Making Rail Accessible

Helping Older and Disabled Passengers

November 2022

Merseyrail

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Introduction

Foreword by
Andy Heath
Managing Director

We aim to deliver a sustainable and customer focused railway that everyone in the communities we serve can be proud of. We have developed this document as part of our Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) to set out the arrangements and services we have in place to help customers with restricted mobility and those requiring assistance including:

- If you have visual or auditory impairments or learning difficulties
- If you have a short or long-term mobility impairment
- Those customers with non-visible disabilities which may not be immediately apparent to others
- If you are older
- If you are travelling with disabled children in pushchairs or wheelchairs

There is no charge for any of our assisted travel services

We believe that all customers have the right to a safe, comfortable, punctual and trouble-free journey. Our goal is simply to provide trains and stations that are as accessible as possible, ensuring you enjoy the best possible access and journey comfort when travelling with us.

This leaflet sets out our commitment to you and explains how you can request assistance.

Assistance – What is available and how to get it

We aim to provide assistance to you throughout the Merseyrail network and beyond, whether you have booked in advance or not. You can simply turn up at the station or you can book in advance via our helpful Assisted Travel team. We have explained how to do this in more detail in this leaflet.

Whilst you can turn up and travel at our accessible stations we can also assist you in:

- Helping you to plan your journey
- Assisting you in buying a ticket at the station including Advance Purchase discount tickets and Railcards
- Reserving advance seats or wheelchair / scooter spaces with other train companies (where reservations are available and your scooter is allowed)
- Offering advice on what facilities are available at stations and on board the train
- Remove this bullet and replace with
- From late 2022, we will begin introducing our new fleet of class 777 trains onto the Merseyrail network. This revolutionary new train offers step free boarding and alighting at all Merseyrail stations. This means that where a station is accessible, you will be able to board or alight independently if you wish to. During this time our existing Class 507 and 508 trains will still be in operation, and you will continue to require a ramp to access these vehicles if boarding and alighting in a wheelchair.

  Our new fleet will be introduced gradually onto the Merseyrail network over a period of approximately 12-18 months. Whilst this

process is taking place some services will continue to be operated using the older vehicles, therefore we recommend that you continue to request assistance at the ticket office, station help point or in advance via our dedicated Assisted Travel Team

- Helping with luggage
- Guiding you on or off the train
- Assisting you towards a connecting train
- Assisting you to or from the station boundary for your onward connections by other means of transport

What we can't assist you with:

- We cannot assist with lifting you or with personal care
- Staff are not able to leave the immediate station boundary (including car parks) or cross public roads

Turning up at a station without booking assistance in advance

You will need to check that the stations you want to travel to and from are accessible to you. Most of our stations are open from start to end of service but we do advise that you check via the contact methods detailed further on in this leaflet or on our dedicated assisted travel page on our website www.merseyrail.org/assistedtravel.

If you require assistance, please make yourself known to a member of staff when you arrive. We will be delighted to help if you don't book in advance, however if we are not expecting you, you may be required to wait a short time if the member of staff is already assisting a customer at your departure or destination station at a similar time.

Our new class 777 trains will begin to enter passenger service from late 2022. The roll out of the

trains will take approximately 18 months. For the duration of the period, we would strongly recommend that you continue to request assistance, if you currently require it. This will help us to ensure you can board the train service you require regardless of which type of train you are travelling on.

Our station staff will provide assistance for you at stations including helping you buy a ticket and assist you with boarding and getting off between the platform and train. If the train you are traveling on is a new class 777 train, our staff will assist you to the platform and position you in the best place for the doors. You will then be able to board yourself using the sliding step technology. If you are visually impaired or still require help to board and alight, please let our staff know and they will be happy to help. Our staff will telephone through to your connecting or destination station to ensure that you will be met at the other end, this call will include what assistance you need and where you are on the train. If you are travelling to an accessible unstaffed station, the station staff will ask the Guard on board to assist you off the train.

Unstaffed or temporarily closed stations

If you want to travel from an accessible unstaffed station please use the help point on the platform to alert our control room. Also at each station entrance there is welcome poster on which you find telephone numbers for the Assisted Travel team in Customer Relations, they will then take your details and alert the Guard on board the next available train. The Guard can then assist you as required including deploying the ramp to board the train if necessary.

If the train you are traveling on is a new class 777 train, you should wait on the platform for the train to arrive. You will then be able to board yourself using the sliding step or where you have asked us to, our

train manager will assist you onto the train.

If you wish to travel from a station not accessible to you, please contact the Assisted Travel team who will arrange an accessible taxi to the next accessible station. This service will be of no charge to you but you do need to purchase a rail ticket at the earliest and most convenient opportunity to cover the whole journey.

