

Accessible Travel Policy

Southeastern Railway

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A: Commitments to providing assistance

Southeastern is a train operator running services in South East London, Kent and parts of East Sussex . This Accessible Travel Policy gives information about the provision of assistance at Southeastern, and our strategy going forward. This document is supported by the Making Rail Accessible Leaflet which provides a summary of the information provided within this document and is available online and in larger stations.

Please follow this link to view the Accessible Travel Policy and its alternative formats. [Accessible travel policy | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/accessible-travel-policy)

This policy explains our approach to helping passengers travelling on our network. For example:

- Passengers with visual or auditory impairments.
- Passengers with learning disabilities.
- Passengers whose mobility is impaired, for example as a result of arthritis or other temporary or long-term conditions.
- Passengers with non-visible disabilities that might not be immediately apparent to other people, for example dementia
- Older people.
- Passengers accompanying disabled children in pushchairs or wheelchairs.
- Passengers with a disability who need help with luggage.

The purpose of this policy is to help you, plan your journey, understand what services we offer and how we plan to meet your expectations when travelling with us. You will find information on a variety of areas including getting assistance with us and facilities that we have.

A1: Booking and providing assistance

Our Customer Services team

Our Customer Services team are available to help you book assistance as well as provide information on how your journey may be impacted due to changes such as engineering work or industrial action strikes.

Assistance can be arranged:

- By calling our 24-hour Customer Services team on 0800 783 4524 (freephone, available every day except Christmas Day. Please note, if you book online or via the app when the contact centre is closed for Christmas, the booking won't be confirmed until the 27th December).
- Through the Southeastern app which can be downloaded free from the App Store (<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/southeastern-railway/id1544126349>) or Google Play (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=southeastern.travelcompany>)

[on.prod](#)). (Shortly, you will be able to book assistance at the same time as purchasing tickets through our app)

- QR codes for App Downloads:



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- online at www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/more-travel-help/assisted-travel
- By using Text Relay number (18001 0800 783 4524).
- You can also make an assistance booking through National Rail Enquiries by calling 0800 0223720 (Available 24 hours a day, All year round) .

Assistance Provision

Southeastern uses Passenger Assist, a national system that all train companies are members of. It allows train companies to make arrangements as required at all points along the journey for anyone who needs assistance. We're committed to using this system and we will provide assistance to anyone who wishes to travel on our network, whether they have booked or not. We'll provide this assistance at the stations we manage directly including London Cannon Street, and in partnership with Network Rail and High Speed One at our London Terminals (London Bridge, London Charing Cross, London Victoria and London St Pancras International) and with other train companies at their stations.

Booking Assistance

Regardless of whether you are making a simple journey or one that involves changes, we can book your tickets and your assistance for you in one transaction, if you call our Assisted Travel team on 0800 783 4524. Alternatively, you can do this on the Southeastern App.

If your journey involves more than one train company, we'll confirm your bookings with the other train companies involved. We will also check the accessibility of the stations you plan to travel to and make contact with you if there are any alternative transport arrangements that may need to be made. Alternative transport options may include, buses, taxis, trams or the London Underground for example. If you would like to find out more about the accessibility of stations, this is available on, the Southeastern website ([Station information | Southeastern](#))

(southeasternrailway.co.uk), the Southeastern app and National Rail Enquiries ([National Rail Enquiries - Station Information](#)). You can also find live information about station lifts at [National Rail Accessibility Map](#) and we will also be launching our Step-Free Journey planner in 2024 available in the Southeastern app and on our website.

We'll discuss your individual requirements when you get in touch to make sure we can provide assistance that best suits your needs. Once booked, we will give you a Passenger Assist reference number and send a confirmation email. We can also do this by post if there is adequate notice to send it. We ask you to keep this with you when travelling so that staff on stations and trains can identify your booking. Assistance can be booked at any of our stations, any time that a train service is scheduled to run.

We can't confirm assistance for cross-London journeys that include Transport for London (TfL) journeys ([Keeping London moving - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](#)), because they operate a 'turn up and go' assistance service at the stations we call at. However, we'll take you to meet a member of the London Underground staff if you would like their assistance.

You can book assistance on our website when buying train tickets by clicking through to our Passenger Assist booking form. It is available in the Accessible Travel section on our website, where all information related to accessibility and train travel is located.

We will always ensure that we use and maintain the Passenger Assist services and we'll always look for ways that we can improve its performance. We will continue to seek feedback from people who book assistance through callbacks after their journey (both phone calls and email surveys).

We have established a handover process for assistance between station staff, which will include passing set messages between staff to ensure that the correct details are conveyed.

There is a dedicated phone number for every station and a role at the station that is responsible for answering the phone during station staffing hours. However, if the station is unstaffed, then the phone call will automatically be diverted to a nearby staffed station. This ensures that there will always be someone available to answer the phone, so that necessary arrangements can be made.

When alighting from a train, we'll help you leave the train as soon as possible. Sometimes at our terminal stations, (when your destination station is the last stop of the service), we can't get to you immediately, but you'll be assisted off the train within five minutes of your train's arrival.

Where possible, we'll help you change trains, including those operated by a different train company at the same station, and other modes of transport, such as buses, underground trains, and taxis, within the boundaries of our stations.

You can find information about connections and onward travel at [Station information | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#) information and from station information posters at the station.

We'd encourage you to book assistance, although we understand that this won't always be possible. If you haven't booked please arrive at the station in plenty of time before your train and let a member of staff know that you need assistance. This could be ticket office, gateline, or platform staff (to check availability visit our website [Station information | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#)) If none are available, either attract the attention of staff on trains or use a Help Point at the station to let us know you need assistance. We'll do everything that we can to get you on the train you wish to travel on where possible. If you require ramp assistance at an unstaffed station, where available on train staff can do this for you. Where they are not available and you have booked in advance we will reach an agreement with you on how assistance will be provided, which may involve using our roving staff or providing accessible alternative transport.

Booking notice period

For us to be able to plan your assistance effectively and ensure staff are ready to help you, you can book assistance in advance. At the time of writing [January 2024], assistance can be booked up to 2 hours in advance of your train's departure.

You can book your assistance up to 12 weeks in advance if you wish, as well as making regular weekly or daily bookings in advance as well.

Delivering these booking times for travel on other train companies' services will be challenging, because of the frequency of other services and limited reservable seating and wheelchair spaces. We will work with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to agree on a reasonable solution.

If you're making long-distance journeys that include other train operators, we'd advise that, where possible, you book your assistance, reserve your seat and buy your tickets as far in advance as possible to give you the widest possible choice. If there is no seat reservation available, we will make you aware of this and discuss alternative services with you.

It isn't possible to book seats or wheelchair spaces on our services - these are on a first come, first served basis, although our staff will do all they can to ensure you are able to make your journey in comfort, ensuring that you have priority use of the wheelchair space if you are a wheelchair user.

Assistance at staffed stations

When you arrive at one of our staffed stations, please make yourself known to a member of staff. Our station information pages have a meeting point for assistance listed on them for each station. This indicates the location within the station where you are most likely to find staff. If you are unable to find a member of staff, you can use our help points to request assistance or call our customer services team on 0800 783 4524.

Assistance at part-staffed or unstaffed stations

Most of our stations are staffed for some part of the day and will be able to provide assistance. When using one of these stations where there are no station staff available, if there are staff on the train, the Conductor or On Board Manager will provide assistance to you for getting on and off the train.

