

Inclusive Travel Guide



NorthLink
FERRIES

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Operated by **serco**



MV Hrossey approaching Lerwick

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Foreword

NorthLink Ferries are committed to ensuring that all passengers have an easy and comfortable journey with us regardless of any physical or sensory impairment. We are acutely aware of the importance of the services which we operate for the Northern Isles and as such we endeavour to make our services as inclusive as they can be.

Public transport can be challenging but we aim to ensure that anyone who travels receives appropriate treatment to make travelling on NorthLink vessels a pleasant experience. We request that to facilitate any reasonable requirements you may have to simply communicate these at the time of booking or prior to travel, thus, allowing us to make any necessary arrangements. Ensuring those that require easy access to and from our vessels, or making amendments for food allergies is all part of our routine customer service offering which my colleagues are trained to provide.

We are aware that technology is becoming ever more important in this subject area and on reflection of this we have installed British Sign Language interpreting systems at all our terminals and Recite Me accessibility tools to our website. We are now also a 'venue' on the Neatebox 'Welcome' app which can be used to give our staff advance notice of your arrival. For those unfamiliar with

our vessels you can navigate through them using Google Street View on our webpage or contact us in the usual manner and we can organise a visit around our facilities to familiarise you.

In developing our offering we have worked with Disability Equality Scotland (DES), Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) and the Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS) to name a few, who have directed our strategy. There is always more that can be done and should you have a comment please do raise it with us at the earliest opportunity.

I hope you find the booking, boarding and travel experience with us an enjoyable one and should you require any specific help speak to a colleague or myself.



Stuart Garrett
Managing Director
Serco NorthLink Ferries



Introduction

NorthLink Ferries recognise that the travelling public have a wide range of needs for a comfortable and enjoyable experience. We are continuing to ensure an enhanced number of inclusive options are available, ensuring that we meet our passengers' requirements. Our vessels have been designed to be accessible for all, ensuring our passengers enjoy their experience on board. We request passengers to make us aware a minimum of 48 hours prior to departure of any specific accessibility requirements. If you are unable to notify us regarding any assistance you might require our crew and shore side staff will make every effort possible to assist you.

Passengers can make specific requests for relevant facilities and assistance when making their reservation either through our customer service centre 0845 6000 449 or 01856 885500 if calling from a mobile, out with the UK or at our terminal check-in locations.

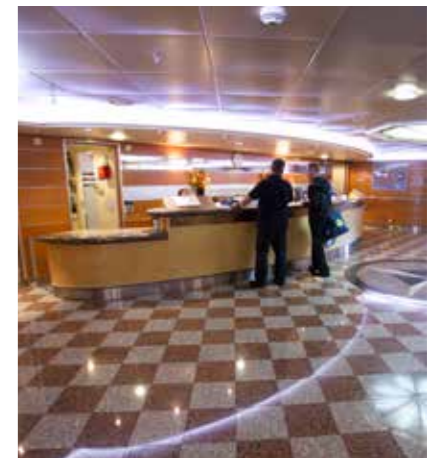
Training

Our staff play an important role in ensuring appropriate access to our ferry service. Being both aware and considerate of issues as they are presented is essential for a pleasant experience from shore to ship, during the voyage, disembarkation and the onward journey. NorthLink Ferries have designed training programmes to educate our staff, including a wide range of passengers' needs and how they can ensure passengers get the most out of their experience with us.

Training has been undertaken to ensure all staff are familiar with current legislation and safety procedures, including weekly drills taking place on board, covering the actions necessary to assist all passengers in an emergency situation.

Website

The NorthLink Ferries website has been designed in a way to ensure that it works with assistive technology such as screen readers. For those without Screen Readers, the Recite Me accessibility tool will read text aloud, or change font sizes, colours and styles to suit your requirements. Tables are only used cosmetically for tabular data, ensuring the information on our website is accessible to all.



On Board Reception

From Shore to Vessel

Departure and Arrival

All NorthLink Ferries terminals have automatic entry door openings and low level ramps. All our terminals have low level check-in desks. The passenger will be checked-in and issued with a boarding card which must be retained for boarding the vessel and for disembarking in Kirkwall (Hatston Pier). Car drivers are asked to approach the car check-in booth which is sign posted.

