



The Sunshine Coach Programme Guide

2026

About Variety's Sunshine Coach Programme

Since the programme began in the 1960s, we have delivered over 6,000 Sunshine Coaches.

In the UK, there are more than 1.3 million disabled children and nearly 4 million children living in poverty. Variety, the Children's Charity, exists to improve their lives. We believe that all children should have an equal opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of circumstance or disability.

We offer practical help that makes an immediate difference to children and young people up to the age of 19. Our iconic Sunshine Coaches provide adapted, accessible transport for schools and non-profit organisations, enabling children to access opportunities and experiences that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to have. These include getting involved in their local community, educational trips, cultural outings, hydrotherapy and sports sessions, and broader curriculum activities.

Our aim is to help increase childrens' confidence, independence, social connections, learning outcomes, educational experiences and overall quality of life.

Variety's values

Our values are at the heart of everything we do.



Compassion

We believe every child should have the opportunity to live, laugh, learn and experience life to the fullest. Our commitment to compassionate service drives us to take meaningful action that creates real change in children's lives.



Dignity

We embrace and celebrate the unique potential of every child, regardless of their abilities or circumstances. We foster an environment of dignity, understanding, and acceptance that empowers children and their families.



Collaboration

We believe in the power of partnership and work closely with families, welfare professionals, schools, and community organisations to deliver our support where it's needed.



Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do, from our programmes and services to our interactions with children, families and stakeholders. We measure our success by the positive difference we make in children's lives.

Courage

We fearlessly uphold our belief that every child has the right to develop their full potential and are committed to challenging the inequality, inequity and prejudice against children, wherever we find it.



Commitment

We are committed to seeking creative solutions and adapt our approaches to meet the evolving needs of the children we serve. Our innovative spirit is guided by our commitment to delivering meaningful, life-changing support.



Trust

We uphold the highest standards of integrity in our operations, ensuring that our resources are used effectively and efficiently. We maintain open communication with our stakeholders and honour the trust placed in us.



Empowerment

We are dedicated to providing children with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. We believe in empowering children to reach their full potential.



About Variety's programmes

We fund and deliver life-changing programmes that give children and young people across the UK a better future.



Since Variety UK was founded in 1949, we have raised over £200 million, and supported more than 900,000 children who are disabled and disadvantaged.

Our programmes:

The Sunshine Coach Programme
offers specially adapted accessible transport to schools and non-profit organisations.

The Wheelchair Programme
provides bespoke manual, sport and powered wheelchairs to children and young people.

The Specialist Equipment Programme
provides life-changing equipment including specialised play equipment, hoists, walkers, beds, furniture and car seats.

Access Interns
is a supported work experience programme which partners with companies to empower young people with disabilities to kickstart their careers.

Our Coaches change lives

I can use the word impactful, but it's immeasurable what the Coach does for our children. They can become a part of society instead of just sitting on the periphery of it.

The Sunshine Coaches we offer

We are very proud to be able to offer six different types of Sunshine Coaches. We have four diesel and two electric to apply for, all with different specifications and at different prices.

Diesel

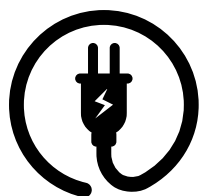


14 seater

17 seater

13 seater with tail-lift (wheelchair access)

17 seater with tail-lift (wheelchair access)



Electric

16 seater electric

15 seater electric with tail-lift (wheelchair access)



Looking to apply for a Sunshine Coach?

To apply for a Coach, you must...

- ☒ Be a UK based and operating school or non-profit organisation
- ☒ Work with children and young people up to 19 years of age
- ☒ Work with children who are disabled, disadvantaged, or both
- ☒ Have your contribution available (35% of the cost of the coach)
- ☒ Commit to using the Sunshine Coach three days a week, 39 weeks a year

You can apply for a Sunshine Coach via our online application form.

You will first be asked to complete a series of eligibility criteria questions to ensure that we can work with your organisation.

You will then be moved through to the online application form.



Your Sunshine Coach journey

Step 1: Eligibility and application

Visit Variety's website to apply for a Sunshine Coach. You will first complete a short eligibility questionnaire, and if suited, be directed to our online application form. Create an account and complete the form.



Step 2: Casework

Once submitted, your application will wait for internal casework. Casework is carried out to ensure that your application is legitimate and in line with our eligibility criteria.



Step 3: Assessment

One of our External Assessors will be in touch to arrange an assessment of your application with you. This will be either over the phone, video call or as a site visit.



Step 4: Decision

A decision will be made to approve, decline, or request further information about your application. You will be notified of the outcome via email.

Step 5: Funds check

The Sunshine Coach Team will be in touch to enquire if you have your full contribution for the coach, which is 35% of the cost of the vehicle. This is required to help us secure donorship.



Step 6: Donor alignment

Variety's Fundraising Team work hard to find a donor to fund the remaining 65% of your Sunshine Coach. Once secured, you are notified and will begin the paperwork with support from the Sunshine Coach Team.



Step 7: Paperwork

The Sunshine Coach Team will request information from your organisation to generate the correct paperwork for your Sunshine Coach. The Coach is then ordered from our suppliers.



Step 8: Finances

You will be asked for your contribution to the Coach, and the donor's funds will then be provided to you. Further instructions will then be given.



Step 9: Delivery

When the invoice is settled, your Sunshine Coach will be delivered to your organisation, or you may be asked to attend an external presentation to collect your Coach.



Step 10: Presentation

Alternatively, Variety will be in touch to arrange a Sunshine Coach presentation. This is a chance for the donors to visit your organisation, meet the children, and see the Coach in its new home!



Step 11: Impact and evaluation

The Programmes Team will be in touch three and ten months after delivery to carry out impact monitoring. This helps us gather valuable feedback.



Step 12: Enjoy your Sunshine Coach!

The most important step: enjoy your Sunshine Coach! We hope you love it, and make lots of happy memories for many years to come.

Our valued donors

We are extremely proud and grateful to work with companies, Trusts, Foundations and individual donors who believe in our mission. Their support opens the gateway for children to have new experiences, opportunities, and to make life long memories.

Some of our wonderful Sunshine Coach donors include:



Variety has delivered over 600 coaches in the past 10 years to schools, charities, hospices, youth clubs and alternative provisions, who exist to support children and young people who are disabled and disadvantaged.

We are very lucky to work with some fantastic and generous donors who want to see more wheels on the road, and take pride in being the longest-running charity to offer an accessible transport programme.

“I really hope the bright new Sunshine Coach will broaden horizons for all the children at our school, and give them the freedom and opportunity to experience many wonderful days out.”



If you have any questions about the Sunshine Coach Programme, or would like further information, please contact the team at coaches@variety.org.uk.

If you have any questions about any of our other programmes, please email programmes@variety.org.uk.