

Accessible Travel Policy

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Introduction

Welcome to Merseyrail. This policy document is designed to complement our customer leaflet which is entitled, '*Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers*' and is available at all staffed stations as well as on our website www.merseyrail.org.

As each licensed operator is required to do, this document sets out our policies and approach towards providing assistance for customers with restricted mobility and 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.

In this document we provide information to help you understand how we plan to provide you with the confidence you need to travel by rail, particularly when you are using our services. We will explain how to find details of the assistance, facilities and information you will need to help you to plan your journey.

A: Commitments to providing assistance

A1: Providing booked and un-booked assistance to our customers

Travelling from a staffed Merseyrail station to a staffed Merseyrail station

We know that modern life is busy and often customers need to travel at short notice or don't have an opportunity to book their journey in advance.

At all stations except for those detailed on page 4 of this policy, we have staff located in our ticket offices that will be able to help provide turn up and travel support for customers with assistance needs.

Just approach one of our station team and let them know you need their assistance and they will do their best to make sure you get on the next available service. They will also be able to answer any other questions you may have.

As has been the case for many years, our team will always phone ahead to let the station you are travelling to know that you are on your way so that staff at that station can be ready to meet you when you arrive. Each station has a specific phone number for this purpose and we will also pass on any relevant information about you to colleagues to ensure we can meet your needs. This approach is fully in line with the passenger assistance handover protocol.

At our stations with ticket gate lines the Station Assistant on duty is responsible for answering these calls and arranging your assistance. At all other stations the Station Retailer is responsible for this.

During peak times please be aware that services and stations can be busy and you should always allow extra time in case the train you want to catch is busy. In these circumstances you may need to wait for the next one.

Travelling from an unstaffed Merseyrail station to a Merseyrail station

We have four stations on our network that do not have ticket offices and are unstaffed. These are;

Overpool, Little Sutton, Bache and Capenhurst

We also have one station that is open for part of the day (from start of service until 2pm Monday to Friday);

Ellesmere Port

If you arrive at one of these stations and require assistance to travel you should press the button at the clearly labelled help point located on each platform. Our control room team will arrange for you to receive the help you need.

At Ellesmere Port station, when the booking office is closed, please follow the above procedure.

You should allow extra time when travelling from these stations. Our on-board team will usually be able to provide assistance to you in these situations. However in some cases staff may need to travel from another station to assist you, or arrange for alternative transport such as a taxi to collect you to take you to the next staffed station.

We would always recommend contacting our assisted travel team an hour ahead of the planned journey time to discuss if you are travelling from one of these stations.

Unbooked Assistance - travelling from a Merseyrail station to a station outside of the Merseyrail network

We work with Network Rail and the other UK Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to help customers that need assistance to plan their journey to any UK rail station to or from stations on our network.

In these circumstances, we would always advise that customers who need assistance request it in advance using the process set out on page 5. This is so that we can better plan with the other companies involved and make sure everything is arranged for your journey. It will also help prevent significantly longer journey times for you in the event that the other train operating company you are travelling with cannot accommodate you on the service you wish to travel on.

If this isn't possible please don't worry, our helpful team will ring ahead when you arrive to make other operators aware of your journey plans and ensure support is available.

Travelling to or from an inaccessible Merseyrail Station

If the station you wish to travel to or from is an inaccessible station please contact our Assisted Travel Team in advance of your journey in line with the guidance in the next section, The team will arrange a suitable alternative to collect you and transport you to your nearest accessible station. This will usually be a taxi.

Booking Assistance in advance

Our assisted travel team

If you prefer to book assistance in advance for our services or for those of other train operating companies you can do so by contacting our assisted travel team. The team can be contacted by telephoning 0800 0277 347 (Freephone) or 0151 555 1111 (selecting option 3).

Please be aware that bookings are only accepted by phone between 7am and 7pm Monday-Friday. Outside of these times please call 0151 702 2704 where our out of hours team will be happy to help.

Textphone and Text Relay users please prefix 18001 prior to dialling the numbers above.

Recommended booking notice periods

Travelling entirely on our network

As set out above, the nature of our network means that you can simply turn up and travel if your journey is entirely on the Merseyrail network. We appreciate however that some customers prefer to book in advance. If this is the case we recommend you do so at least 1 hour in advance so that we can ensure our stations teams can be made aware of your plans.

Travelling off our network

When travelling off our network where a journey also includes another train operating company, please be aware that we can currently accept bookings up to 10pm the day before travel.

Passenger Assist System

The Passenger Assist System is a national system supported by all train operating companies which allows operators to make the necessary arrangements to assist customers with disabilities or restricted mobility. We are committed to using Passenger Assist. We will provide sufficient resources to maintain the system and enhance performance.

We will work with other Train Companies and station operators to an agreed process. This will ensure that if your journey involves a change or connection onto other operators' services, assistance can be booked through our assisted travel team as a single point of contact.

When making your booking the team will check the station accessibility information, which will also be available to view on the National Rail Enquiries station web pages, as well as advice on connecting modes of transport e.g. bus, tube and trams.

Our team will discuss your individual requirements at the time of booking and will make sure that any connections suggested are achievable. You will be provided with a Passenger Assist reference number and booking confirmation via email (or post on request, if there is adequate time to send this to you). You will need to take this with you when travelling so that staff on stations and trains can identify your booking.

When a train terminates at any Merseyrail station, regardless of whether you have booked or not, our stations or on board teams will be there to help you to alight from the train as soon as possible. In any event this will be within five minutes of the train's arrival time. Please do not hesitate to ask our on-board team if you need help to alight from the train.

Ramps

We have portable ramps at all our staffed stations to help with getting on or off our trains. These are able to carry a combined weight (for passenger and wheelchair) of up to 300kgs.

At our unstaffed stations please press the button on the help point. In this situation we will arrange for our on-board colleagues to put down the ramp and assist you on the next available service to your destination.

If you have booked assistance to board or alight from an unstaffed station we can provide alternative transport such as a taxi, at no extra cost to you. In these circumstances we will collect you and take you to the most convenient, nearby accessible or staffed station where a member of staff will be on hand to assist you.

In these circumstances we recommend booking your assistance as described on page 6 of this document, so that we can discuss with you how best to meet your needs. We will always seek to support you in making as much as your journey by rail as possible and this may include sending a member of staff to an unstaffed station to assist you.

Changes in arrangements

During the course of your journey, our staff are trained to anticipate the needs of customers and they will communicate news of any service disruption with you. This will include information about alternative transport via public announcement or, where possible, to you in person.

