

Access to Ferry Travel

A guide for passengers with
a disability or reduced mobility



We're committed to making sure that our services are accessible to everyone.

This publication is available in alternative formats on request. Please call 0800 121 6022 or email contact@consumercouncil.org.uk

This publication was printed in June 2022 and every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate and correct but no legal responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions or misleading statements.

The content in this publication could change. New information will be available on our website at [**www.consumercouncil.org.uk**](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)

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Introduction

Ferry travel provides an important service to passengers travelling to, from, and within Northern Ireland.

The rights of people with a disability or reduced mobility are protected to ensure they have the same access to ferry travel as all other citizens.

All disabilities are covered including hidden disabilities such as learning difficulties, autism and hearing loss.

A person may have reduced mobility because of an illness, an age related condition or a temporary injury.

The rights explained in this publication apply to people travelling on all passenger ferry services operating to, from or within the United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) countries.



Key information

However, the rights do not apply to passengers travelling on ferries:

- certified to carry up to and including 12 passengers;
- with a crew responsible for operating the ship of no more than three people;
- where the distance of the service is less than 500 metres, one way; or
- on excursion and sightseeing tours other than cruises.

These exceptions mean that the passenger rights outlined in this publication do not apply to some smaller ferry services.



Booking travel

Ferry companies, travel agents and tour operators are not allowed to refuse a person to travel by ferry on the basis of their disability, unless:

- restrictions are imposed for safety reasons; or
- the design of the ferry or terminal makes it impossible for the person to board or disembark the ferry, or to carry the person safely or in a manner which is practical for assistance staff.

If a ferry company, tour operator or travel agent refuses to allow you to travel they must inform you immediately of the reason why.

You can also request the explanation in writing and this must be provided within five working days.

Each ferry company must ensure its booking process is accessible for people with a disability or reduced mobility. All relevant information, including your ticket, journey information and access conditions must be available in accessible formats, for example, text, Braille, audio, video and electronic formats.



Arranging assistance

Ferry companies and port terminal operators must provide assistance free of charge to people with a disability or reduced mobility. If it is possible, the assistance should be adapted to your individual needs.

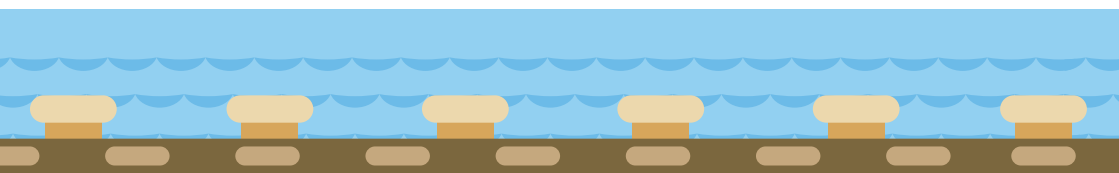
Assistance must be provided at any stage of the journey that you need it, from your arrival at the port terminal until you leave your destination port.

You should inform the ferry company or port terminal operator of your assistance needs at least 48 hours before you travel. It is often easiest to do this at the time of booking.

You should also inform the ferry company of any accommodation or seating needs you have and of any medical or mobility equipment you need to bring.



The assistance you need must be provided at any stage of your journey, from your arrival at the port terminal until you leave your destination port.



The ferry company is required to send you a formal confirmation that your assistance request has been received.

If for some unforeseen reason, or in the case of last minute travel, you do not give more than 48 hours notice, the ferry company and port terminal operator are still required to make all reasonable efforts to assist you.

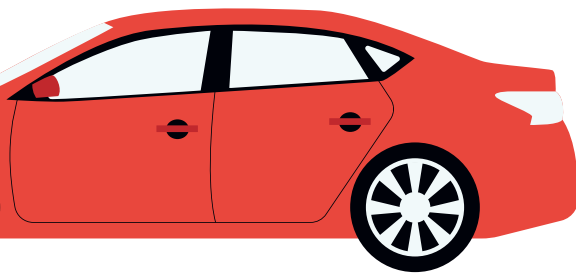
If you booked your ticket from a travel agent, you need to inform only the travel agent of your assistance needs. The travel agent is responsible for communicating your assistance needs to the ferry company and port terminal operator. The travel agent must also confirm to you that they have notified the ferry company and port terminal operator.



