



What is APRS?

The Assisted Passenger Reservation Service consists of two parts;

- » The booking of the service through the national railway reservation system (NRS)
- » The actual assistance to customers at stations and on trains (providing information or physical help)

How APRS booking process works

A disabled passenger can book assistance in the following ways:

- » In person (arrive at a station and book)
- » By telephone to Fort William
- » Contacting another Train Operating Company or Travel Agent with access to RJIS

All details collected about the passenger are sent direct to stations once they have been input into the system. The station, if partly staffed or not staffed, the APRS prints are sent to a 'Parent Station' which is responsible for disseminating this information. For fully staffed stations, the information is sent direct to these stations.

Therefore, not all APRS bookings go through Fort William.

FIRST SCOTRAIL Assisted Passenger Guidance For Staff

As a First ScotRail customer service policy, providing assistance to passengers that need extra help on their journey is part of a duty of care that we pride ourselves in delivering.

Many customers rely on this assistance being provided in a reliable and consistent way to enable them to meet their day to day needs while using our services. Failure to provide assistance whether booked or not, can cause inconvenience to these customers.



Checklist for people making APRS bookings

- » Establish what sort of assistance and equipment the customer needs.
- » Use Knowledgebase to check accessibility of stations.
- » Inform customers to be at the station in good time. (10/20 minutes before the train departure time)
- » For wheelchair users, a ramp should be requested at all times and for all interchange points.
- » Include all aspects of customer's journey in details section such as seat or coach where customer is located.
- » Accommodated companion next to the disabled person.
- » Print the journey details and give them to the customer or post them where possible.
- » Detail where the customer is to be met or any other information like travelling with 'guide dog'.
- » Get customers contact details in case something goes wrong or for call backs.

What can you do to help deliver consistent service?

You need to fully understand the process and the needs of our disabled customers.

Checklist for station staff assisting customers

- » Requests will be faxed each day to stations.
- » Check for assisted request at the start of each day or shift.
- » Ensure that full briefing / hand over is done between shifts.
- » Keep a diary and file requests on correct dates.
- » Make sure all the equipment is available and in good working condition.
- » Ensure printers have paper and are in full working order.
- » Booking office staff can print APRS request for the station if not received through normal channels.
- » Call ahead if you have helped a customer onboard who has not requested assistance in advance.
- » Advise train crew on any passengers that require assistance onboard.

Checklist for onboard staff

- » Ensure you have the list for APRS request when picking up your diagram papers.
- » Speak to a disabled person onboard to find out if they need assistance.
- » Phone ahead if customer does not have assistance booked in advance.
- » Check at unstaffed stations for those you have not been advised of but need assistance.
- » Contact First ScotRail Control for any taxi requirements the customer may require.
- » Where possible and when asked, assist the customer to get refreshments from the hospitality trolley.

Helping specific disabled customers

Disability has a wide ranging category of people and therefore difficulty to detail everything. Below are some of the common categories where we can make a difference every time we come into contact with such people.

Please note this is only guidance to the standards and we anticipate that you would like to go the extra mile in assisting disabled passengers.



Helping a blind person

- » Introduce yourself and make sure the blind person knows you are speaking to them.
- » If you are guiding them, let them take your arm.
- » Inform them where kerbs and steps are as you approach them (say whether they go up or down)
- » Mention any potential hazards that lie ahead and say where they are.
- » If you are guiding someone into a seat, place their hand on the back of the seat before they sit down, so they can orientate themselves.
- » Don't walk away without saying you are leaving.
- » After checking tickets, place your hand on the person's shoulder to acknowledge you have seen their ticket or pass and you are now leaving.

Facts about blind people

Not all people who have guide dogs or use white cane are totally blind. Some blind people choose not to have their dog or white cane when they travel due to other concerns. If you see someone using a white cane with red stripes on it, this means that they have hearing impairment as well.

Helping a deaf person

Even if someone is wearing a hearing aid, it doesn't mean that they can hear you.

- » Kindly ask if the customer would like to lip-read you.
- » If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't just keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way.
- » Find a suitable place to talk with good lighting, away from noise and distractions if possible.
- » Speak clearly, be patient and do not turn your face away from a deaf person.
- » If you're talking to a deaf person and a companion, don't just focus on the hearing person.
- » Don't shout. It's uncomfortable for a hearing aid user and it looks aggressive.

Helping someone with learning disabilities

Many people who cannot read complicated information might ask where to find the train and understand the answer as well as someone who's asked the same question because they've simply forgotten their glasses.

The term "learning disability" is used to describe a wide range of intellectual disabilities, many of which are hidden.

- » Be polite and respectful.
- » When speaking to the person with a learning disability who has a companion or friend, the conversation should focus on the main customer.
- » Don't raise your voice unless the person you are talking to asks you to raise it.
- » Ask the customer if the information you provided answered their question.
- » Ask if they would like it repeated or written down in very plain but non-patronising English.
- » You can point at some features in the station or signs for direction.
- » Repeat your offer to write down information that a customer may have to use later. Even if the customer is not able to read it, they can show someone else who can help them.

Handling wheelchairs on and off trains

- » Ensure safety guidelines are adhered to.
- » Talk to the wheelchair passenger and any accompanying passengers.
- » Ensure the passenger is aware of the procedure and agrees to it.
- » Ensure any equipment you will be using is in good working order.
- » Lower the wheelchair from train to platform by reversing out of the train with you at the lower end of the movement.
- » Powered wheelchairs should board with the motor engaged, to allow the occupant to drive up the ramp.

