

TRAVEL with  
CONFIDENCE



# HELP IS AT HAND

Not all disabilities are visible



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

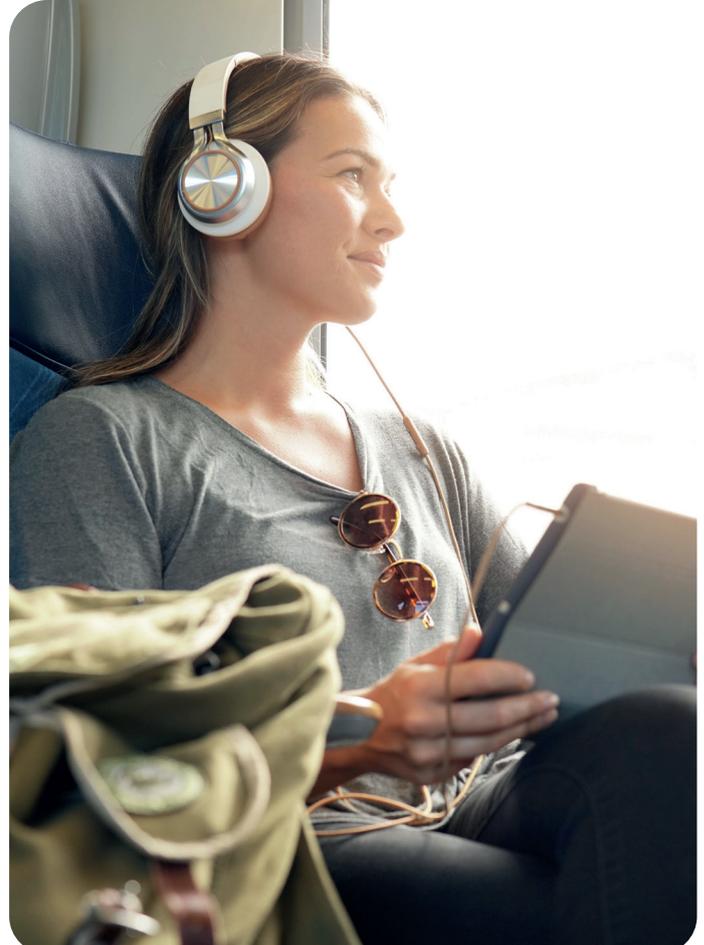
# Tips on how to travel with confidence

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Welcome to Help is at Hand - this booklet aims to give you support and advice on how you can enjoy a journey on the train or bus from planning your journey to arriving at your destination - we hope that you will soon be travelling with confidence.

## Key tips

- Be prepared
- Plan the trip in advance
- Visit the station/bus stop before the journey
- Travel with a buddy
- Plan what to do if things go wrong
- Congratulate yourself when you have completed your trip!



# Planning a journey

## Plan your journey before you travel

Have you thought your journey through? Do you have a plan for coping with delays?

**Research your trip - when to travel, where you are going and what to expect.**

**Plan the trip** - Create a travel plan on the document provided

- When is the best time to travel?
- Where are you going?
- What station/bus stop will you go from?
- What station/bus stop will you arrive at?
- How many stops are there on the journey?
- What are the train/bus times?
  - Departure
  - Arrival
  - Return journey departure and arrival
- What are the prices?
- Do I need assistance or a ramp?



## Gathering your information

**For information about the stations** - you are visiting and what to expect, use National Rail Enquiries website to find out more about the facilities available  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations\\_destinations](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations)

**For information about bus journeys** - [www.stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey)

**If you need assistance when travelling by train, it is better to book in advance** - [www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel). Call 0800 52 82 100 (freephone) to speak to the SWR in-house Assisted Travel Team. For all train travel National Rail Enquiries also operate a 24-hour dedicated travel assistance line by calling 0800 022 37 20.

**For SWR travel** - To plan your journey visit [www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey) or [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or if you would prefer to call SWR 0345 6000 650 or National Rail 03457 48 49 50.

**Visit the station or bus stop before your journey** - familiarise yourself before you travel. Take someone with you on a visit or a journey before you travel alone.

