

Tips for taxi operators to support blind or partially sighted people during COVID-19

This guide has been written by blind and partially sighted people working with Sight Loss Councils.

- 1. Be aware:** Not all blind or partially sighted people “look blind” (wear dark glasses, use a cane or a guide dog). Drivers should be mindful that it may not always be obvious that they may need assistance. People with visual impairment will require more verbal information than others so drivers should be clear when communicating. If a person advises a call handler of their visual impairment, please ensure this is communicated to the driver, so they are fully aware of the situation. If payments should be made by card, please make the customer aware of this as soon as possible.
- 2. Guiding:** If someone usually requires ‘traditional’ guiding in public areas and there is no safe alternative, they will need to be guided to and from the vehicle. Single use face masks and hand sanitisers should, therefore, be used by all parties. You can find more information on guiding on the RNIB website: www.rnib.org.uk/advice/guiding-blind-or-partially-sighted-person
- 3. Social distancing:** Many blind or partially sighted customers will find it difficult to maintain social distancing. So, drivers should keep this in mind when on duty.
- 4. Introduce yourself:** If a driver thinks that someone needs help, they should introduce themselves as customers may not see their vehicle or identity badge - a simple “Hi I’m Steve, I work for “taxi company”, is there anything I can do to help today?” can go a long way.
- 5. Hygiene:** To keep everyone safe, please highlight to your blind and partially sighted customers where they can wash or sterilise their hands - don’t assume everyone knows where it is.

6. Changes to the environment: Make sure your blind or partially sighted passengers are aware of changes within the taxi, such as protective screens and card payment machines (if available). Ensure any temporary signage is at least size 48 point font – hand-written notes are difficult for everyone to read so, where you can, verbalise these changes to the customer.