To find out more about travelling to and from inaccessible stations go to page 11.

Booking Assistance in Advance

You are able to book assistance via our Assisted Travel team in advance of travel. If your journey is only between Merseyrail stations, just **one hour's** notice is required to ensure your travel arrangements can be communicated to our staff. When you arrive at the station please make yourself known to a member of staff.

Please note when travelling off our network where your journey involves travelling with another train operating company, please be aware that we currently accept bookings up to 2 hours in advance of travel. 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. You should be aware however that there may be situations where other train operators are not able to assist you on the particular train you need, for example if they operate a pre-booking policy for wheelchair spaces. This is the reason we strongly advise booking in advance.

If you wish to travel at a weekend we strongly recommend that you contact our Assisted Travel team, due to the possibility of engineering work taking place on the rail network and trains being replaced by buses. There is more information on alternative accessible transport further on in this leaflet.

You can request assistance with us for Merseyrail or other train operating companies by:

- Calling our Assisted Travel team on 0800 0277 347, (free of charge from a landline. If calling from a mobile, you may be charged if you dial 0800 numbers) or 0151 955 1111 (the cost depends on your communication provider). The team are available Monday to Friday 07.00 to 19.00 hours. Our Customer Relations team is available 364 days per year. We are closed on Christmas Day.
- If you require to book assistance outside the hours above only please ring 0151 702 2704.
- Textphone and text relay users please prefix 18001 prior to dialling the numbers above.
- Email our Assisted Travel team to comment@merseyrail.org
- Contact us on WhatsApp at 0151 555 1111
- Message us on twitter @merseyrail (we will need to contact you via direct message to obtain your details)

All train operators and other booking agents use the same system called Passenger Assist so that we can track your journey and offer the assistance that you have requested. We will need to ask you some questions when you book so that we can ensure the correct assistance is provided.

Inaccessible stations

Whilst we make every effort to make our stations accessible, you should be aware that some stations may have physical or navigational constraints that could make it inaccessible to you. 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.

We will book you suitable accessible alternative transport which will normally be a taxi, at no extra charge, between the inaccessible station and the nearest or most convenient accessible station for your journey. Also, if your destination station is inaccessible to you, we will help you plan your journey to the nearest or most convenient accessible station and provide alternative transport to your destination station. There are no extra charges for this service.

When speaking to our Assisted Travel team we will discuss your individual needs determining what the most suitable transport is for your requirements. We will make sure you can complete as much of your journey by rail as possible. Please try and book this as soon as you can so that we can be sure of providing the right transport for you. Once your booking is confirmed we will ensure you have all the information you need.

What to expect – our commitment to customers at every stage of the journey:

Before you travel

All our staff receive training in disability awareness and will ensure that you have everything you need to plan your journey.

You can check if stations are suitable for you by using the handy interactive map on the Merseyrail website. You can use the website to check if the facilities available at your chosen stations will meet your requirements such as step to platform heights, station ramps, lifts, induction loops, accessible toilets and Blue Badge Holder parking spaces. Our staffed stations are open from 15 minutes before the first train to 15 minutes after the last train has departed.

The web link for all this information is www.merseyrail.org/assistedtravel or you can telephone our Assisted Travel team as well as asking any member of our station or on board staff.

Delays to your journey

If you have booked in advance and there is a significant delay to your journey, if you have provided your contact details we will make every effort to contact you before you arrive at the station so we can make revised arrangements that suit your requirements. We advise all our customers that they should check before travelling, please see 'How to Get in Touch' at the back of this leaflet.

Buying your ticket

You can purchase your ticket at any of our staffed ticket offices who will have access to the full range of railcards and advance and on day fares. We have ticket machines at some staffed stations and at all unstaffed stations (Disabled rail cards can be used on these machines) . If you have difficulty in using the ticket machines please advise a member of staff on your journey who will assist you. There will be no penalty if a disability prevents you from buying a valid ticket and any discount you are entitled to will be applied.

Merseyrail do not offer telephone sales however the Assisted Travel team will help you choose the best ticket and route for your journey. They can also advise you where your nearest accessible ticket office is, should you need face to face support.

As well as the national discounts below, Merseytravel offer their own concessionary discounts to residents in the Liverpool City Region. Please ask us for information or you can contact Merseytravel direct www.merseytravel.gov.uk/tickets/concessions/Pages/Disabled.aspx or telephone 0151 330 1000.

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.

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

All of our Station and Revenue Protection teams are aware of this policy and will be happy to assist you where needed.

There are a range of discounts available to older and disabled people.

Disabled Persons Railcard
This railcard will save you and a companion 1/3 off train fares. However, see below for automatic discounts without a Disabled Persons Railcard.

