

# Public transport



A guide for older and disabled people

2013

**The information contained in this guide is correct at the time of going to print (April 2013). It will be reviewed every two years. See our website for any changes since printing.**

**Rica is a charity that researches and publishes independent information on products and services for older and disabled people.**

**Unit G03 The Wenlock  
50–52 Wharf Road  
London N1 7EU  
Tel: 020 7427 2460  
Fax: 020 7427 2468  
Textphone: 020 7427 2469  
Email: [mail@rica.org.uk](mailto:mail@rica.org.uk)  
[www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk)**

# Public transport

*A guide for older and disabled people*

Public transport in the UK is becoming more accessible but to make your journey go as smoothly as possible it is best to plan and prepare. In this guide, we give an overview of bus, coach, community transport, ferry, plane, taxi, train and tram, travel with information about access, journey planning, concessions, assistance, announcements and communication, accessible toilets, loop systems, parking and how to report back or complain. There are travel tips and advice from experienced travellers and a list of useful contacts.

The following symbols are used in the guide:



Access for wheelchair and scooter users



Apps on your mobile device to help



For people who are blind or partially sighted



For people who are deaf or are hard of hearing



For people who need simple information



Warning: note for your safety and security

## CONTENTS

<b>Legal rights</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Getting going</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Journey planning</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Assistance</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Concessions</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Travel route information</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Toilets</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Layout and orientation</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Assistance dogs</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Reporting back and complaining</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Travel tips and advice</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Buses</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Community transport</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Coaches</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Ferries</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>London</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Planes</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Taxis</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Trains</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Trams, metros and light railways</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Safety</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Useful contacts</b>	<b>32</b>

# Legal rights

## EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and protects disabled people in all areas including transport.

Under the Act, transport providers have the duty to provide an accessible service and make 'reasonable adjustments' to offer the same standard of service to disabled people as non-disabled people. In practice this means providers have to provide accessible facilities, accessible information and simple procedures for booking assistance where required.

### The regulations mean that transport providers:

- cannot refuse someone or charge them extra because of their disability
- may refuse disabled people for valid safety reasons
- must provide free travel to an assistant with a disabled traveller if they need to be there for safety reasons
- must guarantee to accommodate a disabled traveller if notice is given and must make every effort to help if no notice is given
- must provide help with moving around the station or terminal, getting on and off and loading and unloading luggage
- must provide information in accessible formats
- must train their staff in disability awareness and specifics like handling equipment
- must provide adequate compensation for any lost or damaged equipment
- must allow registered assistance dogs to travel on buses and coaches.

## House of Commons Transport Select Committee

In April 2013, the House of Commons Committee held an inquiry into access to transport for people with disabilities. It heard evidence from public bodies and voluntary organisations including those representing older and disabled people. A common theme from the evidence is the need for consistency and reliability between the different types of transport and there was concern over the lack of spontaneity of travel for older and disabled people.

Some points raised:

- For people with learning difficulties a pilot project called safe haven helped people who became confused get help and support at train stations.
- For deaf or hard of hearing people or those with sight loss, information about changes to services was a key concern.
- Some staff were helpful but staff attitudes vary widely.
- In London, it seems the Paralympics improved access and attitudes.

**For travel by seas and waterways:**

- Assistance dogs should be allowed, but with regard to national rules.
- If equipment is lost or damaged, the operator should provide temporary replacement.
- Large operators must develop and publish quality standards for assistance.

Transport vehicles are covered in a different way. The Equality Act 2010 gave the Government powers to set standards of accessibility for different means of transport and regulations exist for trains, buses, coaches and taxis.

**TRAVELLING IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR**

Wheelchair accessibility regulations for access to public transport use a specific reference wheelchair (see below).



The reference wheelchair has:

- total length of 1200mm including extra-long footplates
- total width of 700mm
- sitting height (from ground to top of head) of 1350mm

- height of footrest above floor 150mm.
- The reference wheelchair is bigger than most wheelchairs to ensure that enough room is provided for most wheelchair users. However, many mobility scooters and some powered wheelchairs are bigger than the reference wheelchair and may not necessarily fit.

**Size**

If your wheelchair is no bigger than the reference wheelchair you should, in theory, be able to use all new public transport vehicles. If your wheelchair is bigger, get in touch with the relevant transport operator. Although they are not legally obliged to take you in a larger wheelchair, many companies will make every effort to help.

**TRAVELLING WITH YOUR MOBILITY SCOOTER**

All transport operators will accept mobility scooters that can be folded down and carried on as luggage. People who have small scooter models can ride on them on some buses, some trains and some trams. See the appropriate section for details of the size limits and various permit schemes.

# Getting going

## JOURNEY PLANNING

**Transport Direct** lets you plan journeys all over the UK using public transport and has live transport information but not details of access. [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info)

## Traveline

(England, Scotland and Wales) provides timetables for local and national journeys on buses, coaches and trains and has details on access.

**Tel** 0871 200 2233 (8am–8pm, calls are charged at national rates) [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

## Translink

(see page 34) (Northern Ireland) has an online journey planner for train, bus and metro services.

**Tel** 028 9066 6630 (Monday– Friday 7am–8pm, Saturday & Sunday 8am–6pm) [www.translink.co.uk/Journey-Planner/](http://www.translink.co.uk/Journey-Planner/)

## People with learning disabilities



Mencap (see page 33) has Easy Read factsheets on accessible transport eg bus, train concessions and Taxicard [www.mencap.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.mencap.org.uk/campaigns) follow links to independent living.

In Northern Ireland, there is a guide: *Travel safe: a guide about community safety for people with learning disabilities*. [www.drdni.gov.uk](http://www.drdni.gov.uk) and follow the links to people with learning disabilities.



## ASSISTANCE

Contact the relevant transport operator to find what help their staff can provide. You usually have to give at least 24 hours notice. It is best to phone to check every part of your journey eg for trains there is Passenger Assistance which is a centralised planning and booking service for (see page 25).



## CONCESSIONS

Many transport operators offer concessions for disabled and older people to travel. Contact the relevant transport provider. All local authorities are obliged by law to offer concessionary bus travel to older passenger (see page 10).

## FACILITIES

The Equality Act 2010 mean that transport operators have to provide good access, accessible toilets and well-lit, clearly signed stations with tactile markers, for example, at platform edges.

## Travel route information

Clear and audible announcements on public transport are becoming more common, including information on delays or changes to travel routes. Transport companies are obliged to communicate with all passengers equally including disabled passengers.

## Toilets



The National Key Scheme, formerly the RADAR Key Scheme, provides people in the UK with access to over 9,000 locked accessible public toilets. The scheme is operated by the national charity, Disability Rights UK (see page 32), which sells keys for £2.25 has a map of the location of the toilets. There is an app for smartphone users.

Contact your local council or local disability organisation who also often sell national key scheme keys.

**Changing Places** is a coalition of organisations including Mencap (see page 33) that campaigns for toilets to be provided that have extra room and more facilities than standard accessible toilets:

*England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

**Tel** 020 7696 6019

Email: [changingplaces@mencap.org.uk](mailto:changingplaces@mencap.org.uk)

*Scotland*

**Tel** 01382 385 154

**Email**

[pamischangingplaces@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:pamischangingplaces@dundee.ac.uk)

[www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

## For blind or partially sighted travellers



### ■ RNIB React

The RNIB React talking sign system provides audio information about your location. You carry a small portable device which you can use to trigger speaker units along your route. You can often get detailed, real-time travel information such as when buses are due.

