

# Disability and Inclusion Strategy

GO-AHEAD IRELAND

2019

Go-Ahead Ireland are committed to working in line with the National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021. We commit to working closely with the National Transport Authority and the National Disability Authority and any other relevant organisations to ensure that we are providing a quality and accessible service for all our current and potential customer.

## **1. Our commitment**

Our aim is to provide customers with a safe, accessible, friendly, reliable and punctual service which can consistently be trusted to meet the travelling needs of all of our customers.

We wish to provide a service which can be consistently relied upon and promise to offer all reasonable support and assistance to help our customers successfully undertake their journeys.

We will always look at ways to improve upon the service we offer to our customers. Listening to our customers is important and we will act upon suggestions and ensure we keep our customers updated.

## **2. Providing a quality and accessible bus service**

Our customers deserve a reliable and punctual service and we will strive to operate 100% of our scheduled daily journeys. We regularly review our timetables to ensure they are realistic and achievable so that our services can be depended upon by our customers.

### **2.1 Our Fleet**

Go-Ahead Ireland have a fleet of 133 vehicles, all of which are low floor and accessible. The internals of the vehicle have contrasting colour handrails and there are visual and audio announcements inside the bus for next stops announcements.

### **2.2 Training for our Colleagues**

All our drivers receive extensive training to offer all necessary support to customers that need assistance.

This training provides our drivers the ability to understand how to make services accessible to all, and to recognise that the accessibility needs of everyone differs. Our training equips drivers with skills to help support customers with a range of different disabilities or special needs to help provide them with a positive travelling experience.

The training covers a wide range of topics and endeavours to make all our colleagues understand and appreciate that empathy, tact and professionalism is key to helping ensure that our services are genuinely accessible to all potential customers.

Our training emphasises that when someone boards one of our buses we don't know the circumstances they currently face and as such we should look to provide help to anyone who might need it, even if it might not be immediately apparent.

Our drivers are trained to provide customers with a safe and comfortable journey on all occasions. All drivers hold a Certificate of Professional Competence and receive ongoing professional development to keep their skills relevant. Our training meets the standards set out by the Road Safety Authority and we regularly review and consider best practice to update our courses to ensure they meet the latest standards.

### **2.3 Wheelchair Accessibility**

All our buses are low floor and accessible for wheelchairs and have one designated wheelchair space.

All our buses have ramps positioned at the front doors. When boarding and leaving the bus, please wait until the ramp is fully deployed and resting on the pavement before attempting to get on or off the bus. When on the bus all wheelchairs must be positioned in the designated wheelchair space with their brakes on

If a wheelchair ramp malfunctions when a customer is boarding the driver will radio control to see when the next bus is arriving, if this is not suitable for the customer the driver will organise for control to organise a taxi for the customer.

### **2.4 Passengers with Buggies**

All of our fleet have a designated wheelchair and buggy space. An unfolded buggy can be used in the designated buggy space. If it is unoccupied when boarding, the buggy must be kept in a safe position with the brake on, and must not infringe on the aisle.

If the buggy space is already in use by another buggy, the wheelchair space can be used if free. If using the wheelchair space, the buggy must be safely positioned with the brake on.

If at any stage of the journey a customer wishes to board in a wheelchair, the buggy must be folded up and be stored safely on the luggage space or be keep it at your side, and not positioned in the aisle. Wheelchair users have priority for this space.

### **2.5 Travelling with a Mobility Scooter**

If you wish to travel with a mobility scooter on our services, you are required to use a permit to ensure that the scooter is passed as safe to travel on board and is the correct size for the bus.

Permits can be arranged though the Travel Assistance Scheme, where a Travel Assistant will check to see if your scooter fits and will give you all necessary information you need to travel on the bus.

### **2.6 Travelling with an Assistance dogs**

Assistance dogs must wear identification to notify the driver that they are an assistance dog. We would ask that assistance dogs do not block the aisle or travel on the seats.

There is no limit to the number of assistance dogs that can travel on one of our buses at any one time. The driver has the discretion to make the decision based on the crowding of the bus. The driver will do everything they can to ensure that customers with assistance dogs can board safely.