You can check the staffing times of the station and whether help is available from on train staff by visiting southeasternrailway.co.uk/station-information or checking the station information poster.

To attract the attention of these staff, please wait in a prominent position, behind the yellow line, on the platform. On-board staff will always look out for customers on the platform who may require assistance, and if you have booked they will have been notified and will be looking out for you. Please note the onboard staff cannot assist you in getting to or from the car park, or with other assistance around the station due to the limited time that trains stop at stations.

We have introduced a Mobile Assistance Team who can be deployed to provide assistance to board our trains and to help at our stations when stations are unstaffed. They are based at key locations throughout our network. The Mobile Assistance Team can provide assistance whether it has been booked or not. However, to reduce waiting times we advise you to book your assistance in advance if you can.

If you're boarding a train at a station which is unstaffed and there are no staff on the train to provide assistance, by booking in advance we'll either send someone to the station to assist you, like a member of our Mobile Assistance Team, or arrange for a taxi to take you to the nearest staffed station to continue your journey. The available options will be discussed and confirmed with you when booking.

If you haven't booked and the station or train doesn't have staff who can assist you, you can contact with us to arrange assistance by calling our Customer Services team or use the Help Points located at all of our stations.

Ramps

We have ramps to help with boarding our trains located on the platform or on the train itself. Our staff will be happy to help you, or will find someone to help you if they are unable to, with these if you need one. If the station you intend to travel from or to does not ordinarily have staff (see [Station information | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://southeasternrailway.co.uk/station-information) for details of which stations and services are staffed) we would encourage you to book assistance. Alternatively, you can use the Help Point at the station which will connect you to a larger local staffed station or to our Passenger Services Coordinators. 24-hour colleagues will then direct one of our roving team to your location or arrange alternative transport.

Assistance with onward travel – trams, buses, and taxis

Where possible, we'll help you between trains and other modes of transport, such as buses, London Underground, trams, metro, and taxis, within the boundaries of our stations.

Since 2021 our contract with CMAC now requires taxi operators to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles and a number of drivers trained in disability awareness, and we are working with our supplier to deliver further future improvements. We rely on the local authorities and their taxi policies for disability awareness training of the drivers. More than half of the 13 local authorities Kent and East Sussex have made disability awareness training for taxi drivers mandatory and in the London Boroughs we serve, training is not mandatory but all Black Cab drivers are required to have undertaken disability awareness training.

Staff at our stations that don't have taxi ranks can assist help disabled customers to arrange their own accessible taxi where necessary. We also have information posters at our stations that give details of other transport operators who serve the station.

All bus companies serving stations with buses that have a capacity for more than 22 passengers will use buses that are accessible to disabled people.

Station facilities and services

We'll keep information regarding our services up to date at all times and passengers requiring assistance will be able to find information on limitations or restrictions to access.

Our Information Delivery team keeps this information live and liaise with our Facilities department to ensure information is correct and up to date.

Any temporary changes to the availability of facilities at stations, such as lifts or toilets, will be advertised on the Southeastern app, on our website at [Service disruption | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#) and through alert messages on the National Rail Enquiries website. This will also be duplicated on our station information pages and available on our phone app. On train, toilet availability will be announced at stations through our customer information systems.

Any permanent changes to facilities or services at stations will be updated on a regular basis. This includes, but isn't restricted to, the following:

- The level of accessibility from the station entrance to the platforms.
- Staffing hours and assistance availability.
- Meeting points for assistance.
- Ramps for train access.
- Accessible waiting rooms, toilets, and set-down/pick-up points.

When booking assistance with us, our Customer Services Team member will check the accessibility conditions of the station and communicate this to you. This information can also be posted to you, if you need it.

This information is also available on our website at [Station information | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#) , or National Rail Enquiries at [National Rail Enquiries -](#)

Alterations to facilities

If facilities like toilets or lifts at stations we operate are out of services, for example due to a fault, we'll update our system as soon as possible. Our goal is to do this within 24 hours of the fault being identified and logged. This information will be included on next arrival/departure information through National Rail Enquiries and in our mobile app. Where this impacts the ability to carry out assistance, and where we have permission to contact a customer, we'll aim to contact you in advance to let you know about the facility being out of order, and how we can best proceed.

If a facility on board a train is not available, such as an accessible toilet, that has an impact on your ability to travel, we'll do everything we can to let you know. This information is communicated through station Customer Information Systems as well as through our mobile app.

Where possible, we'll give you an estimate for when station facilities will be back in service. Our maintenance teams try not to send any train into service with faulty facilities.

If you find a problem with a train or station facility, you can let us know by contacting customer services or log it directly with us through our mobile app.

Assistance with luggage

Although we don't offer a portering service for luggage, our staff will help passengers with luggage they feel comfortable assisting with. As a general guide, please refer to our luggage policy below:

- As a guide you may take up to two items of luggage which should not exceed 30 x 70 x 90cm in size and a single item of hand luggage that must be capable of being held in your lap. We recommend that you bring pull-along suitcases which don't exceed 23kg each.

You can leave luggage at London Charing Cross, London Bridge, St Pancras, and London Victoria. These stations all have level access; there is a charge to use the left luggage service.

Seats on trains

Southeastern does not offer seat reservations. However, all Southeastern trains include clearly marked priority seating areas on board, which have extra legroom. These can be identified by labels above, on the back of the seat, and on the window.

We'll provide assistance where possible to help passengers into a seat or wheelchair space. Booking assistance does not guarantee a seat or wheelchair spaces; we operate a first come first served policy. However, if wheelchair spaces are occupied by passengers, other than those using a wheelchair or mobility scooter, staff providing assistance will make sure you can access the space.

SeatFinder

Use our SeatFinder tool to check how busy your train might be and where seats are available, so you can plan your journey with confidence.

If you're looking to travel within the next 2 hours, our SeatFinder tool will show you how busy trains from your station usually are. If you're planning your journey in advance, you can use our SeatFinder Timetables to see how busy trains usually are on each individual weekday. So if you're only travelling a couple of days each week, then you can compare each day to help you find the quietest times to travel.

Priority seating card

We have introduced a priority seating card that assists disabled passengers in obtaining a seat, by removing the need for them to explain why they need one. You can apply for a Priority seating card through the Southeastern app, our website by visiting [Travel Support | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://southeasternrailway.co.uk), or at one of our ticket offices or by calling our Passenger Assist service.

Assistance dogs

Trained and certified assistance dogs are very welcome on all of our trains and stations, they are free of charge and can travel in any part of the train. Seats in the priority area have extra floor space so that dogs can be seated more easily.

At Southeastern we recognise the Assistance Dog Card. The card explains why the assistance dog may need to sit under an unoccupied seat and provides a visual guide to other passengers that there maybe a guide dog under the seat.

A2: Passenger information and promotion of Passenger Assist

We want all of our passengers to be able to travel independently as easily as possible and we understand that information provision is key to that. We'll always aim to provide accessible, clear, consistent, correct and concise information to ensure our passengers are confident at every stage of their journey – including when planning journeys.

Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet for customers – Making Rail Accessible

Our Accessible Travel Policy leaflet, Making Rail Accessible will be:

- On display on leaflet racks, and provided at ticket offices at all staffed stations called at by our train services, at a height suitable for wheelchair users to access.
- Online on our Accessible Travel page ([Accessible travel policy | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/accessible-travel-policy)) as a PDF and as a Word document.
- Provided as an alternative format on request, without charge.
- Available on request via our website, phone and text relay.

We'll display information at all of our stations informing passengers how they can get a copy.

