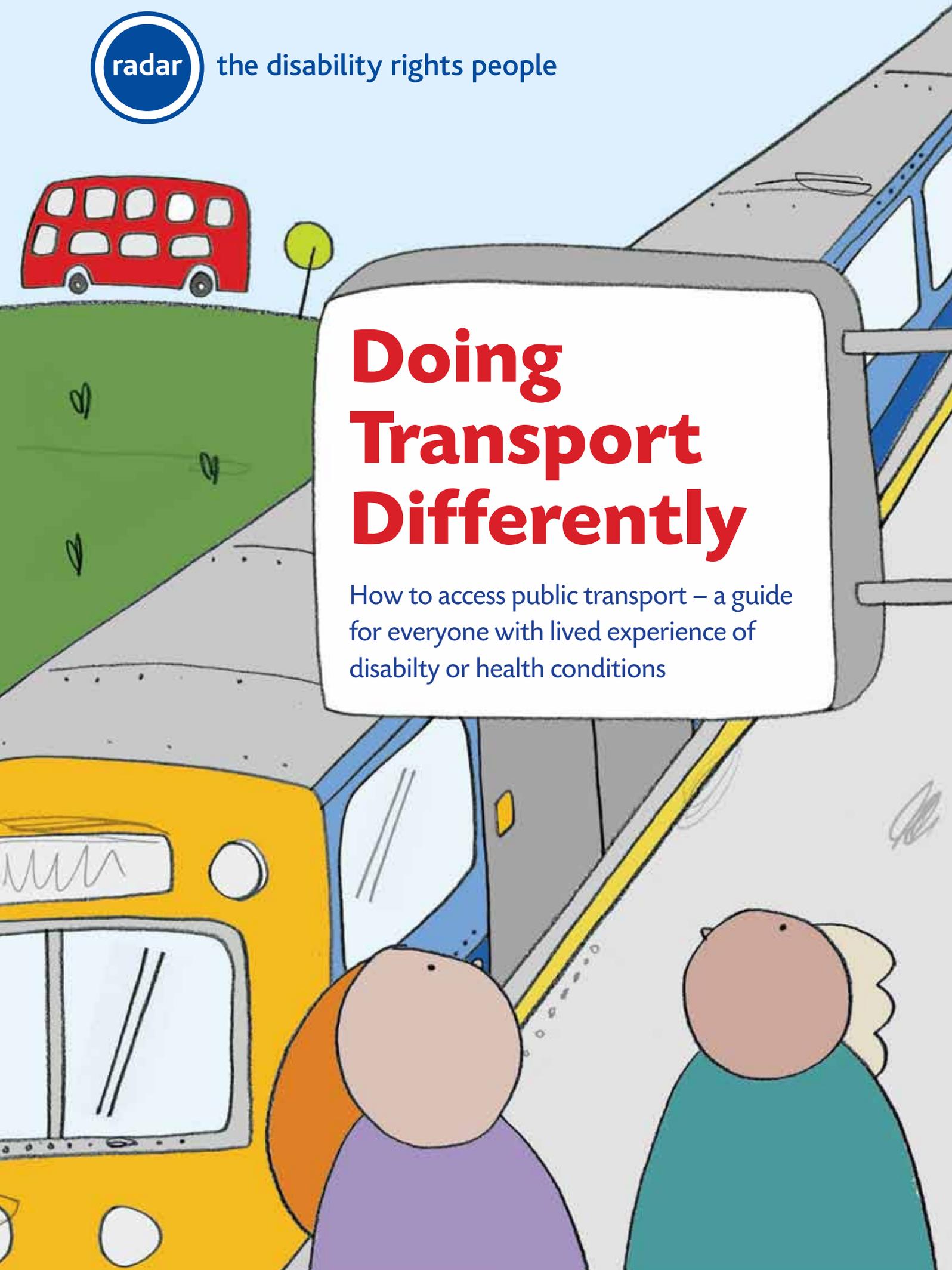




the disability rights people

Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide
for everyone with lived experience of
disability or health conditions



Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

How to use this guide

This guide is aimed at people with lived experience of disability or health conditions and at those advising or working with them. Using a question and answer approach to enable different people with different travel needs to dip into it in different ways, it will show you how far access to public transport has improved and how to make use of it.

Where should I start?

- » If you're not yet using public transport for whatever reason and want to know what's possible, go to **section two**.
- » For an overview of the law as it relates to transport, go to **section two**.
- » To begin planning a journey, short or long, go to **section three**.
- » For information and advice on using buses or coaches, go to **section four**.
- » For information and advice on using trains, go to **section five**.
- » For information and advice on underground trains, go to **section six**.
- » For information and advice on light rail and tramways, ferries and other forms of transport, go to **section seven**.

The resources section includes both useful websites and useful phone numbers to keep with you when you travel.

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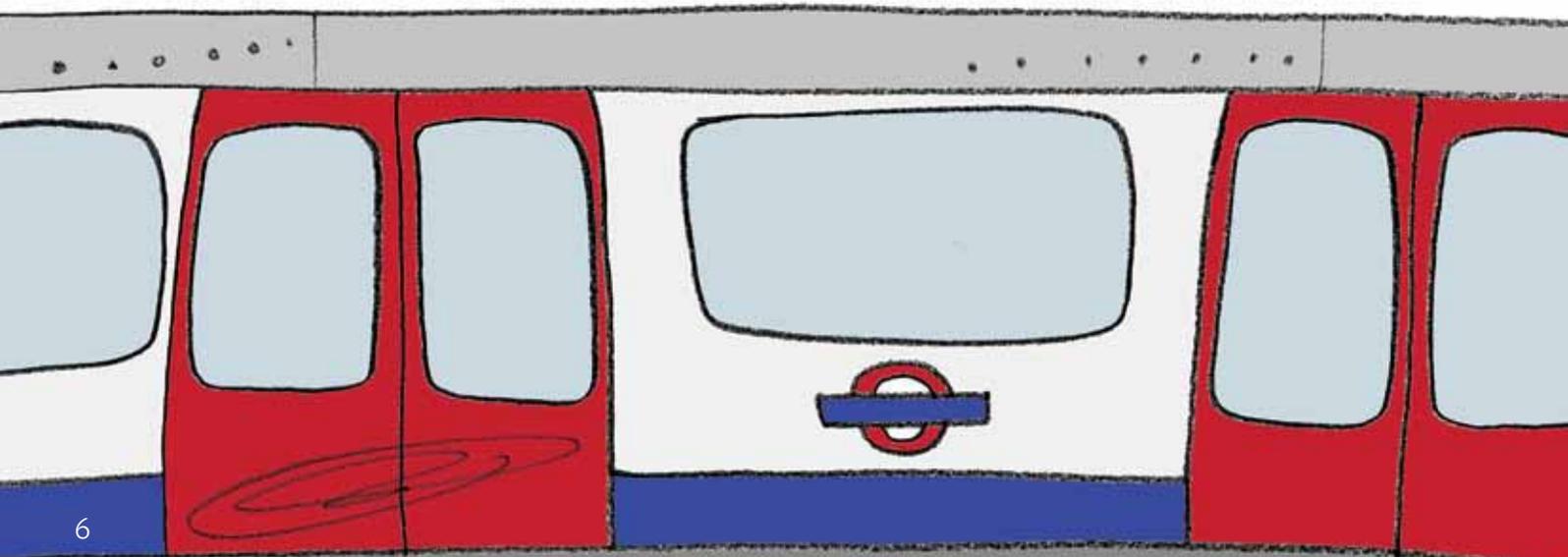
Foreword

Genevieve Barr

I live and work in London and with my acting, work in disability and leadership, I travel a lot. I like the overground trains in London the best – they're spacious and very accessible in terms of having live information written on screens as well as voiced over.

Of course, trains can frustrate me. When there are delays, the information is only relayed by microphone and that means that because I am deaf I have to ask someone to pass on that information or suffer in silence.

I also like the tube because it is fast and the information is really clear and easy to use. I do think it can be made much more accessible though, particularly for wheelchair users. Still, public transport is getting there. Radar's Doing Transport Differently will help all of us to get there too.



Sir Bert Massie CBE

When I left school in 1965 there was no choice but to use a car or, in my case, an 'invalid tricycle' provided by the then Department of Health.

There was not an accessible taxi in the country. If I travelled by rail I was placed into a dark, cold and dreary guard's van. The only accessible vehicles were owned by charities that controlled their use. None of the pavements were ramped so it was impossible to get to the bus-stop. It was also futile because none of the buses were accessible.

During the 1980s Radar and other organisations did a huge amount of work to make the case that transport should be suitable for disabled people. Even when the government and transport operators accepted the argument, more work was required to decide how to make transport accessible and to agree what was meant by 'accessible'.

The debate moved on. No longer was it necessary to just meet the needs of wheelchair users. The needs of people with other mobility impairments had to be met. Colour-contrasting assisted visually impaired people, better handrails were welcomed by people with arthritis, better signing assisted deaf people and clearer information helped those with learning disabilities.



During the last two decades much of the public transport in the UK has become accessible to disabled people although there remains much to do. Despite this progress, the missing element is often that some disabled people have insufficient information about what is available and therefore lack the confidence to use it. This guide is an attempt to put that right.

The information you need to get out and about is between the covers of this publication. That is why I very much welcome this new guide in Radar's Doing Life Differently series. All that remains is for you, the reader, to Do Transport Differently.

1: We're getting there

Beginning the journey

We all know that travel broadens the mind. But it can do a lot more than that. Public transport can revolutionise the way you do things or, indeed, whether you can do them at all – whether you can go out and how often, the way you travel to work, how often you see your friends, your ability to take up a new hobby, how fit and healthy you are and your carbon footprint.

Discovering a new bus route might enable you to go swimming during your lunch hour. Securing that cheap Advance train fare could be the difference between seeing your friend perform at the Edinburgh Festival and missing it. A boat down the Thames is still one of the best ways of seeing London.

But the truth is that public transport is not always the easiest method of transport – hopping into a car seems much easier. However, in recent years two things have happened: travel in private cars has become more time-consuming, more expensive and more difficult, while public transport has become easier to use and more accessible to more of the population. To be sure, it's not perfect as we know only too well, especially in some parts of the country – but it's worth seeing how it can work for you.

» Travellers' Tales

'The independence that I gain from bus travel allows me to do the things necessary for my recovery such as attending treatment appointments, socialising and volunteering.'

Doing Transport Differently is aimed at those of us living with disability or a health condition or who for some other reason have found public transport tricky to use in the past. It will show you how the system has become more accessible, how to get the best out of it and why you should consider it seriously when planning your next journey, whether that's down to the local shops or to the other end of the country.

This guide looks at the benefits of travel by public transport, how to enjoy your journey from planning to arrival and at the main forms of public transport available in the UK: train, bus, underground, metro, light rail, tram and ferry. And because it focuses on integrated journeys – getting from door to door – it also includes basic information on some of the more private forms of transport such as taxis and assisted transport schemes.

» Travellers' Tales

'When I first started work in 1980, I used to travel there on the train. In those days, there were no wheelchair spaces on trains, nor were there any ramps. My wheelchair had to be manhandled, with me in it, into the guards van.

One memorable morning, the guard on the train refused to allow my father to get me and my wheelchair onto the train unless I could show him a pass, signed by the Area Manager, allowing me to travel with the post. I didn't have one. We tried remonstrating but it was pointless.

The guard on the next train allowed me on without a murmur but I was late to work that day.

I needed this pass not, it should be stressed, to travel in the lap of luxury but to travel in an unheated, bare carriage with dirty wooden walls and floors and with bars at windows that were often open even in the depths of winter. I shared this salubrious space not only with the post, but with stacks of bicycles that would fall on top of me whenever the train stopped.

Needless to say, I weaved my way around the bureaucracy of British Rail, located the (extremely apologetic) Area Manager and got the requisite paperwork, which I never had to use again. But rules is rules, and absurd as it seems, the post was more important than people. I defy anyone to suggest that train travel hasn't improved for disabled travellers.'

It's not just people with physical impairments who find public transport a challenge, people with mental health conditions or learning difficulties can also find it inaccessible. If you think public transport's not for you, whatever the reason, Doing Transport Differently will make you think again.

All prices and fares mentioned were correct at the time of writing but are subject to change and are included here for guidance only.

2: Expanding your horizons

Public transport is for all of us. That's why it's called public transport. We all have the right to use it and transport operators naturally want as many customers as possible. But some of us face challenges in accessing it. This chapter answers some of the frequently asked questions about access to public transport in the UK today.

What are the benefits of using public transport?

There are many. How many of these appeal to you?

- » Public transport will make you more independent. This is especially true if you don't have your own car but even if you do, it will considerably increase your options.
- » It is flexible – once you get off you forget it, no worries about parking or parking costs making it ideal for going out, for meeting friends, for going to work and many other journeys.
- » It brings together people of all ages, backgrounds and classes fostering a sense of community far more than, for example, travelling in isolation in cars. It helps us feel part of things. In a survey for the Mental Health Action Group published in September 2011, 83% of respondents said public transport was 'very important' to their mental health.

» Travellers' Tales

'The advances in making transport more accessible for disabled people have changed my life dramatically. It has given me and my family a way to travel and the opportunity to get out. Before buses were made accessible with the wheelchair space, I had been confined to a large adult buggy and was forced to always travel with a companion.

I now have the freedom to travel short distances (that are well tried and tested) independently and am able to meet people at the other end without them being obliged to travel with me. This has greatly improved my confidence and my view of the outside and my place in it. It most certainly contributed to my choice and ability to travel in to London to both study and now to work. Without these advances this would have been extremely difficult.'

- » It encourages us to have a more active healthy lifestyle, particularly if we combine it with walking or cycling to the station or stop.
- » It is safer – cars are by far the most dangerous form of transport. Reducing the number of cars on the road reduces the number of deaths and injuries caused by car accidents.

- » It is usually less stressful. While drivers are coping with traffic jams, heavy traffic and looking for a parking space, public transport passengers are reading a book or newspaper, listening to music, playing computer games or messing about with their mobile phones. Of course, it's not always like that but with 84% passenger satisfaction, it is most of the time.
- » While individual journeys are not always cheaper, in the medium to long-term, public transport travel is far cheaper than owning and running a car. (Tickets today may be cheaper than you think. There are also many passes and concessions for disabled or older travellers as you'll see in this guide.)
- » It is environmentally-friendly – public transport reduces the use of fuel and reduces carbon dioxide emissions, pollution and congestion. If you travel from London to Glasgow by train instead of flying, you could save 56kg of CO₂. Three return journeys like this will reduce the average person's annual transport carbon footprint by nearly 20%. Commuting between Maidenhead and London every day by train rather than car saves nearly two tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

In short, using public transport is better for you, better for the economy and better for the environment. It can also be combined with other cheap and healthy forms of transport such as walking – see the websites of Walk England and Walk 4 Life for more information – and cycling.

But how can our ageing public transport system ever be accessible to all?

It's true that with the world's oldest railway, oldest tube network and oldest tram service (on Brighton sea front), making Britain's public transport system accessible has not always been easy. There are still many of what the engineers call 'legacy issues'. But creative thinking is helping. A good example is the Harrington hump which raises the height of a platform to reduce the stepping distance to the train. Named after Harrington, a 150 year old station in Cumbria where it was first used, the hump is relatively cheap (a tenth of the price of raising a platform conventionally), easy and quick to fit and can be modified to suit the platform in question.

Since the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, the government has introduced a series of regulations concerning the accessibility of rail and public service vehicles. As a result, accessibility has been more or less part of the design of most public transport vehicles or stations opened or introduced in the last 15 years. Many new systems such as the Docklands Light Railway, while still not perfect for everyone, are nevertheless case studies in what can be achieved.