Arriving at the port

If you require assistance you need to arrive at the port at a time agreed in writing by the ferry company. This should not be more than one hour before the boarding time. If you do not know the boarding time, you should arrive at least one hour before the departure time.

When you arrive at the port, you are entitled to the assistance of trained staff, who should be as accommodating as possible to your individual needs.



In the terminal

If you are travelling as a foot passenger, staff will be available to assist you to move to the check-in counter and check-in your baggage. The staff will also help you proceed from check-in to the security search area.

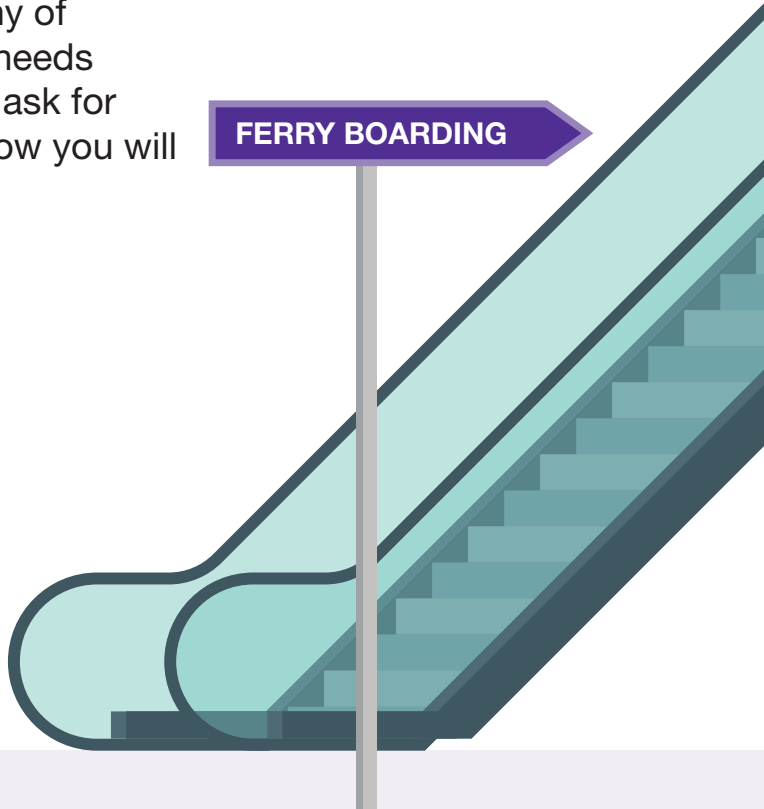
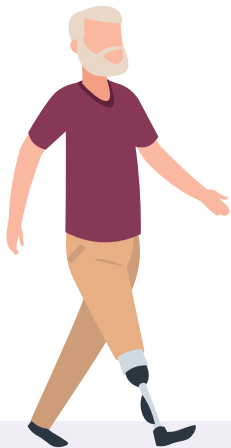
Security staff will have received specialist training and should be aware of your needs to ensure searches are carried out appropriately.

It may be possible for searches to be carried out in a private area. If you would prefer this ask a member of security staff.



Boarding the ferry

The specific assistance provided when boarding will differ depending on whether you are travelling as a foot passenger, with a car or as part of a coach party. When informing the ferry company of your assistance needs it is important to ask for information on how you will be assisted.

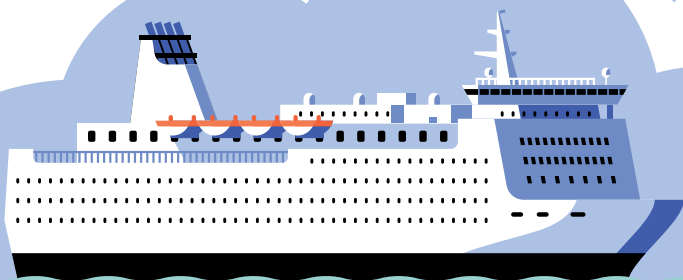


On-board the ferry

Staff will be available to assist you from the ferry door to seating areas or your cabin. All reasonable efforts must be made to arrange seating to meet your needs.

Staff will be able to store and retrieve your baggage on the ferry and help you make your way to the toilets. However, staff are not required to help you access recreational or retail facilities on-board the ferry.

