

# Wheelchair and mobility scooter guide

May 2024



WE'RE WITH YOU

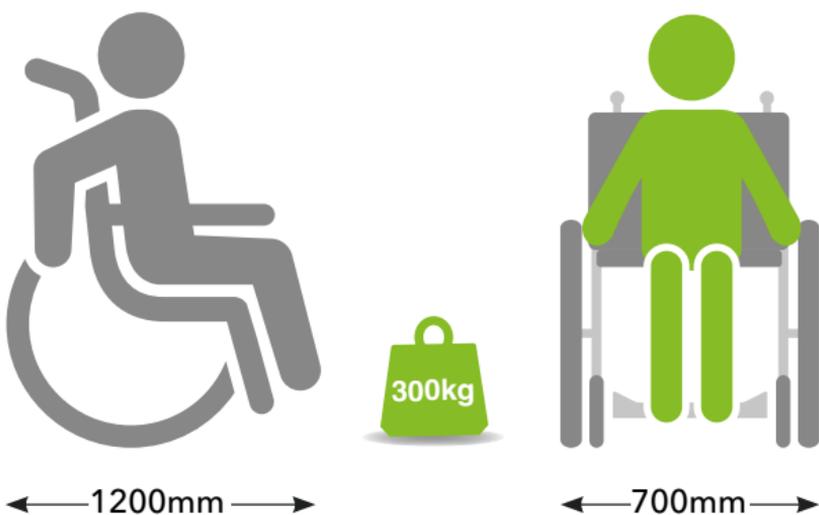
# Assisting your journey

Following feedback, this wheelchair/powerchair and mobility scooter guide has been created to provide you with some helpful information around travelling safely in our stations and on our trains.

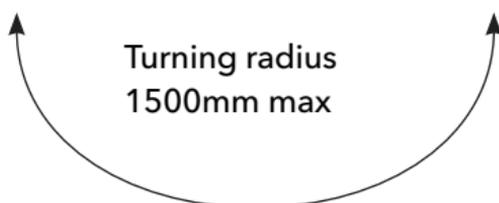
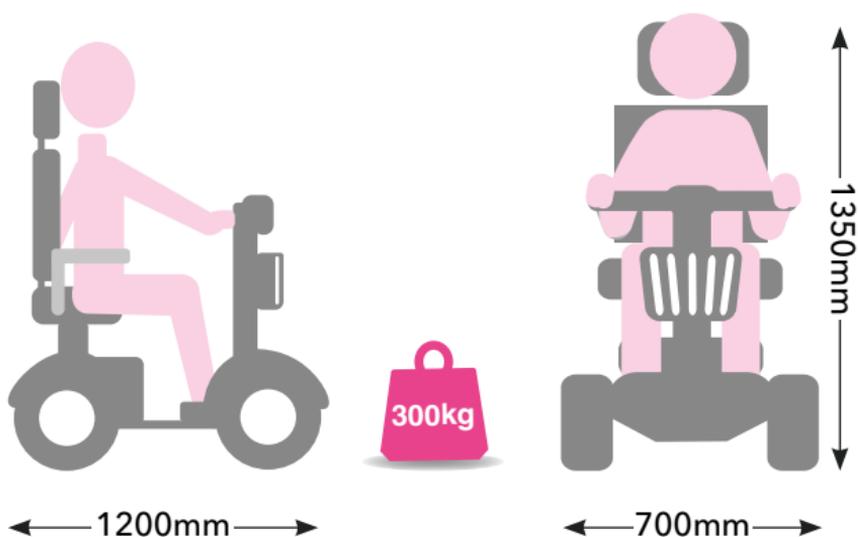
There is additional guidance for mobility scooters, as there are some restrictions on the type of scooters that can be used on our services.

All of our trains can accommodate wheelchairs and mobility scooters of up to 1200mm long and 700mm wide.

Where these specifications are exceeded, we are unable to provide journey support via an alternative vehicle such as a taxi.



There are some further restrictions on scooters. Please see further details of our mobility scooter policy at the end of this guide.





## Before you travel

Whether you book assistance or you simply show up at a station, we'll always do what we can to help. Booking the support you need in advance just gives us a little more time to ensure we have the staff available to provide you with any help you may need.

If you have not travelled before or recently changed your mobility aid, please check the dimensions with our dedicated Assisted Travel team to ensure it is okay to use on trains. Some scooters are only meant for road use and cannot be carried on trains.

Our Assisted Travel team can also help provide guidance on the availability of staff, the accessibility of a station or to book assisted travel. Please refer to the back page of this booklet, where you will find contact details for the team.

# Arriving at the station

When you arrive at the station please speak to a member of staff, or at unstaffed stations use a help point or contact our control team via our freephone number **0808 168 1238** or text **07970 511077**.