We will provide both visual and aural information. At our stations passenger information screens are located on each platform and in concourse/booking office areas.

Loudspeakers are located throughout our stations so that you should be able to see or hear what is happening from wherever you are located.

Taking their other duties into consideration staff will then do all that is reasonably possible to assist you. The provision of clearly marked Help Points at all of our unstaffed stations provides a link to our control room team 24 hours, 7 days a week (except Christmas Day), who will also be able to assist you in continuing your journey.

Sometimes a train's departure platform must be changed, often at short notice. Such a change will be shown on the customer information screens and will be announced aurally as soon as possible. When change occurs our staff will provide assistance and information to help you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible, as efficiently as possible. If this is not possible for example because the new platform is not accessible to you, we will provide alternative transport such as a taxi, at no extra cost to you. This will connect you to the nearest accessible station on that line.

Assistance with onward travel – buses and taxis

Wherever possible our stations team will help you connect with other services operating from our stations such as buses or taxis, however we do not license taxis to operate from our stations. Merseyrail has no control over taxis that operate around our stations except for those specifically ordered by our staff for rail replacement purposes.

Where we provide a rail replacement taxi our station teams have the ability to source accessible vehicles where required.

For further information on local bus and tram connections please contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or go to traveline.info.

Alternatively, please visit the Merseytravel journey planner; www.jp.merseytravel.gov.uk/

Station facilities and services

We are committed to ensuring that the information regarding our stations and services is up to date. We will also ensure that customers requiring assistance are aware of any limitations or temporary restrictions, which significantly impact on the accessibility of particular station.

Our station management support team are responsible for updating the information provided on the National Rail Enquiries website. This includes the Station Journey Planner which displays useful information about our stations including the;

- Level of accessibility from station entrance to platforms
- Staffing hours and assistance availability
- Meeting points for assistance
- Ramps used for train access
- Accessible waiting rooms, toilets and set-down/pick-up points.

Our stations must be categorised as;

Category A: “This station has step-free access to all platforms / the platform”

Category B: “This station has a degree of step-free access to the platform, which may be in both directions or in one direction only - please check details.”

Category C: “This station does not have step-free access to any platform.”



All stations have a clearly marked assisted travel meeting point. You can identify these by looking for the signage shown opposite;

For full details please see the up-to-date stations facilities section of our website, including our step free accessibility map by visiting;

www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/assisted-travel

For stations not served by Merseyrail, you can either contact our Assisted travel team who can plan your route with you, utilising the accessibility information about all UK rail stations which they hold or you can visit the National Rail Enquiries website provides similar information. Please visit;

www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations

Alterations to facilities or services

Should temporary issues arise which significantly impact on the accessibility of any of our stations, we will update the system within 24 hours of notification of a problem and provide an estimated time for when the facility will be in use again.

If we have your contact details we will endeavour to contact you by telephone or email to advise you of temporary issues. Where possible this will be at least 24 hours in advance of your journey or as soon as is possible dependent on the circumstances. We will contact you;

- Where stations have a physical constraint preventing use by some disabled people;
- Where significant temporary work affects station accessibility;
- Where changes to stations make them temporarily inaccessible (e.g. all lifts or all station toilets out of order);
- Where changes to train facilities materially affect disabled passengers – e.g. the temporary use of inaccessible trains; and
- Emergency engineering work.

Our commitment to provide this information includes instances when stations/trains become inaccessible in the short or longer term. This information will be available to our station staff and to you through our website, ticket offices, customer relations team and station Help Points.

As part of our ongoing review process, we will update the information on our website to ensure the details are current. We will also check to ensure that this information is correct on the National Rail Enquires website when we do so.

Assistance with luggage

At our staffed stations we will provide assistance with luggage for disabled and older passengers free of charge within the station boundary. This includes carrying luggage to and from the train, as long as it is within the allowances set out in the National Rail Conditions of Carriage.

Please bear in mind the weight, size and quantity of luggage; as our service is limited by the ability of our staff to lift the item(s) safely.

We would advise booking this service in advance by speaking to our assisted travel team. If that isn't possible we will of course assist you if our staff are available.

Seats on Trains

Seats on Merseyrail trains cannot be reserved.

Priority seating, for older or disabled people and pregnant women is provided closest to the entrance/exit doors and is marked with a notice asking other passenger to make the seats available where required. Our staff will make every reasonable effort to ensure a passenger can obtain a seat where required.

Assistance Dogs

Assistance Dogs are welcome on all of our trains, free of charge, and can travel in any part of the train. Our priority seating provides additional space for your assistance dog to sit more comfortably

A2: Passenger information and promotion of assisted travel

It is our aim to provide you with information that is accessible, accurate, relevant, consistent, up-to date and easy to understand. We want to provide you with assurance and confidence at every stage of your journey, including when planning your journey prior to your departure. This is particularly true if your journey will involve a change of train or transfer to another mode of transport.

All our trains are fitted with aural and visual on-train systems.

Announcements are made throughout the journey confirming the destination of the train, the name of each station as the train approaches it and at each station stop. Our on-board staff can make additional aural and activate additional visual announcements as and when required. We will make announcements within 2 minutes if a train is delayed. All notices are positioned in such a position that they can be read by a wheelchair user.

A2.1: Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet for customers – ‘Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers’

To accompany this Accessible Travel Policy document, we have produced a shorter and more concise leaflet to help in planning your assisted journey, entitled ‘Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers’; both documents are available in alternative formats.

Our leaflet is also available from our ticket offices and leaflet racks at all staffed stations. It can also be obtained from our customer relations team and is available online as a PDF on our website at <https://www.merseyrail.org/media/1449864/making-rail-accessible-dl-booklet.pdf>. The leaflet is designed in a way that means it is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features (e.g. Adobe Reader).

Alternative formats of this leaflet including audio book and larger print are available on request without charge. Please contact our assisted travel team if you require one of these formats.

Our stations will have welcome signage which will include information for customers travelling through our stations, that highlights how a copy of the leaflet or a copy of our policy can be obtained.

Our Merseyrail Accessibility Forum meets twice a year. We use this to promote the assisted travel services we offer, to local organisations that support customers who may wish to use them. Where appropriate will provide them with copies of the leaflet.

A2.2: Stations and train accessibility information

We will ensure that accessibility information relating to our stations and trains is readily available to you and kept up-to-date. In order to achieve this, we will maintain this information in an online format. You should visit www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/assisted-travel to view this information.