RNIB React has been installed in locations across the UK including Birmingham, Leeds and Belfast. To find out if it's installed in your area, contact the RNIB (see page 33).

## Layout and orientation



Knowing the layout of transport facilities is vital for blind and partially sighted people. [www.describe-online.com](http://www.describe-online.com) provides text descriptions of the layout of public spaces and Directory Enquiries can connect you to local transport operators and is a free service if you are registered blind or partially sighted. The RNIB has useful travel advice [www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/travel/Pages/travel.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/travel/Pages/travel.aspx) and a guide called *On the Move* available in print and online.

There are also travel sections in the RNIB guides *Your Guide to Getting Great Service* (what transport operators should provide) and *Living Safely* and specific online advice on travelling by rail, London Underground, bus, taxis and minicabs. Contact the RNIB (see page 33).

## Assistance dogs



### Travelling in the UK

Travel providers usually allow your working dog to travel with you providing that it's registered with Assistance Dogs UK which includes Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Dogs for the Disabled, Support Dogs and Canine Partners for Independence.

Bus, coach and train companies carry registered assistance dogs. National Express also carry 'buddy dogs', a scheme for children and young people from Guide Dogs (see page 33). Black cabs and private hire vehicles must carry assistance dogs at no extra cost to the passenger under the 2010 Equality Act. Drivers who have a medical condition that means they can't be near dogs will have a 'Notice of Exemption' on their vehicle windscreen.



## Going abroad

The Pet Travel Scheme lets you take your assistance dog abroad without the need for quarantine. The dog must be vaccinated against rabies, fitted with a microchip and given the right documentation. What needs doing when varies depending on where you're travelling to and from. For more information, contact:

The Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

**Tel** 0870 241 1710

**Textphone** 0845 300 1998

**Email** [pettravel@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pettravel@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad)

If travelling by plane, check the airline's policy on assistance dogs in advance. You'll always need to prove that your dog

is registered with Assistance Dogs UK, and let the airline know in advance. Assistance dogs can normally travel free of charge in the passenger cabin with you, but on some airlines they have to travel in the hold of the plane. Always carry identification for your dog, plus a safety harness suitable for securing your dog at take-off, landing and whenever else it is needed.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

It is important to complain about poor service so things improve.

### Smartphone users



Now people can complain on the spot via social media eg via Facebook or Twitter and send a message or photo to [www.fixmytransport.co.uk](http://www.fixmytransport.co.uk) which is a website where you register your complaint. FixMyTransport sends your message direct to the Customer Services department of the transport operator and also it will be online for others to read and comment on.

### England, Scotland and Wales

Always contact the local transport provider first. If you're not satisfied with their response, then take the steps recommended in the relevant sections below.

### Northern Ireland

First contact Translink (see page 34) with complaints about their train, metro or bus services. If you're not satisfied with their response, contact the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (see page 32).

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- Plan your trip: check websites, phone your transport provider, talk to other people.
- Ask the transport operator if they offer assistance or travel training.
- Some transport companies can give you a 'Safe Journey' card which is a card with details of your needs written on it so you show it to the driver or staff to privately ask for help, eg [www.firstgroup.com/safejourney](http://www.firstgroup.com/safejourney).
- If you're not feeling confident, take a friend or relative with you.
- Book assistance with the transport operator in advance (most need 24 hours notice).
- Plan for each step of the journey, think about food, drink, any medication needed.
- Check there will be accessible toilets and facilities.
- [www.parkingforbluebadges.com](http://www.parkingforbluebadges.com) has location information on parking spaces for blue badge holders at bus stations, ferry terminals and airports.
- Make sure your mobile phone is charged before you set out. Take emergency contact details, phone number of the transport provider and other contacts.

# Buses

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) mean that all single-decker buses will be accessible by 2016 and all double-deckers will be accessible by 2017.

## JOURNEY PLANNING

Timetables, maps and information on board vary from bus to bus and area to area. Online and telephone journey planning is available from Traveline (see page 6). Bus companies offer journey planning and most provide information in alternative formats e.g. large print timetables. If in doubt, contact the bus operator.

## ASSISTANCE

Drivers will often help you get on or off the bus. A few bus companies have helping hand schemes where volunteers help you on and off or even travel with you for the journey. Contact your local bus company to see if they can help.

Some people use a bus hail card on the street. It is a card with the word 'BUS' on it available from the RNIB (see page 33). If you have complex needs, you can get a 'Safe Journey' card or similar from your local authority or Passenger Transport Executive. There is a section you can fill in which allows you to give details of your journey to the driver.

## CONCESSIONS

The national bus concession scheme for disabled people is run by local councils and operates differently in different parts of the UK.

Contact your local authority in England and Wales, Transport Scotland (see page 34) in Scotland or Translink (see page 34) in Northern Ireland.

## ACCESS

Bus access has improved with most buses having lower steps, easy-to-grip handholds, non-slip floors, improved lighting, easy-to-use bell pushes, clear stopping signs and easy-to-read destination signs. There are priority seats for older and disabled people. Since 2000, all low floor buses meet the requirements of the PSVAR and have a designated space for wheelchair users.

## Doors and ramps

Low-floor buses have ramps. In London, the driver operates the powered ramps from the cab and wheelchair users board through the centre door but in other parts of the country, ramps are usually unfolded by hand by the driver. Ramps slope no more than 8° when resting on the pavement. Doors are at least 800mm wide, and gangways at least 750mm wide. Floors inside will be flat or the slope will be no more than 5° in the doorway area and 3° elsewhere.



### Space inside

There is at least one space for a wheelchair or mobility scooter user or parent with a buggy. The space is:

- at least 1300mm long by 750mm wide, with headroom of at least 1500mm
- 1200mm long and 700mm wide for London buses.

Often you will need to manoeuvre your wheelchair or mobility scooter back and forwards to get into the space. It has a vertical pole and other grab rails that you can use to steady yourself while travelling. The wheelchair space may have a folding seat for other passengers to use. The seat will be easy to fold up.

### WHEELCHAIR USERS



On most buses, the wheelchair user sits facing backwards against a padded backrest to stop tipping. You don't have to secure the chair or wear a seat belt. You need to put your brakes on.



## MOBILITY SCOOTER USERS

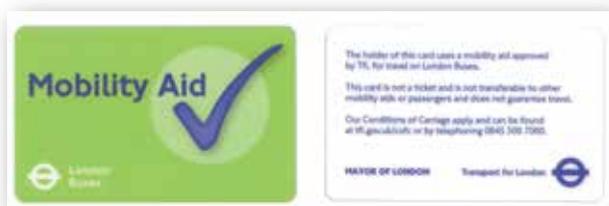


You can now travel on a small mobility scooter on low-floor buses providing:

- your local bus company is running a scooter permit scheme
- your scooter is a Class 2 type and meets certain size limits (1000mm length; 600mm width; 1200mm turning radius and 300kg weight, including user), and
- the bus company has assessed you in safely using your scooter on the bus.

The national scooter permit scheme was developed by the Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT see page 32) and has been adopted by over 20 bus companies. You get assessed by your local bus company who issues you with a credit card-sized permit (similar to the picture below) to show to the driver to confirm that you are allowed to travel on your mobility scooter. In London there is a similar mobility aid recognition scheme developed by Transport for London (see page 17).

