

# Get on board



## A guide for disabled travellers on the Borders Railway



This guide was funded by  
The Rotary Club of Jedburgh

# Getting to Edinburgh

Travelling to Edinburgh from the Scottish Borders was often difficult for disabled people, whether they went by car or by bus.

The Borders Railway makes it more comfortable for them to make a return trip to the city.

We have produced this booklet in the hope that it helps you to have a safe and enjoyable journey.

| Departures   |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| 12:11        | Platform 7  |
| Tweedbank    |             |
| Calling at:  | Page 1 of 1 |
| Brunstane    |             |
| Newcraighall |             |
| Shawfair     |             |
| Eskbank      |             |
| Newtongrange |             |
| Gorebridge   |             |
| Stow         |             |
| Galashiels   |             |
| & TWEEDBANK. |             |
| ScotRail     |             |

## Planning your journey

Disabled people need to know how to access the train safely and should always contact **ScotRail Assisted Travel** before travelling.

If you need a ramp, this can be arranged and a ScotRail employee will help you to get on the train safely.

ScotRail has a **Disabled Persons Protection Policy** that covers the whole of Scotland. It can be downloaded from [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk) or requested by phoning 08009 122901.

There are no toilets at any of the unmanned stations on the Borders Railway, but there is a **Changing Places** fully accessible toilet at the Galashiels Transport Interchange.



The designated wheelchair space on the trains is only big enough for a single wheelchair.

Wheelchair users, however, have priority over pushchairs, scooters, luggage, etc.



The toilets on the train cannot be used by people who have to use a wheelchair.

**It is not possible to reserve a wheelchair space.**

## Disabled Persons Railcard

This railcard currently costs £20 for one year or £54 for three years (2016).

It entitles you to rail travel throughout the UK, with a third off the normal fare and the same discount for a companion travelling with you.

You can get an application form at any ScotRail ticket office, online at [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk) or by phone on 0912 188103, Textphone 091 269 0304.

You will need proof of your disability when applying.

Once you have your railcard, you can use it at ticket machines at unmanned stations to get your discounted tickets.



## National (Scotland) Concessionary Travel for Blind Persons

A free card is available to residents in Scottish Borders who are registered as either partially sighted (sight impaired) or blind (severely sight impaired).



It gives free travel (in Scotland only) on all bus, coach and rail services and some ferry services. This includes travel to/from Carlisle and Berwick-upon-Tweed.

You can apply for a pass with a C + (with companion) entitlement, if one of the following applies:

- you are registered as blind
- you are registered as partially sighted and in receipt of Attendance Allowance
- you are registered as partially sighted and receive high or middle rate care component DLA (Disability Living Allowance)
- you are registered as partially sighted and are in receipt of standard or enhanced daily living component of PIP (Personal Independence Payment).

Your companion will be able to accompany you and travel free throughout Scotland on buses. **Please note that this concession does not apply to journeys by rail.**

Visit [www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk) to find out more.



## National Entitlement Card

This covers travel anywhere in Scotland and to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle. Many people in the Scottish Borders will already have one, as it can be used in libraries, as a bus pass, and for other council services.

Additional information can be added to the card to allow you to use it on the Borders Railway, with discounts for you and a companion where appropriate. Apply to your local Scottish Borders Council Contact Centre, with proof of your disability and current address, and a photograph.

You cannot use the National Entitlement Card at a ticket machine in an unmanned station. You can pay on the train or at your destination and you will not incur any penalties.

If you do not have a Disabled Person's Railcard or a National Entitlement Card, and you stay in your wheelchair for the entire journey, you can get a 34% discount. If you have a companion they get the same discount.

### **Wheelchair spaces cannot be reserved on the Borders Railway.**



If a wheelchair cannot be accommodated on a train, arrangements will be made to provide alternative transport, such as an accessible taxi, to allow the passenger to complete the journey at no extra cost.

## Buying tickets

If you are disabled, you should book tickets with Scotrail Assisted Travel. You can also make them aware of any help you need, such as an access ramp.