## Buying your ticket

- Where to get your ticket?
  - Online or via app
  - At the ticket office, at a ticket machine or from the bus driver
- Do you have a rail card? Or a concessionary bus pass?
- Buy your ticket in advance if possible – it can often be cheaper

## What to take with you Check List

- Bus/train ticket
- Phone
- Phone charger
- Emergency phone number
- Water
- Snack
- Medication
- Headphones
- Hand-sanitiser
- Travel card
- Something to help pass the time (such as a book or portable games console).



# Travelling with Autism, anxiety or phobias

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- Treat yourself to something that will make you feel calm before your journey
- Know what you will do if the journey becomes difficult
- Visit the station/bus stop before your trip
- Plan your journey
- Have visual images of what to expect
- Plan what you will look forward to at the end of the journey

For more information download the Network Rail guide

[www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Autism-friendly-guide-to-travelling-by-train.pdf](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Autism-friendly-guide-to-travelling-by-train.pdf)

## **Phobias about particular forms of public transport are not uncommon, so you're not alone!**

- Travel with a buddy
- Travel in a seat at the front on a bus
- Check where the guard is on the train/or advise the bus driver, so they can offer support

## **Dealing with panic attacks**

- Get out at the next stop if necessary
- Call someone to help you
- Practise breathing exercises, and when calm enough continue the journey

Don't give up on travelling by public transport – help is always available to support you

## **When to travel**

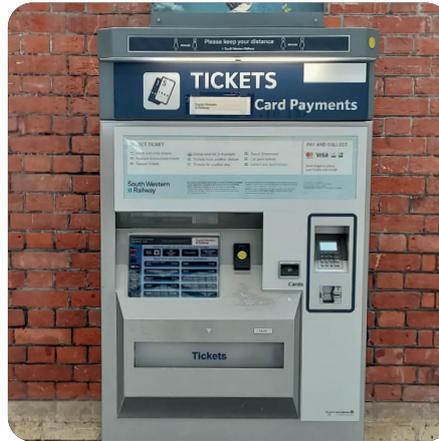
- **Avoid 'Rush Hour'**. Travelling at the busiest times is stressful for anyone. Travel after 10am and avoid 5-7pm if you can
- **Put on your armour!** If you have to travel in the rush hour, think about ways of coping with crowds. Some people find it easier if they wear big coats, even in summer. Others carry comfort objects, such as pressure toys that can be hidden in a pocket and squeezed to relieve anxiety.
- **Stay close to an exit.** Even though you can't use it while the bus or train is in motion, it can reduce anxiety.

# At the station

**Before you board the train -**  
Visit the ticket office or ticket machine if you need to buy a ticket.

Check the departure board for train times and platform information.

Look for the best way to get to the right platform.



## Assisted Boarding Point

Need help boarding one of our trains?  
Contact our team and tell us where you are, where you're travelling to and what kind of assistance you require.

Scan or enter the number shown into WhatsApp

Call 0800 528 6599

South Western Railway

Stand next to the "Assisted Boarding Point" sign and the guard will look out for you.

There are four simple steps for our customers using the Assisted Boarding Point service.

1. The customer turns up at the station and finds the Assisted Boarding Point on the platform.
2. They scan the WhatsApp QR code or phone number to send a message or call our contact centre.
3. The contact centre team send a text message to the Guard of the service that the customer intends to travel on, providing them with advance notice.
4. The train arrives, the Guard helps the customer to board, and the train departs right-time.

## Check list while travelling

- Ask the guard to help you on board or to help you during the journey
- Alert the guard to help you when you reach your station
- Book assistance. Consider using the ramp if you do not like getting on or off the train – it is available for everyone
- Do some breathing exercises if you are anxious

## Where to get help?

Ask a member of staff for any help you need.

If you need a guard or would like to travel where they are located, look for the carriage with the flashing light.



On the platform speak to a member of staff or use the Help Point. Use the blue button for help it takes you through to someone who knows where you are and can help you any time of day or night. Only use the green button in an emergency - it's like phoning 999.

### Ask for help

Press the blue button on the Help Point for any other information.

Make a phone call: 0800 52 82 100 (freephone)

# At the bus stop



**On the day** – download the Stagecoach Bus App, track how far away your bus is and how busy it will be.

**Busy bus checker** – If you don't like full buses wait for the next one to come along, or check the Stagecoach Bus App to see which ones are less full. Green buses on the tracker are quieter services, amber colour means busy, red buses mean these are very busy.