Rica has a list of mobility scooters that meet the CPT criteria for bus travel and of companies operating permit schemes which you can find on our website [www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk). To apply for a permit contact your local bus company.



## TRAVEL ROUTE INFORMATION



Route and destination are shown on the front, side and back of the bus. The route numbers are at least 200mm high and destinations are shown in letters at least 125mm high in front and 70mm high on the side of the bus.

There is an innovative talking sign system, RNIB React that gives real-time information at some bus stops (see page 7). The RNIB (see page 33) also has useful videos on its website and a leaflet *Bus travel explained*. Guide Dogs (see page 33) is campaigning for a change in the law to make audio and visual information, including audible announcements of the current stop, next stop and final destination, available on board bus and coach services across the UK.

### Smartphone users



Some apps (applications) are available which tell you when the bus is coming – some use voice output. Check if they work in your area.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

If you have a complaint about any bus service or regular coach service, always first contact the bus or coach operator that provides the service. Tell the company about your complaint in as much detail as possible:

- the exact date and time you were travelling
- where you were travelling to and from and the bus or coach number
- the bus registration number, the driver's name or description – helpful but not essential.

Enclose your ticket if you can and keep a copy of the letter or email and ticket. Give the company time to get back to you.

Secondly, if you don't get a reply or you are not happy with the reply you get, then contact the following organisations depending on where your journey was:

- **England:** contact Bus Users UK  
**Tel** 0300 111 0001  
**Email** enquiries@bususers.org
- **Wales:** contact Bus Users UK  
**Tel** 029 2022 1370  
**Email** wales@bususers.org  
[www.bususers.org](http://www.bususers.org)
- **London:** contact London Travelwatch (see page 19)
- **Scotland:** contact Transport Scotland  
**Tel** 0141 272 7100  
**Email** info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.transportscotland.gov.uk](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk)
- **Northern Ireland:** contact The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (see page 32)  
**Tel** 0800 121 6022

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- The bus driver is often under pressure to keep to timetable and sometimes is unable to operate the lift, leave the cab or intervene to force other passengers to vacate the wheelchair space for you.
- See travel tips and advice on page 9.
- For wheelchair or mobility scooter users, position yourself in front of the bus stop, so the driver has plenty of time to see you as they approach the stop.

## Community transport

Community transport is a local door-to-door transport service which:

- is often called 'Dial a ride' or 'Ring and ride' service
- can carry you in your wheelchair or if you are unable to use public transport
- you book in advance and is not free but is far cheaper than taxis
- generally cannot be used for journeys for which there is alternative transport
- cannot be used for trips you have to do every day, such as getting to work
- is usually run by your local council or transport authority.

To find your local community transport service:

- search online [www.ctonline.org.uk](http://www.ctonline.org.uk)
- check the community pages in your phone book or phone your local council
- contact the Community Transport Association UK (see page 32)



# Coaches

## COACH SERVICES

Accessible coaches are operated by several companies: National Express, Oxford Tube, Megabus, Gold Line (Northern Ireland) and City Link (Scotland).

### National Express

The largest UK operator has wheelchair access on all of its coaches (not to the toilet). There are only a very small number of coach stops that are not accessible for wheelchair users and alternative arrangements are made to provide accessible coach travel. National Express aims to list accessible stops on its website by the end of 2013.



### Journey planning and booking

Online you can find service information and details of coach access and coach station access. Wheelchair users need to phone 36 hours in advance to check their wheelchair fits in the space safely and securely and that the stops are accessible and to book any assistance. When you book they will ask for details of the make and model of your wheelchair to make sure it is compatible

with the docking system on the coach.

National Express has a code of practice for disabled customers to ensure a common high standard of service and a telephone helpline.

### Disabled Persons Travel Helpline

**Tel** 08717 818179 (10p/minute from a landline or extra your mobile network charge, 7 days/week 8am–8pm)

**Textphone** 0121 455 0086

**Email** [DPTH@nationalexpress.com](mailto:DPTH@nationalexpress.com)  
[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

### Coach facilities



On the National Express website, there is a list of facilities at the main UK coach stations which includes information on accessible toilets, help points or staff available, accessible public telephones, induction loops for people who use hearing aids, manual wheelchairs available, clipboards and magnifying glasses, disabled parking and baby changing facilities.

### Megabus

- If you are able to climb the steps, the driver will store your wheelchair or mobility scooter in the luggage hold and help you to your seat.
- If you can't climb the steps, don't buy a ticket in the usual way. Instead, call 0141 332 9841 (calls charged at standard rate, local or international call charges may apply depending on location) at least 48 hours in advance. They will allocate a wheelchair accessible vehicle to your trip, if possible.

- In Scotland, only Scottish Concessionary Entitlement Cards apply.

### **Oxford Tube**

- All coaches have a wheelchair space. The driver will provide assistance with getting in and out. You can just turn up and travel.
- Discounts are available for over-60s.

### **Goldline (Northern Ireland)**

- No mobility scooters are allowed but they will take any wheelchair.
- Book 24 hours in advance to make sure you get an accessible coach. There is one wheelchair space but if two people want to travel they will normally send another coach.
- The driver will usually help with boarding.
- Northern Ireland residents over 60 can use their concessionary pass to get free travel. If you have a visual impairment, a learning disability, or receive a mobility component of DLA or PIP then you are entitled to a Concessionary Smart Pass.

### **City Link (Scotland)**

- The driver will assist passengers with mobility difficulties. If you don't need to stay in your wheelchair, they will help you to a seat.
- If you need to travel in your wheelchair, call 0141 332 9841 at least 48 hours in advance. If it's possible on your route, City Link will provide a bus with a wheelchair lift.
- In Scotland, only Scottish Concessionary Entitlement Cards apply.

## **CONCESSIONS**

There is not a national concessions scheme at present. Ask your coach operator if they offer any discounts. For example, National Express offers a Senior Coachcard for people who are 60 or over and a Disabled Coachcard. They cost £10 and offer 1/3 off your travel throughout the year.

## **ACCESS**

All new coaches on scheduled services that carry more than 22 passengers are now built to be wheelchair accessible. For wheelchair users, coaches are different to buses in that:

- you access via a platform lift
- the wheelchair space faces forward and has an anchoring system for the wheelchair and a seatbelt for the wheelchair passenger
- entrances, exits and gangway floors do not slope more than 5°.

Lightweight mobility scooters can be stowed in the luggage hold providing that they can be dismantled and the heaviest part weighs less than 20kg. Mobility scooter users cannot get on coaches on their scooter.

## **TRAVEL ROUTE INFORMATION**

If you need extra information, for example alerting you to which stop to get off, then talk to the driver who is able to give announcements on the journey to keep you informed.

## **REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING**

See Reporting back and complaining in the buses section (see page 12).

# Ferries

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

The European Passenger Rights Regulations 1177/2010 – sea and inland waterway, implemented in December 2012, concerns the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway. The European regulations state that ships and ferries must carry any disabled person that wishes to travel on them, as long as it is safe to do so. Assistance must be provided for free, including help with boarding and accessible information. If your equipment gets lost or damaged, they must compensate you and find a replacement at the time. These rules apply to all services except sightseeing tours and very short-distance ferries.

