

All SWR stations have Customer Information Screens (CIS) which displays details of the next train to depart the station, as well as its calling points. In addition, all SWR stations have a public address (PA) system which provides audio details of the CIS. The PA volume may be turned down after 21:30 in more built-up areas so as to be sensitive to neighbouring residents. If you do require more information at a station that is unstaffed, please use the Help Point or call our Assisted Travel team, both of which are available 24 hours a day (except Christmas Day and Boxing Day).

All our trains have Passenger Information System (PIS) which provides audio and visual updates of the journey. All our trains have guards on board who are able to provide audio updates, especially during disruption. If you are unable to hear the PA announcements from staff, our on-board staff will do their best to walk through the train to provide information to all passengers.

If you have booked assistance with us and there is significant disruption that we know will affect your journey, we will do our best to contact you before your journey via any reasonable contact channel that you have given us, such as your email address or telephone number.

Our stations have signage directing you to onward travel connections, such as taxis and buses. Our station staff are able to provide you with local onward travel information, as well as being able to assist you and any luggage that you may have to these other modes of transport. At our London stations with connections to the London Underground, our staff will take you to the London Underground staff who will be able to further assist you with your journey. As with any journey with SWR, you do not need to book any of your assistance in advance. Outside of London, our staff will help you to the bus or taxi rank as far as the station boundary. We cannot guarantee that taxi and bus staff will provide you with the same level of assistance as SWR staff.

If there are any changes to working facilities at stations due to unplanned disruption, this will be posted as an alert message on the corresponding National Rail Enquiries station page and on our JourneyCheck webpage - [www.journeycheck.com/swr/](http://www.journeycheck.com/swr/). We will do our best to put up signage at stations that are affected, such as a lift being out of service, to make all customers aware. If you are on a station or train and notice something is out of order, please make station or on train staff aware in the first instance. You may contact us via the Help Point on a station, or customer relations if on a train. Some of our trains have QR codes by the toilet which you can scan to make us aware of a problem via a simple webform. We will aim to provide an expected timescale for fixing the problem, however, this is not always possible to ascertain until the train has returned to the depot or qualified professionals have visited the affected asset.

If any facilities have been changed from what you expected or booked, our staff will work with you to find the best travel solution for you. The best travel solution may not always involve another one of our trains but we will find the right solution for you.

All information regarding our stations and trains can be found on the SWR website. Further details on stations outside the SWR network can be found on the National Rail Enquiries website.

## Information points, help points and contact centres

Most of our staffed stations have a dedicated information point which have (but are not limited to) timetable information, railcard leaflets, Making Rail Accessible leaflets, and local tourist information. This is available during ticket office staffing hours, and longer at most larger stations. At our unstaffed stations, information posters will have information on the nearest staffed station.

If customers have booked assistance, we will make them aware of where to meet staff who will be helping them onto the train. At many of our smaller stations, we will have an Assisted Boarding Point (ABP) which has information on how to contact our staff to request assistance to board the train. The ABP can be recognised by its SWR colours and titled "Assisted Board Point." More information can be found on our assisted travel pages on our website. Since September 2019, we have been trialling the use of Assisted Boarding Points at selected stations, which although paused in Spring 2020 because of Covid-19, has proved successful and we will be rolling these out across the SWR network from Autumn 2020. We will involve our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum in guiding us to make them a success, as well as involving any other disabled groups or individuals to help in our decision making. This is also the meeting point for any pre-booked assistance at our smaller stations.

All of our stations have a dedicated meeting point for booked assistance. This information can be found on the relevant station page on the National Rail Enquiries station page.

## Websites

SWR has a dedicated Assisted Travel webpage. This details all the information that customers need in order to request assistance with us. The webpages detail the following information:

- How to book assistance with us
- Station and train information
- The Travel Assistance Card and how to use it
- The Assistance Dog Seat Card

Our Accessible Travel Policy documents are also available on this page. Our website and its pages meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards and have the ReciteMe tool embedded. This free tool allows customers to customise the SWR website to make it as accessible to them as possible.

Our website has a dedicated Contact Us page which lists different ways to contact us if you have any feedback or complaints. The page can be found here:

<https://www.southwesternrailway.com/contact-and-help/contact-us>

## Ticketing

We sell tickets for a variety of journeys including different ticket types and different train operators. We are committed to providing you with information on these tickets and journeys both accurately and impartially regardless of which train operators are involved in the journey.

