



# **Making rail accessible: Helping older and disabled passengers**

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# Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what assistance is available to passengers who want to travel on Chiltern Railways (CRCL).

In the following pages we set out:

- How you can book assistance
- The levels of assistance we are able to provide – and not able to provide
- Where you can get further information.

At Chiltern Railways we are committed to providing you with a safe, reliable, welcoming and value for money service. We want to make sure that you can use our services safely and comfortably and are investing in trains and improving our stations to provide a better journey experience.

You can get a full version of our **Accessible Travel Policy** from our Customer Services Team or from our website at [chilternrailways.co.uk](http://chilternrailways.co.uk).

## Assistance: what is available and how to get it

### **For immediate travel**

We will provide assistance at our stations accessible to you and with staff during the hours that trains are scheduled to serve that station. Many of our stations are staffed and some of our trains have train managers. Where staff are available, they will always help you and provide assistance that you request, where reasonably practicable.

You can book using the Passenger Assistance system for our services and those of other train operating companies by contacting our team:

**Call:** Chiltern Railways (charged at your local rate) **03456 005 165 (selecting option 3 then option 3 again)** available between 0700 – 2200, 7 days a week.

**Call:** You can request assistance 24-hours a day by contacting Passenger Assist on freephone **0800 022 3720**

**Call:** When purchasing tickets over the phone (**03456 005 165 (selecting option 1 then option 2)**) assistance can be arranged at the same time as purchase from 0700 – 2200, 7 days a week (except Christmas Day)

**Relay Assist:** If you're deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, dial **0870 240 9598** or visit **[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/travel-assistance](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/travel-assistance)** (for people with hearing impairments)

**Online:** When purchasing tickets via **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/buy-tickets-online](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/buy-tickets-online)** there is the option of making a request for our Assist Team to contact you and arrange assistance for your journey.

To make sure that our staff can give you the best service and notify you if there is anything that will affect your journey, you can pre-book assistance at least six hours before you travel.

If you are travelling in the morning we recommend you let us know by 22:00 the night before. But, even if you need a hand on the day, we'll still do everything we can for you.

Call **03456 005 165 (selecting option 3 then option 3 again)**, daily between the hours of 07:00 - 22:00. From April 2022 this will reduce to 2 hours prior to travel for same day travel.

# The levels of assistance we are able to provide:

- Help with planning your journey
- Assistance with getting on and off the train
- Boarding or alighting with wheelchairs, scooters and mobility aids
- Assistance with getting around the station, including to and between platforms
- Assistance to and from connecting services and onward transport within the station area
- Purchasing travel tickets Please note that Advance fares can be booked at the same time as booking assistance
- Making seat reservations and booking dedicated spaces on services operated by other train operators
- Checking the facilities available and accessibility for trains and stations at each stage of your journey
- Help with luggage

Our staff are trained to assist passengers with both visible and non-visible disabilities.

Please note that we can't accompany you throughout your journey or provide personal care, such as help with eating, taking medication or using the toilet. If you need this sort of help you should travel with a companion. For safety reasons, our staff are unable to lift you from a wheelchair into a seat on the train, but they are able to assist you make the transfer.

# What to expect: our commitment to passengers at every stage of the journey

## Before you travel

We commit to providing you with the information you need when planning your journey, irrespective of disability. You can obtain information about journey planning and ticket purchase through the following channels:

- Phone:** **03456 005 165** for our Customer Relations Team and Assist Team.
- Ticket Office:** visit one of our staffed ticket offices at stations; the following link **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations)** will provide locations and opening hours.
- Online:** **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk)** Our Website will provide you with travel information and enable you to buy tickets.

Our staff will be able to provide information on our facilities and services, which can also be found via the following links to our website:

- Station facilities, accessibility information, train facilities, staff availability and disabled parking spaces: **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations)**
- Use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters and other mobility aids: **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)**
- How to purchase a ticket and discounts available: **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)**
- Temporary reductions in accessibility (including of toilet facilities): **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)**
- Train times and routes: **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/download-our-timetable](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/download-our-timetable)**
- Details of delays, disruption and emergencies (including emergency or temporary timetables): **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/live-train-times](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/live-train-times)**

## **At the station**

We will continuously improve the range of facilities available at our stations. Station facilities include lifts, ramps, accessible counters, induction loops, toilets and accessible toilets, waiting rooms and shelters as well as accessible seating.

