

Accessible Travel: Information for Disabled and Less Mobile People



The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) is an independent advisory body, established under the Transport Act 1985, and set up to advise Government on the transport needs of disabled people.

The Department for Transport sponsors the Committee.

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1 Introduction

DPTAC's aim is that disabled people should have the same transport choices and freedom to travel as non-disabled people. DPTAC would like travelling on any mode of transport to be a realistic option for disabled people.

There have been significant improvements to public transport, but disabled people still face obstacles when travelling. These obstacles can have a big impact and may affect the enjoyment of the experience, possibly dissuading disabled people from travelling again in the future.

DPTAC has published *Accessible Travel* to help make travelling a little easier and a more positive experience, offering suggestions on what you may need to think about when you plan and book your journey, including where to go for more information.

Access to the internet is necessary to get most of the information supplied in this document, but some phone numbers are supplied here. Internet access is available in most local libraries. Support groups, Citizens Advice Bureaus and local authorities may also provide access.

Most of the additional information in this document is sourced from the internet and is available from:

- Directgov's Disabled People web pages:
www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/index.htm
- Department for Transport (0300 330 3000)
Access to Transport web pages:
www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access
- Transport for London (0843 222 1234)
Transport Accessibility web pages:
www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1167.aspx

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The Transport Direct website also offers information for door-to-door travel for both public transport and car journeys around Britain. It contains travel information to help you plan your journeys:

www.transportdirect.info.

Information on the services available in your area can be obtained from your local authority. Contact information for all local authorities can be found on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/Localcouncils/index.htm.

2 Travelling in the United Kingdom

There are many places to obtain useful information and advice on accessible travel to help you plan a trip or holiday in the UK to suit your needs:

- Open Britain: www.openbritain.info is the UK's biggest directory of accessible accommodation and travel. It aims to be a one-stop shop facility for all those needing accessibility information and is supported by all national tourism authorities.
- Direct Enquiries: www.directenquiries.com has been set up to help you find out about the accessibility features of hotels, restaurants, pubs and other leisure facilities across Britain. The site also contains access information on hospitals, post offices and other services.
- Good Access Guide: www.goodaccessguide.co.uk is an online guide to life, leisure and mobility in the UK. The site contains a directory of accommodation and services for disabled people, seniors and anyone whose life is made easier by better access to goods, services and amenities.
- The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain contains ideas for the disabled traveller and includes handy maps and accessibility information. The Guide is free if you hold a Blue Badge or a Disabled Persons Railcard: www.accessibleguide.co.uk.
- Tourism for All UK: www.tourismforall.org.uk is a national charity providing information to the public, especially to older or disabled people, on where their specific access needs can be met, making tourism welcoming to all.

Tourist information centres and tourism websites can also provide useful information on travelling around the UK: www.britainexpress.com/TIC/index.htm or www.visitbritain.com/en/GB.

Accessible Toilets

You can search for the location of an accessible toilet on the Direct Enquiries website: www.directenquiries.com.

Changing Places

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all disabled people and their carers. Changing Places toilets are for those people who require the additional space and equipment to enable them to use toilets more comfortably. Locations for Changing Places facilities are available from the Changing Places website: www.changing-places.org/Findatoilet/Locationmap/tabid/70/Default.aspx.

RADAR National Key Scheme

The RADAR National Key Scheme (NKS) allows independent access to the locked public accessible toilets around the UK. The NKS Guide, also available from RADAR, provides information about the 8000+ accessible disabled toilets around the UK fitted with the NKS lock. NKS keys cost £3.50 and are available from the RADAR website: www.radar-shop.org.uk or by calling 020 7250 3222.

Driving

Useful information on driving and disability, including on learning to drive, the Motability scheme, adapting your vehicle and vehicle tax exemption is available on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Yourvehicleandlicence/index.htm.