The types of train we operate and how accessible they are is known to both our ticket office teams on our stations and our Assisted Travel team at our contact centre. They have information to ensure that you do not purchase a ticket that is not usable for you. Our website and Self-Service Ticket Machines also contain messages when purchasing tickets to ensure that you are able to fully utilise your ticket when buying tickets for our train services.

If you are unable to buy a ticket at your starting station because you are unable to access the ticket buying facilities, you are able to purchase your ticket at the first available opportunity that is accessible to you, whether that be on board our trains from our Commercial Guards and Revenue staff, or at the destination station. You will still be able to use your Disabled Persons Railcard or receive the relevant discounts.

## Discounts

We participate in a number of national schemes offering discounted fares as follows:

- **If you are visually impaired**

Visually impaired customers travelling with a companion who do not have a Disabled Persons Railcard are entitled to the following discounts on Anytime/Day tickets:

- First or Standard Class Anytime Single or Return: 34% off
- First or Standard Class Anytime Day Single: 34% off
- First or Standard Class Anytime Day Return: 50% off

These concessions apply to the companion also, however, they are not valid if you are travelling alone and do not have a Disabled Persons Railcard.

If you are blind or visually impaired, you can buy one adult Season ticket that enables a companion to travel with you on National Rail services only at no extra cost. It doesn't have to be the same person travelling with you on every journey.

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

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

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

- First or Standard Class Anytime Single or Return: 34% off
- First or Standard Class Anytime Day Single: 34% off
- First or Standard Class Anytime Day Return: 50% off

The same discount will apply to your companion's ticket.

- **Disabled Persons Railcard**

If you have a disability you may be eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard. There are two types of this railcard – a one-year and a three-year railcard. You are entitled for a discount of up to a third on most rail tickets. As well as that, one adult travelling with you can get the same discount as your companion. You can find details about this railcard and how to get one at:

- Website: [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)
- Email: [disability@raildeliverygroup.com](mailto:disability@raildeliverygroup.com)
- Call: 0345 605 0525
- Minicom/Textphone: 0345 601 0132 (for people who are hard of hearing)

- **Senior Railcard**

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

- Website: [www.senior.-railcard.co.uk](http://www.senior.-railcard.co.uk)
- Email: [railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk](mailto:railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk)
- Call: 0345 300 0250
- At stations: You can use your birth certificate as evidence

Other railcards are available that may be more suitable to you. You can visit [www.railcard.co.uk](http://www.railcard.co.uk) for further information.

- **Freedom Pass**

The Freedom Pass is a concessionary card available to all Greater London residents over the age of 65, as well as to others under 65 who meet certain qualifying criteria. The Freedom Pass is valid on SWR services after 09:30 Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays), all day weekends, and in the Oyster Fare Zone only. If you are travelling beyond the Oyster Fare Zone at a valid time, you will need to purchase a ticket that is valid from Boundary Zone 6. For example, if you are travelling from Clapham Junction to Basingstoke, you will not pay for the journey from Clapham Junction to Surbiton (Clapham Junction is Zone 2, Surbiton is Zone 6.) You will only pay from Boundary Zone 6 (which is the equivalent of Surbiton) to Basingstoke. You will need to purchase your ticket from a ticket office, a guard or member of Revenue staff. These tickets are not available online, on our app or from our Self-Service Ticket Machines.

## Self-Service Ticket Machines

SWR stations, as well as London Waterloo, Clapham Junction and Guildford have Self-Service Ticket Machines to allow you to purchase a variety of tickets. These machines follow the Department for Transport joint code of practice (details can be found on the Department for Transport's website). Tickets can be purchased including tickets with a disabled persons railcard or senior railcard discount (this includes companion tickets for people booking tickets with a disabled persons railcard). These machines also allow you to collect tickets that you have purchased online.

## Ticket gates

Some stations that SWR manage have ticket gates which are staffed. Some stations that SWR trains call at but do not manage also have ticket gates. To find out which stations have ticket gates, please visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations/default.aspx](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/default.aspx) and search for the relevant station.

When no staff are available to operate the ticket gates at any of our managed stations, we will lock the gates in the open position so that customers can pass through.

All of our ticket gate lines have at least one wider accessible gate for wheelchair users and customers using other mobility aids.

## Buying tickets in advance of travel

When buying tickets (whether that be from a website, ticket office or other method) we suggest you check the required facilities of that train with the operator in terms of the accessibility of their trains. This may relate to things such as the provision of wheelchair spaces in first class which not all trains offer. If you are travelling on a train not operated by SWR, please check this information before purchase.

