

ROG Accessible Travel Policy

Our Commitments

This policy describes how Rail Operations Group (ROG) will plan for and support passengers with accessibility needs when operating **occasional charter passenger services**. Because each charter is planned individually (including route, stations served, rolling stock and staffing), the precise arrangements available can vary from tour to tour. We will always aim to provide appropriate assistance and reasonable adjustments, and we encourage passengers to contact us (or the booking agent) as early as possible so we can agree suitable arrangements for that specific journey.

ROG contract with and closely work with Station Facility Operators, other Train Operating Companies, Network Rail and Ticket retailers/Booking Agents to ensure that the needs of our passengers with assisted travel requirements are met. We support this by providing training for our staff or validate that training is provided to third party staff to ensure Train Guards/Stewards who are fully conversant with procedures and equipment are always on our services.

All the carriages that we use for chartered trains were built well before 1999. Unfortunately, because of this, these vehicles do not have all the modern compliant facilities provided for passengers with assisted travel needs today. Where possible, carriages with accessible toilet and wheelchair/companion locations will be sourced.

We are sorry to say that while operating older carriages we can currently only accommodate folding and non-folding wheelchairs. We do not currently have space to accommodate motorised wheelchairs or scooters. As soon as this situation changes, we will update this policy to reflect the change in our capability.

Though we do not operate any stations we will work with Station Facility Owners and Operators to provide the most appropriate assistance at each location where our passengers board or alight.

The carriages we use do not have passenger information screens fitted; however, they all have onboard PA systems and regular announcements will be made to provide customers with any information required as to the running of the train and approximate times of arrival. Our on-train staff will advise any hearing-impaired passengers if they inform us that they will need this help.

We will ensure through a formal agreement with train promoters, that information is clearly available at the point of ticket sales explaining clearly what the accessibility restrictions are for the service, where there are restrictions and why they may be in place. We will ensure that train promoters who use our services are regularly updated when our capabilities change.

Guidance for Customers

We encourage customers with assisted travel requirements to travel on our charter train services and will always do our best to provide guidance and assistance. To enable ROG to aid customers when travelling on any of our charter train services we would encourage customers to contact our Charters team prior to travelling. Please contact info@railopsgroup.co.uk and we will do our utmost to help in preparing for your journey.

We recommend that you do this immediately after making a booking (this can also be done via the booking agent) and at least 48 hours prior to the charter train journey. Where less than 48 hours'

notice is given, we will still endeavour to accommodate all your needs, but some aspects may not be fully met.

How we plan our services

All our services are planned in conjunction with Network Rail using the Charter Planning Process and in liaison with Station Facility Operators. This process is designed to ensure that we have considered all aspects of operating the train service and includes:

- Route of train service;
- Track, station and depot access;
- Operational requirements (special instructions and resources);
- Locomotive and Rolling Stock requirements;
- Interchange considerations with other main-line operators; and
- Staffing level requirements.

Once completed, our delivery plans are reviewed by the senior management group and undergo a risk assessment and approvals process to ensure that due consideration has been given to all aspects of operating our planned services. A Charter Manager is appointed at ROG to lead the planning and internal process requirements for approval and to ensure a quality service is provided. The appointed ROG Charter Manager's information will be made available in communications regarding each charter ahead of operation.

Station Facilities and Access

ROG are not directly responsible for the operation of any passenger station, each of which is usually operated by a Train Operating Company or Network Rail. We liaise with station operators at the early stages of planning a Charter Tour, to determine the level of facilities, accessibility and staffing available for people with disabilities, for example:

- Step-free access to platforms;
- Assistance with getting around the station or connecting to other rail services or other forms of transport, where appropriate; and
- The availability of wheelchair ramps and accessible toilets.

We work with Station Facility Operators to confirm arrangements for connections including access from platform to platform. We will ensure this accessibility information is made clear in all promotional material for each individual tour and when journeys are being booked. Where helpful, we will also signpost passengers to publicly available station accessibility information (for example, National Rail station information and/or the relevant station operator's accessibility information) so that passengers can plan their journey with confidence.