Even busy, old stations can be made accessible. Clapham Junction station opened in 1863 and today more trains pass through it than any other in Europe. But under the Access For All railway improvement programme, Network Rail finished refurbishing it in 2011 with a new second entrance, lifts, footbridges, handrails and tactile paving. It is now step-free from entrance to platform. Access to information has improved too. Think of the audio-visual displays in trains, undergrounds and some buses. If you're blind, a tourist or just not sure where you are, they make all the difference. Organisations such as Guide Dogs are campaigning for these to be mandatory on all public transport systems – a campaign we support.

But perhaps even more important than the infrastructure is the staff. Appropriate training for dealing with disabled passengers was prioritised by the government under its Railways For All strategy and the vast majority have now had it. Under EU regulations, disability awareness and equality training is obligatory for all customer-facing rail staff engineers and managers responsible for rail infrastructure.

Many bus drivers have also had such training and an EU regulation will make it mandatory here too in the near future. Most public transport staff have always wanted to help – that's why they work in a public service – but now they have the skills needed to do so effectively.

We're not under any illusions. At Radar, we still hear stories of drivers who don't pull in at a convenient place, who don't give out information, who are rude, allow others to be rude, or who question your right to a concessionary pass, but they're becoming the exception. (If you come across staff who don't behave as if they've had any disability awareness training, the transport operators want to know, so report them. You'll be helping them learn how to do their job better.)

There are millions of people in the UK living with impairments or health conditions that may make it more difficult for them to use public transport. That's a lot of potential train and bus ticket sales down the drain if the system is not accessible. Public transport providers know this and in a competitive market they want our custom. It's fair to say that it's never been easier to use public transport than it is today and that the public transport operators have never been keener to encourage you.

I'm not sure I can use public transport

If you don't think you can use public transport because it is inaccessible think again. Read this guide and you might be surprised by the improvements we've seen over the past few years.

Equally, if you don't feel confident about using public transport for whatever reason you may be surprised too. There is now help available. A number of local authorities are introducing 'travel training' schemes to help people gain the confidence to travel on their own. It's a great idea – you get more independence and the local authority saves money on assisted travel.

Typically, courses cover how public transport works, how to use technology such as smartcards, safety, journey planning and preparation and what to do in emergencies. It can be a truly life-changing experience, opening up new horizons and boosting independence and self-confidence which will help in other areas of life too such as finding a job and enjoying your social life. In 2011, the Department for Transport published a good practice guide for travel training. There is more information on their website. Also try the website coolmove.org.uk which is administered by Hawkey Brook College in Wigan and has developed into the unofficial website for travel trainers.

Some transport providers also offer this sort of help. A good example is Transport for London's Travel Mentoring Service. Find out about travel training in your area by contacting your local council, local disabled person's organisation or local transport providers.

A friend can provide similar sort of help – travelling with you when you try a new route, for example.

Many train operators also hold Try A Train days at which you can find out more about what they're doing to make their trains more accessible.

As you'll read in this guide, online tools make it far easier to plan a journey in detail before taking it. You can see where the steps are, where the priority seats are, where the toilets are etc. This means you can travel in greater confidence.

There are more and more ways to find out about and book your journeys too – in person, by phone, online – so if you're uncomfortable with one method, try another.

Think about when you travel. When the bus or train is less crowded, it is easier for staff to provide the help you need and for you to find the seat that you prefer. Some people prefer sitting at the front, others near the doors. (Remember, priority seating is for people with invisible impairments too.) Travelling on the same routes at similar times will help you to get to know the drivers and other staff.

More and more staff have had disability awareness training (although awareness of mental health conditions is not yet standard in such training). Some transport operators provide cards which you can show to the driver or conductor explaining your particular needs. These save you having to explain and make it clear to all around that you're entitled to be on the bus or train. It may be called a Safe Journey Card, Travel Support Card, Bridge Card or similar. Find out if your operator supplies these.

I had a bad experience with another passenger

Although public transport staff are improving as the result of their training, it would be silly to pretend that there isn't still some discrimination on public transport.

A survey by Scope published in June 2011 suggested that nearly half of disabled people had faced some form of discrimination at some time while travelling on public transport, nearly always from other passengers. However, it is still relatively rare and will only be eliminated if all of us, passengers and staff, make it clear that it is unacceptable. Denying ourselves the right to use public transport will not help any of us including those who are behaving inappropriately.



» Travellers' Tales

'I'd like to see a public campaign aimed at increasing awareness of what it means to be a disabled person using public transport. I believe that more people would willingly offer up a seat if they had a greater understanding. Negative conceptions of disability lead people to believe that on one hand, disabled people should get off benefits and go to work and on the other, have no more reason to sit on a seat than they do.'

Link up with other disabled people through your local disabled people's organisation or through an organisation for people with your particular disability or health condition and work together. Share experiences and work with public transport providers to continue the improvements we've already seen. A good example is the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign's Trailblazers campaign. It was set up to 'fight against the social injustices experienced by young people living with muscle disease or a related condition' and one of the results was a report on public transport End Of The Line.

You'll find that many disabled people's organisations can also give advice on public transport. In London, for example, Transport for All can offer information to older and disabled people about travel in the capital, advising on journeys, helping with forms and taking up complaints. There is an Advice and Advocacy Line (on 020 7737 2339 or skype) and an in-house Advocacy and Advice worker. You can also contact them online.

How does the Equality Act/ disability discrimination legislation apply to transport?

In October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 are much the same and the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. It applies to people with invisible impairments as well as visible ones. The Act aims to protect disabled people and to prevent disability discrimination in the access to goods and services including land-based transport services. This includes access to railway and bus stations.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'Public transport has the potential to 'liberate' a person from the downward spiral of poor mental health, social isolation, poor life opportunities and to engage them with education, cultural opportunities, voluntary employment and paid employment.' (Mental Health and Public Transport, report by the Mental Health Action Group, September 2011)

Transport companies are obliged by law to make 'reasonable adjustments' to eliminate problems such as poorly presented timetables, over-complex booking procedures, inadequate or inaccessible facilities, lack of assistance for disabled people etc.

Your right to reasonable adjustments could include providing timetables, fare tariffs or other information in an accessible format. Most operators do this and much more as you'll see in this guide.

The government is advised on disability and transport issues by the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), an independent body set up by the Transport Act 1985. At the time of writing, the government was consulting on arrangements to replace DPTAC.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'I have held my disabled person's railcard for about a year now and it has really opened up my life. Being told by my doctor that I could no longer drive myself meant that it was very important to me to remain independent.'

The public sector equality duty in the Equality Act incorporates the disability equality duty in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This requires public bodies including transport providers to have due regard to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity when developing or implementing policy.

You also have rights under the European Passenger Rights Regulations affecting air, rail, ferry, bus and coach travel. These apply across Europe not just in the UK. See <http://ec.europa.eu/passenger-rights> for more information.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'Assume most people are helpful. It's a fact – good experiences far outweigh bad. Be clear what sort of help you want and, if you need a seat, making your disability visible to other passengers helps.'

3: Planning your journey

Where can I go?

Pretty much anywhere you want. As the stories in this guide show, you can go anywhere on public transport – down the local shops or to the other end of the country. You can actually get from Land’s End to John O’Groats in less than 24 hours via a combination of train, bus and foot! Check it out on the Transport Direct website (see below) if you’re not convinced.

The key to a successful trip is in the planning and with modern technology such as the internet and smartphones, planning has never been easier. You can use these tools to find out not just about services of a particular type or from a particular operator but to plan integrated journeys using several modes of transport in as much detail as you need – right down to where the steps and toilets are.

Where can I find information?

A good place to start planning an integrated journey is the website Transport Direct – www.transportdirect.info – which enables you to find the various routes for a particular journey and compare them with using the car in terms of cost, time and effect on the environment. It is also available via the government’s www.direct.gov.uk website.

Other useful websites, which are perhaps more user-friendly if you already know you want to use public transport, include:

- » Traveline (<http://traveline.info>), which is provided by a partnership of transport operators and local authorities to provide ‘impartial and comprehensive information’ and links you to journey planners for regional public transport networks all over the country. Excellent for seeing exactly what’s available in your area. Traveline also provides telephone support on 0871 200 22 33 but it’s not cheap (10p per minute plus any charges your network provider make.)
- » In the major urban areas, look at the websites of the local PTE (Passenger Transport Executive):
 - » Transport for London (www.tfl.gov.uk)
 - » Transport for Greater Manchester (www.tfgm.gov.uk)
 - » West Midlands – Centro (www.centro.org.uk)
 - » Merseyside – MerseyTravel (www.merseytravel.gov.uk)
 - » West Yorkshire – Metro (www.wymetro.com)
 - » South Yorkshire – South Yorkshire PTE (www.sypte.co.uk)
 - » Tyne & Wear – Nexus (www.nexus.org.uk)
 - » Greater Glasgow – Strathclyde Passenger Transport (www.spt.co.uk)
 - » Northern Ireland (www.translink.co.uk)

» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

Many will have their own Journey Planners such as this one from Transport for London: <http://journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk> (using the Advanced Search feature enables you to search by access related criteria).

- » For specific types of transport such as train or bus, the most helpful websites are listed in that particular section of this guide. National Rail Enquiries, for example, a great starting point for rail journeys, is outlined in more detail in chapter 5. The train operators also have their own sites.
- » A useful source of access information on all buildings including those concerned with transport is Direct Enquiries – www.directenquiries.com They also have a smartphone app in development.
- » For the latest travel news, BBC Travel News (www.bbc.co.uk/travelnews) gives you the situation at a glance – the home page is updated every few minutes and brings all road and public transport together.

It's often useful to have tangible information with you too. Not just for the time when you can't get internet access or a mobile phone signal but for the times when flicking through the timetable is just the easiest thing to do. Most transport operators provide leaflets and hard copies of timetables as well as audio material such as DVDs and podcasts.

If you can't pick these up from the transport provider's information centre or download them from the internet, ask for them to be posted to you. Maps are also always useful.

Make sure you know how the transport systems you'll be using work.

- » If you haven't bought tickets in advance, how do you buy tickets on the day?
- » Can you get a reduction as, for example, a disabled or older traveller?
- » During what time periods is your ticket valid?
- » How can you ensure you'll get on the right train?
- » Are you guaranteed a seat?
- » How do you make sure you get a seat if you need one?
- » Where will you find staff and what can you reasonably expect of them?
- » How is information given?
- » How will you find out about any delays or other problems?
- » How will you find a route that's accessible to get you to the platform or stop?
- » How do you book passenger assistance if needed?
- » Can your personal assistant travel with you?

These topics are also covered in the chapters on the different modes of transport.

» Travellers' Tales

'Do your homework. I do a lot of travelling and I'm clued up on the best trains, the best seats, the best offers. I prefer to book by phone rather than online because it's more human and they can talk you through the various fare options. The helpline staff also get to know the sort of assistance you need. The internet cannot do this – yet.'

If you can, get to know the staff at the stations or on the routes you regularly use. As well as being a useful source of local information, this will make travelling more pleasant, reduce surprises all round and see you in good stead if, for example, you can't always give the 24 hour notice required for passenger assistance on a train.

What about mobile and smartphones?

Transport Direct and Traveline are both available on your mobile or smartphone. NextBuses is a mobile internet service, also available as an iPhone or Android smartphone app, which will tell you the time of your next bus.

Traveline-txt is a similar service whereby you can check the next buses by texting the code of a particular bus stop. The code and the number should appear somewhere on the bus stop (in the signage or timetable notice). There's more information on both NextBuses and Travelline-txt on the Travelline site (<http://traveline.info/mobile.html>).

Many transport operators will also have mobile versions of their websites or apps. Check on their websites and at the appropriate app store for your phone. In London, for example, you can check live bus times on computer, smartphone or by text again using codes. More on the TfL website.

There are also apps and internet tools that can help with the planning of your journey and guide 'books' for when you get there. Many apps are free. Technology is improving access to information all the time. For example, QRs (or mobile barcodes) are beginning to appear on bus stops to give travellers fuller access to timetables and information.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'Beware of signals and I don't mean the ones beside the train track, I mean mobile phone signals. I have a smartphone with the National Rail Enquiries site on it and a tube map and other apps which I can blow up large enough for me to read. They work very well if there's a signal but there often isn't on the London underground.'

But a word of warning: don't rely on your smartphone. Because we can do so much with our smartphones these days, there can be a temptation to rely on the smartphone to find a solution if you get in trouble. Don't do this if you can avoid it. A smartphone cannot make a train appear after the last one has already left or put a bus stop temporarily out of service back in service. What's more, you can't rely on there being a signal or a wi-fi network handy when you need one. Using your phone, especially online, can be very expensive too. So don't skimp on the planning.

What will I need on the journey?

Of course, all journeys are different but this checklist might be helpful.

- » **Tickets** – We can plan integrated journeys but we haven't yet got integrated ticketing (although things are improving) so check out what tickets you need for what. Buying tickets in advance is nearly always cheaper. Familiarise yourself with the various national and local concessions available for disabled travellers, older travellers and other groups on the various forms of transport you'll be using at the various times of the day or week. You'll learn for yourself what is the most economic way of making a familiar journey but for an unfamiliar one buying tickets in advance is probably the safest way for you and your wallet.
- » **Time** – Make sure you have time to catch your bus or train comfortably. How will you get to the station or stop? What might delay you getting there? You may need time to validate or buy your ticket or to buy other things you need for the journey.

- » **Other documents** – What other documents might you need for your journey or when you get there? Passport, driving licence, railcard or other pass.
- » **Suitable clothing** – You'll want different clothes depending on the season, the time of day you're travelling and on the mode of transport. Is there air-conditioning? Where will you wait when making changes? If you're walking, can you walk in the shoes you're wearing? Layered clothing helps you to adjust more easily to changes in temperature.
- » **Food and drink** – You don't want to be hungry or thirsty. The air-conditioning and heating systems on many forms of public transport can dry you out so make sure you have some water. As for food, will you be able to reach and/or afford the buffet car? If not, you'll need to bring food with you.
- » **Luggage** – Don't take more than you need. Think ahead. How far will you have to carry your luggage to get from door to door and at what times of the day? If you can't carry it, can you get help at the time you need it? Don't assume staff will be able to carry it for you. If you need help from the transport operator, ask about it and, if it is available, book it in advance. There's more about this in the chapters on the various modes of transport. Pack the things you'll need for the journey like tickets and water on top and remember to take all your belongings with you when you get off. If you do misplace something, contact the lost property department of the relevant public transport operator for assistance.



» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

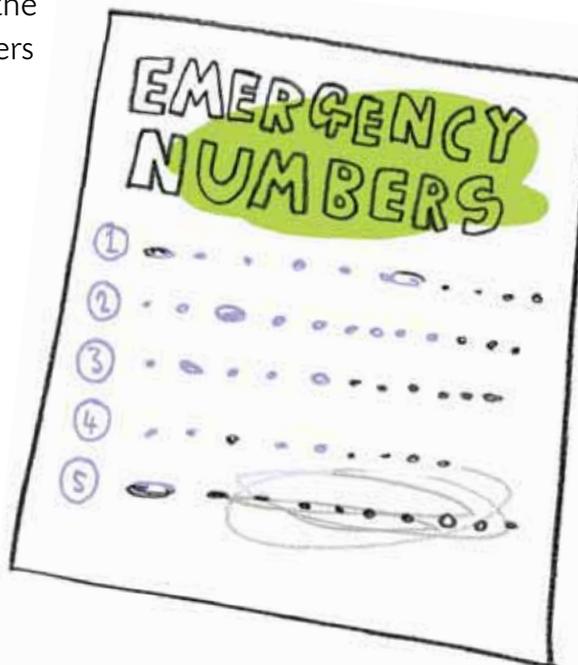
- » **Money and credit cards** – Make sure you've got enough cash but not too much and a credit/debit card. Ensure you've enough in your bank account in the event of an emergency. A money belt or similar might be an idea on a longer journey or if you're carrying a lot of cash or other valuables.
- » **Medication** – Make sure you've got any drugs or other medical materials that you need for the trip, plus any relevant information in a form that would be clear to someone else in the event that you cannot explain your needs for yourself – a piece of paper in your wallet, for example.
- » **Emergency numbers** – A list of emergency numbers (including the people you're going to see – friends, family, hospital or whatever – and the numbers for your transport providers you're using) separate from your phone is a good idea as a mobile phone is easily lost.