We will also provide the same information to the National Rail Enquiries website to ensure consistency. Colleagues at our ticket offices will also be able to provide you with the same up-to-date information on request.

Station accessibility information

Our website also includes detailed station accessibility information including;

- Network accessibility map including stepping heights
- Ticket office opening hours
- The presence of induction loops
- Ticket vending machines (TVMs)
- Help points
- Accessible toilets
- Customer information points
- Staffing hours/assistance availability
- Level of platform accessibility
- Real time information systems
- Local public transport information including taxi company phone numbers
- Presence of 'Blue Badge' parking spaces

Train accessibility information

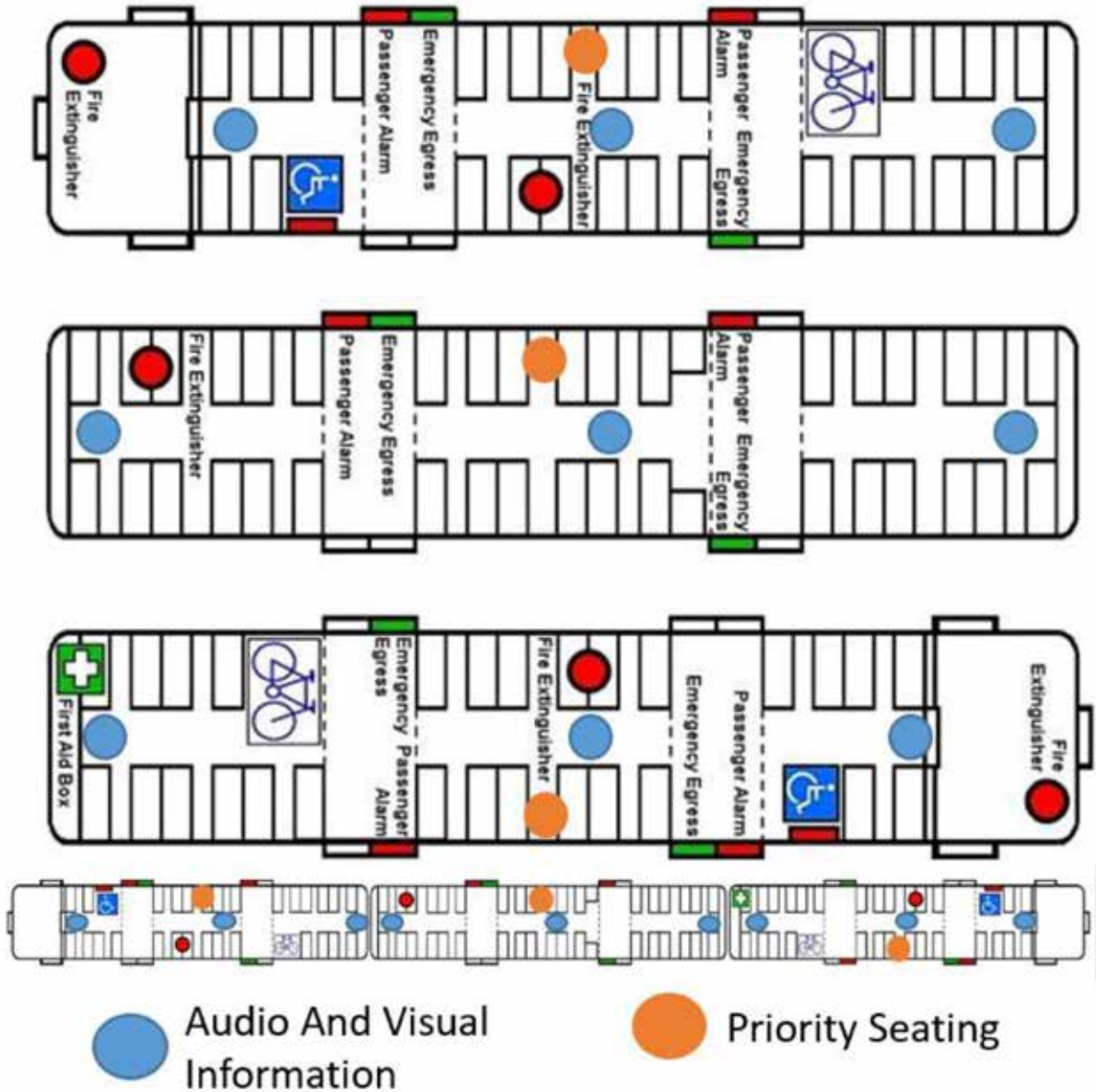
All Merseyrail services are operated by class 507 and 508 electric trains.

These have two sets of wide-opening doors on each coach. These are opened and closed by our on train team at each station stop. These trains were built between 1978 and 1980 and are of a standard type built at that time for short-distance suburban journeys. They have no toilet facilities.

These units have three coaches but can be joined to make a six-coach train.

The illustration on page 14 shows the facilities available including the location of the areas specifically designed for the carriage of wheelchairs.

From 2022, Merseytravel will introduce new Class 777 trains onto the Merseyrail network. These trains which have been designed in collaboration with customers including those with additional travel needs. This document and our leaflet will be updated once the trains come into service.



The diagram above is also available to download as a PDF that is accessible using screen readers or other software with accessibility features, such as Adobe Reader.

A2.3.1: Train departures and arrivals information

We commit to providing you, wherever possible, with clear and consistent aural and visual information at our stations. On the train announcements will provide sufficient time for you to prepare to alight.

Stations

At all stations we have visual customer information systems (CIS) which show the destination of the next train, all stations the train will call at and when it will arrive. All stations are fitted with a public address system (PA). At times of service disruption we will provide information and any alternative transport arrangements through the public address system.

Sometimes platform changes occur at very short notice. Where this happens our staff will provide assistance and information to help you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible, as efficiently as possible. If the platform is not accessible, we will arrange alternative transport i.e. taxi, to the nearest accessible station together with a travelling companion if required.

All stations are fitted with platform help points linked to our control room where help can also be provided if needed.

Trains

All our trains are fitted with aural and visual on-train public address system for your journey. Announcements are made throughout the journey confirming the destination of the train, the name of each station as the train approaches it and at each station stop.

Our on-board staff can make additional aural and activate additional visual announcements as and when required. We will make announcements within 2 minutes if a train will be delayed.