### **2.7 Travelling with a Visual Impairment**

Our drivers will pull in and stop for any customer who is waiting at a bus stop with an assistance dog or cane. The driver will ask the customer where they wish to travel to ensure they are boarding the correct bus, and if needed will contact control to inform the customer when their correct bus is due.

All our buses are fitted with on board stop audio announcements, in both English and Irish, to ensure that the next stop is announced for customers, so that they can notify the driver via the stop bell of where they wish to stop.

The customer can also notify the driver when they board of where they wish to alight. The driver will do their utmost to remember, however it is advised to listen out for the stop on the next stop audio announcements, in case the driver forgets due to various circumstances.

## **2.8 Travel Assistance Scheme**

Go-Ahead Ireland are members of the Travel Assistance Scheme for the Greater Dublin Area. This scheme is available to all customers with Go-Ahead Ireland, Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Luas.

The scheme provides assistance for any customer who would like help in using and understanding the Dublin area transport network so they can ultimately travel with confidence around the city,

This scheme is free for people aged 18 or over and can be used Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00.

For more information on the scheme, please contact our customer care team on 1850 80 40 71 or email [customercomment@goaheadireland.ie](mailto:customercomment@goaheadireland.ie).

## **2.9 Free Travel Passes**

All customers who have a Free Travel Pass are entitled to travel on any of Go-Ahead Ireland's services.

# **3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Go-Ahead Ireland strongly believes in supporting diversity and ensuring our customers are treated equally. We are an equal opportunities employer and fully committed to improving and furthering opportunities for all our customers and colleagues, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, civil status, family status, disability, religion, age or membership of the Traveller community.

We will not accept any discrimination by customers or colleagues and as such we are committed to the principle that our customers and colleagues should be able to travel and work in an environment which is free from intimidation and harassment.

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important in fostering a culture of inclusivity within Go-Ahead Ireland and we endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

Promotion and advancement are made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of our Equal Opportunities Policy.

# **4. Customers Safety and Security**

Providing our customers with a safe and secure travelling experience is one of our primary concerns.

All our vehicles are fitted with a CCTV system for the purposes of crime prevention, detection and for the safety and security of our customers and colleagues.

#### **4.1 Getting on the Bus**

All passengers must board the bus from a designated bus stop. To signal to the driver that you would like to board, please do so by putting out your hand at the stop.

When the bus has stopped and the doors are opened, please board by the door near the driver. Please let passengers wishing to exit the bus off before you attempt to board.

Please have your travel pass, leap card or exact change ready.

#### **4.2 Getting off the Bus**

If you wish to get off the bus, please press the stop button before the stop approaches, allowing enough time for the driver to safely slow down and stop. Please remain seated until the bus is safely stopped.

If the bus has centre doors, please exit the bus here. If you need a ramp to exit please press the accessible stop button that is available at the wheelchair space, to alert the driver. The ramp will deploy at the front of the bus, so please ensure you exit by the driver.

If you are not able to press the accessible stop button, when the bus has stopped at your stop please make your way to the front of the bus and let the driver know you need the ramp.

### **5. Keeping customers informed**

We believe it is important to keep our customers informed to help provide the best possible experience.

Our services have real time information available on the Transport for Ireland apps (National Journey Planner and Real Time) and Go-Ahead Ireland's website, [www.goaheadireland.ie](http://www.goaheadireland.ie), and where available on the real time information boards at the roadside.

Additionally, timetables will be available on our website and information about our services will be displayed at each bus stop. For printed timetables, you can contact us directly and we will organise to post one out to your address.

If you would like an accessible version of the timetable, please email [customercomment@goaheadireland.ie](mailto:customercomment@goaheadireland.ie) or call 1850 80 40 71 and we will organise for an accessible timetable to be sent out.

In periods of disruption we will notify all our customers via our twitter account and on our website.

### **6. Our Commitment**

Go-Ahead Ireland are committed to ensuring that all employees understand and act upon this strategy.

We will ensure that all our customers experience a welcoming, accessible, reliable and safe journey with us, and all colleagues have a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We will actively work with the National Transport Authority and the National Disability Authority, along with any other relevant transport providers and authorities to work to continually improve public transport for all customers, and to ensure an inclusive workplace for all employees.

We will continually work to develop and review this strategy through engagement with key stakeholders, including our colleagues and customers.

## Contact Information

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