Make sure someone knows where you're going and how to get in touch with you.

» Travellers' Tales

'My advice for a new journey, especially one you might take frequently, is to do a trial run if possible. Travel between bus stops and stations can throw up some unforeseen obstacles and these all add time to your journey. Plan the journey using Journey Planner and give time for things to take a little longer than estimated, in case buses are unavailable for various reasons.'

In the early days, familiarise yourself with the passenger assistance staff, make them aware of your general travel routine so that they may better accommodate you.'



4: Buses and coaches

Introduction

Buses and coaches are increasingly accessible to all. In England, Scotland and Wales, all new buses and coaches designed to carry more than 22 passengers on local or scheduled services must comply with Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR).

The PSVAR set design standards for accessibility including access for wheelchairs, priority seats, handrails and slip-resistant floors. By 1 January 2017, all buses must comply with the accessibility regulations; by 1 January 2020, all coaches must comply. In addition, many vehicles also have audio and visual announcement systems.

Northern Ireland has separate regulations under the responsibility of the Department for Regional Development.

The PSVAR have improved vehicle accessibility considerably but the obligations of the bus operators themselves do not end there. Like all service providers, they are subject to the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation meaning they are obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Buses sometimes have a poor reputation with those who seldom use them but in fact, satisfaction among bus users is high. The overall service satisfaction score was 85 out of 100 in the first Bus Passenger Transport Survey of 2011 for Passenger Focus. Buses also did well in Passenger Focus's most recent mystery travellers' survey with the assessors giving an 'overall satisfaction' score of 79 points out of 100 and four out of five buses running on time (defined as operating within five minutes of their timetable).

Although the mystery travellers' surveys do not include the particular perspective of disabled users, the most recent survey did report that in 97-98% of cases getting on and getting off was unobstructed (that is to say the bus was close enough to the kerb and stop).

If you don't know about the buses in your area, it's worth finding out. Once you understand the routes, fare structures and local idiosyncrasies, they can be an excellent way of making shorter journeys around your community.

Where can I find out about services?

Many general travel websites give information on buses including Transport Direct, Traveline, and, in Northern Ireland, Translink, all of which are listed in chapter 9.

You can also try searching for a website for the provider of the line you're interested in. But note that you may not always find all the information you need from individual operators. The better ones will advise you of all services but some operators are still reluctant to provide information about services they regard as competitors. In doing this, of course, they are shooting themselves in the foot since passengers may not make a journey at all if not told about a rival service that will bring them back later, for example, or from a different location. Other operators may simply not know about services other than those they provide themselves. For these reasons, the general sites might be the better bet.

If you're in a major city area, you should also check out the website of your Passenger Transport Executive (PTE). Currently, there are PTEs for Greater Manchester, West Midlands, Merseyside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear and Greater Glasgow. Greater London is covered by Transport For London. All the web addresses are in chapter 9.

For coach services, accessibility varies but all operators will try to be disability-aware. See the websites of the providers such as National Express, Oxford Tube, Megabus, Goldline (Northern Ireland) or City Link (Scotland). All these operators have at least some accessible coaches. National Express say they will have a new coach with wheelchair space and lift across their network by 2012. They also have a disabled person's travel helpline (see page 71).

As well as the internet, there are many other sources of information including timetables, maps and leaflets, telephone helplines (watch out for mobile phone charges), smartphone apps, notices and enquiry offices at stops and stations, information displays and drivers and other company staff.

Under an EU regulation passed in 2011, disabled people will, from 2013, be entitled to accessible travel information throughout their journey, although it remains to be seen exactly how this will be implemented in the UK. (There are other intended improvements too including a right to compensation for damaged wheelchairs or other assistive equipment and, on longer journeys and subject to notice, free transport for those required to accompany a disabled person. The free transport should come into force in 2013 but member states have the right to defer by up to four years. Again, it remains to be seen what the UK will do.)

Choosing the right ticket

Check out how to buy a ticket for your journey before you make it.

For most regular bus journeys, you will probably not be able to buy single tickets in advance online and in some cases you will not be able to buy a ticket on the bus either. (You may, for example, need to buy it from a machine at the bus stop or from a local shop.) If you can buy on board, you may need the exact money. Check prices carefully too. One-off fares can be expensive. Tickets designed to encourage more regular use such as season tickets, day tickets or smartcard tickets (like London's Oyster scheme) are far more competitive. Find out if your ticket will be valid if you change bus.

As with most retailers, you can reasonably expect bus and coach operators to make their ticket-vending process accessible whether you're buying online or in person. For example, websites should be accessible and ticket office windows should have induction loops clearly marked.

Can I get a reduction?

Under the English National Concession Travel Scheme (ENCTS), you're eligible for a disabled person's pass if you live in England and are, in the jargon, 'eligible disabled'.

This means you:

- » are blind or partially sighted;
- » are profoundly or severely deaf;
- » are without speech;
- » have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to walk;
- » don't have arms or have long-term loss of the use of both arms; or
- » have a learning disability.

You're also 'eligible disabled' if your application for a driving licence would be refused on fitness grounds under section 92 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (other than for the abuse of drugs or alcohol).

All this means that as it stands, the ENCTS can be difficult to access for people with invisible impairments such as mental health conditions or learning difficulties but the driving licence clause may apply since it covers physical and mental conditions. You'll need a psychiatrist, nurse or other health professional to testify that because of your condition or the medication you take for it, you would not be eligible for a driving licence. (If you already have a licence and want to keep it, you will not get a concessionary pass.)

The pass can be used on buses anywhere in England during 'off-peak' times (9.30 am to 11.00 pm, Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and on public holidays). Your local council will tell you how to apply for a disabled bus pass in your area.

You should also ask the council what exactly is covered. As well as off-peak travel you may be able to use your pass for peak travel (as in London, see below), community transport services, reduced rail fares or companion passes.

Similar schemes exist in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In London, you may be eligible for a Freedom Pass provided by your London borough council. This offers Londoners free travel on the Transport for London network (effectively almost all public transport in London) at all times (not just off-peak). Outside London, you can only use your Freedom Pass off-peak. London's longer-term jobseekers may also be entitled to a pass allowing some discount travel. Wheelchair users travel free on London's buses whether or not they have a Freedom Pass.

Older people of an 'eligible age' may be entitled to an older person's bus pass. If you were born after 5 April 1950, the age you become eligible is tied to changes in the state pension age. If you were born before 6 April 1950, you became eligible on your 60th birthday.

Some services are excluded from the disabled or older person's bus pass including services where most seats can be reserved such as coaches, services running for less than six weeks (such as shuttle buses to special events), services for tourists (such as open-top bus tours), services on vehicles of historical interest, 'rail replacement' services and services where the fare includes 'extras', like refreshments or car parking.

Having said all that, many of the operators of these sorts of services offer reduced travel for older or disabled people so ask the operator concerned for more information.

At the bus/coach station or stop

Make sure that you understand how bus stops are designated in your area and that you're at the right stop. In London, for example, the buses all have numbers but the stops in a particular area or around a particular junction are identified by letters. Your local operator can explain how the system works in your area.

Similarly, find out how the coach operators serve your area. They can be more flexible in their stopping points than trains so there may be a stop nearer you than you think.

Make yourself visible at the bus or coach stop or station, especially if it is a request. Staying in well-lit areas makes sense from a safety point of view too. Check timetables to limit your waiting time. When the bus comes, let the driver know in good time that you want it to stop by attracting his or her attention.

You can take support and assistance dogs into ticket offices, buffets and restaurants and onto buses and coaches. Most coach stations have accessible toilets. Some require a National Key Scheme (NKS) key which you can buy from Radar.

Most bus stops now offer clear information. In Passenger Focus's most recent mystery traveller survey, three quarters of stops had legible timetable information (96% among stops with shelters) and one in four (23%) had 'real-time' electronic information displays.

You may also be able to get this sort of waiting-time information once at the stop by text or via a smartphone.

Getting on, getting off and enjoying the journey

Information about stops and routes on the bus itself can be poor so, on an unfamiliar route, it makes sense to ask the driver to alert you to your stop. Bus and coach drivers should provide all reasonable assistance to disabled people. They have a legal requirement to do this but most want to help anyway and many will go far beyond what is strictly required.

Under the EU regulation passed in 2011, bus operators will have to provide mandatory disability awareness training (DAT) for all drivers. This should come into force in 2013 but member states have the right to defer by up to five years. It remains to be seen what the UK will do. However, many drivers already receive DAT.

Most drivers are proud of what they do and want to do it well. They will try to help but they may not guess what you need so politely tell them if you want, for example, to find a seat while the bus is stationary or need them to park particularly close to the kerb to enable you to get down.

Similarly, if you want a particular sort of seat or to sit in a particular place or to know where to put larger luggage, ask the driver. Knowing the layout of the bus and what the various sections are designed for makes life easier for everyone.

» Travellers' Tales

'Concessionary travel has encouraged me to undertake leisure activities which I had ceased because I simply could not afford more than the most basic journeys.

For example, I can go to the cinema using Orange Wednesday and travel free of cost to the cinema. It helps get me out of the house and get accustomed to crowds again. This helps me to start re-building relationships with people and makes me feel more confident.

I have used concessionary travel to go to Mind trips, walking excursions, skating, which I otherwise would not have been able to afford. It gives me a choice of transport methods so that if I am feeling claustrophobic and don't want to travel on crowded buses, I can go on a near empty tube which gets me there in half the time. I haven't had a panic attack on public transport for a while.'

Being polite and friendly will go a long way towards getting what you need. However, the driver's responsibilities do not extend to physically lifting passengers or heavy mobility equipment. If you need help to get on and off a coach, you should ask about this when you book your ticket. Coach drivers will often help with your luggage. If the luggage hold beneath the coach is accessed from the outside, there's no need to manoeuvre your luggage on and off the coach.

Most fellow passengers will also be helpful but if you need a particular seat and one is not offered, ask for it politely but firmly. It is your right.

When the bus is approaching your stop, press the bell once and wait until the bus stops before getting up. For your safety, remain seated throughout your journey.

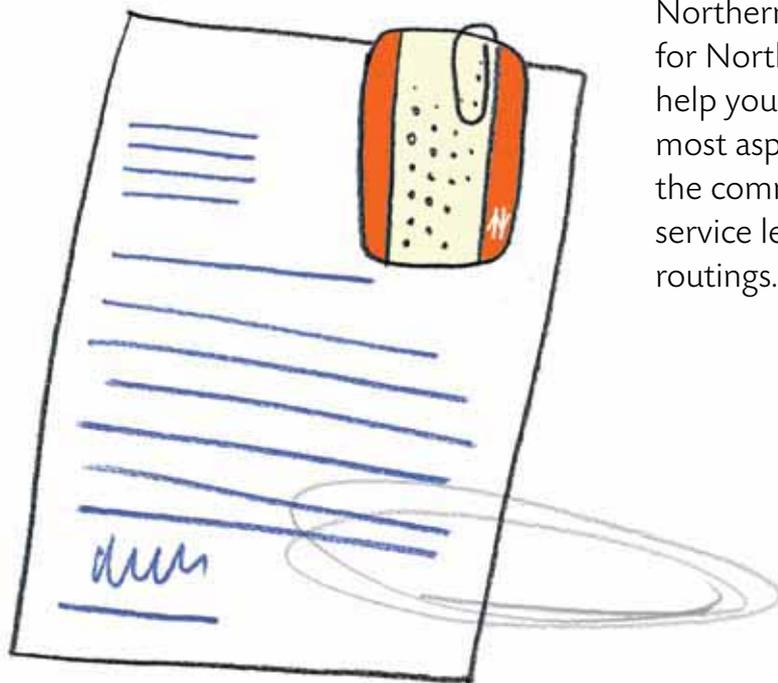
On longer journeys, coaches usually have toilets on board. If you can't access it – for example, because it is down some stairs – it is not unreasonable to ask the driver to stop at a coach station or somewhere else so you can use the toilets.

Finally, buses are great way of getting around town but keep an eye on your bags, wallet or purse.

» Travellers' Tales

'Drivers are currently in a difficult position. We need a campaign around pushchairs and buggies on the buses and clarity from the operators in the form of notices etc. I've had children of my own so I know what it's like but it used to be standard practice to fold your chair before getting on the bus.

That doesn't happen anymore and it should. Buggies are much easier to fold down these days too. We don't want disputes between passengers so it's up to operators to make it clear.'



Solving problems

Most difficulties will be resolved to your satisfaction on the day. If they cannot, take them up with the operator first. (If you don't, you'll only be referred back to them by any higher body you appeal to.)

Provide as much detail as you can in writing about the journey concerned and enclose a copy of your ticket if possible. Tell them when you were travelling (date and time), where from and to and the number of the bus. If you are not satisfied with the operator's reply, you can contact the relevant complaints body.

For London, this body is London TravelWatch, for Scotland it is Passengers' View Scotland and in Northern Ireland, the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland. These bodies can help you with complaints relating to most aspects of the service including the commercial side like fares and service levels, ticketing, timetabling and routings.

» Travellers' Tales

'With regards to buses, it is important to note that all but two routes in London have the capacity to carry a wheelchair user. This must be praised as when I was small this was not the case. Much has been done, but at the same time there are still many improvements that could be made.

In theory, a wheelchair user should be able to board any bus that is not already carrying a wheelchair user. After all, there is a space designed on every bus. This, however, is not always the case. The space may be filled with pushchairs (which may be carrying a child or be loaded with shopping or, in some cases, be completely empty). This is not what is meant to happen, buggies are meant to be folded if the space is required by a wheelchair.

This is not always adhered to meaning that the passenger is forced to wait for the next bus which may have the same problem. I've been refused three buses in a row for that same reason in the past.

Or a wheelchair user may encounter another problem. A faulty ramp, either when trying to board a bus or disembark a bus, getting to your chosen stop and realising that the kerb is too high or too low, the 'blue bell' not working (which very often happens)...

Just yesterday I was told I could not board a bus home because the driver claimed he could not get close enough to the kerb. He made this assumption without first trying the ramp. It was only after I told him that the ramp was likely to reach that he relented and lo and behold it worked!

In other words, general awareness is key for both staff and passengers. Passenger assistance on buses can be improved by drivers having a little more patience and time. Ensuring that all staff and passengers are aware of the priority policy would be key. I understand that a driver cannot force anyone occupying the wheelchair space to move or fold buggies but awareness that this is the procedure should be supported by all drivers and an attempt should always be made to make passengers more aware.'

For England (outside London) and Wales, you should go to the Bus Appeals Body. They can help with issues around punctuality and reliability, staff behaviour and poor information but unlike the above authorities, they can't help with commercial aspects of bus operations. For complaints about the buses themselves, their safety and maintenance, try the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). To complain about a bus station, shelter, or stop (or the absence of one), contact the transport section of your local council.

To complain about a decision to stop a service because of insufficient passenger use or other reason, try your local council or Passenger Transport Executive.

There are seven statutory Traffic Commissioners in the UK. Bus operators are licensed by the Commissioner and must register timetables with him or her. Through the VOSA, the Commissioners also monitor bus safety and drivers' hours. The pressure group Bus Users UK stress that 'commissioners can – and do – bring operators to book (by fines, restriction of services or even putting them off the road altogether in extreme cases) for regular infringement of these aspects of bus operations, including timekeeping.' So don't give up if you have a legitimate complaint.

Contact details for all the bodies listed in chapter 9. If you need advice on making a complaint, contact Passenger Focus. They have a helpline.