Senior Railcard
If you're over 60, this railcard will save you a 1/3 off most train fares. Please note that time restrictions do apply in some parts of the UK in terms of the use of this railcard.

Two Together Railcard
With this railcard you and the person you travel with the most will get 1/3 off rail fares when you travel together.

Travelling without a Disabled Persons Railcard
Some disabled passengers are automatically entitled to discounts so it may be worth checking this out before buying a railcard. The discounts are as follows.

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

You are entitled to these discounts if you are:

- a wheelchair user staying in your wheelchair during the journey (the discount also applies to one person travelling with you); or

- visually impaired (blind or partially sighted) and travelling with one other person. You are not entitled to this discount if you are travelling alone. You must provide written evidence of your visual impairment to get the discount. This evidence must be provided at the time you buy your ticket.

Child wheelchair users are entitled to 75% off these tickets. Please note that:

- in some cases it might be cheaper to buy a full-rate off-peak or advance ticket; and
- you cannot buy tickets with these discounts online or from ticket machines, only from ticket offices. Please ask our staff for more information.

Wheelchair and scooter dimensions

We are only able to carry wheelchairs, scooters and mobility aids up to a certain size for safety reasons and to meet turning circle restrictions on board our trains. The maximum size dimensions are:

- 700mm by 1200mm; and
- 300kg (combined weight of passenger and wheelchair/scooter)

If a scooter or wheelchair user positions their vehicle safely within the designated space they don't need to transfer to a seat on Merseyrail trains. If your scooter or wheelchair is particularly large, staff may ask you to confirm the dimensions to ensure your safety on our services. If you are not sure of these, please contact your wheelchair or scooter provider before you travel.

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.

When trains are not running due to planned or emergency engineering works, we cannot provide alternative transport for scooter users. However if you are already traveling 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.

At the station

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

The information includes:

- Level of accessibility from station entrance to platforms
- Staffing hours and assistance availability
- Meeting points for assistance
- Ramps for train access

- Accessible waiting rooms, toilets and set-down/pick-up points.
- whether new class 777 trains are in use on the line you are traveling on

If we have your contact details we will try 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.

All stations have a clearly marked assisted travel meeting point utilising the look and feel shown below.

For full details please see our up-to-date stations facilities including our step free accessibility map please visit our website;

www.merseyrail.org/assistedtravel

For stations not served by Merseyrail the National Rail Enquiries website;

www.accessmap.nationalrail.co.uk

We recommend that you arrive at your departure station in good time. As a general rule, arriving at the station twenty minutes before your train is due to leave means we can provide you with the best quality assistance. We particularly recommend this at larger and underground stations, whilst at our smaller stations we recommend ten minutes.

We also recommend you are on the platform at least five minutes before the train is due to leave.

At our unstaffed stations, we recommend that you go to the appropriate entrance or platform for your train service and advise staff via the help point of your arrival.

We realise that you may change your journey plans at short notice. If you change your mind before you travel, and you have booked assistance, please let us know as soon as possible.

If your journey plans change once your journey has begun please tell a member of staff as soon as possible and we will do what we can to assist you with your new travel needs.

Aural and visual information

At all stations we have visual customer information systems which show the destination of the next train, all stations the train will call at and when it will arrive. This system complies with national standards. All stations are fitted with a public address system. At times of service disruption we will provide information on train service alternatives and any alternative transport arrangements through the public address system, visual customer informaiton system, or in person if possible.

Information points and displays

Our Ticket Offices serve as information and meeting points. Travel information and train departure posters are located on each platform. In addition help points which are fitted with induction loops are located on all station platforms. All help points are linked to a control room and can provide information on train running times and can respond to emergencies.

Welcome posters are located at or near the station entrance and provide information on the facilities at the station, a contract number for a local taxi, lost property and our Assisted Travel/Customer Relations team contact number.

A number of our stations have 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 spaces are situated as close as possible to the station entrance.

We have been investing in better station facilities to make our network more accessible and comfortable for you, including new lifts, suitable–height ticket counters, induction loops and help points, toilets and accessible toilets, waiting rooms, accessible seating and handrails.

On the train

We currently operate two models of tain our existing 507/508 model and our new 777 model.

Regardless of which type of train you are traveling on, we will have a guard or train manager on board who is available to answer any questions you have for onward travel. All of our trains have:

- Visual screens that show the next stop
- Announcements on board both automated and verbal as required
- Wheelchair spaces
- Priority seats

The wheelchair space cannot be reserved however and access to this space is on a first come first served basis. 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.

When a train reaches its destination we aim to assist you from the train within five minutes unless you indicate that you will alight without assistance.

Please do not hesitate to ask our on-board team if you need help to alight from the train.

