



Please be aware that many of the links to pages on the internet are incorrect due to recent changes to the Directgov pages

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Accessible Travel: Updated Guidance & Information for Disabled and less mobile people



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

The Department for Transport sponsors the Committee.

Chair: Dai Powell OBE

Secretariat: DPTAC, Zone 2/23 Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DR

Telephone: 020 7944 8011

Fax: 020 7944 6998

Email: dptac@dft.gsi.gov.uk

DPTAC website: www.independent.gov.uk/dptac

© Crown copyright 2012

Copyright in the typographical arrangement and design vests in the Crown except where otherwise indicated. This publication may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright with the title and source of the publication specified.

This document is printed in Univers 14pt. It is also available in alternative formats on request and is available on the DPTAC website at www.independent.gov.uk/dptac

ISBN:

DPTAC 20

October 2012

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Travelling around England and London	2
	Visiting the United Kingdom	2
	Accessible Caravan Sites and Beaches	2
	Accessible Care Hire	2
	Accessible Hotels	2
	Accessible Toilets	2
	Driving	3
	Toll and Congestion Charging Schemes	3
	Visiting London	4
	Travelling to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games	4
3.	Blue Badge (Disabled Parking) in England and Wales	5
	The Blue Badge Scheme	5
	Blue Badge Advice Line	5
	Displaying Your Blue Badge	5
	Disabled Parking for Visitors to the UK	5
	Using Your Blue Badge Abroad	6
	Misuse of Blue Badge Permits	6
	Misuse of Disabled Parking	6
	Disabled Parking Schemes in London	6
	Blue Badge and London Congestion Charge	7
4.	Powered Mobility Vehicles including Scooters	8
	Types of Mobility Vehicles	8
	On the Pavement	8
	Where there is no pavement	8
	On the road	8
	Powered Mobility Vehicles on Public Transport	9
	Rail	9
	Bus and Coach	9
	Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles	9
5.	Travelling by Bus and Coach	10
	Bus Services	10
	Wheelchairs on Buses	10
	Buses in London	11
	Coach Services	11
	Wheelchair on Coaches	11

	Points to consider when travelling by coach	11
	Concessionary Bus Travel and Community Transport	12
	Making a Complaint about a Bus and Coach Services	12
6.	Travelling by Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle	13
	Wheelchair Access in Taxis	13
	Assistance Dogs in Taxis	13
	Making a Complaint about Taxi Services	13
	Community Transport	14
	Taxicard Schemes	14
7.	Travelling by Rail, Tram and Tube	15
	Rail Services	15
	Wheelchairs on Rail	15
	Trams, Metro and Light Rail Services	15
	Making a Complaint about Rail and Tram Services	15
	In London	16
8.	International Travel	17
	Passports	17
	Travel Health	17
	Travel Insurance	17
	Travelling with an Assistance Dog	17
	Medicines and Oxygen	18
	Travelling Overseas by Train	18
9.	Travelling by Air	19
	Air Travel within the EU	19
	Pre-booking Assistance	19
	Travelling Unaccompanied	19
	Refusal of Booking	19
	Seating Allocations	19
	Mobility Equipment	20
	Using Facilities	20
	Making a Complaint about Air Services	20
10.	Travelling by Sea	21
	Access to Sea Travel	21
	Making a Complaint about Maritime Services	21



1. Introduction

DPTAC's aim is that disabled people should have the same transport choices and freedom to travel as non-disabled people and 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 significant impact, affecting the enjoyment of the experience and even dissuade 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 as you plan and book your journey.

Most of the additional information in this document is sourced from the internet **[Please be aware that many of the links to pages on the internet are incorrect due to recent changes to the Direct gov pages]** and available from:

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

Further information can also be obtained from your local authority. Contact information for all local authorities can be found on the Directgov website: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/Localcouncils/index.html>

Internet access is necessary to access most of the information supplied in this document. Your local library may provide internet access as do some local authorities and citizens advice bureaus. Support group centres may also be able to help.



2. Travelling in the United Kingdom

Visiting the United Kingdom

For advice on accessible travel in the UK visit the Tourism for All website: www.tourismforall.org.uk. Tourism for All UK is a national charity dedicated to making tourism welcoming to all. Local tourist information centres can also provide useful information on traveling around the UK: www.britainexpress.com/TIC/index.htm.