If passengers are travelling with a car they may request for the car to be located near the lift on the car deck, we will make every endeavour to fulfil this request. Vehicles will be directed onto the ferry into the relevant space by the vessels Loading Officer. Lifts and stairwells are available to the passenger decks from the main car deck. Crew will be available to assist passengers boarding either through the terminal, or from the car deck with a wheelchair if requested.

For passengers arriving into Lerwick and Aberdeen there is an option to stay on board until 9:30am, passengers with cars on board will be asked to disembark their cars upon arrival but are welcome to return to the vessel. Only the driver of the car is required to disembark the vehicle upon arrival. Remaining passengers will disembark via the passenger walkway.

Passenger Walkways

To enable a smooth transition upon departure and arrival there are passenger walkways in place across all our terminals. The length of the walkways are as follows:

- Aberdeen – 91m
- Hatston (Kirkwall) – 87m
- Scrabster – 135m
- Stromness – 90m-105m (Dependent on the vessel's position on arrival)
- Lerwick – 115m

Our crew will be happy to assist with your luggage or with any other requirements you may need.

Transport Links

NorthLink Ferries will assist passengers with information for onward travel. Information is available on board, in our terminals and online to help inform your decision on the next stage of your journey. We can provide timetables for a range of services including buses, trains and taxis. Our staff will happily book a taxi on your behalf to ensure an appropriate vehicle is sent to aid on-going travel for all passengers.

Left Luggage

A left luggage facility is available at the Aberdeen terminal for passengers who are departing the same day. This is available from 8am up until 2 hours 15 minutes before departure. Luggage must be labelled for the onward voyage (e.g. Kirkwall or Lerwick). All items are left at the owner's risk and may be subject to searches at the operator's discretion.

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/aberdeen/

Left luggage facilities are also available in the Lerwick terminal which is run by Lerwick Port Authority. Luggage can be dropped off from 7am onwards but must be picked up before the terminal closes, please see our website for terminal opening hours. All items are left at the owner's risk and may be subject to security searches. Our left luggage facilities are subject to International and UK security threat levels. If you wish to make use of the left luggage facilities please contact the relevant terminal before you travel.

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/lerwick/

There are luggage trolleys available for use within all terminals to help passengers transport their luggage.

Valet Service

A valet service is available for drivers who would rather not drive their car on board or away from the ferry. For a small fee, we will arrange to load your car whilst you board as a foot passenger. On arrival in either Aberdeen or Lerwick we will unload your car and park it, locked away securely in the terminal yard. Your keys will be available to collect from the ship's reception desk.

Pre-visit Service

Before you travel if you would like to visit our facilities in order to familiarise yourself with our vessels then this is something which can be pre-arranged. We kindly ask that you contact us to organise a time and a date which is suitable for yourself. This is also a great opportunity to allow us to better understand any additional requirements you may have.

Before your visit, you can familiarise yourself with our vessels by using Google Street View. This feature can be found on our website:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/on-board/tour/

British Sign Language Interpreting System

British Sign Language users can now contact us via an interpreter provided by Sign Solutions. This system allows customers to video call an interpreter who will in turn phone our customer service team. This system also works within our terminals too with all terminals having the capability to video call an interpreter so we can best understand your requirements. This service can be found here:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/sign-language-interpreter-service/

Oxygen Bottles On Board

The carriage of oxygen bottles is strictly regulated and we ask passengers who require the use of oxygen bottles on board to communicate this at the time of booking. A letter from your GP will also need to be provided as evidence. If you are unable to communicate this information at the time of booking it will be up to the Master's discretion to provide carriage for the oxygen bottles. More information on the amount and size of oxygen bottles can be found here:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/on-board/accessibility-options/

'Welcome' by Neatebox

'Welcome' by Neatebox is a revolutionary app which aims to transform the way people with accessibility requirements interact with businesses. All NorthLink terminals are now Neatebox venues offering the functionality of the 'Welcome' app.

At NorthLink Ferries we aim to use this app to better understand how we can improve our service in order for all passengers to have a safe and enjoyable journey.

Users are able to interact with the app by downloading it for free from the App Store or Google Play.



