

Contents

Introduction	2
Before you travel	3
Seat reservations	5
Monitoring our service	5
Station facilities	6
Assistance with luggage	7
Car parking	7
On our trains	7
Mobility scooters	8
Disabled Person's Railcard	9
Improvements to stations	10
Engineering work and the Thameslink Programme	11
Contact us	12

Introduction

As a forward-thinking and progressive organisation, we are all too aware of the need to change and continuously improve. Our commitment to our customers is second to none; they are at the very heart of our business and we have a very real and honest commitment to improve the journey experience of all of our customers.

This leaflet outlines to you, our customers, some of the new and innovative ways we can help you get the best from our services. We know how important it is to get you from A to B simply and with the least possible fuss. This leaflet tells you how to achieve this, including planning your trip, supplying the assistance you need en route and everything in between!

Do read the leaflet, tell us what you think, what we have missed and where we can do better. You are important to us and your views will help us shape the future of the service we can offer our disabled customers.



Before you travel

To make sure your journey is problem-free, why not give our Assisted Travel Helpline a call before you leave? Our friendly and knowledgeable team are available from 7am until 10pm every day of the year except Christmas day.

The team will be able to give you good advice on planning your journey and can offer general information too.

Helpline: **0800 058 2844***

Textphone: **0800 975 1052***

* Freephone

If you need any assistance during your journey it's best if you book at least 24 hours in advance. This enables us to make sure the staff and special equipment you might need are available. We will contact the stations you intend to use to ensure they are prepared for your arrival. You can also use this telephone number to purchase your travel tickets. If you would like to use this service please allow at least three working days for us to post them to you.

Some of our stations have 'Fast Ticket' machines which allow you to buy your tickets over the phone and print them when you arrive at the station. Further details, as well as the locations of the machines are available from the Assisted Travel team.

We understand that it might not always be possible to give us 24 hours notice before you travel, so we will do all we can to offer you the service you need whether you have booked assistance or not.

If you are travelling with us for the first time or you're going to stations you're unfamiliar with, it can be even more beneficial if you call our specialist team before you make your journey.

If you wish to travel from an inaccessible station we will make alternative arrangements, usually a taxi, to take you to the next accessible station along the line so that you can continue your journey by rail. If a taxi is necessary for you to complete your journey, this will be arranged at no extra cost to you.



Seat reservations

Due to the high frequency of train services which we run we do not offer seat reservations on any of our services. However, if you are continuing your journey with another train operator that does offer seat reservations, our Assisted Travel Helpline will book these for you.

Monitoring our service

We want to know how well we are doing, so we'll ask you if you want a follow up call after you have travelled with us. We will use any feedback you give us constructively to review and improve the service we offer.

If your arrangements are not delivered at one of our trains or stations, when 24 hours or more notice has been given, the cost of your train journey with us will be refunded upon request.



Station facilities

If you book assistance, please arrive at the station 20 minutes before your scheduled departure time and make yourself known to staff. You may find it easiest to go to the ticket office. If a meeting point is not clear we will advise you when you book.

All of our station staff are trained to ensure they are better able to understand the needs of all our customers. This training covers a variety of different disabilities and conditions. Because every person is different, we encourage you to tell us how you wish to be assisted – after all, you know what you need from us!

Help points

Help points are available at all of our stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our staff will be able to help you with a variety of enquiries such as timetable and train running information.

Induction loops

We have induction loops at many of our ticket offices and we are in the process of fitting more. Please look for the 'T' sign at your local station.

Accessible toilets

Accessible toilets are available at some of our stations. Please ask our Assisted Travel team for information on where these are available.

Information on station accessibility is available at:
www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations

Assistance with luggage

Carrying luggage can be a struggle, but we will do what we can to help. Do remember that the help we can give is dependent on the availability and physical limitations of our staff. Our staff are trained in manual handling - but bear in mind the size and weight of any luggage you'd like us to help you with.

Car parking

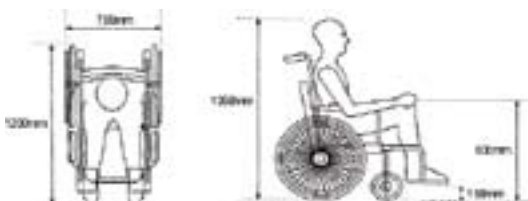
We've got car parks at many of our stations. Some of them have parking bays designated for Blue Badge holders. You can park free in these spaces or, if they are occupied, it won't cost you to park elsewhere if you display your Blue Badge.

