

Travel with Confidence

Rail travel 'top tips' – from Winchester Go LD travel trainers and mentors



This bitesize resource offers some practical 'top tips' for rail travel using lessons learnt from the 'Travel with Confidence' project delivered in partnership by Hampshire Community Rail Partnership, Winchester Go LD, and South Western Railway. The tips are designed to support adults with learning disabilities to become more confident in accessing safe and enjoyable rail travel, but may also be applicable to those with other disabilities or additional accessibility needs.

This resource has been collated by Community Rail Network, using original content from a series of training videos produced by Winchester Go LD members to share their lived experience and advice for other train travellers. You can view the videos [here](#).

Planning your journey

Step 1 – Work out what train to catch

- Visit the station first, talk to staff, and/or use the large and easy-to-navigate inform boards;
- Try to avoid busy times, e.g. rush hour, if you can;
- Allow yourself enough time so as not to panic, and have the option of a back-up train in case of any cancellations or delays;
- Take advantage of online journey planning tools, e.g. on train operator websites.

Step 2 – Book passenger assistance in advance

- Book assistance at the station or online and select the level of help you want; e.g. would you like to use the ramp? Would you like to be shown to a seat?
- When you arrive at the station, tell staff you have booked passenger assistance, e.g. by showing them on your phone. At staffed stations, there should be clear signage showing where passenger assistance can be found.

Step 3 – What to take on your journey

- If you have one, take your sunflower lanyard (or equivalent) to indicate that you have a non-visible disability or condition;
- If you have one, take your travel assistance card, which has space on the back to include extra information that you might need to show railway staff, e.g. emergency contact numbers;
- Take items to make your journey calm and enjoyable, e.g. something to eat and drink, something to read, a portable game or music. Don't forget your phone!

Sunflower Lanyard – you can buy a Sunflower Lanyard from their website at <https://hdsunflower.com/uk/>

The Sunflower Lanyard helps other people to know that you have some form of disability or condition, and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time on transport and/or in public spaces.

Buying a ticket

- You can book your ticket online before your journey, but some stations have ticket offices and/or machines, and it can be helpful and easier to speak to staff.;
- There are lots of different types of ticket and things can get confusing, but remember, it is always okay to ask for help;
- Think about whether you need a single or return ticket. A single ticket will take you to where you want to go, and a return ticket will take you there and back again;
- You can also buy your ticket well in advance of your journey, and this can make things cheaper. So, if you can plan well ahead of your journey, you could save a lot of money;
- The time of day will also affect your ticket. It could be anytime, or off-peak, and this will again affect the price. If you can, avoid busy times, when prices may be higher;
- If you are travelling in a large group, you may be able to get a discounted ticket. Ask someone for details;
- You can also get cheaper tickets if you have a Disabled Person's Railcard, so this is a good thing to have. You can ask for help if you want to apply for one of these;
- If the station you are travelling from has ticket barriers, you may need to show your ticket to get through. Again, you can ask staff to help with this if needed;
- Once on your train, you may need to show your ticket to the guard, so make sure you keep it somewhere safe throughout your journey.

Disabled Person's Railcard – You can get 1/3 off your travel with a Disabled Person's Railcard. These can be easily bought online at <https://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/>

Using the station and the Help Point

- The Help Point at the station should be clearly marked. You can use this to find out information about your journey, for example, when the next train is, if it is on time, and what platform you need to use;
- Stations can be noisy places, so it is important to speak clearly and loudly enough so you be heard by the operator at the other end. Don't worry about asking the operator to repeat things if you didn't hear them clearly;
- If you are struggling to use the help point at a staffed station, remember you can always ask someone for help;
- To find out what platform you need, you can look at the station's departure boards or inform boards, or ask a member of staff;
- When getting around the station, for example if you have to change platforms, you may need to use stairs or a lift, if one is available. Follow the signs and leave yourself enough time to get where you need to go;
- While you are waiting on the platform, stay behind the yellow line to ensure you are safe. Only cross the line once the train you are about to board has come to a complete stop.



