

Birmingham Mental Health Awareness Training for National Express West Midlands

Organisation: **Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust**

This Social Inclusion Fund project involved the collaboration of Centro, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, National Express West Midlands and Community Vibe Ltd (a media production company), together with mental health service users to produce a unique training package in mental health awareness for transport staff. Central to the pack was a 20 minute DVD, developed and performed by service users, National Express West Midlands staff and the Safer Travel Police Team.

The key objective of the project was to help raise awareness and understanding, particularly among bus drivers, regarding the issues and challenges faced by people with mental health problems when using public transport. For instance, mental health patients can often get anxious when using public transport and for some people independent travel can be a real challenge. The project followed a series of transport road shows organised by the NHS Trust, local bus operators in the region and Centro.

The DVD was key to the delivery of the training sessions and by March 2008, over 500 National Express West Midland drivers had been trained. In the next three years, it is hoped that every bus driver in the company will be trained in mental health awareness.

Centro will continue to support the project and promote mental health awareness training amongst other bus and rail operators across the West Midlands as part of improving public transport and promoting social regeneration.



Top left to right: John Sidebotham: Centro, Julian Cleaver: Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust NHS Trust, Gary Archer:Community Vibe Ltd, Madi Pilgrim and Adrian Alcock: National Express West Midlands, Rachel Green: Community Vibe Ltd and Ken Bannister: service user.