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: <http://www.accessibleguide.co.uk/>.

More information on useful contacts about holidays and leisure activities mainly, but not exclusively for families with disabled children, is available from the booklet *Holidays, Play and Leisure*, which can be downloaded from the Contact a Family website at: www.cafamily.org.uk/holidays.html.

The National Trust Access Guide provides detailed information regarding the accessibility of National Trust properties: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-visits-essential_info/w-visits-essential_info-disabilities.htm. Hard copies can be ordered from the Access office at accessforall@nationaltrust.org.uk or call 01793 817634.

Accessible Caravan Sites and Beaches: *Caravanable*, a website set up to provide information about facilities for disabled people on caravan sites in the UK also provides information on accessible beaches: <http://www.caravanable.co.uk/Links.htm>

Accessible Car Hire: The Forum of Mobility Centres provide information on companies that have adapted and accessible vehicles to hire within the UK: <http://www.mobility-centre.com/usefulcontacts1/carhire.htm>

Accessible Hotels: The Good Access Guide provides information on accessible accommodation around the UK: <http://www.goodaccessguide.co.uk/accommodation/index.php>.

Direct Enquiries also provide comprehensive and detailed access information (including pictures) on hotels around the UK including city guides: <http://www.directenquiries.com/>.

Accessible Toilets: The National Key Scheme (NKS), sometimes known as the RADAR Scheme, was developed because some public toilets for disabled people had to be locked to prevent damage and misuse. The NKS enables key holders to access thousands of public toilets independently. Keys are available to purchase (at £3.50) from the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) website: <http://www.radar-shop.org.uk> or by calling 020 7250 3222. *The National Key Scheme Guide*, also available from RADAR, provides information about the 8000+ accessible disabled toilets around the UK fitted with the NKS lock.

You can search the location of an accessible toilet on the Direct Enquiries website: <http://www.directenquiries.com/>.

Driving

Motability, a national charity that has overall responsibility for the Motability Scheme, assists disabled people to lease a car, powered wheelchair or scooter simply by using their government-funded mobility allowances: <http://www.motability.co.uk/main.cfm?Type=IDX>.

Disability Motoring UK (DMUK), a charity promoting mobility for disabled motorists, passengers and Blue Badge holders can answer your questions about accessible parking, vehicle adaptations, congestion charging and other issues affecting their members: <http://www.disabilitymotoring.org> or call 01508 489449.

The Highways Agency has published various information leaflets for disabled drivers: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/disability> or call 08457 504030. These include *My Way* magazine which contains information on handling a breakdown and *Disability – Accessibility of the Strategic Road Network*.

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, so find out what concessions apply from the authority responsible for the charging scheme prior to travel. 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 get a concession.

Blue Badge Holders are exempt from the London and Durham congestion charge – however in London pre-registration is necessary (See page 7) or for more information visit the Directgov website:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Usingmotorwaysandroads/Reducingroadcongestionandpollution/DG_10025599

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:

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

Visiting London

Visit London provide a guide to accessible London including information on accessible hotels, shopping and places to visit:

<http://www.visitlondon.com/maps/accessibility/index>

Specific information on disabled parking and using a Blue Badge in London is available on Page 6. Information on Transport in London is available within Sections 5 – 7.

More detailed information on how to get around London and journey planning is available from Transport for London. See page 1 for contact information.



3. Blue Badge (Disabled Parking) in England and Wales

The Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The scheme offers concessions throughout the UK and is administered by local authorities who deal with applications and issue the badges. Contact your local authority directly for more information. The Directgov website also contains some useful information on the scheme: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/motoringandtransport/bluebadgescheme/dg_4001061.

Blue Badge Advice Line

The Blue Badge advice line is provided by the Community Transport Association and can provide general Blue Badge information and advice including details about toll concessions and using a Blue Badge abroad. Tel: 0161 367 0009 / 020 7944 2914 or email: blue.badge@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Displaying your Blue Badge

You should display your Badge on the dashboard or fascia panel of your 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 time clock (required in England and Wales) need only be displayed when you are parking on yellow lines or in a Blue Badge parking bay that has a time limit. In both cases, you should set the time of arrival on the clock and display it next to your Badge on the dashboard or fascia panel.

