

The Launch



On Tuesday 3rd February 2015 we launched BlueAssist on the First Trans Pennine Express trains. Something we are currently very excited about. Not just because it gave us an opportunity to promote the BlueAssist system, or to have a party, but because it will mean that travel in the North of England will be easier for people with disabilities, particularly those with hidden disabilities.

What do we mean by hidden disabilities? Well anyone who does not have a clearly apparent physical disability and support system; such as a wheelchair or white cane. So people who may have a life time condition such as Autism, Learning Disabilities, Hearing impairment, Dyslexia, we could keep adding to this list and maybe you can help us by introducing BlueAssist to new groups. However BlueAssist is not just for life time problems it is for those who have illness or injury that cause additional difficulties such as; stroke, Meniere's disorder, mental health problems, Cancer. We do not judge who should use BlueAssist, nor do we have a requirement you must prove in order to gain access. We believe that if you need and want to use the system it should be available without question. Which is why we are delighted that First Trans Pennine Express will make sure leaflets containing a BlueAssist card are available at all the stations they manage. Look out for the BlueAssist leaflet on the station or ask for it at the ticket office.

Now First Trans Pennine are the FIRST train company to introduce the system. We presented to all the train companies at a meeting last year, and several were interested but have yet to get started. First definitely deserve their name FIRST as they saw the potential and wanted to give all their passengers a FIRST CLASS experience and saw this as one way to help those who may have difficulties. The team at First have worked very hard over the last few months,, developing training materials and posters, liaising every step of the way with our team and then training all their staff. They have organised the practicalities of the launch and will be there on Tuesday with us handing out leaflets. Their commitment to the least able passengers is one that should be commended.

However they have also undertaken not just to be the First but to show others the way. Thanks to the dedication of their staff, and in particular Tom. Several other rail operators are looking at this launch and the following benefits of BlueAssist to see if they too should join with BlueAssist. So if you or someone you know has a less than perfect experience on one of the other train operators, why not ask them to sign up to joining BlueAssist. We want every journey to be successful. We will keep you posted as to who is next.



Our Blue Assist Card seems to have grown, no problem the First Trans Pennine Station staff know what it means.



Our CEO busy giving out the new leaflets



Steve Acklam Chair of Trustees, the Lady Mayoress of Kirklees, with Steve Lee Head of Customer Service for TPE and Barbara Dewar CEO