If you have a complaint under the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation, you should take it up in the above way in the first instance. If you're not satisfied, seek advice from Radar, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agency.



Using a wheelchair or scooter on the bus

Bus and coach operators are getting there with wheelchairs. By 2017 most buses will be able to accommodate wheelchair users and by 2020 most coaches will. Under the PSVAR, coaches require a forward-facing wheelchair space fitted with a wheelchair restraint system and wheelchair user restraint. Buses may continue to use rearward-facing, unrestrained positions.

The regulations setting out what 'accessible' means in practice are based on the design of the more usual types of wheelchair (and bus axle) so you may have problems if your wheelchair is very heavy or takes up a space – when you are in it – of more than 70 cm wide or 120 cm long (including footrests). This may affect you if, for example, you need to travel with your legs fully extended or the backrest reclined.

You're responsible for the travel-worthiness of your wheelchair, for ensuring that its battery is secure and that its parts do not damage the ramp. A transport operator has the right to refuse to take your wheelchair if they believe it is not safe for you or other passengers.

It makes sense to check with the operator beforehand if there is any doubt about the suitability of your wheelchair.

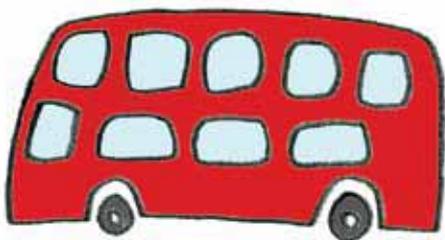
Once on the bus, you must make sure your wheelchair brakes are on and, on a powered wheelchair, that the power is switched off.

If you need a designated space that is being occupied by a buggy or other passengers, ask for it. There's no precise law on this but for most bus operators, the principle is that all passengers on the bus should try to accommodate each others' needs. Transport for London, who run London's buses, are very clear on the issue:

'Wheelchair users have priority over everyone else for use of the wheelchair space. If the wheelchair space is occupied by standing passengers or buggies, standing passengers will be asked by the driver to make room if possible, buggy owners will be asked to fold them and put them in the luggage space or keep them by their side.'

At Radar, we'd like to see clearer notices to this effect on buses. The reason for wheelchair user priority is that 'reasonable adjustments' should be made to allow disabled people to access the service. If there are disagreements, the driver ought to ask that the wheelchair space is cleared for a wheelchair user but this can be difficult in practice and only the police have the power to enforce it.

A mobility scooter is not a wheelchair and operators are not obliged to carry them so contact the operator before you travel to find out whether or not your scooter can be transported on their buses and coaches. Many will try to help. Under an agreement being discussed at the time of writing, operators agreed that Class 2 scooters could be parked in the wheelchair space provided they met the criteria for size and weight. You'll need a permit for this and be required to receive training before taking your scooter onboard for the first time.



There's still no legal requirement, however, and class 3 scooters will not be carried. A leaflet on this is available from the Confederation of Passenger Transport (UK).

Of course, it's not unreasonable to expect to be able to get on and off the bus with the same freedom as passengers not using wheelchairs but the reality can be different. In a 2009 report from the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, *End of the Line*, travellers carrying out the survey were unable to board the first relevant bus to arrive at their stop in a third of cases. Common causes were the access ramp being unavailable, the accessible space being unavailable or the driver failing to stop at a location which was accessible to the passenger. For this reason it makes sense to do your homework beforehand and, if practical, to let operators know your travel plans, especially if using an unfamiliar route.

Ricability, the national research charity, offers useful independent information on this subject including the publication *Wheels within wheels*, a guide to using a wheelchair on public transport.

5: Overground trains

Introduction

Don't underestimate Britain's rail network. Despite being the oldest in the world, it is one of the most efficient. With over 10,000 miles of track and well over a billion journeys made every year, it is one of the busiest railways in Europe. It runs 20% more train services than France, and 60% more than Italy. All told there are some 24,000 trains per day which, incredibly enough, is more than Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Portugal and Norway put together. Punctuality is over 90%. It is also, of course, one of the most environmentally sustainable forms of transport.

In 2009, Network Rail committed itself to a £35 billion five year programme to get more trains on the network, more of those trains running on time and to make the railway even safer. They also aim to reduce the cost of the running the nation's railway by over a fifth.

Like other service providers, rail operators are covered by the the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation. This means they must not treat a disabled person less favourably than they would a person who is not disabled and must make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable disabled people to access their services.

All station and train operators must have a disabled people's protection policy (DPPP) approved by the Office of Rail Regulation. It will set out what provision the station or train operator makes for disabled people using its services. Copies are available from the train or station operator concerned. These are weighty technical documents so most operators, local authorities and Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) also publish easier to read guides for disabled travellers although these are not obligatory.

All heavy rail vehicles must be accessible by 2020.

European legislation also applies here. Under the regulations, you have the right to:

- » buy your ticket without any hassle;
- » travel in safety;
- » equal service with other passengers if you have reduced mobility;
- » information on accessibility;
- » compensation in case of injury and death and liability for luggage;
- » protection from rail companies failing to meet their liability obligations.

These regulations don't only apply to the UK but throughout the EU meaning that European travel is increasingly accessible to people living with disability or health conditions.

The days when wheelchair users had to enter the station on a goods lift and the only accessible part of the train was a window-less section of the guard's van are long gone. Since December 1998, all new and refurbished rail vehicles have had to meet Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations designed to allow people living with disability and health conditions to travel comfortably.

Today, policy-makers and the station and train operators are all pulling in the same direction with programmes such as Access For All designed to open up the rail network to as many people as possible. If you've not used the rail network before or don't think you can or have had a bad experience in the past, it's worth looking at rail travel again.

Does all this apply to heritage railways?

Yes, as far as possible. The UK has a rich legacy of heritage railways including the Severn Valley Railway, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, the Great Central Railway and the Wensleydale Railway. Many are now run by volunteers or not-for-profit organisations. Because they're primarily for tourism, these operators have an incentive to ensure they're as accessible as possible without losing their traditional look and feel. Heritage railways are covered by same codes of practice as other railways, but are given more leeway in how the rules are interpreted.

Contact the railway concerned for more information. Most will be delighted that you share their interest and will try to accommodate you as best they can.

Choosing the right ticket and planning the journey

Even the greatest railway enthusiast would not claim that rail fares and ticket types are as easy to understand as they should be. This complexity can put people off travelling by train. Nobody wants to pay more than the person in the next seat for the same journey nor do they want to be made to feel a criminal by a ticket inspector for a genuine mistake.

Many Train Operating Companies (train operators) are trying to improve this and to work better together on fares as well on all other aspects of the rail service. By shopping around and familiarising yourself with the fares regimes on the trains you use, you can go a long way towards helping yourself. Having said that, you should be able to understand the fare structure. If you cannot, the operator should make a 'reasonable adjustment' to enable you to do so. Ask if you're not sure. When booking by phone, you should be given the full range of prices and an explanation of when the various fares apply.

The National Rail website – www.nationalrail.co.uk – provides timetables and fares across the network including information on individual stations and their facilities for disabled passengers. Go to the station you're interested in and click on the 'Stations Made Easy' link. There really is a lot of detailed information here. For many stations there are also maps and photos.

The site also provides real-time travel information on delays and other matters affecting the service as well as various travel tools enabling you to get information in a variety of ways including by telephone, text or smartphone app. From the site you can link through to individual train operators for reservations, information on their policies for disabled people and contact numbers to book assistance (see Passenger Assist below).

Also familiarise yourself with the National Rail Enquiry Service (08457 48 49 50 or textphone 0845 60 50 600). It gives telephone information on timetables, fares and tickets on any route, engineering works and the best or cheapest route to use. They're good and there's the added advantage that if they do give you incorrect information, you can take it up with consumer watchdog Passenger Focus. To do this, you'll need the date and time of the call to the National Rail and the number you called to and from.

Some fares are regulated which means the train operators can only increase them by a fixed maximum amount. Other fares are unregulated. Currently, around 45% of fares are subject to regulation including season tickets and long-distance off-peak fares.

It's a myth that British train prices are uniformly high compared to the rest of Europe. A fare and ticketing study by Passenger Focus published in 2009 concluded that buying tickets on the day was 'expensive when compared with other countries' and that 'commuting to London is expensive when compared with other principal European cities, although train frequency in Britain is generally higher'. But it said that 'on long distance trains it is possible to travel more cheaply in Britain than elsewhere in Europe – if you manage to buy an Advance purchase ticket at the lowest price.'

In other words, it pays to do your research and to book as early as you can. Many websites selling train tickets say they will find you the cheapest ticket but their searches are only as good as the information you put in. Sometimes, two singles might be cheaper, sometimes a return. Fares also depend on the time of day and the day of the week. Changing your journey time slightly so that it is no longer during the rush hour or travelling on Thursday instead of Friday can make a big difference to the fare. Check out alternative routes and slower trains.

Look out for special offers too and check your eligibility for railcards. As well as the Disabled Person's Railcard (see below), there are many other railcards including, at the time of writing, a 16-25 railcard, a senior railcard, a friends and family railcard for those travelling with children and a network card offering reduced off-peak fares.

However you buy your tickets, make sure you do your research, particularly if buying online. A survey by Passenger Focus in 2011 found that some people buying online were paying more than they needed to.

So what are the main types of train fare?

As we said, you need to shop around, but at the time of writing, these were the main types of train tickets available:

- » **Anytime** – These are single and returns with which you can travel anytime. Day singles and returns are valid on the date shown. Anytime return tickets are valid for one return journey. The outward portion is valid for 5 days and the return portion for one calendar month from the start date shown on the ticket. These tickets are refundable.
- » **Off Peak** – These are cheaper than Anytime tickets but you may need to travel at particular times of the day. If you're not told, ask about the times when you are buying your ticket. These tickets are also refundable.
- » **Advance** – Advance tickets are single fares offering real value for money on many longer and some shorter journeys. They can be hard to get hold of as they generally go on sale 12 weeks before travel and sell out quickly. You need to choose a specific train at the time of booking and no break in the journey is allowed except for changes between trains. There are no refunds. However, you can change your journey at any time before departure for a £10 fee plus any difference in the fare payable.
- » **Season tickets** – These are for regular travellers making the same journey every day. Season tickets are available for seven days or for any period from one month to one year. As an example of the sort of savings you can make, an annual season ticket gives you 52 weeks travel for the price of 40. Season tickets are refundable.

Can I get a reduction?

The Disabled Person's Railcard allows you to buy rail tickets at a discount of up to a third. Another adult travelling with you can also travel at the same discounted fare. Children aged from five to 16 may also be eligible. In this case, the accompanying adult travels at the discounted rate of the the adult fare (not the child one). Cards are valid for one year (currently, £20) or three years (currently, £54).

» Travellers' Tales

'Disability and lack of mobility came quite suddenly in my case making me feel useless and somewhat of a social outcast. Travel seemed a non-starter due to price and mobility factors. I applied for a Disabled Persons Railcard and went for a day out at the National Gallery. I found good priced tickets via the internet and made prices even better using my card. The staff at stations and on the trains I found friendly and helpful.

I've since been to many galleries throughout the UK and have now started a degree course in Art History and have even begun to paint.'

To qualify, you must meet at least one of the criteria listed below.

- » be registered as visually impaired.
- » be registered as deaf or using a hearing aid.
- » have epilepsy and have repeated attacks even though you receive drug treatment.
- » have epilepsy and are currently prohibited from driving because of your epilepsy.
- » receive Attendance Allowance.
- » receive Severe Disablement Allowance.
- » receive the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).
- » receive the higher or middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance.
- » receive War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.
- » receive War or Service Disablement Pension for a disability of 80% or more.
- » be buying or leasing a vehicle through the Motability Scheme.

To buy a Railcard you need to complete an application form and send it with a copy of proof of entitlement and payment. The application form lists the particular proof you will need.

Again it can be more difficult for people with conditions that do not directly affect their mobility to get a railcard.

But note that to qualify for a Disabled Person's Railcard, you need only the lower rate of mobility component. This is paid to people who 'cannot walk outdoors on an unfamiliar route without guidance or supervision from another person for most of the time' and therefore includes some people with learning difficulties and mental health conditions. (Many people with mental health conditions are eligible for a DLA mobility component – some 400,000 are currently claiming – so if you're not one of them, you could be missing out on a disabled person's railcard as well as on Disability Living Allowance.)

» Travellers' Tales

'The staff at the rail stations always help me more with advice when they see my disabled persons railcard. On packed trains the staff give me a seat if they see me, sometimes in first class if the priority disabled seats are full or we can't get to them. I have some physical problems as well as mental health. If my mental state is poor I know I can wait there as they are friendly people. When ill, I don't have to plan too much, just get out of the flat and know I have the pass.'

There is a Disabled Person's Railcard website – www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk – from which you can download an application form or there is a telephone helpline/textphone. The website also includes general information and news of interest to disabled passengers.

Wheelchair users and people with a visual impairment are entitled to a discount without a Disabled Person's Railcard. At the time of writing, this applied to Anytime fares only. The discount is 34% on regular singles or returns and 50% on day returns. National Rail Enquiries (NRE) warn that 'sometimes it may be cheaper to buy an undiscounted Off Peak or Advance ticket'.

The discount is available, in the words of NRE, to 'customers who stay in their own wheelchair during a rail journey' and 'customers with a registered visual impairment' (you may need to prove your visual impairment with a document from social services, the RNIB or other 'recognised institution'). Carers travelling with you are entitled to the same discount. Indeed, the discount for customers with a registered visual impairment is only available if you are accompanied.

At the station

Some of Britain's stations are very busy with passengers starting and ending journeys or changing trains. Over 20 million journey interchanges were made at Clapham Junction alone in 2009-10.

As well as their responsibilities under the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation, passenger train station operators are also duty bound to provide accessible services and facilities for disabled passengers under condition five of their operating licences. This condition requires them to establish, amend where necessary, and comply with, a disabled people's protection policy (DPPP), agreed by the Secretary of State; and, in establishing and revising the DPPP, to pay due regard to a code of practice called Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice, known as 'the code'.

'The code' is published by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland and fulfils the Secretary of State's responsibility to produce a code of practice 'protecting the interests of users of railway passenger services or station services who are disabled'. The latest version was published in 2010 bringing together all the European and national standards that must be followed and setting out guidelines for doing so. It covers subjects such as staff training, information, car-parking, set-down and

» Travellers' Tales

'Passenger assistance is very good indeed. Even if I don't always give 24 hours notice, I've never been turned away. At my regular mainline stations (Birmingham New St and Euston), there's always someone. I like it. You get chatting to the staff helping you, you get to know them, they get to know you and the sort of assistance you need.

I'd say, build up your confidence. Use the services. That's what they're there for. Don't be too proud to accept assistance – you're giving other people satisfying work. And if it does go wrong, give it another try. We're all only human.'

pick-up, access, doors, lighting, floors, furniture, signage, announcements, ticket sales, help points, waiting rooms, platforms, ramps, lifts, escalators and stairs. If you have problems with any of these at your local station, check 'the code' and see what the station ought to be doing.

Note that not all stations are covered. Some are exempt from 'the code' to varying degrees including the stations at Heathrow Airport, those on the London Underground which are not also on the rail network, heritage railways, anything on non-standard track and some others. Check if you're not sure.

» Travellers' Tales

'When booking, ask as many times as you need to to ensure that they are providing what you need. This may take several phone calls. Keep on at them as sometimes they do not know as much about what we need as they think they do which makes it possible that our priorities get lost in the system. If you find a service for booking that you are happy with, stick with it.'

You can find out about the access to your particular station using the 'Stations Made Easy' tool on the National Rail website. This gives information about the accessibility of the available facilities allowing you to plan a route around a station.

Many ticket office windows have induction loops clearly marked while phones at many stations are fitted with devices to help if you have a hearing aid.

