



## Easier access on our buses

### 1. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and bus travel

The Disability Discrimination Act allowed the government to introduce design standards for 'accessible' buses and to set a date when all buses must meet these standards

The design standards were introduced at the end of 2000. Since then new buses which can carry more than 22 passengers and are used on local services have had to meet these design standards

Buses built to these standards must have a range of access features, making them easier for everyone to use such as:-

- Brightly coloured grabrails
- Slip-resistant flooring
- Brightly coloured 'stop' buttons that you can reach from the seat, to let the bus driver know you want to get off
- A clear route number and destination on the front of the bus, the side by the door and a route number on the rear
- A ramp or other device to bridge the gap between the bus and the kerb and
- A space on the bus for a wheelchair user

The design standards apply to the whole of the country so passengers know what to expect when they get on accessible buses in other parts of the UK.

All buses used on local services must meet the design standards by:

- 1 January 2016 for single-deck buses; and
- 1 January 2017 for double-deck buses (this does not apply to home to school transport)

Nearly 70% of buses used by Padarn Bus meet the design standards for accessible buses already.

Many accessible buses also have 'kneeling suspension'. This means that the bus driver can lower the bus at the bus stop so that the entrance is closer to the kerb.

You can find out whether your service or particular journey is accessible by phoning our enquiry line – 01286 871347, or Traveline (0871 200 22 33)

### 2. The DDA and Customer Care

The Disability Discrimination Act has made it against the law for bus companies to discriminate against disabled people.

This means that we, the bus company and our drivers and other staff, must not treat disabled people worse than other people because they are disabled. We also have to make *reasonable* adjustments if disabled people would find

it difficult to use our services otherwise. For example a driver should be prepared to let a blind or partially sighted person know when they have reached their stop, if asked, or be prepared to write a note for a deaf passenger.

Bus companies don't need to make changes to the buses themselves, as this is covered by the Government's design standards. Buses that don't meet these standards will gradually be replaced by ones that do.

## What can I expect when I travel by bus?

### 1. At the stop

All bus stops in our area are request stops, which means that you have to signal the driver that you want the bus to stop by holding out your hand. Make sure you signal in good time so that the driver has enough time to pull in safely.

If you are travelling with a guide dog or use a white stick, the driver should be prepared to stop for you even if you don't signal. The driver should pull in close to the kerb and call out the number and destination of the bus. If you can see the bus approaching, it would be helpful if you hold out your arm even if you are not sure its the right bus.

### 2. Guide Dogs and other assistance dogs

If you travel with an assistance dog, drivers must not refuse to carry you just because you have a dog with you, even if there are other dogs on the bus already. However the driver could refuse to carry you if the reason would apply to any passenger – for example if the bus was full.

We do not charge for carrying assistance dogs, but you should make sure your dog is wearing its harness or jacket so that the driver knows it is an assistance dog.

### 3. Getting on the bus

Let passengers off the bus before you get on. Have your travel pass ready to show the driver if you have one or your money to pay your fare. If you do not have your pass with you, you will have to pay your fare. If your buses is fitted with a new machine, you may have to place your pass over the top for it to register. If you have difficulty with this, the driver will be happy to help.

The driver has a duty to check that you are using a valid pass, for example, any expiry date, or to check the photograph. However the driver should not question you about whether you are entitled to a pass.

If you want the driver to let you know when you have reached your stop or, if you want time to find a seat before the driver pulls away from the stop, just ask when you get on the bus.

A small number of buses on our routes have two doors. On these buses passengers would normally board at the front and get off through the centre doors.

### 4. Using the ramps

If the bus is accessible, it will have a boarding device such as a ramp fitted to bridge the gap from kerb to bus. If you want the driver to put down the ramp, please ask. You can also ask the driver to lower the bus if it has a kneeling facility.

The drivers must provide reasonable help to disabled passengers when they board the bus. This includes putting down the ramp if you ask.

In some exceptional circumstances, drivers can refuse to put down the ramp, for example, if they think this would risk their own safety or that of a passenger or put the security of the bus at risk. However, a driver must have a very good reason to refuse.

If the driver is not able to pull in close enough to the kerb, because of parked cars etc., he should be prepared to move the bus further along the road, where he can pull to the kerb safely.

## On the bus

### 1. Priority Seats

There are seats near the front of the bus reserved for older or disabled people. There will be a sign to show which the priority seats are.

On accessible buses there is a space for a wheelchair. The driver does not have to keep the space free in case someone using a wheelchair might want to use the bus. If other passengers are in this space when a wheelchair user wants to get on the bus, the driver should ask them to move, if there is room. If not, the driver will have to refuse to let the wheelchair user on.

Usually there is space on accessible buses for one wheelchair user only.

Some of our accessible buses have a separate space for people with buggies.

Please be prepared to give up a seat or move out of the wheelchair space if another passenger needs it more than you.

### 2. Advice for wheelchair users

Check in advance that your wheelchair is small enough to fit on a bus. The largest size is 700mm wide, 1200mm deep, 1350mm from floor to top of head and 150mm from floor to foot rest.

You may use both powered and manual wheelchairs on accessible buses. Most powered chairs now have dry cells, but if not and your battery is leaking acid, the driver will refuse to carry you.

The wheelchair users space is designed to fit a wheelchair user safely without needing restraints. There is a padded board at the rear of the space to protect you if the bus has to brake sharply in an emergency and a rail at the side to prevent you from tipping sideways. You should back into the space up to the padded board, travel facing the back of the bus, and put your brakes on and disconnect the battery.

There is a stop button in the space for a wheelchair user and when you want the bus to stop you should press this once. This turns on a signal in the driver's cab which sounds different to the other stop buttons

### 3. Mobility Scooters

The company does not allow scooters to be carried on its vehicles. Although some scooters may be as small as wheelchairs, they are not as easy to turn and move in small spaces. For the safety of other passengers therefore, they cannot be brought onto our buses.

### 4. During the journey

It is against the law to smoke on buses.

You may need to show your pass or ticket to an official during your journey and you should not refuse to do this.

Please don't block the aisle. You can use the luggage hold to store any shopping.

If there are seats available, it is safest to sit down on the bus. However if you need to stand, choose a safe position next to a handrail. You should not stand near the driver's cab or talk to the driver while the bus is moving as this could distract their attention from the road.

Help keep our buses clean by not eating or drinking on them and please don't drop litter on the bus.

Buses rarely break down. If this does happen when you are travelling on an accessible bus, any replacement should be accessible and if it isn't, we will make alternative arrangements for you to finish your journey.

## **5. Getting off the bus**

Accessible buses have stop buttons you can reach from certain seats and in the wheelchair space. You should press this once when you want the driver to stop at the next stop, making sure you give enough time for the driver to slow down.

If you need the driver to lower the bus or put out the ramp, just ask.

The driver has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect. Always treat the driver and other passengers as you would want to be treated yourself.

## **Commenting about our bus services**

If you have any comments, compliments or complaints about our bus services, you can fill out the appropriate form on our website under 'contact us', you can telephone 01286 871347 or you can write to: Operations Director, Padarn Bus Limited, Y Glyn Industrial Estate, Llanberis, Caernarfon, LL55 4EL

For comments about other buses in the area, please address them directly to the operator or to the local council.