Please be advised that no SWR trains have wheelchair spaces in First Class and our staff will make customers aware of this at the point of booking assistance.

## Booking assistance when purchasing tickets

You are able to book assistance whilst purchasing tickets when you call our Contact Centre. We are currently unable to book assistance at the same time as buying a ticket online, at a station ticket office or ticket machine, or on our app. We are looking into ways of linking the ticket buying and passenger assistance booking processes, and we will work with all partners in the rail industry to explore options for this.

You do not need to be a Disabled Persons Railcard holder to book assistance. We are looking into the possibility of being made aware of passenger assistance when you buy a ticket on our website and you select the Senior or Disabled Persons Railcard discount.



## Alternative accessible transport

Although the majority of the stations that SWR manages are step-free, there are some that may not be accessible to you. Further details of this station accessibility is available at [www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/at-the-station](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/at-the-station). This may be due to

- The station is inaccessible (i.e. due to a physical constraint)
- Where for whatever reasons, substitute transport is provided to replace rail services (e.g. due to planned engineering works); or
- Where there is disruption to train and station services at short notice that, for whatever reason, makes services inaccessible to disabled passengers

Even if the station you wish to use is inaccessible to you, we will ensure you are able to travel to and from that station at no extra cost. We will do what we can to make as much of that journey by rail, however, for parts of the journey where that is not possible, we will arrange alternative transport that is accessible to you (such as a taxi).

We will take your individual requirements into consideration as well as the journey time, accessibility of trains and stations used and staffing of those stations to best adapt to your requirements. Wherever possible we will do what we can to give you an alternative that most resembles the experience of those who do not require assistance.

We will discuss these individual requirements at the time of booking assistance which you can do by calling us at 0800 52 82 100 (freephone). If services become inaccessible to you during disruption, you can call us on this number or speak to a member of station staff. Where no staff are available on stations that SWR does or doesn't manage, you can use the station help points where available or call our Assisted Travel team. We will then arrange suitable transport to get you to your destination.

When there are delays, disruption or emergencies and we provide rail replacement services (RRS) or taxis, we will ensure these are as accessible as possible from our RRS providers. RRS vehicles are provided by small family firms and the rail industry is working with government to inform their policy decisions to support these businesses in increasing the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in their fleets.

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 you are unable to use the replacement transport, we will arrange a taxi that is accessible for you.

For taxi operators licensed by SWR and replacement bus companies, we will liaise with them to ensure their drivers have undertaken disability awareness where possible and outline this in our training section towards the end of this policy.

## Wheelchairs, mobility scooters and mobility aids

We provide wheelchair spaces on all our trains for wheelchair users. You are welcome to use these spaces if your wheelchair fits within the following dimensions:

Width:	700mm
Length:	1200mm

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

All our trains, except those used on the Island Line, have 2 dedicated wheelchair spaces in each wheelchair area. These are located next to the Accessible Toilet (our Class 455/456 and 707 trains do not have toilets.) The below table shows how many wheelchair spaces are available with each type of train (more details on our trains are available on our website at <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel> or <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/our-trains>).

Train type	Standard class wheelchair spaces
158 – 2 coach	2
159 – 3 coach	2
442 – 5 coach	2
444 – 5 coach	2
450 – 4 coach	2
455 – 4 coach	2
456 – 2 coach	2
458 – 5 coach	2
707 – 5 coach	2

The trains in the above table may be put together in different formations to make the trains longer. For instance, we may create a 12 coach train by putting three Class 450 trains together. This would then allow for 6 dedicated wheelchair spaces on that train.

Customers using mobility scooters require a permit to travel on SWR trains. The combined weight of the scooter and user must be under 300kg on the mainland and less than 230kg on the Island Line. We have this current weight restriction due to the 1938 London Underground stock used on the Island Line. When considering permit applications, we always exercise common sense working with the customer to find a way to allow them to travel safely with us and we will be reviewing this weight limit when refurbished rolling stock is introduced onto the Island Line. The dimensions of scooters permitted on our services are:

### **3-wheeled scooter**

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

### **4-wheeled scooter**

Width:	560mm (56cm)
Length:	1120mm (112cm)