## ACCESS

Some ferries have wheelchair accessible toilets and some supply wheelchairs at terminals while a few have special cabins for disabled people and offer discounts. Check access at ports online: [www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)

If you are driving, provide the ferry company with details of your disability at the time of booking and also let them know when you check in.

Loading and unloading depends on the circumstances on the day.

## ASSISTANCE

At the time of booking, explain your needs and then again when you check in. Staff will assist you when boarding

and disembarking. The port of Dover advertises a trained escort service for passengers with visual impairments. Check what is available at other ports.

Crew will assist with getting on and some orientation but it is advisable to travel with a companion if you need more help during the journey.

## CONCESSIONS

Disabled Motoring UK (see page 33) offer concessions to their members with selected companies on specific routes. Check with ferry companies if they offer discounts for blue badge holders. In Scotland, visually impaired people are eligible for free bus, train and ferry travel: [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/public-transport/concessionary-travel/visually-impaired](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/public-transport/concessionary-travel/visually-impaired) (see page 34).

## JOURNEY PLANNING

Journey information for UK ferries is online or phone the ferry company.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- Phone the ferry company to check details especially if you are travelling overnight.
- Be aware – sea travel can be distressing for some dogs.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

Contact the ferry company.

# London

## JOURNEY PLANNING

Travelling in London can seem confusing, so start with two organisations: *Transport for London* and *Transport for All* and also check out the London Oyster card.

### Transport for London (TfL)

is the public body responsible for transport services in London.

**Tel** 0843 222 1234 for travel information and journey planning (24 hours, costs less than 5p per minute from a BT landline, charges from mobiles or other landline providers may vary)

**Textphone** 020 7918 3015 for travel information

**Textphone** 020 7027 8511 for Oyster information

[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

TfL's online journey planner provides access details; select 'More options'. It is accessible for people using screen readers such as JAWS. The TfL website has useful live travel updates.



For people with learning difficulties or with hidden impairments, the Travel Support Card can make it easier to get help from transport staff. The card has a blank space inside to write down information about your journey and any help you may need. Show the card to staff if you need help.



### London Underground

TfL has useful information including large print maps, maps showing



step-free access and gaps between trains and platforms, a toilet map, an audio tube map, a map in simple language called *Out and about in London* and useful information online and in print. Go to [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk) and search for accessibility guides.

### Transport for All

is a voluntary organisation that provides specialist advice to disabled and older people using transport in London.

**Tel** 020 7737 2339

**Textphone** 07793 879643

**Email** [contactus@transportforall.org.uk](mailto:contactus@transportforall.org.uk)  
[www.transportforall.org.uk](http://www.transportforall.org.uk)



Transport for All can provide specialist advice over the phone and they have a free booklet called *Get Moving* which has details of travelling in London which includes access information on: buses, the Underground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), overground trains, London river services and taxis.

### **Oyster card**

is a plastic credit card-sized smartcard that you use instead of tickets on buses, the Underground, trams, rail, DLR and some river services. To get one, you pay a refundable deposit of £5 then pay to add credit. You tap the card in and out on the automatic ticket gates and the system works to make sure you are not overcharged. For visitors to London, an Oyster card can save you time and money. [www.oyster.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.oyster.tfl.gov.uk)

You can use your Disabled Persons Railcard with a pre-paid Oyster card but the registration process is not accessible for blind people: the form has to be completed at the booking office.

## **ASSISTANCE**

On London Underground, TfL staff can assist you to platforms and onto trains. If you need someone to help you get off at the other end, staff can call ahead to arrange this. All trains have priority seating next to the doors and voice announcements with drivers announcing any disruptions. Tactile warning surfaces are installed as platforms are refurbished. TfL has a travel mentoring scheme which gives free advice on journey planning and it can provide a mentor to accompany you on your first few journeys: [www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/dialaride/travelassistance.asp](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/dialaride/travelassistance.asp).

## **CONCESSIONS**

### **For London residents – Freedom Pass and 60 plus Oyster card**

The Freedom Pass offers concessions in England for registered blind and partially sighted people who live in the London Boroughs. It entitles the holder to 24-hour free travel across Transport for London's

networks, except for some river boats where travel is half price. Train travel is free for Freedom Pass holders but not all rail services in London are part of the London Overground network and you may not be able to travel before 9.30am. To check which services accept Freedom Passes contact TfL or Transport for All (see page 17).

### Disabled Persons Freedom Pass

If you live in London and have an eligible disability, you can apply for a Disabled Persons Freedom Pass. To find out more contact your local council.

### For visitors to London

People coming in from outside London can use their Freedom Pass only on buses not on the underground.

### Railcards

Give you discounts on some off-peak London services.

## ACCESS

Information and signs are clear to help you find stops or platforms.



All lines except for the Metropolitan line have audible announcements. There are tactile maps available at Old Street, Westminster and Earsl Court stations.

RNIB recommend a Smartphone app, Tube Exits which tells you which carriage to board in order to be nearest station exits, and which side the doors open on.



### Announcements and communication

For Deaf and hard of hearing people, all ticket offices have induction loops.



## LONDON BUSES

All London buses (except Heritage buses on routes 9 and 15) have ramps, are low-floor and can be lowered to pavement level when the bus stops. Every bus has a space for one wheelchair no bigger than 700mm in width and 1200mm in length. Many buses have audio announcements with next stop information.

### For mobility scooter users

Contact Transport for London (see page 17), their website lists mobility scooters you can ride onto London buses.

## LONDON TAXIS

All licensed London taxis (black cabs) now have to be wheelchair accessible and for Londoners there is the London Taxicard Scheme (see page 23).

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

First contact Transport for London (TfL) (see page 17). If still dissatisfied contact: London TravelWatch

**Tel** 0207 505 9000 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am–5pm)

**Fax** 0207 505 9003

[www.londontravelwatch.org.uk](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk)

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

For wheelchair users:



- The Underground map has two colours for the wheelchair symbol. One shows access to platform only ie for carers, the other shows access to platform and train.
- Note personal assistants do not travel free on the tube.
- You can get help with manual ramps on overground & underground trains.

# Planes

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

The European Regulation 1107/2006 concerns the rights of 'persons with reduced mobility' when travelling by air. The guidelines cover before and after booking and at the airport. Disabled people can receive free assistance when they fly to and from Europe including domestic flights.

Disabled people are protected from discrimination during reservation and boarding. Under regulations in force since 2008, airports not airlines are responsible for training staff in disability awareness and providing accessible information. Airport managing bodies are required to organise the services necessary to enable disabled passengers to board, disembark and transit between flights.

### Airlines have to:

- provide certain assistance on board the aircraft eg help only as far as the toilet
- carry passengers' medical equipment and two items of mobility equipment free of charge
- carry assistance dogs free of charge (on permitted routes).

An airline can demand that a passenger travels with a companion if the passenger is not self-reliant, meaning unable to reach an exit unaided in an emergency.

## JOURNEY PLANNING

Even when you book online and tick the box to tell the airline about your needs, never rely on this: always phone to check that they have all your correct details.

## ASSISTANCE

Airports are responsible for help in the airport, airlines for help on the plane. You book assistance with the airline which passes this on to the airport. Before you fly, consider the assistance you need and check the airline's safety rules.



### Pre Book Assistance

Always tell your airline, travel agent or tour operator at least 48 hours in advance if you need assistance. Confirm as well when you check in.