You should note the Blue Badge scheme does not apply to off-street car parks, for example supermarket car parks.

Disabled Parking for Visitors to the UK

In many cases, visitors from the 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). Please check directly with the local authority you wish to park in before use. A list of local authorities can be found on Directgov using the link provided on Page 1.

When visiting from outside of the EU, it is at the discretion of each local authority whether you can use your disabled parking badge or permit, so please check directly with them in advance.

Using your Blue Badge abroad

If you are a Blue Badge holder you may also be able to use your badge in the EU and abroad, however this varies from country to country so always check local rules before you travel. For more information see the DfT Blue Badge webpage (see link on Page 5) and the leaflets:

- Parking Card for people with disabilities in the European Union:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/259428/281009/euparkingcard.pdf>
- Travelling to countries outside the European Union:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/259428/281009/outsidetheeu.pdf>

Misuse of Blue Badge Permits

It is an offence for people other than the Badge holder to take advantage of the parking concessions provided under the scheme. Local authorities can take away a badge if the badge holder misuses it. If you think that a Blue Badge is being misused you should report this to your local authority.

Misuse of Disabled Parking

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

If a non-disabled motorist has parked in a bay reserved for disabled people in a private car park (e.g. supermarket), 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 you think that people are unfairly parking in bays reserved for disabled people, 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 everyday, 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 – Green Badge**

These additional schemes are designed to give local badge holders a greater chance of getting a parking space so it is important to check the rules that apply to these areas before you travel. Standard Blue Badge holders could receive a penalty charge notice if using disabled parking bays in these areas without the correct permits being held and displayed.

If you live or work in these areas and hold a current Blue Badge you may be eligible to apply for the additional Badge. Please 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 boroughs above:
<http://www.bluebadgelondon.org.uk/>.

Blue Badge and the London Congestion Charge

Blue Badge holders do not have to pay the London Congestion Charge provided you register with Transport for London (TfL) at least ten days before your journey and pay a one-off £10 registration fee. You can download a registration form from the TfL website:
<http://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

There are three types of mobility vehicles as defined in The Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988:

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

Rules for users of powered wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters (PMS) are available in the Highway Code:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_069852.

On the Pavement: powered mobility vehicles must not travel faster than 4 mph (6 km/h) 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);
- use lights 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 you 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 (if fitted); and
- must not travel on motorways, cycle lanes or bus lanes (when in operation).

The Department for Transport has developed a Code of Practice for Class 3 Vehicles:

<http://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 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 operator before you attempt any journey.

Where operators are able to carry powered mobility vehicles they may only be able to do so if the size does not exceed that of the UK reference wheelchair:

- Total length 1200mm
- Total Width 700mm
- Sitting Height (from ground to top of head) 1350mm
- Height of footrest above floor 150mm

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.

Rail - Operators may only be able to carry powered mobility vehicles that fall within the size of a reference wheelchair, (see above) or which 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:

http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/disabled_passengers/scooters.html or phone: 0845 7484950.

Bus and coach - Operators should carry electric wheelchairs which are within the dimensions of the reference wheelchair and which do not exceed any weight limit (usually 300kg including the user). Sometimes the way the space is organised inside the bus or coach can mean that it is impossible to manoeuvre larger chairs into the wheelchair space in which case you will not be permitted to travel. Generally operators do not allow carriage of powered mobility scooters, for the reasons given above. However some may allow scooters if they fall within the size of the reference wheelchair. To find out more contact the operator of your local bus service by using the Directgov Journey Planner:

<http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/FindBusInput.aspx> or phone 0871 2002233. For information about buses in London, please visit the Transport for London website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2605.aspx>.

Taxis and private hire vehicles – The carriage of powered mobility vehicles will be at the driver's discretion and will be dependant on the size of your vehicle, and on health and safety considerations.



5. Travelling by Bus and Coach

The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) 2000 focused on ensuring that all new bus and coach public transport vehicles must be physically accessible to disabled people, including wheelchair users. Specifically these rules related to the design and layout of buses to include slip-resistant floor, designated disabled spaces and handrails. Time was afforded to bus and coach companies to gradually upgrade their fleets of vehicles but by 1st January 2017 all buses must comply with these regulations. Coaches have until 1st January 2020.