Our website contains information about the facilities and accessibility features at every station we call at. You can also find information on our station facilities and those of other operators on the national rail website:

**[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations)**

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

## **Assistance at a staffed station**

At the station, if you have pre-booked assistance, make your way to the clearly signed “Meeting Point” and staff will meet you there. These will be positioned either on the platform or near to the ticket office. Otherwise, make yourself known to the staff who will commonly be located at the information point, the ticket office or gateline.

Whether you have pre-booked assistance or not, we recommend you arrive at the station at least 20 minutes prior to the departure of your train. This allows staff enough time to contact your destination or interchange station and ensure that there will be someone available to assist you. We can also help to carry your luggage on or off the train and to a connecting service, taxi rank or other vehicle when you book this in advance with us through our Passenger Assist team. This service is free. NB: You are also entitled to take an additional small item free of charge, if you are able to carry it independently.

When the train arrives, we will make sure you, and any luggage, are successfully boarded, seated or in an appropriate space or seat. We have portable ramps at all our accessible staffed stations and on all trains. These are suitable for wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Please note that there are some mobility devices that are too large for our trains to accommodate.

Please see our website for more information on this: **[www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)**

## **Assistance at stations without staff**

When you have booked in advance a journey to or from a station which is unstaffed, we will ensure you have the help and assistance you need, deploying our staff as required or providing an alternative accessible vehicle to take you to the nearest accessible staffed station or your destination (depending on your journey requirements). Some of our services do operate as a driver only service and our team will take into account the staffing levels on the train and at the station, together with the level of accessibility at the station in relation to the type of assistance you will need, to ensure you can be assisted to your destination. If our team believes there is any risk of you not being provided with sufficient assistance at a particular station or stage of your journey, they will discuss options and/or an alternative journey plan, assistance or transport to get you to your destination.

Our driver only services operate between London Marylebone and Aylesbury Vale Parkway (via Amersham) and on some services between London Marylebone and Banbury and London Marylebone and Oxford. We understand that booking assistance is not always practical. Therefore, if you want to travel from one of our stations and there are no staff there when you arrive you can use one of our Help Points on the station platforms to request assistance. It is worth noting that this can take time to arrange because staff will have to travel to you (and services tend to be less frequent to unmanned stations) and we do not recommend this system is used if your journey is time sensitive. Alternatively, there is information on our “Welcome To...” posters at your station of the nearest staffed station should you choose to travel from there instead. Our services that run north of Banbury do have a Train Manager on board who are able to assist you with boarding or alighting. At these stations, wait at the Meeting Point (identifiable by its signage) and our Train Managers will assist you with boarding.

Whether you have booked assistance or not, our staff will call your destination or interchange station before you board the train to ensure that there are staff available to assist you with alighting. Once you have boarded the train, our staff will call back and confirm to your next station where you are situated on the train, arrival time and the type of assistance you require. Where there is a train manager on board the service and you are calling at a part staffed or unstaffed station, they will help you with alighting the train.

## Inaccessible stations

Not all of our stations are accessible to wheelchair users and people with other mobility issues. In these circumstances, we will provide alternative transport such as a taxi – at no extra cost to you – to take you to the nearest accessible station. We will send a member of staff to assist you where it's practical to do so.

## On the train

Our staff on board are committed to ensuring that your journey will be as comfortable and stress-free as possible.

## Seats on trains

We do not provide seat reservations on any of our routes. Priority seating (which has extra legroom and moveable armrests and situated near the doors) is available on all of our trains. Wheelchair spaces are available on all of our trains, and our on-board staff will assist in ensuring these dedicated spaces give wheelchair users first priority. Some of our services operate as a driver-only service, in this instance the station staff will assist you in locating an appropriate seat. If you are with companions and/or family members, we will do our best to seat them close to your seat. In particular, we will aim to ensure that family groups, especially those requiring adult supervision, are located in close proximity.

## Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome on all of our trains, free of charge, and can travel in any part of the train.

## Wheelchairs, Scooters and Mobility Aids

Wheelchairs can be carried, in the designated spaces, on most of our trains so long as they fit within the following dimensions:

- Width 700mm
- Length 1200mm
- Weight (including passenger) 300kg

If your wheelchair exceeds the above dimensions, we will unfortunately be unable to accommodate you on our services.

At some stations we have wheelchairs available to those who are elderly/infirm and find it difficult walking to the platform. More information on stations that provide this service can be found at [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations).

For safety reasons, our staff are unable to lift you from a wheelchair into a seat on the train, but they are able to assist you make the transfer. Some powered mobility scooters are only meant for road use and cannot be used on trains, so if you have not travelled before or recently changed your scooter, please check the dimensions with us (as above) to ensure it is okay to use on our trains.

## **Powered Scooter criteria**

3-Wheeled scooters or those with a triangular footprint (2 wheels at the front close together and 2 wheels at the rear) that fall within the following size dimensions and are a maximum length of 1200mm and width of 700mm and are;

- Maximum speed of 4mph;
- Does not exceed 300kg when it is carrying its user;
- Has a free-wheeling facility for use in case of power-failure;
- Has sealed batteries;
- Must negotiate gradients of 8 degrees or more; or
- Can be folded down to a size that can be accommodated as hand luggage.

For safety reasons, our team are unable to lift or physically manoeuvre you or your scooter. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that you can control your scooter so that you can get onto and off the train safely. Although we can book assistance on other train companies' services, scooter policies may differ, including the requirements for scooter cards. We can advise you of these requirements, or provide contact details for the relevant train company to ensure your scooter is permitted. This should be done prior to making your journey, if you need to change onto another train company's services.

## **Aural and visual information**

We are committed to providing important aural and visual travel information in a variety of means so that it can be accessed as easily as possible. Our on-board staff are trained to give announcements and will do so on all services that do not have pre-recorded announcements, as well as in emergency situations, when there are delays or changes to your journey for example.

Some of our services are operated as Driver Only services so should you have any special requirements whilst on board, please speak with a member of staff at your station before boarding. If your disability means

that you are unable to hear the on-board announcements please advise a member of staff so that alternative arrangements can be made if required. All of our trains are equipped with a customer information system that uses visual displays.

## **Train facilities**

There is information about the facilities available on different train types on our website, including the availability of priority seating and accessible toilets by train type. [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)

## **Assistance on arrival**

When a train terminates at one of our stations our pre-booked Passenger Assist service will help you to alight from the train as soon as possible and in any event within five minutes of the train's arrival time. At all other stations, assistance will be provided safely and efficiently.

# **If things do not go as planned**

Where disruption does occur, we will do everything we can to ensure that, wherever possible, you are able to continue your journey and are not left stranded at a station or on board.

At times when our facilities or services are disrupted, we will give you notice on our Mobile App, website and other communication channels such as social media. When you begin to search on our mobile app or website for a journey there will be a "banner" with headline information which will expand when you click on this. If the disruption means your original arrangements are no longer valid, we will do our best to make contact with you and re-book any required assistance through Passenger Assist.

Our staff are trained to anticipate your needs, especially if you have mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. They will communicate news of any service disruption and provision of alternative transport to you via the Customer Information Systems or, where possible, in person.

The provision of Help Points at all of our stations, provide a link to our Customer Information Team (except 25 December) who will also be able to assist you in continuing your journey.

Sometimes a train's departure platform must be changed, often at short notice. Such a change will be shown on the customer information screens and will be announced aurally as soon as possible. When a change occurs, our staff will provide assistance and information to help you reach the revised departure platform, if accessible, as efficiently as possible. Should the revised platform be inaccessible to you, our staff will make alternative arrangements for you to be able to continue with your journey. This may include an accessible taxi to an alternative or your destination station or helping you to board the next service from an accessible platform.