### For blind or partially sighted people at airports



You can ask for someone to meet you from the point where you arrive at the airport eg a car park or train station and guide you through check-in, baggage check and customs controls, someone to tell you personally when your plane is boarding if you are in a 'silent airport' and someone to help you board the plane and stow your luggage.

### ACCESS

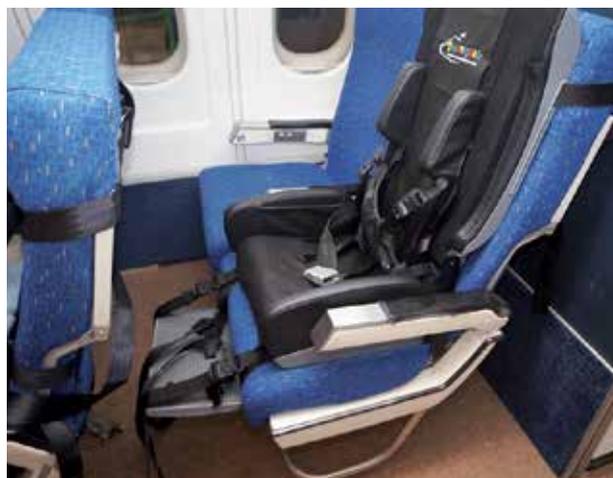
Major airports are accessible but check facilities at your chosen airport in advance. Disabled passengers will usually be called for boarding first. Airlines must make all reasonable efforts to arrange suitable seating for you.

### Wheelchair or mobility scooter users

When you book your flight, check with the airline that they can carry your wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Sometimes manual wheelchair users go to the plane before transferring into a transit chair. Powered wheelchairs or mobility scooters are specially packed, so you transfer into a transit chair at the check-in desk. The British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA, see page 32) has free information *Air Transport Advice: the safe carriage of powered wheelchairs and scooters by air*. It has the weight and dimensions of some electric mobility equipment and how to make them safe for air travel.

### Air travel for disabled children



#### TravelChair aircraft seat

*MERU, a charity that designs and manufactures specialised equipment for disabled children, has designed the TravelChair for disabled children between 3–11 years old (dependent on size) for use in an aircraft seat. It is important to get an assessment. You can try out four support seating systems in part of a real plane fuselage in Carshalton, Surrey. The TravelChair is also available for hire. For more information about Try b4u Fly contact: QEF Mobility Services  
Tel 020 8770 1151  
[www.tryb4ufly.org.uk](http://www.tryb4ufly.org.uk)*



## TRAVEL INFORMATION



Most public address systems in airports have induction loop facilities, which amplify sound for people with a 'T' switch on their hearing aids.

### On the plane



Many airlines offer a personal safety demonstration to blind and partially sighted passengers on the plane. Sometimes safety information videos are subtitled and announcements may be picked up via induction loops. Cabin crew can tell you about services, describe the layout of your food tray, open awkward packaging or help you find your way to the toilet. It's a good idea to explain your disability to cabin crew so that they can keep you fully informed.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

First contact the airline or the airport. If you are not satisfied with their response, contact the national enforcement body of the country where the incident took place. For flights departing from England, Scotland and Wales and the assistance provided by airlines on flights from outside the EU to the UK with an EU registered carrier, the Civil Aviation

Authority (CAA) deals with complaints: Civil Aviation Authority Passenger Advice and Complaints Team

**Consumer advice line** 020 7453 6888 (Monday to Friday: 9.00am to 2.30pm)

**Fax** 020 7453 6754

**Email** [passengercomplaints@caa.co.uk](mailto:passengercomplaints@caa.co.uk)  
[www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)

For complaints about flights departing from or arriving into Northern Ireland contact The Consumer Council of Northern Ireland (see page 32).

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- Before your flight, get a doctor's letter explaining your medication needs.
- Tell the airline if you will be carrying syringes in any of your luggage.
- In Europe assistance is generally good; many countries have similar laws in place but some do not.
- Be prepared for intrusive questions, having your wheelchair damaged and in the worst cases being refused permission to fly.
- If you need to be carried to board the aircraft, be prepared for some indignity in the transfer process.
- Consider what arrangements you may need to make if you cannot get out of your seat and reach and use the toilet.

Download *Your rights to fly – what you need to know* a step-by-step guide for disabled and less mobile passengers available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, [www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/service-users-guidance/air-travel](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/service-users-guidance/air-travel) (Not available in print)

# Taxis

There are two kinds of taxi:

- London-style 'black cabs' are licensed by the local authority and can be hailed in the street or at a taxi rank
- Private hire vehicles (PHVs), often called minicabs, are operated by companies and have to be booked in advance.

## ACCESS

In London, all black cabs must be accessible as part of their 'conditions of fitness'. They must have anchorage for a wheelchair to be safely carried or stowed, have grab handles in a contrasting colour and have an induction loop fitted. The taxi door must be at least 750mm wide and 1200mm high and open at least 90°. Not all black cabs are equally accessible for wheelchair users. Ramps which are steep and channel ramps can be difficult.

Outside of London, some local authorities only issue licenses to taxis that have room for wheelchair users. In many cases, taxis in these areas will be the same as in London. There are now adapted people carriers or vans and while there are no minimum standards for these, they are likely to have at least the same amount of room for wheelchair users as London cabs. Some van conversions may be bigger and can take two wheelchair users. To find out what is available in a particular area, contact your local taxi licensing office.

## ASSISTANCE

Drivers of accessible taxis (of both kinds) have to provide their passengers with a reasonable amount of mobility assistance. This means that if you use a wheelchair, the driver must help you in and out of the vehicle either in the wheelchair or transferring to a seat. They must also load the wheelchair into the vehicle and offer to load and unload their passengers' luggage.

Drivers who are not physically able to assist in this way will display an exemption certificate. If the taxi isn't accessible, the driver doesn't have the same requirement to help.

## CONCESSIONS

In London, the Taxicard scheme provides subsidised transport for disabled people who have difficulty using public transport. It is run by local councils and only for people living in London.

London Taxicard Scheme

**Tel** 020 7934 9791

**Fax** 020 7934 9699

**Email** [taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk](mailto:taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

[www.taxicard.org](http://www.taxicard.org).

Some other areas have similar concessions in place. Contact your local authority to find out what applies in your area.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

Your local council will have a taxi licensing office. Contact them if you want to complain or give feedback. If you can, note down the driver's badge number or the taxi's license plate number.

For complaints about London taxis, contact:

the Public Carriage Office

**Tel** 0845 300 7000

**Fax** 020 7027 9914

[www.tfl.gov.uk/pco](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/pco)

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- If you're sitting in a wheelchair, make sure you travel in the right position, secure the chair and wear a seatbelt; never sit sideways. 
- Some drivers might drive past if they see you in a wheelchair or with a guide dog (even though this is an offence) so get someone else or a friend to hail the taxi.
- Booking taxis at certain times of day may be a problem, eg. from 8.30–9.30am, and 3–6pm as they may be pre-booked for work or school journeys.
- RNIB (see page 34) can provide taxi hailing cards for blind or partially sighted people which are cards with 'TAXI' printed on them that you can hold up. 



