

Welcome Back

Coach Station Manual

A comprehensive guide for coach stations

Version 1 March 2021

national express

An introduction from Chris Hardy, MD

Welcome back! We are very excited to be re-opening our network following another period of temporary suspension.



I feel a sense of Déjà vu writing this introduction, this being our second network relaunch after another temporary suspension of services on Sunday 10th January. The suspension was another sad but necessary step to help the national cause to save lives, protect the NHS and retain jobs. Hopefully another network suspension will not be necessary but we continue to review and act on advice from all the relevant authorities.

The past year has brought a whole range of unprecedented challenges to us and the whole bus and coach industry. I am optimistic that things will improve with positive news regarding vaccines and an eventual return to normality. Reinstating services after the first network closure showed that customers want to travel with us and I am sure they will want to do so again.

With the July 2020 relaunch, we made huge steps to keep employees and customers safe. We implemented a variety of new measures and ways of working to enhance protection, enabling us all to work in a secure and controlled environment. The COVID-19 Driver Survey showed that driving teams were overall very satisfied with our efforts to keep them safe. We were also very pleased to once again be perceived as the market leaders in this field. This time, while we are continuing with all of these measures, it should be much easier given the experience we now have in delivering our 'new normal'. Safety must always remain our number one priority; we cannot be complacent. I hope that we can maintain our safe network and outstanding performance scores throughout and beyond 2021.

In addition, there have been further positive developments as we work towards this forthcoming relaunch. To mention a few items,

- There is now a 'Return to Work Induction - COVID-19' course available on iLearn.
- Investment in a new telephony platform and

compliant payment system have enabled 80% of the Contact Centre to work from home permanently.

- SMART replacement Travelcat and Service Cloud (Salesforce) have initially been rolled out in the Contact Centre with a wider roll out of both systems planned for Coach Stations teams throughout 2021. Service Cloud enables a single view of the customer enhancing interaction personalisation which will change the way we engage with our customers and quickly understand their needs.
- St Margaret's Bus Station, Leicester is under redevelopment and whilst services will continue to operate from the same location the team and customers will be operating from portacabins at the rear of the Bus Station.
- The redevelopment works are also progressing well at the new Broadmarsh Bus Station, Nottingham, with reopening scheduled for September 2021.
- We have continued to make great progress with Accessibility and Inclusion awareness - the lift operation and wheelchair fitment video is now available as an important and useful driver tool to support them in their role. A revised safety CD with improved customer messaging has been recorded for use.

We hope that you will find this updated guide helpful and informative. Please ensure your teams are fully informed regarding what is expected of them before they return to work, helping to safeguard them and our customers alike. I very much look forward to working with you again and welcoming customers back onto our network. As always, please be mindful of Government advice, remembering to 'social distance' wherever you can.

Chris Hardy
Managing Director

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Summary of main changes since July 2020 Welcome Back Pack:

- Sitting Together seat feature
- Seat Reservation relaunch
- Updated Covid-19 course on iLearn
- Launch of PPE webstore for all coach station managers to order PPE for direct delivery
- Updated customer announcements both onboard and in stations
- Updated Covid-19 terms and conditions for customers
- Updated coach station specific safe working practices
- Updated ticket design



01 Protecting us all - New measures to help keep us safe at work

Following the network restart in July 2020 after the first national lockdown caused by Coronavirus, we introduced lots of new measures to keep us all safe whilst at work. Here is a reminder of the measures that we put into place following the restart and that will be in place when we restart again.



PPE for all frontline staff: face masks, gloves, face visors and hand sanitiser



Vehicle changes to seat configuration, driver's protective screen and air filtration to purify the air



Detailed risk assessments completed for vehicles, coach stations and office spaces



Face coverings mandated for all customers and available to purchase at all locations



Hand sanitisers on all vehicles, in coach stations and offices



Temperature screening of all employees and customers



Enhanced cleaning on vehicles, at coach stations and in offices (including fogging)



Return to work support and training on iLearn



Social distancing on vehicles, at coach stations and in offices: stay apart - stay safe



Welcome Back packs created for partner operators, coach station and front-line staff

All measures have been implemented to help keep our teams and customers safe during these unprecedented times and while social distancing measures are in place.

