

Written submissions provided for the Transport Committee's review into the accessibility of London's transport network

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NCT is here to support parents. We don't tell them what to do or think – through our classes, branches, and helplines, our volunteers and qualified staff give parents accurate, impartial information so that they can decide what's best for their family. Through us, they can join a support network of other parents nearby, which can be a lifeline in the early years. We are the UK's leading parenting charity, and, being independent, we have an influential voice in campaigning and lobbying on the issues that parents care about.

NCT warmly welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to this investigation on behalf of parents of young children, mainly babies and toddlers. Our submission is based on consultation with our London membership and branch base and the parents with whom they interact through the provision of essential support services. In London NCT has 15,918 members in 34 branches. Their stories are used throughout this submission to illustrate responses to the committee's questions.

Planning journeys

- How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

The online journey planner is a useful tool for parents but respondents to our consultation noted inaccuracies in reported journey time and misinformation at times regarding accessibility of stations, routes, especially during maintenance works. Additionally, some respondents felt that accessible journeys were often miscalculated when alternatives which would be shorter were overlooked.

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Additionally, maps provided via journey planner to plot journeys do not currently outline pedestrian crossing and dropped kerbs which those traveling with buggies may need to use to complete their journey.

Some parents traveling with small children and babies use wide double buggies and these do not fit through all manual access gates at stations and may not fit easily on escalators. Allowing the addition of an option of “I travel with a wide pram/buggy” to the mobility requirements list online or as a prompt from the telephone help lines will allow these parents to avoid stations with these access barriers.

Certain stations may not provide step-access issues but can involve long walks between platforms and lines. This can present an issue for families with very young children and for some pregnant women. Outlining long distances between lines (or average times) online or via the telephone helplines would be of benefit to help those passengers pick the best routes for their needs.

Step free exits at stations with a range of exits should be highlighted in the results on journey planner.

Though very useful the accessibility guides, including the step free tube map are not very easy to find on the site. Station information should be up to date, and this should include London Overground (where station information is felt to be especially patchy). Pages should have a ‘last updated’ date at the bottom of the page and should have someone reviewing the information when stations have work done on them.

Parents with learning disabilities or low literacy may find it difficult to find the family friendly information on the website. Making this clearer and easier to find would be very helpful.

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Parents on low or restricted incomes should be able to calculate the cost of more accessible journeys at point of planning and a financial calculator should be part of the Journey Planner functionality and provided on the telephone helplines.

Having more information on traveling with young children available at stations, stops and on vehicles, eg; on line maps on tubes, trains and DLR would allow parents traveling with young children better access to resources when online access is not an option and journeys need to be planned or changed while in transit. For example, in the event of a station, line or route closure parents will struggle to find information on accessible routes at short notice without online access. All vehicles should display the telephone helpline number.

"I have only used the online journey planner. It is quite useful but some of the information provided is not up-to-date. It also comes up with some very long-winded journeys (involving four or five changes) to compensate for the lack of accessibility, when simpler options are available. "

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Often the attitude and helpfulness of staff is as important as the physical accessibility of the chosen or needed route and parents referred to staff as being essential to their journey being a positive experience.

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"We badly need lift access, or failing that, more helpful station staff who offer to help users such as myself".

There were concerns raised about staffing shortages at certain times in stations making it impossible for people to overcome physical access barriers, including unreliable auto entry gates.

Parents can find it particularly difficult using buses at busy periods with small children and staff attitudes are deemed to have a significant impact on this. Having a policy whereby buses would not depart until parents and children were seated/had reached the wheelchair/buggy space would be very helpful to parents who often feel rushed by driver and passengers and may be struggling to get on the bus quickly with a buggy and often other young children. Parents often describe traveling with very young children in this way highly stressful and remark that attitudes and helpfulness from staff and other passengers makes a big difference.

"I have struggled to fold up the buggy at the same time as holding the baby, making sure the toddler doesn't run into the road and keep an eye on my shopping and handbag. This is an impossible task, made worse by the time pressure vibes exuded by the driver and other passengers."

In general there appears to be inconsistency in the attitudes and practices of TFL staff in assisting parents, particularly with physical help to overcome physical access barriers. For example, some parents referred to staff helping them carrying prams up stairs while others noted that staff stated they would not or could not help. Some bus drivers were seen to let buggies access via the rear doors while others wouldn't. Improving the consistency of the customer service experience for parents would be hugely beneficial to improving the experience overall.

NCT recommends that staff training include elements on the issues experienced traveling while pregnant, with a buggy and with small ambulant children and buggies so that staff have an

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understanding of how their practices can affect a young family using the service. Issues of health and safety, backcare etc, should be clarified.

NCT recommends that a “Parents Pledge” is taken by all TFL staff as part of their training and induction and would be happy to be involved in the development of such a pledge. It would include elements such as physical assistance, always offering help to traveling families and signposting and information provision.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Unsurprisingly, due to the nature of traveling with babies and very young children, physical access issues were paramount among concerns but also the compliments that parents had for TfL.

Physical access issues include lack of step free access to stations and stops:

- difficulties in accessing bus stops in bus stations due to presence of safety barriers not wide enough to let bigger buggies through
- lack of step free access between rail options at larger stations and lack of step free signposting
- frequent maintenance issues with escalators and lifts at stations

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- general lack of step free access at a large number of rail and tube stations. Despite recognition of improvements, many parents feel completely unable to use the rail and tube network due to steps and lack of step free access through use of ramps, escalators or lifts.
- Stations with a variety of exits do not have consistent use of step free exit signage.

"I have to face 3 flights of 13 stairs each time I want to access both south-bound and north-bound platforms. It is a big problem for those people with pushchairs. I'm currently pregnant and have no idea how I'm going to be able to use the trains and Overground service from the station once I have 2 small children".

Accessible journeys are often only possible when extending the journey time and adding the number of transport options needed. This makes it very difficult for parents to navigate the system. It also makes the issue of lack of toilet and baby changing facilities a very real problem. Lengthening a journey to allow for step free access increases the likelihood that public facilities will be needed to meet your baby or young children's care needs. Toilet and baby changing facilities across the TFL network are insufficient. There are not enough publicly accessible free toilets and baby changing areas and the hygiene and cleanliness is often poor.

" There are no lifts or they are in isolated locations which feel unsafe , at the far end of platforms. Many of the escalators are long and steep and it is a scary prospect balancing only the front or back two wheels of a pushchair on an escalator step while trying to prevent older children from tripping or falling as well."

NCT recommends that full consultation with groups with restricted mobility take place in the design and development of any new stations and stops or any major refurbishment.

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Wide gaps between trains and platforms are seen as difficult to navigate with prams and especially difficult to use for parents traveling with prams and another child. Nominating an area of platforms with particularly wide gaps where the gap is less wide and easier to navigate, via on-floor marking would be very helpful to parents.

There is lack of clarity on access for prams on buses. Staff seem to have inconsistent practices as to whether prams can access buses where the wheelchair space is not in use at busy times. Additionally, the policy of folding prams on request needs further work to ensure that sensitivity is always shown to the parent and reasonable adjustment is made wherever possible. NCT recommends adding oyster card readers to the rear of all buses, making it much easier for parents accessing with prams to enter the bus and pay their fare. For many parents, if they enter via the rear door, they may need to leave their baby/small children to travel back through the passengers entering the bus to touch in. This is stressful and causes unnecessary worry and concern.

NCT would encourage TFL to work with local councils regarding the placement of litter bins, lampposts and safety barriers adjacent to bus stops and in designation of temporary bus stops where needed. Often buses cannot position alongside the bus stop optimally to allow easy access by pram or with small children due to obstructions on the pavement.

NCT recommends that prams/buggies should always be permitted to access via the rear doors regardless of whether the ramp is used. Ramps should be automatically lowered for any user with a pram/buggy, which is not current standard practice.

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Other issues

Financial accessibility

1 in 5 families fall into poverty as a result of the birth of a child. Due to lack of fully paid statutory maternity leave and paternity leave periods, many families have a reduced income, coupled with higher outgoings after they've had a baby. Access to the Freedom Pass scheme and reduced bus and tram fares is not currently available to those in receipt of Maternity Allowance. NCT recommends that those in receipt of Maternity Allowance be extended access of the discounted fare scheme for buses and trams. This is particularly important in allowing parents with young children to make more accessible journeys which may cost more. The consideration of a time period of validity on oyster card touch-in when a bus fare is paid (ie; you won't be charged again if you touch in within a specified time) would make it fairer for those who need to use several buses to travel accessibly rather than one tube, rail or DLR journey. For parents with young children on low and restricted incomes, physical inaccessibility is compounded by financial inaccessibility.

Family friendly facilities across the TFL network

In addition to having good customer services and psychically and financially accessible modes of transport, stops and stations, families have access needs in relation to the support facilities they'll require when traveling.

Young children and babies often need to be fed, changed or assisted to use the toilet more often than older children. Lack of access to free, clean toilets and baby changing facilities across the TFL network makes traveling with young children an overly difficult experience.

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All major bus and train (and interchange) stations should provide free access to clean toilets and baby changing facilities. Access to existing toilets is very difficult with prams and buggies, due to the lack of step free access and lack of provision of parent and child toilets.

Additionally, traveling on the TFL network can be difficult in terms of accessing somewhere to feed very young children, be it from a bottle or breast. Traveling parents need to be made feel welcome to feed their babies whenever and wherever they need to. For breastfeeding mothers, this is often difficult as they often perceive a negative reaction and so are discouraged to feed their babies when out in public.

On behalf of the Breastfeeding Manifesto Coalition the NCT coordinates the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme which encourages improved and easy support for welcoming breastfeeding mothers which allows more places and spaces right across the UK to be breastfeeding welcome.

There are many reasons for TFL to be breastfeeding welcome.

It makes a real improvement to customer/client service

Training staff to be welcoming and helpful to breastfeeding mothers encourages them to be more helpful and considerate to all customers. This will boost customer satisfaction and loyalty which is great for your business.

It can attract a new customer/client base

When new mothers find a place that welcomes them to feed their babies, they pass on the good news and customer numbers grow as a result. Their visits are not usually at the busiest time of day.

There is little or no cost to you

Little things go a long way and breastfeeding mum's say what they appreciate most is a welcoming atmosphere and friendly, attentive staff, something you can provide for free! You can also write up a breastfeeding welcome policy for your staff.

It can improve your image and get you free publicity

By becoming breastfeeding welcome you are making a positive contribution to helping babies get the

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best start in life. It is great for your image as it demonstrates that you are not solely motivated by profit but are dedicated to making your customers happy. Businesses that become breastfeeding welcome will get publicity not only from being listed on our website, but also from word-of mouth recommendations between families.

The NCT recommends that TFL be the first corporate adopter of the scheme in advance of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. www.breastfeedingwelcomescheme.org.uk

Creating a family friendly culture among commuters

Finally, many parents refer to the attitudes of their fellow passengers as having a major impact on whether their journey was positive. NCT welcomes the efforts of the Together for London initiative and would call for any further expansion of this initiative to focus on ways fellow passengers can help parents to have a more positive journey. Parents refer to unhelpful remarks about not traveling with children at peak times, passengers not offering to help but complaining that parents accessing buses or trains are delaying their journey, among other issues. NCT would recommend that TFL initiatives which encourage improved passenger behaviour and attitudes make a concerted effort to encourage improved attitudes towards fellow passengers traveling while pregnant or with young children. We would also recommend that the current "priority seat" stickers be phased out and replaced with ones which specifically request that passengers give up their seats as many people do not feel comfortable in asking those in priority seats to give up their seats. The stickers should be used consistently across the TFL network.

