

# SWR launch boarding assistance service in industry first

August 5, 2021



South Western Railway (SWR) has announced the launch of Assisted Boarding Points – an industry first assistance service for its customers, allowing for a far more intuitive and efficient travel experience.

Customers at a host of SWR stations will now see dedicated Assisted Boarding Points on station platforms, where they can WhatsApp or call a dedicated customer service team, who will contact the guard on the next available service and ensure assistance is provided when the train arrives. The service requires customers to give just 10 minutes notice prior to travelling.

The boarding points will ensure both customers and guards know exactly where to meet – helping to improve the overall travel experience. There will be clear signage with a QR code for customers to scan and instantly message the dedicated team with details of their journey via WhatsApp, and also a direct telephone number. Customers will need to provide details of their departure station, destination station and the type of assistance they require such as a wheelchair ramp, support getting onto the train due to a visual impairment, reduced mobility or an injury, and the guard onboard will be ready to help upon arrival.

The service is currently being rolled out at a number of SWR stations in Surrey, Hampshire, Wiltshire,

Somerset, Dorset and Devon, but it will eventually cover the whole network – in total, to 189 stations and 417 platforms.

Christian Neill, Deputy Customer Experience Director at South Western Railway commented: “We know that not every journey is planned in advance, and indeed they shouldn’t have to be. We’re proud to be launching this industry first service, which will make it markedly easier for our customers who require assistance to travel with minimum fuss or difficulty. This is just one way in which we’re boosting the accessibility of our network and helping all of our customers to travel with confidence.”

Alan Benson, Chair of Transport for All said: “Getting help on and off the train is vital for disabled people travelling, and this is the most common source of problems. Anything that makes this easier has to be welcomed. This initiative by SWR puts disabled travellers in control of their own journeys and will give them the confidence that is too often missing.”

Anthony Smith, Chief Executive of Transport Focus said: “We know from our research that elderly and disabled passengers don’t always receive the help they need when travelling by rail. This new boarding service will enable people to request assistance more easily, without the need to pre-book.”

Customers can find out more information about the new assisted boarding points, where they have been rolled out and how to use the service

here: <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/assisted-travel/assisted-boarding-points>

*Photo credit: South Western Railway*