

Disability Awareness & Accessibility

National Express fully recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, specifically to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and its responsibilities under the Public Service Vehicles Regulations 1990. The policy set out below aims to show how the company will fulfil its obligations to our passengers.

Guidance for Bus Passengers using Wheelchairs, Buggies and Mobility Scooters

National Express is committed to making its scheduled bus services accessible to as many people as possible and ensuring all passengers can travel safely and comfortably. On average 1500 journeys a week are undertaken by wheelchair users. However at busy times it must be recognized there may be a number of potential passengers wishing to use the specific areas of the bus set aside for wheelchair, buggy or mobility scooter use and therefore it may not be possible to travel on the vehicle of choice. Our policy and procedures should this situation arise are set out below and reflect the recent judgement (January 2017) in the Supreme Court. However we would always encourage all our passengers to consider the needs of other passengers and move their seat / position on the bus if necessary.

Wheelchair and/or disabled users have priority over everyone else for the use of the wheelchair space, since this is the only space in which they can travel safely. On all our buses a sign next to the wheelchair space states that this space is reserved for wheelchair users. Note that a wheelchair user is defined as in the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000.

If someone in a wheelchair wishes to board and the wheelchair space is occupied by standing passengers or buggies, standing passengers will be asked by the driver to move and make room and buggy users will be asked to fold the buggies and put them in the luggage space or keep them by their side. Full details of the policy are given below.

All new buses built since 31 December 2000 must comply with strict safety criteria to allow a wheelchair user to board the bus. All buses in the UK must be wheelchair compliant by 2017. Under legislation the "standard reference wheelchair" has a maximum width of 700mm, a length of 1200mm, sitting height of 1350mm and footrest of 150mm. If your wheelchair exceeds these dimensions, the bus will not be able to carry you safely. Electric wheelchairs are classed in the same way as manual wheelchairs, although batteries must be covered. Intending passengers are asked to check that their wheelchair is compliant.

Specific rules apply to each of these categories and are set out below.

Policy for wheelchair use on the bus

1. All our buses can accommodate one wheelchair and carry a sign on the near side corner of the front of the bus and/or a sign on the near side of the bus close to the front doors
2. If a wheelchair user wishes to board the bus and the bay is already occupied :
 - the driver will ask passengers to move to allow the passenger using the wheelchair to board.
 - If in the first instance this request is not adhered to the driver will give a clear second instruction.

- Should this instruction continue to be ignored the driver will seek guidance via the radio from central control as to whether a company official such as a roadside inspector is available to assist.
 - If additional assistance is not readily available the driver will need to make a decision as to whether to proceed, taking into account the reasonableness of the refusal to accede to the request and the overall needs of all passengers and other road users
 - The driver cannot compel passengers to move if they refuse to do so and also has a duty of safety to the bus, its passengers and himself / herself. Thus if the situation cannot be resolved through the aforementioned process unfortunately in these circumstances the wheelchair user may need to travel on a subsequent service.
3. The driver will always attempt to park at bus stops to allow wheelchairs to board / alight from the bus easily. Drivers will deploy ramps on request / as required for wheelchair users and the bus will 'kneel' where appropriate. There will be some stops where this will not be safe and the driver may have to stop further along the road. Similarly, there will be some stops where a wheelchair customer may not be able to board due to inconsiderate parking or the road layout.
 4. When on board, please ensure you position your wheelchair in such a way that you do not obstruct the aisle.
 - Wheelchair users should place the rear of their wheelchair against the back-rest.
 - Brakes must be applied.
 - Travelling forwards or sideways is not permitted.
 5. Wheelchairs must be occupied at all time when inside the bay. Empty wheelchairs must be folded and stored in the luggage rack.
 6. The Company will not be liable for any loss of or for any damage caused to wheelchairs or other mobility equipment or assistive devices except where caused by its negligence or that of its staff or agents. In the event of the Company being so liable, such liability shall in respect of any one claim be limited to the cost of replacement or repair of the equipment or devices lost or damaged.