16 June 2010

Prepared by Anne Fox, Head of Campaigns and Public Policy, NCT

When I got a train from Clapham Junction I found that a member of staff was willing to help carry the buggy up the hundreds of stairs but only if I took my baby out. I wasn't willing to do this as he was asleep so I waited for a member of the public to help instead. The member of staff told me that "this would make them look bad!".

My nearest station is Honor Oak Park. I have a 2 year old and baby due soon, which will mean traveling either with a double buggy or with buggy and sling combo.

There is only stair access to/from both platforms.

At peak times there are lots of commuters around and if you look sufficiently needy, someone will help carry a pram up/down the stairs.

However, during the middle of the day there is often no one else getting on/off at the station, so no-one to help.

Currently with just one toddler I manage to struggle up carrying the pram by myself. But once I have a baby too this will just not be possible.

This means that I either have to travel at peak times (not ideal with small children) or get off a stop earlier or later (Brockley or Forest Hill) to have step-free access and then use a bus (all added cost, time and hassle).

So, we really need step-free access at HOP.

The most frustrating thing about it is that there is plenty of space on either side of the station and it looks like they could build some ramps very easily.

(separate to above respondent) I live in Honor Oak Park and have to face 3 flights of 13 stairs each time I want to access both south-bound and north-bound platforms. It is a big problem for those people with pushchairs. I'm currently pregnant and have no idea how I'm going to be able to use the trains and Overground service from the station once I have 2 small children.

We need some escalator access at Finsbury Park station as it is virtually impossible to get to the platform with a double buggy unless a passer by helps. I have never seen station staff offer to assist anyone. The nearest stations to us are Finsbury Park and Haringay overland which has very steep stairs – dangerous for toddlers. My friend has a side by side twin buggy and was coming back from a weekend away with her husband and two children. Access at Haringay is either via a gate or via the ticket office and she had used the office entrance on the outward journey which was sufficiently wide. On her return on Sunday evening in the pouring rain she found that they were unable to exit the station with two small babies in the pushchair as the office was shut. The gate was too small to get through and they had to partially dismantle the pushchair and hand sections of it over the gate while dealing with two babies in the rain. It was a horrible experience. We since hear that they are manning that office even less than before. The gate needs to be made wider at this station.

One thing I've found a bit annoying is the access at Kew Gardens. To get from one platform to the other you have to walk a really long way. You can't use either the bridge or walkway under the station as there is only stairs and no ramp.

I have a small child and my Dad's in a wheelchair. So I'm used to navigating London Transport on wheels. There's been a big improvement in the offering but whilst the tube and buses are fairly good. Linking with London Overground or any other overground train services in London is a nightmare due mainly to lack of lifts.

I've just moved out west and the connections with South West trains are impossible. The gaps between train and platform are impossible to lift a buggy up and down to. There are no lifts in nearby stations which means my Dad is forced to travel by car and it's very hard for me to get my son in and out of my local stations in a buggy, due to the numerous steps. I don't know if that's in your remit but it's pointless having good access at one end of your journey if you can't get out at the other.

From my experience the only tube stations that have the right access are earls court, Westminster and canary wharf which isn't much! Very difficult to access central London easily at all.

On the whole the staff have been helpful especially on the underground system. I would also like to praise the staff at Richmond station who take the time to actually physically take you to the "secret" lift - why the lift to and from the overland train platforms can't be made public access i have no idea! Also there needs to be better signage to indicate that you can access the tube platforms and platform 1 of the overland service without the need to enter the ticket hall and use the stairs - I didn't know till a member of staff pointed this out to me.

I do wish to make note however of the journey i make occasionally between Richmond and Putney on the overland train. Staff at Putney station have told me on several occasions that they are not permitted to help parents with prams due to health and safety and have actively stood and watched me struggle down the stairs with my son in his pram. Were it not for the kindness of some commuters i have no idea what i would have done.

Ramps alongside stairs would also be a huge help (Clapham junction in particular is a no go for me due to the lack of anything like a ramp or a lift!)

Sanusie Sesay
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4 June 2010

Dear Mr Sesay

Poor/No Access On Hackney Buses

Thank you very much for your help with my telephone enquiry on 1 June.
I'm writing in the hope that you might be able to bring about an improvement in the service offered to wheelchair users on Hackney buses.

As a result of a motorbike accident, my boyfriend Steve uses a motorised wheelchair. He can only use his left hand so his chair, although compact, is quite heavy and needs the bus ramp to be fully deployed in order to board the bus. It simply can't be manoeuvred manually.

On several occasions now, we have waited for buses 26 and 55 at the Warner Place stop, in Hackney Road, which we then couldn't access because the ramps kept retracting. There are clearly two reasons for this. Some of those on older vehicles are extremely sensitive, and in order for them to work properly (particularly the faceted ones that consist of two hinged parts) the driver needs to be parked near to the kerb. Unfortunately, some of these drivers are extremely reluctant to do this. In the last few weeks (17 May and 30 May) they have simply left us there and driven off without warning or apology. On both of these occasions we were travelling off peak and there were very few passengers on board.

The accident also affected Steve's speech, so if he was travelling alone he couldn't shout for help. I've complained several times to TFL about the aggressive or dismissive behaviour of their staff, but I've just been given a reference number. To date, no action appears to have been taken.

I don't drive and this type of wheelchair can't be used on the Tube, so we really rely on the busses. It's so distressing planning a trip out because we never know whether the ramp will work or the driver will just leave us behind.

We really hope you can help us.

Yours faithfully



Louisa Mullan

A bit about me, or rather, my disability.

It stems from a 2003 road accident in which my cerebellum was damaged; my motor functions, voluntary and involuntary, are severely compromised. My entire body is affected, head to toe, inside and out, but the most obvious effect is that I have a very limited range of movement and greatly reduced speed, strength and precision. The condition also affects my voice; when it works, it's very quiet, slow and slurred, for purely physical reasons. People often mistake my impaired speech for a cognitive condition.

Outdoors I use a powered wheelchair (I can't use a manual chair as my arms aren't strong or flexible enough to propel one). I've been using - or trying to use - London buses for two years now, and have encountered the same problems over and over. While all TFL buses are ostensibly wheelchair accessible, the truth is that I'm only able to board about half of them. In some cases this is due to drivers who don't seem to know how to operate the wheelchair ramp; mostly, though, it's due to problems with the ramps themselves.

The bus I use most is the 55, Leyton to Oxford Circus. I catch it from Hackney Road into town. The 26 and 48 routes also pass by and I've noticed that these buses have, in the last year (to June 2010), been updated. The 55 hasn't; I don't know the model name or number but they appear to be the same buses I was catching ten years ago. I occasionally use the 26 or 48 to go to places near the river, and the accessibility of the new buses is faultless. However, the 55 is my usual ride as it goes into central London. It's dispiriting to see a shiny new 48 with its wide windows and smiley panel lines followed by a dusty old 55; here's my bus, but it's still a 50/50 gamble whether I'll be able to get on it.

I always position myself by the kerb a little way before the bus stop crowd, stick a hand out and make eye contact with the driver to ensure he/she knows I'm there, and will need the ramp. So - the driver pulls into the stop in the usual position, presses the switch to extend the ramp, and the fun begins.

On these older buses there are two types of ramp: One is a simple single ramp which pokes out of the bodywork and sags towards the pavement. If I see one of these I'm hopeful, because they're more reliable than the other variety. In this, the ramp is in two halves, one on top of the other. The problem with these is that they

are massively oversensitive; they're supposed to retract if they encounter an obstacle, but they react to the slightest irregularity in the pavement. Even the lines between the slabs on a new, smooth pavement can cause them to retract. I've seen these ramps extend right out, then pull back in for no apparent reason. I'm not exaggerating when I say that this type of ramp simply doesn't work most of the time. I despair when I see one.

What happens next depends on the driver. He (I'll say "he"; I know a lot of drivers are female, but I don't want to keep saying "he or she") will probably press the button again, with the same result. Then I'll go to the front of the bus to see the driver. If he knows his job he'll say (or indicate) that he's going to move closer to the kerb. Otherwise he'll say the ramp's not working, so I have to ask him to move closer to the kerb. Unfortunately I can't be heard over the distance between the pavement and the driver, through his perspex window, with the engine running, so I have to use sign language - a vague beckoning motion. Sometimes this works, sometimes the driver repeats the "Sorry, not working" gesture and leaves.

Some drivers are great and go way above and beyond to help, shuffling the bus closer and closer to the kerb until the ramp extends. One press-ganged a bunch of passengers to lift my chair on board while I stepped in through the exit doors. Another used his foot to lift the ramp over the (tiny) pavement irregularities while his TfL colleague held the ramp switch down.

On the other hand, I've waited on Clerkenwell Road in the rain while three consecutive buses failed to pick me up. I was only able to get on the fourth because the driver, showing tremendous initiative, rolled forward and deployed the ramp on a low, smooth driveway. He had to use the same technique to let me off. I once waited on Hackney Road for so long that I had to go back home to use the toilet. I was an hour late for my appointment, when I had originally set out an hour early. I've seen lightly loaded buses sitting so low that the ramp hits the side of the kerb. I've boarded buses only to find that the ramp won't retract, and everyone has to disembark and wait for the next one.

The final straw came recently, when two drivers simply gave up and drove away while I waited by the middle doors. Not a word, no "Sorry mate, it's not working" - they just left. One had made no effort to get the ramp down beyond the first failed attempt, the other eventually got his to extend - right in front of a bin. Instead of retracting it, moving forward a couple of feet, and extending it again, he

retracted it - and drove off.

I'm tired of having to deal with this nonsense. Let me make this very clear: My life is miserable. When people see me walking (which I can, but only a bit), or fumbling with a fork or cup, I'm aware that I become, primarily, an object of pity. If I'm out in my wheelchair, I'm essentially a piece of street furniture to be stepped around; a bench, albeit a fast-moving one. When I talk to people, understandably, they initially assume I'm retarded. (The correct term is *cognitively impaired*, but really). Then, when they realise I'm not, it still takes a while for them to reconcile my fully-functional thought process with my slow, slurred speech.

I'm 38 years old and I can't tie my own shoelaces, cut up my own food or write my own name. The last thing I need is to have my existence made even worse, to have the endless frustration and humiliation added to by a service which is meant to help me.

Inclusion London

Dear Ian,

Investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the London Assembly Transport Committee's investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network.

Geraldine O'Halloran will attend the meeting from Inclusion London, and is copied into this mail.

Please find attached a copy of Inclusion London's submission to the consultation on the Mayor's Transport Strategy. A number of the points in the submission concerned access. Many of the changes and steps we proposed have not found their way into the final strategy. Therefore they remain outstanding and hopefully the points raised will assist with the Committee's

investigation.

We have circulated your call for evidence to borough-based and other organisations across London and hope that organisations will contact you directly with evidence and/or may attend the Committee session. Some organisations commented to us that the timescale was challenging, particularly for organisations with very limited staff resources. We have advised them that they can submit evidence beyond the 16th June date given, but even this may represent a challenge. We raise this so it could perhaps be taken into account in the next phase of the committee's work.

We draw attention in particular to the following issues.

