

# Sussex and Hertfordshire stations mapped for blind and partially sighted passengers

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Blind and partially sighted passengers will find it easier to navigate four of the busiest stations in Sussex and Hertfordshire now that Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern have installed RNIB tactile maps.

The update, by parent company Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), completes an annual £700,000 investment at 33 stations, making small but important improvements based on customer feedback as part of its journey towards making services more accessible.

Elsewhere, stairs have been refurbished with bright white and yellow strips that help partially sighted people see the edges and know when they're at the top or bottom. Public address systems have been updated to be clearer, new accessibility information points have been created, clearer platform information displays installed and help points updated. *See editor's notes for a full stations list.*

The two new tactile maps at **Brighton** and **Three Bridges**, which also has an extra gate wide enough for wheelchair users, parents with buggies and those with luggage, each reflect recent changes in the station layouts. The same is true at **Haywards Heath** where there's also an extra map next to its second entrance. **Stevenage** station now also has an additional tactile map in the main concourse.

Manufactured by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), the raised lines and symbols mean the maps can be used by blind and partially sighted passengers. There are also braille translations of printed information.

Michelle Lee, RNIB Accessible Maps, Images and Signage Consultant, said: “RNIB has campaigned over a number of years to make rail travel more accessible for blind and partially sighted people. A fundamental part of this work is ensuring the accessibility of train stations and the support people need to get around them.

“We commend Govia Thameslink Railway for helping with this work by installing ‘RNIB Maps for All’ at four of its stations. These maps will help people with sight loss to travel independently and with confidence.”

Chris Fowler Customer Services Director for Southern, said: “We’re listening and delivering on our pledge to make travelling easier for our disabled customers, and others with accessibility needs. These smart RNIB maps and other small but important improvements made at stations should make a real difference.”

Rail and Accessibility Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: “I’m pleased to see GTR bring in this important initiative, benefiting blind and partially sighted passengers as people return to our railways.

“I am determined to ensure the rail network is open to everyone, and these maps will ensure passengers can travel with confidence through some of Sussex and Hertfordshire’s busiest stations.”

*Photo credit: Govia Thameslink Railway*