You can take support and assistance dogs into ticket offices, buffets and restaurants and onto trains. Most stations have accessible toilets. Some require a National Key Scheme (NKS) key. You can buy an NKS key from Radar.

What if I need specific help?

Under Passenger Assist (which used to be called the Assisted Passenger Reservation System or APRS), you should try to give train companies advance warning if you think you'll need any assistance from staff – ideally more than 24 hours' notice. This is particularly important if you'll be getting on or off a train at an unstaffed station.

It is best to call the operator of the station that you are starting your journey from regardless of the train company you are travelling with. Having said that, any of the operators listed in the useful phone numbers in chapter 9 should be able to book help for you should you find a particular Passenger Assist contact you're happy with. Of course, they may not be the operator best placed to help you on certain journeys. Watch out too for the price of phone calls. These do vary. National Rail Enquiries will transfer you to the appropriate operator from their 08457 48 49 50 local call rate number (0845 60 50 600 textphone).

» Travellers' Tales

'The disabled person's railcard is great value. To be able to take someone with you at the same concession. It pays for itself within one or two journeys.'

Give as much information as you can about what you'll need and check carefully what staff at the station can actually offer. You cannot assume they'll lift you, your heavy luggage or other heavy items like mobility scooters. Nor can they accompany you on your journey or help with eating, drinking or going to the toilet.

Tell them about any special needs you may have – for example, the need to use oxygen (most modern portable equipment does not pose a problem and you can be advised where best to put it) or if you need space for your assistance dog.

Just a single experience of sailing past your stop because the help you booked is not available is likely to lodge in the memory but thankfully, it isn't the norm. Passenger Assist generally works well. In a survey by consumer watchdog Passenger Focus in 2010, 71% of 'mystery shoppers' who tested the system were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' although 15% were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. Passenger Focus concluded that there had been some improvements since its last survey of what was then called the APRS but that the service was still 'inconsistent'. Visually-impaired mystery shoppers were least satisfied so make sure you're clear about what you need when booking through Passenger Assist.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'I have personally very many outstanding examples of passenger assistance, many when using public transport in London. Locally too, there are clearly some staff who understand disability issues and provide an exemplar service.'

» **Travellers' Tales**

'I believe a lot of problems could be easily solved if all guards and drivers were made aware of a disabled passenger on their service as a matter of routine – if only for emergency purposes. This would make life so much easier and cause a lot less panic when passengers requiring assistance are forced to pull or press alarms just to gain some attention.'

Again, Passenger Assist is for people with visible and invisible impairments. It is available to, for example, people with mental health conditions who want it.

You can book through Passenger Assist via National Rail Enquiries or with the train operator concerned. (The numbers are listed in chapter 9. They should also be on their website or you'll find them on the Disabled Person's Railcard site.)

Using a wheelchair or scooter on the train

Most trains can accommodate wheelchairs of the standard size. The regulation size is prescribed in government regulations covering public transport and is the same as for buses and coaches: 70cm wide by 120cm long. A small number of older trains can currently only accept wheelchairs up to 67cm wide.

All intercity train services and most other mainline services are wheelchair-accessible. Access to the train is provided by a ramp kept either at the station or on the train (hence the need for advanced notice).

On mainline (intercity, suburban and cross-country) trains, there should always be a space designed for wheelchair users. You must always use this space and apply your brakes when the train is moving. If you use a powered wheelchair, make sure that the power is switched off when travelling. If you need a designated space that is being occupied by a buggy or other passengers, ask for it.

At the time of writing, wheelchair-accessible sleeper cabins were available on overnight trains between London and Scotland but not on those between London and the West of England.

On the Eurostar services to the European continent, two wheelchair spaces are available in two first class carriages on each train. Wheelchair users pay the lowest available standard class fare and a companion can travel with you at a special rate.

Powered scooters are more problematic. They come in all shapes, sizes and weights and trains are not obliged to carry them. Each train operator has its own policy so check before travel and when booking Passenger Assist. The National Rail website – www.nationalrail.co.uk – has a section on wheelchairs and scooters including the scooter policy of all train operators.

Ricabililty, the national research charity, offers useful independent information on this subject including the publication *Wheels within wheels*, a guide to using a wheelchair on public transport.

On services with seat reservations, you should be able to reserve a seat or wheelchair space for yourself without charge.

How is station access being improved?

Access for All is a ten year programme which began in 2006 as part of the government's Railways for All strategy. It is designed to provide step-free, accessible routes from entrances and between platforms at 160 or so selected stations. This includes features such as new lifts, footbridges, handrails and tactile platform paving.

The programme, managed by Network Rail, is supported by a ring-fenced £370 million from the Department of Transport.

Stations are chosen by the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland. Most funding is targeted at the most heavily used stations but a proportion has also been allocated to ensure a fair spread of stations across England, Scotland and Wales.

The Access For All pages on the Department for Transport and Network Rail websites lists all selected stations.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'I don't use passenger assistance in advance much as I'm just not that good at predicting my life but staff are usually excellent anyway – especially on Virgin trains – and I've never been turned away. Priority seats on trains really help as it means you don't have to compete for seats so check which services have them and which ones don't and where exactly the seats are in case they're not well labelled.'

Getting on, getting off and enjoying the journey

Assuming you've used Passenger Assist, you should have all the assistance you need getting on and getting off, leaving you to enjoy the journey.

Most people do. In the Passenger Focus survey for spring 2011, 84% of passengers were satisfied with their journey. Some train operators fare better than others. The Passenger Focus website includes data from each train operator so you can see how the particular train operators you use are getting on.

Nine in ten trains run on time or, at least, conform to the PPM (public performance measure) for punctuality.

This is defined as trains arriving at their destinations within five minutes for commuter services or within ten minutes for long distance services. If you need to check exactly what facilities are available on your train, the train operator should be able to tell you before you travel. If you need anything on the journey, ask. Train staff are usually keen to help. Moreover, train staff must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate disabled passengers. Examples could be:

- » allowing you to travel in first class on a standard class ticket if the accessible toilet in standard class is out of order or making an emergency stop at a suitably-equipped station;
- » help with identifying your destination station;
- » arranging alternative transport from the nearest accessible station on your route to your destination station if the destination station is not accessible;
- » getting you a drink on a long journey if you can't get to the buffet and there is no trolley.

What will you do at the other end? The Traintaxi website – www.traintaxi.co.uk – is useful for finding out if accessible taxis are available at a station. Train taxi lists up to three local taxi or cab firms serving each station.

Solving problems

Problems can usually be solved on the day. Train operators are increasingly good at dealing with disabled customers and with unexpected events. If your train is delayed and you're entitled to compensation, a decent train operator will tell you. Having said that, it is still down to you to request compensation. It will not be given automatically.

You can complain about: being sold the wrong ticket for your journey; delayed or cancelled trains; the lack of information at stations or on trains; overcrowding; a penalty fare; the conduct of staff; access to the train or station and any help you did or didn't receive; and late notification of changes to a service because of engineering works.

Compensation may be available if your train journey is delayed because of something within the control of the train company such as engineering works but not for something out of its control like severe weather. Exactly what is available depends on the nature and length of the delay and whether you were eventually able to travel or not. If you couldn't travel at all, additional expenses such as an overnight stay may be considered. Similarly, claiming for a taxi might be possible if you're stranded (but make sure you tell the station manager you're doing this and that he or she

» Doing Transport Differently

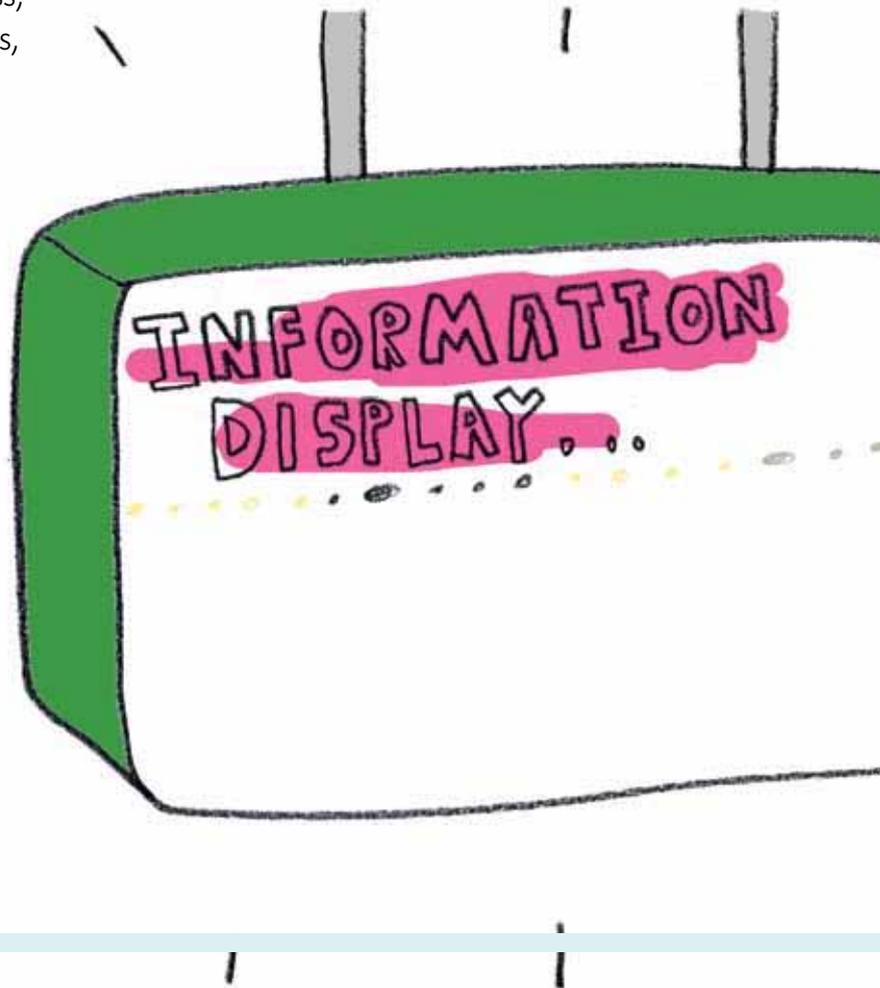
How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

confirms that they can't get you to your destination in any other way). You'll need the ticket/receipt or a photocopy of it as evidence for any compensation claim.

If your complaint is about a train, a particular journey or a delay or cancellation, take it up with the train operator's customer services officer. If it is about a station, find out whether it is run by a train operator or by Network Rail. Network Rail currently run 18 of the country's busiest stations (Birmingham New Street, Edinburgh Waverley, Gatwick Airport, Glasgow Central, Leeds, Liverpool Lime Street, Manchester Piccadilly and the London stations, Cannon Street, Charing Cross, Euston, Fenchurch Street, King's Cross, Liverpool Street, London Bridge, Paddington, St Pancras International, Victoria and Waterloo).

All train operators will have a passengers' charter approved by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). This will set out their service standards and explain how to complain. You'll probably need to get a form from the station or you can do it by phone. Notices at stations and on trains should give addresses and telephone numbers for making complaints.

You can also complain to the ORR if there's a problem with the accessibility of a train or tram such as if the audio-visual passenger information system is consistently left switched off.



If you are not satisfied with the way in which the train operator or Network Rail has dealt with your complaint or request for compensation, you should complain to Passenger Focus (outside London) or London TravelWatch (inside London). The ORR can investigate your complaints about unsafe practices in the rail industry.

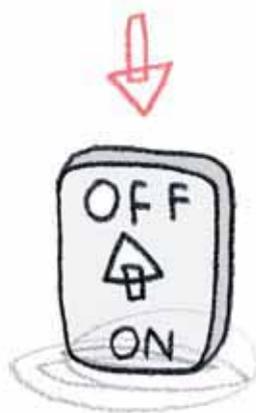
If you're dissatisfied with the service you receive from Passenger Focus or ORR, complain to them and then to the Parliamentary Ombudsman. For problems with London Travelwatch, go to the Local Government Ombudsman.

If you have a complaint under the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation, you should take it up in the above way in the first instance. If you're not satisfied, seek advice from Radar, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agency.

Can I challenge a penalty fare?

You may be charged a penalty fare if you take a train without a ticket or 'permit to travel'. This is usually £20 or double the fare, whichever is the most. Revenue staff are trained in disability awareness and should not fine you if you're genuinely unable to purchase a ticket but, in the unlikely event that that happens, there is a process for an independent appeal which should be explained at the time.

You can appeal against a penalty fare if the signs warning you of the penalty were inadequate or if you couldn't read them because you are visually-impaired or don't read English. You can also appeal if you were unable to buy a ticket because the machines or ticket booths were not working or were inaccessible to you because of your disability or if the queues were too long. Make your appeal through the Independent Penalty Fares Appeal Service.



Station story: Canterbury West

Canterbury West was an old Victorian station dating back to 1846. With the introduction of high speed services taking passengers into London in less than hour from the station in 2009, it has become more and more popular.

Using funding from the National Stations Improvement Programme and the Access for All programme, Southeastern provided:

- a new footbridge and two lifts to provide a step-free route between the entrance and all platforms;
- tactile paving along the platform edges;
- a new enlarged booking hall;
- refurbished, accessible toilets;
- a new waiting room;
- an enlarged café area;
- secure cycle parking; and
- improvements to the lighting and forecourt.

When the station was reopened in December 2010, transport minister Norman Baker said: 'We want public transport that is accessible to everyone and that is why the government has provided £2.7m to make these vital changes at Canterbury West which will benefit passengers using this busy station. We are determined to promote equality and fairness for all which is why we continue to fund the Access for All scheme which is enabling important accessibility work to be carried out at railway stations across the country.'

One local Disabled Persons Railcard holder said: 'When I think back to my times as an able-bodied commuter in the 80s with the old slam-door trains, I am amazed at how much train travel has changed. For one, there's no way I could have completed my daily Canterbury to London Bridge journey as a disabled person.'

6: Underground trains

Introduction

In the UK, there are two underground metro systems.

- » **The London underground** – ‘the tube’ – which dates back to 1863 making it the oldest in the world.
- » **the Glasgow subway** which opened in 1896 (the third oldest in the world).

With over a billion journeys a year, the London underground is the world’s third busiest system (after Moscow and Paris). Its 270 stations and 250 miles of track also make it the second longest network after Shanghai. This is not including the Docklands Light Railway which although it appears on the tube map is managed separately by DLR Limited.

Both the tube and the DLR are part of Transport for London (TfL) which also includes London Overground, London Tram (Tramlink), London Buses, London Dial-a-Ride and London River Services. TfL also runs Victoria coach station and licenses black taxis as well as running London’s strategic road network (and enforcing the congestion charge).

This chapter primarily deals with the London underground – which carried a record 1.1 billion passengers in the year to March 2011 – with a separate section on the Glasgow subway.

How accessible is the underground?

Despite its size, age and number of passengers, London Underground is making progress on access. A variety of accessible tube maps are available showing stations with step-free access, gaps between the platform and the train, and which stations can be accessed by using escalators. At the time of writing, these included:

- » large print tube maps in black and white and colour.
- » a ‘step-free guide’.
- » an ‘avoiding stairs’ guide (which includes escalators).
- » a toilet facilities tube map.
- » an audio tube map. (Audio descriptions of a number of stations are also available from a service called Describe Online)

The TfL website includes a section on Transport Accessibility for all its forms of transport including the tube. Its Journey Planner with its advanced search feature can help you plan a journey that suits you – avoiding stairs or escalators, for example, or limiting the amount of walking.

Unlike for the train, TfL say you don’t need to book assistance in advance for the tube. There is a 24-hour travel information centre on 0843 222 1234 (or Minicom 020 7918 3015) and a Customer Service Centre (0845 330 9880) for additional information.

Journey Planner or the Customer Service Centre can tell you if particular lifts or escalators are out of order or stations closed. (Or you can get this sort of information texted to your phone via TfL Travel Alerts.)