We recognise that good announcements are essential to you. Our staff are trained to speak slowly and distinctly in a clear, concise and confident manner. It is mandatory for on board staff to walk through trains to make sure that you have all the information you need, they are trained to recognise and support customers with non-visible disabilities our train team are monitored regularly to ensure this happens.

Rail Replacement Buses

Where trains are not able to operate, all of the rail replacement vehicles we use are accessible. Where you haven't booked assistance in advance and you arrive at one of our stations when rail replacement vehicles are in use, our station staff will advise you of where to board the bus if you don't know. In most cases this will be immediately outside the station. In the event you have any difficulties in using the vehicle provided you should speak to a member of our station staff we will be happy to assist.

A2.3.2: Connections and wayfinding

We work with Merseytravel, stakeholders and local councils to ensure that our stations are clearly and consistently signposted.

Our staff will provide you with information on how to make connections with other modes of transport both prior to your journey and when travelling on our trains or through our stations. We also provide onward connection information and local maps on posters at all of our stations.

The frequency and routes of our services are defined under our concession agreement. If any changes are proposed we will consult with Merseytravel, this is so we make sure the needs of local communities continue to be met.

A2.3.3: Delays, diversions and disruption

This subject is covered in in Section A6.

A2.4: Ticket offices, information points, help points and customer relations

You can obtain information about the services provided by Merseyrail and all other train companies at our ticket offices or Mtogo stores.

We will provide details of fares, timetables, connections and confirmation of bookings made by Passenger Assist (including bookings by other train operators) for that particular station in an easy to read format.

Information regarding accessibility onto other forms of transport from the station is also available from our staff, or they will be able to advise you where this information can be obtained. All information points on our network are staffed from start to end of train service each day.

Further details of the information facilities available at our stations can be found on our website www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/assisted-travel

We will ensure that up-to-date information regarding the services we provide is available to other train companies and station operators.

This includes information regarding delays, diversions or other events that may affect your journey. For up to date train running information on the day of travel please follow us on Twitter @merseyrail, send us a WhatsApp message (0151 555 1111) or visit our website.

Leaflets regarding our services are also available and placed at varying heights to be accessible to you. We also provide information on station posters which give you information about alternative transport available from that station.

In addition at every station you can also use the station Help Points to gain information and assistance from staff in our control room.

Information regarding all national train services is also available by contacting National Rail Enquiries:

Tel: 03457 48 49 50

Website: www.nationalrail.co.uk

Text Direct: 0345 60 50 600 (for people with hearing impairments).

A2.5: Our Website

We have worked hard over the last 12 months with organisations like the Shaw Trust to ensure that our website meets industry-recognised Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which define how to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities.

To help you find the information you need, we also provide a homepage link to our Assisted Travel page. This explains the Passenger Assist service in a clear and concise manner, using plain English and avoiding the use of industry jargon. It also provides the necessary contact information and provisions for you to book assistance.

It sets out accessibility information, staff availability, customer relations opening hours and 'Blue Badge Holder parking' spaces. It details information relating to any temporary reductions in accessibility and details of any delays and disruptions to facilities or services where relevant.

The mobility scooter section of our website details our policy on the use of wheelchairs, powered chairs and scooters whilst travelling on our network (including any restrictions that apply to their use). It also includes details of how to obtain an 'Access Pass', our dedicated scheme for powered and mobility scooter users.

In addition, there is a link to enable you to access the '*Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers*' customer leaflet and details of how to obtain it in accessible formats.

The website also provides guidance on how you can provide feedback or make a complaint. This includes information on the availability of redress for when assistance has not been delivered as booked. Where other information is located elsewhere, we provide a connecting hyperlink to, or from, the assisted travel page.

A3: Ticketing and Fares

We are committed to sell tickets accurately and impartially. This mean we will provide you with accurate information or advice on your journey and ticket options, irrespective of which train operating company provides the service.

Our ticket office staff and assisted travel team are also familiar with the accessibility of our stations and trains, they are trained to ensure that the tickets you purchase will be appropriate for your needs.

You can buy a ticket for your journey at our staffed stations and at stations with self-service ticket machines. Some of our ticket offices have dropped/low level counters suitable for passengers who use wheelchairs, customers should simply approach this windows if they require service.

All Merseyrail unstaffed stations and some staffed stations have self-service ticket machines. You can buy discounted tickets with a valid Disabled Persons Railcard for yourself and a companion from these machines.

If you are unable to buy a ticket at a station before your journey or are unable to use the self-service ticket machine, you will be able to buy a ticket at your destination station or from one of our Revenue Protection staff with no penalty and with any appropriate discounts. All of our Station and Revenue Protection teams are aware of this policy and will be happy to assist you where needed.

Please note our on-board Customer Service staff do not have the facility to sell tickets.

Disabled Persons Railcard

We support the Disabled Persons Railcard, which offers you and an adult companion travelling with you, up to a third off most rail fares in Great Britain.

The Railcards are currently available as twelve month or three-year cards, so you can choose one that most suits your needs. The Disabled Persons Railcard scheme is managed by the Rail Delivery Group.

If you are eligible, you can apply for a Disabled Persons Railcard by filling in an application form which can be obtained from Merseyrail ticket offices, downloaded online or obtained by phone. You will need to show proof of disability when applying for the Railcard.

Please note there are no time restrictions on when tickets can be bought for when using this railcard.

The Disabled Persons Railcard website has a full list of proofs of eligibility or you can contact the Disabled Persons Railcard team for help with your application and further advice. Please note it is not possible to purchase the Disabled Persons Railcard over the ticket-office counter. The Disabled Persons Railcard Office contact details are:

Helpline: 0345 605 0525

Textphone: 0345 6040 132

Website: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Discounts for visually impaired customers

If you are a visually-impaired person travelling with a companion and you do not hold a railcard, the following discounts will apply on tickets purchased from ticket offices ;

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

No concession applies if you are travelling alone and you do not hold a railcard. To obtain these discounts, a document confirming your disability, issued by a recognised institution (for example, Social Services Department, Local Authority, Guide Dog Ownership certificate, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) or Blind Veterans UK) is required. This evidence must be provided at the time you buy your ticket.

It is also possible that you can be issued with one adult season ticket to cover two persons; with the two travelling for the price of one. In this case, a different companion may travel with you on different days. Please speak to colleagues in our customer relations team if you need any further assistance.

Discounts for customers who use wheelchairs

If you remain in your wheelchair for a rail journey and you do not hold a railcard, you will be given the following discounts on anytime/day tickets:

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

The same discount will apply if you have one companion.