- In London, the Hailo app for smartphones lets you order black cabs and make payments (useful if you can't read the meter, or if handling money is difficult). You can also let drivers know in advance if you're a wheelchair user. 
- [www.traintaxi.co.uk](http://www.traintaxi.co.uk) is a website that lets you know whether there's a taxi rank at any train station and gives the numbers of local firms with wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- Let a licensed minicab company know that you have a visual impairment. Ask the driver to tell you exactly where they've parked and describe the surroundings.

# Trains

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

The Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) are the mandatory standards for the accessibility of rail vehicles. Currently over 7,600 rail vehicles in service meet the standards, while older trains are improved when they're refurbished. All vehicles must meet the standard by 2020.

## JOURNEY PLANNING

### National Rail

For details of train timetables, phone National Rail Enquiries:

**Tel** 08457 48 49 50 (open 24 hours)

**Textphone** 0845 60 50 600

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

The National Rail website has information about stations: a map and photos and summaries of parking, staff hours and accessibility.

[www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations)

There is also live travel information using two services to help you keep track of your train:

**Alert Me** will send text messages or emails when your train is delayed. Sign up at the national rail website.



**TrainTracker** is an automated phone service that gives audio arrival and departure times. It's as up-to-date as the boards in the station.

**Tel** 0871 200 49 50 (10p/min from landline, mobile charges vary)

**Text messaging** 84950 (network rate to send, 25p for each answer)

### Rail Travel Made Easy

[www.rail-accessibility.co.uk](http://www.rail-accessibility.co.uk) is a website aimed at helping disabled people access rail travel. It has information about booking passenger assistance as well as useful travel tips.

### Try a Train Day

Some train operators run Try a Train days, where you can try out a train journey with a staff member and familiarise yourself with the stations, trains and facilities. Contact your local train operator or National Rail Enquiries (see above).

RNIB recommend UK Train Times app



## ASSISTANCE

You can book free travel Passenger Assistance through National Rail Enquiries (see above) or through your train operating company, or in person at your local station or online at [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk).

Once you've booked Passenger Assistance, it's treated like a reservation. You and staff at the relevant stations each get an email record of what assistance you've booked and when.

Train companies ask for at least 24 hours notice so that arrangements can be made.

Staff can meet blind and partially sighted travellers and offer guidance around the station. Staff are not allowed to lift you or help with personal assistance.



## CONCESSIONS

Having a railcard will get you a third off most journeys. You may be eligible for a Disabled Persons Railcard or a Senior Persons Railcard. 16–25 and Family & Friends railcards are also available. Railcards are valid in Great Britain only. In Northern Ireland, Translink operate their own concession scheme for travellers (see page 34).

### Disabled Persons Railcard

This also gives a discount to any adult companion. It costs £20 for a one-year railcard and £54 for a three-year railcard. You can download large print leaflets and application forms from their website, or contact them for Braille or audio versions.

**Tel** 0845 605 0525

**Textphone** 0845 601 0132

[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

### Senior Persons Railcard

This is available to anyone over 60. It costs £28 for one year and £65 for three years. Buy online or at a station and for more information:

**Tel** 08448 714036

[www.senior-railcard.co.uk](http://www.senior-railcard.co.uk)

#### TIP

Some train operating companies may offer their own concession scheme eg for wheelchair users.

## ACCESS

Access at most large stations has been improved; usually there are ramps, low-counter windows and induction loops for people using hearing aids. Handrails have been fitted on walkways and tactile strips installed on platform edges. Blue badge parking is often available.

### Boarding

Some trains and trams have doors level with the platform. If not, trains will use ramps or other boarding devices. Most are portable and fitted by station staff – book assistance in advance (see above) to make sure someone does this. The maximum combined weight of you and your wheelchair or mobility scooter must be under the stated safe load of the ramp (normally 230–300kg).

Doors which are large enough for wheelchair users are marked with a wheelchair symbol:



Work is being done to provide better ramped access to platforms and more automatic doors and portable ramps.

### Inside the train

RVAR-compliant trains are designed to be accessible to the 'reference wheelchair' (see page 5). There are usually at least two wheelchair spaces on every train with multiple carriages. Longer trains have more: trains with 12 or more carriages must have at least 4 spaces. The space is not shared with buggies and pushchairs, but see below for details on mobility scooters.

The passage from the door to the wheelchair space will usually be at least 850mm wide, and the wheelchair area

will be at least 1300mm long by 750mm wide with a backrest to park against. Other features include:

- automatic, light-touch internal doors
- handrails in contrasting colours
- accessible toilets near wheelchair space
- a way to attract attention in an emergency
- service in your seat if you can't access the buffet.

### Pre-RVAR train

Not all trains meet the standards described above. Many now have wide exterior doors and automatic interior doors. Some have accessible toilets but others do not. Space may be tight. Check details of individual services with the train operating company.

### Substitute transport

Any replacement transport will be accessible unless it has to be provided at short notice. If so, the train company will provide an accessible taxi to take you to your destination at no extra cost to you.

### Mobility scooter users

Train operators are not required to carry mobility scooters but most of them will.

### Folded-up mobility scooters

All train companies apart from Island Line will let you carry a folded-up scooter onto the train as luggage. Some train companies say their staff will help you carry the scooter on board, but others can't guarantee this assistance. Check in advance and think about what you'll be able to manage.



### Travelling on your mobility scooter



Some train companies allow you to travel on your mobility scooter if it meets certain criteria. The size of allowable mobility scooters varies between operators, normally because of different carriage designs, but it must be able to fit in the wheelchair space.

If you want to use your mobility scooter on trains then:

- Contact the train company concerned for details of their policy. If you're changing trains, check for each part of the journey.
- Consider the scooter's weight and climbing capability because of the ramps.
- You'll also need to manoeuvre your scooter within the carriage and position it in the wheelchair space.

### Mobility scooter permits

Some companies run permit schemes for scooters. When you apply, you'll be asked for details about the size and other features of your scooter so that the train company can check it's suitable. They

might also ask for a copy of the owner's manual as proof and photos of you or the scooter. Once you've got a permit, you can show it to staff as proof. If you get a new scooter you'll need a new permit.

### Which scooter on which trains?

We publish details of mobility scooters and their dimensions on our website:

[www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk).

National Rail has details of train operators' policies on mobility scooters (see page 25).

### Who gets priority for the wheelchair space?

Most train companies don't distinguish between wheelchairs and mobility scooters when a booking is made, although some give priority to wheelchair users.



## TRAVEL ROUTE INFORMATION

Trains show their destination on the outside and inside of the carriages, and each station is announced. Staff can provide information about accessible connecting services.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

In England, Wales and Scotland contact Passenger Focus (see page 33).

For Northern Ireland contact Translink (see page 34) or the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (see page 32)

## TRAVEL TIPS AND ADVICE

- Always book assistance at least 24 hours in advance.
- Contact the train company to find out what arrangements there are if you need assistance after 5–6pm.
- Check whether the lifts are working if you're returning late.
- Book at least 24 hours before you travel: someone has to set out a ramp for you get on the train plus you need to reserve the wheelchair space; like booking a seat.
- In case of problems, take the National Rail Enquiries contact details with you especially the phone number. The phone line is open 24 hours a day and will have a record of your passenger assistance booking.

**Tel** 08457 48 49 50

**Textphone** 0845 60 50 600

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

# Trams, metros, light railways

## LEGAL RIGHTS AND REGULATIONS

Light railways and trams come under the Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010 (RVAR 2010). This sets the standards for access for wheelchair users, the size and location of handrails, handholds and control devices as well as providing passenger information systems and other equipment.