There are also six travel information centres (at Euston, Heathrow Terminal 123 underground station, King's Cross, Liverpool Street, Piccadilly Circus and Victoria) who can advise on pretty much anything to do with London travel including tickets and accessibility.

I've never used the underground before. Can I get any help?

TfL run a Travel Mentoring Service to support disabled Londoners who want to use the many mainstream accessible public transport options TfL now have available. It can offer advice on planning a journey using an accessible route and can even provide a mentor to come with you for your first few journeys. Mentoring is free of charge and is available Monday-Friday from 8am-6pm. You can find out more on the TfL website or by calling 020 3054 4361.

There are also guides you can download from the website in regular and large print called Getting Around London and Making Rail Accessible: Helping Older and Disabled Passengers.

» **Travellers' Tales**

'Travel Mentoring has given me freedom and options that I did not know I had. It has greatly improved the quality of my life.'

For people with learning difficulties there is a guide called Out and about in London: My guide which won a Plain English Campaign award. There is also a guide for adults accompanying people with learning difficulties. They're both available to download from the website or by calling 0843 222 1234. Out and about in London is also available as an audio version (MP3 or CD).

Choosing the right ticket

Buying a one-off ticket on the tube is very expensive – at least £4. TfL are trying to encourage the use of the Oyster card, a pay-as-you-go plastic smartcard designed to replace paper tickets. It costs £5 (although this deposit is refundable if you ever return the card.)

You add credit to your card in advance which is then deducted, journey by journey, as you pass through London's tubes, buses and trams, tapping your card in and out on the automatic card readers on the ticket gates. (There's a tube map showing all the Oyster stations in London.)

You can top your card up automatically from your bank account or add credit online, at certain stations (not all of them) or local shops (newsagents, garages, off licences etc) called Oyster Ticket Stops. You can add travelcards and season tickets to your card too. Registering your card will enable you to get a refund if the card is lost or stolen.

TfL say Oyster is the cheapest way to pay for single journeys on bus, tube, tram, DLR, London overground and most national rail services in London. (In tube zone one, for example, a single journey will cost £1.90 instead of £4). If you make lots of pay-as-you-go journeys in one day, there is a daily price cap. The exact level of the cap will depend on which types of transport you use and at what times of day but it should never exceed, with a few exceptions, the price of the equivalent Day Travelcard.

There are reductions for children, 16-18 year olds and students. For these you'll need a photo Oyster card.

Each station has at least one ticket machine with lower buttons and coin and card slots and all ticket offices have induction loops.

If you need help buying a ticket, ask any member of staff.

Can I get a reduction?

If you live in London, you may be eligible for a Freedom Pass provided by your London borough council. This offers Londoners free travel on the Transport for London network (effectively almost all public transport in London including the tube) at all times (not just off-peak). Outside London, you can only use your Freedom Pass off-peak. There is more information on the Freedom Pass on page 29.

Note: the standard English National Concession Travel Scheme (ENCTS) disabled or older person's travel pass can only be used on London's buses not on the tube.

Free travel is available for war veterans. There are also passes offering discounts available for longer-term jobseekers or those on the new deal. If you are eligible to buy one of the National railcards (16-25, Senior, HM Forces Railcard, Disabled Persons, Annual Gold, Network and Family & Friends), you can also get discounts on some off-peak travel on Tube, DLR, London overground and national rail services in London. There's not space here for detail on all the various options and who is entitled to them but they're well worth investigating.

At the station

Over 80 tube stations, mostly suburban ones, have car parks. All have accessible spaces, free for use by Blue Badge holders.

All underground staff have training on how to assist disabled passengers so ask for help if you want it. They can help you to the platform, help you onto the train and, if necessary, help you find a seat. If you ask, they can also call ahead to your destination or interchange stations and arrange for a member of staff to meet and help you there too.

Trained guide dogs, police and other assistance dogs are, since October 2011, allowed on London Underground escalators. Other dogs or animals must be carried.

Tactile warning surfaces are being installed on more and more staircases and seats are available on most platforms.

Many stations have a vertical step onto the train. This may be as much as a foot high (30cm). There may also be a gap between the train and the platform so check all this before you get down there. The 'step-free' tube guide includes all this information.

To reduce the step up, London Underground are installing platform humps on some platforms which raise the platform to the level of the train. At the time of writing, these could be found on most Victoria line platforms (except Pimlico), London Bridge and at stations on the Waterloo and City line. Similar, smaller improvements are being made to platforms as new trains are introduced.

» Travellers' Tales

'I am at the second stop from the end on a tube line. For rush hour travel, if it's very busy or if there are problems I leave earlier than normal, get a train going the wrong way for the one stop to the end of the line. It is almost empty, I sit on it as it fills up and wait for it to resume its journey past my original stop.

Similarly, I'll go past the stop I need to change at to a station further down the route if it is a shorter way to change train or I have a better chance of getting a seat. It's all about planning. Every time I am about to take a journey I check out the TfL web site. I start looking two or three hours beforehand. If I spot a problem early, I either cancel or if away from home (at work, for example) I will leave early as a precaution.'

Using a wheelchair on the tube

London Underground has 62 stations which are step-free from street to platform. Full details can be found in the 'step-free' tube guide.

But most tube stations are still reached by escalator and, for safety reasons, you cannot use a wheelchair on the escalators. However, wheelchairs can be folded and carried. Ask a member of staff for help.

Carriages on District, Jubilee and Northern line trains have multipurpose areas suitable for luggage, pushchairs and wheelchairs. These are also available on the new Victoria and Metropolitan line trains that were being introduced at the time of writing.

There are also now more than 250 wide-aisle automatic ticket gates on the tube so Wheelchair users don't have to wait to be let through a manual gate.

Getting on, getting off and enjoying the journey

The priority seating is next to the doors. It should be clearly marked. Priority seating is for disabled people, pregnant women, older people, those travelling with children and anyone less able to stand. The idea is that passengers should leave these seats free or vacate them if they see someone who might require one. But if no one offers and you need a seat, ask.

Apart from the old trains on the Metropolitan line, all tube trains now have automatic voice announcements announcing the current and next stations, and the destination of the train. Service disruption information is broadcast by the driver over the public address system.

The District, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria lines also have visual information displays inside the train. These too show the current and next stations, and the destination of the train. At the time of writing, new trains with improved audio and visual information were being introduced on the Metropolitan line.

Solving problems

Most problems can be solved on the day with London underground staff who are genuinely keen to help. But if you're not satisfied you should complain in the first instance to TfL Customer Relations. Contact details can be found on the TfL website or at any underground station. You can also make complaints online at the TfL website.

If you're dissatisfied with the reply from TfL, take it up with London TravelWatch, the independent appeals body set up by parliament to represent the users of all transport services in London. TravelWatch will only consider a complaint after TfL has had an opportunity to reply so you're wasting your time going to them first.

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), the independent national service for investigating complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities, also covers a number of other bodies including TfL. Before complaining to the LGO, again give TfL a reasonable chance to answer the complaint and talk to London TravelWatch.

If you have a complaint under the Equality Act/disability discrimination legislation, you should take it up in the above way in the first instance.

» Travellers' Tales

'I prefer the tube for travelling around London. The audible announcements are good. It can get crowded but my guide dog encourages people to give me a seat. It's much harder without him. It's good that there are lots of different ways to access the tube – lift, escalator, stairs. My worry is that when they refurbish stations, they often move the steps. This makes it more difficult for me as my dog doesn't like the escalators.

Staffing reductions are a worry. You don't want to be stuck there unable to get out of the wider entrance because there's nobody to open it. So one travellers' tip would be to check that the station you want is still staffed.'

» Travellers' Tales

'Announcements are still not always clear but they are getting more helpful – 'doors open on the left hand side' is very useful if you can't see the doors.'

If you're not satisfied, seek advice from Radar, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agency.

Glasgow Subway

The 15-stop Glasgow Subway does offer facilities for hearing and sight-impaired passengers. Guide dogs are welcomed as are hearing dogs and assistance dogs. Ticket offices have amplification equipment.

However, wheelchairs are not permitted. The Strathclyde Partnership for Transport who run the Glasgow Subway put this down to 'the inherited constraints of the small tunnels and trains'. (The same applies to larger prams and pushchairs.) Most stations have escalators as well as stairs.

As on the London underground, staff are keen to help. You just have to ask. They can stop escalators if necessary and make sure train drivers know where you want to get off.

All train carriages provide priority seats for elderly people and people with disabilities.

TV style screens at the entrance to stations will give you real-time travel information on train frequency and any delays.

You can buy a concessionary ticket if you have an older or disabled person's travel card.

There are car parks at Shields Road, Kelvinbridge and Bridge Street.

If you have a complaint and are not satisfied with the SPTs response having taken it all the way to the top (the chief executive), you can then take it up with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

- » Glasgow Subway website:
www.spt.co.uk/subway

7: Other means of transport

Introduction

The improvement in public transport over the past decade or so has seen new forms of transport appear and, in the tram, the return of an old favourite. This chapter introduces them briefly.

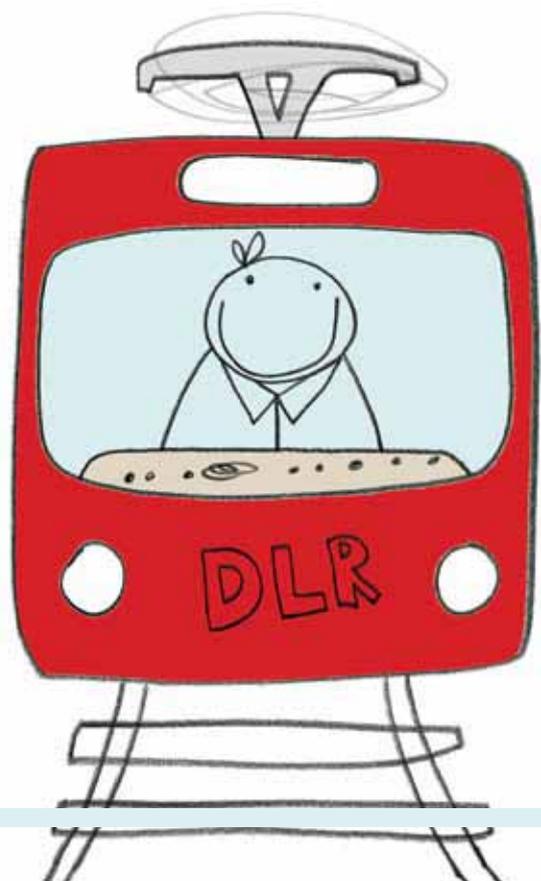
Light Rail and tramways

Traditional trams disappeared from Britain's streets in the middle of the last century but in recent years carriages running on tracks have reappeared in and around our cities to reduce congestion and improve public transport. These newer systems have been built with accessibility in mind. Having said that, when systems describe themselves as 'fully-accessible' they are often referring to wheelchairs so it is still worth checking that a system is fully accessible to you.

Transport buffs generally define light rail as systems that don't have the speed or capacity of railway or underground metro systems but are more than simply street-running trams. This includes systems such as the London Tramlink, the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), the Tyne and Wear Metro, Manchester Metrolink, Midland Metro, Nottingham Express Transit and the Sheffield Supertram, all of which are included in this section. Many of these combine both light rail and tramway

sections. Similar systems are planned for Edinburgh and elsewhere. Even the UK's one remaining first generation tramway in Blackpool is having an upgrade which will see new low floor trams with level access tram stops appearing along the famous promenade.

Light Rail accessibility is governed by the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010 which replaced the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998. They prescribe the accessibility standards to which new, and older (pre-1999) light rail vehicles as and when they are refurbished, must comply. Enforcement is by the Office of Rail Regulation using the same regime already in place for accessibility on heavy rail. All light rail vehicles must be accessible by 2020.



Docklands Light Railway

Run by Transport for London (TfL), the DLR was the first 'fully accessible' railway in the UK. All stations have a lift or ramp access to the platforms, with level access onto the trains. Lifts have alarms allowing you to talk directly with a member of DLR staff.

The gap between the platform edge and the train is about 7.5cm and the step up or down from the platform to the train about 5cm. TfL say: 'these levels allow easier access for most passengers. Most wheelchair users find getting on and off smoothest with the largest wheel first, this may mean reversing as appropriate.' There is more information on the DLR via the TfL website (www.tfl.gov.uk).

London Tramlink

The London Tramlink is sometimes called the Croydon Tramlink. It operates in south London linking Wimbledon, Croydon, New Addington and Beckenham.

The tramlink is fully accessible with stops providing step-free access. At Wimbledon station there are passenger lifts to provide connections to other services, as well as to and from street level.

Each stop has a tactile strip along its entire length, a safe distance from the platform edge.

There are priority seats in each section of the tram. The next stop, destination and interchange points are announced as the tram leaves each stop and are shown on the internal display.

Wheelchair users travel free regardless of whether or not you have the Freedom Pass, London's disabled person's travelcard. You can easily get on and off and there is a space for your chair in each section of the tram. Next to the wheelchair space is an intercom to speak to the driver in an emergency and a stop request button, both at low level. All door opening and stop request buttons are at an accessible height.

There is more information on the Tramlink via the TfL website (www.tfl.gov.uk).

Tyne and Wear Metro

The Tyne and Wear Metro linking Newcastle and the coast opened in 1980 and is run by Nexus, the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive.

It promises assistance for passengers with disabilities or health conditions at any station provided you give at least six working hours' notice and welcomes standard size wheelchairs (70cm x 120cm). They also say that where assistance is required but has not been booked in advance, they will try to help anyway.

» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

A Bridge Card is available to anyone who may need additional support whilst travelling. It can be shown to transport staff if help is needed. It does not entitle you to a concessionary or discount fare but can save explaining all the time.

Powered mobility scooters cannot be used anywhere on the system although lighter scooters if folded may be carried on board.

All Metro stations are accessible by level access, ramps or lifts. Lifts vary in size but all should be able to accommodate a wheelchair. Some of the older ramps are rather steep.

Station platforms are at about the same height as train floors. There may be a gap of up to 12.1 cm and/or a step of up to 4.8 cm depending on the station.

All stations have Help Points which are generally located near ticket machines.

There are toilets accessible with a Radar National Key Scheme key at Heworth, Gateshead, Four Lane Ends and Whitley Bay.

Many Metro stations have automated departure announcements giving the destination of the next due train while at Monument and Haymarket, there are talking signs from RNIB REACT. Drivers also announce key stations and interchange points on board trains.

There is a free Metro Access Guide available as a download from the website or as a printed booklet which includes detailed information on each of the stations of the network.

You can buy a concessionary ticket if you have an older or disabled person's travel card. Also available is a Companion Card enabling local residents holding a Metro Gold card and receiving certain benefits who are not able to travel unaccompanied to take someone with them free of charge on the metro.

Nexus have a Complaints Handling Procedure (available as a PDF on the website). If you are not satisfied with their response, take it up with Passenger Focus (details on page 72)

» Metro website:
www.nexus.org.uk/metro

Manchester Metrolink

All Metrolink stops have either a ramp, lift or escalator access plus ticket vending machines, emergency call points and customer information points and CCTV.

All platforms have wheelchair access points marked for step free access and most platforms have tactile edges.

Each tram has designated wheelchair areas with its own emergency/information call points.

The Metrolink website includes detailed information on each stop.

There is a Disabled Persons Concessionary Travel Permit if you live in Greater Manchester and have severe walking difficulties, are partially sighted, profoundly or severely deaf or have been or would be refused a driving licence on medical grounds. It will allow you to travel free off-peak on the Metrolink and half-price at peak times.

Application forms are available from Local Authority Information Centres, travelshops or by post from Transport for Greater Manchester

Travel training may also be available for young people and adults who need additional help or support to make journeys confidently and safely on their own using public transport.

» Metrolink website:
www.metrolink.co.uk

Midland Metro

Midland Metro linking Birmingham, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich is fully accessible.