Station and train accessibility information

We will keep our train and station accessibility information up to date and available to customers. You can print an html version of all the station information pages on our website.

Passengers can request a copy in an alternative format at no extra cost. Our Customer Services team can also send the information you need in a format accessible to you.

We'd encourage all passengers to visit the dedicated station pages on the Southeastern app or website for up-to-date information regarding all Southeastern stations. We are also developing a step-free journey planner which will be great tool for anyone looking to plan a step-free journey.

At staffed stations, where our staff have mobile devices or personal computers they are able to access the same information on their devices, dependent on a mobile signal, WiFi coverage, and network availability.

You can find an interactive map of all the stations in Great Britain on the National Rail Enquiries website [National Rail Accessibility Map](https://www.nationalrail.gov.uk/accessible-travel-policy) . This map includes details of the accessibility of every station in Great Britain as well as information like staffing, toilet, and waiting room provision.

Passenger journey information

All Southeastern stations, and the stations at which we call, have Customer Information Screens (CIS). These display details of the next train to depart the

station, as well as calling points. In addition, most of our stations have a public address (PA) system which provides audio details of the information displayed on the screens.

The table below shows a list of stations with no or limited public address system. However, information updates can be found on our website, on our app, and on our Twitter page.

<u>Stations</u>	<u>Public address system status</u>
East Malling, Shoreham, and Stone Crossing	No public address system
Adisham, Aylesford, Aylesham, Barming, Bat & Ball, Bekesbourne, Beltring, Chartham, Chilham, Crowhurst, Cuxton, Dumpton Park, Dunton Green, East Farleigh, Folkestone West, Frant, Halling, Harrietsham, Hollingbourne, Kemsley, Lenham, Maidstone Barracks, Minster, New Hythe, Queenborough, Sandling, Snodland, Snowdown, Stonegate, Sturry, Swale, Walmer, Watlington, Wye, Yalding	Limited public address system

All Southeastern trains have a Passenger Information System (PIS) which provides visual updates of the journey and automatic announcements about the stations the train will call at. When we have onboard staff, such as Conductors or On-Board Managers they will also do their best to walk through the train to provide information to all passengers.

During planned disruption, such as engineering works along a line of route, any passengers booking assistance, are advised by our Customer Services team in advance of travel.

When there is disruption affecting a journey, this will be displayed on customer information screens and through PA announcements at stations. The onboard staff on trains will also make announcements about delays, diversions, or terminations of service.

You can access information about disruption through our app, our website at [Service disruption | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/service-disruption), via the Southeastern Twitter feed (@SE_Railway), and by checking National Rail Enquiries (NRE). You can also sign up for travel alerts through NRE and have these delivered directly to your inbox. You can also sign up for disruption notifications through the Southeastern website and app.

You can access information about planned disruption at stations through our website, through our mobile app, or through National Rail Enquiries, which will give details of the accessibility of rail replacement services.

What information will I be able to get?

- Details of the train you're travelling on and the current location.
- The calling pattern of your train and expected arrival times at each station.
- Details of any delays, including revised arrival times and the reason for the delay.
- Details of other transport connections, including the status of the relevant London Underground connections.

Changes to facilities available at stations will be posted as an alert message on the corresponding National Rail Enquiries station page as well as on the station information pages on the Southeastern app and website (within 24 hours). We have also introduced messages about out of service lifts to our station customer information systems so that when a train is going to be calling at a station where the lift is currently not working, this will automatically be announced on the station display so passengers can make alternative arrangements with our staff.

We will do our best to display signage at stations that are affected, such as a lift being out of service, to make all passengers aware. If you are on a station or train and notice that something is out of order, please make station or on-board staff aware. You can tweet us @SE_Railway, message us on WhatsApp using 07866 002 690 or contact our Customer Services team if you are on a train and unable to get the train crew's attention. You can also report a train or station fault through our mobile app.

If any facilities have been changed from what you expected or booked, our staff will work with you to find the best travel solution for you.

Information points, help points and contact centres

Information on the services Southeastern operates and services operated by train companies that run through stations we manage, can be found at our ticket offices, which are also information points on our stations when open. They can also provide information about fares, timetables and connections as well as up to date information about any delays or disruptions affecting rail services. They will also be able to confirm any bookings made for the Passenger Assist service. These information points are indicated using the universal 'i' sign for information.

Meeting Points

You can check our website for station information as each station meeting point for assistance is listed.

At staffed stations, the meeting point for booked Passenger Assist will be at the ticket office, the gateline (if there is one), or the office on the platform.

At unstaffed stations, the meeting point will usually be on the platform. If you are unable to find a member of staff, your best option is to use our help points to request assistance, or alternatively you can call our customer services team on 0800 783 4524.

Information about other services

If you need information about the accessibility of other forms of transport from the station (such as buses, London Underground, trams, metro, and taxis), we recommend the following:

- TfL Go app- Using TfL Go for step-free journeys - Transport for London
- Plan a journey - Transport for London (tfl.gov.uk)
- Tram route - Transport for London (tfl.gov.uk) for the Tram at Beckenham and Elmers End
- Travel in Kent across bus, train and car sharing <https://kentconnected.org/>

Alternatively, our staff will do the best they can to help you. They may not have access to this information but they will be able to help you with where you can find it.

Information about our services

We'll make sure that information regarding the services we provide is kept up to date and continuously made available to other train companies and station operators – including information regarding delays, diversions, or other events that may impact your journey.

If you require live train running information on the day of travel then please speak to a member of station staff, use the Southeastern app, message us through WhatsApp using 07866 002 690, follow us on Twitter @Se_Railway or visit our website at www.southeasternrailway.co.uk.

At our larger stations, we will have leaflets and posters available regarding our services and those of other train operators who serve the station. These will be placed at varying heights accessible to you. We also provide posters on our stations, which give you information about local services and transport available from that station, as well as indicating the nearest staffed station if required.

You can find Help Points at all of our stations where you can speak directly to an operator who can make arrangements to assist you.

Information regarding all national train services is also available by contacting National Rail Enquiries:

Tel: 03457 48 49 50

Website: nationalrail.co.uk

Text Direct: 0345 60 50 600: (for people who are hard of hearing or deaf)

Websites

We have designed and built our website to be W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA compliant and we conduct regular external audits to monitor this compliance. The Southeastern website has been designed to work with screen readers, magnifiers, voice-over software and in-browser accessibility functions.

To help you find the information you need we also provide a link to our Accessibility content from our homepage.

It has everything you need to help you book assistance and purchase a ticket to travel (including details of discounts available to disabled passengers).

Our website also includes a direct link to our station information, which includes details of onboard and station facilities, as well as station accessibility details and staff availability.

In addition, there's a link for our Making Rail Accessible customer leaflet and details of how to obtain it in accessible formats. You will find information on how you can provide feedback or make a complaint and we include information on the availability of redress for when assistance has not been delivered as booked. You will also find links to other relevant information.

A3: Ticketing

We sell tickets for a variety of journeys, including different ticket types and for different train companies. We'll provide you with information on these tickets and journeys both accurately and impartially, regardless of the train company involved.

The types of train we operate and how accessible they are is known to both our ticket office colleagues at our stations and our Passenger Assist team at our contact centre. They have information to ensure you are not offered a ticket you cannot make use of.

Penalty fares

Southeastern is committed to ensuring that every passenger pays for their journey because fraudulent travel is not fair on passengers who do pay. Our employees check tickets on trains and at stations and we operate a penalty fares scheme across our network as part of our approach to minimising ticketless travel.