Firstly, Inclusion London's submission to the consultation on the Mayor's Transport Strategy raised a number of particular issues on access. These included the following:

- A proposal to amend proposal 25 (of the draft MTS) on the 'New Bus for London'. Inclusion London argued that the Routemaster was correctly discontinued among other reasons because of its inaccessibility and that as London has a perfectly good fleet of accessible buses, money and time should not be squandered on resurrecting it. Our view was not accepted and the Routemaster project remains in the final strategy. Since our submission was made we have learned that the designs for the bus have been drawn up without discussion with disabled people. We believe this is a mistake. The Mayor has a duty to pay due regard to equality for disabled people and we do not see how this can be done if disabled people are not involved in discussion on something as controversial as the replacement Routemaster from the outset.
- Opposition to the decision to delay existing plans for step-free access to the Tube as set out in TfL's Business Plan and indicated by the MTS' focus on accessibility at 'strategic interfaces' only. We proposed amendment to Proposal 40. This did not find its way into the final Strategy and is a major outstanding issue. The inaccessibility of the underground system, which is central to travel in London, has been a focus of concern by disabled people's organisations for many years. It is of great concern that plans to move forward in addressing tube access have been postponed.
- Blue Badge: we wanted to see more effort by the Mayor and via the Transport Strategy to encourage the central London boroughs to recognise the Blue Badge and to standardise their policies. We also raised the concerns raised with us that disabled drivers perceived that Blue Badge and/or disabled parking bays appeared to be becoming fewer in number.

- Information: we welcomed Proposal 41's goal of improving information but wanted to see a commitment to closer working with Disabled People's Organisations to ensure this goal was actually realised.
- Better streets or shared space street design: we expressed our concerns about the potential of particular shared street designs to discriminate and end up excluding certain groups of disabled people. We were also concerned at the lack of an agreed definition of what 'better streets' or 'shared space' streets were and what standards would apply, and how these standards were measured against the needs of disabled people. We expressed our concern at proposals that may be involved, such as shorter pedestrian crossing times. We drew attention to and supported concerns by other organisations, such as Guide Dogs, to the Exhibition Road shared-space plans, being partly funded by the Mayor of London. Given the Committee is taking a 'whole journey' approach to access, we draw this area of accessibility to your attention. The final strategy makes reference to the needs of disabled people on this point, saying that 'those with reduced mobility, visual impairment and deaf people should be taken into account'. We would like to see a much stronger wording which asserts and upholds the rights of disabled people and the need for public bodies and service providers not to discriminate. We welcome the agreement (announced on 18 June) by Kensington and Chelsea now to work with Guide Dogs and disabled people to trial shared surface street plans and to amend the plans if trials reveal barriers to disabled people.
- We made a number of comments on the proposals around cycling, which we draw the committee's attention to, including the need for cycle training schemes to be much more accessible to disabled people, to have staff trained in disability awareness and equality and to avoid stereotyping disabled people, our concerns about cycling superhighways, and two way cycling on one way streets.
- We raised a number of other issues related to access in varying ways including concern at the scale of fare increases, the future of concessionary fares, the variable quality and unreliability of door-to-door transport and the retaining accountable Mayoral influence on the Freedom Pass.

Secondly, in addition to these points and in relation to the Committee's specific questions:

- In terms of staff assistance, we have had mixed feedback. Reports of assistance by Underground staff have been generally positive, whereas it has been more mixed in regard to bus drivers (and taxi drivers).

However, feedback about bus staff is complicated by the general demand on the bus system, the difficulty in getting on a bus in the first place (due to demand and competition for accessible spaces) and the difficulty in communicating with the driver, especially when the bus is crowded.

- With regard to design, we have had calls for intercom systems on buses and for improvements in the design of ramps in some cases, with users saying that sometimes ramps were very steep.
- Ongoing feedback about the problems created by inaccessibility of much of the tube system is considerable. Issues raised include the level of planning needed to undertake routes that would be simpler for non-disabled users, the total exclusion of disabled people from many routes, the disproportionate impact that station closures and other system faults have on disabled users and other issues that will be familiar to the committee. Improving the timetable for making more tube stations step free and fully accessible remains a top priority.
- The exclusion of many disabled people from much of the tube system means that additional reliance on other forms of transport is likely to continue. With regard to the bus system access is often difficult in reality, above and beyond the physical characteristics of buses. Real access may be subject to significant delays because of demand on wheelchair spaces and seating. This points to the need for a joined up approach – involving ensuring that individual buses are physically accessible, maintaining and improving frequency of the bus service and relieving demand by improving accessibility of the tube and other transport means.
- With regard to other issues of physical accessibility and what more needs to be done, Inclusion London assisted TfL in its review (in 2009) of the organisation's Disability Equality Scheme. Many issues about the physical environment, accessibility and the whole journey were raised by the Citizen's Jury. Rather than repeat them, we would point the Committee to the issues raised in by the Citizens Jury in the DES Consultation document, September 2009. The views expressed therein remain valid, such as the need to move forward with plans for step-free access to the tube and to ensure continuing communication with and involvement of disabled people's organisations in transport planning and monitoring.

Thirdly, in our submission to the MTS consultation we raised some general matters of policy and involvement that we would draw to your attention as they affect all work.

- We argued that there needed to be explicit reference in the Mayor's

equality framework to the Social Model of Disability and that the way in which this is being implemented should be made clear in all strategies. We wait to see if this has been taken on board in the equality framework.

- On involvement, we were concerned at the inadequacy of steps to involve disabled people in discussion on the transport strategy. Our concerns on this point have grown since we made our submission to the transport strategy consultation as we now understand that review of the GLA's Disability Equality Strategy is significantly overdue and had the review taken place when it should have, it would have fitted in with the timing of the consultation on the Transport Strategy and, if properly conducted, informed that strategy. We have raised our concerns about this failure to review the DES in a timely and appropriate manner with the GLA.
- We drew attention to the principles enshrined not only in national legislation but in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), including Article 9 which refers to transport.

Thank you again for your invitation, and we look forward to continuing to be involved in your work in the future.

.....
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11 January 2010

Submission to consultation on Draft Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS)

1. Introduction

This paper represents Inclusion London's response to the consultation on the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy, due to close on 12th January 2010.

Inclusion London is the pan-London Deaf and disabled people's organisations CIC. Our contact details are at the end of this document. We are a relatively new organisation, set up in part to fill the clear gap that existed for a London-wide Deaf and disability equality organisation able to provide a voice and provide capacity-building support to borough based and other Deaf and disabled people's organisations in London.

2. Consultation

The submission reflects a process of research and consultation by Inclusion London with Deaf and disabled people's organisations in London. This process included:

- Discussions within Inclusion London.
- One-to-one meetings and liaison between Inclusion London and other disabled people's organisations and relevant wider policy-making organisations.
- Writing and circulating a briefing paper to Deaf and disabled people's organisations in London, October 2009, to which comments were invited. The briefing highlighted the fact that the consultation was taking place, provided information on how the relevant documents could be obtained, set out the deadlines for submissions and gave other important information. It also

- Holding a (very well attended) consultation event on 8 December 2009, addressed by a range of speakers.
- Participation in other third sector stakeholder events that discussed the MTS: Inclusion London helped to facilitate a workshop on transport plans at the LVSC 'London Calling' conference on 17th November 2009 and spoke at a consultation event on the MTS organised by the London Civic Forum on 14th December 2009.
- Circulation of a feedback report of the Inclusion London consultation event to London-based organisations, in December 2009. This report incorporated information and views from the consultation event and also reiterated information about how individuals and organisations could participate in the consultation.

3. General comments

Informed by this process of consultation, overall this paper notes that while public transport and the system of transport regulation in London has improved very markedly since 2000 from the point of view of the ability of disabled people to use it and to move around more easily, there are now serious concerns that that process of improvement is slowing or in some respects being reversed.

Therefore while there are a number of positive points in the MTS, and the relevant parts of the Draft Replacement London Plan (particularly where these retain policies in the existing strategies) overall Deaf and disabled people we consulted considered the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy were not good enough for disabled people. We have therefore called for a number of actions and amendments.

4. What we cover

In this submission Inclusion London addresses a number of key issues: it does not respond to every issue in the MTS and where it is silent no particular viewpoint should be assumed.

The timescale of the consultation and particularly the fact that it takes place at the same time as a number of other important Mayoral consultations has created strains on our limited resources. We imagine this will be the case for other small organisations. We request that the Mayor considers the limitations placed on the consultation process as a result of running major consultations such as on the London Plan, MTS, EDS and Health Inequalities Strategies simultaneously.

We take into account proposals in the Draft MTS¹ and Draft Replacement London Plan² and also the approach set out in TfL's Business Plan 2009/10 – 2017/18³,

¹ Mayor's Transport Strategy Public Draft, Published for public consultation, October 2009

TfL's Disability Equality Strategy Consultation Document⁴ and media announcements by the Mayor⁵.

We have tended to focus on issues where we think there is a problem. This is not meant to detract from the many improvements in public transport in London since 2000. It is simply necessary, when faced with a deadline and scarce resources, to focus our remarks in this way.

We have organised comments thematically and by order of where they appear in the Draft MTS.

5. Our approach

Our approach is that transport must be fully accessible, affordable and reliable – able to be used equally by disabled people and capable of facilitating the social and economic inclusion of disabled people rather than contributing to isolation and exclusion. There have been important steps in this direction in the last decade in London's transport but much remains to be done: we are concerned that the direction of travel of the MTS and related plans will undo some of the progress made and considerably slow previously planned improvements in other areas.

We would draw the Mayor's attention to the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (December 2006), which the UK government ratified in 2009. The ability to access and use, including to afford to use, public transport is important in order to realise many of the rights in the Convention. Non-discrimination in transport is, however, specifically relevant to Articles 3, 4, 5 and 9. The steps to which Article 9 commits signatories to include the following:

'To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia: Buildings, roads, transportation and other

² The London Plan – Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London consultation Draft replacement plan, October 2009

³ Business Plan 2009/10-2017/18, Transport for London

⁴ Disability Equality Scheme Consultation, September 2009, Transport for London, September 2009

⁵ http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=23978

indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces...'

And:

'Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;

Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;

Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;

Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public...'

These standards, and the legal obligations set out in national legislation, are the ones that we expect from the Mayor and TfL. Disabled Londoners with whom we consulted feel instead that the Mayor needs to reinstate the social model of disability at the heart of his strategic approach to transport, to be much more ambitious in his proposals for transport and to involve disabled people in developing his plans to a much greater degree and respect our views. When it comes to transport, disabled people assert the principle 'nothing about us, without us': for too long transport has been planned without considering how disabled people would be able to use vehicles or stations, access information, afford tickets, safely travel around streets, and undertake whole journeys safely, efficiently and independently.

6. Specific comments

4.1 Approach to equality

Inclusion London proposes that the **Social Model of Disability** be explicitly and centrally present in all Mayoral strategies and explicitly reinstated in the Mayor's equality strategy and in the MTS. We are concerned that the MTS uses a new equality framework introduced by the Mayor: *'Equal Life Chances for All'*. This equality framework is highly generic and omits a great deal of necessary detail both in terms of analysis of the causes and drivers of discrimination and inequality and of the necessary approaches and steps to tackle the specifics of discrimination and deliver equality. Specifically, it does not include reference to the Social Model of Disability. We note and welcome the inclusion of the Social Model of Disability in TfL's Disability Equality Scheme and urge that this be explicitly included in the Mayor's equality framework and in the MTS. This will allow a stronger foundation for the Mayor in thinking through the steps needed to improve transport so that it is adequate for use by disabled people.