Public Transport providers who fail to provide spaces, or to make their vehicles accessible according to those regulations are open to prosecution in the criminal law.

Having regulated design standards, attention has subsequently turned to ensuring that designated wheelchair spaces and priority spaces are themselves accessible.

The Disability Discrimination Act was amended in 2005 and gave the individual disabled passenger a right to bring a civil claim for compensation against a public transport service provider if they failed to make reasonable adjustments to make the service accessible.

Both disabled passengers and transport companies alike seem concerned as to the extent by which a designated wheelchair space should be preserved for disabled passengers. Recent passenger surveys highlight anxiety as to potential conflict with other passengers where push chairs and luggage are stored in the wheelchair space.

In October 2007, former Minister of State for Transport, Rosie Winterton MP stated that,

“Powers granted to Government under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 enabled the Department for Transport to make regulations allowing wheelchair users to access new buses in safety and in reasonable comfort. No such powers were granted in respect of people using pushchairs.”

The Equality Act 2010 has since strengthened the rights of disabled passengers further. If a disabled person can show that they have been treated less favourably than others for a reason related to their disability, or that the transport provider has failed to make a reasonable adjustment, then they will be entitled to claim compensation from that transport company. This includes being unable to access a bus which might comply with PSVAR, for example where a bus might be accessible because it has

a ramp, but where the ramp cannot be used, or where the wheelchair space is in use by someone who is not disabled. It would be a reasonable adjustment to ensure that the wheelchair space is available for wheelchair users and to ensure that it is not taken up by non-disabled passengers when it is required by a wheelchair user.

Further 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:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/buses/pubs/psvar/>.

The Equality Act 2010 can be obtained from:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Bus Services

As we approach 2017 more vehicles are becoming accessible to disabled people. Modern low floor buses with ramps enable wheelchair users to board, although not all are wheelchair accessible yet. Various companies around the UK are utilising 'talking bus' technologies and some buses now also have audio visual information systems on board

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 by using the Directgov Journey Planner:

<http://directgov.transportdirect.info/Web2/JourneyPlanning/FindBusInput.aspx> or phone 0871 200 2233.

Wheelchairs on Buses

Operators may only carry wheelchairs if its size does not exceed that of the UK reference wheelchair. Scooters are not permitted. (See Section 4 for more details).

Buses in London

All buses in London are wheelchair accessible. In London, Transport for London (TfL) has introduced what it calls the iBus which it claims is one of the world's largest integrated Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) projects. This uses satellite technology to update passengers on board and at bus stops as to the next stops, current location and estimated times of arrival. For information about buses in London, please visit the Transport for London (TfL) Buses website: <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2605.aspx>.

Coach Services

At the moment, coaches used on scheduled coach services are not always accessible to some disabled people and are not usually wheelchair accessible. 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.

Points to consider when travelling by coach

- To ensure that you can travel at your required time, and so that drivers are fully aware of when you are travelling, it is strongly recommended that you make a reservation in advance.
- Check that both the departure and arrival coach stations are accessible, including any other stops along the way.
- 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. Even if there is, the space inside will be limited and access to it may be down steep steps. Ask if there will be any 'comfort breaks' along the route.
- If you have a special diet or will need food during the journey it is advisable to take food with you.
- You should always carry medication, food, money and valuables with you onto the coach – do not place these in the luggage hold.
- It may be possible to reserve seats with extra legroom. Check with the operator when you book your ticket.
- If you will need oxygen you may be able to take it with you, but always check with the operator first.

For information on bus and coach accessibility please visit the Department for Transport (DfT) website:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/buses/>.

Concessionary Bus Travel and Community Transport

Concessionary fare schemes (e.g. Freedom Passes) 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: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/PublicAndCommunityTransport/DG_073262, or on DfT website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/voluntary/>.

Further information on Community Transport is also available on Directgov: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/PublicAndCommunityTransport/DG_4019388, or on the DfT website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/concessionary/>.