Our permit policy has been created for safety reasons by rigorous testing of various different scooters on our trains. You may apply for a permit on our website at: [www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/wheelchairs-scooters-and-ramps](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/wheelchairs-scooters-and-ramps) or by contacting our Customer Relations team. You may travel on your scooter by travelling in the wheelchair space on our trains but this is the only place scooters can go on our trains and must not be stored in vestibules or obstructing aisles as these are emergency exit routes. If you can transfer to the seat, we would encourage you to do so rather than travelling on your scooter as this may be safer and more comfortable for you. Please contact our Assisted Travel team if you have any questions regarding our Scooter Permit scheme and our team will do their best to accommodate you. If your scooter application is rejected, we will explain why. It may be rejected because it doesn't meet our requirements but we will try to work with you to accommodate you on our services as best we can.

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

## Delays, disruption to services, and emergencies

We understand that disruption to both facilities and services can have a huge impact on both accessibility and confidence when using the railway and we do everything we can to minimise this. When disruption does happen, we will make sure that you can continue your journey wherever possible and we will not leave you stranded.

At times when our facilities or services are disrupted, we will give you notice on our website and other communication channels. If the disruption means your original arrangements are no longer valid, we will do our best to make contact with you and re-book any required assistance through Passenger Assist. We will request a contact number from you when you book assistance, which will help us to contact you in case of disruption. We have staff onboard all of our trains and they will do their best to help you plan your adjusted journey if things do go wrong.

Our staff are trained to help all customers, including those with non-visible disabilities, as much as possible and will agree with the customer how best they can assist. 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. This involves providing you with audio and visual information when you need it. If you then require any additional assistance (for example in changing platforms) or need further help understanding the information, staff will be happy to help. Taking their other duties (such as train dispatch) into consideration they will then do all that is reasonably possible to assist 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 as soon as possible. At staffed stations, when a platform change occurs our staff will provide assistance and information to help you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible, as quickly, safely and comfortably as possible.

If we have to alter or cancel your train because of disruption, we will provide you with accessible substitute transport where applicable. This will be done without additional charge. Our rail replacement team has contractual arrangements with bus and taxi operators across the SWR network, including securing, wherever possible, the provision of accessible

vehicles; this team deals with both planned and unplanned disruption. When train services are replaced with replacement road transport, we will do everything possible to secure accessible vehicles from local operators. For planned disruption in the London area, we provide buses which are wheelchair accessible. However, it is not always possible to secure a wheelchair accessible coach for planned or unplanned disruption and in these circumstances, we will book a taxi that is accessible to you. Our frontline 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. Additionally, if you feel that a replacement bus is not appropriate for you, please discuss this with our station and control teams and they will be happy to arrange alternative options for you.

When the level of accessibility of facilities at a station or on a train is less than that normally provided (e.g. as a result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities), we will aim to provide you, wherever possible, with equivalent replacement facilities. If we have your contact details, we will do our best to contact you by telephone or email and to make you aware of the disruption, and to assist you with making alternative arrangements (such as re-booking or re-routing assistance). We will also provide you with information of the disruption to facilities through our website and advise our staff at stations, on trains, and at our contact centre, to provide you with an estimated time for when the facilities will be functioning again where known.

If there is disruption to your journey and you are at an unstaffed station, please use the Help Point or call our Assisted Travel team for more information.

### **In the event of an emergency**

Keeping our customers safe is our priority. All our trains and stations have evacuation plans that take into account the needs of disabled passengers and our staff and emergency services are aware of these. Our staff and the emergency services will supervise any emergency procedures that may need to be taken. Safety information is provided on all our trains with clear diagrams and pictures, and in the rare event of an emergency on a train, our on-board team will advise and help you. In nearly all cases, the safest option is for all customers to remain on the train and wait for instructions until our team have fully assessed the situation. If you do have to leave the train between stations, the emergency services will provide equipment and help you get off the train safely. If we need to evacuate an unstaffed station, we will use the station Public Address System to alert you.

## **Station facilities**

We operate the majority of stations that we call at on the South Western Mainline. Please visit our website or the National Rail Enquiries website for more information on all station facilities. Additionally, for information on stations that we do not manage, please visit the respective Train Operating Company or Network Rail website, or the National Rail Enquiries Website. Some stations that we call at are managed by Great Western Railway, Network Rail, and Southern.

## Left luggage

Fully accessible Left Luggage facilities are available at London Waterloo. For more information, please visit the National Rail Enquiries station page, or the Network Rail website.