The Highways Agency has published information for disabled drivers which can be obtained by calling 08457 504030, or:

- *My Way* magazine (which contains information on handling a breakdown): www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/24336.aspx
- *Disability – Accessibility of the Strategic Road Network*: www.highways.gov.uk/knowledge/24341.aspx

Accessible Car Hire

The Forum of Mobility Centres provide information on companies that have adapted and accessible vehicles for hire: www.mobility-centre.com/usefulcontacts1/carhire.htm.

Mobilise

Mobilise, www.mobilise.info, is a charity promoting mobility for disabled motorists, passengers and Blue Badge holders. Mobilise can answer your questions about accessible parking, vehicle adaptations, congestion charging and other issues. Call 01508 489 449 for more information.

Toll and Congestion Charging Schemes

There are various road user charging schemes in the UK. The charges are generally for the cost of maintenance or to limit the number of vehicles entering a core area.

Concessions to charges do vary. Before you travel, find out what concessions apply from the authority responsible for the charging scheme. The main criteria for exemptions are:

- holding a Blue Badge;
- being in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance; or
- being exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty.

In most cases, you have to apply in advance to obtain a concession.

Blue Badge holders are exempt from the London and Durham congestion charges. In London, payment of a one-off £10 fee and pre-registration with Transport for London is necessary:

www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging/6736.aspx.

In Durham, the driver must pre-book their exemption on each occasion it is required:

www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6371.

Disabled people are also entitled to concessions at some river crossings, bridges and tunnels. A list of concessions available in England and Wales is available on the Directgov website:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Bluebadgescheme/DG_181209.

Information on the Blue Badge scheme (disabled parking) can be found in Section 3.

Visiting London

Visitors to London with specific accessibility needs can plan and make the most of their stay in the capital by visiting the Inclusive London website: www.inclusivelondon.com. The site will help you to find out about the accessibility features of hotels, restaurants, pubs, shops, museums and tourist attractions.

The Visit London website also contains useful information on the accessibility of hotels, restaurants, shopping facilities and other attractions in the capital: www.visitlondon.com/maps/accessibility/index.

Information on each transport mode in London, including disabled parking, can be found in the relevant sections within this document, or contact Transport for London (see Section 1 for contact information).

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Organisers of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games are committed to providing services and facilities to meet all accessibility requirements, including ensuring that there are good accessible transport options for all spectators travelling to the Games.

To find out what is available for your needs visit the London 2012 Accessibility web page: www.london2012.com/visiting/accessibility. To help you to plan ahead, information on all the accessible transport options available can be found on the London 2012 Accessible Travel web page: www.london2012.com/visiting/getting-to-the-games/plan-your-travel/accessible-travel.

Everything you need to know about the Games is available on the London 2012 website: www.london2012.com or you can call: 0845 267 2012 for any general enquiries.

3 Blue Badge (Disabled Parking)

The Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of on-street parking concessions for disabled people with severe mobility problems. It allows them to park close to the places they wish to visit, either as driver or a passenger. The scheme is administered by local authorities, who deal with applications and issue the badges. A list of local authorities can be found on Directgov using the link provided in Section 1.

The Directgov website also contains some useful information on the scheme: www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/motoringandtransport/bluebadgescheme/dg_4001061.

While the Blue Badge scheme operates throughout the United Kingdom, there are small variations in its application in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Information on how the scheme operates outside England can be found on Directgov at the link above.

The Department of Transport publishes two information leaflets on the English Blue Badge scheme. One is for those who wish to apply for a badge and is entitled 'Can I Get a Blue Badge?'. The other is the Blue Badge 'Rights and Responsibilities' leaflet, which explains how the scheme works. These can be viewed and downloaded from the DfT website at: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/bluebadge.

Displaying Your Blue Badge

The badge should be displayed on the dashboard or fascia panel of the car, where it can be clearly read through the windscreen. The front of the badge should face upwards, showing the wheelchair symbol. When no parking concessions are being used, badges should be removed from view.

The associated parking clock need only be displayed when the badge holder is parking on yellow lines or in a Blue Badge parking bay that has a time limit. In both cases, the clock must be set to the time of the badge holder's arrival (to the nearest quarter of an hour) and must be displayed next to your Blue Badge on the dashboard or facia panel.