Customer information prior to booking

Promotional material, provided by the booking agent, for each train service will include clear details about the charter tour, the origin and destination stations, the rolling stock, contact details and also sources of advice for passengers with assisted travel requirements detailing what type of assistance is usually available.

Clear information about any restrictions there might be and why, in terms of accessibility or assistance at stations or on-board trains, will also be provided in relation to each train service. This guidance will also be available on both our own website and that of the Train Promoter and Booking Agent's website.

Customer information during booking

When the Train Promoter receives a booking for any service that will be operated by ROG, we will ensure that a copy of this Policy is available to be included with tickets should it be requested. If there are any specific accessibility restrictions on a service due to the type of rolling stock available, this will be made clear to the booking agent prior to the commencement of the sales process.

We would ask passengers to contact us at info@railopsgroup.co.uk to discuss accessibility/assistance requirements immediately after booking (this can also be done via the booking agent) or at least 48 hours prior to the specific charter train service.

ROG advises Train Promoters and Booking Agents using our services to close booking facilities 7 days prior to the tour taking place. This enables a robust planning process for each tour and ample time to make any arrangements in line with this policy.

Accessible Travel Policy arrangements prior to train service Operation

Whenever we are made aware of any assistance requirements for a passenger, they will immediately advise the ROG Charter Manager. The ROG Charter Manager has the responsibility and authority to ensure that;

- The Train Guard for the service in question is briefed of the needs of the passenger, such as help with boarding and alighting, seating arrangements, additional assistance in terms of accessing any on-board catering, assistance to access the catering vehicle, or assistance with on-board information.
- Arrangements with Station Facility Operators to arrange specific assistance requirements within the station or in making connections with other main-line operators are in place.
- Specific arrangements and briefing of staff are carried out in relation to caring for any vulnerable passengers in an emergency including waiting with them until handed over to emergency service response staff etc.
- Potential alternative transport requirements in the event of train failure including the provision of suitably adapted vehicles that would be suitable to meet the specific needs of a passenger with assisted travel requirements, ensuring that they are transported to a location that can receive and assist with onward travel arrangements have been considered.
- On the morning of train service operation, the ROG Charter Manager will contact start, intermediate and destination stations to establish if there are any issues which may impact accessibility for passengers (e.g. if there are accessibility issues, lifts out of order etc.).

Staff awareness, training and briefing

Our staff and contracted Train Guards/Stewards are provided with suitable formal training on disability awareness as part of their role. Regular update and refresher briefings will be provided to staff as part of our Competence Management System and will include:

- Disability and equality awareness training to ensure they are made aware of their responsibilities to disabled passengers;
- How to communicate clearly with disabled people (including those with speech or hearing impairment, learning difficulties or other needs); and

- The operation and use of Wheelchair Ramps (this activity will be limited to the Train Guards and Train Stewards).

The Train Guard will provide Train Stewards with a pre-job briefing prior to the commencement of each train service which will include details of any disabled customers requiring assistance, allocating responsibilities and additional guidance if required.

Actions in the event of service disruption or emergency

In the event of an emergency or the failure of any of our services, the Train Manager and his/her team will take into particular account the requirements of any passengers on board the train with assisted travel requirements.

Depending on the nature of the event, and if necessary, they will discretely discuss with the passenger requiring assistance, whether they have any additional needs - for example in the event of an emergency evacuation by emergency response services in non-life-threatening situations.

The Train Guard will contact ROG Charter Manager who will ensure that:

- Suitably accessible onwards transport will be available if required;
- Any booked assistance for connecting services/at stations is advised and kept informed of any changes to plans; and
- That any emergency response teams attending are aware of potentially vulnerable passengers with disabilities on our service. Should passengers have any concerns they are encouraged to discuss these with the on-board staff who will be able to offer guidance and assistance.

Passengers with impaired hearing

We can arrange for on-board staff to provide some additional assistance to you if you can't hear announcements through our on-board public address system.

