



Blackpool Transport - Accessibility For All

Jane Cole, Managing Director for Blackpool Transport, was appointed bus sector champion for disability in 2016 with the aim of improving accessibility for all within the bus and tram industry. The challenge, was to share and develop industry leading best practice to better understand a customer's needs.

"My vision is to empower every Blackpool Transport employee with the knowledge and skills to confidently deliver an exclusive customer experience for all". Jane Cole.

The vision

We all have a duty to deliver an excellent service to every customer, regardless of their requirements. Our model looks to understand these requirements and cater for them at every touch point along the customer journey.

It goes far beyond a wheelchair accessible bus. We strive to embed understanding and change behaviours in our people to provide an accessible transport system for all.

The outcome

Dementia Friends

Our in-house Dementia Champion Tracey has provided Dementia Friends training to over 500 employees within the business. Our employees demonstrate an understanding of what it's like to live with Dementia, and we've been able to develop behaviour to further understand the needs of those with both hidden and apparent disabilities.

Tracey has been nationally recognised with a 'Dementia 2 Million' badge for her outstanding contribution as a Dementia Champion. Further collaborative working alongside Guide Dogs UK, Lancashire Mind and local disabled user groups ensures our employees feel empowered and equipped with the skills to deliver an accessible transport system for all.

The challenge

Safe Haven

Our customer centre is the first in the North West to be recognised as a Dementia Safe Haven. The Haven provides a safe, friendly environment for any person suffering from Dementia and allows a member of our team to make contact with friends or family to ensure their safety.

Our work, along with others in Blackpool has contributed to the town's recognition of becoming a Dementia Friendly town.

Accessible Transport For All

Our Safer Journey Cards provide a means for customers to communicate discreetly with our staff

regarding any individual needs they may have. This allows our team to understand and better cater for any personal requirement without causing distress to the customer.

Our Accessible fleet of Palladium buses provide industry leading standards for wheelchair users, with some buses able to carry two wheelchair users at a time.

Our Youth and Stakeholder Engagement model allows us to provide an integrated transport network which serves the primary needs of our customers and embeds ourselves within hard to reach communities.

Inclusion is at the forefront of our thinking to continue to change perception of public transport, facilitate its use and meet the social needs of the town which we serve.

The future

We are taking our internal training offering to the next level by including mental health awareness within our driver CPC training. This consists of two sessions covering hidden disabilities relating to customer discussion points around barriers to accessing public transport. A second session will discuss driver wellbeing including coping strategies for stress, anxiety, nutrition and physical activity.

If successful, we plan to role this training out to staff at all levels. Disability is not a subject which is defined as separate within our CSR. Disability is integrated into the DNA of Blackpool Transport and every system, process and action which impacts on customers. We consider what people with disabilities need.

A disabled person is a customer who comes into contact with our staff and takes away an amazing customer experience.