Disabled Parking for Visitors to the UK

Visitors from **within the European Union** (EU) can bring their own disabled parking badge or permit to use in the UK. However, this is prohibited in some areas (e.g. central London).

When visiting England from **outside the EU**, it is at the discretion of each local authority whether they will allow the disabled parking badge or permit issued from outside the EU to be used locally. Therefore, before using a badge, badge holders from outside the EU should check directly with the local authority they wish to park in. A list of local authorities can be found on Directgov using the link provided in Section 1.

Using Your Blue Badge Abroad

Blue Badge holders may also use their badge in the EU and abroad. However, this varies from country to country, so badge holders should always check local rules before travelling. For more information see the DfT Blue Badge web-page (link overleaf) and the leaflet 'Parking Card for people with disabilities in the European Union': www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/259428/281009/euparkingcard.pdf.

Misuse of Blue Badge Permits

It is an offence for people other than the badge holder to display the badge and take advantage of the parking concessions provided under the scheme. Misusing the badge could lead to a £1,000 fine. Local authorities can also withdraw a badge if the badge holder frequently misuses it. If anyone believes a Blue Badge is being misused, they should report this to the local authority concerned.

Misuse of Disabled Parking

It is an offence to park in an on-street Blue Badge parking bay without displaying a Blue Badge. If anyone sees this, then they can report it to a traffic warden, parking enforcement officer, the local police or the local authority.

Disabled Parking in Off-street Car Parks

The Blue Badge scheme does not apply to off-street car parks (e.g. at supermarkets). If a non-disabled motorist has parked in a bay reserved for disabled people in a private car park, an employee of the store can ask the driver to move their car from the reserved space but they cannot legally insist on it.

If anyone believes that people are unfairly parking in bays reserved for disabled people, they should speak or write to the management of the store or car park.

Disabled Parking Schemes in London

Due to the high volume of traffic entering central London every day, there are four central London boroughs that operate their disabled parking schemes using different coloured badges:

- **Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – Purple Badge**
- **City of Westminster – White Badge**
- **City of London – Red Badge**
- **Camden (near the West End) – Green Badge**

These additional schemes are designed to give local badge holders a greater chance of getting a parking space, so before you travel it is important to check the rules that apply to these areas. Standard Blue Badge holders could receive a penalty charge notice if using disabled parking bays without the correct permits being displayed. Each of the four boroughs provides bays for use by Blue Badge holders, but you may wish to get more information from them first on what parking is available.

Disabled people who live or work in these areas, and hold a current Blue Badge, may be eligible to apply for the additional badge. Contact the relevant borough directly to find out more.

More information about these alternative schemes can be found on the Blue Badge London website, which is sponsored by the four boroughs above: www.bluebadgelondon.org.uk.

Blue Badge and the London Congestion Charge

Blue Badge holders do not have to pay the London Congestion Charge provided they register with Transport for London (TfL) at least ten days before your journey and pay a one-off £10 registration fee. A registration form can be downloaded from the TfL website: www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging/6736.aspx or call: 0845 900 1234 (Textphone: 020 7649 9123).

4 Powered Mobility Vehicles, Including Scooters

Types of Mobility Vehicles

- Class 1 – manual wheelchair, i.e. self-propelled or attendant-propelled, not electrically powered;
- Class 2 – powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters, for footway use only with a maximum speed limit of 4 miles per hour;
- Class 3 – powered wheelchairs, and powered scooters for use on roads/highways with a maximum speed limit of 8 miles per hour and facility to travel at 4 miles per hour on footways.

Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters are available in the Highway Code: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_069852.

Wheels within Wheels, published by Ricability, is a useful guide to using wheelchairs on public transport: www.ricability.org.uk/consumer_reports/mobility_reports/wheels_within_wheels.