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

Making a Complaint about Bus and Coach Services

If you have experienced difficulty with access to buses, trains or stations and want to complain about your journey, here's what we recommend:

1. Keep your ticket, which should give you the details of the company responsible and the journey in question;
2. Make your complaint straight away. The complaint should include all of the details of the journey, date, time, route, names and employee numbers if available and a copy of the ticket (not the original);
3. Set a timescale for a response to your complaint, and set out your proposed outcome which might be to suggest better signage, or staff training;

If you are outside London and are unhappy with the bus operator's response you can ask Passenger Focus to follow it up: 08453 022022 or <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk>. Passenger Focus is an independent public body created to protect the interests of Britain's bus passengers.

If you would like to take a complaint further in London, contact London Travel Watch on 020 7505 9000 or <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk>

For further information see the Directgov website: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/BusAndCoachTravel/DG_10036241

If you believe that you have been discriminated against on grounds of your disability, you should seek legal advice. Free initial advice is regularly provided by the Equality & Human Rights Commission, the Citizens Advice Bureau or other law centres. There are also independent law firms with specialist practices in disability discrimination and transport cases.

If you would like to contact the Equality & Human Rights Commission, they can be contacted at www.equalityhumanrights.org. They have a help line called the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) on 0800 444 205 from 09:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday and 10:00 to 14:00 Saturday.



6. Travelling by Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle

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

Wheelchair Access in Taxis

Accessibility is at the discretion of the operator and also dependant on the model / capacity of vehicle. Please call the operator direct to find out what they have available. You can also find out whether there are wheelchair accessible taxis available in your local area by contacting the taxi licensing office in your local authority.

Licensing authorities, mainly those in larger cities require licensed taxis to be wheelchair accessible (e.g. All licensed taxis in London are wheelchair accessible, as is the Hackney Carriage fleet in Manchester and over half of the fleet in Newcastle, Birmingham and Cardiff).

Outside these areas many taxis and minicabs are saloon cars which are not wheelchair accessible but you may be able to transfer out of your wheelchair as most will take a folded wheelchair in the boot. Some taxi and mini cab operators have larger 'people carriers' or 'multi-purpose vehicles' (MPVs) with access for wheelchair users.

The carriage of powered mobility vehicles will be at the driver's discretion and will be dependant on the size of your vehicle, and on health and safety considerations.

Assistance Dogs in Taxis

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on licensed taxi drivers in England and Wales to carry assistance dogs in their taxis without charge. Similar duties for private hire vehicles (minicabs) came into force in March 2004.

RNIB (<http://www.rnib.org.uk> or telephone 0303 123 9999) has produced a sign for blind and partially sighted people to assist them to hail a taxi.

Making a Complaint about Taxi Services

If you need to make a complaint about a taxi operator please contact the taxi licensing office in your local authority or see:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/TaxisAndP>

[PrivateHireVehicles/DG_10036287](#). It may be helpful to have the licence number or registration of the vehicle concerned.

In London, complaints can be reported directly to the Public Carriage Office <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/contact/pco>.

For further general information on Taxis see the Directgov website: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Publictransport/TaxisAndPrivateHireVehicles/DG_10036418

Community Transport

Many local authorities provide community transport services, (generally a minibus or van) for people who cannot use public transport:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/PublicAndCommunityTransport/DG_073262

Contact your local authority to find out what is available in your area. In London, visit the Transport for London Dial a Ride website:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/3222.aspx> or call 0845 9991999.

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. Visit the London Taxicard Scheme website for more details:

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/taxicard/default.htm>. Tel: 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 (<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk>) provides information on each of these, a journey planner, and useful information on the services provided at stations: http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/. The site also provides useful information for disabled people: http://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 prior to departure directly with the relevant train company: http://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.

National Rail can also be contacted by telephone on 0845 7484950 or by text phone on 0845 6050600 for further information and help on how to plan your journey.

Wheelchairs on Trains

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

Trams, Metro and Light Rail Services

There are a number of Tram, Metro and Light Rail systems across the UK, A list of all of these can be found on The Trams website: <http://www.thetrans.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 page 1).

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 who 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 still unhappy you can ask Passenger Focus, an independent public body created to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, to take up the matter further for you. Telephone: 0300 1232350 or website <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk>.