Where possible, you must purchase a ticket before boarding a train. Tickets can be purchased on the Southeastern app and website, through national rail enquires, from ticket offices or ticket vending machines. You can also purchase a ticket at the same time as booking assistance through our Call Centre and on our app. If you are disabled and have not been able to purchase a ticket before travelling, for a reason related to your disability, you will not be subject to a penalty fare and will be able to purchase the full range of tickets available to you, including any appropriate discount that applies either on board the train or at your destination.

Discounts and Railcards

Buying a ticket:

- Train tickets can be purchased on the Southeastern app or online at southeasternrailway.co.uk at any staffed station ticket office, from our self-service ticket machines,

- When booking assistance by phone with our Call Centre, disabled passengers can also purchase tickets in advance.
- Assistance can be booked through the Southeastern app, disabled passengers can also buy tickets in the same transaction.

We participate in a number of national schemes offering discounted fares such as follows:

- Two Together Railcard
- Family and Friends Railcard
- Network Railcard
- 16-17, 18-25 & 26-30 Railcards
- Veterans Railcard

See www.railcard.co.uk for more information

Senior Railcard

If you are aged 60 or over, you're eligible for a Senior Railcard. There are two types of this Railcard – one-year and a three-year railcard. You are entitled for a discount of up to a third off most rail tickets. You can find details about this railcard and how to get one at:

- Website: www.senior-railcard.co.uk
- Email: railcardhelp@railcards-online.co.uk
- Call: 0345 300 0250
- At stations: You will need to provide a valid passport or UK driving licence or EEA National Identity Card number to prove your date of birth.

Disabled persons railcard

The disabled persons railcard (DPRC) gives holders a third off a range of rail fares for themselves and one accompanying adult. An application form for the disabled persons railcard is available from all staffed stations along with a leaflet containing further information and full details of discounts available when using this card.

For further information, including details of postal and online application for the railcard (which is not available at stations), please contact:

- Disabled persons railcard office on 0345 605 0525 or
- Textphone 0345 601 0132 or www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk
- Southeastern customer services on 0345 322 7021 (Text Relay 18001 0345 322 7021)
- Southeastern Passenger Assist on 0800 783 4524 (Text Relay 18001 0800 783 4524)

Discounts are available to blind or visually impaired passengers travelling with a companion, and for those people who remain seated in their own wheelchair for a rail journey and do not have a railcard. These tickets cannot be brought from a ticket

machine but have to be bought at a ticket office or from on train staff. For more information, please follow this link: National Rail Enquiries - Concessionary discounts for disabled people who do not hold a Disabled Persons Railcard.

These may not always be the cheapest ticket available to you, please check with ticket office staff.

- Concessionary fares ticket type discount standard anytime singles or returns 34% off.
- Standard anytime day single 34% off /standard anytime day return 50% off.
- The Southeastern app will remember if any railcard has been applied in the ticket purchasing process ensuring that access to discounted fares can be obtained easily and quickly for in-app ticket purchases.

For passengers registered as blind or visually impaired, a document from a recognised institution such as, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), Blind Veterans UK or a local authority confirming the individual's disability must be shown when buying a ticket and travelling. The discount applies to them and a companion but individuals travelling alone do not receive the discount.

Season tickets

For those registered as blind or visually impaired an adult season ticket can be purchased that enables an accompanying companion to travel at no extra charge. It doesn't have to be the same person travelling on every journey. Evidence of your visual impairment will be needed to prove your eligibility. Tickets can be purchased from staffed stations. For more information, please follow this link: National Rail Enquiries - Concessionary discounts for disabled people who do not hold a Disabled Persons Railcard

No discounts apply to season tickets for those with other disabilities.

Smart ticketing

The Key is Southeastern's contactless smartcard which means you can buy and download your tickets at home and allows you to fast-track through the station and avoid the queues. Using the Key, you can buy single, return and season tickets and you are also able to buy tickets for most other train companies across mainland Britain and TfL. For more information on ticket types, please visit our dedicated page for ticketing explanations: <https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/tickets/tickets-explained>

You can pick up a Key card at a station ticket office, or order one via the Southeastern app or through our website www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/the-key .

Unlike with paper tickets, if you lose your Key card or it is stolen, we can 'freeze' your card, which means that nobody else will be able to use it, and we will replace it for free. Having The Key allows you access to our Rewards plus program where you can receive promotions, rewards and offers.

We now offer eTickets for individual trips and s-Tickets for Season tickets. These can be purchased through the Southeastern app or website.

eTickets

An eTicket will only be offered on routes and ticket types if available. Once you have received your eTicket, you can either add it to your Wallet on your phone, print the ticket on paper or just download the barcode ticket from your email. You can scan the barcode on the barcode reader at the gate (where available) or allow a member of staff to scan the ticket when requested. More information can be found on our website: [eTickets | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#)

sTickets

An sTicket provides passengers with another way to purchase a Season ticket. They are now available to purchase through the Southeastern website and the latest version of the Southeastern app. All you need to do is scan your sTicket at the ticket gates or show it to a member of staff when they ask to see your ticket. Customers buying sTickets from the website will need to download the Southeastern app to use their sTicket. Travelcard Seasons and Early Bird discounted Season tickets are not available as Southeastern sTickets, however Flexi-Season tickets are available. More information can be found on our website: [sTickets \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](#)

Flexible Season tickets

A Flexi Season ticket is a new kind of Season ticket that allows you to take advantage of a frequent travel discount, giving you 8 days of travel within a 28-day period.

Available on our SmartCard, The Key and as barcode sTicket, you can use your 8 days of travel at any point during the 28-day period, and you can travel at any time of the day.

Once you've purchased your Flexi Season ticket and before you travel, you will need to activate one of your 8 day passes each day you travel using our Southeastern app, or by tapping on the reader on a ticket gate.

Freedom Passes

Please be aware that Freedom Passes and the associated discount to London Boundary Zone 6 (including to Dartford and Swanley) are valid on Southeastern services after 0930 Monday to Friday, and all day at the weekend.

Ticket machines

Southeastern stations have self-service ticket vending machines (TVMs) to allow you to purchase a variety of tickets. These machines follow the Department for Transport (DfT) Design Standards for Accessible Stations Code of practice (DfT Code of Practice). Tickets can be purchased with discounts from these machines including with the Disabled Persons Railcard or the Senior Railcard discount (this includes companion tickets for people booking tickets with a Disabled Persons Railcard). All our TVMs can now issue tickets from 'anywhere to anywhere'. This means that you can buy a ticket for a journey starting at any location, just like you can online or in the Southeastern app. It also enables you to buy add-on-fares to get to different destinations, if you are a Season ticket holder.

Ticket gates

Around 40 of our busiest stations have ticket gates which are staffed. As well as these stations, major stations operated by Network Rail (London Bridge, London Cannon Street, London Charing Cross, London St Pancras and London Victoria) also have ticket gates to some or all of the platforms. Stations managed by other operators may have ticket gates at some of their stations that Southeastern trains call at.

When no staff are available to operate the ticket gates at any station, we will set the gates in the open position so that passengers can pass through unless they are remotely monitored.

All of our ticket gate lines have at least one wider accessible gate.

Purchase of Advance tickets

Where Advance tickets are available for purchase (whether from the Southeastern app, website or a ticket office) we suggest you check the required facilities of that train with the operator in terms of the accessibility of their trains. This may relate to things such as the provision of wheelchair spaces in First Class which not all trains offer. If you are travelling on a train not operated by Southeastern, please check this information before purchase.

