



time for change?

Bus strategy consultation responses

Reference and date	Response
Ref PIP067 2 June 2014	<p>Dear Nexus</p> <p>I am writing on behalf of NEAT, the regional group of blind and partially sighted representatives which, at our meeting on 21st May resolved to hereby make a group response to the further consultation for the Nexus bus services quality contract scheme as follows:</p> <p>1 Since the original consultation there has been further consideration at Parliamentary level of the importance of audible journey information announcements onboard buses for visual impaired people and others (usually giving bus location, route and destination) and reinforced by Baroness Kramer's support for RNIB's bus charter launched in March 2014 http://www.rnib.org.uk/were-board-bus-charter-launched-transport-minister. We therefore believe this is sufficient justification for this to be included in the QCS. It is the group's firm view that the contract should require that all new buses should be fitted with operational audible announcements.</p> <p>2 We would be disappointed if this was not possible at the outset of the contract. If it is not possible, then this should be included at the first review point within the contract period. It would also be appreciated if the contract specification of this service could be agreed with NEAT.</p> <p>3 Providers will be expected to meet this specification as a minimum but it seems sensible to encourage any additional innovations or known best practice they may offer which could help to improve service quality. We would therefore also strongly suggest that the contracting process should state that best practice or innovation in disability access will be looked on particularly favourably.</p> <p>4 Furthermore, the contract should state if a bus is not renewed within five years of the outset of the contract then that bus should then be fitted with audible announcements.</p> <p>Newcastle Society for Blind People Co Chair, NEAT</p>