Everyone should feel secure and protected while working or travelling on our network. These measures are discussed in detail later in this pack; if you have any questions please ask your Coach Station Manager.

02 Coach Stations Opening 29th March 2021

In summary the current planned reopening dates are as follows.

29 March - Confirmed

- Birmingham, Leicester and Victoria (VCS)

12 April - Provisional

- Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham

17 May - Provisional

- Golders Green, Heathrow (CBS & T5), Luton, Liverpool St, Milton Keynes, Stansted & Stratford

21 June - Provisional

- Bournemouth, Cardiff, Gatwick North, Newcastle, Oxford, Plymouth, Southampton

Other - TBC

- Heathrow T4, Gatwick South

Please note that all dates with the exception of the 29 March are provisional and may change as we respond to the operational demands and outside influences that may arise over the coming weeks and month. This includes any safety issues, customer demand, driver support, airports resuming international travel, competitor activity, government advice on travel and continued use of the flexible furlough scheme where it makes sense to do so.

Once a coach station's reopening date is confirmed the teams will be provided with details of the team rota, opening hours and required individual restart date. All colleagues will also be required to return sometime before reopening for a full day of induction and refresher training.



03 Site Induction

3.1 Return to Work Induction e-course on iLearn

This comprehensive course entitled 'Return to Work Induction - COVID-19' is available to all returning team members; the following topics are covered & the link is available [HERE](#)

- We are so pleased to have you back
- Overview of Coronavirus/Covid-19
- Personal Safety, Responsibility & Hygiene
- Mental Health & Resilience
- How our operations will work - This section is optional dependent on role
- Working from home - This section is optional dependent on role
- Conflict Management - This section is optional dependent on role

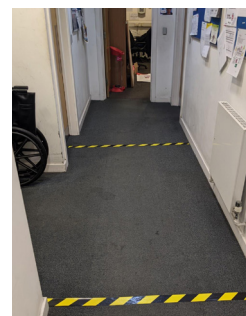
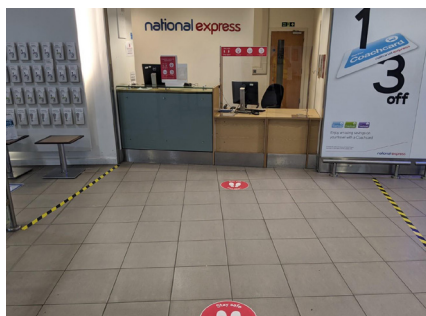
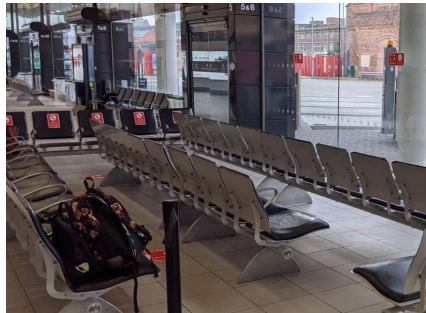
Completion time for the course is approximately 30 minutes and it is recommended you complete all sections relevant to your role.

3.2 Station Layout

You will notice that the layout of your station (BCS is shown below as an example) has significantly changed so that we can incorporate all the measures required to keep you, your colleagues, stakeholders and customers safe - a prime example being social distancing measures.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with this during your station tour / induction before you return to work.

