

Outstanding Practice 2014 Winners ~ DB Regio

DB Regio Tyne and Wear Limited are the operators of the Tyne and Wear Metro which serves Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, North and South Tyneside, with an estimated 38 million passenger journeys every year.

DBTW decided to ensure frontline staff were confident and capable of being able to approach vulnerable passengers by providing guidance and support. By introducing training that enabled face-to-face interactions and a compilation of special services to further their knowledge, the Customer Service team could create a comfortable and unique environment for Metro customers.

DBTW established a link with Eye Wish Access, as a gap had been identified in the training programme to provide suitable disability awareness education that concentrated solely on visual impairment. This specially bespoke schedule enabled our frontline staff to increase their confidence by creating more accessible environments for visually impaired people

by showing them how to inform and support them in their journey.

Eye Wish Access is a not for profit Community Interest Company that offers Vision Awareness Training to enable organisations to have the ability to provide accessible services to visually impaired people.



DB Regio & Eye Wish Access representatives, winners of the Outstanding Practice category with Mark Thompson, Gateshead College, category sponsor



equality north east

Room G~2, Gateshead College, Construction Centre,
8th Avenue Kingsway South, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0JL
tel: 0191 426 4399 email: info@equality-ne.co.uk www.equality-ne.co.uk

Eye Wish Access are a North East based team, who are accredited vision awareness trainers, with an overall aim to raise awareness of sight loss issues through the delivery of training.

Visual impairment is a hidden disability which often means people are excluded from mainstream society because of the barriers they face in everyday life. Eye Wish aims to dismantle those disabling barriers and attitudes so that visually impaired people can fully engage in conventional activities.

The vision awareness course that was introduced included:

- A specifically designed Metro course which was delivered by visually impaired trainers
- A four hour session - one hour class based and then scenario based practical training on Metro
- Understanding how to perform the correct etiquette with guide dogs
- Learning how to approach a blind customer
- Learning how to support a blind customer when purchasing a ticket
- Overall aim to give staff the confidence to deal with visually impaired and blind customers

Following the introduction of the Eye Wish programme out of 111 members of staff

over 90% of frontline staff have been fully trained. The bespoke training course enabled Customer Service staff to have:

- A much improved understanding of visual impairment
- Practical knowledge to make services more inclusive
- Increased staff confidence in communicating with and delivering services to visually impaired people
- Positive reaction from frontline staff

The direct passenger benefit means that visually impaired passengers are now able to travel in a more relaxed environment as they are aware that Metro staff are available for assistance. DBTW will continue to work with Eye Wish Access as they continue to challenge barriers and myths on public transport. The success can be measured on the changing attitudes and the accessibility of organisations for visually impaired passengers.

For more information about the North East Equality Awards, please visit our website, www.equality-ne.co.uk/awards or contact Equality North East on 0191 426 4399 or email info@equality-ne.co.uk.

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