We recommend you arrive 20 minutes before your train is due to depart in order to give staff time to contact your destination station and make sure arrangements are in place for you. To help us to provide the right support for you, please advise our member of staff of your access needs.

# Getting to and whilst on the platform

One of our station team members will help you to the platform and wait with you, or advise you where to wait and when they will return. As platforms are not always level please make sure you apply your brake to your wheelchair or scooter.

Platforms can be busy places so please be aware of other passengers and if using a powerchair or scooter make sure you minimise your speed.

Keep away from the platform edge staying well behind the yellow line.

Whilst waiting on the platform for a train, position your wheelchair or scooter so you are parallel to the track, close to the back wall.

If you are using a motorised mobility aid, switch it off while waiting.

# Boarding the train

Please wait for a member of staff to deploy the ramp and inform you that you can board the train, before attempting to board. Always listen to the advice given by our staff and consider whether you are comfortable to steer up a short steep ramp over the gap between the platform and train. Our staff will be unable to take the controls of powerchairs.

You will normally be boarded facing the train, so the member of staff or your companion are pushing you, rather than pulling you on to the train.

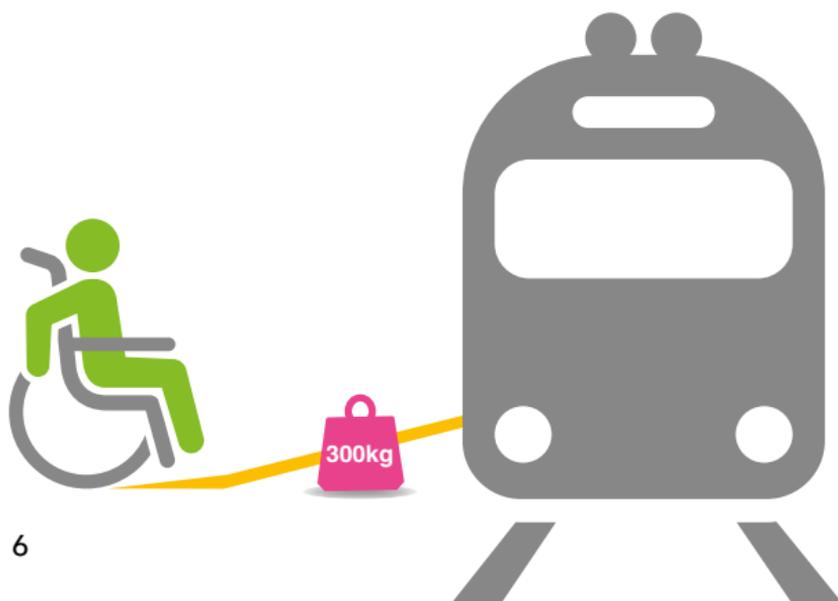
To help prevent the wheelchair or scooter tipping back whilst going up the ramp, please make sure that any bags or similar are removed.

If boarding on your own be aware of the speed you are travelling. You are entering a confined space so be aware other people might be in your path.

Make sure your wheelchair/scooter is aligned with the middle of the ramp and do not turn when on the ramp.

At stations within the 'Thameslink Core' (London St Pancras through to London Bridge), the doors of the accessible carriages will stop next to the raised level boarding areas (or 'humps') on the platforms.

Staff are on hand at the level boarding areas at all times that trains call, to notify the destination station of any passenger requiring assistance. They can also provide any assistance for passengers leaving the train.



# Once on the train

All our trains have wheelchair spaces within the standard class seating area only, which are marked on the outside of the carriage. We do not have wheelchair spaces within first-class areas.

Wheelchair spaces aren't reservable, although our staff will make every reasonable effort to ensure wheelchair users have priority using wheelchair spaces. If all wheelchair spaces are all occupied, they will work with the customer to identify the best option to enable them to reach their destination.

Please position your wheelchair/scooter parallel to the side of the train. Ensure as best as possible that you are within the designated space.

Make sure the brakes are applied to your scooter/wheelchair so that it doesn't move around. Be aware that the train may rock and tilt as it goes along, so make sure you are seated securely.

There will be a call for assistance device in the wheelchair space at a reachable height, possibly behind a fold down table which the assisting staff should make sure is available to you.

If there is no wheelchair space available on the train, or all spaces are occupied, then position the wheelchair/scooter to one side of the door vestibule to keep the route clear through the train for other passengers.

# Leaving the train

A member of staff will make sure a ramp is in place to help you get off the train. At a terminal station it may take up to five minutes for a member of staff to arrive as they may have other passengers to assist.

Please wait for a member of staff to deploy the ramp and inform you that you can alight, before attempting to leave the train. Being lifted off the train is unsafe and our staff are unable to do this.