Equal Life Chances for All has very limited objectives and does not include many of the goals and steps that disabled people wish to see, nor an adequate timetable for delivery. With regard to transport it sets an outcome of: ‘Accessible, affordable and safer transport’, but the four measurements on accessibility, affordability and safety (which are intended to cover all groups) include no specific targets or timescales and little detail. The document says that the measurement of success will be the ‘number of step-free underground stations and number of accessible overground stations and bus stops’. But no targets figure or timescale are given: e.g. it does not say that x% accessibility must be achieved by Y date. The measurement as it stands is not meaningful: it would mean that the Mayor could cut the targets for making more stations step-free from the existing goal (as TfL’s Business Plan plans to do) and still achieve some much more limited improvement in accessibility, and say that that this was in line with his equality framework.

Inclusion London believes that such an equality framework is in need of major overhaul in order for it to be more meaningful as a framework for challenging discrimination and moving to a more equal society. In particular, **we propose that it is immediately amended to:** explicitly include the Social Model of Disability as a principle shaping the Mayor’s approach; that it analyses and addresses the drivers of inequality and discrimination; sets out how the specific inequalities and discriminations affecting specific communities, such as Deaf and disabled people, will be tackled; introduce meaningful and ambitious targets for progress towards a more inclusive and equal London.

This would in turn require amendment of MTS E31, 2.2 paragraph 40, 4.5.1 paragraph 199, paragraph 421, and in the Draft Replacement London Plan policy 3.1. Therefore we propose these amendments and relevant amendments to Equal Life Chances for All and equality strategies.
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4.2 Involvement

We propose that the Mayor should recognise and act on the basis of the principle ‘nothing about us, without us’ with regard to disabled people and therefore more fully involve Deaf and Disabled people in developing strategies and policies. We note the steps taken by TfL in reviewing and developing its Disability Equality Scheme. Similar steps appear to have not been taken to involve Deaf and disabled people in the development of the MTS. Such consultation needs to be inclusive, fully accessible and organised with sufficient notice.

4.3 Accessibility – buses

The improvements in bus frequency, reliability and accessibility in the last decade are rightly cited as a success story. Figure 37 shows a steady rise in bus use since 1999/2000 and Figure 38 shows corresponding high levels of satisfaction. Paragraph 331 notes that ‘keeping the network as accessible as it is today will also be essential as the bus fleet will continue to be the only city-wide accessible public transport mode despite improved accessibility of the rail networks’. Proposals to postpone making a number of tube stations accessible will intensify reliance on buses. For disabled people it is important that buses remain frequent – actually being able to use buses requires, among other things, that there is space on buses when they arrive at stops. Disabled people report tensions resulting from competition over space on buses. Such friction can be reduced by ensuring that buses run frequently and thereby capacity is maximised.

Other steps are also needed, including disability awareness-raising of passengers and drivers. These were also issues covered by recommendations of the Citizens Jury that reviewed TfL’s Disability Equality Scheme.

Proposal 25 promotes a ‘*New Bus for London*’. It appears from the text that the design, prototype and manufacture are all still to be agreed. However, the images used in the text are modelled on the old Routemaster bus and the text explains that the bus will be a double-deck with ‘*a platform at the rear near-side corner so passengers will be able to board and alight easily*’.

Inclusion London reminds the Mayor that the old Routemaster bus was totally inaccessible and for that reason it is a cause for celebration that it has been phased out and replaced by a bus fleet which is largely accessible. We strongly oppose this attempt to revive the Routemaster and consider the project a waste of money. We believe these funds could be better spent on meeting the transport needs of disabled people.

Inclusion London proposes amendments to Proposal 25 accordingly.
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4.4 Accessibility – underground

The draft MTS and TfL Business Plan propose to drop existing plans to introduce step-free access to underground stations. The MTS is a plan for less accessible transport than that currently envisaged under the existing strategy. Inclusion London calls for a thorough overhaul of proposals under this section aimed at reinstating the timescale for accessibility improvements and using this as a baseline to step up the rate of improvements.

This is covered in the draft MTS, Chapter 4, 4.5.2 and **Policy 21** and Chapter 5 **Proposal 40** and in the Business Plan at page 39.

The draft MTS **section 4.5.2** is entitled 'Improving accessibility' and notes the additional barriers to travel faced by disabled people due to the design and delivery of transport systems and infrastructure. The text supports the 'whole journey approach' to accessibility.

Policy 21 commits the Mayor and TfL to '*increase accessibility for all Londoners by promoting measures to improve: a) The physical accessibility of the transport system, including streets, bus stops, stations and vehicles; b) Information provision, staff service and the travelling environment*'.

The text notes that it is taken forward by various proposals (which are contained in Chapter 5). We are concerned that some of these proposals and the related policies in TfL's Business Plan and statements by the Mayor contradict this commitment, with the effect that it will at least be slowed down or at worst thrown into reverse.

The Business Plan notes progress achieved between 2003 and 2009. It explains, however, that '*it has been necessary to review the affordability of the station enhancement programme for the former Metronet lines*' and '*work underway at stations will be completed, but at stations where work has not started, enhancements will not be carried out in the first three years of the Business Plan period*'. Although it states that '*TfL will continue to improve street to platform accessibility, building on the foundation of 58 step-free platforms*' it explains that work has been stopped even where it has already started: '*TfL has had to stop work at Osterley, Ladbroke Grove, Amersham, West Kensington, Newbury Park and Greenford*'.

Instead, as **Proposal 40** in the draft MTS explains, '*strategic interfaces*' are proposed as the new priority.

Inclusion London opposes this proposal to reduce step-free accessible plans only to 'strategic interfaces'. While we consider it important to improve access at these interfaces, we do not agree with the proposal to change cut back on other planned access improvements. We believe this will have a major negative impact on the lives of disabled people in London. We call on the Mayor to reinstate the programme of step-free access as existed in the original strategy.

The Business Plan pins the cause of this proposed u-turn on 'the downturn in TfL's revenue'. We do not accept that disabled people should bear the brunt of any such downturn. Indeed we consider the Mayor's policies have made a significant contribution to the fall in revenue. Rather than dumping the problem that has been created by some of his policy choices onto disabled people, the Mayor should look at

the actual causes and revise his policies in those areas: for example, the impact of reversing the Western Extension of the congestion charge (introduced in February 2007) as proposed by this Draft MTS, **Proposal 127**. Removal of the Western Extension will result in a very significant loss of revenue and will also add to traffic congestion (as noted at paragraph 717) and pollutant emissions (with a negative impact on health). Further significant revenue would be raised by implementing plans of the previous Mayoral administration to charge gas guzzler (4x4 style) vehicles a significantly higher congestion charge. Inclusion London therefore proposes that the MTS and other Mayoral policies be revised so as to ensure increase in revenue from these and other forces that do not require plans for accessibility to be delayed or abandoned, and therefore in the meantime opposes **Proposal 127**.

As well as raising considerable revenue both policies would make a significant contribution to reducing pollution and thereby reducing levels of asthma and similar conditions, encouraging walking, cycling and use of public transport and by these and other means making positive contributions to health and living conditions in London.

Paragraph 413 of the draft MTS explains that the Department for Transport's 'Access for All' programme has committed funding for step-free access to 47 per cent of National Rail stations in London by 2015. We urge the Mayor to give a similar commitment for London Underground stations.

Therefore we propose amendments to:

Draft MTS **Proposal 40**, to add a commitment to go ahead with programme of step-free refurbishments to underground stations and indeed to seek to improve upon this programme so the tube can be used by all equally. This would require corresponding amendments to the draft MTS Proposal 19, Policy 21, Business Plan, the London Plan Chapter 6 and Policy 6.1. We also oppose MTS Proposal 127, as the Western Extension revenue would help fund the approach we have set out.

4.5 Accessibility – Blue Badge in central London and Blue Badge spaces

Paragraph 420 notes the importance of the Blue Badge in providing priority parking places 'in town centre locations' and elsewhere for disabled people who qualify for the badge. In fact, the Blue Badge is still not recognised by the central London boroughs and Westminster, the City of London, Kensington & Chelsea and Camden (south of Euston Road). Councils in these boroughs implement their own regulations which are not standardised, but vary from area to area. These are parts of London that not only are important central locations for shopping and many amenities and services but where the local boroughs charge astronomical sums for parking.

Inclusion London urges the Mayor to use his influence to encourage these boroughs to adopt the Blue Badge scheme and/or to adopt measures which make it easier for disabled people to park in these boroughs.

Participants in Inclusion London's consultation said that Blue Badge spaces appeared to be disappearing, i.e. becoming fewer in number, and called for action by the Mayor to investigate this and to defend Blue Badge parking spaces and discourage bad practice by Boroughs.

Therefore we propose that Paragraph 420 is amended accordingly.

4.6 Accessibility – information

We welcome the commitment in Proposal 41 to work to improve the 'availability, quality, quantity and timeliness of information about the transport system and to remove barriers to travel'.

However, we believe that both in relation to this proposal in Proposal 42, which addresses awareness-raising and attitudes, there needs to be explicit commitment to working with disabled people's organisations on these goals.

4.7 Dial-a-Ride

At Inclusion London's consultation event on 8 December we heard many complaints of poor quality and reliability of Dial-a-Ride services, inconsistent standards and availability across boroughs and calls for the Mayor to do much more to support Dial-a-Ride and ensure it is available at a consistent standard of excellence across London to those who need to use it. There was no support for any cut in Dial-a-Ride – quite the opposite.

Therefore we are alarmed at the threat implicit in the Draft MTS, at paragraph 430, which states that 'there has been significant unconstrained increase in demand, which is not sustainable in the long-term'. Inclusion London opposes any reduction in Dial-a-Ride services, availability or capacity and indeed supports measures to improve and extend Dial-a-Ride.

Therefore we propose that this implicit threat is removed from paragraph 430 and Proposal 44 is amended to make clear that the Mayor is committed to improving and extending Dial-a-Ride.

4.8 Cycling

Section 5.12 promotes the ‘cycling revolution’. Inclusion London supports the case for more cycling and indeed would welcome more ambitious targets than the five per cent modal share in the Draft MTS. We have the following additional comments:

Proposal 53 – cycle training.

The MTS stresses the importance of cycle training and that it needs to be more available. Proposal 53 says that TfL will work with the boroughs and ‘other stakeholders’ to deliver improved training ‘Offering cycle training to people of all ages’. Inclusion London calls for this to be amended to include a commitment to make training for disabled people much more available than at present. Borough based cycle schemes should be required to have staff professionally competent to work with a range of client requirements, including disabled people.

Training schemes should be required to be disability aware and therefore:

- a) to train cyclists in road etiquette which includes awareness of the needs of disabled pedestrians, and
- b) to be inclusive of disabled people. Schemes often say they train disabled people but actually have limited ranges of equipment, stereotypical attitudes about disabled people and their potential cycling interests or offer discounts to people with particular categories of impairment but not to others, for no apparent or sufficient reason.

There are a few examples of good, inclusive training schemes in London – these need to become the model for training. Inclusion London believes that organisations of Deaf and disabled people should be involved in contributing to improved guidance on training and that cycle training organisations at London wide and borough level should be encouraged to liaise with appropriate Deaf and disabled people's organisations.

Proposal 53 – cycling superhighways.

