

## Disability Statements

**As a major public transport operator, National Express Group is committed to providing quality services to all our customers. We aim to reduce social exclusion through a positive policy of providing improved access to transport for the less able or those without the use of other means of transport.**

We continue to look for ways to improve facilities at coach and bus stations, and have invested in facilities on our buses and coaches. We consult with bodies, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, that look after the interests of those customers with special needs. Managers across all our operations liaise with local bodies, including recognised representatives of local people with disabilities, in order to identify joint initiatives to improve the accessibility and comfort of customers who are less able. We have a commitment to meet all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

### **Coach travel**

National Express coaches help less able travellers whenever possible. A new, fully accessible coach, the Levante entered service in 2006 and a growing number of routes are now operated by them with all being fully accessible by 2012. Customers requiring special assistance during their journey, such as the carrying of folding wheelchairs or specific seat allocation, are asked to notify National Express when they buy their ticket. National Express have a Code of Practice entitled "Serving our Disabled Customers" which outlines how we are able to assist all of our customers.

The coach division's customer contact centre in Birmingham operates a dedicated help desk for less able travellers. Contact can be made by phone, email and letter. Staff will help customers by offering a leaflet reading service, issuing large-print timetables and discussing individual travel needs. In addition, the most recent coach stations, such as Manchester and Newcastle, have been designed with less able customers in mind from the outset. All our coach stations have been assessed for compliance with DDA requirements. Disabled customers travelling by National Express can also take advantage of discounted fares which can save them up to 50% off standard fares.

### **Bus travel**

National Express West Midlands has an extensive programme of investment in new easy-access buses. All new vehicles are fitted with a low-entrance platform, which meets the kerb, and incorporates a specially designed "buggy" zone so that baby buggies can be wheeled straight onto the bus. New vehicles include space for one wheelchair.

On the latest easy-access vehicles, passengers with impaired vision also benefit from improved destination and interior signage.