## JOURNEY PLANNING

Contact the individual operators for service information. All have online and telephone service information, including details of fares, access and any assistance offered.

## CONCESSIONS

Concessionary and discounted fares are available for older and disabled passengers on all services. Contact your operator or local authority for details. Disabled Persons Railcards and Older Persons Railcards can be used on the London Underground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and Merseyrail Underground.

## ACCESS

The vast majority of light railway and tram services are modern, newly developed services and have high levels of access.

### Tram services are:

- Birmingham Midland Metro
- Blackpool Trams
- Croydon Tramlink

- London DLR
- Manchester Metrolink
- Midland Metro
- Nottingham Express Transport
- Sheffield Super Tram
- Tyne and Wear Metro

## ACCESS FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS



All services have wheelchair accessible platforms and importantly level access between the platform and carriage, so you don't need ramps.

## ACCESS FOR MOBILITY SCOOTER USERS

You can now also travel on your scooter on the majority of tram and light rail services if your scooter is a Class 2 type and meets certain size criteria (length 1000mm; width 600mm; turning radius 1200mm; weight 300kg including user). On some services you need to apply for a permit and be assessed to ensure you can manoeuvre safely. For further information, including a list of which scooters fit these criteria, contact your service operator or look at our website: [www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk).

## TRAVEL ROUTE INFORMATION

Audible and visual announcements are available on all trams, metros and light rail providing information about final destination and next stop.

## REPORTING BACK AND COMPLAINING

Contact the operator.

# Safety for wheelchair users



## Safety in buses, coaches and trains

- An upright pad or partition is fixed at one end of the wheelchair area. Place the back of your wheelchair against it.
- The backrest of your wheelchair should be in the upright position so that it fits securely against this pad or partition.
- Put on your brakes once in the travelling position.
- Turn off the power when in place.
- Take care on the ramp when it's wet or icy.
- Never travel facing sideways.
- Powered wheelchairs or mobility scooters must have sealed or gel-type batteries.



## Maintenance

A transport operator can refuse to carry you if they think your wheelchair may be a safety risk to other passengers. So before you travel, it's a good idea to make sure that:

- tyres are at the right pressure
- the back of the chair is not loaded with bags which could cause it to tip
- batteries are secure
- kerb climbers are adjusted so that they do not catch on ramps.

## Stability on ramps

Most wheelchair users have few problems negotiating slopes. But wheelchairs can tip on slopes that are too steep. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have a report, DB2004(02) *Guidance on the Stability of Wheelchairs* [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk). Although most tips are backwards, it is possible to tip forwards or sideways. Things that can affect stability include:

- the shape and size of cushions and seats
- your weight and shape, the way you sit, and the movements you make
- attachments such as trays and leg-rests, shopping and other things you carry
- sudden changes of speed or direction when the wheelchair is near its tipping point
- steep ramps, particularly when going down and in wet or icy conditions
- surface features such as thresholds, gaps, ledges and other obstructions.

To minimize risk, know the limits of your wheelchair and how to control it safely. If in doubt, check manufacturer's instructions. Be aware of how stable you are on different ramps and slopes. Check if anything has changed before travelling which may affect your stability eg if your wheelchair has a new accessory added to it. Know your weight in your wheelchair and check it is within the safe working load for ramps or lifting equipment.

### Things you can do:

- Do not carry things on the front, rear or side of the wheelchair.
- Adjust the wheelchair for optimum stability. On some wheelchairs, the castors or rear wheels can be moved. However, some people adjust their wheelchairs to get better manoeuvrability at the expense of stability. If you are in doubt about this compromise, consult your wheelchair service, a manufacturer or a mobility centre.
- Fit an anti-tipping device.
- Be careful how you sit in situations where there might be a danger of tipping. Avoid moving or stretching in ways that might increase the risk.
- If you make involuntary movements, attachments like posture support, calf straps or heel loops may help. If needed, get advice.
- Make sure electronic controls including accelerator and brakes are set to minimise risk.



- Only go straight up/down the slope. Do not attempt to cross the line of the slope.

Many wheelchair users are familiar enough with their chair to know how stable it is. If in any doubt, and if you have a NHS wheelchair, your local wheelchair service should be able to assess your stability. If you bought your chair privately, ask the manufacturer if they can make this assessment.

If you travel with an assistant or you get help when getting into public transport always make sure that they know what to do and how to do it safely and are strong enough to help. Your assistant should never attempt to lift you and your wheelchair.

# Useful contacts

## Action on Hearing Loss

National charity that provides support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus. They have policy documents on access to public transport for people with hearing loss.

**Tel** 0808 808 0123 (freephone)

**Textphone** 0808 808 9000 (freephone)

**Fax** 020 7296 8199

[www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

## Adviceguide

Independent online guide from the Citizens Advice Bureau. Has a section on rights to public transport simply explained.

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

## Assist UK

National charity that leads a UK wide network of local Disabled Living Centres, most of which have an equipment or product display for anyone to visit and try products and get information and advice from professional staff about what might suit them best.

**Tel** 0161 832 9757

**Email** [general.info@assist-uk.org](mailto:general.info@assist-uk.org)

[www.assist-uk.org](http://www.assist-uk.org)

## British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA)

Trade association that represents the companies that provide products and other specialist healthcare for disabled people.

**Tel** 020 7702 2141

**Fax** 020 7680 4048

**Email** [bhta@bhta.com](mailto:bhta@bhta.com)

[www.bhta.com](http://www.bhta.com)

## Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT)

Trade association for the bus, coach and light rail industries responsible for legislation, regulation and standards.

**Tel** 020 7240 3131

**Fax** 020 7240 6565

[www.cpt-uk.org](http://www.cpt-uk.org)

## Community Transport Association (CTA)

National organisation representing community and local transport services.

**Tel** 0870 774 3586

**Fax** 0870 774 3581

**Email** [info@ctauk.org](mailto:info@ctauk.org)

[www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)

## Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

Independent consumer body representing Northern Ireland's consumers in the areas of transport, water and energy.

**Tel** 0800 121 6022

**Fax** 028 9065 7701

**Email** [complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk)

[www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)

## Disability Rights UK

National charity that represents everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions. Sells national toilet scheme keys.

**Tel** 020 7250 3222

**Fax** 020 7250 0212

**Textphone** 020 7250 4119

**Email** [enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org)

[www.radar-shop.org.uk](http://www.radar-shop.org.uk)

## DisabledGo

Collates detailed information about the access to hotels, restaurants, colleges, tourist attractions, libraries, hospitals, leisure centres collected in person by their team of surveyors.

**Tel** 0845 270 4627

**Text messaging** 07971 425213

[www.disabledgo.info](http://www.disabledgo.info)

## Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

National charity providing impartial advice, information and training on daily living aids. It has comprehensive information on services for disabled people including free factsheets.

**Telephone Helpline** 0845 130 9177

(10am–4pm, charged at local rate)

**Tel** 020 7432 8009

**Email** [advice@dlf.org.uk](mailto:advice@dlf.org.uk)

[www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

[www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk)

## Disabled Travel Advice

Website offering tips and advice.

[www.disabledtraveladvice.co.uk](http://www.disabledtraveladvice.co.uk)

## Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK)

Campaigning charity for disabled drivers, passengers and Blue Badge holders.