## Blue Badge Parking Spaces

We want it to be as easy as possible for customers to travel to our stations by car and information on our car parks can be found on our website.

Most stations have a tarmac or concrete surfaced car park, with designated parking spaces available for Blue Badge holders (although charges apply at Car Parks managed by SWR).

We have done what is reasonably possible to locate these spaces as close to the station as possible providing easy access. These spaces are marked with the wheelchair symbol on the ground.

Station staff and other contractors working on behalf of SWR as parking wardens enforce railway byelaws accordingly ensuring that nobody who does not have a blue badge uses these spaces.

Throughout the franchise we are working towards Disabled Parking Accreditation and some stations on our network will benefit from an increased number of Blue Badge parking spaces.

## Third-party provided facilities

We will do all that is in our power to ensure services and facilities provided by a third party on our network are as accessible as possible. This requirement is included in relevant contracts and enforced by our Property team. Our station teams will monitor the services and facilities provided by third parties to ensure that they are not located where they will cause an obstruction.

We will work with our tenants and third parties to ensure that beyond their own responsibilities under the Equality Act that we make reasonable efforts to provide as accessible a facility as possible.

## Replacement facilities

When the level of accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided (e.g. as a result of the breakdown, alteration or removal of facilities), we will aim to provide you, wherever possible, with equivalent replacement facilities. If this is not possible, we will discuss the best options with you.

## Station entrances

We understand the importance of easy access to stations and as such our property team will always consider the impact to accessibility if there is a need to restrict or temporarily close access to a station by a certain entrance. We will comply with the Code of Practice regarding mandatory standards for unobstructed progress during building works.

We are committed to ensuring that all station entrances are kept in use and not permanently closed during times that the station is open. When necessary, due to refurbishment or security for example, we may have to close these points of access, we will consult with the DfT, London TravelWatch, Transport Focus and local disability groups, as applicable, and any such changes to access will not be made until approved by the DfT. If the closure is semi-permanent, then alternative arrangements will be put in place for the duration of any required works.

## Redress

When you have booked assistance and it has not been delivered, we will provide you with compensation for your journey. When your assistance was booked for travel on one of our trains, we will offer you a full refund for the cost of that leg of the journey. If you were travelling on another train company's service, we will coordinate the response on their behalf, or we may wish to pass your claim to them in some circumstances with your permission. We will provide you with an explanation of what went wrong and any mitigating actions that we intend to take as a result.

We are happy to assist you with your claim as much as we can. You can make a claim for compensation via phone, textphone, email, or by posting a comments form or letter. For more information on the claims process, please see our Making Rail Accessible leaflet available at [www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel).

We will always comply with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and in line with National Rail Conditions of Travel, we will consider all additional compensation claims for any losses or extra cost caused by a service failure. An example may be the cost of a new train ticket if you miss connecting train. This does not affect your legal right to make claims under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, although you must not seek to recover the same money twice (for example from both our claims process and the Consumer Rights Act 2015).

## Rail Ombudsman

If we have not resolved your complaint with us in a satisfactory manner, you may wish to escalate your complaint to the Rail Ombudsman. More information can be found on the ombudsman's website: <https://www.railombudsman.org/>

# Strategy and Management

## Strategy

SWR are developing an Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) strategy which compliments the overall Customer Experience strategy. The A&I strategy sets out how we intend to continually improve the provision of all aspects of our services to customers with disabilities. We hope to publish further details on the A&I strategy in the summer of 2020.

To develop our strategy, we will consult with our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum (A&I Forum) as well as analysing customer pain points as part of our Customer Experience strategy. To support our strategy and to improve the experience for our disabled customers, we will include:

- **People empowerment and awareness:** Making sure our staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver amazing customer experience to everyone
- **Passenger Assist:** Creating seamless end-to-end journeys for customers who require additional assistance
- **Customer engagement:** When things go wrong, we learn from our mistakes and listen to our customers

As well as these priority areas, we are committed to continually improving our service provision for customers with disabilities in all aspects of our service. Since the start of our franchise in August 2017, we have:

- Appointed a dedicated Accessibility & Inclusion Manager
- Reduced the booking notice period to assistance from 24 hours to 4 hours
- Established an Accessibility & Inclusion Forum whose members have varying disabilities and live on our network
- Introduced a Travel Assistance card. This is designed to help customers who may struggle with verbal communication
- Introduced a seat warning card for Assistance Dogs. It allows the Assistance Dog owner to warn other customers that there is an assistance dog under the seat
- Since April 2019, customers have been able to request immediate assistance via the SWR app (we ask that customers give us 20 minutes notice to make arrangements)

Over the next two years we will be introducing a brand-new fleet of trains, the Class 701 which will feature increased accessibility features for our customers. The new trains will replace existing trains that are 30 years old, as well as ensuring that our entire mainland fleet of trains will have on-board toilets. The Island Line will also benefit from a replacement fleet of trains which are better suited to all customers' needs, replacing the existing 1938 London Underground stock.