Paragraph 467 and Proposal 53 support the development of ‘twelve cycle superhighways’. We believe such superhighways need to ensure no loss of pedestrian street space and that they should not be shared with pedestrians due to the danger to pedestrians, and specifically Deaf and disabled people, from cyclists. We note that the Citizens’ Jury that reviewed TfL’s Disability Equality Scheme called on the organisation to formally engage with Deaf and disabled people to ensure it hears their concerns about use of cycle lanes on footpaths.

Paragraph 471 – one way streets

The MTS suggests ‘allowing cyclists to legally cycle both ways along one way streets’. We consider this could pose particular dangers to some disabled people and do not support it.

Therefore we propose amendments to Proposal 53 in line with the points as set out above.
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4.9 Accessibility – ‘better streets’

Participants in Inclusion London’s consultation event on 8 December very clearly called for a stop to so-called ‘shared surfaces’ or ‘shared space’ or ‘better street’ plans that actually exclude many disabled people and for there to be work to arrive at standards that are acceptable to disabled people as well as to the Mayor, councils and transport authorities.

Inclusion London believes there is much that needs to be done to make streets and open spaces more inclusive, safer and more pleasant places and strongly supports this objective in principle. We do not agree that this automatically leads to the kinds of developments that are being implemented in parts of London or in the MTS. In relation to both, we believe there is a need for guidance to be developed which sets standards of inclusive design. For this, disabled people have to be central to the process of discussion and agreement on standards: disabled people themselves know best what designs and streetscapes work. We call on the Mayor to listen to disabled people.

The draft MTS together with TfL’s Business Plan and the Mayor’s Draft Replacement London Plan advocate ‘shared space’ schemes, which the MTS also calls ‘better streets’.

Proposal 82 would commit the Mayor to ‘working with the London boroughs and other stakeholders, will use the principles of ‘better streets’ to seek to improve town centres, in particular’. However, there is not an agreed definition of what these ‘principles’ are, and even less an agreed and acceptable standard of implementation that ensures that disabled people are included and not driven out of so-called ‘better streets’.

Paragraph 565 states that a ‘balanced street’ is one that has ‘few if any traffic lights with formal crossing understated’. **Proposal 83** states that: ‘The Mayor, through TfL, and working with the London boroughs and other stakeholders, will introduce accessible for all, ‘better streets’ initiatives. Consideration will be given to trialling the removal of traffic signals where safe and appropriate’. The removal of traffic lights and controlled crossing will make streets less safe and less inclusive for certain disabled people. Inclusion London does not agree that the case has been made for a general policy which favours removal of traffic signals. As presented, this sounds like a policy written by motorists, for motorists.

We note that the Citizens Jury which reviewed TfL's Disability Equality Scheme and TfL's plans called for TfL to carry out and publish impact assessments on proposed changes such as to road crossings and for these to consider safety of disabled people.

Inclusion London opposes Proposal 83 and calls for a halt to further development of this policy until pending further discussion involving disabled people and involving detailed presentation of what exactly is proposed.

The MTS Executive Summary, **Paragraph E18** says that (with the aim that it will reduce congestion) 'The Mayor will implement a package of measures ranging from the rephasing of traffic signals to better information for drivers'. **Proposal 101** would implement this. Rephasing of traffic signals in this scenario results in less time being allowed for pedestrians to cross the road – impacting on anyone, including many disabled people, who are not able to get across quickly enough. As the London Evening Standard put it: *'It is hoped pedestrians will either hurry as they see the time elapse or decide to wait before crossing.'* Those who can't just 'hurry' will include many disabled people. The Evening Standard commented, *'they will also face a longer wait at the kerb because the number of "green man" phases will decrease'* (*Hurry up and cross...Boris to put Green Man on Timer*, Evening Standard, 11/3/2009). This policy to 'aid traffic flow' clearly prioritises drivers above both pedestrians generally and the safety and inclusion of disabled people. For these reasons Inclusion London opposes it. We believe there should be a Disability Equality Impact Assessment of this proposal.

The development in Exhibition Road (being developed by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and part-funded, to the tune of £13 million by TfL) is cited and supported in TfL's Business Plan. However, this development has been particularly criticised as likely to exclude many disabled people, particularly (but not exclusively) people who are blind or have visual impairments. We believe the Mayor should listen to these criticisms and we oppose the endorsement of the scheme in the Business Plan and the endorsement of the concept as it stands in the MTS and London Plan, believing that agreed and inclusive standards and guidance are needed.

TfL's Business Plan states that the design dispenses with 'traditional kerbs', which TfL thinks 'will put pedestrians, cyclists and motorists on an equal footing and create a safer, more pleasant environment'. Many disabled people's organisations dispute this interpretation believing that kerbs are important as a delineator of different parts of streets – marking a division between the pedestrian area and areas in which there are motor vehicles in particular. Mencap, the learning disabilities charity, has said: 'We are concerned about the implications of shared surface schemes on people with a learning disability. Where there is no clearly defined pedestrian area, there are potential safety implications for some people with a learning disability who may find

this design set-up confusing.’ (David Congdon, Head of Campaigns and Policy, Mencap, cited at <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/sharedstreets>)

Research undertaken for Guide Dogs by University College London (UCL) has demonstrated that the minimum height for a kerb to be reliably detectable by blind and partially sighted people is 60mm or greater. We urge the Mayor and the MTS to accept and base further development of proposals on this research.

Guide Dogs (in a coalition involving a cross section of major disability rights organisations) as well as the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (the statutory advisors to Government on the transport and mobility needs of disabled people) have called for a moratorium on further development and implementation of shared space schemes pending the outcome of Department for Transport research. Inclusion London calls on the Mayor to listen to this call.

The disabled persons’ Citizens Jury which scrutinised TfL’s Disability Equality Scheme raised concerns over the design and accessibility of ‘shared spaces’, and recommended that *‘TfL provides more evidence, through research and dialogue with Deaf, disabled and older people, on the benefits and pitfalls of using shared surfaces before these are rolled out’*. TfL accepted that *‘there has been considerable confusion over what is meant by ‘shared space’ and ‘shared surface’... The type of space which has caused most concern is the single surface scheme’* and notes that *‘TfL will work with other groups to produce guidance for London boroughs when research [to find if there is an acceptable delineator to the kerb] is completed’*.

Inclusion London strongly recommends that the Mayor’s policy be that any further development of shared space schemes is halted until there are London-wide and nationally agreed standards for such designs that are inclusive of disabled people and accepted so by disabled people’s organisations.

Therefore we propose these points are taken on board in the further development of the MTS and Proposals 82 and 83 amended accordingly, and amendments accordingly made to the TfL Business Plan and the Draft Replacement London Plan, policy 6.10.

4.10 Questionnaire on ‘better streets’ – leading question

Inclusion London agrees with the point made by other disabled people’s organisations that the question on ‘better streets’ in the short consultation document on the strategy is a leading question designed to encourage a particular outcome. The question asks if people support ‘Introducing shared space schemes to improve the look and feel of streets and make them safer’. A more ‘open’ question would ask

people about what things would make streets better, safer and inclusive, and would provide a definition of what the Mayor's policy of 'shared space' is.

Inclusion London therefore believes that the outcome of this question must be disregarded.

4.11 Fares

Disabled people who participated in Inclusion London's consultation were very concerned at the cost of transport in London, including announced fare rises that were significantly above inflation.

Disabled people in London are more likely than average to experience poverty. Discrimination means that disabled people are likely to have fewer qualifications than their peers who are not disabled. Even when disabled people are graduates, however, they are more likely to be unemployed. If in employment, disabled people are more likely to be in non-professional and non-managerial employment. They are more likely to experience low pay.

These facts mean that high fares in London affect disabled people disproportionately.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy and the TfL Business Plan assume the very high fare increases announced by the Mayor on 15 October 2009 and which have come into effect at the beginning of January 2010: bus fare increases of 12.7% (many times the rate of inflation) and tube fare rises of 3.9%. These increases are significantly above inflation.

Only two paragraphs are devoted in the MTS to 'fare levels', and the focus is solidly on revenue from fares and 'value for money' by operators. Inclusion London believes that this focus is short-sighted and that the Mayor should have a greater regard to the service delivery responsibility of London transport and the wider impact of excessively high fares. If public transport fares are set too high greater numbers of people are likely to be forced off public transport and back onto reliance on private car use. This will limit efforts to reduce carbon emissions and make it difficult to achieve environmental targets. Those who continue to use public transport will face the misery of high cost at the very time when millions of people are experiencing economic distress due to the recession.

We do not agree that these fare increases were the inevitable result of the need to raise revenue: the Mayor has a number of alternative ways that he can choose to raise revenue. The Mayor is choosing to lay a great deal of the burden on the

shoulders of ordinary Londoners and, for our part, specifically on the shoulders of Deaf and disabled Londoners. This is unacceptable, particularly when millions of Londoners are facing the realities of recession. This is not the place to get into the many options the Mayor has to increase revenue, but Inclusion London does not accept that fare hikes on this level are the key way in which the Mayor should be seeking to plug the holes in his transport budget. The alternatives would not only be more socially equitable but would bring health, environmental and social benefits – for example, the Mayor would raise an estimated £70 million by reinstating the western extension of the Congestion Charge and an estimated £50 million by a policy of charging 4x4 gas guzzler vehicles a higher Congestion Charge rate of £25 daily or above.

Proposal 119 says that ‘The Mayor will ensure that fares provide an appropriate and necessary level of financial contribution towards the cost of providing public transport services to ensure that public transport continues to play a central role in London’s transport system and overall economic development’. This proposal needs to be amended. Recent fare increases have not been ‘appropriate’ as far as equality and the affordability of transport is concerned. We propose this proposal is amended to emphasise that fares must be affordable and equitable and to state that if fares rise they do so only in line with inflation and not 12 times the rate of inflation (as in the case of the recent bus fare increases).

Inclusion London urges the Mayor to accept this change. We also urge the Mayor to look at other ways of raising revenue that are not as socially regressive as his current over-reliance on high fares.

Therefore Inclusion London proposes that Proposal 119 be amended as set out above.
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4.12 Concessionary fares

Inclusion London is concerned at the tone of **section 5.23.2** on Concessionary Fares. The text implies that there may be a reduction in fare concessions.

Paragraph 684 states ‘...it is essential that the scale and scope of concessions offered is both affordable and sustainable’ and is followed by **Proposal 120** which says that ‘The Mayor will keep the range of concessions for which he is responsible under review to ensure that they are focused on where they will be most effective at helping those in most need of them’.

Particularly in light of the recent huge increases in fares, Inclusion London strongly believes there should be no reduction in the range or scope of concessionary fares available. Concessionary fares go some way to alleviating the heavy burden of high fares on those who can least afford them: i.e. they are already highly targeted.

Cutting back on concessionary fares would seem to be entirely the wrong thing to do at a time of economic hardship and when people need to be able to use public transport to take up employment opportunities.

Therefore Inclusion London proposes that Proposal 120 is amended to make it explicitly clear that there will be no reduction in the current range or eligibility criteria for concessionary fares.

4.13 Freedom Pass

Paragraph 683 notes that ‘the bulk of the cost of providing free travel for the over 60s and disabled people is borne by the London boroughs’. This relates to the Freedom Pass. While this is funded by the boroughs, the Mayor has up to now had important powers in relation to it.

Under the ‘reserve scheme’, which forms part of the 1999 GLA Act, the Mayor has the power to determine the level of funding to be provided by boroughs if London councils have not come to agreement with TfL on their contribution by 31 December of the relevant year. This authority means that the Mayor can ensure that the Freedom Pass is funded adequately even if the boroughs try to cut their funding.