On the Pavement

Powered mobility vehicles must not travel faster than 4 miles per hour (6 kilometres per hour) on pavements or in pedestrian areas. You may need to reduce your speed to adjust to other pavement users who may not be able to move out of your way quickly enough or where the pavement is too narrow.

When There Is No Pavement

Class 2 mobility vehicle users can use the road, but should use caution and:

- travel in the direction of the traffic (where possible);
- lights must be used if travelling at night.

On the Road

Class 3 mobility vehicle users should use caution, and:

- **should** travel in the direction of the traffic;
- **should** ensure they are highly visible at all times;
- **should not** carry more than one person;
- **must** follow the same rules about using lights, indicators and horns as other road vehicles; and
- **must not** travel on motorways, in cycle lanes or bus lanes (when in operation).

The Department for Transport has developed a Code of Practice for Class 3 Vehicles: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/tipws/codeofpracticeforclass3vehic6165.

Powered Mobility Vehicles on Public Transport

Some operators, at their own discretion, will permit powered mobility vehicles (e.g. mobility scooters) to travel where possible, but you may find that you are denied carriage for health and safety reasons (including stability and manoeuvrability concerns).

Make sure you check with the transport operator before you attempt any journey.

Where transport operators are able to carry powered mobility vehicles, operators may only be able to do so if the dimensions do not exceed those of the UK reference wheelchair:

- total length 1200 mm;
- total width 700 mm;
- sitting height (from ground to top of head) 1350 mm;
- height of footrest above floor 150 mm.

You will have to use the designated space, which will have a padded backrest for you to park against. For your safety and comfort you should always use this space.

Buses

Some operators allow carriage of powered mobility vehicles if the dimensions fall within those of the reference wheelchair. Find out more by contacting the operator of your local bus service on Transport Direct: www.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/FindBusInput.aspx or phone 0871 200 2233. Contact Transport for London for information about using powered mobility vehicles on buses in London. See Section 1 for contact information.

Rail

Some operators may only be able to carry powered mobility vehicles if the dimensions fall within those of a reference wheelchair (see above), or if it can be dismantled to fit in the luggage racks. To find out more, see the information provided by National Rail on each of the train operators:

www.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/disabled_passengers/wheelchairs_scooters.html or phone 0845 748 4950. Contact Transport for London for information about using powered mobility vehicles on London Overground (and Underground). See Section 1 for contact information.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

The decision on whether or not to carry powered mobility vehicles will be up to the driver and will depend on the size of your vehicle. Section 6 contains more information.

Trams and Light Rail Services

Some operators allow carriage of powered mobility vehicles. To find out more, contact the operator of your local service. Section 7 contains more information.

5 Travelling by Bus and Coach

The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 require all new bus and coach public transport vehicles to be accessible to disabled people, including wheelchair users. All vehicles will need to be accessible by 2015 – 2017 for buses and by 2020 for coaches used on scheduled services. Different dates apply according to the size and type of vehicle, and there are exceptions. Very small buses and coaches (with capacity not exceeding 22 passengers) are not included within the scope of these regulations.

Information on the regulations can be obtained from the Department for Transport (DfT). See Section 1 for contact information. Guidance is also available on the DfT website: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/buses/pubs/psvar.

Useful information on bus and coach travel is also available on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/BusAndCoachTravel/index.htm.

Bus Services

As older, inaccessible buses are being replaced, more vehicles are becoming accessible to disabled people. Modern low floor buses with ramps enable wheelchair users to board. Some buses now also have audio visual information systems on board. However, not all bus services are accessible yet.

New public transport buses should be wheelchair accessible, but always check before you travel, as services can vary. Contact your local bus operator to check if and when they run accessible services. Find your local bus service operator by using the Transport Direct Bus Route Planner: www.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/FindBusInput.aspx or phone 0871 200 2233.

Wheelchairs on Buses

Some operators may only carry wheelchairs if the size does not exceed that of the UK reference wheelchair. See Section 4 for more information.

The Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 say that a bus driver should ask non-disabled passengers occupying the wheelchair space to move if a wheelchair user needs to board the bus. However, the driver cannot make them move. Further information on these regulations can be obtained from DfT. See Section 1 for contact information. Guidance is also available on the DfT website: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/buses/pubs/conduct.

