

Bus drivers in training

Lothian bus drivers will take part in a training session on Thursday to help them understand the needs of their blind and partially sighted passengers.

The company will hold a 'swap-with-me' event in which members of national sight loss charity RNIB Scotland will explain the challenges they face when travelling on public transport and how a driver's actions can help make bus travel as accessible as possible for all users.

This includes approaching bus stops slowly to ensure people have time to make out the number and route, by allowing passengers with sight loss to find a seat before pulling away, and by letting them know when they arrive at their destination.

At today's event at the Longstone Depot in Murrayburn Road, drivers will also have the opportunity to wear special spectacles that simulate different eye conditions to experience first-hand the barriers that blind and partially sighted passengers face when trying to hail a bus, buy a ticket and get on board.

The drivers will discuss their role and the part they play in making the journey as accessible as possible, while those with sight loss will get a chance to sit in the cab to get a better idea of what the job entails from the driver's perspective.

Olivia Sklenar, Accessibility Officer from Lothian Buses said: "Lothian is committed to delivering reliable, safe and

accessible bus travel for all. We are delighted to continue our partnership with RNIB Scotland by hosting another 'swap-with-me' event. The events are always a real success, with our drivers benefiting from the real-life experiences shared by some of our blind and partially-sighted customers."

James Adams, director of RNIB Scotland, said: "It's great news that Lothian Buses has embraced our campaign to make public transport as accessible as possible. Bus travel can be a life-line for blind and partially sighted people, who rely on buses more than most because they are unable to drive and taxis can be too expensive for everyday journeys. But many of our members say they sometimes have difficulty in using some services.

"We think if drivers are more aware of the problems people with sight loss face they will take that extra bit of time to ensure they can make their journey confidently. We're grateful for the opportunity to explain these."

There are around 183,000 people in Scotland living with significant sight loss.

[Lothian](#) has more than 700 buses servicing over 67 routes throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians.