Advance tickets are only available as single tickets at specific times and on selected routes, but you can mix and match Advance Tickets and times to suit you. Therefore, if you're making a return journey, you will need to buy a ticket for each direction. They must be bought at least a day before you intend to travel. For more information about the advance fares we offer, please visit our website: [Advance Train Tickets | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk)

Booking assistance when purchasing tickets

Train tickets can be purchased at the time of booking Passenger Assist. Please allow 72 hours for posted tickets to arrive. Where possible, tickets can also be purchased and collected at the station through a self-service ticket vending machine or our colleagues in the ticket office.

A4: Rail replacement services

Replacement bus services used during planned and emergency engineering works are now required under our contract to be wheelchair accessible and meet the requirements of the Passenger Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations or they have an exemption under s.178 of the Equality Act 2010.

In the unlikely event that we use an exempt vehicle (for instances during service disruption), then alternative accessible transport will be made available for those passengers unable to use an exempted vehicle. This will usually be a replacement accessible taxi. During planned engineering works any alternative accessible transport will be made available at the same time as other rail replacement services.

We will look to procure PSVAR compliant buses and coaches at least 12 weeks before the planned engineering works. Our bus contract, which came into force on 1 August 2023, stipulates that 100% PSVAR coverage is required for all engineering works, blockades and disruptions. All bus services have achieved full PSVAR compliance this year.

If services become inaccessible to you during disruption, you can call us on 0800 783 4524 or speak to a member of station staff. Where no staff are available on stations you can use the station help points where available to get in touch. We'll then arrange suitable transport to get you to your destination.

The vast majority of bus and coach companies which we use for bus replacement services have confirmed that their drivers have received some form of disability awareness training. This maybe undertaken in-house or through external suppliers as part of the driver's own continuous professional development. We now require Rail Replacement service providers to make sure that all bus drivers must read and understand the additional training material we have provided to them about how to help disabled passengers.

Alternative accessible transport

Alternative accessible transport can be provided to help disabled passengers travel between stations that they are not able to access for the following reasons:

- Where a disabled passenger is unable to travel from a station because the station is inaccessible to them (e.g. because of a physical constraint);
- Where a disabled passenger is unable to travel from a station because the rolling stock is inaccessible to them (e.g. because of a physical constraint);

- Where substitute transport is provided to replace rail services (e.g. because of planned engineering works) that is inaccessible to disabled passengers;
- Where there is disruption to services at short notice that, for whatever reason, makes services inaccessible to disabled passengers. (e.g. a lift is not working).

We'll discuss your needs with you and the assistance we can offer. If alternative transport is required this will normally be a taxi which can be arranged to take you to the nearest or most convenient, accessible and staffed station to complete your journey, where possible, by train.

We'll take your individual requirements into consideration as well as the journey time, accessibility of trains and stations used and staffing of those stations to best adapt to your requirements. If a taxi is required for replacement of a train service, we will ensure it is accessible to you.

This will be provided at no extra charge; however you do need to hold or, at the earliest opportunity, buy an appropriate ticket for your entire journey. Tickets can be bought on our app, website or once at your destination. Wherever possible we'll do what we can to give you an alternative that most resembles the experience of those who do not require assistance.

We source all our rail replacement taxis through a single contractor who have access to a network of over 4000 vetted and approved transport suppliers. As part of their contract with suppliers they ensure they are audited thoroughly so they have the required local authority issued licences and relevant insurance. In addition to any training drivers are given to qualify for their taxi licence our contractor will ensure that the supplier:

- Ensures that wheelchair accessible taxis safety equipment such as lifts, wheelchair restraints and ramps are regularly checked and this is documented.
- What safe movement and securing training drivers receive for ensuring safe loading, unloading and securing of wheelchair users.
- What process of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking is undertaken by the companies and how it is recorded.
- What drivers handbook or code of conduct is issued to drivers.

As long as a supplier is safe and legal to operate, they will work with them to ensure they meet this additional criteria and set a timeline for compliance.

A5: Wheelchairs, mobility scooters and mobility aids

Wheelchairs

All of our trains now have dedicated wheelchair accommodation, located near to the accessible toilet (if there is one) and identified by the wheelchair symbol for wheelchair space on the nearest doors. As with priority seats, we cannot reserve these spaces in advance but staff will do all they can to ensure you travel on your desired service.

We welcome all wheelchair users on our trains where their wheelchair is within the maximum dimensions. Where possible, we recommend travelling in the designated wheelchair space, but appreciate that some passengers may prefer to transfer to one of the fold-down seats available in this area. These are also available for passengers' travelling companions.

Our wheelchair accessible trains are designed to accommodate wheelchairs up to 1200mm long and 700mm wide.

Passengers wishing to travel in a coach that doesn't have a wheelchair space, because they intend to transfer to a seat, should inform a member of staff if assistance is needed. As a matter of course employees are instructed to assist wheelchair users onto the train and into the wheelchair space, so the accessible toilet is in reach.

Wheelchairs are the responsibility of the owner when on our trains and you will need to move if you are blocking a door or walkway. It may be easier for passengers to remain in their wheelchair than have to move it during your journey. You will not need to move your wheelchair if it is in the designated space.

Staff know that wheelchair users have priority to occupy the wheelchair space and will ensure that they are able to make their journey.

Mobility scooters

Mobility scooters are welcome on all of our services but there are restrictions in terms of size, weight and type of scooter.

All of our trains accept scooters that are no longer than 1200mm (48") and no wider than 700mm (28"), including any attachments, as this is the size of the space available. The mobility scooter must be left in the wheelchair space.

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

To help prevent mobility scooters tipping back when using the ramp, please ensure that any shopping bags and similar are removed.

When operating a mobility scooter within the station premises, the user must ensure they have placed their scooter in the correct setting ensuring all brakes and safety functions are operating as they should be. Any class 3 mobility scooter must be set to the pathway/pedestrian setting with max speed of 4 MPH. We also encourage mobility scooter users to take extra care on the platforms ensuring they are in the

correct directional and speed settings before using the vehicle within operational areas. Once on board our trains, mobility scooter users are also advised to transfer to a seat for their safety.

There have been serious safety incidents across the UK rail network involving mobility scooters, due to users being distracted or rushing for trains. Unintentional changes to direction or speed settings as well as lapses in concentration have resulted in unpredictable accelerations and less effective braking. To ensure everyone's safety, individuals are encouraged to familiarize themselves with their mobility scooter settings and use them mindfully. Attention to these details creates a safer environment for everyone.

During times of service disruption or engineering work, the operators of replacement transport services such as buses, coaches and taxis may be unable to accommodate mobility scooters.

Alterations due to planned engineering work are publicised 12 weeks in advance - please check [Engineering work | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/engineering-work).

If your service is unexpectedly terminated and your journey has to be completed by road, we will ensure you reach your destination and arrangements are made for storage of mobility scooters until they can be collected.

Please note there is a combined weight restriction of 300kg for mobility aids, luggage and the passenger on our ramps.

Please see our separate guide to using your mobility scooter or wheelchair on trains and at stations by visiting our website.

Rollators

If you are travelling with a rollator, please be reassured that you can request assistance on and off our trains. Please make yourself known to a member of staff or book assistance in advance, and we will deploy a ramp to bridge the gap between the train and the platform.

For your safety, please ensure that any bags are removed or are secured to the roller, particularly when you are boarding or alighting a train.

