

Minibus Options builds the UK's largest wheelchair-accessible minibus conversion

- *IVECO BUSMASTER bodybuilder completes the first minibus conversion equipped to accommodate seven wheelchairs*
- *New IVECO Daily minibus to reduce costs versus traditional coach-built alternatives*

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Derbyshire-based Minibus Options has completed the UK's largest wheelchair-accessible minibus conversion – building an M2 category minibus offering the capacity to accommodate up to seven wheelchair passengers.

The conversion has been made possible thanks to the IVECO Daily – the largest panel van on the UK market – which is now offered with a 4,100mm wheelbase plus an extra-long rear overhang, making the vehicle more than 7.6m in length.

Minibus Options was one of the first bodybuilding partners to join the IVECO BUSMASTER advocate programme in 2016 and came up with the idea for the conversion to help local authorities and community transport organisations reduce their vehicle acquisition costs.

Fred James, Sales Director at Minibus Options, says: "The Daily has provided us with an opportunity to use all of our experience to design a vehicle which is entering the realms of coach-built minibuses in terms of wheelchair capacity.

"Previously if you wanted more than six wheelchairs on board you'd need to take the coach-built route, but with our solution we can bring this vehicle to market for less than £60,000. That's a significant saving and we are expecting strong interest."

Key to the 17-seater vehicle's design is the unique cut-in stepwell and manual fold-out step from the front near-side sliding door – developed by Minibus Options' engineering team to offer easy access for passengers with reduced mobility. For wheelchair passengers, access is via a neat electro hydraulic tuck-away tail-lift at the rear doors.

Abdi Ali, Product Manager at IVECO BUS UK, has also been working closely with Minibus Options on the design of a similar model which will be able to take advantage of IVECO's natural gas-powered engine range. The IVECO Daily Natural Power minibus conversion offers





capacity for up to five wheelchairs, owing to the tail-lift needing to be positioned internally to free external space for gas tank storage.

Ali explains: “Increasingly, customers are looking seriously at low-emission LCVs, and natural gas remains the single most efficient technical solution available to solve pollution-related problems in urban areas. The team at Minibus Options has been working hard on the design, and we’re looking forward to seeing the first Daily Natural Power minibus conversion produced for the UK market.”

Key features inside these new models include semi-highback individual contoured passenger seats mounted onto a quick-release track mechanism with anti-rattle locking devices, plus twin coach-style electrically operated lifting air vents mounted in the roof. The interior also features saloon LED lighting, plus a blue night light, loading lights and step footwell lights. Safety is also enhanced with a reversing camera to aid manoeuvrability.

The new model is based on a conversion of the Daily 50C15 panel van – with IVECO’s class-leading Hi-Matic eight-speed automatic transmission available as an option to deliver absolute driving pleasure. Power is provided by a 3.0 litre Euro 6 light-duty diesel engine capable of producing 146hp between 3,000 and 3,500 rev/min, and up to 350 Nm of torque between 1,500 and 2,600 rev/min.

To view a vehicle walkaround video produced by Minibus Options, please follow this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JJJe0l_hv4

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