

Great Northern can now further support disabled passengers at three stations on the Fen line

June 6, 2023



A wheelchair user from Stowbridge is urging other disabled people and those who require assistance to enjoy the independence he gains from travelling by train now that **Great Northern** has launched a new mobile assistance team for Downham Market, Littleport and Watlington stations.

Gio Strawbridge works at a tech company in London and has been commuting to King's Cross from Downham Market on the Fen Line between King's Lynn and Cambridge for seven years. He travels at a time of day when Downham Market station is staffed.

However, Downham Market is not staffed all the time and the smaller stations of Littleport and Watlington have no staff at all.

Now, a new mobile assistance team will be on hand within 20 minutes, every day of the week – weekends included – with the aim to provide assistance to board or alight every train that is running.

Gio said: “Being able to use the train is extremely important for me, for as much as I can work from home which is easy convenient and easy, there are occasions every week when I do need to travel into work. If the train wasn’t available, the only other option would be to drive which I would never do.

“It’s just a fabulous service. The staff at the station are really helpful and make sure I board the train I want, that I’m comfortable on the train, and make sure I’m safe.

“The assistance staff at King’s Cross are fantastic as well. It gives me the ability to travel into London to work and I know I’m safe. The train service is flexible for people who have mobility issues, I don’t have to worry.

“Ray and John on the mobile assistance team are really good and you get the personal touch which I really like. You are very important to them and you are known. I know as soon as I pull into Downham there’ll be someone there waiting with the ramp.”

Great Northern’s Accessibility Lead Carl Martin said: “We’re constantly looking for ways to improve the level of service we give people who need assistance, to overcome the barriers that prevent independent travel on the railway.

“This latest mobile assistance team could transform the lives of many of our customers. It will help us create a more accessible and inclusive railway, where everyone has the confidence to travel with us.

“We really want people to try out the service and let us know what they think about it through our customer contact centre.”

The mobile team is there for anyone who needs assistance getting around the station and boarding a train – whether it be an older person with luggage, someone who is visually impaired or someone who needs a ramp to board the train with a wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Customers request assistance when they arrive at the station, either by contacting the control centre from the station help point, using the ‘emergency and assisted travel button’, or by calling freephone 0808 168 1238 or texting 07970 511077.

The mobile assistance team members are based at Downham Market and will drive to Littleport or Watlington, aiming to arrive within 20 minutes, to help the customer board the train and notify the destination station of their arrival. On the customer’s return journey, the mobile assistance team will be there to greet the customer off the train.

If passengers prefer, they can book the mobile assistance team further in advance by contacting the assisted travel team either online or by calling 0800 138 1016.

Photo credit: GTR