Buses in London

All buses in London are wheelchair accessible. For information about bus accessibility in London, please visit the Transport for London (TfL) bus web page: www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1171.aspx.

Coach Services

At the moment, not all coaches used on scheduled services are accessible to disabled people and are not usually wheelchair accessible. However, since 2005, all new coaches on scheduled routes must have improved access for passengers with ambulant and sensory disabilities.

Wheelchairs on Coaches

Most coaches on scheduled routes in the UK will not carry powered wheelchairs or scooters. Some may take folding manual wheelchairs in the luggage compartment but will normally require notice. Some companies operating long-distance scheduled coach services are gradually replacing their fleets with accessible coaches, sometimes low floor or with a side lift, but most often with a wheelchair lift incorporated into the passenger entrance at the front of the vehicle.

Apart from wheelchair access on the coach, there are other points you should consider when travelling by coach:

- Check that both the departure and arrival coach stations, and any other stops along the way, are accessible.
- If you need assistance getting on and off the coach, always ask for this when you book your ticket.

- Check if there is a toilet on board. However, even if there is, space inside will be limited and access may be down steep steps, so it is always worth checking if there will be any 'comfort stops' on the route.
- If you have a special diet or will need food regularly during the journey, it is advisable you to take food with you on the coach.
- You should always carry medication, food, money and valuables with you on the coach and not in the luggage hold.
- It may be possible to reserve special seats with more legroom when you book your ticket; you will need to check with the operator.
- If you need oxygen, and the equipment you use is portable and small, you may be able to take it with you, but always check with the coach company first.

For information on bus and coach accessibility please visit the Department for Transport (DfT) website:
www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/buses.

Concessionary Travel and Community Transport

Concessionary travel schemes (e.g. bus passes including Freedom passes in London) and Community Transport services (for people who are unable to use public transport) are services administered and provided by your local authority. Queries on services provided, eligibility and applications should be directed to them.

Further information on Concessionary Travel can be found on Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/BusAndCoachTravel/DG_10036264, or on the DfT website: www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary.

Further information on Community Transport is also available on Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/PublicAndCommunityTransport/DG_073262, or on the DfT website: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/voluntary.

Information on the London Dial a Ride Scheme can be found on the TfL website: www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/1187.aspx.

Making a Complaint about Bus and Coach Services

For complaints regarding bus and coach services you should in the first instance write to the operator, enclosing your ticket if possible (make copies). Complaints regarding all bus services in London should be made directly to TfL: www.tfl.gov.uk/contact or call 0845 300 7000.

Outside London, if you are not satisfied with a company's response, or if the company has not responded within a reasonable time, you can contact the Bus Appeals Body: www.busappealsbody.co.uk or call 01932 232 574.

In London, if a bus or coach company has had an opportunity to deal with your complaint, but you are not satisfied with the response, you can contact London TravelWatch: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk or call 020 7505 9000.

6 Travelling by Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle

For many disabled people, taxis (licensed taxis, e.g. black cabs) and private hire vehicles (e.g. mini cabs) are a very important means of getting around, particularly when other transport choices are not available. Both can be booked in advance. However, only licensed taxis are permitted to stand on taxi ranks or be hailed by passengers on the street.

General information on taxis and private hire services is available on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/TaxisAndPrivateHireVehicles/DG_10036418.

Wheelchair Access in Taxis

The accessibility of taxis will depend on the model or capacity of the vehicle, and your local taxi operator will be able to tell you what vehicles are available to suit your needs.

Some licensing authorities, mainly those in larger cities, require all licensed taxis to be wheelchair accessible (e.g. in London). In some areas, taxis and minicabs are saloon cars, which are not wheelchair accessible, but you may be able to transfer out of your wheelchair, because most will take a folded wheelchair in the boot. Some taxi and mini cab operators also have larger 'people carriers' or 'multi-purpose vehicles' with access for wheelchair users.