**Tel** 01508 489 449

**Email** [info@disabledmotoring.org](mailto:info@disabledmotoring.org)

[www.disabledmotoring.org](http://www.disabledmotoring.org)

## Guide Dogs

National charity that breeds and trains working dogs for blind people to maintain their independence.

**Tel** 0118 983 5555

**Fax** 0118 983 5433

**Email** [guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:guidedogs@guidedogs.org.uk)

[www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

## Mencap

Charity that values and supports people with a learning disability, their families, friends and carers.

**Mencap Direct Tel** 0808 808 1111

(9am–5pm Monday to Friday)

**Email** [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

## Motability

National charity that enables people who receive some disability benefits to lease a new car or wheelchair or scooter.

**Tel** 0845 456 4566

**Textphone** 0845 675 0009

**Fax** 01279 632000

[www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

## Open Britain

Brings information and ratings from VisitEngland and DisabledGo about access and facilities at holiday destinations around Britain. It promotes an incentive to business to improve facilities to make them accessible to disabled customers.

**Tel** 0845 124 9971

**Email** [info@tourismforall.org.uk](mailto:info@tourismforall.org.uk)

[www.OpenBritain.net](http://www.OpenBritain.net)

## Passenger Focus

Official, independent consumer organisation that represents the interests of rail users nationally and bus, coach and tram users across England outside London.

**Telephone helpline** 0300 123 2350

(8am–8pm Monday–Friday  
and 8am–4pm weekends)

**Fax** 0845 850 1392

[www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)

## **RNIB**

Charity that supports blind and partially sighted people. Runs campaigns, provides accessible information and sells products and services relevant to people with sight loss.

**Telephone Helpline** 0303 123 9999

**Fax** 020 7388 2034

**Email** [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## **Shopmobility**

Schemes that loan manual or powered wheelchairs or mobility scooters mostly based in shopping centres. Some you have to pay, some you book in advance, some arrange an escort. To find a Shopmobility scheme in your area, contact The National Federation of Shopmobility UK (NFSUK)

**Tel** 08456 442 446

(24hr answerphone service)

**Fax** 08456 444 442

**Email** [info@shopmobilityuk.org.uk](mailto:info@shopmobilityuk.org.uk)

[www.shopmobility.org](http://www.shopmobility.org)

## **Tourism for All UK**

National charity that aims to make tourism welcoming to all and to overcome barriers to participation in tourism for disabled people, older people, carers of young people or disabled or older relatives and people on low incomes.

**Tel** 0845 124 9971

**Email** [info@tourismforall.org.uk](mailto:info@tourismforall.org.uk)

[www.tourismforall.org.uk](http://www.tourismforall.org.uk)

## **Translink (Northern Ireland)**

The name of the integrated public transport operation of Citybus, NI Railways, and Ulsterbus in Northern Ireland. It has journey planning and timetable information for transport in Northern Ireland and is the organisation to contact with complaints or feedback.

**Tel** 028 9066 6630

[www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

## **Transport Scotland**

National transport agency for Scotland.

**Tel** 0141 272 7100

**Email** [info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.transportscotland.gov.uk](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk)

**Motability has teamed up with leading home, pet and travel insurers**

**For full details of the Motability Insurance range visit [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk) or call direct:**

**Motability HOME Insurance**

**0800 783 0061**

**Motability PET Insurance**

**0800 369 9094**

**Motability TRAVEL Insurance**

**0800 519 9957**

**For every policy sold, the insurance providers will pay a proportion of the premium in commission to Motability to help disabled people remain mobile.**





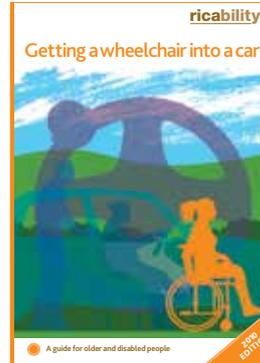
# Rica guides

All these guides are available in print and online at [www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk). Our website also has a searchable database of car measurements.



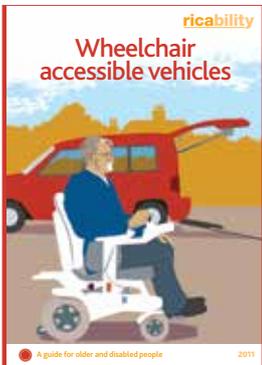
## FAMILY CARS

Issues affecting families of disabled children and fitters information about cars and standard and specialist equipment



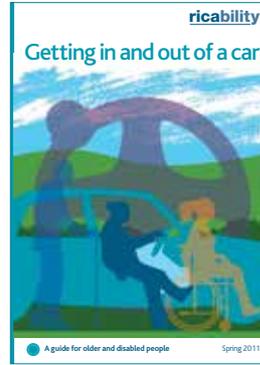
## GETTING A WHEELCHAIR INTO A CAR

Equipment to help you stow or carry a wheelchair in a car, including ramps, hoists, racks and trailers



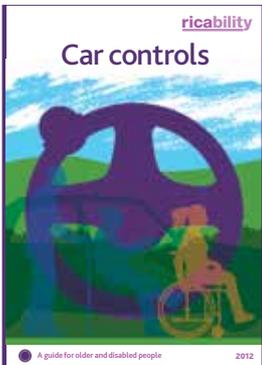
## WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

Information on vehicles converted to allow you to travel in your wheelchair, as a passenger or driver



## GETTING IN AND OUT OF A CAR

Techniques that may help as you get older; helpful equipment and details of lifting systems if you need more help



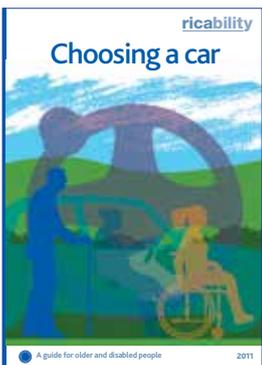
## CAR CONTROLS

Information on types of adaptations and how to get them; it covers simple and more complex conversions and controls



## MOBILITY ADDRESS LIST

Addresses of all adaptation suppliers, fitters and converters in the UK and the services they offer



## CHOOSING A CAR

Things to think about if you have a disability, details of features that may help you and ways of adapting a car to suit your needs

## SEVEN SHORTER GUIDES

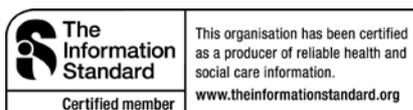
- Motoring after an amputation
- Motoring after a brain injury
- Motoring after a stroke
- Motoring with arthritis
- Motoring with cerebral palsy
- Motoring with multiple sclerosis
- Motoring with restricted growth



**Consumer research for older and disabled people**

Rica is an independent research charity that publishes practical consumer information.

Rica  
Unit G03 The Wenlock  
50–52 Wharf Road  
London N1 7EU  
Tel: 020 7427 2460  
Fax: 020 7427 2468  
Textphone: 020 7427 2469  
Email: [mail@rica.org.uk](mailto:mail@rica.org.uk)  
[www.rica.org.uk](http://www.rica.org.uk)



Research: Chris Lofthouse,  
Cassie Barton  
Photos: Heathrow Photo Library,  
National Express,  
Robin Beckham,  
Transport for London  
Design: Price Watkins  
Print: WPG

ISBN: 978-1-907408-19-9

© Rica 2013

Funded by:

