

# Coach Driver Practical Support



# Focus on Barriers

Safe, accessible travel should be a right for every passenger.

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Historical infrastructure barriers have prevented some people from travelling.

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As this changes, it's crucial that attitudes, policies and environments are inclusive.

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A focus on barriers, removing them and providing information and assistance to reduce any residual difficulties should create a positive culture where the right to travel is clearly respected.

# Picking Up Passengers

You need to stop and pick up a disabled passenger if they are at a coach stop and want to board.

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Make sure you understand how to lower the step and be aware of all the accessibility features on board.

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Remember that some conditions might cause a person to have jerky movements, shout or even swear e.g. cerebral palsy or Tourette's syndrome. It is likely to be reasonable to carry passengers with these conditions.

Continued

If someone is unsteady on their feet, let them get to a seat before you pull away from the stop.

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You need to pull the coach right into the coach stop on every occasion so that the kneeling suspension brings the vehicle down to the height of the kerb.

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Be patient if someone is slow getting on or getting to a seat – **not every disability is visible.**

# Driving

Ensure that everyone is sitting down before starting to drive off, as this is one of the most common problems people report.

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A number of conditions, both visible and invisible, can affect how quickly people can walk and how stable they are.



**Continued**

You won't always know someone is disabled.  
They might be in pain or anxious. That's why it's  
always important to drive with care and attention.

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With some disabled passengers, sudden braking  
and acceleration will cause alarm and it will be  
painful for people with muscle and bone conditions,  
such as arthritis.

# Being Dementia Friendly

Practical assistance, patience and a friendly smile can make a huge difference to many people who find travel makes them anxious, fearful or confused, including people with dementia.

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Things can seem different to people with dementia. Swirls in colourful patterns can look like snakes and dots can look like moving insects. A black patch on the floor could look like a gaping hole or a shiny patch could look like a big puddle. If you see someone looking confused, see if you can reassure them.

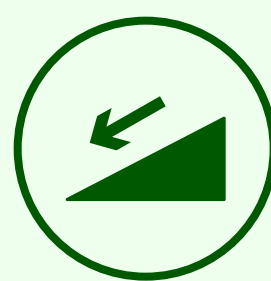

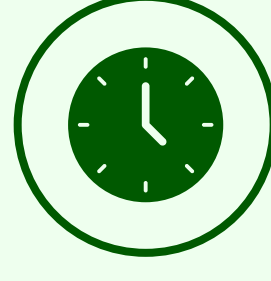




## Continued

**Stay calm** – dementia may cause people to behave in a way that seems odd. Don't take it personally, they might just be feeling confused or frustrated.



# Top 10 Tips

-  Lower the step or ramp if you see someone who looks as if they might need it.  
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-  Remember, not every disability is visible.  
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-  Be patient – give people time to find their ticket or pass and to check they are on the right route.  
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-  Make clear announcements.  
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-  Take your time and give passengers time to sit down before driving off.

# Continued



Signpost people to priority seating and ask other passengers to move if appropriate.



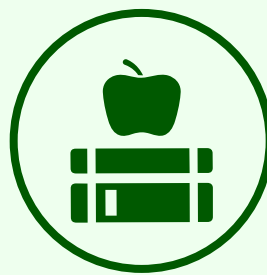
Be approachable – be friendly, make eye contact, smile.



Don't rush disembarking – give everyone the time they need.



Build connections – if you have regular passengers, take the time to say hello.



Keep learning about different experiences. If you don't know much about dementia, autism-spectrum conditions or anxiety, for example, find out more.