Passenger assistance and boarding the train

- You can book passenger assistance ahead of your journey, on your phone, on the website, or on the app;
- At larger, staffed stations there will be a passenger assistance office. Look out for this as staff based there will be able to help you, and you should always feel comfortable asking for help;
- Using the ramp to board a train is not just for wheelchair users, it can be really useful for anyone who feels apprehensive about getting on and off. The ramp can be booked through passenger assistance either before your journey, or you can ask for it at the station. Just remember to leave yourself enough time to do this;
- If you would like help getting on the train, you should stand next to the station's assisted boarding point, which should be clearly signposted;
- When boarding the train, let other passengers get off before you try to get on. This will make things easier for you, even if the train or station is busy.

Passenger Assistance – you simply tell them the journey you plan to take, and they will connect you to the right train company.

You can book in the following ways:

On your phone: Call 0800 022 3720, Text 60083, Textphone/minicom 0845 60 50 600

Online: <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/help-and-assistance/passenger-assist/>

On the app

You can also call passenger assistance from the train if you need help at your destination station. Just remember to give station staff enough time to get things ready for you and prepare for your needs.

Having a comfortable journey

- Finding a seat can be difficult if the train is busy and full of passengers. Most trains will have priority seating areas for disabled passengers, and there will also be extra space for wheelchairs and accessible seating, so use these areas if you can;
- If you are worried about feeling travel sick, try to find a seat that faces forwards rather than backwards, so you are sitting in the same direction that the train is travelling. Wearing travel bands on your wrists can also help combat travel sickness;
- During your journey, if you have a problem or feel worried about anything, you can try to speak to the train guard. You could also phone home, a support worker or carer, or ask a fellow passenger for help;
- If you see something that is an emergency, you should use your phone to dial 999 and ask for help. The British Transport Police are also on-hand for you to contact at

all times, should you see anything suspicious or witness a crime. You can contact them on 0800 40 50 40, or by texting 61016;

- If you need to use the toilet during your journey, you will be able to find an accessible toilet somewhere on the train you are using. Look for signs, and/or ask the guard for help. Make sure you leave enough time to visit the toilet before you reach the station you are getting off at.

Travel Assistance Card – a Travel Assistance Card is a free card that can be downloaded from some train operator websites, e.g. South Western Railway. It is for anyone who may need a bit of extra help but might be afraid to ask. You can add useful information such as your name, emergency contact number(s), how someone can help you, and the stations you normally travel to/from.

<p>The station I regularly use is</p> <input type="text"/>	<h1>Travel Assistance Card</h1> <p>Can you help me?</p> <p>South Western Railway</p>
<p>The station I usually travel to</p> <input type="text"/>	
<p>www.southwesternrailway.com Customer service centre: 0345 6000 650 Assisted travel: Phone: 0800 5282 100 Text: 0800 6920 792</p>	
<p>How you can help me (please write or draw below)</p>	<p>Hello, my name is</p> <input type="text"/>
	<p>My emergency contact is</p> <input type="text"/>

Getting off the train and leaving the station

Knowing when to get off your train is extremely important, but don't worry, there are plenty of ways to make sure you get this right. You can:

- Listen to the announcements made by the guard, who will say what the next station is;
- Check the scheduled time of arrival on a timetable or journey plan and match this to your destination station;
- Count the number of stops the train needs to make before it reaches your station, and tick those off as they go;

- Look at the signs inside each of the train carriages, which will display what the next station stop is.

When you arrive at the station, look for the 'way out' signs. You may have to go through another set of ticket barriers, so have your ticket ready just in case. If you need help, find a member of staff, or use the station help point.

We hope you enjoy your journeys by train!



Community Rail Network would like to credit and thank Winchester Go LD for the original content and pictures used in collating this document. You can view their full resource pack linked to the Travel with Confidence project [here](#).