You can double check the timetable information at the bus stop, there will be a case displaying the times.

If you don't have a bus pass, you can buy your ticket on the mobile app. Tickets for a day's unlimited travel are available to buy in advance from the Stagecoach app.

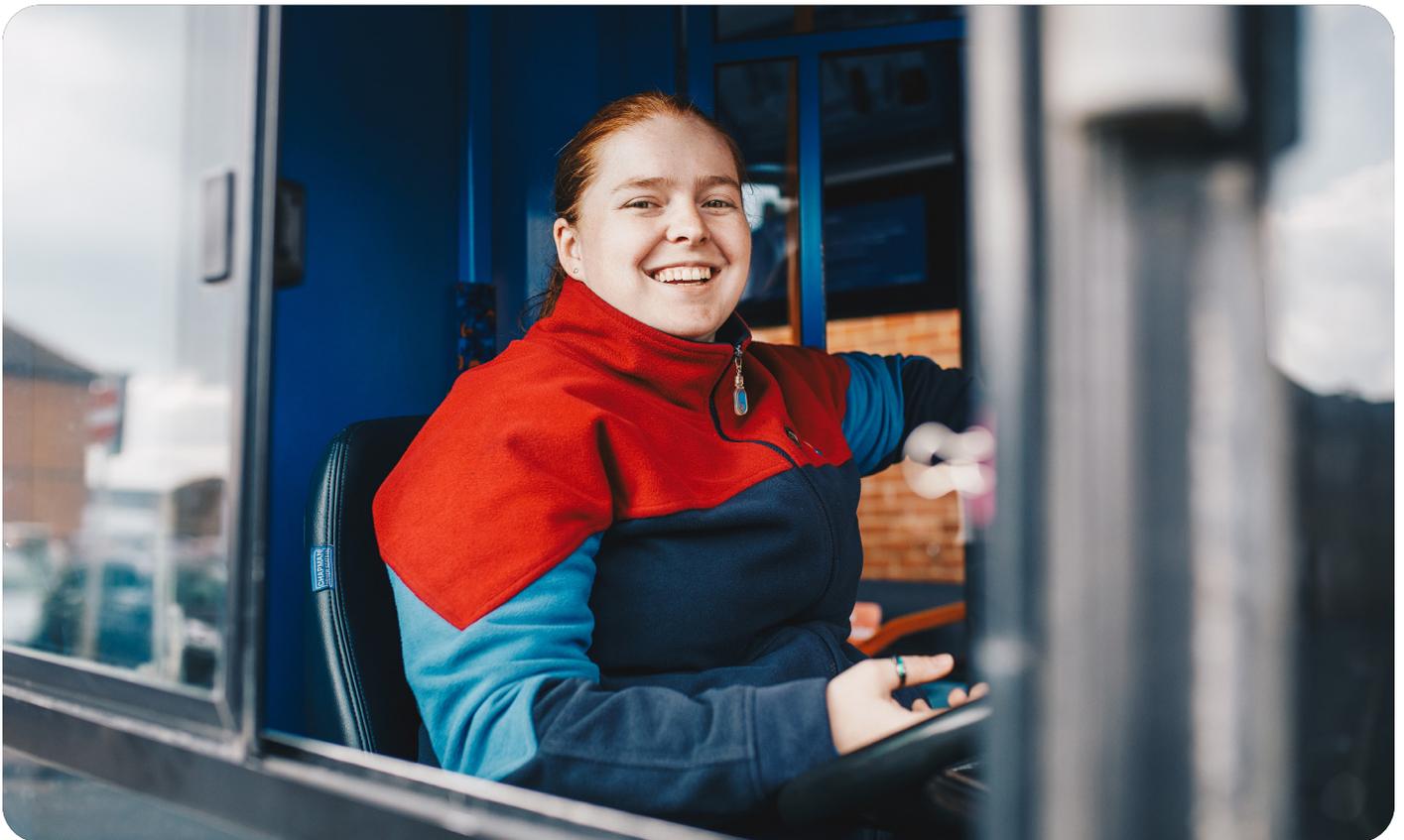


If you just need a single, return or day ticket you get these from the driver, they accept cash or you can pay with a contactless device like a bank card, or mobile device.

When you see your bus approaching, put your hand out to signal the driver and let him know you'd like to get on.