MV Hamnavoe sailing past the Old Man of Hoy

On Board our Vessels

Cabins

Our standard cabins on all of our vessels are designed to be spacious and comfortable; the dimensions are 225cm x 400cm. Each cabin comes with an en-suite, the dimensions of which are 110cm x 169cm. The entrance to the en-suite has a step which is 24cm high. Berths in cabins are 55cm apart and the berths themselves are 85cm wide. Some of our cabins have pull down bunks, these are 135cm off the deck and come with a ladder for easy access. For more information on our standard cabins please visit our website:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/on-board/accommodation/

Higher berths can be equipped with safety rails, and carry cots are available to be reserved free of charge at the time of booking. Portable rails are also available upon request for use on the lower bunks. Baby changing facilities can also be found throughout our vessels public areas, in both the male and female toilets. All our cabins have shower gels and hand wash and alternative palm oil free soaps are available should that be more suitable, these can be requested at reception on deck five.



Accessible 2 Berth Cabin

You can book to spend the night on board the MV Hamnavoe when travelling on our 06:30am sailing from Stromness, for arrival in Scrabster at 08:00am. This service is also available for the weekend 09:00am sailing from Stromness, arriving in Scrabster at 10:30am. Please see our website for further details:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/offers/hamnavoe-bed-and-breakfast/

On board the MV Hrossey and MV Hjaltland serving the Lerwick-Kirkwall-Aberdeen routes, there are four cabins per ship designated for those with additional accessibility requirements. On the Scrabster-Stromness route on board the MV Hamnavoe there are

two accessible cabins. All accessible cabins are designed to be spacious and comfortable; the dimensions of these rooms are 254cm x 296cm. The accessible cabin doors are electrically operated and are 90cm wide. Cabins that are fitted with lifting equipment have two single berths which are 117cm apart. The beds are 90cm wide and are 53cm off the deck to the top of the mattress. In the cabins without lifting equipment the beds are also 117cm apart and have an additional drop-down berth available if required. These drop-down berths are 139cm off the deck and come with a ladder for easy access.

All accessible cabins are fitted with a television, and contain a phone which connects to the ships reception. Cabins

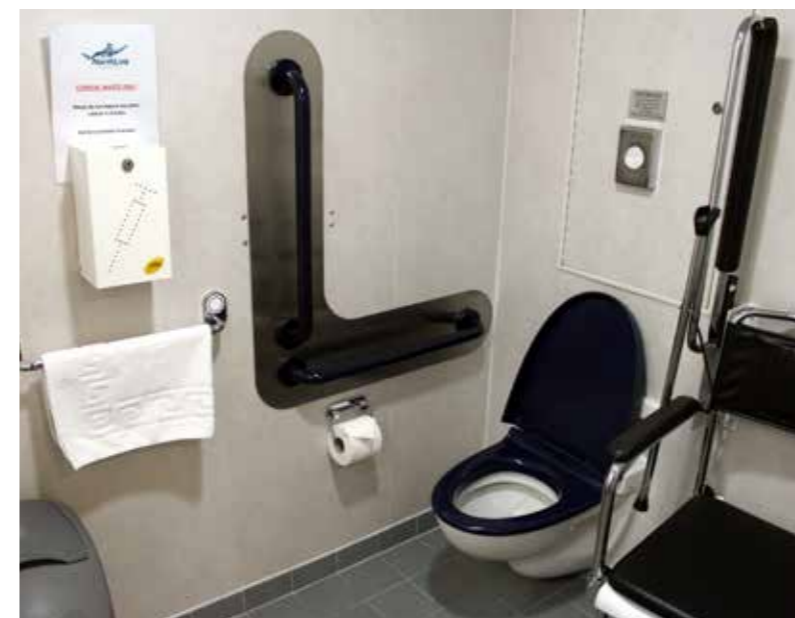
are fitted with standard UK three-pin electrical outlets, providing electricity at 230 volts/50Hz and USB sockets.

Accessible cabins have their own en-suite facilities, the dimensions for these facilities are 135cm x 207cm. The en-suite facilities on the MV Hamnavoe are slightly bigger with the dimensions being 138cm x 267cm. There is a sliding door at the entrance which is 87cm wide. Sinks are placed 80cm off the deck and these facilities are fitted with colour contrasted grab rails and a mixer tap. The toilet is 40cm off the deck with grab rails either side and the toilet seats are blue to increase colour contrasting. Each cabin is equipped with a waterproof seat which can be manoeuvred into the shower or used as a commode.

A Barometric commode is available on all three passenger vessels and if their use be required this should be communicated to us at time of booking.