We work closely alongside industry colleagues including Rail Delivery Group (RDG), the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), Network Rail, local authorities, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Community Rail Partnerships and Rail Ombudsman as well as other stakeholder organisations to further improve our service provision. We also work closely with other Train Operating Companies to encourage partnership working and the sharing of best practice to create a consistent journey experience for all.

As part of our commitment, since the start of our franchise, we have and will continue to work on improving accessibility at our stations through our annual access improvement fund to invest in station accessibility improvements, as well as our continued work to increase the number of fully accessible stations on the network. We continue to seek new methods of increasing accessibility across our estate; we have an ongoing programme of improvement works and will seek to build on this. We will commit to comply with the PRM-TSI and the Department for Transport's (DfT) Code of Practice. However, when necessary, after every effort has been made to comply with the relevant requirements and we cannot meet the Code of Practice we will apply for dispensations and derogations from the Code of Practice via the DfT.

Whilst we will do everything in our power to meet these standards as a minimum, we shall consult with the DfT at the earliest stage should this not be possible, so we can consider alternatives that are suitable and seek dispensation from the Code of Practice.

### **Improving access to SWR services**

SWR are committed to maintaining the current standards of accessibility and continually seeking ways to further improve this to our services for all. We will do this by engaging with our customers and stakeholders as well as organisations representing disabled people so that we can identify areas of improvement and anticipate customers' needs. As part of the annual review of our Accessible Travel Policy we will review our policies that impact customers with disabilities and incorporate customer feedback as applicable.

## **Management arrangements**

Ensuring accessibility to all aspects of SWR's operation are continued and further enhanced will form part of our Accessibility & Inclusion Strategy, as well as having our dedicated Accessibility & Inclusion (A&I) Manager as a key stakeholder in any project scope, which is fully supported by the SWR executive team and board. The accountability for ownership and development of our Accessible Travel Policy is with our Customer Experience (CX) Director. The CX Director will act as a sponsor to the development of accessibility projects and has accountability for overall compliance to this policy.

The Accessible Travel Policy forms part of our Passenger License (Condition 6: Provision of Services for Disabled People) and Station License.

To ensure the Accessible Travel Policy is incorporated into business and project planning, all new projects must assess the impacts on disabled people and whether the opportunity to improve accessibility has been considered during project conception. If a project does not satisfy these criteria, then the project will not be approved. All major projects that do not go through a business approval process involve the A&I Manager as a stakeholder to give relevant sign-off to the project. This process forms part of our metrics for assessing returning on investment and allows us to assess this for improvements for disabled people.

The A&I Manager, as part of our Customer Experience team, is responsible for ensuring the implementation/delivery of the Accessible Travel Policy across the business as well as ensuring ongoing compliance.



All new management level staff at SWR will go through our corporate induction as well as our Disability and Equality training. This training includes informing all staff about their responsibilities to disabled people, SWR's policies and the law. From July 2021, all existing staff will go through Disability and Equality training. This has been developed in conjunction with our A&I Forum, as well as seeking best practice from throughout the rail industry.

All projects relating to stations and facilities must meet certain criteria before being approved. This includes that the project must be in line with the Joint Code of Practice as well as comply with the Equality Act.

## Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that we maintain performance against our Accessible Travel Policy and deliver everything that we commit to, we will monitor against several key performance indicators every period, including:

- Total number of customers who booked assistance over the rail period
- Total number of customers who requested assistance without booking over the rail period
- Ratio of customers who booked assistance versus customers who requested assistance without booking
- Total number of no-show customers who had booked assistance
- Total number of assistance failures over the rail period
- Total number of complaints relating to Passenger Assist over the rail period
- Total number of complaints relating to general accessibility over the rail period

We will use our Customer Council and Accessibility & Inclusion Forum to receive feedback about the services we provide and where these can be improved as well as issues with what we currently deliver. This engagement will allow us to build action plans to implement changes in line with what stakeholders are not satisfied with.