Birmingham & Vehicle Photos



Onboard Coach Photos



Examples of signage we are displaying at our Coach Stations


Welcome to the Coach Station

Keeping our customers and colleagues safe and well is our top priority. Please familiarise yourself with the key points below before entering the station:

-  Do not travel if you feel unwell. Covid-19 symptoms include a high temperature, a new continuous cough, and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.
-  You are required to wear a face covering in stations and on board our coaches.
-  Please keep a safe distance from others where possible and follow instructions regarding social distancing.
-  If you are dropping someone off or picking someone up, then to avoid overcrowding, we would please ask that you wait outside of the Coach Station.
-  Temperature screening will be in place before you board the coach. A high temperature is a symptom of Covid-19. You may be refused travel if you provide a temperature reading of 38C or higher, or if you refuse to have your temperature taken.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. We hope you enjoy your journey with us today.

-  You are required to wear a face covering
-  Only one customer per desk at any one time
-  Stay safe, stay apart
-  Use card or a contactless payment method where possible

-  Follow Government advice and please do not travel if you feel unwell
-  You are required to wear a face covering in stations and on board our coaches
-  Stay safe, stay apart
-  Hand sanitiser stations are available in the station and on board our coaches
-  Please be patient and work with our teams as they're here to keep you safe

3.3 Mental Health

The wellbeing of our team members is critical to the safe operation of our network. We recognise that the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns may have had a significant impact on mental health presenting a wide range of issues including feelings of isolation, anxiety, health concerns, bereavement, money worries, use of alcohol and/or depression.

The easing of lockdown will inevitably present it's own challenges around re-establishing a work routine, integrating back into a (changed) society, perceived exposure to risk and other health concerns. This is why we strongly recommend honest and open conversations to identify anyone who might need some additional support.

Useful advice, guidance and support is available through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and organisations such as the Mental Health Foundation.

3.3.1 Thrive Mental Wellbeing App

The Thrive app is another tool from EAP that you can download to help get your mental health back on track. The app can provide a range of wellbeing issues and has been clinically approved by the NHS. Whether you need information or have questions about stress, pregnancy, debt, landlords and or nutrition, the Thrive App can support you. If you are prompted to log in at any point here are the details;

Username = lifestyle1234

Password = carefirst.

04 Customer Information Pack

4.1 Welcome Back; Customer Service Manual

To support you with answering customer questions our Customer Experience Team have created a Welcome Back; Customer Services Manual. This manual is a comprehensive customer Q&A guide for front-line teams and can be accessed via the link below.

To support the Covid-19 measures put into place last year and to ensure our customers are well informed prior to travelling with us, the following information has been added to various customer information points to ensure expectations of how customers can reduce the spread of the virus are clear.

- The website Covid - 19 safety page
- Detailed as part of the booking process and terms & conditions of travel
- Clearly displayed on the booking confirmation and tickets.
- Animation instruction & video footage will also be provided online to bring the advice to life for customers

We have put a lot of effort into communicating this to customers before they travel using a number of different approaches such as prominent messaging on the web-site, promoting key messages on social media channels and proactive messaging to everyone on our customer database. New posters and signage at stations will also support this on the ground.

We are confident that most customers will be clear on what they need to do but there will inevitably be some who are not aware or choose to ignore the messages we are issuing. It is therefore very important that you and your teams understand all of the measures we have put in place, exemptions that apply and what to do should a customer not follow the new requirements. The topics within the manual are described below; Foundation.

Page	Topic
4	Introduction
5	Protecting us all – New measures to help keep us safe at work
6 - 11	Customer information - setting expectations
12	Special Terms & Conditions live online relating to Covid-19
13 - 17	Temperature Checks
18 - 22	Customer Face coverings and masks Q&A
23 - 24	Social distancing Q&A
24 – 25	Accessibility & Inclusion

Link to this document can be found [HERE](#).