Lift Access

There is lift access available to decks three, five and six which are the publicly accessible areas. There are Braille signs located at the entrance to the lifts which are 107cm off the deck floor. The lifts have a capacity of 630kg which equates to 8 people; the dimensions for the lift are 112cm x 140cm. The entrance of the door is



Accessible Cabin En-Suite

91cm wide which allows access for mobility equipment. There are Braille signs and control panels within the lift which are 77cm off the deck. These lifts are brightly lit and have audible instructions. Larger mobility scooters will not fit in our lifts, so please check ahead if you rely on a mobility scooter.

Dietary Requirements

On board all of our vessels we provide a specially designed menu which has achieved a coveted “Taste our Best” award. Each ship was audited by the awarding body VisitScotland with praise given for our use of local produce from Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and the North East of Scotland as well as having superb levels of customer service. Our menu is suitable for most dietary requirements or allergies which passengers may have. Crew receive training which focuses on allergens in order to help meet passengers’ requirements. Please visit our website for more details on our menu:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/on-board/food-drink/



Changing Places

Changing Places

Working closely with ‘Pamis’ (Promoting A More Inclusive Society) allowed us to discover that many people find standard accessible toilets challenging to use and require the additional equipment of Changing Places which have more space, a hoist, height adjustable changing bench and many more relevant facilities.

On deck six of MV Hjaltland and MV Hrossey the accessible toilets have been replaced with ‘Changing Places’ toilets to provide better facilities for all people that require specific equipment. A ‘Changing Places’ toilet is also available on deck five port aft of MV Hamnavoe.

Aboard the MV Hamnavoe the accessible toilets are on decks five and six, dimensions are 251cm x 207cm. The sinks in all vessels are 80cm off the deck floor and the toilets in all vessels are 40cm off the deck.

Other Vessel Facilities

In our restaurants, bars and lounges there are tables with movable seats to allow wheelchair access. There is an outside deck area on board which can be found on deck six, access to this is via a weather step which is 12cm high. The doors which lead to the outside area are heavy weather resistant doors. A crew member will be available upon request should you require assistance in opening these doors.



Changing Places

To keep our younger passengers entertained, a play area is available for use called the Viking’s Den. This includes toys, games, activities and a television. There is also a games zone which is suitable for teenagers and adults alike.

Throughout your journey there will be intermittent tannoy announcements which give relevant information on a variety of subjects, including; emergency and safety announcements, expected time of arrival updates and on board services. Throughout our public areas there is background music and bright lighting. If you require a quiet area during your travels to get away from some of the busier areas then our crew will be able to show you a public area which is better suited to you.

We operate a hearing loop system which can be found at reception on deck five. Across our vessels there are braille tactile systems; these are between 99cm and 112cm off the deck. On deck five there are signs with relevant braille directing you to your cabin; these are 142cm off the deck. On each cabin door there is a sign with braille to indicate the cabin number; these are 115cm off the deck.



MV Hjaltland docked in Aberdeen Harbour

Travelling with Pets

Registered assistance dogs are welcome in all areas of the vessels. Pets are welcome on board but must remain in your vehicle or the provided kennels, please see our pets policy for more information:

www.northlinkferries.co.uk/on-board/travelling-with-pets/

Emergency Procedure

In order to better streamline our emergency procedure we kindly ask that you make any shore side staff or crew members aware of any additional assistance you may require. If an emergency were to take place while on board our vessels then our crew have the training and skills to react. Our vessels are also equipped with the necessary apparatus and have the thorough safety measures in place. In the unlikely event that an emergency was to occur then our staff will be at hand to assist you.

Terminals



Aberdeen Terminal

NorthLink Ferries, Jamieson's Quay, Aberdeen, AB11 5NP, Scotland
Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/aberdeen

Terminal Accessibility

A gradual slope with railings takes passengers to the main entrance doors (174cm wide) of the terminal building, which open automatically. The second set of doors (160cm wide) open manually and are normally open for convenience. The wheelchair accessible reception desk is 5m from the entrance, with level access. There is a public lift which provides access to all floors and is found 8m from the accessible entrance. The dimensions of the lift are 110cm x 150cm and it is brightly lit with audible instructions and tactile/braille call buttons.

Accessible Toilet

The Aberdeen terminal has a unisex adapted toilet designated for public use. A key is not required and the door is locked by a twist lock. This adapted toilet is 153cm x 220cm and the toilet is located 3m from the accessible entrance, with level access. Baby changing facilities are available within the accessible toilet.