Guidance for buggy users travelling by bus

1. Subject to space being available National Express buses can carry two occupied unfolded buggies within the designated area but only when the space is not required by a passenger wishing to use the bus in a wheelchair or approved mobility scooter. **Passengers in wheelchairs have absolute priority and the space required may include the manoeuvring area in addition to the actual wheelchair space.**
2. It is a condition of travel that adults with children in buggies are required to co-operate in allowing proper use of the designated wheelchair space by vacating this space during the journey if it is required by a customer in a wheelchair (or, if no wheelchair user is travelling, a disabled buggy or approved mobility scooter) including repositioning small prams, folding any buggies and storing them appropriately.
3. In accordance with the wheelchair policy set out above , the driver may call for assistance or guidance via the radio should a wheelchair passenger be unable to board because a buggy is blocking the wheelchair space or access to it. This will inevitably delay the service for all passengers and the company would therefore expect that the wheelchair space is a made available at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. At all times the driver is required to ensure that the bus is safe for use by all passengers so all aisles must be kept clear of buggies and the driver may refuse to proceed if he/she is concerned about the safety of any passengers.
5. When on board, please ensure you park your buggy in such a way that you do not obstruct the aisle. Buggies must be parked inside the bay with the brakes on. Do not overload the handles with shopping as this can cause the pushchair to tip over.
6. Unfolded buggies must be occupied at all time by a child. It is not permitted to use the buggy to only carry luggage or shopping.
7. If a child is not seated in a buggy, the buggy must be folded.
8. Please ensure children are strapped in and secured in their buggy at all times; whilst boarding, alighting and travelling on the bus.

Guidance for Mobility Scooters travelling by bus

There is no legal requirement for bus operators to carry mobility scooters. However National Express has adopted the CPT Code for the use and acceptance of Class 2 Mobility Scooters. The key features of the code are summarised below . It should be noted that disabled passengers in wheelchairs have absolute priority and the space required may include the manoeuvring area in addition to the actual wheelchair space. The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 specify a definition of a 'wheelchair user'.

A Class 2 Mobility Scooter has a maximum width of 600mm, a length of 1000mm and a turning radius not exceeding 1200mm. The weight of the passenger and the mobility scooter must not exceed 300kg. Under no circumstances can a Class 3 Mobility Scooter or similar be transported on a bus.

Full details of the scheme are set out in the full code, [the CPT Code for the Use and Acceptance of Mobility Scooters on Low Floor Buses leaflet \(PDF\)](#).

- All users of mobility scooters MUST obtain a personalised 'Permit to Travel' prior to attempting to board a bus.
- Mobility Scooters will not be carried on any NX bus under any circumstances without this 'permit to travel' For details of how to obtain a permit, including the required training, please contact:
Tel. 01922 856172 or email busmobility@nationalexpress.com
- Once on Board, passengers should put their mobility scooter in the designated wheelchair space, reversed up to the backrest. The scooter motor must be switched off and the scooter parked in gear to avoid movement.
- The passenger must remain on the mobility scooter once it is parked, using the handrails provided to assist with safety and stability.

Guidance for Oxygen Users

Passengers are allowed to board our buses with oxygen bottles where they are provided for personal health reasons as long as proper precautions are in place. The oxygen bottle should be secured in a padded cover and attached to a wheelchair or electric scooter which would ensure that is secure should a collision occur.

Guidance for Users of Walking Aids (For example Rollators)

After you have boarded the bus please fold the 'walking aid' and stow securely or hold it. For safety reasons it is not permitted to sit on the walking aid whilst the bus is in motion.

Guidance for Blind and Partially Sighted Passengers.

National Express bus is a signatory to the RNIB Bus Charter and will seek to ensure all its drivers and processes are in line with the aims of the charter.

The key actions are summarised below but the full charter is available at

www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/RNIB%20Bus%20Charter.pdf

- Bus drivers will stop for any waiting passengers at bus stops, the bus is safely positioned and always try to ensure that the door entry or exit is not obstructed by street furniture or other obstructions.
- Bus drivers will tell blind and partially sighted passengers which service they are and what their destination is, and ask if they need assistance with payment or finding a seat.
- Bus drivers will not pull away from a bus stop until blind and partially sighted passengers have found a seat. Drivers will assist passengers by providing information about which seats are free or where priority seats are located.
- where we have talking buses our drivers will not switch off or turn down the audio announcements. If a service does not have a functioning audio next stop announcement, the driver will advise the passenger when their stop is reached, and provide any necessary assistance in helping them to get off the bus.
- We will check all of our customer feedback systems with blind and partially sighted passengers, and ensure that they are as accessible as possible. We will also promote our feedback procedures using the most accessible means – including websites, mobile sites and apps as well as more traditional methods.
- We will review our timetable information in conjunction with blind and partially sighted people, local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure it is as accessible as possible.
- We will ensure that all of our bus drivers are fully aware of the rules around concessionary passes and we will support the scheme with a travel assistance card.
- We will seek to improve the way sound can be heard through the assault screen, between the bus driver and passenger.
- We will actively promote the priority seating and areas for disabled people through awareness campaigns and materials on buses – this will include promoting this priority space for guide dogs.
- We will make the pass scanners as visible as possible and ensure that our drivers are as consistent in their approach to scanning passes for blind passengers.
- We will explore all options for providing audio announcements on our buses, including making use of new technologies when they become available.
- In order to achieve the above we will build interactive sight loss awareness training into our driver training. We will involve blind and partially sighted people in the design of the training materials and activities and seek endorsement for our training from organisations representing blind and partially sighted people.