When disruption causes the cancellation or alteration of train services, we will provide you with accessible substitute transport. This will be done without additional charge.

When train services are replaced with rail replacement vehicles, we will do everything possible to secure accessible buses from local operators. When this is not possible, we will book a vehicle that is accessible to you.

## **Emergency procedures**

Our staff will supervise any action that needs to be taken in the event of an emergency either at a station or on a train. Our staff will identify the safest route and method for evacuating the location they are responsible for.

Every station has a Station Evacuation Plan detailing evacuation routes for all customers, stating whether the route is suitable for wheelchair access. If you are a wheelchair user and you are in an area where no safe evacuation route exists, a place of safety will have been pre-identified for you (accompanied by a member of staff) to await rescue by a member of the emergency services.

Should an incident occur, our staff will use their disability awareness skills and judgement to anticipate your needs and communicate any instructions. In accordance with the nature of the incident, our staff are trained to take into account your needs especially if you have mobility/visual/hearing impairments, or if you are older, infirm or vulnerable.

### **Redress and compensation**

When assistance has been booked but has not been provided due to

a failure of the assistance service, we will provide you with appropriate redress. In these instances, the form and value may be determined on a case by case basis taking into account the circumstances of each case. We will be happy to assist you with your claim and more details of the claim process can be found on [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/compensation](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/compensation). We will coordinate a response to your complaint so if you travelled with multiple train companies, we will provide you with a full explanation in response, including why it happened and what mitigating actions we intend to take as a result.

We will also always comply with the Consumer Rights Act 2015. In line with the National Rail Conditions of Travel, we will consider all additional compensation claims for any losses or extra costs caused by a service failure. (For example, the cost of a new plane ticket if you miss a flight). This will not affect your legal rights to make claims under the Consumer Act 2015, although you must not seek to recover the same money twice for example both under our claims process and the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

## Where to get more information and how to get in touch

Our Customer Relations Team is available from 0830 – 1730 (Monday – Friday) and can be contacted by phone on **03456 005 156 option 3 and option 4** or via our website [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/contact-us](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/contact-us) Large Print or Easy Read versions of this leaflet

Contact our team on **03456 005 156 option 3 and option 4** they will send it to you within seven days.

### Our Accessible Travel Policy

This document sets out in more detail our commitments and standards of service provision, as well as relevant policies and practices, with regards to disabled people using the rail network. It is available both online [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information) and in Large Print and Easy Read formats available from our team on **03456 005 156 option 3 and option 4**.

## Stations and trains accessibility information:

Available from our website at [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/routes-and-destinations) and [www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information](http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/before-you-travel/Assisted-Travel-Information)

## Day of travel queries or issues:

- **03456 005 156 option 3 and option 4** between 0830 – 1730 (Monday – Friday)
- Assisted travel service opening hours and contact details: **03456 005 156 option 3 and option 3** from 0700 – 2200, except Christmas Day.
- **0800 022 3720** for the National Passenger Assist booking number
- Text Phone or minicom **0845 60 50 600**

## How to contact us via Social Media:

Twitter: @chilternrailway

Facebook: @chilternrailway

To get involved in the Chiltern Railways Accessibility Forum

Email: [accessibility@chilternrailways.co.uk](mailto:accessibility@chilternrailways.co.uk)

## Provide feedback or make a complaint

Customer Services (Mon-Fri 08.30 to 17.30)

Email: [customer.service@chilternrailways.co.uk](mailto:customer.service@chilternrailways.co.uk)

Customer Services  
Banbury ICC  
Merton Street  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX16 4RN  
Phone: **03456 005 165**  
Fax: **01926 729 914**

The Rail Ombudsman  
Email: [info@railombudsman.org](mailto:info@railombudsman.org)  
Rail Ombudsman  
1st Floor  
Premier House  
Argyle Way  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire  
SG1 2AD  
Phone: **0330 094 0362**