However, Mayor Johnson has agreed to support attempts to amend legislation to give away the Mayor’s power to set this funding level

<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/media/current/pressdetail.htm?pk=661&showpage=3>

Such a change would mean that instead of the Mayor – a democratically elected position – having this authority, it would be transferred to an ‘independent arbiter’, that is, a person or body that will not be elected and not subject to democratic accountability.

Inclusion London believes that this retreat from a democratic structure, with a certain level of transparency, is not likely to be helpful to disabled people and the services we need. We are further concerned that this move follows a history of dispute around the Freedom Pass and the resistance of boroughs to meet necessary levels of funding and is therefore likely to be motivated by a desire to find a formula that is more amendable to those boroughs that wish to restrict funding. Inclusion London opposes this change.

In general disabled people who have participated in our consultation supported greater regulation and enforcement by the Mayor – to ensure good and consistent standards and tackle bad practice by London boroughs. Giving away Mayoral powers which provide leadership in support of important provisions like the Freedom Pass is going in the opposite direction to that.

We propose the draft MTS be amended to include a statement of the Mayor's commitment to the Freedom Pass and an assurance that the Mayor will retain the existing powers of his office with regard to the reserve scheme, so that the Mayor can, if necessary, ensure he uses the authority of his office to guarantee the level of funding to the Freedom Pass.

These amendments could be applied to Proposal 120 and this is what we propose.

4.14 Equality Impact Assessment

Chapter 6, **paragraph 731** indicates that the Draft MTS has undergone an Integrated Impact Assessment, which the Glossary (page 309) indicates incorporates an Equality Impact Assessment. However, Inclusion London considers a number of the proposals that we have highlighted have significant disproportionate negative impacts on disabled people and may discriminate against disabled people – for examples, proposals to rephrase traffic lights and crossings or introduce shared surfaces in streets. It is not self-evident how these proposals can have cleared a disability equality impact assessment and there is certainly considerable controversy around some of them.

We therefore believe that TfL should explain the detail of the process that it has undertaken, and the Equality Impact Assessments should be published and able to be scrutinised and discussed by disabled people in a dialogue with TfL.

4.15 Dialogue with Deaf and disabled people

At Inclusion London's consultation event on 8 December 2009 there were strong calls for funding and resources for local groups of disabled people to be able to monitor and work around access issues. We note and support a similar call by the Citizen's Jury which reviewed TfL's Disability Equality Scheme. The Jury recommended that: *'TfL should work closely with London Councils and Inclusion London to develop effective local access groups in all London boroughs'*.

We strongly support this recommendation and all other recommendations by the Jury that supported stronger involvement of disabled people in discussing, commenting on and scrutinising the Mayor's and TfL's strategies, policies and practices.

7. Conclusion

This submission reflects a process of consultation among Deaf and disabled people in London about the Draft MTS. Inclusion London strongly encourages the Mayor to listen to the concerns expressed by Deaf and disabled Londoners and to take on board the proposals in this submission.

For further information contact:

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Policy Manager

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London SE16 4DG

London Deaf and Disability Organisations CIC
Company registration no: 6729420





LVIF

London Visual Impairment Forum

'working together across London for people with a visual impairment'

London Visual Impairment Forum's Initial Written Submission to London Assembly's Transport Committee Investigation into the Accessibility of London's Transport Network June 2010

Introduction:

London Visual Impairment Forum (LVIF) comprises voluntary (not for profit) organisations working with, and on behalf of, blind and partially sighted people in Greater London. There are approximately thirty eight local, London wide and national organisations actively involved.

There are 39,315 people registered as blind or partially sighted in London. However, it is likely that there are between 78600 and 117900 people that have low vision who have not registered. The majority of blind and partially sighted people lose their vision when over the age of sixty, at a time when they may also be facing additional disabilities, such as hearing impairment, or conditions which add to their mobility difficulties.

London VI Forum welcomes the opportunity to provide this initial written submission to the London Assembly's Transport Committee investigation of the accessibility of London's transport network. The response has been prepared in collaboration the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association who will use it to inform their oral evidence to the Committee on June 23, 2010.

The response follows the structure provided in the invitation letter, starting with planning journeys.

Planning journey

- **How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?**

Response:

The following are suggested to assist blind and partially sighted people:

- The transport assistance scheme is a very useful tool to aid independence. LVIF recommends that funding is continued for this scheme.
- Timetables and other information to be available in larger print.

- Increase the number of push button information points and locate them in a consistent place on underground station platforms, e.g. immediately to the left or right of entrances.
 - Accessible information indicating which stations have alternatives to escalators, such as stationary stairs or lifts is needed for guide dog owners who are unable to use escalators.
 - Telephone helplines are useful means of obtaining information for visually people
- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?**

See suggestions above:

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- **What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?**

Response:

This seems to vary from operator to operator: Staff on the underground trains are, on the whole, excellent. If bus drivers and over ground train staff could reach a similar level of awareness, blind and partially sighted people's transport would experience would be much improved. However, if there are cuts to underground station and ticket office staff this could reduce the assistance offered to blind and partially sighted and other disabled passengers.

- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?**

Response:

Bus Drivers

The disability awareness training for bus drivers needs to be improved. The difficulties that the training needs to address are listed below:

- Audio description is a crucial tool for visually impaired people. However, some drivers switch it off, this needs to stop. It is also important that all operators ensure that the audio description it is in working order before the bus leaves the depot.
- Drivers do not wait for the blind or partially sighted or older people to be seated before driving off. This can lead to falls or prevent bus travel for fear of a fall.

- Blind and partially sighted people cannot see where available seats are. If driver assistance are able to assist in locating a seat (possibly by using the mirror) and verbally informing the blind or partially sighted person where one is, it would be appreciated.
- Blind or partially sighted person cannot always distinguish one vehicle from another, so cannot tell in advance if a bus is approaching or if it is the one they require. Therefore all drivers need to:
 - Understand the significance of a white cane and a white cane with a red band.
 - Always stop at bus stop where a blind and partially sighted person is holding a cane.
- Improve communication with people with blind and partially sighted people, e.g. drivers to understand that information about the destination of the bus is needed and instructions to be given verbally rather than pointing.
- How to identify a commuter with a disability especially where the disability is not easily visible.
- In general, drivers need to alert to disabled passengers as well as checking if people have a valid ticket.

Underground train staff

As mentioned above, on the whole underground staff are to be complimented on the assistance they provide. However, there is always room for improvement, the following suggestions are made with this in mind:

- Train staff to identify a blind or partially sighted person when they see them and offer assistance, instead of the blind or partially sighted person trying to seek out staff which can be very difficult due to their impairment.
- Staff to be available to assist blind and partially sighted with route planning, because visually impaired people commuters cannot read the displays or time tables.
- Provide a seamless booked assistance, even if the journey goes over boundaries of service operating companies, or if the service disrupted or changed as a result of engineering work.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Over ground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?**

Response:

Many measures focus on physical disability, the needs of people with sensory disability can be missed. To cater for blind and partially sighted commuters the following provision needs to be available throughout the transport system:

Train Stations:

- Good directional and location signs used within station concourse as recommended in the guidance 'Sign Design Guide'
- Audible information on all buses and trains.
- Audible and clear visual announcements within the concourse.
- Display screens provided where commuters can get close to read the information, especially for some partially sighted people who cannot read at a distance.
- Good colour contrast between walls and floors, on edges of stairs and handrails. Ticket machines to contrast well and stand out for easy location.
- Tactile paving at steps and at platform edges.
- Crossings on approach to bus or train stations should be as recommended in the guidance.
- Logical routes and design layout to assist with easy navigation.
- Adequate and convenient space for guide dogs and other assistance dogs on vehicles – particular an issue on buses.

Other areas:

- Seating to be situated away from the circulation route and thereby not become obstructions
- The use of glass should be limited. If it is used a means for it to be easily identified by blind and partially sighted people, needs to be used.
- Well designed and conveniently located bus stops.
- Good access links between transport modes including taxi ranks and drop off points

Pedestrian Environment

We understand that this inquiry does not cover the pedestrian environment. However, all travel by public transport begins and ends with a journey by foot. The majority of older blind and partially sighted people will not go out alone because of fears regarding the pedestrian environment. We therefore hope that the forthcoming inquiry on the pedestrian environment will consider the following measures which would promote greater accessibility:

- Obstacle free
- Footways separate from cyclists
- Convenient placed controlled crossings with audible signals, tactile rotating cones
- Appropriate tactile paving leading to controlled crossing as specified in DfT guidance. This is particularly important near underground stations and other transport hubs.
- Shared surface streets can prevent blind and partially sighted people from travelling because of concerns such as
 - The kerbs, which provide an essential warning and navigational cue that blind and partially sighted people rely on are taken away.
 - The kerbs are also essential because so low floor buses can lower their ramps in order for wheelchair users to be able to safely get on and off bus.
 - Not all road users will behave responsibly and this could potentially be dangerous for visually impaired people.

Shared surface streets could become no go areas for blind and partially sighted people. LVIF recommends that disabled people are always consulted before plans for shared surface streets are progressed in Greater London.

In this way planning will be consistent with the Mayor's own goals for his Transport Strategy, which includes enhancing the quality of life for all Londoners, improving the safety and security of all Londoners and improving transport opportunities for all Londoners.

This completes London VI Forum's initial written submission, produced in collaboration with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

June 2010



LVIF

London Visual Impairment Forum

'working together across London for people with a visual impairment'

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA
mayor@london.gov.uk

27th July 2010

Dear Mr Johnson,

London Visual Impairment Forum (LVIF) Transport for All and Inclusion London are greatly concerned about the proposed staffing cuts for London Underground which, we believe, could seriously undermine the mobility of older and disabled people in the capital.

Introductions

LVIF comprises voluntary (not for profit) organisations working with, and on behalf of, blind and partially sighted people in Greater London. There are approximately thirty eight local, London wide and national organisations actively involved. There are 39,315 people registered as blind or partially sighted in London, with between 78600 and 117900 others that have low vision but who have not registered.

Transport for All (TfA) – is a pan London disabled and older persons organisation that provides advice, information and advocacy on accessible transport issues. It is recognized that there are approx 1.4 million disabled people in London and over 1 million people aged 60.

Inclusion London is a pan-London disability equality organisation. We provide policy, campaigning and capacity-building support for Deaf and disabled people's organisations (DDPOs) in London. Inclusion London promotes equality for London's Deaf and disabled people. Our work is rooted in the Social Model of Disability and the Cultural Model of Deafness. Inclusion London is a Community Interest Company. We receive funding from London Councils, Big Lottery and Capacity Builders.

We understand, from the RMT's open letter to TfL and London Underground's response to this, that cuts to London underground staff have been proposed. Whilst we understand that budgets are tight our concerns centre around the impact on the level of assistance that will then be available to older and disabled people. We are also concerned about the implications for personal security.

Many disabled people rely on assistance from staff in order to safely use and negotiate the system. The need for assistance arises both in normal operating conditions when passengers may need help to use ticket machines, negotiate barriers or access platforms, as well as during periods of disruption and emergencies, when the need for assistance is particularly critical. For example, when services are disrupted staff are needed to provide advice on alternative routes, physical assistance (e.g. escorting to an alternative line) and reassurance, especially when the disruption occurs midway through a journey.