Once you've shown the driver your ticket or purchased one, take a seat. If you're unsure of when your stop is, tell the driver before you sit down, so they can let you know when to get off.

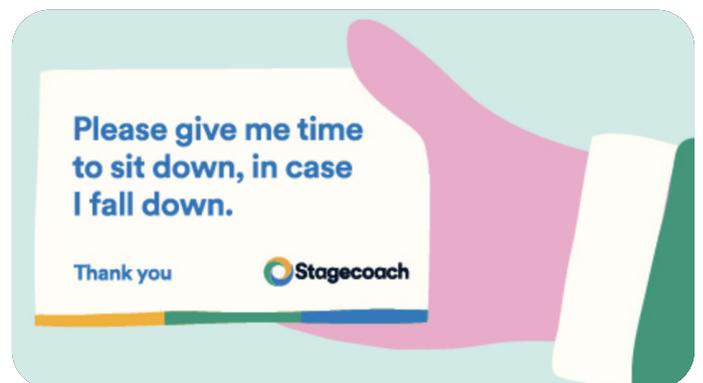
If you know what stop to get off at, press the bell before you reach the stop, and the driver will know to stop and let you off.



If you require a ramp to board or get off the bus, just ask the bus driver

Journey Assistance Cards are available for you to use if you need a bit more help when using the bus. They'll make it easier for you to let our bus drivers know what extra help you need.

[www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/journey-assistance-cards](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/journey-assistance-cards)



# Reducing Anxiety while travelling

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**TECHNOLOGY:** Some people with social anxiety say Google maps and other apps have really helped ease their feelings of anxiety while they're riding buses and trains.

Just the simple action of watching the blue dot showing where you're travelling can be a distraction - and a comfort that you're prepared for your stop.

Call or text a friend or post a comment while you're on public transport. Just because you're sitting on your own doesn't mean you have to be alone.

**MINDFULNESS:** Practise mindfulness by concentrating on your breathing. Or look out of the window and take in the landscape around you - the colours of the trees, shop window displays, people walking on the streets. Feel the calming sensation of your own breathing.

**FACE IT WITH A FRIEND:** Being mobile will transform how you face social anxiety and give you the opportunity to get out and about. But if you are facing one of your major fears, it makes sense to have someone on hand the first time you do it.

Technology means you can have someone on the other end of a text, tweet or Facebook post, but that first time it might just be best if they're there in person to help you through. Need a distraction? Listen to music through earphones, play a game, listen to a podcast on your phone perhaps.

## Arriving at your destination

### How to know when it's your stop

- Listen for information
- Look at the signs on the bus or train
- Ask the bus driver/guard to let you know
- Count the stops

### How to safely leave the train

- Prepare to leave when your stop is announced
- You don't need to get up before your bus or train stops. You will have time.
- Your driver or guard will ensure the ramp is used if you need it

### Arriving at your destination – what information is needed?

- Where to next? Plans for the onward journey
- Let someone know you have arrived safely

### Congratulate yourself!

Travelling can be a challenge it will get easier and you can go and you should always take the time to congratulate yourself when you manage it. The good news is that, with practice, it will get easier and easier, and you can go wherever you want.

# Where to get help

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## Useful websites

To read in preparation for a journey

For people with Anxiety Disorders and Public Transport – DisabledTravelAdvice

## Travelling by train

- [www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel](http://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel)
- National Rail Enquiries - Passenger Assist Home - Passenger Assistance

## Travelling by bus

- Bus Journey Planner | Find Bus Routes | Stagecoach - [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)
- Traveline South West - [www.travelinesw.com](http://www.travelinesw.com)  
(complete journey planner for both bus and train journeys)
- Google Maps [www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)

## Useful apps



Passenger Assistance is a new travel app for disabled people that simplifies the process of booking assisted train travel.

See bus information on your mobile, plan your journey, check when your bus will arrive, search for the right mobile ticket and buy securely.



National Rail Enquiries lets you plan, book and keep up to date with all your train travel and receive real time travel updates.

Plan and book your next journey. Help you get from A to B with live travel updates, train times and onward options.



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**For funding**

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Railway**



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Stagecoach, Winchester Gold, Disabled People's voice, Mind East Hampshire



**Produced by Hampshire CRP for Travel with Confidence**



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