Where it is considered strictly necessary, a ferry company may require a passenger with a disability or reduced mobility to be accompanied by another person who can provide personal care. If this happens, the accompanying passenger will be allowed to travel for free. The ferry company must also make all reasonable efforts to give the accompanying person a seat or cabin next to the passenger with a disability or reduced mobility.



Getting off the ferry

The specific assistance you are provided with when getting off the ferry will differ depending on whether you are travelling as a foot passenger, with a car or as part of a coach party. When informing the ferry company of your assistance needs it is important that you ask for information on how you will be assisted when getting off the ferry.

Assistance at your destination port

If you are travelling as a foot passenger, staff at your destination port terminal should be provided with details of your assistance requirements by the ferry company.

Once you are off the ferry, staff will assist you to retrieve any baggage you checked-in, access toilet facilities and help you move to the terminal exit.



Mobility and medical equipment

If you have medical or mobility equipment that you need during the voyage, you can take this on-board free of charge. Terminal and ferry company staff are responsible for handling your mobility equipment.

If the ferry company or port terminal operator damages or loses your mobility equipment or other specific equipment, it will be required to pay compensation equal to the cost of repairing or replacing the equipment. The ferry company or port terminal operator must also make every effort to provide suitable temporary replacement equipment as soon as possible.

Some items of medical equipment (such as oxygen cylinders) may not be permitted on-board ferries, or may be subject to a size limit. Large or heavy items of mobility equipment may not be permitted in all parts of the ferry. You should contact the ferry company for information about any restrictions.



If you need to bring medical equipment on-board the ferry, you must notify the ferry company when making your booking.

If you are a wheelchair user and wish to bring your own wheelchair on-board the ferry, you should check when making your booking that your wheelchair can be safely accommodated onboard and whether it will be restricted to particular areas.



If you use a motorised wheelchair that is too large or heavy for the passenger areas of the ferry you will be provided with alternative equipment by the ferry company for use during the voyage.

Assistance dogs

If you are accompanied by an assistance dog, the dog will be allowed with you on-board the ferry. Assistance staff will be trained to recognise the needs of assistance dog users and also the needs of your assistance dog.

The ferry company may ask you to provide evidence that your dog has been properly trained as an assistance dog. Before you travel you should check with the ferry company about the specific documents they require.

When travelling with your pet dog, including assistance dog, the rules you must follow depend on the country you are going to or coming from. You should check the latest government guidance before travelling.

Complaints

During your journey, if you are unsatisfied with the service you receive, you should raise the issue immediately. This will allow the ferry company or port terminal operator to address your issue and provide the assistance needed.

After your journey, if you wish to make a complaint regarding the service you received when travelling, you should complain to the ferry company or port terminal operator within two months of the date you travelled. The company must respond to you within one month of receiving your complaint to explain whether your complaint has been accepted, rejected or is still being considered.

You should receive a final reply no more than two months after the company received your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome contact us on **0800 121 6022** or **contact@consumercouncil.org.uk**

We have the power to investigate the matter on your behalf.

Alternatively, if you do not feel comfortable with raising the complaint with the ferry company or port terminal operator yourself you can contact us in the first instance.

Useful contacts

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company*

Telephone:

01624 661661

Email:

iom.reservations@steam-packet.com

Address:

Passenger Services

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company

Imperial Buildings

Douglas

Isle of Man, IM1 2BY



*If you are travelling with Stena Line or the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, you should contact the ferry company directly if you wish to make a complaint about the Port of Belfast.

Stena Line*

Telephone:

03447 707 070

Email:

feedback@stenaline.com

Address:

Customer Services
Stena Line, Stena House
Station Approach
Holyhead, LL65 1DQ



*If you are travelling with Stena Line or the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, you should contact the ferry company directly if you wish to make a complaint about the Port of Belfast.

P&O Ferries

Telephone:

08716 64 21 21

Email:

customer.services@pofferries.com

Address:

P&O Ferries
Channel House
Channel View Road
Dover, CT17 9TJ



Port of Larne

Telephone:

028 2887 2100

Email:

info@portoflarne.co.uk

Address:

Port of Larne
9 Olderfleet Road
Larne, BT40 1AS

**LARNE
PORT**

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Belfast, BT2 8EN

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