If a member of staff fails to show up please use the call for assistance point located in the wheelchair space or by the door to contact the driver, or ask a fellow passenger to alert staff to assist with getting off the train. It's unsafe to try and prevent the doors from closing by positioning your wheelchair or using a cane or even your leg.

Please reduce your speed when leaving the train as there may be people on the platform or fixtures such as benches or lamp posts that need to be avoided.

If you are being assisted off the train, please let staff know how you would like to be assisted with your safety in mind. Staff will normally assist wheelchair users by walking backwards down the ramp supporting the wheelchair in front of them. If you do not need assistance on the ramp and wish to face forward, then do let our staff know.

Powerchair and mobility scooter users should drive themselves on and off the train using their own discretion as to how to enter or leave the train e.g. which direction to go up or down the ramp.

Our staff will be unable to take the controls of powerchairs/scooters.

# Additional guidance applicable for scooter users

A scooter is different to a powerchair. While a scooter can have three or four wheels it has a steering column instead of the joystick controls used for an electric wheelchair. This means that the turning circle of a scooter requires more space than a powerchair, making them less manoeuvrable on a train.

## **On all our services**

Folding/collapsible scooters that can be stored as luggage in luggage racks, can be carried on any type of train.

To help prevent scooters tipping back whilst going up the ramp, please make sure that any bags or similar are removed.

Do not pause on the ramp, nor be tempted to look behind you, as this can affect your centre of gravity and lead to instability.



Scooter users are advised to drive themselves on and off the train using their own discretion as to how to enter or leave the train e.g. which direction to go up or down the ramp.

If you wish to get off your scooter and ask staff to help push your scooter up the ramp, please make sure the scooter is put into free wheel mode.

For your own safety and that of others, please do not exceed 3 miles per hour whilst at any station.

For safety reasons, we have some restrictions on the size and weight of mobility scooters (and wheelchairs) that we can carry (see page 3 for details). Larger mobility scooters (and wheelchairs) may not fit safely onto our ramps or into the accessible spaces on our trains.

Scooter users are advised to transfer to a seat whilst on board the train where possible. Scooter policies do vary between train operators. Some may not allow customers to take their scooter on board. If travelling with another operator, customers can check their scooter policy at **[nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)** or by calling **08457 484950** or contacting our Assisted Travel team.

### **Priority Seating Card**

Priority Seats are available on all trains and our Priority Seating Card allows you to show passengers who are sitting in these seats that you need to sit down in a discreet manner.

You can apply for the Priority Seating Card through our Customer Relations team and it is valid on any Gatwick Express, Great Northern, Southern and Thameslink services. Contact details are provided overleaf. (Also valid on Southeastern and South Western Railway services).

### **Rail replacement buses and taxis**

Many rail replacement buses and taxis are unable to accept mobility scooters. If possible, our station teams may be able to store a mobility scooter, for collection later. We strongly recommend that you speak to staff or check with our Assisted Travel team whether this is possible at your planned departure station before you travel.



# Feedback

We appreciate you taking the time to provide us with feedback, which helps us to improve the assistance support we provide.

Please let us know about your experience travelling with us.

The vast majority of assisted travel goes smoothly and disabled passengers, whatever their assistance requirements, are successfully assisted throughout their journeys.

But things can go wrong, and if they do please let us know. Whether the assistance was booked or not, we investigate any complaints, take appropriate action, and provide redress if appropriate.

## **Further information**

We understand the impact that disruption to our services can have on all passengers and in particular those who are disabled.

Our staff will always work with passengers on an individual basis, if necessary, to ensure you are supported and able to complete your journey - whether on an alternative train service or via a suitable (accessible if required) replacement vehicle.

Alterations due to planned engineering work are publicised in advance, please see [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk) for more information. Our dedicated Assisted Travel team can help with any assistance questions you may have. Details of how to contact the team are provided on the following page.

# Contact us

The majority of passengers travel on our network without booking assistance. If you do wish to book assistance our Assisted Travel team will be happy to help you plan your journey.

We recommend that assistance is booked two hours before travel in order for us to make appropriate arrangements.

If your journey involves another train company, we may need to confirm part of your journey with them. This might depend on their contact centre opening hours. If this is the case, we will discuss options with you.



Telephone: **0800 138 1016**

Textphone: **0800 138 1018**

Web: **[southernrailway.com/assisted-travel](https://southernrailway.com/assisted-travel)  
[gatwickexpress.com/assisted-travel](https://gatwickexpress.com/assisted-travel)**

ThamesLink/

Great Northern

Telephone: **0800 058 2844**

Textphone: **0800 138 1018**

Web: **[thameslinkrailway.com/assisted-travel](https://thameslinkrailway.com/assisted-travel)  
[greatnorthernrail.com/assisted-travel](https://greatnorthernrail.com/assisted-travel)**



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