Senior railcard

If you are 60 years old or over you can buy a Senior Railcard which offers up to a third off most rail fares throughout the rail network in Great Britain. Certain restrictions apply on some rail networks during the morning peak periods.

The Senior Railcard is valid for 12 months or three years and you can choose the time period which suits your circumstances. Please note that time restrictions do apply please see the website below for up to date details.

More information is available from;

Senior Railcard Office Website: www.senior-railcard.co.uk

Email: railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk

Call: 0345 300 0250

There may be other Railcards that may be suitable for you. Please visit railcard.co.uk for further information.

Merseytravel Concessionary Travel Pass

We also accept the Merseytravel Concessionary Pass for disabled people and older people which allows free travel on the Merseyrail's Northern and Wirral Line services. If you need any more information please contact Merseytravel directly by visiting www.merseytravel.gov.uk/Tickets/concessions or telephone 0151 330 1000.

Ticket gates

We have automatic ticket gates at Liverpool Central, Moorfields, Liverpool Lime Street (Low Level), James Street, Conway Park, Old Hall Street, Southport, Hamilton Square and Liverpool South Parkway.

All the ticket gate lines have a wide gate to make access easier for you. These ticket gate lines are normally staffed but if a member of staff is not available, the gates will be locked open.

Purchasing tickets in advance

Our stations offer the opportunity to purchase a range of tickets including advance tickets for other UK rail networks.

Merseyrail is currently limited in terms of online sales to one particular type of ticket. More information about our online day saver can be found at our website www.merseyrail.org/tickets-passes/daily-travel/day-saver.

Whether booking online or in person we can help you check that the journey you are planning to make is catered for your specific need (e.g. accessibility of the train type, or availability of wheelchair space in First Class). This will help you to make an informed decision before purchasing tickets.

Booking assistance at the point of purchase

The nature of our network means that in most cases you can simply turn up and travel. In circumstances where you do need to book assistance, our station team will put you in touch with a member of our assisted travel team, who will arrange. Please remember that if you are travelling beyond the Merseyrail network, onto a network operated by another train operating company, we would strongly recommend you book by 10pm the day before travel.

Our stations are able to give out a card advertising our assisted travel services to customers visiting our stations. This can be given to customers who are purchasing tickets in advance of travel reminding them to book assistance at that point if they need it.

A4: Alternative accessible transport

Some of our stations may not be fully accessible to you. You can view our accessibility map which includes station access and the stepping height from the platform to the train by visiting our website;

www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/station-accessibility

This may be due to:

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

We will make sure that if you want to travel to and from stations which are inaccessible, you will be able to do so at no extra cost. Our aim will be to ensure that you will be able to make as much of your journey by rail as possible. Our assisted travel or our station teams colleagues are responsible for making sure this happens, so whether you call in advance or turn up at a station to travel we are able to get you to your destination. If you do chose not to contact us in advance there may be a delay at the station whilst this is arranged for you. This is particularly the case if you plan to travel off our network and onto a network operated by another train operating company.

However, where travel by rail is not possible, we will arrange alternative transport that is accessible to you, such as a taxi, to the nearest or most convenient accessible station.

In doing so, we will consider your assistance requirements and wherever possible, we will offer you an option that most resembles the service provided to passengers not requiring assistance. As part of this we may consider the potential for the flexible deployment of staff, this means that if required, we may send staff to usually unstaffed stations to assist you if no suitable alternative can be found. This will be determined by our control room team after speaking with you via the platform help point.

We will always discuss your individual requirements at the time of booking or in the case of unbooked assistance our station colleagues will be more than happy to help. Alternatively, you can use a station help point which connects directly into our control room.

We will also arrange suitable transport if disruption to our services leaves trains or stations inaccessible to you. In cases of delay, disruptions and emergencies, all rail replacement busses used are accessible (meeting PSVAR standards) and our centralised taxi arrangements mean that accessible taxis can be provided to you and a travelling companion if available.

Our contract with our supplier means that only PSVAR complaint service busses are utilised on during periods where busses replace trains. These are used for both planned and unplanned disruption as standard, which means that during you should never need to wait any longer than fellow passengers during disruption.

We are committed to ensuring that all future contracts will also contain clauses that ensure this is a requirement.

We will also make reasonable endeavours to ensure drivers of rail replacement bus services and taxis have received appropriate training in line with the ORR to provide assistance to rail passengers through our contractual management processes.

A5: Wheelchairs and mobility scooters

Wheelchairs and our trains

Manual or powered wheelchairs can travel on any of our trains and on any route provided they don't exceed 70cm wide and 120cm long and have a combined weight of passenger and wheelchair of no more than 300kg. These standard dimensions are in accordance with the European Union Interoperability (PRM TSI) guidelines.

Wheelchair spaces

All of our trains offer facilities including two designated wheelchair spaces with assistance points. The location of the wheelchair spaces are indicated by the wheelchair symbol on the exterior of the carriage on the doors adjacent to the wheelchair space. One is situated near to the front of the train and the other is located near the rear.

Our wheelchair spaces are not bookable and are available on a first come first serve basis but our 15 or 30 minute regular service on all lines, means that you'll never need to wait longer than 30 minutes if all of the wheelchair spaces are occupied on the service you intended to use. Our staff will provide assistance during boarding, getting off and positioning the wheelchair user into the appropriate space on the train.

Wheelchair Safety

Our stations team are here to assist you board or alight the train if they believe they can do so safely. We always recommend getting off in a forwards facing position and moving slowly.

When you are preparing to board or alight from the train we ask that all baggage is taken off the back of the wheelchair seat so it does not topple when entering and exiting the train via the ramp.

Scooter Carriage

Scooters no greater than 70cm wide and 120cm long with a combined weight of passenger and wheelchair user of not more than 300kg can be carried on our trains. This is for safety reasons.

We cannot guarantee that you will be able to take your mobility scooter on connecting services operated by other train companies and we highly recommend that you check details with them before you travel. Our Assisted Travel team can help you do this if you contact us in advance if you need help to do this.

Once on board, scooter users should position their vehicle safely within the designated wheelchair space and apply the brakes. On no occasion should scooters block the exits or passageways as this is a safety hazard. If a scooter user positions their vehicle safely within the designated space they don't need to transfer to a seat on Merseyrail trains.

When trains are not running due to planned or emergency engineering works, we cannot provide alternative transport for scooter users. This is because the turning circle within the busses used during rail replacement is smaller than on a train meaning scooters, which tend to be much larger than standard wheelchairs cannot be accommodated safely.

However if you are already travelling with us and there is disruption, we will make every reasonable effort to provide an alternative means of transport. If this is not possible our staff will try and find a location at the station where you can store your scooter safely and return later for collection.

Scooter Safety

For safety reasons we also insist that powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters do not exceed 4 mph on station premises.

Access Pass – Our pass scheme for powered and mobility scooter users

The Mobility scooter section of our website details our policy the use of wheelchairs, powered chairs and scooters whilst travelling on our network (including any restrictions that apply to their use) together with how to obtain an ‘Access Pass’, our dedicated scheme for powered and mobility scooter users.

You can find out more by visiting our website and downloading our mobility scooter information leaflet;

www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/mobility-scooters

As part of the scheme we will ask you for details about your chair or scooter and we will assess it, providing you with the reassurance that it meets the safety requirements set out on page 23.

You can apply for a scooter pass from our Assisted Travel team. We will need you to tell us the dimensions of your scooter, we can then send you scooter pass to attach to your scooter so that you and our staff can quickly see that your scooter can safely be carried on our trains. Please contact the Assisted Travel team who will be happy to help.

Any rejection from the scheme will be fully explained to you once your application has been reviewed.

A6: Delays, disruption to facilities and services, and emergencies

From time to time there can be disruption to our services, but we will do everything we can to make sure you are not left disadvantaged or stranded during the disruption. We will make every effort to reintroduce normal services as soon as possible. We will also notify all passengers about delays and changes utilising on board and at station aural/visual announcements when:

- There are delays of over five minutes at stations or two minutes whilst on board;
- There is a change to the stations that the train is due to stop at; or
- The train is going to be taken out of service before it reaches its planned destination.

There may be times when there will be a need to provide alternative transport which will either be an accessible bus or accessible taxi. Any buses utilised will be PSVAR compliant and our centralised taxi ordering arrangements mean that accessible taxis are also utilised.

These will be arranged by our station or control room teams once they become aware of your needs and are arranged under our contract with third party suppliers.

Where planned disruption, including engineering works are taking place we will endeavour to contact you in advance to provide information on the use of rail replacement services, discuss your individual needs and preferences and make appropriate arrangements. We will do this if you have booked assistance using the contact details provided at the time of booking.

Disruption to station facilities

Network Rail are responsible for the maintenance of some station facilities and services. Sometimes they need to close facilities such as lifts and escalators to do this. If maintenance is planned we will publicise it in advance. If you have booked assistance we will endeavour to contact you to let you know.

Failure of information systems

If our information systems break down, our staff are trained to provide information and assistance to you, including giving guidance to visually or hearing impaired customers.

Emergency procedures

Our staff are trained in emergency procedures, safety and basic first aid to ensure that your needs are considered at all times. We carry out controlled emergency planning exercises, including the emergency services, allowing staff to enhance their experience.

On train

If there is an emergency on a train, our on-train staff are trained in the procedures to advise and help you. There are information posters on our trains outlining what you should do in an emergency situation. In most cases it is safest to remain on the train and await instructions.

If you have to leave the train between stations, our staff and the emergency services will provide the necessary equipment and help you get off safely. Our staff will support you during any incident of this nature.

At stations

Each station has its own detailed evacuation plan which takes into account the needs of disabled passengers. In an emergency, trained staff, with the assistance of the emergency services if necessary, will help you get to a safe place.

A7: Station facilities

A7.1: Left Luggage

Due to the nature of our network, we don't have left luggage facilities at any of the stations which we manage.

A7.2: Blue Badge Holder parking spaces

It is our policy that you should be able to travel to the station by private car and park with confidence. A full list of station facilities, including car parks can be found on our website www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/station-accessibility.

Some stations have a tarmac or concrete surfaced car park, with designated pick-up and drop-off points making access to the station easier and as safe as possible.

Many stations have free parking facilities including Blue Badge Holder parking spaces. The dedicated Blue Badge Holder parking spaces are situated as close as possible to the station entrance. In most cases these spaces fully comply with section C of the DfT's Joint Code of Practice. A piece of work will commence in March 2022 to ensure all Blue Badge Holder parking spaces are compliant to the code. This work is due to be complete by the end of 2022.

We monitor usage of Blue Badge Holder parking spaces. Such monitoring will enable appropriate enforcement action to be taken when non-Blue Badge holders park in designated spaces.

CCTV cameras cover car parks and the usage of Blue Badge Holder parking spaces is monitored either locally or remotely at Merseyrail Control or by our Security Centre teams. Merseyrail and Merseytravel regularly monitor car park usage and work together where possible to increase car parking facilities for all customers across the network.

All station car parks that are managed by Merseyrail have been approved by the Secure Car Park scheme.

A7.3 Third party provided facilities

We will ensure that any services and facilities provided by a third party are as accessible as possible; this requirement will be included by our agent Abellio Station Ventures in relevant contracts and enforced by them in the future.

Our station management team will monitor the services and facilities provided by third parties on a day-to-day basis to ensure that they do not cause an obstruction. While it is recognised that third-party service providers have their own responsibilities under the Equality Act, we will make every effort to ensure that any services and facilities provided by others at our stations are accessible to you.

A7.4: Replacement facilities

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

A7.5: Station entrances

Our property management and station management teams will consider your needs when deciding on the need to restrict or temporarily close access points at stations. We will comply with the agreed code of practice with regards to mandatory standards regarding unobstructed progress during building works.

We will not permanently close station entrances or gates if it leads to a reduction in accessibility for disabled customers to any platform or facility at the station unless we have consulted with DfT, Merseytravel, Transport Focus or, where appropriate user forums such Merseyrail Accessibility Forum.

Any changes will not be made until they have been approved by the DfT and Merseytravel.

A8: Redress and Compensation Passenger Assist – what to do if our assistance fails

In the unlikely event that assistance has been booked but has not been delivered, we will provide you with compensation for your journey.

In cases where assistance on the Merseyrail network is not provided, we will offer you a full refund for the cost of the journey. This will also apply for customers who chose to turn up and travel and do not receive assistance at the destination station by a member of Merseyrail staff.

This also includes assistance provided by our staff or staff of other train companies where you were travelling on or due to travel on one of our services.

We will be happy to assist you with your claim and we will provide details of the claim process in our *'Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers'* leaflet and on the following link ([TBC](#)).

We will coordinate a response to your complaint, should you have travelled with more than one operator during your journey. We will provide you with a full explanation in response, including why it happened and what mitigating actions we intend to take as a result.

B: Strategy and Management

In this section we set out how we:

- Embed the provision of services to disabled people within our business and our project planning
- Will continue to improve access to the railways for disabled people and those with reduced mobility
- Ensure our staff have the resources, skills and confidence to deliver assistance to passengers
- Measure the success of our Accessible Travel Policy

B1: Strategy and Management

Merseyrail is committed to the continuous improvement of services and facilities for disabled people. We believe that when you travel with us you should expect high standards of service throughout your journey. As such, we will:

- As a priority, continue to provide you with a safe, clean, punctual and reliable train service;
- Treat you fairly when things go wrong;
- Keep you informed about services, any planned changes and during disruption;
- Let you know our performance and quality targets in advance, and report each period how we are doing;
- Listen to you and engage with you where appropriate.

We are committed to working alongside our industry colleagues ORR, Network Rail, local authorities, DfT, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Community Rail Partnerships, Rail Ombudsman, Merseytravel and other stakeholder organisations, especially those representing all customers, to further improve the services, products, facilities and information we provide.

We believe that you have the right to safe, comfortable, punctual and seamless journeys, and we will work to broaden accessibility and equality on Merseyrail. Our Accessible Travel Policy fulfils our obligations under our Passenger/Station Licences and relevant ORR Guidance.

We will ensure that new facilities are designed to meet the standards of the PRM-TSI, as will all projects which replace or renew existing facilities.

Whilst we will exhaust every possible avenue, should we not be in a position to meet these standards on stations we will consult the DfT at the earliest stage in the design process so that suitable alternatives can be considered and dispensation sought from the Code of Practice.

Improving access and services on Merseyrail

We are committed to maintaining and further improving current standards of accessibility to our services for all our passengers. We believe we can achieve this by continuously working and engaging with all groups representing disabled people and other stakeholders in order to anticipate customer needs.

We will continue to review our policies annually and incorporate all the feedback we get from you, customer organisations and other stakeholders regarding the services we provide. This feedback will be vital in shaping our policies and making continuous improvements.

We will be improving access and services as follows:

- New Fleet: From 2022 Merseytravel are introducing a new fleet of trains onto the Merseyrail network. The new trains which have been designed with passengers, including those with disabilities, include a range of new accessibility features. This includes an innovative sliding step which will allow step free access from our platforms.
- We will continue to work with partners to deliver station enhancements through which increase accessibility. This will include the provision of lifts and stations under the DfT Access for All scheme.
- We will continue to offer our disabled customers the ability to turn up and travel at our stations without the need to book in advance. Where customers prefer to book we will continue to only require 1 hours' notice in order to make the arrangements required.

B2: Management arrangements

Protecting and improving your access to rail services is an integral part of our business strategy and is supported by the Merseyrail Board of Directors.

Accountability for owning and developing our Accessible Travel Policy rests with our Legal and Compliance Manager. This role will liaise with the relevant Heads of Service working on the specific tasks to ensure compliance.

Compliance is measured through;

- Periodic reporting processes, monitoring key measures such as passenger assist failure rates and complaints from customers using assisted travel services. These are shared where appropriate as part of our periodic ORR regulatory reporting process.
- Through cyclical internal audits ensuring that Merseyrail is living up to its commitments and taking action to rectify if any weaknesses are found.
- Through the work of our Customer Service Group, an internal steering group within Merseyrail that is made up of senior leaders of customer facing services. This Group monitors key performance indicators including those linked to assisted travel. It is responsible for ensuring both compliance and continual improvement.

Establishing and maintaining our Accessible Travel Policy is a condition of our Passengers' licence (Condition 6: Provision of Services for Disabled People) and Station Licence. For compliance purposes the Managing Director of Merseyrail is currently accountable for the Passengers' Licence and the Station Licence.

The Legal and Compliance Manager, works closely with relevant Heads of Service, who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation and compliance with our Accessible Travel Policy. This will largely be achieved through communication with the relevant managers and their teams, alongside customer satisfaction surveys, post travel research and periodic reports.

The implementation of developments in train and station design will be achieved by close liaison with the respective project teams. Their success will be monitored via customer feedback, relevant passenger survey results and the return on investments in the case of ticket sales. Our Customer Service Group and our Team of Directors review these, as appropriate.

B3: Monitoring and evaluation

Our key performance indicators referenced above are:

- Total number of customers who have booked assistance over the period;
- Total number of assisted bookings not successfully delivered over the period
- Total number of complaints we received about issues relating to disabled travel over the period;
- Total number of complaints received as a percentage of the booked journeys over the period; and
- Total number of employees who have received disability awareness training over the course of the year.

These performance indicators are monitored by the Head of Customer Experience and the Legal and Compliance Manager. Where appropriate they are shared with our Customer Service Group for further monitoring or action.

The Customer Relations team will review and investigate any complaints, or feedback, from our disabled customers and provide a detailed response in line with our Complaints Handling Policy. This will ensure that any failures in our commitments are identified and resolved as quickly as possible.

The Head of Customer Experience works with Heads from across the business to review complaints through the Customer Service Group. Where areas of concern are identified they work with the relevant teams to ensure resolution.

We will regularly review this policy and a report on our findings will be sent to the DfT and the ORR. This will include details of the achievements of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled customers and any difficulties we have encountered with the implementation of this policy.

B4: Access improvements

We are committed to complying with PRM-TSI and the Code of Practice when installing or refurbishing trains and facilities at stations.

We also commit to applying for derogations against the PRM-TSI or dispensations against the Code of Practice when necessary, after every effort has been made to comply with the relevant requirements.

Trains

Our existing fleet of trains complies fully with PRM-TSI. All new trains introduced on our network from 2021 will be built in accordance with the principles set out in the current PRM-TSI and the Code of Practice.

Stations

Access varies across all of the stations we operate. This is due to a combination of station design and the level of staff employed at each station. In accordance with the DfT's Access for All programme, and in partnership with the DfT, Network Rail, local authorities and businesses we will work to secure funding for and develop an ongoing strategy to improve the accessibility of our network, in accordance with the standards required.

Details of the accessibility at each individual station can be found on our website: www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/assisted-travel and on the National Rail website: www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations.