The presence of staff is also important in terms of personal security. Passengers, particularly vulnerable passengers, feel safer if there are staff around on which they can call if needed. The presence of staff may also act as a deterrent to those who would otherwise cause problems on the system.

We believe that the loss of staff will have a significant impact on the lives of London's residents and commuters. With the Olympics and Paralympics Games only two years away the impact will be even more acutely felt then when there will be many thousands of visitors, including disabled visitors, wishing to use the Underground. Staff cuts now are likely to undermine proposals to increase staff on the Underground during the Olympics and Paralympics.

LVIF, TfA & Inclusion London would therefore call on you and TfL to reconsider these proposals to ensure that disabled and older people can continue to use the London Underground in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Henrietta Doyle
(On behalf of LVIF, Transport for All and Inclusion London)

Cc

London Assembly Transport Committee members:

Caroline Pidgeon (Chair), Valerie Shawcross (Deputy Chair),
Jennette Arnold, Victoria Borwick, James Cleverly, Jenny Jones,
Joanne McCartney, Steve O'Connell, Richard Tracey,

TfL Staff: Peter Hendy, (Commissioner), Stephen Golden (Head of Policy and Strategy E&I)

Ross Jardine

From: Holmes, Richard
Sent: 20 August 2010 16:58
To: Ross Jardine
Subject: Enquiry into transport accessibility

Attachments: Greenway2; Greenway1



Greenway2 (234
KB)



Greenway1 (125
KB)

Good afternoon, please find below some observations on this enquiry from the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).

I shall only mention briefly issues which impact upon transport as much of this was covered during the evidence session in June. However, it is still appropriate to make mention of some areas of concern.

Ibus - this is a wonderful development which allows blind and partially sighted people to be able to undertake journeys with increased confidence and in much greater safety. However, we have been contacted by some of our members who have complained that some bus drivers turn this system off as we assume they find it annoying. This is clearly not acceptable and we would suggest that drivers are reminded of why this facility is fitted in their vehicles.

We would now like Transport for London (TfL) to turn their attention to information as it is provided at bus stops. Many stops now have visual information informing passengers of when the next bus(s) are due and we would wish to see this extended to provide an audible output too.

Linked into this is an area of key concern to members which is the problems often experienced at stops where a number of buses stop. Many members have experienced problems with these stops as often buses line up behind each other and by the time a visually impaired person has become aware that their bus has arrived it is already pulling out into the traffic. We would recommend that drivers are reminded that they must pull up to the stop as there may be blind and partially sighted people waiting.

London Underground

With most lines now having audible announcements tube travel has improved for many blind and partially sighted people. Furthermore many people report to us how impressed they are with the level and quality of assistance which they receive from Underground staff. We are therefore concerned about the planned reduction in staffing levels at Underground stations as members have suggested to us that this may harm the consistent good quality service they receive from frontline staff.

I would now like to turn my attention to the main area of my submission which is to look at the pedestrian environment and ways in which this can be improved to encourage more blind and partially sighted people to get out and about by themselves.

Pedestrian crossings

It is a cause of considerable concern that Transport for London estimates that 10% of its crossing points fail to meet minimum guidance.

We would want to see Transport for London establish a much more consistent approach to its crossings as currently too many are not safe for visually impaired people to use independently. We would want to see wherever possible crossings include an audible signal with a tactile rotating cone which moves when the 'green man' is showing. We don't consider it is appropriate to only provide a rotating cone especially at busy crossing points. This is for a variety of reasons: Firstly at busy crossings it is not always possible to get to stand by the pole where the cone is located so a person may be forced to wait or rely upon assistance from a member of the public. The second problem impacts most heavily upon guide dogs users as if a person were also holding shopping or more importantly the hand of a young child which of the dog or the child would they let go of to be able to hold the rotating cone?

Thirdly an audible signal at a crossing acts as a very useful guide as it can clearly be heard from some distance away thus informing a visually impaired person that a crossing point is imminent. There is a very important area of policy linked to this

last point which is the provision of appropriate 'tactile paving' at crossings.

What is tactile paving?

This raised or 'blistered' paving acts as a vital indication to blind and partially sighted people that they are at a safe crossing point. It also provides useful visual information to people who have some sight as it is traditionally a pinkish colour. However, recently it has come to our attention that councils are deviating from Department for Transport guidance in this area. Most notably we have been working with Newham Council who have introduced a much reduced provision of this type of paving. In particular they have reduced the 'tails at major crossing points and changed the colour of this paving to gray. This first change means that it is now impossible for a blind person who uses a cane or a guide dog to find a crossing point as the paving no longer goes across the pavement (please see attached picture). Secondly a person with some sight is now also disadvantaged as the colour blends into the general pavement environment (again please see attached). We would not wish this policy to be taken up by other boroughs and would therefore urge the GLA and Transport for London to exert any influence they may have to prevent councils from moving away from recognised national guidance. Such changes simply cause blind and partially sighted people to feel less safe and to therefore either no longer go out or no longer go out by themselves.

Cycling

Many of our members report persistent problems with people who choose to cycle on the pavement. This causes considerable distress for visually impaired people as it can often be very intimidating. We view this as a form of anti-social behaviour as over time it chips away at people's confidence and as with the policy on crossings mentioned above causes a loss of confidence and thus reduced independence. It seems to us and our members that the police view this as very low level and have all but de-criminalised it. We strongly believe that if the police were to take a more robust and consistent approach for example issuing on the spot fines and explaining the damage done to the confidence of visually impaired people that this would help to reduce the level of this problem. We believe that now is a very appropriate time to do this as the Mayor's cycle policy has recently been launched and there are consequently many more bikes in circulation.

A further point of concern is the number of times cyclists opt to ignore red lights which again causes distress to blind and partially sighted people. As with the use of pavements we would like the police to adopt a much more pro-active approach and to point out the danger to pedestrians and indeed the cyclist of not taking note of the highway code. Again now seems a good time to take this approach with the cycle scheme under way. We would urge the GLA to use its influence upon the Metropolitan Police Authority to remind officers that both of these areas are offences and should be treated accordingly.

Advertising boards (A boards)

This is another area which causes difficulty for blind and partially sighted people. The street environment is getting ever more cluttered and A boards are a major culprit. These are very often randomly placed and can therefore not be anticipated by a visually impaired person. As with areas mentioned above these too have a detrimental impact over time as consistently coming into contact with these causes a reduced level of confidence a feeling that going out is simply too difficult is the inevitable response.

We would like to see a situation where boroughs had a policy in this area to limit the amount of these boards that shops can display and the distance from the shop that they are able to display these. It is vital that such a policy is backed by a robust policy of enforcement with boards illegally placed and these boards removed. It is important that the needs of pedestrians are considered first and that there is always sufficient clearance between the board and the kerb edge. National guidance recommends that this should be 2000mm, it is important to note here that such a policy will benefit more people within the community such as wheelchair users and parents with buggies.

In conclusion there have been a number of improvements in transport which have improved the independence of blind and partially sighted people. These include the Ibus information system onboard buses and the consistently good quality assistance provided by London Underground staff. We believe that there is much work to do around the pedestrian environment as the balance has shifted too much towards the motorist. It is important to note that many of the areas where improvement is needed have minimal cost attached but will have considerable benefit in enhancing the confidence

and independence of visually impaired people.

For further information please contact Richard Holmes Campaigns Officer for London -
020 7391 2112 richard.holmes@rnib.org.uk

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Transportforall

Accessible transport is our right

A response to the GLA Transport Committee's investigation into the accessibility of London's transport Network. June 2010



Introduction

Transport for All is a pan-London organisation of disabled and older people that provides specialised advice, information, advocacy and training to both users and providers of accessible transport.

We have over two decades of experience in the accessible transport sector in London, and we welcome this investigation by the GLA Transport committee.

Access to transport services remains a vitally important issue in the lives of disabled and older Londoners. It is the crucial factor enabling people to maintain independent lives and remain active citizens.

Restricted and lack of access to transport services leads to social isolation and has a negative impact on physical and mental well being.

We therefore believe that making London's transport network accessible - by removing the obstacles and barriers that prevent disabled and older people from travelling – must be seen as a political and funding priority by both the Mayor, Transport for London and the Government.

We also strongly believe that the principle of the 'Social model of disability' needs to be applied to all of the Mayor's work on transport. Viewing the inaccessibility of transport services as the factor the 'disables' people rather than an individual's impairments is vital if we are to make progress.

Indeed whilst we recognise the challenges in delivering a world-class transport network – we believe that accessibility should be at the heart of all plans and future development.

Faryal Velmi
Director
TfA

Transport for All deals with the transport enquiries and issues of hundreds of disabled and older people every year. Through our pan London outreach work we visit numerous organisations, groups and forums across London – listening to many different perspectives from a cross section of London’s disabled and older communities. It is these issues and everyday experiences that we have incorporated into this response.

Transport services in London

1. Crossrail

TfA welcomes the arrival of Crossrail in 2017 and the step free transport opportunities that will come with it. TfA is pleased so far with the accessibility commitments made on the project and urge the Mayor to follow them through. Indeed with the axing of the step free tube programme it remains the only service that will enable fast step free travel through central London.

We would like to urge the Mayor and TfL to engage in regular and genuine consultation with disabled Londoners on the Crossrail project to ensure the service will work for us.

2. Thameslink

TfA is pleased that a rail service to complement CrossRail is being built. However no accessibility details are listed which is a concern.

We would like clarification on what levels of accessibility can be expected from the £5.5bn Thameslink enhancement project.

3. National Rail

The Dept for Transport ‘Access for All’ programme is vital in tackling the inaccessible Rail network. While you can now travel on an accessible train from London to Manchester and beyond, using

the suburban rail network is completely out of the question for some disabled and older Londoners.

Huge gaps between the train and the platform, as well as steep stairways coupled with dark and unstaffed stations make many parts of London's Rail network an undesirable way of travelling.

4. London Overground.

TfA again welcomes proposal and with plans to make parts of the new orbital railway for London step free.

We would however like to see plans to expand the number of step free London Over ground stations and interchanges. Also we are concerned that these plans are ring fenced and not subject to cuts.
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5. London Underground

TfA is very disappointed and concerned that plans to create a 'step free foundation network' of stations have been axed. The tube remains the fastest way to travel around London – yet it is out of bounds for many disabled and older people who have mobility impairments in particular.

This decision results in yet many more decades passing without the amelioration of this situation.

Whilst the financial reasons behind the decision is laid in the current TfL's current Business Plan – TfA believes that the decision will actually end up having a high social and financial cost of its own.

Indeed the Government aims to introduce Welfare and Incapacity benefit reform and get more disabled people back to work - how people will get to work has never been considered.

The removal of plans to make the Tube step free will have an impact on disabled people being able to travel to work.

TfA also believes that the decision will have a negative impact on the Olympics and Para Olympics in 2012 – as many thousands of people descend on the capital and use the Tube. Whilst stations

like Green Park and Kings Cross will be made accessible; accessibility of travel will be severely compromised with the lack of step free travel in other parts of the network.

Further Improvements

TfA would however like to add that in order for disabled passengers to use the accessible parts of the tube network freely - the lifts and escalators linking the street, ticket hall, platform and train must work.

If they break down at any level then access is severely diminished. Lengthy delays in repairing lifts and escalators has caused major disruptions and furthermore reduces people's confidence in using the Tube.

Whilst repairs are being carried out - information on completion dates also need to be readily available to all staff so that it can be communicated to passengers.