4.2 Insight into Network changes

The events of the last year have created a unique opportunity for us to rework our routes, interchanges and timings. Our aim is to increase punctuality (at all stops), reduce dead mileage, speed up journey times

and offer evenly spaced services to key destinations. This work is still in progress but the below may be of interest:

- We are going to increase the number of services that start and finish in London. This will reduce low utilisation ultra-early morning services from the regions that were really positioning moves.
- We will move from three daily interchanges at Birmingham to a system of hourly interchanges. Doing so actually speeds up customer journeys, offers more journey options, and ensures full rest breaks for drivers.
- We will deliver more work through our in-house operations and that should mean we can offer a greater variety of work to NX South-East drivers.
- We are exploring reducing driver overnight stays and double manning to make the network more efficient.

Alongside this we have exciting redevelopments in our Nottingham and Leicester stations and we will continue to share our progress on workplace for everyone to see. A lot has changed in our stations since the beginning of the first lockdown and subsequently we have closed Colonnades, Gatwick South and Heathrow Terminal 4 as customer demand and travel restrictions have come into place.

4.3 Managing Conflict

These continuing uncertain times may increase risks of conflict between customers and advisors. Also, the volume of new and updated processes and responsibilities, may cause additional stress which could lead to conflict.

So as to mitigate this risk, we are providing customers with as much information as possible before they travel:

- The website is fully updated with all new and updated customer requirements.
- We have updated our Terms & Conditions to reflect the new requirements around face coverings and temperature screening
- Updated communications displayed in Coach Stations to remind customers of their responsibilities.
- Messaging on e-tickets making customers aware of key measures.

In addition,

- The new e-course called 'Return to Work Induction - COVID-19' includes a section on conflict management.
- A briefing poster has been created to remind you of how to deal with conflict and can be accessed [HERE](#).

As always, if there is any situation where you are finding it difficult to deal with customer conflict then please ensure that they contact your team leader or duty manager who will support you. In addition to this NCC can provide support and assistance to you any time of the day or night.

05 New Processes

5.1 Completion of Pre Opening Checklist

This is primarily for Coach Station Managers to complete before reopening in conjunction with the safety team. This checklist means that all the normal services and amenities will be available to you as soon as you reopen. It is also good guidance to check that the environment is safe and all practices are compliant.

5.2 Face Mask Sales

It is now a legal requirement to wear a face covering when travelling on public transport. Guidance on how this applies to our customers can be found in the Customer Information pack.

Face masks will be available for customers to buy at our stations. Where these are available for sale, they can be processed through the SMART reservation system using the following "Other Product" sales screen:

5.2.1 Audit Process for Management of Face Mask Stock

Each site will receive a small stock of individually-packaged facemasks which are available for purchase by any passenger who has arrived for travel without a suitable face covering (as required by law). This stock is in addition to supplies received for staff/visitor use and the two stocks should be kept completely separate to provide accountability.

On receipt of stock at the Coach Station:

- The quantity received should be checked to ensure it agrees to the expected quantity/delivery note.
- The number of units should be recorded to allow stock levels and sales to be monitored.
- Stock should be kept secure.

Sales recording:

- Each day, a suitable quantity of masks should be issued to an allocated CSA and the quantity issued should be recorded by the CSM/Senior.
- Masks will be sold as 'free sale' as required at the point of boarding and cash received should be securely held by the CSA.
- At the end of shift the CSA should record all masks sold as a single transaction on Smart ('Other Product' sale, Face Masks, enter total value of all masks sold and cash taken), and a receipt should be printed confirming the value of cash declared. Cash should be banked in the usual way.
- Any unsold masks must be returned to the CSM/Duty Manager/Team Leader along with the Smart Receipt.

Reconciliation of cash/Stock:

- The CSM must ensure that all issued stock can be accounted for as either returned from the CSA or declared as sold/cash received (as per the Smart receipt). Any anomalies should be investigated as per normal procedures.
- Any unsold masks should be placed back into stock and the stock quantity adjusted accordingly.

The above should be recorded on the Daily Stock Reconciliation sheet which will be provided to you by your Coach Station Manager. This sheet will be updated to incorporate a column referring to allocation of face masks

5.3 Re-ordering of PPE





To help us obtain PPE, the National Express Webstore by GiftFinder has been introduced as the one stop shop for all PPE ‘consumables’. It allows your line manager to order directly from our approved PPE supplier. There can be a lead time of up to 5 working days for your order to be processed - keep track of your requirements and let your line manager know if you need further stock.