A6: Delays, disruption to services, and emergencies

We understand that disruption to both facilities and services can have a huge impact on accessibility and confidence when using the railway, and we do everything we can to prevent this. When disruption does happen, we'll make sure that you can continue your journey wherever possible and we will not leave you stranded.

If we have to alter or cancel your train because of disruption, we'll provide you with accessible alternative transport, where applicable. This will be done without additional charge.

When you book assistance and there is planned rail replacement, we will advise you what facilities you will find on the replacement services, where the bus stops are located and discuss with you whether this is suitable and accessible for you. If not, we will arrange suitable alternative transport.

If you then require any additional assistance (for example, changing platforms) or you could not understand the information, our staff will do their best to help. Taking their other duties (such as train dispatch) into consideration they will then do all that is reasonably possible to assist you.

If there is disruption you'll find that all of our replacement buses are wheelchair accessible and meet the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) standard or have a derogation in place obtained by the bus supplier. If the bus is inaccessible to you we will arrange alternative accessible transport for you to complete your journey. The on-train staff will announce where the replacement buses can be found on the terminating service. In addition, the Customer Information System displays at the station also contain this information and a PA announcement on the station will be made automatically after the train terminates giving directions to the replacement buses. Where staff are at the station, they will direct you to the replacement services. The location of the replacement buses is also listed on station information posters and on our website.

When the level of accessibility of facilities at a station or on a train is lower than normal provided (e.g. as a result of a breakdown, the alteration or removal of facilities) we'll aim to provide you, wherever possible, with equivalent replacement facilities, or make alternative arrangements.

If we have your contact details, we'll do our best to contact you by telephone or email to make you aware of the disruption and to assist you with making these alternative arrangements (such as re-booking or re-routing assistance). We'll also provide you with information of the disruption to facilities through our website and advise our staff at stations, on trains, in ticket offices and at our contact centre to provide you with an estimated time for when the facilities will be functioning again, where known.

If you arrive 15 minutes or more late at your destination because of a delay or cancellation to a Southeastern service, you can claim Delay Repay compensation. Delay Repay is the national compensation scheme used by train companies. If you feel you have been disproportionately impacted by the delay due to your disability/impairment, when submitting a Delay Repay claim, please select "Other" as your reason for the delay and provide us with any further details.

Emergency procedures

Southeastern's Fire Precaution managers are kept updated on the latest developments on equipment and procedures to assist with evacuating disabled people. This includes evacuation from trains, stations and offices and these plans include staff as well as passengers.

Changes to the design of stations or trains will be made with consideration of evacuation procedures for everyone, including passengers with disabilities. Portable platforms are available for non-emergency evacuation from trains to trains. These help people get from one train to another without the need to climb down off a train or walk on uneven surfaces.

Our managers will ensure that employees are briefed and updated on the contents of emergency plans, including the procedures to assist disabled people including Generic and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEPs and PEEPs).

A7: Station facilities

For current information about facilities at stations we manage please check our website at southeasternrailway.co.uk/station-information or National Rail Enquiries.

Left luggage

You can leave luggage at London Charing Cross, London Bridge, St Pancras, and London Victoria. These stations all have level access; there is a charge to use the left luggage service.

Blue badge parking spaces

APCOA Parking UK manages the majority of station car parks on behalf of Southeastern, with the exception of Ebbsfleet, visit [Station Parking & Tariffs | Ebbsfleet International \(ebbsfleetintl.co.uk\)](#) for more information. APCOA Parking UK can be contacted on 0330 333 9232 or by visiting [Car Parks - Car Parking - APCOA Parking](#)

Not all stations have car parks and sometimes the nearest car park may be council or privately run. If the station has a car park run by us, this is listed in the station information pages on our website.

Blue badge holders can park free of charge at all of our managed car parks, with the exception of Ebbsfleet International, when using our services. This applies to both accessible parking bays and standard bays (excluding premier parking bays marked in red). If travelling on our trains this would be free all day, for all other purposes it will be limited to a maximum of three hours.

Where car parks have specific marked spaces for blue badge holders, vehicles will be checked to ensure that only blue badge holders use the spaces and a Parking Charge Notice (PCN) will be issued to motorists who abuse these spaces.

We'll monitor and review the provision of disabled motorists' parking spaces at our APCOA managed car parks, with a view to adding additional spaces where there is demand.

Where we feel that there is a case for reducing the provision of blue badge parking spaces, especially during a refurbishment or enlargement of an existing car park, we will consult with stakeholders and apply for a dispensation from the Department for Transport.

We have done what is reasonably possible to locate these spaces as close to the station as possible, providing easy access. These spaces are marked with the International Symbol for Access on the ground.

Third party provided facilities

Lease contracts already include appropriate references for tenants to comply with relevant legislation. However, our tenants have also been issued with a handbook which will include relevant information concerning their responsibilities and on their behalf, our responsibilities under both the Equalities Act and the Accessible Travel Policy to make their services available, where reasonable, to disabled people. Our station teams will monitor the services and facilities provided by third parties to ensure that they are not located where they will cause an obstruction.

We will work with our tenants and third parties to ensure that beyond their own responsibilities under the Equality Act, we make reasonable efforts to provide as accessible a facility as possible.

We'll work with local authorities to ensure our stations are clearly signposted in the local area.

Replacement facilities

We'll provide reasonable replacement facilities for you that are accessible, where possible, when the level of accessibility of facilities at a station is less than that normally provided. For example, this maybe the closure of a toilet which could be due to a breakdown, vandalism, alteration or removal of facilities. We'll consider each case on its merit taking into account the proximity of nearby facilities, the likely timescale for the facility to be repaired or replaced, the availability of similar facilities on board (for example, toilets) and the reason behind the closure. We'll also take into account the views of local stakeholders.

Station entrances

We understand the importance of easy access to stations and as such we'll always consider the impact to accessibility if there is a need to restrict or temporarily close access to a station by a certain entrance. We'll comply with the DfT Code of Practice regarding mandatory standards for unobstructed progress during building works.

We're committed to ensuring that all accessible and step-free station entrances are kept in use and not permanently closed during times that the station is open. When necessary, due to refurbishment or security for example, we may have to close these points of access. We will consult with the DfT, London Travel Watch, Transport Focus and local disability groups, as applicable. Any such changes to access will not be made until approved by the DfT. If the closure is semi-permanent then alternative arrangements will be put in place for the duration of any required works.

A8: Redress

When you have booked assistance and it has not been delivered at one of our stations or on a train you were travelling on or due to travel on, we want to hear from you so we can investigate what has gone wrong. There are many ways to get in contact with

us, which are listed below and contact forms are also available from our stations if required.

We'll provide you with appropriate redress for your journey, which could include a full or partial refund of your ticket or vouchers. We'll also let you know how we'll work hard to prevent the same issue happening again. In cases of multiple assistance failure with a number of operators during a single multi-leg journey we will co-ordinate a single response. Where the bulk of the assistance failure happened when travelling with another train company, we can transfer your claim and will seek your consent before doing this.

To make a claim please use one of the following options:

[Contact us | Southeastern \(southeasternrailway.co.uk\)](https://southeasternrailway.co.uk)

Southeastern Customer Services

PO Box 8625

Swadlincote

DE11 1HZ

Telephone

- 0800 783 4524 (Freephone)
- 0345 322 7021 (calls are charged at a local rate and may be recorded)

Text Relay number - 18001 0345 322 7021

We'll always comply with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and, in line with National Rail Conditions of Travel, we'll consider all additional compensation claims for any losses or extra cost caused by a service failure. This doesn't affect your legal right to make claims under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, although you must not seek to recover the same money twice (for example, from both our complaints process and the Consumer Rights Act 2015).