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

Brunswick steps

Brunswick footbridge steps fully resurfaced

Improvements being delivered in the next 12 -18 months

Merseyrail have been successful in a joint bid with Merseytravel to obtain funding from the DfT to install lifts at the following stations;

- St Michaels
- Hunts Cross
- Hillside
- Birkenhead Park

We will be delivering the installation of a new lift at Liverpool Central Station providing greater accessibility to passengers using the Northern line.

We will also be installing Tactiles to various stations across the network making the network fully Tactile compliant.

Future proposed improvements

We have also submitted a joint bid with Merseytravel, to the DfT, for Mid-tier access for all funding and if successful will deliver the following works over the control period CP6;

Station	Proposed Improvement
<p>Moorfields, Bank Hall, Bootle New Strand, Hightown and Walton</p>	<p>Currently a lack of toilet facilities acts as a barrier to access for those intending to use the Merseyrail network. The current trains, and our planned new trains, are not equipped with toilet facilities and there are a number of gaps in the provision of toilets across the network.</p> <p>The aim of this scheme looks to close the gap in the provision of toilet facilities and to install an accessible passenger toilets at these stations.</p> <p>In addition the proposal is to upgrade the existing toilets at Moorfields station up to current accessibility standards.</p>
<p>Bebington, Conway Park, Eastham Rake, Ellesmere Port, Freshfield, Hamilton Square, Hoylake, James Street, Lime Street, Little Sutton, Maghull, Meols, Moorfields, Orrell Park, Rice Lane, Sandhills, Seaforth and Litherland, St Michaels, Town Green, Wallasey Grove Road, Wallasey Villiage, Overpool.</p>	<p>To upgrade the existing handrails at a number of Merseyrail stations, up to the latest double handrail specification.</p>

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Station	Proposed Improvement
<p>Ainsdale, Aughton Park, Bebington, Birkenhead Park, Blundellsands and Crosby, Bromborough Rake, Brunswick, Hillside, Fazakerley, Hall Road, Hoylake, Kirkby, Kirkdale, Leasowe, Maghull, Old Roan, Orrell Park, Sandhills, Seaforth and Litherland, Overpool, Wallasey Grove Road, Wallasey Village, Waterloo.</p>	<p>Upgrade of passenger waiting facilities to latest Accessibility standards, including widening of doorways, removing steps at threshold to waiting areas and the creation of suitable areas, within the shelters, for wheelchair users to wait.</p>
<p>New Brighton, Birkenhead North, Hamilton Square, James Street, Bidston, Hoylake, West Kirby, Birkenhead Central, Rock Ferry, Hooton, Ellesmere Port, Bache, Hunts Cross, Liverpool South Parkway, Liverpool Central (Northern Line), Moorfields (Northern Line), Sandhills, Kirkdale, Walton, Rice Lane, Kirkby, Aintree, Maghull, Town Green, Ormskirk, Hall Road, Formby, Hillside, Blundellsands & Crosby and Southport.</p>	<p>This project is to install new Digital information screens at the following stations:-</p> <p>New Brighton, Birkenhead North, Hamilton Square, James Street, Bidston, Hoylake, West Kirby, Birkenhead Central, Rock Ferry, Hooton, Ellesmere Port, Bache, Hunts Cross, Liverpool South Parkway, Liverpool Central (Northern Line), Moorfields (Northern Line), Sandhills, Kirkdale, Walton, Rice Lane, Kirkby, Aintree, Maghull, Town Green, Ormskirk, Hall Road, Formby Hillside, Blundellsands & Crosby and Southport.</p> <p>The sites selected are key stations, and turn back locations, where service disruptions can result in passengers having to change trains.</p> <p>The provision of information, especially at times of disruption, is recognised as being important to all passengers but more so for vulnerable travellers.</p> <p>This investment will enable up-to date information to be passed to passengers at times of disruption to re-assure them of any problems.</p>

B5: Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

Key organisations that represent the interests of customers with disabilities – including ORR, DPTAC, DfT and Transport Focus – have reviewed our Accessible Travel Policy.

In 2020 we established the Merseyrail Accessibility Forum, comprising local disabled people, groups that represent them and community outreach organisations that specifically support the disabled community within the Liverpool City Region. Where major changes occur we actively engage with this group well in advance, ensuring their views and feedback form a key part of our planning and communication activities.

We will actively promote the availability of assisted travel, with a particular focus on the customer leaflet, *'Making Rail Accessible - Helping Older and Disabled Passengers'*. As well as ensuring that this leaflet is available at staffed stations, in prominent locations where public services are provided, such as Merseytravel's public information centres, and online, we will also advertise the leaflet on station posters and via social media, as appropriate. We also work closely with Merseytravel to promote the location of our stations through appropriate signage and wayfinding.

We will make every reasonable effort to ensure that we meet and maintain the standards set out in our Accessible Travel Policy. If we believe that we are not meeting the commitments within our Accessible Travel Policy we will consult with the Merseytravel and, if appropriate, the DfT.

We will submit our Accessible Travel Policy to Merseytravel, ORR and DfT for regular review from the date of approval. We will also provide an annual report to ORR on the activity, and outputs of our work with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities.

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

B6: Staff training

Merseyrail offers training to colleagues who directly provide service to our customers by providing them with the relevant knowledge and skills needed to best meet the needs of customers who have impairments. It also seeks to ensure they do this in accordance with both the law, the Equality Act 2010 and Merseyrail's commitment to further improve current standards of accessibility to our services for all our passengers.

This includes;

- Frontline staff who may, at any time, need to assist passengers. They receive appropriate training in the use of equipment provided to assist people with disabilities, such as ramps, wheelchairs and induction loops;
- Any staff who may, at any time, deal directly with passengers receive appropriate training to help them communicate with people who have different disabilities; and
- Any staff who answer telephones are trained in communicating clearly with people who may have difficulty speaking, hearing or understanding.

During 2021, Merseyrail successfully delivered training in conjunction with the ORR ATP Guidance on accessible travel to;

- All new staff including senior managers
- All existing customer facing staff received classroom-based refresher training
- Our Customer relations team attended virtual refresher training
- All existing non-customer facing staff received online refresher training including the ATP policy update

Looking ahead, Merseyrail commits to provide all staff with refresher training every two years. Where reasonably practicable, we will provide the suppliers of temporary staff to be used on our network with the training content that is used to meet the outcomes 6,7 & 9 of the ORR ATP Guidance. Suppliers will also be required to demonstrate that all staff utilised have completed the training.



Accessible Travel Policy
April 2022