Disposable face masks are available to order (50 per pack) but in the interests of environment and waste generation, it is preferred for everyone to wear reusable masks (available from the webstore in packs of 5).

0208 686 5544 My Account Shopping Cart Checkout

national express Search 0 item(s)

National Express PPE Webstore

			
PELICAN PUMP Pelican pump to fit 5l hand sanitiser..	HAND SANITISER 5L - BOX OF 4 A quick acting, no-rinse alcohol hand rub which includes moisturisers to help minimise skin drying..	HAND SANITISER 50ML - BOX OF 48 A quick acting, no-rinse alcohol hand rub which includes moisturisers to help minimise skin drying..	ANTI-BACTERIAL/VIRAL WIPES 120 PACK - 24 PACKS PER BOX Pack of 120 antibacterial & antiviral wet wipes. Certified to EN1500, EN1276 & EN14476..
Add to Cart	Add to Cart	Add to Cart	Add to Cart

5.4 Disposal of Personal PPE

In accordance with government guidance you can dispose of PPE within the normal waste along with other items that are non recyclable or hazardous. If there is any waste associated with a confirmed case of Covid-19 then please see the link below for the government guidance on exactly what to do:

[COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home](#)

5.5 Customer Announcements Scripts

In order to remind customers of our revised safety procedures at Coach Stations, customer announcements have been revised to incorporate specific Covid-19 messages.

The following announcement should be made prior to the standard departure announcement be it for individual or multiple (interchange) service departures or at least every 30 minutes.

“Good morning/afternoon this is an important safety announcement

- You are required to wear a face covering in stations and on board our coaches
- Keep a safe distance from others where possible and follow instructions regarding social distancing
- Please be aware that temperature screening will be in place before you board the coach”

5.6 Changes on board Coaches

Recap of onboard changes implemented so as to be 'Covid-19 secure'

Following the recommendations contained within the on-board risk assessment, we will continue to operate with the following measures:

- Revised seating configuration to support social distancing e.g. Single occupancy seats and Sit Together offering*