Terminals



Scrabster Terminal, Scottish Highlands

NorthLink Ferries, Queen Elizabeth Pier, Scrabster, KW14 7UT, Scotland
 Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/scrabster

Terminal Accessibility

There is a gradual slope (215cm at the widest point and permanent) on the approach to the terminal building. The main door (185cm wide) opens by sliding automatically and the second door (179cm wide) opens automatically. The wheelchair accessible reception desk is 6.5m from the entrance and offers level access. There is a waiting area on the first floor which is accessible via a lift found 28m from the accessible entrance. The dimensions of the lift are 110cm x 138cm, it is brightly lit with audible instructions and tactile/braille call buttons.

Accessible Toilet

There is an adapted toilet designated for public use in the terminal. The ground floor toilet is located 13.5m from the entrance. This is a unisex toilet and a key is not required. The doors are locked by a twist lock, and the dimensions of the adapted toilets are 140cm x 220cm. Baby changing facilities are located within the accessible toilet.

Hatston Terminal, Kirkwall, Orkney

NorthLink Ferries, Hatston Quay, Kirkwall, KW15 1RQ, Scotland
 Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/kirkwall

Terminal Accessibility

There is a gradual slope with railings to the terminal entrance. The main doors (100cm wide) and the second set of doors (147cm wide) open automatically. The wheelchair accessible check-in desk is 2.5m from the entrance, with level access. A lift is available to the public which goes to all levels and is found 9m from the accessible entrance. The dimensions of the lift are 109cm x 143cm.

Accessible Toilets

Hatston terminal has an adapted toilet designated for public use, the dimensions are 160cm x 210cm. The toilet is unisex, a key is not required and the door is locked by a twist lock. It is situated on the ground floor of the Hatston Terminal Building (12m from the entrance). Baby changing facilities are available within this accessible toilet.

Terminals



Stromness Terminal, Orkney

NorthLink Ferries, Ferry Road, Stromness, KW16 3BH, Scotland

Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/stromness

Terminal Accessibility

There is a gradual slope (200cm at the widest point and permanent) on the approach to the NorthLink Ferries Stromness terminal building. The main door (98cm wide) opens automatically and the second door (98cm wide) opens with a push button. The wheelchair accessible check-in desk is 9m from the entrance, with level access. There is a lift which is 32m from the entrance giving access to all levels. The dimensions of the lift are 110cm x 160cm.

Accessible Toilets

The Stromness Terminal has an adapted toilet designated for public use. This toilet is unisex and a key is not required. The door is locked by a twist lock, the dimensions of the adapted toilet are 230cm x 150cm and the toilet is located 17m from the accessible entrance, with level access. Baby changing facilities are available within the accessible toilet.

Lerwick Terminal, Shetland

NorthLink Ferries, Holmsgarth Terminal, Lerwick, ZE1 0PR, Scotland

Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/ports/lerwick

Terminal Accessibility

There is a gradual slope (200cm wide and permanent) on the approach to the Lerwick terminal. There is level access to the ferry terminal entrance. The main doors (130cm wide) and second set of doors (116cm wide) open automatically. The reception desk is 11m from the entrance, with level access. A walkway with a gradual slope leads from the first floor to the ferry. There are two lifts which give access to all floors and are found 11m and 18m from the accessible entrance. The dimensions of the lifts are 110cm x 150cm and 110cm x 218cm, they are brightly lit with audible instructions and tactile/braille call buttons.

Accessible Toilet

The Lerwick terminal has two adapted toilets designated for public use. The toilet on the Ground Floor is located 10m from the accessible entrance and the toilet on the First Floor is 12m from the lift. These are unisex, and a key is not required. The doors are locked by a twist lock, and the dimensions of the accessible toilets are 170cm x 206cm (Ground Floor) and 203cm x 163cm (First Floor).

For further information please contact via one of the following:

Email: CustomerServicesDepartment@northlinkferries.co.uk

Write: Customer Services Department, NorthLink Ferries, Ferry Road, Stromness, Orkney KW16 3BH

Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk

British Sign Language users can contact NorthLink Ferries

Website: www.northlinkferries.co.uk/sign-language-interpreter-service/

Telephone: 0845 6000 449 or 01856 885500

www.northlinkferries.co.uk

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