On our trains

Wheelchairs

We're happy to help with your wheelchair. The maximum size of wheelchair we can have on board is 700mm wide, 1200mm long and 300kg in weight (including the weight of the user).

The maximum weight is determined by the ability of the staff member assisting, as well as the safe working load of the ramp used to board the train.



Mobility scooters

If you wish to travel on our services with a mobility scooter you must be in possession of a Scooter Permit.

We are able to accommodate scooters up to 1200mm in length and 700mm width. This is because of the limited space available within the train. Also, due to the safe working load of the ramps we use, a maximum weight of 300kg (including the scooter user) is applied.

We will allow scooter users to travel between accessible stations only, so please check before you travel. Because of the size and weight of scooters we will not provide taxis or other road transport for scooter users to non accessible stations. Additionally, scooters cannot be carried on rail replacement buses.

If you wish to apply for a Scooter Permit please call our assisted travel team, who can post you an application form.

For safety reasons, please do not exceed 4mph on any station.

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are very welcome on all of our services free of charge.

Priority seats

Priority seats are provided on all of our trains for customers who need to use them. These seats can be found near the doors on every coach.

Disabled Person's Railcard

The Disabled Persons Railcard allows you, and an adult companion travelling with you, to get a third off most standard and First Class fares throughout Great Britain.

Details are available in the *Rail Travel Made Easy* leaflet which is available at staffed stations or by phoning the Disabled Person's Railcard application helpline on 0845 605 0525 or textphone 0845 601 0132.

You can get more information online at **www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk**

Discounts are available for permanent wheelchair users and people with visual impairments even if they do not have a Disabled Person's Railcard. Customers with a visual impairment are entitled to a discount if they are travelling with a companion. Permanent wheelchair users are entitled to the discount whether they are travelling with a companion or not. In both cases the travelling companion will also benefit from the discounted ticket price.



Improvements to stations

First Capital Connect is actively improving access at our stations. The Department for Transport is funding a number of projects under the Access for All scheme. For more information on these schemes, including completion dates, please see the Department for Transport website.

While these projects are quite wide-ranging, we are going to make some smaller improvements too. We'll be installing hearing loops and low-level ticket office counters at some stations along with other work to improve your journey experience. We're also looking at car parks at the moment to make sure we are giving you the best possible service. Spaces will be increased and relining will take place at many of our stations.



Engineering work and the Thameslink Programme

First Capital Connect is involved in the Thameslink Programme. This is a scheme which will ultimately deliver new journey opportunities across a bigger network, introduce many new trains with improved access, and create greater accessibility at a number of stations. That's in the future with completion due by 2015 but in the meantime, be aware of the changes we'll have to make to some of our services so the work can take place.

Some of our trains may need to be replaced with buses or coaches and we will do what we can to make them accessible. If we can't, we'll make alternative arrangements for you. For these reasons, it's even more important to give us a call before you make your plans so we can give you the most up-to-date travel information available.

More on the Thameslink Programme can be found on our website. If you're a regular user of the Thameslink route, you may like to consider registering your details on the new Thameslink Programme website at **thameslinkprogramme.co.uk** so you receive special alerts when your journey may be affected by future development work.

This is an exciting time at First Capital Connect as we embark on a project that will deliver new tangible benefits to our customers.

thameslinkprogramme.co.uk

**Crikey! This could
affect your journey.
Check it out.**



Contact us

We welcome all comments on accessibility issues.

We have a full-time Accessibility and Inclusion Manager who promotes travel opportunities for disabled customers and champions their needs within the company. If you are a regular traveller on our trains and you have a disability, or if you represent a group of disabled people, we would like to hear from you.

We would also like to know about your experience using our services. If improvements are required we will try to work directly with you to achieve them.

Customer comment forms are available from First Capital Connect ticket offices. Alternatively, feedback can be given via our Customer Relations team, who can be contacted by post, telephone or email:

Post:

Freepost RRBR-REEJ-KTKY
First Capital Connect
Customer Relations Department
PO Box 443
Plymouth
PL4 6WP

Telephone: 0845 026 4700

Assisted Travel Helpline: 0800 058 2844

Fax: 0845 676 9904

Textphone: 0800 975 1052

Website: www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk

There is an accessibility section on our website which contains useful information. This section also includes a link which allows you to email our Accessibility and Inclusion Manager directly.

Email: customer.relations.fcc@firstgroup.com

We are open from 7am to 10pm every day except Christmas Day.

Thank you for travelling with us.