The decision on whether or not to carry powered mobility vehicles is up to the driver and will depend on the size of your vehicle and on health and safety considerations.

You can find out about the wheelchair accessible taxis available in your area by contacting the taxi licensing office in your local authority or, in London, contact Transport for London (TfL). See Section 1 for contact information.

Assistance Dogs in Taxis

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on taxi and private hire drivers to carry assistance dogs in their taxis at no extra cost. Drivers that cannot carry assistance dogs will carry a certificate of exemption confirming they have permission to refuse on medical grounds.

RNIB produces a card with the word "Taxi" in bold, black lettering to help blind and partially sighted people stop a black cab in the street. Contact the RNIB Helpline on 0303 123 9999 to obtain one.

Making a Complaint about Taxi and Private Hire Services

If you need to make a complaint about a taxi or private hire driver or a taxi or private hire operator, please contact the taxi licensing office in your local authority or see: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/TaxisAndPrivateHireVehicles/DG_10036287. It may be helpful to have the licence number or registration of the vehicle concerned.

In London, complaints about taxis and private hire drivers and operators should be reported directly to the Public Carriage Office on 0845 300 7000 or online at: www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/contact/pco.

Taxicard Schemes

Some local authorities fund Taxicard schemes for disabled people who have difficulty using public transport. Taxicard holders are able to travel in licensed taxis at reduced fares. Contact your local authority to find out what is available in your area.

In London, the Taxicard scheme is funded by participating London boroughs and the Mayor of London. For more details visit the London Councils Taxicard Scheme website: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/taxicard/default.htm. Alternatively, telephone: 020 7934 9791 or email: taxicard@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

7 Travelling by Train, Tram and Tube

Rail Services

The rail network is operated by a number of train companies. The National Rail website (www.nationalrail.co.uk) provides information on each of these, a journey planner and useful information on the services available at stations: www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations. The site also provides useful information for disabled people: www.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/disabled_passengers.

Assistance is available for disabled people to get on and off trains if it is needed. This assistance should be booked at least 24 hours before departure directly with the relevant train company: www.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/disabled_passengers/#TravelAssistance. It is important to request a confirmation number when you book your assistance. You will be asked to quote this when you arrive at the station.

It is a condition of all passenger and station licences that station and train operators should establish and comply with a Disabled People's Protection Policy (DPPP). Each train operating company is required to produce a DPPP outlining how they will protect the interests of disabled people using their services. To obtain a copy of the DPPP for an operator, contact them using the information provided on the National Rail website: www.nationalrail.co.uk/tocs_maps/tocs.

National Rail can also be contacted by telephone on 0845 748 4950 or by text phone on 0845 605 0600 for further information and help on how to plan your journey.

Disabled Persons Railcard

If you have a disability that makes travelling by train difficult, you might qualify for the Disabled Persons Railcard. The Disabled Persons Railcard allows you, and an adult companion, to get one-third off most rail fares throughout Great Britain. Information on eligibility criteria and on how to apply is available from Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/PublicAndCommunityTransport/DG_4001063.

Wheelchairs on Trains

Operators may only be willing to carry wheelchairs if the size does not exceed that of the UK reference wheelchair. See Section 4 for further details.

Trams and Light Rail Services

There are a number of tram and light rail systems across the UK. A list of all of these can be found on The Trams website: www.thetrams.co.uk.

In general, all of these services are accessible, but accessibility information should still be obtained by contacting the operator of each service directly. Information on these services can also be obtained from your local authority (see Section 1).

In London

Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for London's Overground, Underground and tram services. For information on what is available in London contact TfL (see Section 1).

TfL has also published useful guides for people with disabilities, including the 'Step Free Tube Guide', the 'Audio Tube map' and the 'Tube Toilet map': www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/accessibility-guides/default.aspx.

Making a Complaint about Rail and Tram Services

If you need to make a complaint about a rail or tram service, the first step is to contact the company that operates the line or station in question. It is best to put it in writing and, where possible, include proof of your journey (such as a copy of your ticket or receipt).

