

UK: More service stations to become fully accessible as government releases fund

Department for Transport is partnering with Muscular Dystrophy UK to award money for Changing Places toilets.



More service stations in England are to become fully accessible for disabled passengers with the launch of a £2 million government fund.

The Department for Transport is partnering with Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) to award the money for Changing Places toilets, which are expected to be ready by the early 2020s.

More than a quarter of a million people across the UK cannot use standard accessible toilets, meaning that they are forced to go for long journeys without a bathroom break, be changed by their carers on toilet floors, or have to stay at home.

By providing more space and specialised equipment, including adult-sized changing benches and hoists, Changing Places facilities allow people with conditions like muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy to use the bathroom safely and comfortably, removing some of the difficulties faced by disabled

people travelling on the roads.

“It is unacceptable that, despite welcome investment in some areas, our roadside services are not more accessible for over a quarter of a million people, and I am determined to do more”, said Transport Accessibility Minister Nusrat Ghani.

MDUK will work with DfT to allocate funding based on detailed proposals by the operators of motorway services areas which will set out how they propose to fulfil the eligibility criteria. This includes the equipment provided within the Changing Places toilet, the total budget, and the individual operator’s broader accessibility measures, such as disabled parking spaces and other accessible facilities within the service station.

The department’s partnership with MDUK was announced last November to bring Changing Places toilets to the majority of motorway service areas, as part of the government’s Inclusive Transport Strategy which aims to provide equal access to the transport network by 2030.

“Building Changing Places toilets at motorway service stations will make it easier for more than a quarter of a million people and their families to visit friends, go on holiday, or simply enjoy a day out somewhere – activities the rest of us take for granted,” commented Catherine Woodhead, Chief Executive of Muscular Dystrophy UK.