Call 0800 912 2901 or Textphone 18001 0800 912 2901. You can also buy a ticket at [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

You should give 24 hours' notice, so that arrangements can be put in place. If you need tickets to be posted out to you, then allow seven days.

You can also buy tickets at staffed stations or at stations with self-service ticket machines. **Please note that you cannot use the National Entitlement Card in these machines, but you can use a Disabled Persons Railcard.**

If you are unable to buy a ticket in advance because of your disability, you will be able to get a ticket on the train or at your destination with no extra cost.

You might need to do this, for example, if the station ticket office is closed and your disability prevents you from using a self-service ticket machine. You will still receive the relevant fare reductions, subject to entitlement.

Speech-impaired and/or hearing impaired passengers can get a **ScotRail Passenger Assist Card** from staffed stations or the ScotRail website.

The passenger can write questions on the space provided on the back of the card and show it to a staff member on the train.



The image shows a dark blue ScotRail Passenger Assist Card. At the top, it says 'SCOTRAIL PASSENGER ASSISTANCE' in white. Below this, it provides contact information: 'Request for assistance can be made by calling ScotRail Assisted Travel before you travel. Assisted Travel Helpline: 0800 912 2901 Text Relay Service (for the hard of hearing): 18001 0800 912 2901'. The 'You can:' section lists four bullet points: '• arrange assistance to board/alight the train', '• arrange seats/locations and/or their space', '• purchase travel tickets (on-board facilities/alternative transport)', and '• check accessibility at stations/on-board facilities'. The 'AID TO COMMUNICATION' section contains three questions with corresponding blank lines for answers: 'I am travelling to: \_\_\_\_\_', 'What is the destination of the train I need to get? \_\_\_\_\_', and 'I need to purchase a ticket. How much is the fare? \_\_\_\_\_'. At the bottom, it says 'Please write any questions/answers in this space: \_\_\_\_\_'. The ScotRail logo is in the top right corner.

# On the train

## Getting on the train

There will be a carriage with a wheelchair symbol on the door.

If you are in a wheelchair/scooter or you need a ramp, contact ScotRail

Assisted Travel beforehand, and a member of staff will put a ramp in place.

Wheelchair dimensions should be no greater than 700mm wide and 1200mm long.

Scooters should be no greater than 1040mm long and 560mm wide.

Wheelchair and occupant should weigh no more than 300kg.



The Borders Railway currently uses the 158 model of carriages. These will be refurbished by 2018.

So far, only three carriages have been refurbished, with single doors adapted to double doors. This single door can make access into the carriage a bit tight.

The position of the accessible toilet may cause difficulties for many disabled people. These toilets cannot be used by people who have to use a wheelchair.

Scooter passengers have to transfer to a seat as they cannot remain on the scooter. Scooters should be locked and put in the wheelchair priority area.

Contact ScotRail Assisted Travel before starting your journey.

Once in the carriage, wheelchair users have to make a sharp right turn to get into the dedicated wheelchair area. This space cannot be reserved, but wheelchair users do have priority. Passengers using this space will be asked to vacate it for a wheelchair user.

There are priority seats around the wheelchair location. If the passenger has a Guide Dog, there is a space under the seat for the dog.



### **Parking**

All stations, except Galashiels and Brunstane, have dedicated parking facilities.

### **Staffing**

With the exception of Edinburgh Waverley, all stations are unstaffed.

### **Ticket machines**

All stations have ticket machines. Disabled Persons Railcards can be used at these machines to get a discount. National Entitlement Card holders can buy tickets on the train.

### **Toilets**

The only station on the Borders Railway route with toilet facilities is Edinburgh Waverley.

In Galashiels, toilet facilities, including a Changing Place, can be found at the Transport Interchange across the road from the station (see Page 9).

## Galashiels Transport Interchange

The Galashiels Transport Interchange is mainly designed to provide better connections between all means of transport, particularly bus and train.

It is across the road from the railway station, and is accessed via a pedestrian crossing.

It has tourist information, bus and train information and a railway ticket machine.

The Interchange is staffed.

Other facilities include showers and a Changing Places toilet, suitable for all types of disability.

There is seating and a café on the ground floor.