If you are unhappy with the response you receive, you can ask Passenger Focus to take up the matter for you. Passenger Focus is an independent public body created to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers. Telephone: 0300 123 2350 or website: www.passengerfocus.org.uk.

More information on making a complaint about Rail services is also available on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/RailTravel/DG_10036295.

Complaints about London's Overground, Underground, Trams and DLR services should be made on the Transport for London website: www.tfl.gov.uk/contact or by calling 0843 222 1234.

8 International Travel

It is important to be well prepared when planning any journey abroad. Make sure you have all the information you need about the trip (and for all parts of your journey) before you book your ticket. There are many sources of information available through your travel agent, tour operator, transport operator or station, airport or port.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office has published information for Disabled Travellers on its website: www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/your-trip/disabled-travellers.

This section contains general information when planning a trip or holiday abroad if you are disabled or travelling with someone who is. Also see Section 9 on Travelling by Air and Section 10 on Travelling by Sea.

Passports

Your passport will need to be valid and in good condition. Information on how to apply for a passport is available from Directgov: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports/index.htm.

Travel Health

General travel health information is available on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/travel-health/Pages/introduction.aspx. The Department of Health has also published a useful leaflet *Health Advice for Travellers*: www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4123441.

Health Insurance

If you are visiting an EU country, you should apply for the free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). See the website www.ehic.org.uk or call 0845 606 2030 for more information. The NHS website also contains some useful information on healthcare abroad: www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx.

Travel Insurance

You should take out travel insurance before you travel. Mobility aids and disability equipment are unlikely to be covered by standard travel insurance policies. If you need to take this equipment with you, make sure that it is adequately insured for loss or damage. Further information on travel insurance for disabled people is available on the Directgov website: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/PlanningATrip/DG_4018312.

Travelling with an Assistance Dog

It may be possible for you to travel with your assistance dog now that dogs are allowed to travel more freely under the Pet Travel Scheme, more commonly known as the Pet Passport Scheme: www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/index.htm.

Different countries have different rules about dogs entering their country. Before you travel, you will need to make sure that you have all the papers to prove your dog has had the necessary preparations. You should always contact your vet, the organisation that trained your dog, or the umbrella group Assistance Dogs UK: www.assistancedogs.org.uk before you make a decision.

Other useful links:

Directgov: Travel and Transport – Taking your pets abroad: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/TravellingAbroad/BeforeYouTravel/DG_4000019.

Guide Dogs Publication – Travelling Abroad with your Guide Dog or other Assistance Dog: www.guidedogs.org.uk/fileadmin/gdmain/user/Advice_and_services/Travel_and_Guide_Dogs/Documents/AdviceServices_travelguidedogs_travellingwithyourguidedog.pdf.

Medicines and Oxygen

Each country will have its own rules on the types of medicines or medical equipment you can take with you. Transport operators will also have their own rules on carrying oxygen. Please ask what the rules are, and what can be provided for you at the time of booking.

Useful information on travelling abroad with medicines and oxygen is available from the NHS Home Oxygen Service www.homeoxygen.nhs.uk/5.php and Carers Direct: www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/yourself/timeoff/Pages/Travellingabroad.aspx.

Travelling Overseas by Train

Directgov has published information for disabled people who wish to travel overseas by train: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/GettingThere/DG_4017236.

Other useful information is available on the Eurostar website: www.eurostar.com/UK/uk/leisure/travel_information/before_you_go/special_travel_needs.jsp.

9 Travelling by Air

Services on planes and at airports vary considerably around the world. It is important to plan ahead and ensure all sections of your journey are accessible to you. Section 8 also contains some useful information.