Our policy and use of metrics will be reviewed regularly and a report with the findings will be submitted to the ORR. This will include details of achievements of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled people and any difficulties we have encountered with the implementation of this policy.

Our Customer Contact Centre will handle any complaints and/or feedback received from customers in relation to both Passenger Assist and the general accessibility of our trains or stations. They will provide a detailed response to the customer and ensure that any assistance failure is investigated. Information on this investigation will be used to inform the customer what went wrong and what we are doing to address this. As required, the Accessibility and Inclusion Manager may be consulted to provide information to support this response. When assistance has failed as the result of SWR, local managers will take action accordingly to prevent such an incident recurring.

We will regularly review this policy and a report on findings will be sent to the DfT and the ORR. This will include details of the achievement of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled customers and any challenges we faced in implementing this policy.

## Access Improvements

SWR are committed to ensure compliance with PRM-TSI and the Joint Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing our trains or facilities at our stations. Where compliance is not achievable after every effort possible has been made, we commit to applying for derogations against PRM-TSI and/or the Joint Code of Practice

We have several projects completed and ongoing to improve access to our services:

### Trains

SWR are introducing a fleet of nearly 100 brand-new Class 701 trains. These trains are fully compliant with PRM-TSI and will be replacing (and expanding) a number of older train types in our fleet. Once the introduction of the Class 701 fleet is completely rolled out (which is planned to be by December 2021) we will have a fully accessible and compliant fleet, complete with Accessible Toilets on every train. The Class 701 fleet will be used on our suburban and metro network, and will replace the Class 458, 455/456 and 707 fleets.

We have carried out works to our diesel trains (Class 158/159), as well as the Class 442 units to ensure that they are compliant under RVAR 2010. This has involved the fitting of pinned ramps and the associated drill holes in the train step-plate. Where full compliance has not been possible, we have received the necessary derogations from the Department for Transport (DfT) after all other options have been exhausted. The Class 442 trains are the only trains on our network with any restrictions to ramped boarding and wheelchair and scooter users. The external door is narrower than the reference wheelchair but we will make customers aware at the stage of booking any assistance if we are not able to accommodate them on a 442 train service. We will discuss alternative arrangements with customers, which may include waiting for an alternative train service or taking an alternative form of transport such as a taxi. The 442s run train services between London Waterloo and Poole, and also between London Waterloo and Portsmouth Harbour via Woking. All rolling stock types which have received a derogation from the DfT meet the spirit of the 2020 regulations.

### Stations

SWR manages 184 stations along our route and we have done lots of work to make these as accessible as possible. The majority of our stations are fully step free and accessible and we have done work to improve this along our route. We have successfully bid for Access for All funding in 2019 to create step-free access at Isleworth, Stoneleigh, and Wandsworth Town, as well as previous bids being carried forward for Barnes and Walton-on-Thames. Step-free access work at Teddington, which was successfully given funding in 2014 will be completed by the end of the franchise. All of the Access for All projects are done in conjunction with Network Rail.

Additionally, to work improving the physical access to train services on our stations, we are also undertaking the following:

- Remote access to lifts and waiting rooms
- Installing additional Accessible and Changing Places toilets
- Improving Customer Information Screens at stations
- Expanding the use of induction loops along our platforms

We are also in the process of developing new station maps that give a more immersive experience and allow customers to better plan their station journey and understand what is around them.

## Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

We understand the importance of involving disabled people in decision making in all aspects of what we do. We currently have access to:

- SWR Accessibility and Inclusion Forum whose members are involved in reviewing upcoming projects to ensure planning at the earliest stage as well as identifying areas for improvement across SWR. This is chaired by Disability Rights UK
- A member of the Transport Focus team is contracted to work with SWR one day a week, especially with the wider Customer Experience team
- Our Voice of the Customer survey
- SWR are part of Wavelength – a new customer feedback tool being used across the industry to understand customer views on our service

Our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum have been involved in the development of our training and our Accessible Travel Policy (ATP). The Forum meets three times a year and is formed of SWR customers who have different disabilities, including those with non-visible disabilities. The forum has reviewed our current Disability Awareness training and has informed us of improvements to be made which we have acted upon. In Summer 2020 we held focus groups with disabled people to help design our new Disability Awareness training. The forum has also reviewed the content and language of our ATP through its drafting process. We will further consult with them on the finalised designs for the Passenger Leaflet.

