

Initiative to make bus travel safer for vulnerable people



Police, bus companies and other partners have teamed up to make bus travel even safer for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Starting today, Tuesday 29th May, a series of social media messages will be issued on Police Scotland and partner channels outlining the steps to take to get on, ride and then get off the bus safely.

This is complemented by a leaflet which will be available on buses aimed at those who have a concessionary card, and a police-led training message which will be delivered to drivers in the Edinburgh, Lothians and Forth Valley areas.

Sergeant Kos Papakyriakou of Edinburgh's Road Policing Unit has spearheaded this pilot project, and said, "Every injury that an older person suffers on a bus can hugely affect them, their friends, relatives and neighbours, even if it seems very minor. They could lose their confidence to travel and thus their independence, they could suffer injury which could

affect their quality of life, or worse.

“From speaking to bus companies and organisations that represent older people, we found that a lot of the incidents where passengers have been hurt could easily have been prevented through education.

“Our approach has three strands – outlining to bus drivers how they can help their passengers get to their destinations safely as well as what happens should there be an incident on a bus; giving simple advice to older passengers to give them the confidence to use the services; and raising general awareness for travellers so they can pass this on to older friends and relatives as well as be patient and courteous to older passengers.

“I’d like to thank Lothian and First who have wholeheartedly taken part in this pilot project and committed to providing safer journeys for their passengers, and our other partners including Road Safety Scotland and Roar – Connections for Life whose assistance with the leaflet and driver training video has been invaluable.”

The training video and leaflets will initially cover Lothian routes in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian, and First Bus services in West Lothian, Falkirk, Alloa and Stirling.

Walter Herring, Head of Operational Risk, Lothian said, “We recognise the vital role Lothian play in the everyday lives of our customers, particularly the elderly and infirm. Through our partnership with Police Scotland and working alongside other bus operators, we have been able to contribute to this important campaign that we hope will encourage new and existing customers onto our buses in the knowledge they can travel in confidence and safety.”

Jason Hackett, First Scotland East, Larbert Depot Operations manager, said, “We are pleased to support this project and it has not only allowed us to raise awareness of older passenger

safety on our buses to all our customers, but we have extended that and taken it even further with the training video.

“This means our staff are now better equipped and more capable than ever of dealing with issues facing older passengers on a daily basis. Hopefully, it will give more passengers the confidence to use the bus going forward.”

Nicola Hanssen, General Manager at Roar – Connections for Life added, “Staying mobile is vital to staying connected in older age. We are delighted to support a campaign to help make bus travel as safe as possible so older people can use this lifeline service with confidence.”