Air Travel within the EU

Under European Union (EU) law, if you are disabled or have difficulty moving around, you can receive assistance when you fly to and from the EU. EU airports can provide assistance to get you to and from your flight, including meeting you at a designated help point at the airport, checking in and getting through security, providing accessible flight information, reaching connecting flights and getting to the next part of your onward journey.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Department for Transport have published a booklet on what to do and what you can expect, entitled *Your Rights to Fly – What you need to know*: www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-service-users-pre-october-2010/air-travel/your-rights-to-fly-step-by-step-guide. For a copy of the booklet or for advice call EHRC on 0845 604 6610 (England) 0845 604 8810 (Wales). Email: info@equalityhumanrights.com.

The Directgov website also includes information on air travel for disabled travellers: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/GettingThere/DG_4017242.

Pre-booking Assistance

You should contact your airline, tour operator or travel agent to request assistance at the time of booking, or at least 48 hours in advance of departure, to be sure of getting assistance. However, if you give less, or no notice, reasonable efforts must still be made to assist you. Always ask for confirmation of booked assistance on the ticket or on your itinerary. This will be useful if you need to make a complaint if you do not receive the correct assistance.

Travelling Unaccompanied

Airline safety rules vary from airline to airline and may state that anyone unable to fasten or unfasten their seatbelt, or leave their seat and reach an emergency exit unaided, should be accompanied when travelling by air. To travel alone, you should be capable of moving from a passenger seat to an on-board wheelchair, because cabin crew are not allowed to lift passengers in and out of seats for health and safety reasons.

Refusal of Booking

Airlines can only refuse a booking from a disabled or less mobile passenger if accepting it would break safety rules, or if the size of the aircraft or its doors makes boarding or carriage physically impossible.

Seating Allocations

Some people prefer the extra space provided on an aisle or emergency exit seat. However, the Civil Aviation Authority have published information on why some people cannot be allocated to, or directed to, seats which permit direct access to emergency exits: www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx/www.dft.gov.uk/default.aspx?catid=1770&pagetype=90&pageid=9855.

Mobility Equipment

You are permitted to check-in two items of mobility equipment free of charge. Wheelchair users may be able to stay in their own wheelchair until the departure gate, depending on their disability and whether the chair can be loaded from the gate. If this is not possible, your wheelchair will be checked in and you should be transferred to an airport wheelchair suitable for your individual needs.

Using Facilities

Airport and airline staff can help you get to a toilet. However, they are unable to provide assistance in the toilets or bathrooms. If you do require help, you will need to travel with someone who can assist you.

Making a Complaint about Assistance in the EU

If you have had a problem with the assistance that was provided, you will need to inform the airline, airport or booking agent first. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, or if you wish to make a complaint about a breach of the law, contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission (contact details provided above).

Air Travel outside the EU

When travelling with non-EU airlines and to non-EU countries, disabled people may not get the same level of service that can be expected in Europe. It is always advisable to check what you can expect before you book with non-EU airlines when travelling to non-EU countries. Where there is no provision for disabled people, your rights will be those set out by the domestic laws of the country concerned.

Making a Complaint about Air Services

The Directgov website includes information on how to make a complaint about an airport, airline or travel agent:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/AirtravelintheUK/DG_10036233.

10 Travelling by Sea

Services on ferries and ships vary considerably, even across the UK, so it is important to plan ahead and ensure all sections of your journey are accessible to you. Section 8 also contains some useful information.

Port facilities and services (including booking facilities) in the UK should be accessible to disabled people. However, there is currently no legislation requiring operators of passenger vessels to do the same. Despite this, many ferry and cruise operators provide access to their services for disabled people.

Access to Sea Travel

DPTAC has published *Access to Sea Travel – Information for Disabled People and Persons with Reduced Mobility*. This document can be downloaded from the DPTAC website: <http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/pubs/seatravel/index.htm> or a printed copy can be requested from DPTAC.

Directgov has also published information on overseas travel by sea: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/GettingThere/DG_4017236.

Making a Complaint about Sea Services

For information on how to make a complaint about a port or ship service, see the DPTAC document *Access to Sea Travel* (for details, see above).

Directgov has also published information on how to make a complaint about boat services on inland waterways in Britain: www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Boatingandtravellingbywater/RiversAndWaterways/DG_10035954.



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