Although there is no permanent staffing at stops, all 23 stops along the route are designed to be fully accessible, with level, ramped, or lift access to all platforms, and handrails where required. There is information and timetables; tactile paving along the platform edge, at stairs and crossing points; good lighting; and 'real time' information and audio announcements; as well as a waiting shelter with seating and an emergency intercom. Some stops have cycle racks.

There are free Park and Ride facilities at The Hawthorns, Black Lake, Wednesbury Parkway and Priestfield stops with Blue Badge disabled parking spaces.

There is level access between the tram and platform edge as well as bright colour-contrasting doors and handrails, priority seats and two accessible spaces for wheelchair users with an emergency intercom.

Trams have visual information screens, audio announcements and Customer Service Representatives on-board to give information and to sell and check tickets and passes. Assistance dogs are permitted.

Centro offer Blind and Disabled Concessionary Passes to those people living within the West Midlands County (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Solihull, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) which provide for free off-peak travel on the Midland Metro as well as buses.

» Midland Metro website:

<http://nxbus.co.uk/the-metro>

Nottingham Express Transit (NET)

Nottingham Express Transit say that, following wide consultation with representatives from disability groups, theirs was the first UK tram system designed to be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The tram stop platforms are all laid out in the same way. The platform edge is white with tactile paving. Clearly-marked paving shows the appropriate place for Wheelchair users to wait so that they are nearest the wheelchair spaces on the tram. Stops are all well-lit, have electronic displays providing real-time information, emergency help points and shelters which include a passenger information display.

Trams are 100% low floor throughout. They have wide double doors with white strips for enhanced visibility feature on each tram and warning sounds. There is only a small gap between the doors and the platform.

The floor colourings in front of doors contrast with the rest of the carriage and there is extra space near the doors to allow wheelchairs on and off easily.

Each tram has two dedicated wheelchair spaces with help buttons and stop request buttons at an appropriate height. There are also six clearly marked priority seats. Guide dogs are welcome on the tram.

There are electronic signs, audio announcements and conductors trained in disability awareness on board every tram to issue tickets and provide help if needed.

There are a total of over 100 parking spaces for disabled motorists close to the tram stop at all five Park and Ride sites (Wilkinson Street, Hucknall, Moor Bridge, Phoenix Park and The Forest). The timetable is also available in Braille and large print.

HOLDERS OF disabled concession passes from Nottingham City Council travel free at all times whereas Nottinghamshire County Council OAP and Disabled passes are only free off-peak. Check with the relevant local authority for availability.

» NET website: www.thetram.net

Sheffield Supertram

Stagecoach Supertram serves Sheffield with three light rail routes covering 29km, half of which runs on the street.

They say the stops were designed to ensure maximum access based on ergonomic studies by Cranfield Institute of Technology. The stops feature ramped platform approaches and tactile paving to locate tram doors and level boarding and alighting. On board, there is priority seating, audio and visual information and a conductor.

All trams have two priority wheelchair spaces near the entrance door.

There are currently no restrictions on mobility scooters.

Holders of passes issued under the English National Concession Travel Scheme (ENCTS) are entitled to free local bus and tram travel at any time.

- » Websites:
www.travelsouthyorkshire.com and
www.supertram.com

Ferries

The UK has international ferry services to France, the Republic of Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Scandinavia and the Netherlands. There are also local services serving the Channel islands, the Scottish islands, the Isle of Man, the Scilly isles and the Isle of Wight.

As well as these sea ferries, there are ferry – or waterbus – services on inland waterways including the Thames in London (run by Transport for London), the Mersey in Liverpool (Mersey Ferries), the Taff in Cardiff (Cardiff Waterbus) and Bristol harbour (Bristol Ferry Boat).

Although passenger shipping and aviation were exempt from key parts of the Disability Discrimination Act, the government was consulting, at the time of writing, on the application of Part 3 of the Equality Act 2010 (the section concerning access to services) to ships and hovercraft. Whatever the results of this consultation, the legal situation will become clearer at the end of 2012 when EU regulations concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway will come into force in the UK.

EU Regulation 1177/2010 will provide disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility with the same opportunities to travel by water as they have in the rail and aviation sectors across the EU.

For the time being, it's a case of checking with the individual operator. Larger UK ports generally have good facilities; elsewhere it can vary. Some ferry operators ask that people with certain impairments or health conditions be accompanied by a non-disabled companion. As ever, the advice is to check before you book and to give as much detail as you can about your requirements, especially if you will be travelling alone.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) produces a guide *Access to Sea Travel – Information for Disabled People and People with Reduced Mobility*. (At the time of writing, the government was consulting on arrangements to replace DPTAC.)

Taxis and Dial-a-Ride

Detailed information about accessible taxis is beyond the scope of this guide which is concerned with access to regular, scheduled public transport. However, as taxis will often feature in integrated or longer journeys, we are including some basic information.

Under the existing legislation, the government has the power to regulate for accessible taxis. It has expressed the intention to exercise this power but it has not yet done so. As a result, regulations vary. In London, for example, all newly-licensed taxis must be able to carry a wheelchair and all taxis must be wheelchair accessible by January 2012.

Currently, the only national regulation concerns dogs. Guide dogs, hearing dogs or assistance dogs accompanying people with epilepsy or a physical disability must be carried free although a driver can apply for an exemption if, for example, they are allergic to dogs.

The best starting point for further information on taxis and minicabs is the government's website – www.direct.gov.uk – which includes information on how to check the licences of firms and drivers, how to complain and how to use taxis and minicabs safely. For information about taxis and minicabs in your area, contact the local authority. They can also tell you about any subsidies or assistance that might be available.

» Travellers' Tales

'The Mersey ferry offers the best way to see the Liverpool skyline – I never get bored with this trip and have done it several times.

Take a train from any of the four city centre stations on the Wirral Line and get off at Hamilton Square (the train goes under the river) and then it is a short five minute walk to the Woodside terminal where you get the ferry back to Liverpool. If you buy a day ticket this will be cheaper than a train ticket and then a ferry ticket.

I think the boat is fairly disabled friendly but pushing someone in a wheelchair up the ramp at Woodside could be difficult.'

» Travellers' Tales

'I cannot walk so use an electric scooter that has to be brought to the driver's side so I can slide out so adequate space is needed. Always talk with the ferry men. I'm an avid ferry traveller– Channel Islands, Norway, Spain, France, Ireland. The Golden rule: speak to ferry people and explain needs and always book a long time ahead.'

In London, you may be eligible to use the Taxicard or Capital Call schemes. These provide subsidised taxi and minicab travel for people who have difficulty using public transport. There are various criteria for eligibility. It's worth exploring these as, in some cases, an endorsement from your GP for your application may be sufficient. There is a guide called Assisted Transport Services in Greater London that can be downloaded from the Transport for London website. It deals with Taxicard and Capital Call and London's Dial-a-Ride (see below).

If you're looking for a taxi at the end of your journey, the Traintaxi website – www.traintaxi.co.uk – can give you the phone numbers of the local taxi operators from any station in the country so you can check on accessibility before travelling.

Dial-a-Ride is a scheme operated by some local councils which is multi-occupancy like a bus but door to door like a taxi. Journeys are booked in advance and you're picked up in a mini-bus or people carrier which you share with other scheme members. Ask your local authority if there is a scheme in your area.

In London, where Dial-a-Ride is free, there is a guide to Dial-a-Ride available to download from the TfL website. Temporary membership is available if you're visiting London.

8: All Aboard

Public transport in the UK has come a long way since the Duke of Wellington said of steam trains in 1852: 'I see no reason to suppose that these machines will ever force themselves into general use'.

Given the great advances we've seen, especially in accessibility and comfort, it's possible that even the Duke would have been racing online to book a ticket. We certainly hope this guide has encouraged those of you reluctant to use public transport, for whatever reason, to give it a go. And those of you who tend to rely on one method to perhaps try another. If you use public transport for local journeys, why not try it for a longer one? Try an integrated journey, mixing bus and train or tube and coach, for example.

What about that little journey from Lands End to John O'Groats in less than 24 hours? Bus to Penzance, train to Bristol Temple Meads, train to Birmingham New Street, coach to Glasgow Buchanan bus station, train from Glasgow Queen Street to Perth, train to Inverness, bus from Inverness bus station to Dunbeath, bus to Wick and bus to John O'Groats. Total time: 23 hours, 49 minutes. Just in time for a nice cup of tea.

Whatever journey you try, let Radar know how you get on.

Sounds great but what happens if it goes wrong?

Information on who to complain to is included under the relevant mode of transport chapter and in the resources, chapter 9. Here are some basic tips on how to complain effectively based on the advice from Transport For All.

Under the law, you should receive the service described in the travel company or organisation's customer charter on the same basis as anyone else. If you don't, you may want to pursue it.

» Travellers' Tales

'I have visited museums and galleries in York, Manchester and especially London. That particular journey requires an early start accessing the train in my home town, a pleasant journey down, in the City in time for coffee, some culture, spot of lunch, more sight-seeing and then a train home again.

After having afternoon tea on the concourse at St Pancras station watching Eurostar trains going in and out – no hassle, no fuss, just a very relaxing time, secure and safe – I would like to go to Paris.'

Be clear about exactly what you are complaining about and about what you want to achieve through your complaint. Do you want an explanation, an apology, compensation or something else?

Make a draft of what you want to complain about as soon as possible, while it is still fresh in your memory. Then gather together everything you need by way of evidence. Act quickly. It is best to make your complaint as soon as possible after the event about which you are complaining.

Follow the correct procedure. Some companies may ask you to fill out a particular form and to send your travel tickets to them. Ideally do not send original documents. Send photocopies. Describe what actually happened including the detail: date and time of travel; start and finish point; vehicle or train licence numbers (if known) and the names and numbers of any staff involved (if known).

Phone calls are not the same as putting something in writing. They may be recorded by the company and there is no reason why they should not be recorded by you. If you do use the phone, keep a record of who you spoke to, when the call took place and what was said. Always follow up with a letter, email or complaint form.

Keep records. This includes copies of all tickets, letters, emails and notes from phone conversations.

You may also have grounds for complaint under the Equality Act/ disability discrimination legislation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission put it like this: 'You may have been unlawfully discriminated against if you find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to use the service due to a practice, policy or procedure which the provider has not taken reasonable steps to change.' If you feel that this is the case after having read this guide, take it up through the transport operator's preferred channels but also seek advice from Radar, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agency.

How do I save a journey if there's a problem en route?

The advice above is fine once the journey is over but what can you do while you're still travelling?

Well, don't pull the communications cord or set off the alarm unless it is genuinely a matter of life and death emergency.

Whatever the problem – whether it's your fault or the transport operator's – talk to a member of staff as soon as you can. The sooner you do this, the more likely it is that things can be put right. If, for example, the assistance you were expecting wasn't there at the station and you're stuck on a train, the train may be able to stop at the next station and provide a taxi. This won't be possible if you're 100 miles further down the track. For buses and coaches, it's a little easier, a bus driver or coach should be able to stop even if it's not at an official stop.

If there are no staff available, ask another passenger to find one for you.

If you're at a station or stop and have, for example, missed a connection, talk to the nearest member of staff. Is there an information or help point? If not, try the ticket booth. Again, ask a member of the public to help you if there are no staff around.

If you cannot find a real-live member of staff, this is where a charged mobile phone and a list of emergency numbers can be useful. Call the transport operator or call/text a friend who can do it for you. Phoning is likely to be quicker than going online.

» Travellers' Tales

'When initially diagnosed with mental illness, I was essentially housebound. Taking up voluntary employment was an essential step in my reintegration not only away from the home but also into simple social situations that generated such anxiety for me. Public transport was an absolute necessity in this process without which my recovery would not have been possible. My evolution from then stemmed into higher education and paid employment, both of which were again only possible via public transport.'

» Travellers' Tales

'I recently travelled from Leeds to Bournemouth involving buses, trains, London Underground and taxis. Although I had allowed some flexibility on times, I was concerned that the link from Kings Cross to Victoria using the tube could be difficult. Happy to say thanks to the quality standards of customer service, support, assistance, communication and guidance offered by the Transport for London Tube staff, everything went well. The standard of service from the Tube staff was (and has been) exemplar and I can only put this down to management, leadership and excellent training.'

9: Resources

List of organisations and websites

Journey Planning

Transport Direct

Web: www.transportdirect.info

Traveline

Tel: 0870 608 2608

Textphone: 0870 241 2216

Web: www.traveline.org.uk

Door to door

Links to 'travel and transport information for disabled and less mobile people'. (At the time of writing, the government was consulting on arrangements to replace DPTAC.)

Web: <http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/door-to-door>

BBC Travel News

Web: www.bbc.co.uk/travelnews

In most of England, county and unitary councils have responsibilities for public transport and have a public transport information officer. In the major conurbations, this responsibility is carried out by Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) and in London, by Transport for London. Contact details below.

Centro/Network West Midlands

Address: Centro House,
16 Summer Lane,
Birmingham B19 3SD

Tel: 0121 200 2700

Textphone: 0121 214 2787

Web: www.cento.org

GMPTE

Address: 2 Piccadilly Place,
Manchester M1 3BG

Tel: 0871 200 2233

Web: www.gmpte.com

MerseyTravel

Address: 24 Hatton Garden,
Liverpool L3 2AN

Tel: 0151 227 5181

Textphone: 0151 330 1087

Web: www.merseytravel.gov.uk

Metro

Address: Wellington House,
40-50 Wellington Street,
Leeds LS1 2DE

Tel: 0113 251 7272

Web: www.wymetro.com

» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

Nexus

Address: Grainger Chambers,
Hood Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 6JQ
Tel: 0191 202 0747
Textphone: 0191 202 0501
Web: www.nexus.org.uk

South Yorkshire PTE

Address: 11 Broad Street West,
Sheffield S1 2BQ
Tel: 01709 515151
Web: www.sypte.co.uk

Transport for London (TfL)

Address: Travel Information,
55 Broadway,
London SW1H 0BD
Tel: 020 7222 1234
Textphone: 020 7918 3015
Email: travinfo@tfl.gov.uk
Web: www.tfl.gov.uk

TfL Customer Relations

Address: 4th Floor, Zone Y4,
14 Pier Walk,
North Greenwich,
London SE10 0ES
Email: enquire@tfl.gov.uk

In Northern Ireland:

Translink

Address: Central Station,
Belfast BT1 3PB
Tel: 028 9066 6630
Textphone: 028 9035 4007
Web: www.translink.co.uk

In Scotland:

Transport Scotland

Address: Buchanan House,
58 Portdundas Road,
Glasgow G4 0HF
Tel: 0141 272 7100
Web: www.transportscotland.gov.uk

In Wales:

SEWTA (for South East Wales)

Web: www.sewta.gov.uk

SWITCH (for South West Wales)

Web: www.sswitch.net

Taith (for North East Wales)

Web: www.taith.gov.uk

TraCC (for Mid Wales)

Web: www.tracc.gov.uk

Other general contacts

Confederation of Passenger Transport (UK)

Government-recognised trade association for the bus, coach and light rail industries.

Address: CPT Head Office,
Drury House,
34-43 Russell Street,
London WC2B 5HA

Tel: 020 7240 3131

Web: www.cpt-uk.org

Campaign for Better Transport

Web: www.bettertransport.org.uk

Transport for All

Campaign for fully accessible, reliable and affordable transport for disabled and older Londoners.

Address: 336 Brixton Road,
London SW9 7AA

Tel: 020 7737 2339

Web: www.transportforall.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Disability helpline offers advice if you feel you may have been discriminated against by a service provider.

Tel: 08457 622 633

Textphone: 08457 622 644

Web: www.equalityhumanrights.com

London TravelWatch

Independent, statutory watchdog for transport users in and around London.

