

Thameslink has new team to help people at three London stations

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Thameslink has said there is new assistance for visitors at three south London stations.

A mobile team has already begun work on the Thameslink route, in a trial that aims to provide support to disabled passengers and other customers at Beckenham Hill, Crofton Park and Ravensbourne stations.

The result is support nearby at three stations each day of the week, including weekends for all train services.

This adds to the existing provision, which had assistance available to help only when the ticket offices were staffed, on weekday mornings and early afternoons.

The initiative is part of **plans announced** by Thameslink and its parent company GTR last year to give all passengers the confidence to travel no matter their access need or the level of support they require.

Thameslink'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.

“The new mobile assistance team is very much a trial and we want to seek feedback from the people who actually use it.

“I really think this new service 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.”

The service is there for anyone who needs assistance getting around the station and boarding a train. This includes elderly people with luggage, those who are visually impaired or, where platforms are step-free, passengers who require a ramp for a wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Customers request assistance by contacting Thameslink’s control centre, either 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, which is based at Beckenham Hill, will drive to Crofton Park or Ravensbourne, 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.

Kay Pallaris from Crofton Park Railway Garden user group said: “This is really good news. I know that a friend of mine who is a wheelchair user has had to cancel visiting us in the past because he couldn’t get assistance at Crofton Park station.”