We will work on the promotion of the accessibility of our services and Passenger Assist across our route. We have begun work on this engagement over the last year through:

- Social media, media and web promotion of new initiatives around accessibility including our Travel Assistance Card
- Revamping our Passenger Assist website page to provide better information around our projects and more useful Q&A sections
- Attendance at local authority events across our route to present our offering to business and councillors to help spread the word about what we offer for customers

We will continue to do the above while also promoting our Assisted Travel Policy – specifically the “Making Rail Accessible” customer leaflet – in prominent public locations across our route as well as on our stations.

SWR also conduct “Try the Train Day” events which aim to improve all users’ confidence in using rail as a mode of transport. Although not geared up specifically to disabled people, these events have supported local accessibility groups across our network in encouraging their members to use the train. This has had wider benefits to the industry as everything we cover can also be applied to all Train Operating Companies in Great Britain.

We will report to the ORR on the work in this area on the whole that we have undertaken and the progress that this has led to.

## Training

Staff training is a key part of ensuring customers with disabilities can access our services. As part of this policy, SWR is committed to the following:

- By 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 all new staff, including all management staff, will receive Disability and Equality training as part of their induction. This will be in a classroom-based setting and delivers the following outcomes:
  - - Understanding disabled people and their everyday challenges: challenging misconceptions and understanding barriers to access and inclusion
    - Equality Legislation: exploring and understanding the Equality Act 2010
    - Defining Disability: an introduction to the various definitions of disability and the appropriate terminology
    - Recognising passengers who need assistance: exploring physical and non-physical impairments to enable staff to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance
    - Railway Regulatory Framework: understanding regulations and policies that are relevant within the railway industry
    - Passenger Assist: how it works for disabled passengers and the staff's role in delivering the service
    -
- Additionally to this, by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, all frontline staff that interact directly with passengers at any time as part of their duties will receive training as part of their induction that covers:
  - Communication: finding a way to communicate with disabled people with patience, respect and dignity
  - Accessibility in stations: the identification of accessible features at the station where staff work as well as at the key destination stations on the network
  - Providing safe assistance: duties and process to ensure that both staff and passengers remain safe at all times
  -
- By 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 we will have provided refresher training to all existing frontline staff to meet the requirements as set out above
- We will provide refresher training within 2 years of receiving Disability and Equality training and a minimum of 2 years thereafter
- We will involve disabled people in the creation of our disability awareness training. We aim to do this through the creation of videos and lived-experiences being presented as well as the use of our Accessibility & Inclusion Forum to approve our training content on a recurring basis
- By 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, where we reasonably can, agency staff and contracted staff who are working on a temporary basis that have direct interaction with customers will receive a version of disability awareness training that will cover Passenger Assist, Communication and Providing safe assistance as a minimum
- Our Customer Contact Centre staff who provide information or advice directly to customers will receive disability awareness training as part of their induction which covers a minimum of Passenger Assist and Communication

We will report to the ORR by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 on our progress against all of these commitments in more detail, however, as of June 2020 we have:

- Reviewed our existing Disability Awareness Training with the support of our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum
- All current Disability Awareness Training for new staff is taking place remotely using Zoom or Microsoft Teams
- Agreed a partnership with an experienced training firm which specialises in disability training to create our new Disability Awareness Training
- Focus groups are in the process of being created for the end of July 2020 with disabled customers from our network to help inform our new training
- Subject to Covid-19 restrictions, filming will take place at stations on our network with disabled customers to capture their experiences to inform all colleagues receiving Disability Awareness Training.

We understand that the importance of awareness training during disruption spans wider than just our own business and how well the drivers of alternative accessible transport are trained can impact their ability to interact with our customers. It is important to us that as they are providing a service, they have received as much training as possible to be able to do that. To do this we have engaged with all of our existing contracted taxi operators that use our station taxi ranks and our replacement coach providers and asked them what the training they provide consists of.

### **Taxi Providers**

All our contracted taxi drivers are given disability awareness training as part of their licensing with the local authority 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.

At the time of submitting our Accessible Travel Policy we have verified that any statistics and terminology we use are up to date and appropriate.

Until the above deadlines while we are implementing changes to our training, we ensure that all frontline staff who assist passengers at any time have the appropriate training to safely use any equipment required such as ramps and wheelchairs. Staff also receive training presently around communicating with people who have a disability and how this may vary. This includes speaking clearly to help communicate with customers who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding for those who answer telephones.