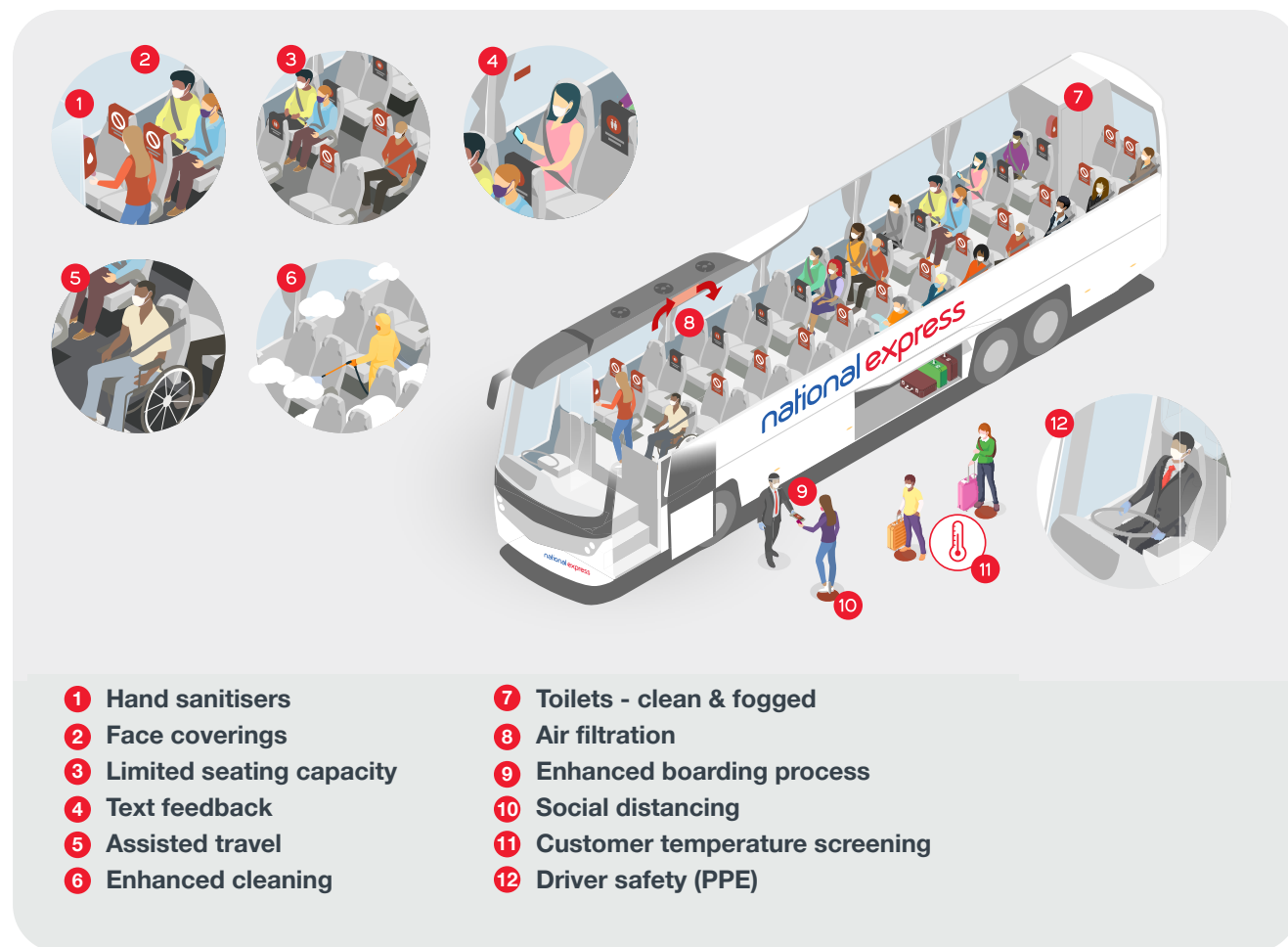
*Customers with young children who are unable to sit on their own and customers who need to travel with a carer are allowed to sit together even if they have not reserved seats together - to be managed on a case by case basis as appropriate. Customers who use wheelchairs and disabled customers who require assistance can use the front kerbside seat as long as they wear a face covering or face mask (unless exempt). Co-drivers can only use this seat if it is not needed by a disabled customer/customer who uses a wheelchair and must wear their facemask (unless exempt).

- Reintroduction of Seat Reservations with new headrest covers
- Additional signage to alert customers to their own responsibilities e.g wearing face coverings, social distancing, hand sanitising etc.

- Hand sanitisers on board for driver and customer use - both on the screen behind the driver and at the rear of the coach near the toilet.
- Updated on-board Safety CD.
- Protective screens for the driver in the cab area.
- An additional filter using three types of technology, including UVC radiation to reduce bacteria and corona type viruses, and a PM2.5 filter to block 99% of airborne particulates and improve air quality must be installed in the air conditioning systems of all coaches
- Removal of seat-back safety cards, seat back netting and tables to reduce customer touch-points and make cleaning easier (with revised safety stickers highlighting legally-required information installed at the front of the coach)
- Customers seated at the front of the coach advised to leave the coach first; those at the back to leave last

All of this detail is also available on the National Express website.

The changes we have made are summarised pictorially below:



5.6.1 Sitting Together

Following the successful trial of customers from the same household or support bubble (as defined by the Government) sitting together, we are now launching this feature as a longer term product. The product is called “Sit Together” and is available across the entire network and is a free of charge add-on product, but only available to customers on a request only basis.

Customers can request to sit next to one another, but we are not always able to guarantee this on the day of travel.