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

In London

Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for London Underground (Tube), London Overground (Rail), London Trams and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR):

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1167.aspx>.

London Underground (Tube): Some of parts of the Tube were built in late Victorian times and as a result have limited access for disabled people. Newer lines, however, are now much more accessible and there are continuing works to upgrade the system including at some older stations. TfL has published useful guides for people with disabilities, including the Step Free Tube Guide, the Audio Tube Map and the Tube Toilet map:
<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/gettingaround/accessibility-guides/default.aspx>.

You can ask a member of staff at any station to help you get onto the platform, and if necessary onto the train and to a seat. Staff will call ahead to ensure assistance is waiting for you at your arrival destination. Wheelchair accessibility does still vary - use the TfL links above to obtain more information.

London Trams: All access to London Trams is step-free. There is no need to use ramps or any other special features to board. Additionally, all tram travel is free for wheelchair users, irrespective of whether or not they hold a Freedom Pass. To assist blind and partially sighted people, each stop has a tactile strip along its entire length, a safe distance from the platform edge. See the London Trams website on the TfL website:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2674.aspx>.

Complaints about London Tube, London Trams, DLR or London Overground services should be made on the Transport for London website:
https://custserv.tfl.gov.uk/icss_csip/init.do or by calling 0843 222 1234.



8. International Travel

It is important to be well prepared when planning any journey. 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 including the travel agent, tour operator, transport operator or station, airport or port.

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

This section contains general information when planning an international trip or holiday abroad if you are disabled or travelling with someone who is. More specific.

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

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

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

Travel Insurance: It is recommended that you have travel insurance prior to 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:

http://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: <http://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 that your dog has had the necessary preparations, so you should always contact your vet, the organisation that trained your dog, or the umbrella group Assistance Dogs UK: <http://www.assistancedogs.org.uk/> before you make a decision.

Other useful links:

Directgov: Travel and Transport - Taking your pets abroad:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/TravellingAbroad/BeforeYouTravel/DG_4000019

Guide Dogs Publication - Travelling Abroad with your Guide Dog or other Assistance Dog:

http://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 their 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 is available from the NHS Home Oxygen Service <http://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: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/GettingThere/DG_4017236.

Other useful information is available on the Eurostar website:

http://www.eurostar.com/UK/uk/leisure/travel_information/before_you_go/special_travel_needs.jsp



9. Travelling by Air

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 contact 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) has published a booklet on what to do and what you can expect entitled *Your Rights to Fly*: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/download_your_rights_to_fly_.pdf. For a copy of the booklet or for advice call EHRC on 0845 604 6610 (England) 0845 604 8810 (Wales). Email: info@equalityhumanrights.com.

Directgov has also published information on air travel on their website: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/GettingThere/DG_4017242

Pre-Booking Assistance: It is advised that you ask the airline for assistance at the time of booking (or no later than 48 hours before departure) to be sure of getting it. Always ask for some confirmation of this on the ticket or on your itinerary. This will be useful if you need to make a complaint.

Travelling Unaccompanied: Airline safety rules, which vary from airline to airline, may state that anyone unable to fasten or unfasten their seatbelt, 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, as 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 to explain why some people cannot be allocated to, or directed to, seats which permit direct access to emergency exits:

<http://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 (e.g. electric wheelchair and manual wheelchair). Wheelchair users may also be able to stay in their own wheelchair until the departure gate depending on the impact of your disability and whether the chair can be loaded from the gate.

Using Facilities: Airport and airline staff can help you get to a toilet. However, they are unable to provide assistance in the 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 you wish to make a complaint about a breach of the law contact the Civil Aviation Authority (contact details provided on page 19).

Air Travel outside Europe

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

Directgov has published information on how to make a complaint about an airport, airline or travel agent on their website:

http://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.

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. New European legislation coming into force in December 2012 will make it unlawful for operators of cruise or ferry services from refusing to carry disabled passengers except on the grounds of safety. The legislation does not require operators to alter ships to make them more accessible. Detail of how to complain if you feel that an operator is unreasonably refusing to carry you on ship will be available on the Directgov website.

Directgov also has published information on overseas travel by sea:
http://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 above *Access to Sea Travel* (see above).

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