

Out and about

Transport – Trains, undergrounds, metros and trams

Transport not accessible



Useful knowledge

Under the Equality Act 2010, transport must be accessible for all people, regardless of disability. There are special regulations under the Equality Act 2010 that deal with physical accessibility of transport modes; and the discrimination provisions of the Act deal with what happens getting on and off transport and when on it.

If you're discriminated against in transport because of your disability, your complaint would go to the local government in the case of taxis and minicabs, and the provider in the case of buses and trains. For taxis where you know which taxi company you used, you can also complain directly to the taxi company.

Trains, undergrounds, metros and trams

Rail services are now far more accessible than they were in the past and many disabled customers are able to use the rail network without assistance.

You have a right to request assistance when travelling on National Rail. This can include help in boarding or exiting the train, or accessing the platform. You should request assistance in advance, particularly if you're travelling through stations that you're unfamiliar with, or if you need a ramp or other help from staff to get on or off the train. Some companies require you to book at least 24 hours' in advance. You can make your request the National Rail Travel Assistance online booking system, or by calling the rail company.

If rail replacement bus services are being used and you're unable to access the bus, the rail company must provide you with a taxi to ensure you reach your destination.

Some trains still don't meet accessibility standards. However, all light and heavy passenger trains in the UK must meet accessibility standards by 1 January 2020.

For undergrounds, metros and trams, if you're unable to travel because of a broken lift, the transport provider may pay for a taxi for you.

Useful skills

- Effective communication
- Negotiation skills
- Writing clearly
- Problem solving
- Decision making

Ways to assert your legal rights

1. If you've requested assistance but the request isn't granted or if no one is there to assist you, you should complain to the train company as soon as possible. Provide as much detail as you can on what happened as a result of being denied assistance. You may be able to claim back some or all of the cost of your ticket. You may also be able to claim additional costs, such as a taxi to take you to your destination station if you were unable to exit the train where you intended.
2. If the trains or stations are inaccessible to you, even with assistance, you can complain to the train company. Your complaint could be about there being no accessible toilets at stations or on trains, a lack of wheelchair space or a lack of priority seating.
3. Train companies have their own complaints procedures you should go through to begin with. If you've exhausted the internal complaints procedure and are still not satisfied with the train company's response, you can complain to Transport Focus, the watchdog for transport users.

Download [train company complaint letter](#)

You may also want to consider seeking [injunctive relief](#)

4. If the train company doesn't make reasonable adjustments, you may be able to take legal action. Taking court action can be a long, stressful and

sometimes very expensive process. There are strict time limits for taking legal action under the Equality Act. You will have six months minus one day from the date of discrimination to make your claim in the County Court. A court can allow an 'out-of-time' claim in limited circumstances but it is better to seek legal advice. You can claim for compensation, and a legal order for the service provider to make the reasonable adjustments you originally asked for.

You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

- Telephone** • 0808 800 0082
- Text phone** • 0808 800 0084
- Email** • [through websites form](#)

[Transport Focus](#) is the watchdog for transport users

See [case studies](#) for example Disabled passenger receives refund and apology from South West Trains

www.transportfocus.org.uk/advice-and-complaints/case-studies