5.6.2 Seat Reservations



The image shows a blue sidebar with a 'My Account' section. Below it, a large blue box contains the text 'Reserved' in white, followed by 'Sorry, we're keeping this seat warm for someone else' and 'Reserve your seat for next time at nationalexpress.com'. Above this box is a vertical list of account management options with icons: 'Sign up at nationalexpress.com/myaccount', 'Great offers when you sign up to our mailing list', 'Manage preferences', 'Check your seat or upcoming journeys', 'View tickets', 'We'll securely save your details', 'Checkout faster', 'Check out your tickets with ease', 'Amend travel', 'Make amendments to your tickets with ease or add extra luggage', 'Personalise your journey', 'Reserve your favourite seat', 'Save money on your ticket purchase', 'No booking fee', 'Benefits to make travelling with us even easier', and 'My Account offers lots of great features and The hassle-free way to manage your bookings'.

From the middle to end of March, we will be putting Seat Reservations back on sale for when the network re-launches on 29 March.

One of the changes to Seat Reservation is the introduction of new headrest covers which will be available to clearly mark reserved customer seating.

All operators, who are operating services from 29 March 2021, will receive packs of Seat Reservation headrests and installation guides ahead of the network restart, which advises how to attach/clean them and where to store them. The driver will be required to manage seat stock whilst promoting social distancing and may require support from Coach Station teams.

In addition, a Seat Reservation iLearn course has been updated to reflect these new on board processes changes and will be circulated in due course. It is highly recommended that all frontline staff undertake this course to familiarise themselves with this when they return to work.

For reference, a summary of other key changes to Standard Seat Reservation has been included below:

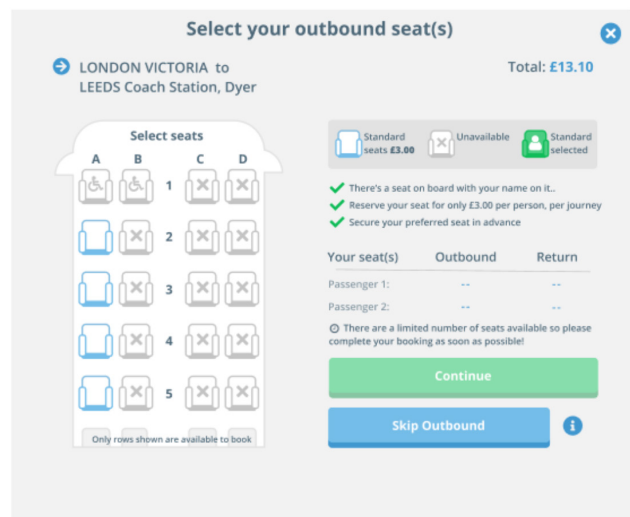
- It will only be available across 4 socially distanced seats (2A - 5A), curbside.
- It will be priced at £3 per journey leg, per passenger (previously £2).
- It will only be available to customers travelling alone (as we continue to encourage customers who are travelling within a group to sit together, if they are permitted to, in line with Government guidance).

The product will not be available to add on via the Contact Centre, Stations, or other sales channels. Customers are only able to book this feature via the website.

However, at the point of departure, you may have to support the driver in understanding which customers would like to sit together. Current on board capacity is approximately 50%, however with the ‘Sitting Together’ seats we can safely increase this.

- Route availability will remain the same as before, with the addition of starting locations on Cross Country routes; this is to maximise availability of this product on the network with minimal operational issues.

The image below demonstrates the seats available for customers to reserve on board the vehicle and how it is presented in the booking flow on the National Express website.