# Role Play

**In pairs, act out one of the following scenarios:**

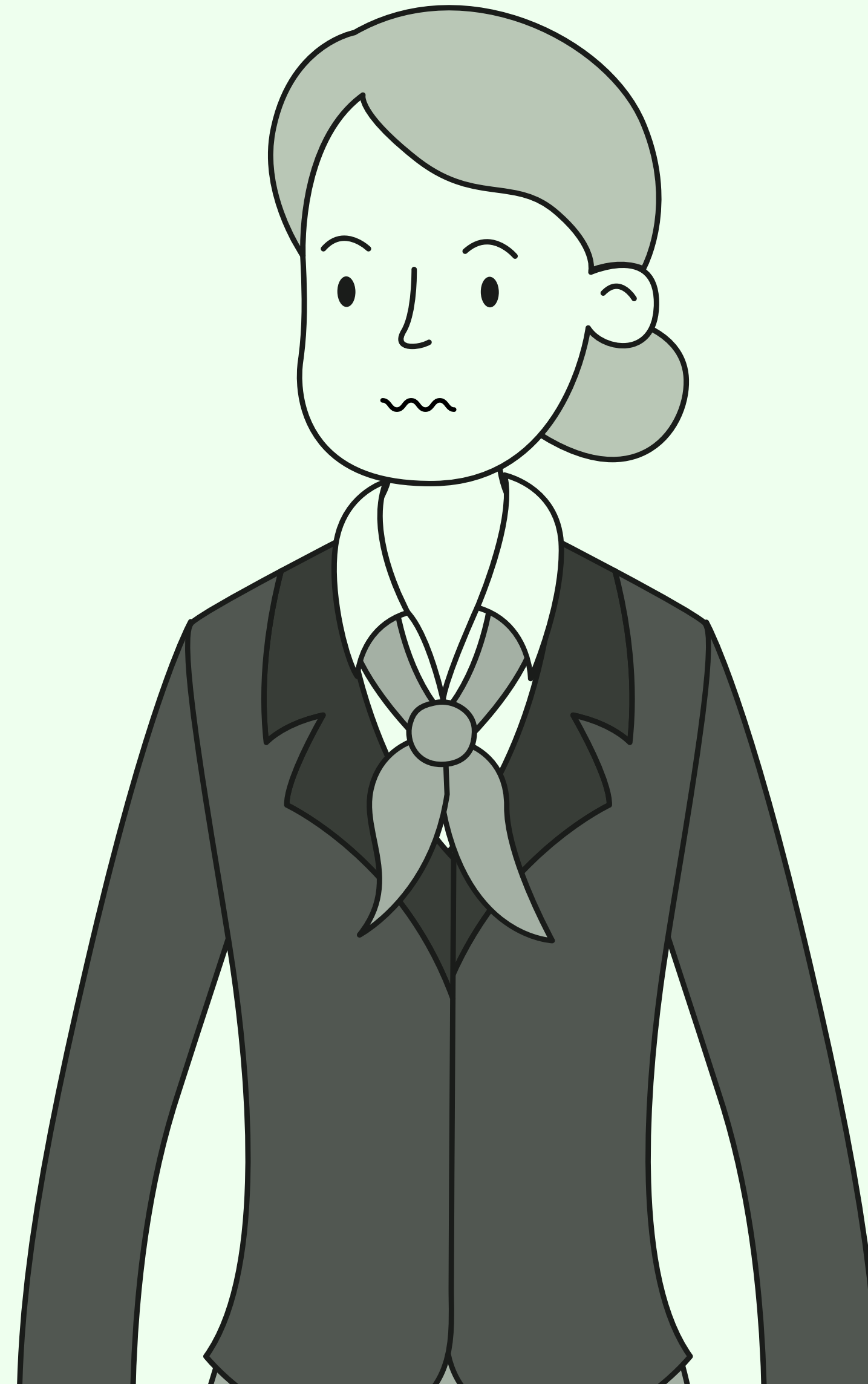
Someone with a mobility impairment wants you to help them get on the coach and to a seat.



# Role Play

**In pairs, act out one of the following scenarios:**

A passenger who is profoundly Deaf and uses British Sign Language wants something. You aren't sure what.



# Your Role

**Be vigilant about stopping for passengers** – they may not be able to signal to you or know which vehicle is approaching.

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**Smile and acknowledge passengers** – it makes everyone feel safer and happier.

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**Be patient** – if there is a problem to deal with, even if the passenger is stressed, stay calm and be as helpful and understanding as you can.

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**Provide information about the journey** – this can help if there are no audio-visual announcements.

**Continued**

You have a key role in making it possible for many older and disabled people to travel with confidence.

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Remember that disabled people have rights as well as needs. You must be aware of these.

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Without your knowledge and understanding, many would simply not be travelling by bus or coach.

# Discuss

What changes will I make to the way I work to ensure that my service anticipates adjustments for disabled passengers?

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Where should I go for advice on how to help disabled passengers?



REAL

Respect

REAL

Empathise

REAL

Ask

REAL

Listen

REAL Passenger REAL Person



Department  
for Transport