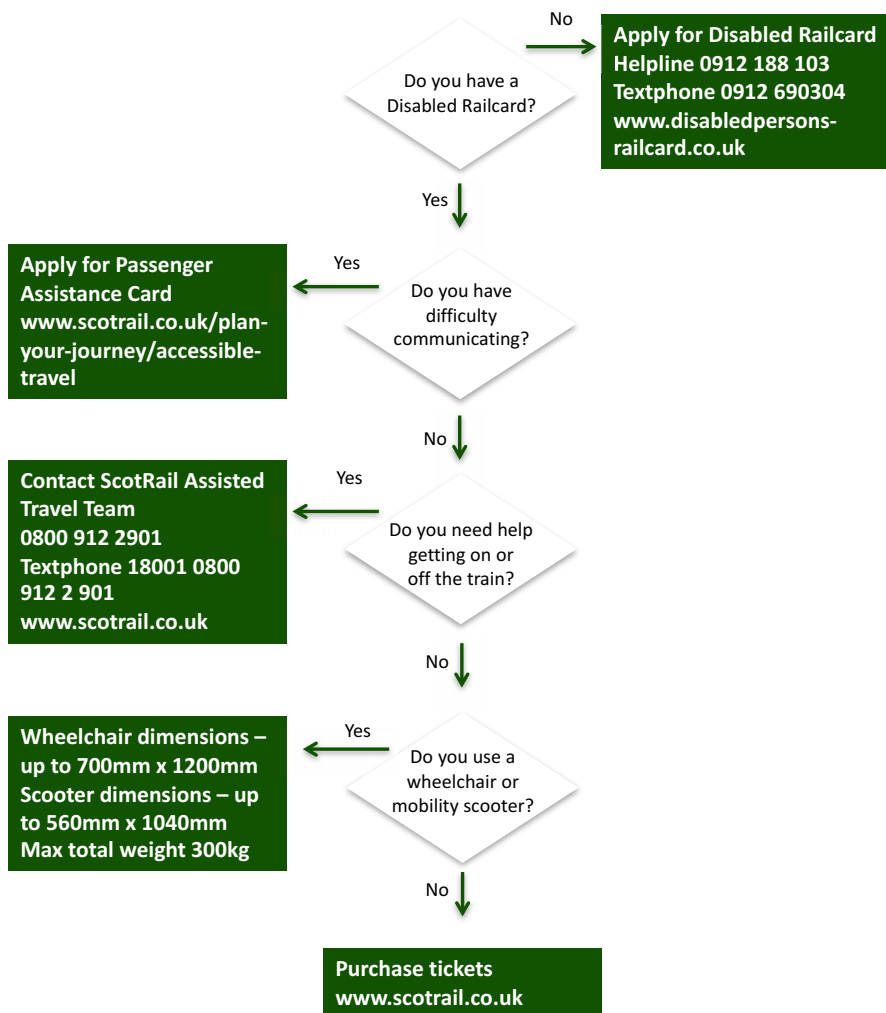
There is a car park opposite the interchange.



## Changing Places

Changing Places toilets are different from standard accessible toilets as they have extra features and more space to meet the needs of people who use them. Find out more at [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

# Get help - a quick guide



# Useful contacts

## ScotRail Customer Relations

PO Box 27129

Glasgow G2 9LH

[customerrelations@scotrail.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@scotrail.co.uk)

0344 811 0141

## ScotRail Assisted Travel Team

0800 912 2901

Textphone 180 010 800 912 2901

Scotrail would be interested to hear about your experience on the Borders Railway – good or bad.

This publication was researched and written by Isobel McLeish of Jedburgh, a disabled user of the Borders Railway, and friends. It was supported by the following organisations:



**You can contact the author of this  
publication, Isobel McLeish, c/o  
Borders Voluntary Care Voice  
Roxburgh House Court  
Roxburgh Street  
Galashiels TD1 1NY  
Tel. 01896 757290  
E-mail [isobelmcleish@yahoo.com](mailto:isobelmcleish@yahoo.com)**

**Photographs courtesy of:**

Steven Oliver  
Scottish Borders Council  
ScotRail  
Face PR

**Published November 2016**