B: Strategy and Management

B1: Strategy

As well as these priority areas, Southeastern is committed to continually improving service provision for passengers with disabilities in all aspects of our service, undertaking a review of all of the stations we manage to identify areas of improvement for accessibility (not limited to changes to improve physical access to the station) and a review of our on-board accessibility.

We work closely alongside industry colleagues including Rail Delivery Group (RDG), the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), Network Rail, local authorities, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), Transport Focus, Community Rail Partnerships and the Rail Ombudsman, as well as other stakeholder organisations to

further improve our service provision. We also work closely with other Train Operating Companies to encourage partnership working and the sharing of best practice to create a consistent journey experience for all.

Our Accessible Travel Policy fulfils our obligations under our Passenger and Station Licenses, as it meets the requirements of the ORR's Accessible Travel Policy guidance 2020.

We ensure that new facilities are designed to meet the DfT's Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations: A Code of Practice 2015 (DfT Code of Practice) as will all projects which replace and/or renew existing facilities. This is achieved by ensuring that all infrastructure projects are submitted to our internal Facilities Approval Panel where the compliance to these standards will be checked. This will also include verifying whether the evidence submitted for a dispensation from the standards is acceptable.

Whilst we'll do everything in our power to meet these standards as a minimum, we shall consult with the DfT at the earliest stage should this not be possible, so we can consider alternatives that are suitable and seek dispensation from the DfT Code of Practice.

Improving access to Southeastern services

Southeastern is committed to maintaining current standards of accessibility and continuing to seek ways to improve it. We'll do this by engaging with our passengers and stakeholders as well as organisations representing disabled people so that we can identify areas of improvement and anticipate customers' needs. As part of the annual review of our Accessible Travel Policy we'll review our policies that impact customers with disabilities and incorporate customer feedback as applicable.

Some of the ways over the last year that we have improved our service are:

- Added questions about people's accessibility needs into our continuous Customer Satisfaction survey enabling to track satisfaction across our network in detail and use this information to formulate improvement plans.
- Enabled all railcards, including the Disabled Person Railcard (DPRC), will be remembered in the digital purchase process.
- Enabled the sale of digital railcards.
- Upgraded all our accessible toilets to make them Stoma-friendly.
- Introduced a Disability Language Guide to help our colleagues communicate confidently whether it be in conversations, within written documents or on our social media pages.
- Started rolling out the Passenger Assistance System by Transreport to all our frontline colleagues.
- Launched an Assisted Boarding Point Pilot at Thanet Parkway.
- The Customer Services team can facilitate any requests for assistance that come in as part of the Assisted Boarding Points Pilot.
- The MAS team have been introduced to London Bridge and they support stations during peak periods like football matches and special events.

- Webchat was introduced as an alternative channel of contact for any query and to help people when booking a ticket.
- Improvements were made to our post-travel survey to collect more accurate data. This includes adding n/a when neither 'yes' or 'no' were appropriate.
- The booking form was updated to include the maximum permitted weight of mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
- Requests for alternative formats were fulfilled within 10 working days
- Managers and Change Leads from across the business have received Equality Impact Assessment training.
- We have updated the process for sending out JAM Cards and Sunflower lanyards to ensure a quicker turn-around.
- The Customer Services team now have access to live lift data - [NRE Accessibility Map](#)
- The Customer Services team have reviewed and updated our process and script for customers booking assistance who need help to buy tickets over the phone.
- We continue to improve our station information. We've recently placed an order with our Customer Information Screen supplier to develop the ability to provide details of the nearest alternative station with step-free access when a lift is out of order.

During 2024 we plan to:

- Enable the booking of Passenger Assistance at the same time as buying tickets when someone books assistance through the app Spring 2024
- For smartphone users, we are developing the capability to track your journey through the Southeastern App. A launch date has yet to be announced.
- We will progress an application to the DfT's Inclusive Transport Leaders scheme.
- We are working with our taxi supplier, to have more locally sourced taxi suppliers they can use to provide accessible vehicles more efficiently.
- The Customer Services Team as well as our Frontline Colleagues will be undertaking ATP refresher training.
- The Customer Relations Team are looking at a more automated process for Assisted Travel cancellations and amendments that are raised via X (Twitter)
- We are looking at enabling passengers to bulk book their requests for assistance via our app.
- Trial a multi-use space on the 376s using floor markings to prioritise areas for wheelchair users, prams/ pushchairs and cycles.
- We hope to engage in a trial with Wheels for Wellbeing to explore the use of nonstandard cycles and standard cycles that are used as mobility aids on board our service.

B2: Management arrangements

The Accessible Travel Policy forms part of our Passenger Licence (Condition 6: Provision of Services for Disabled People) and Station Licence.

Ensuring accessibility to all aspects of Southeastern’s operation are continued and further enhanced forms part of our Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy, which is fully supported by the Southeastern executive team and its board. The accountability for ownership and development of our Accessible Travel Policy is with our Passenger Services Director. The Passenger Services Director will act as a sponsor to the development of accessibility projects and has accountability for overall compliance to this policy and ensures its implementation by:

- Keeping the Executive Board informed of ongoing improvements such as the introduction of Equality Impact Assessments for all projects, ensuring that the needs of everyone covered by the Equality Act (2010) are incorporated in plans and all opportunities are taken to improve their opportunities to use our facilities and services.
- Ensuring all new front-line employees receive disability equality training to ensure that they have the confidence and competence to assist disabled passengers.
- Employing operational Accessibility Managers who are collectively responsible for the successful delivery of our ATP.
- Putting in place a Facilities Approval Panel to check that all new proposed facilities meet the requirements of the DfT’s Code of Practice.
- Maintaining membership of the Employers’ Forum on Disability.
- Running a disabled passengers’ ‘mystery shopper’ programme.
- Investing every year on physical improvements at stations for disabled people.
- Supporting the work of our Accessible Travel Advisory Panel to consult on issues around accessibility.
- All front-line teams and drivers new starters receive a day of disability awareness training. This training includes informing staff about their responsibilities to disabled people, Southeastern policies and the law.

B3: Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that we maintain performance against our Accessible Travel Policy and deliver everything that we commit to, we will monitor against several Key Performance Indicators every period, including:

- Total number of customers who booked assistance over the period.
- Total number of customers who requested assistance without booking over the period.
- Ratio of customers who booked assistance versus customers who requested assistance without booking.
- Total number of no-show customers who had booked assistance (when the Passenger Assist app is rolled out across our network) (Total number of assistance failures over the period (Total number of complaints relating to Passenger Assist over the period.
- Total number of complaints relating to general accessibility over the period.
- Total cost of compensation paid out related to failure of assistance.
- A record of reported failed assists and the reasons why.
- Performance cost of assistance delays.
- Delay minutes due to failed/late assists.

- Compensation paid to passengers re disability-related complaints.
- Taxi cost when used as alternative accessible transport.
- Availability of onboard toilets.
- Track the satisfaction of people with accessibility needs in our Customer Satisfaction survey.

We will use our Accessible Travel Advisory Panel to consult about changes we propose to facilities or policies and consider the feedback we receive.