Address: 6 Middle Street,
London EC1A 7JA

Tel: 020 7505 9000

Fax: 020 7505 9003

Email: enquiries@londontravelwatch.org.uk

Web: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

Address: PO Box 4771,
Coventry CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614 or
0845 602 1983 or text 'call
back' to 0762 480 4323
(8.30-5, Monday to Friday)

Fax: 024 7682 0001

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Web: www.lgo.org.uk

Direct Enquiries

Nationwide Access Register developed in partnership with Radar.

Web: www.directenquiries.com

Travel training

Web: www.coolmove.org.uk

European Union

Web: [http://ec.europa.eu/
passenger-rights](http://ec.europa.eu/passenger-rights)

Tel: 00800 67891011

Ricability

Research and information for older and disabled people.

Address: Unit G03, The Wenlock Business Centre,
50-52 Wharf Road,
London N1 7EU

Tel: 020 7427 2460

Textphone: 020 7427 2469

Fax: 020 7427 2468

Email: mail@ricability.org.uk

Web: www.ricability.org.uk

Guide to using wheelchairs on public transport: http://www.ricability.org.uk/consumer_reports/mobility_reports/wheels_within_wheels

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Tel: 0345 015 4033

Textphone: 0300 061 4298

Text 'call back' with your name and mobile number to 07624 813 005.

Web: www.ombudsman.org.uk

Buses and Coaches

Bus Users UK

Address: PO Box 119,
Shepperton TW17 8UX

Tel: 01932 232574

Email: enquiries@bususers.org

Web: www.bususers.org

To complain about buses:

Web: www.bususers.org/complain.htm

London Buses Customer Services,

Address: TfL London Buses, 4th floor, Zone Y4, 14 Pier Walk, London SE10 0ES

Tel: 0845 300 7000
(8-8, Monday to Friday)

Web: www.tfl.gov.uk

London TravelWatch

Independent, statutory watchdog for transport users in and around London.

Address: 6 Middle Street,
London EC1A 7JA

Tel: 020 7505 9000
(9-5, Monday to Friday)

Web: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk Complaints: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/complaints

Passengers' View Scotland Area

Address: 2D Dockside,
Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Tel: 0131 244 1694
or 0131 244 5306

Email: ptuc@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

The Bus Passengers' Platform at the same address are on:

0131 244 0898 or 0131 244 5306.

Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

Address: 116 Holywood Road,
Belfast BT4 1NY

Tel: 028 9067 2488

Fax: 028 9065 7701

Email: info@consumercouncil.org.uk

Web: www.consumercouncil.org.uk

Bus Appeals Body

Address: c/o Bus Users UK,
PO Box 119,
Shepperton TW17 8UX

Tel: 01932 232574

Email: enquiries@bususers.org

Web: www.bususers.org

National Express Disabled Persons Travel Helpline

Tel: 08717 818179

Textphone: 0121 455 9986

Email: dpth@nationalexpress.com

Web: www.nationalexpress.com

National Express buses

(West Midland, Coventry,
Dundee and Midland Metro)

Tel: 0121 254 7272

Web: http://nxbus.co.uk

Oxford Tube

Tel: 01865 772250

Web: www.oxfordtube.com

Scottish Citylink

Tel: 0870 550 5050

Web: www.citylink.co.uk

Victoria Coach Station

Hub and terminus for most coach services in and out of London. There is a mobility lounge where disabled people can wait and from which assistance can be provided. To book assistance:

Tel: 020 7027 2520

Web: www.tfl.gov.uk

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)

Tel: 0300 123 9000

Fax: 0113 249 8142

Email: Enquiries@vosa.gov.uk

Web: www.vosa.gov.uk

The Traffic Commissioners

are listed on the Department for Transport website (www.dft.gov.uk)

Arriva

Tel: 0844 800 44 11

Web: www.arrivabus.co.uk

First Group buses

Web: www.firstgroup.com/
ukbus (Local phone numbers on page 75)

Go Ahead

Web: www.Go-ahead.com
(Local phone numbers on page 75)

Stagecoach bus

Web: www.stagecoachbus.com
(Local phone numbers on page 76)

» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

Overground trains

National Rail Enquiries (NRE)

- Tel:** 0845 748 4950
Tel: 0845 60 40 500 (Welsh)
Textphone: 0845 605 0600
Tel: overseas (international rates apply):
+44(0)20 7278 5240
Web: www.nationalrail.co.uk
TrainTracker™:
0871 200 49 50 (Calls cost 10p per minute from a BT landline, calls from other operators and mobiles may be higher)
TrainTracker™ Text:
text station name to:
8 49 50

Passenger Assist Numbers

for all train operators appear on page 74.

Passenger Focus

- Address:** Freepost (RRRE-ETTC-LEET), PO Box 4257, Manchester M60 3AR
Tel: 0300 123 2350
Email: info@passengerfocus.org.uk
Web: www.passengerfocus.org.uk

Disabled Persons Railcard

- Address:** Disabled Persons Railcard Office, PO Box 11631, Laurencekirk AB30 9AA
Tel: 0845 605 0525 (7am-10pm, Monday to Sunday);
Textphone: 0845 601 0132
Email: disability@atoc.org
Web: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Independent Penalty Fare Appeals Service (IPFAS)

- Address:** PO Box 89, Portsmouth PO1 1OG
Web: www.penaltyfares.co.uk

Network Rail Access For All

- Web:** <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/6372.aspx>

Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010

- Web:** www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/pdf/uksi_20100432_en.pdf

Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)

- Address:** One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN
Tel: 020 7282 2000
Fax: 020 7282 2040
Web: www.rail-reg.gov.uk
Email: contact.cct@orr.gsi.gov.uk
Other numbers for complaints:
020 7282 2018
/3925/ 3951/
3941/ 3857
(dial any of these numbers)

Underground trains

London Underground

Address: Customer Service Centre,
London Underground,
55 Broadway,
London SW1H 0BD

Tel: travel info
0843 222 1234 or

Minicom: 020 7918 3015 (24 hour)

Web: www.tfl.gov.uk

Tel: customer service
0845 330 9880
(8-8, seven days a week)

Oyster Customer Service Centre

Address: Oyster card helpline,
1st Floor, Albany House,
55 Broadway,
London SW1H 0BD

Tel: 0845 330 9876
(8-8, seven days a week)

Textphone: 020 7027 8511

Web: www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster

Glasgow Subway

Web: www.spt.co.uk/subway

Light rail and tramways

Manchester Metrolink

Web: www.metrolink.co.uk

Midland Metro

Web: <http://nxbus.co.uk/the-metro>

Nottingham Express Tramway

Web: www.thetrams.co.uk/net

Sheffield Supertram

Web: www.travelsouthyorkshire.com

Web: www.supertram.com

Tyne And Wear Metro

Web: www.nexus.org.uk

Taxis and Dial-a-Ride

For cab and taxi information:

Web: www.direct.gov.uk

Traintaxi

Web: www.traintaxi.co.uk

Dial-a-Ride (London)

Address: Progress House,
5 Mandela Way,
London SE1 5SS

Booking: 0845 999 1 999
(or 020 7309 8900) and
select option 1 and 1 again
(9-4, Monday to Friday)

Email: Dar.generalenquiries@tfl.gov.uk

Fax: 020 7394 5210

Walking

Walk for Life

Web: www.walk4life.info

Walk England

Web: www.walkengland.org.uk

Useful phone numbers

Train operators' Passenger Assist contacts

Arriva Trains/Trenau Arriva Cymru Ltd

Tel: 0845 3003005
Textphone: 08457 585 469

c2c

Tel: 01702 357640
Textphone: 08457 125 988

Chiltern Railways

Tel: 08456 005 165
Textphone: 08457 078051

Crosscountry

Tel: 0844 811 0125
Textphone: 0121 200 6420

East Coast Main Line Company

Tel: 08457 225 225
Textphone: 18001 08457 225 225

East Midlands Trains

Tel: 08457 125 678
Textphone: 08457 078 051

First Capital Connect 0800 058 2844

Tel: 0800 975 1052

First Great Western

Tel: 0800 197 1329
Textphone: 18001 0800 197 1329

First ScotRail

Tel: 0800 912 2 901
Textphone: 0800 912 2 901

First TransPennine Express

Tel: 0800 107 2149

Grand Central

Tel: 0844 811 0071
Textphone: 0845 305 6815

Hull Trains

Tel: 08450 710 222
Textphone: 08456 786 967

London Midland

Tel: 0800 092 4260
Textphone: 0844 811 0134

London Overground

Tel: 0845 601 4867

Merseyrail

Tel: 0151 702 2071
Textphone: 0151 702 2071

National Express East Anglia

Tel: 0800 028 28 78
Textphone: 0845 606 7245

Northern

Tel: 0808 156 1606
Textphone: 0845 604 5608

South West Trains & Island Line

Tel: 0800 52 82 100
Textphone: 0800 692 0792

Southeastern

Tel: 0800 783 4524

Textphone: 0800 783 4548

Southern

Tel: 0800 138 1016

Textphone: 0800 138 1018

Virgin West Coast

Tel: 08457 443366

Textphone: 08457 443367

Bus operators' contacts

Arriva

Tel: 0844 800 44 11

First Aberdeen

Tel: 01224650000

First BerkshireTel: 01344 782222 (Bracknell)
01753 524144 (Slough)**First Bath**

Tel: 0845 6064446

First Bristol/Somerset

Tel: 0845 6020156

First Cymru

Tel: 01792 572255

First Devon & Cornwall

Tel: 0845 6001420

First East England

Tel: 08456 020121

First Glasgow

Tel: 0141 4236600

First Hampshire & Dorset

Tel: 0870 0106022

First Manchester

Tel: 08457 881155

First Midlands

Tel: 08450 100 111

First Potteries

Tel: 08708 500868

First Scotland East

Tel: 08708727271

First South Yorkshire

Tel: 01709 566000

First Yorkshire West & North

Tel: 0845 6045460

Go Ahead London

Tel: 020 8545 6100

Go North East

Tel: 0191 4205 050

Go South Coast (incl. Southern Vectis, Bluestar, Wilts & Dorset

Tel: 01202 680 888

» Doing Transport Differently

How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions

Metrobus

Tel: 0129 3449 192

Brighton & Hove

Tel: 01273 886 200

Oxford Bus Company

Tel: 01865 785 400

Plymouth City Bus

Tel: 01752 662271

Konectbus

Tel: 01362 851210

National Express buses

Tel: 0121 254 7272

Stagecoach Bedfordshire

Tel: 01234 220 030

Stagecoach Bluebird

Tel: 01779 470077

Stagecoach Cambridgeshire

Tel: 01223 433 250

Stagecoach Chesterfield

Tel: 0845 266 6606

Stagecoach East Kent/East Sussex

Tel: 08456 00 22 99

Stagecoach East Midlands

Tel: 01522 580515

Stagecoach East Scotland

Tel: 01333 426038

Stagecoach Grimsby-Cleethorpes

Tel: 01522 580 515

Stagecoach Highlands

Tel: 01463 258933

Stagecoach Hull

Tel: 01482 212 899

Stagecoach Lincolnshire

Tel: 01522 580515

Stagecoach London

Tel: 020 7055 9600

Stagecoach Manchester

Tel: 0161 276 2611

Stagecoach Mansfield

Tel: 01522 580 515

Stagecoach Merseyside

Tel: 0151 545 2551

Stagecoach Midlands

Tel: 08456 001 314

Stagecoach North East

Tel: 0191 567 5251

Stagecoach North West

Tel: 01228 597222
(Cumbria and Morecambe Depots)

Tel: 0151 545 2551
(Merseyside, Chorley, Preston &
Fleetwood Depots)

Stagecoach Oxfordshire

Tel: 01865 772250

Stagecoach South

Tel: 0845 121 0190

Stagecoach South Wales

Tel: 01633 485118

Stagecoach West

Tel: 01452 418630

Stagecoach West Scotland

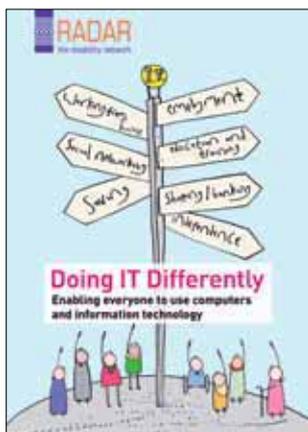
Tel: 07736 892 253

Stagecoach Yorkshire

Tel: 0845 266 6606

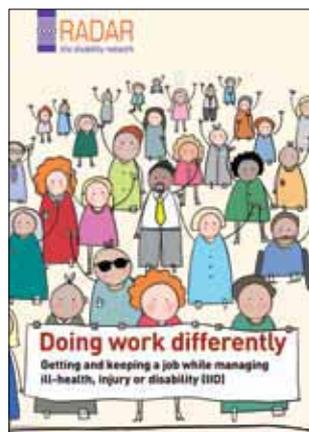
Doing Life Differently Guides

This ever growing series of publications is written by and for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions. Each guide is packed with practical advice about ways to do everyday things differently and include real-life stories to inspire people to take control of different aspects of their lives, with maximum choice and independence.



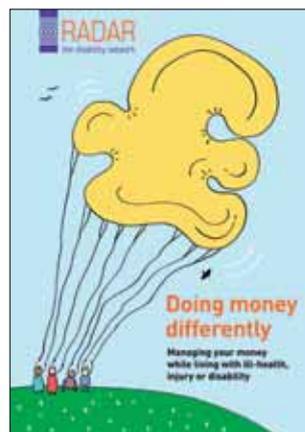
Doing IT Differently

aims to provide information and assistance to allow everyone the opportunity to take advantage and overcome the barriers of Information Technology (IT) and computers regardless of disability.



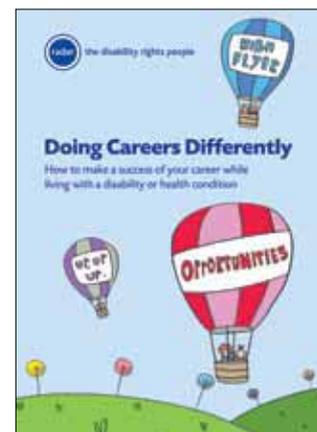
Doing Work Differently

explores practical solutions to real questions related to work and provides real life examples of how people have started a job, found a new career, or found a way to keep doing their current job if their circumstances change.



Doing Money Differently

looks at new ways of making, saving and looking after your money. It is a toolkit to help people better understand money and lessen the amount of time you spend thinking and worrying about it.



Doing Careers Differently

is packed with useful information, this guide includes stories from people with lived experience of disability or health conditions who have built satisfying careers, from part-time flexible work to a first-time management role and beyond.

If you are interested in downloading your free copy of one of these publications, please visit www.radar.org.uk

Coming Soon

Doing Sport Differently aims to encourage and support people with lived experience of disability or health conditions to participate in fitness and sport.



Radar are the Royal Association for Disability Rights.

We are a pan-disability organisation led by people with lived experience of disability or health conditions. We work in broad partnerships to have the widest impact. Our vision is a just and equal society whose strength is human difference. Radar is passionate about achieving equality and human rights for all.

Doing Transport Differently – a guide written by and for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions on how to access Public Transport.

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Thanks to all the people with lived experience of disability or health conditions and Radar members who helped write this guide and to all our sponsors, trustees and project team.

Doing Transport Differently – how to make trains, buses and other forms of public transport work for you. Some positive messages within:

'Public transport was an absolute necessity to my recovery.'

'Travel Mentoring has given me freedom and options that I did not know I had.'

'I defy anyone to suggest that train travel hasn't improved for disabled travellers.'

'Public transport can 'liberate' you from poor mental health.'

'Being told by my doctor that I could no longer drive it was very important to me to remain independent.'

'It's a fact – good experiences far outweigh bad.'

Doing Transport Differently has been sponsored by



the disability rights people



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250 City Road,
London EC1V 8AF
Web: www.radar.org.uk

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Fax: 020 7250 0212
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