The image shows a screenshot of the 'Select your outbound seat(s)' interface on the National Express website. The route is 'LONDON VICTORIA to LEEDS Coach Station, Dyer' with a total price of '£13.10'. The interface displays a grid of seats (A-D, 1-5) with icons for wheelchair accessibility and seat status (Standard seats £3.00, Unavailable, Standard selected). A legend indicates that a seat is selected. Below the grid, there are three green checkmarks: 'There's a seat on board with your name on it...', 'Reserve your seat for only £3.00 per person, per journey', and 'Secure your preferred seat in advance'. A table shows 'Your seat(s)', 'Outbound', and 'Return' for Passenger 1 and Passenger 2. A note states: 'There are a limited number of seats available so please complete your booking as soon as possible!'. There are 'Continue' and 'Skip Outbound' buttons.

5.7 Wheelchair Accessibility Update

An updated video has been produced to support CSA's and drivers in understanding our customers who use a wheelchair onboard our coaches. Please click on the [LINK](#) to access it.

06 Safe Working Practices ~ SWP

A number of Safe Working Practices (Covid - 001) have been created to support the return to work of team members; the content headings are below and each team member **must complete and sign** the detailed document prior to starting work on their first day back.

The specific SWP's relevant to Coach Stations are those titled:

- Working in coach stations during Covid-19 pandemic v2
- Provision of first aid during Covid-19 pandemic
- Personal protective equipment v3
- Handling, using & sanitising general equipment and workstation appliances v2
- Touchpoint cleaning in Coach Stations during Covid-19 pandemic

- General use of an alcohol based hand sanitiser / cleaners during Covid-19 pandemic

In addition to the individual team members signing the detailed SWP, the person responsible for carrying out the training must also sign the document. These SWP's are held on site locally for review at your safety audit.

6.1 Safety Audits

Coach Station Health, Safety & Environment audits will take place in 2021 where national and local restrictions permit. Sites not audited in 2020 will be prioritised where they are open. Audit dates will be agreed with Station Managers in advance and will focus on key health and safety risks, including Covid-19

07 Cleaning

We will all be familiar with the personal hygiene suggestions to reduce the possibility of contracting the virus (e.g. wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds) and National Express has introduced numerous cleaning enhancement regimes to support this ~ specifically:

- Deep clean of the station prior to re-opening.
- Sanitiser dispensers - individually allocated to team members and located at various points within the station for use by the public.
- We will introduce enhanced cleaning regimes including Public Toilets which will remain open and chargeable.
- Coach Station Fogging using airborne disinfectant which will reach all the hard to reach places will be done at NX managed stations.
- For those stations where we are not the landlord, fogging is provided by the main onsite cleaning company, e.g. TFL provides this service in Victoria Coach Station.



Other protective measures include:

- Desk screens.
- Decommissioning of some TVM's to support social distancing.
- Installation of barriers for coach boarding queues.
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to include gloves, masks and visors.

Government guidelines strongly recommend maintaining good standards of housekeeping and hygiene in areas used by multiple workers, to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19. Team members should clean the following areas as stipulated in the Station Checklist with antiviral cleaning products:

- Ticket Vending Machines
- Door handles
- Workstation desk tops

Following on from the risk assessments, each NX-owned location will have enhanced cleaning regimes (frequent wiping of touch points, fogging etc) and will be re-configured to promote social distancing. There will also be additional protection for team members, including PPE and screens at ticket and information desks.

Customer toilets will remain open, but will be cleaned more regularly and some further changes will be made to promote social distancing for those people using the facilities. Ticket vending machines will also be open, taking card and cash sales and hand sanitisers will be placed strategically at key locations around the station. Frequent announcements will be made to remind customers of social distancing and the requirement to wear a face covering.

As always, CSAs will assist and support our drivers wherever they can, particularly in the management of customer movements and the boarding process. However, please note that due to the different ways we will all be working, much of their time may well be taken up managing customer issues and conducting light cleaning duties within the station.

08 Network Control Centre ~ NCC

NCC will be available and operational when the network restarts and team members should contact NCC for any on-the-day support. However, please note that like the network, the team will not initially return at full capacity so there may be slight delays in answering calls during peak times.

NCC Number: 0330 123 0822