If things do not go as planned

During disruption

When there is disruption our staff will let customers know as soon as possible, this may be by making announcements, the use of electronic information screens, notice boards and posters and by staff at the station or on the train. Our staff are trained to recognise both visible and non-visible disabilities, if they see you at the station or on board they will actively speak to you to offer assistance however do not hesitate to call for help.

There are emergency call buttons on our trains, on platforms and in lifts. In an emergency all staff are trained how to safely evacuate from trains and stations in conjunction with the emergency services.

Disruption is announced on stations and regularly updated on our Merseyrail twitter feed and website.

If our services are disrupted, we will take the worry away from you and provide alternative transport to take you to the nearest accessible station so that you can continue on your journey. Our station staff will make the necessary arrangements for your assistance and onward travel arrangements and one travelling companion including organising accessible transport. This may be by an accessible bus or taxi.

Planned engineering works

When the train service is subject to planned engineering works, an accessible low-floor bus service is provided.

In the event of disruption a map showing the location of rail replacement bus stops can be found on the information page of the station you are traveling from or to at www.merseyrail.org/plan-your-journey/stations

When trains are not running due to planned or emergency engineering works, we cannot provide alternative transport for scooter users.

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.

If we get things wrong

We want you to have confidence in our passenger assistance service and we will always do our best to give you the assistance you have asked for. However, occasionally we may not be able to fulfil our promise and if we do not provide the assistance as booked, please contact us as soon as possible so we can investigate the reasons why.

This 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.

If we haven't provided the level of service you expect, please let our Customer Relations

department know, we will investigate what went wrong, put things right and provide redress and an apology to you. If proven that we have failed, we will refund 100% of the price you paid for that leg of the journey on the Merseyrail network.

The Customer Relations contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

Where to get more information and how to get in touch

Merseyrail understands the importance of providing up-to-date accurate information. We will take all reasonable steps to provide consistent and up-to-date information via our website at www.merseyrail.org and on the National Rail. Enquiries website www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Our Customer Relations team and station staff are also there to help you.

Merseyrail also provides up to date information on our online social media platforms. Here you can be informed of any engineering works, train disruption and travel info as well as general enquiries.

If there is a temporary change that affects station access or facilities, we will update the information on our website, together with the relevant pages on the National Rail Enquiries website and with a message on the Passenger Assist booking system. We will update these sites for all changes that will last more than one day.

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. These documents (Making rail accessible: helping older and disabled passengers and Making rail accessible: guide to policies and practices), are also on our website for download, and a hard copy can be obtained from our staffed stations or by writing to our Customer Relations team. We provide a variety of information and assistance for people with sensory impairments. If you need information in other formats we will produce these within seven working days.

Our policies and practices will be reviewed annually.

If we make any major changes to our policies, practices or there is a change to legislation, we will ensure the information is correct and up to date.

If there are any changes we will publish a printed edition of the updated document every year.

However, the most up-to-date version will always be available.

Contact Us

We welcome your comments and feedback about all aspects of our services. If you would like to give feedback, the fastest and easiest way to contact us is via our social media channels, the details you need to do this are below. Alternatively you can contact us by using a Comments form which are available at all our stations or email the Customer Relations team to comment@merseyrail.org.

You can also write to our Customer Relations team at:

Customer Relations Department
Merseyrail
Rail House
Lord Nelson Street
Liverpool
L1 1JF

Information for disabled passengers can be obtainable from:

- All of our station ticket offices
- Our website, available at: www.merseyrail.org
- If you need any support on the day of travel please contact our Assisted Travel team as part of our Customer Relations department , telephone number and textphone number 0800 0277 347 (free of charge from landlines. If calling from a mobile, you may be charged if you dial 0800 numbers) or 0151 555 1111, (the costs depends on your communication provider). These lines are open Monday – Friday 07.00 to 19.00 (outside of this times please call 0151 702 2704)
- National Rail Enquiries – telephone: 08457 48 49 50
- Text phone: 08456 05 06 00
- National Rail: www.nationalrail.co.uk
- Merseytravel: www.merseytravel.gov.uk

If you want to pre book assistance please contact our Assisted Travel Team on 0800 0227 347 or 0151 555 1111 or by email comment@merseyrail.org

Customers requiring to book assistance outside these hours, weekends or Bank Holidays can ring 0151 702 2704.

We are also pleased to hear from you and welcome your views, comments on accessibility issues and any suggestions for improvements to the services we provide. If you think there is any information missing from this booklet that you would find useful, please let us know.

Alternative formats

Copies of this document are available, free of charge, from our ticket offices, our Customer Relations team and from our website www.merseyrail.org

We will also provide copies in alternative formats such as audio and large print, and easy read on request and will endeavour to have the documents available on demand. If not, we can send them to you within seven days.

Merseyrail

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November 2022

Merseyrail