Our Customer Services team will handle any complaints and/or feedback received from passengers in relation to both Passenger Assist and the general accessibility of our trains or stations. They will provide a detailed response to the customer and ensure that any assistance failure is investigated. Information on this investigation will be used to inform the customer what happened, what we could do better and what we are doing to address this. As required, the Accessibility and Inclusion Manager may be consulted to provide information to support this response. When assistance has failed as the result of Southeastern, local managers will take action accordingly to prevent such an incident from recurring.

We will regularly review this policy and a report on findings will be sent to the Department for Transport and the Office for Rail and Road. This will include details of the achievement of objectives, new initiatives to improve our service to disabled passengers and any challenges we faced in implementing this policy.

B4: Access Improvements

Southeastern is committed to ensuring compliance with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR), the Persons of Reduced Mobility - Technical Standards for Interoperability (PRM-TSI) and the DfT Code of Practice when refurbishing our trains or installing or refurbishing facilities at our stations. Where compliance is not achievable after every effort possible has been made, we commit to applying for dispensations against RVAR, PRM-TSI and/or the DfT Code of Practice.

Trains

We have worked with our rolling stock companies to complete a four-year programme to deliver enhanced accessibility on our trains for persons of reduced mobility. As a result, all our trains now provide access for persons with reduced mobility. The Department for Transport (DfT) set a target for all rail vehicles to be accessible by no later than 1 January 2020, unless appropriate exemptions are in place. To achieve that they need to meet the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 1998 (RVAR), PRM-TSI or have achieved targeted compliance.

All our trains meet at least one of these standards, with the exception of 43 two-carriage Class 466 units which do not have either an accessible toilet or a wheelchair space. These trains are permitted to operate beyond 1 January 2020 so long as either, they run in multiple formation with a unit that has the necessary provisions (for example a Class 465 four car unit), or the DfT has granted a special dispensation.

Stations

Access improvements – Our Accessibility Minor Works programme will ensure that we spend specifically on improvements for disabled people. We will concentrate on the smaller but equally important improvements for disabled people such as highlighted stair nosings, and dual height, warm-to-touch handrails.

We have invested over £500,000 on improving Blue Badge parking provision at our stations with car parks, bringing both the spaces and the numbers provided, up to current standards.

Access for All schemes- This is the DfT sponsored programme that is delivered by Network Rail with our assistance. This year, Chatham and Petts Wood Access for All schemes have been completed. In 2024, we expect to see Plumstead, Bexley and potentially Herne Bay completed.

The Mid-Tier funding for Deal Station has now been extended to include the delivery of the small forecourt scheme serving the Platform 2 station entrance. This will be completed by March 2024. Mid-tier funding at High Brooms station is also being progressed with detailed design work taking place.

B5: Working with disabled passengers, local communities and local authorities

We understand the importance of involving disabled people in decision making in all aspects of what we do. We are working towards a number of ways in which we engage with customers with disabilities to do this which includes:

- We have the Accessible Travel Advisory Panel (ATAP) is a pan-disability group with a diverse range of lived experiences. They meet 6 times a year, through a mix of in person and online meetings to discuss how changes across our network impact accessibility and inclusion. Their feedback is then brought to the business where Southeastern will act where reasonably practical to mitigate against any highlighted risks.
- We also have an online panel, accessible to a much wider group of disabled people (over 350 members currently). We are able to carry out regular surveys through email and online assessments to gain their insight to various proposed changes. This has been in such areas as our Minor Works programme, our Covid response, improvements to tactiles, announcements for stations, new train displays at Victoria station and ticket buying and booking assistance through our app.

We'll work on the promotion of the accessibility of our services and Passenger Assist across our route. We've begun work on this engagement over the last year through:

- We have produced a video (Patience) that has been shared through social media channels and on our website see (<https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/more-travel-help/accessible-travel>) with which we hope to encourage both disabled people

to travel and non-disabled people to make it easier for them by encouraging everyone to have a bit more patience.

- We now ensure that any media promotions sent out via our marketing channels and direct to those people on our marketing database include messages and links about booking assistance and that images shared through social media have an Alt-text description for visually impaired people.

We'll continue to do the above whilst also promoting our Passenger Assist Policy – specifically the Making Rail Accessible customer leaflet – in prominent public locations across our route as well as on our stations and online.

The sunflower lanyard and JAM card schemes that Southeastern have now rolled out across our network is a national scheme that spans wider than the railway. We chose these schemes to encourage seamless end-to-end journeys for our customers on the basis that the lanyard and JAM card are also recognised in major UK airports, supermarkets, shopping centres and by a variety of other industries.

We will report to the ORR on the work in this area on the whole that we have undertaken and the progress that this has led to.

B6: Training

Staff training is a key part of ensuring customers with disabilities can access our services. As part of this policy, Southeastern are committed to the following:

Southeastern currently give all new staff, including drivers, other on-board staff station staff, managers and administrators a day's training which focuses on the requirements of disabled passengers.

It covers, guiding techniques for visually impaired people, non-visible disabilities and considers what barriers exist and how they can be removed. It also covers the law, policies and practices, like Passenger Assist and replacement transport for inaccessible stations as well as this policy.

There are also regular bulletins and briefings for staff on improvements being introduced or as reminders of current policies or procedures, like providing Passenger Assist, Priority Seating cards, Sunflower lanyards or JAM cards.

- We have delivered training to all existing staff, including station and on-train, drivers, engineers, administrators and managers through a combination of face-to-face and online training
 - o This has provided our teams with a better understanding of the everyday challenges faced by disabled people and prompted them to; challenge misconceptions and remove barriers to access and inclusion.
 - o Explaining how equality legislation works: exploring and understanding the Equality Act 2010.
 - o Defining disability: introducing staff to the various definitions of disability and the appropriate terminology.

- Recognising passengers who need assistance: exploring visible and non-visible impairments to enable staff to assess individual needs and provide appropriate assistance.
- Ensuring staff understand the Railway Regulatory Framework: the regulations and policies that are relevant within the railway industry.
- Explaining Passenger Assist: how it works for disabled passengers and the staff's role in delivering the service.
- Communication: finding a way to communicate with disabled people with patience, respect and dignity.
- Accessibility in stations: the identification of accessible features at the station where staff work as well as at the key destination stations on the network.
- Safeguarding training is being rolled out to all passenger facing colleagues.
- Additionally, all new frontline staff who interact directly with passengers at any time as part of their duties, will have received training as part of their induction that covers:
 - Providing safe assistance: duties and process to ensure that both staff and passengers remain safe at all times including the use of boarding ramps.
- We'll provide refresher training within two years of receiving disability awareness training and a minimum of two years thereafter.
- We have involved disabled people in the creation of our disability awareness training. We have done this through the creation of videos with disabled people talking about their lived experiences which is shown during the training and discussed afterwards. Going forward we will engage with our customer panels to help develop our training content on an ongoing basis.
- Since 31st July 2021, where reasonable, agency staff and contracted staff who are working on a temporary basis that have direct interaction with passengers have received a version of disability awareness training that will cover Passenger Assist, Communication and Providing safe assistance as a minimum.
- Our Customer Call Centre staff who provide information or advice directly to passengers have received disability awareness training as part of their induction which covers a minimum of Passenger Assist and Communication.

We understand that the importance of awareness training during disruption spans wider than just our own business and how well the drivers of alternative accessible transport are trained can impact their ability to interact with our customers. It is important to us that as they are providing a service, they have received as much training as possible to be able to do that. We now ensure that all bus drivers have received and acknowledged an additional briefing guide on helping our disabled passengers.

At the time of submitting our Accessible Travel Policy we have verified that any statistics and terminology used in the training of our staff are up to date and appropriate.

[1st April 2024]