Passengers with impaired mobility or vision

We can arrange the following assistance if you have impaired mobility or vision:

- Arrange assistance at start and destination stations with getting on and off our trains;
- Plan with Station Facility Operators to provide assistance for you to get around start and destination stations and make any connections with other train services before or after your tour with us;
- Allocate appropriate seats to you, such as seats that have a bit more room to manoeuvre or that are close to exit doors or toilet facilities. We reserve our most accessible seats for people requiring additional assistance, but these are limited in number and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so we advise you to let us know as soon as possible if you have difficulty with certain types of seats and we will do our best to accommodate your requirements;
- Arrange to convey collapsible/foldable wheelchairs, together with other aids in another part of the train and return them to your carriage door at each end of the journey;
- Arrange for a wheelchair ramp to be available, if required (we carry ramps in all our brake vans). The safe working load of our ramps is 300kg; and
- Although our staff are not qualified to provide assistance with physical lifting of people, they will help you to get to your seat in any other way that they can.

Assistance Dogs

We welcome assistance dogs on all our services. Suitable space will be made available at your seated location to enable your assistance dog to be comfortably located with you throughout the journey.

Wheelchairs and other large walking aids

The carriages we use were designed and constructed in the 1950s and 1960s before assisted travel access legislation was introduced. This means that access to seating areas and toilets can be very restrictive. We therefore are unable to accommodate wheelchairs or other large walking aids in the main seating areas or vestibules. These will be safely stored in the Brake/Guards Vans.

Until we can offer a wheelchair space within the passenger accommodation, it may be necessary for wheelchair users who cannot transfer to a fixed seat to travel in the brake van. Specific seating provision would be made for a companion to accompany a wheelchair user in the brake/guard's van. Any other accompanying passengers may be required to travel in the main body of the train for their comfort and safety if there is no additional seating available in the brake/guard's van. Where this is available, we will ensure that the brake/guard's van is clean, lit, heated and ventilated if necessary, and provide you with assistance in getting on and off the train. A member of staff will be regularly available to provide you with any other assistance you require during your journey. Our Customer Services will be able to advise if this is the case.

If you feel we have got things wrong (complaints and redress)

The Chief Executive Officer of ROG holds overall responsibility for handling complaints. ROG has a Complaints Handling Procedure in place, aligned to ORR expectations, and we review our processes to promote continual improvement.

If something goes wrong, we want to put it right. Please contact us as soon as possible so we can investigate and respond, including where appropriate agreeing suitable redress.

- Our customer-facing staff receive training in customer service and how to support passengers with accessibility needs.
- Our third-party agreements (including with promoters, booking agents and service providers) set out responsibilities and how complaints and issues will be managed and resolved.

No matter how well prepared we are, things don't always go to plan. If we fail to deliver assistance that was arranged for you, we will assess what went wrong and what impact this had on you, and we will consider appropriate redress on a **case-by-case basis**. Redress is not always financial compensation; it may include an apology, an explanation, and/or a gesture of goodwill or payment, depending on the circumstances.

ROG has a Complaints Handling Procedure. A copy of this procedure is available on our website at www.railopsgroup.co.uk. If you are not satisfied with our response, you may be able to escalate your complaint to the independent Rail Ombudsman (where eligible) once you have received our final response.

Copies can also be requested via email at: info@railopsgroup.co.uk

Monitoring and Review

On the completion of each train service the senior management group will review the operation including a review of performance against this Policy and the Complaints Handling Policy (CHP.) Any lessons learned will be incorporated into future planning processes.

We will also undertake a review at the periodic Management Review Meeting, chaired by the Managing Director (or his deputy) who has overall responsibility for this Policy. This review will include any feedback received via email, telephone or mail and where appropriate and necessary, staff training will be reviewed to ensure that it continues to deliver against this policy.

Data Protection

We will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) by implementing strict controls on access to the data held by ROG, and we are committed to ensuring the privacy of the data we hold is protected.

Should we ask you to provide certain information by which you can be identified when using our website, then you can be assured that it will only be used in accordance with this privacy statement.

Our privacy policy is available on our website at www.railopsgroup.co.uk

A Large Print (.16 Arial) pdf of this information is available on request via info@railopsgroup.co.uk

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