TfA has also

In order to boost confidence in the Tube network, TfA would like to request that the Mayor and TfL publishes the response times to repair broken lifts and escalators.

6. London Buses

The introduction of the accessible bus fleet has been a huge victory for disabled campaigners. However a number of issues persist with the network which we would like the Mayor to address.

Faulty ramps

Improvements have been made to the reliability of ramps but still many bus companies are allowing buses to go out with faulty ramps.

This results in huge inconvenience for disabled passengers who then have to wait at bus stops for prolonged periods of time. TfA has heard many stories of disabled travellers being let down by a succession of buses with faulty ramps.

We would like the Mayor to address this important issue by more robust action against private bus companies who knowingly allow buses with faulty ramps to leave their depots. This could include increasing the penalty placed on these companies.

Buggies in the wheelchair space

This is an increasing problem across the London Bus network. All too often the wheelchair space is occupied by any number of buggies which prevent wheelchair users from travelling – and exacerbate overcrowding. Again TfA has heard many incidents where disabled passengers have had to wait for prolonged periods of time because of this frustrating problem.

We believe that bus driver intervention is a key factor in dealing with this situation. This can be done either through the use of the P.A system or by a driver insisting that the wheelchair space is vacated. Also crucial is regulating how many prams are allowed on board.

Further Improvements

TfA would like to see the disability equality training that Bus drivers receive tackle the practical situations that arise from dealing with disabled and older passengers.

Training should include how the actions of bus drivers can greatly improve the accessibility of the network

This will equip them to better deal with disabled passengers; and indeed with parents with buggies who refuse to vacate the wheelchair space.

Other issues which are linked to improved customer care on the Bus network include:

- Better training to ensure that all drivers are willing and able to operate ramps,
- Ensuring all drivers are willing and able to use the 'kneeling' low floor capacity of buses.

- That service timetables allow for driving practises that are safe for disabled and older people. The latter includes drivers pulling up to the curb and allowing passengers to find a seat before they pull out.
- Refresher courses and workshops with the involvement of disabled and older travellers would also enhance the initial training.

We strongly believe that without dealing with the issues raised in the above points, the accessibility of the Bus network is compromised.

Audio/visual/real time information on board buses and at bus stops

We welcome the rolling out of iBus, however action is needed to be taken when this feature is not turned on.

TfA would like to see investment in the 'Countdown' display at bus stops and for enhanced real time information. This is especially important for travellers at night and in bad weather.

Scooters on Buses

Increasingly more disabled and older people are choosing to purchase and use electric mobility scooters. No doubt with an aging population, we will definitely be seeing more of them on our streets. Scooters provide users with a reliable and efficient way to get out and about locally; however longer distances are not possible as they run on re-chargeable electric batteries which run out. Therefore increasingly scooter users have expressed a wish to be able to board buses –and so increase the distant they can travel.

However there is much confusion as to when and where this can happen. Some scooter users tell us they can board local buses – while others say they are flatly refused.

TfA would like to see scooter users being able to use London's buses. We recognise that scooters come in all shapes and sizes, and have participated in research studies commissioned by TfL to

determine what dimensions would be suitable. TfL would like to see the results of this consultation published and guidelines lay out as to what size scooter can travel on board our bus network.

Rollators using the wheelchair ramp

Again many older people like to use a walker or rollator to provide them with support when they are out and about.

TfA believes that Rollators users should be permitted to use the wheelchair ramps to board or alight the bus if they so wish.

The New Routemaster

TfA welcomes the fact that accessibility features have been integrated into the new Routemaster. However, to our knowledge no consultation has occurred on the design and use of the bus. This is a great shame and an example of TfL ignoring its own Disability Equality Scheme policies.

7. Community Transport

Community Transport schemes operate a much valued service across London – providing cost effective, accessible and reliable transport to disabled and older Londoners and their groups.

There is a great diversity of services provided by CT schemes – with everything from coach hire to shopmobility schemes available to local residents. The local expertise and knowledge of CT providers make them invaluable partners to improve the quality and quantity of Door to Door transport (like Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard) provided by TfL.

However while some CT schemes have been contracted by D-A-R to fill the gaps in its service provision – the arrangement seems at best ad-hoc and patchy across London.

TfA would like to see the Mayor and TfL fully integrate local Community Transport schemes into its plans to enhance Door to Door service provision.

TfA also strongly believes that TfL and the Mayor need to put forward more detailed proposals as to how exactly local Community transport operators are going to be supported and engaged with. In particular we would like to see TfL and the Mayor encourage local authorities through the Local Implementation Plan process to support their local CT schemes through funding and contract work.

8. Minimising the impact of planned interventions on the Road network.

Disruption caused by road works can be a complete navigational nightmare for disabled people in particular – with everyone from people on mobility scooters to those who are visually impaired affected.

TfA would like the Mayor to consider the impact that road works have on disabled people; and along with the permit system detailed in the MTS, layout enforced measures to ensure that offending companies maintain accessible ways of getting around any works they inflict on our roads.

TfA would like to see ample notice given to passengers on the suspension of bus stops. This often causes much disruption, and we also strongly feel that relocated bus stops should be as close as possible to the original stop.

9 The Blue Ribbon network.

TfA agrees with the proposals to greater utilise the river Thames and improve and enhance river boat service provision. We would however like the Mayor to detail how accessibility will be factored into the proposals.

Our experience of using riverboats along the Thames is that while the piers are accessible – a significant number of boats are now. Solutions like portable ramps or assistance given boarding and alighting would make River based services more accessible.

Further improvements

TfA agrees that improvements such as improved seating, tactile strips and contrasted handrails are necessary to improve accessibility and navigation of the underground network.

10. Street environment.

TfA is strongly opposed to the idea of ‘shared surfaces’ – and believes that the removal of the curb, road markings and other navigational tools will make the streets dangerous and inaccessible to many disabled and older people, particular those with visual impairments.

We are disappointed that despite strong opposition from many disabled people and groups, this agenda is still being promoted by TfL

11.The Blue Badge

The Blue Badge is an important scheme which is used by thousands of disabled and older Londoners. The guarantee to maintain the 100% discount on the Blue Badge is welcomed.

There is however a central London exemption in operation which makes Blue parking very confusing and difficult in a number of central London boroughs.

TfA would like to see the Mayor work with the London Boroughs and the Dept of Transport to ensure Blue Badge holders in London have up to date and clear information as to where and when they can park in central London, so to avoid parking fines.

12. Improving staff service and the attitudes of customers

The assistance and good customer service of transport staff greatly enhances the experience of travelling in London. For disabled and older people the attitude of staff is an important factor in making a journey accessible.

Attitudes of some Bus drivers in particular have been highlighted as an area of concern – with complaints including failure to stop for wheelchair users to not allowing passenger to sit down before accelerating off.

TfA would like to reiterate the point made on Page 7 – and see a more rigorous and service user led approach to training of transport staff.

In terms of the attitudes of other passengers – the anti social behaviour of school children in particular has been highlighted as a problem with older people and people with learning difficulties.

The enforcement of the priority seating on buses is also a serious concern and TfA would like to see more driver intervention via the P.A system to ensure that disabled and older people get a seat.

TfA would like to see a high profile publicity campaign across the transport network re-enforcing the fact that disabled and older people have the right to travel on public transport with the same freedom and choice as non-disabled people. We believe this would make a valuable contribution in the cultural shift that is needed to tackle disabilism, ageism and prejudice on the transport network.

13. Travel Mentoring

TfA supports TfL's travel mentoring scheme, and would like to see extra funding and resources for this useful confidence building service.

14. Door to Door transport

TfA is concerned that the Mayor's Transport Strategy, lacks content and any real direction. It could be understood from this that Door to Door transport is not a priority for the Mayor – which we believe is very worrying.

TfA is currently sitting on the London Council's Door to Door project board would like to re-iterate our belief in an integrated door to door network that efficiently joins up existing Dial-A-Ride, Taxicard and Capital call services with links to local Community transport providers. We believe having **one** eligibility assessment and **one** booking number would streamline the current system and be much more user-friendly, accessible and efficient.

Dial-A-Ride

For those users who can get through to the call centre, book a trip and get to where they want to be D-A-R is a god-send. For those who cannot get a trip for the time or destination they want – or worse still those who are only offered a one way trip, outrightly refused or left stranded D-A-R is a problem.

TfA is therefore very concerned that the TfL business plan does not account for any growth in D-A-R's budget over the next few years. The Mayor has also stated that free rides are 'not sustainable'. These two factors make for very alarming reading.

TfA believes that the Dial-A-Ride service should not be regarded as the poor relation in the TfL family. While millions of pounds are being pumped into the 'mainstream' public transport – there will always be a sizeable (and ever growing) population of Londoners who cannot make it to their nearest bus, tube or Crossrail stop to experience these changes. For them Door to door services like Dial-A-Ride are a vital life line.

We would like to see more money for Dial-A-ride services to expand its call centre and vehicle capacity. This would mean shorter telephone waiting times and the opportunity to travel further from home.

Guaranteed Trips

Tube and Bus passengers may have to wait to get on their desired form of transport – but at least they know its coming. For Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard card users we are told there are no ‘guaranteed trips’. That means that appointments and tickets for the theatre or cinema can often be missed.

TfA challenges the Mayor to provide all Door to Door service users with a guaranteed return trip – so that we can enjoy the assurance that others take for granted.

Taxicard

Taxicard is a greatly cherished service across the capital. Unfortunately however the Taxicard experience is a postcode lottery and where you live determines how you are assessed for eligibility, how many trips you get and how much you pay.

TfA would like to see the Mayor work with London Councils to provide equal access to the Taxicard service across London. This means parity of trips, the way assessment are carried out and how many trips members are given.

Capital call

The fact that Capital Call is not mentioned in the MTS is a bad omen – as the service has already been subject to cuts and changes.

The Capital Call scheme was introduced to supplement Taxicard in those boroughs where black cab availability is scarce. Indeed whilst it operates a small scale service for those who do use it is an important accessible transport option.

TfA is very concerned about the budget freeze that has been put on the service. This has resulted in the service being withdrawn from Kingston, Merton and Ealing (and allocated to Greenwich and Hackney). The membership has also been capped and trip limit has been introduced.

TfA would like express our concern at these changes and in particular at the trip limit being introduced. For those service users who have come to rely on the service it is of grave concern that they will no longer be able to use it. We urge the Mayor to reconsider this budget freeze.

We are also concerned that the £200 travel budget allocated to users is often diminished by the account premium (CC trips are seen as an account job by most taxi firms) added to the cost of the trip. This means that 'cash' bookings are often cheaper than a Capital call trip.

15. The Walking and Cycling 'revolution'

We welcome the emphasis put on walking (or rolling for wheelchair users), however urge the Mayor to recognise the specific concerns that disabled and older people have when hitting the streets.

There have been many improvements to paving, audible signals at crossings, measures to remove street clutter and the introduction of tactile paving. But standards are different from borough to borough, and enforcement is patchy.

TfA would like urge the Mayor and TfL to set consistent standards and designs for accessible streets across London. We would also like to see a Shopmobility scheme in every town centre as they provide an excellent way for people to get out and about and do their shopping.

Also we urge stronger action against cyclists who mount the road and who cycle through red lights.

16. Get on your Trike.

TfA also brings to the Mayor's attention the increasing number of disabled cyclists who use trikes, handcycles or other adapted cycles. We would have liked to see these types of cycles available in the cycle hire scheme that is to being rolled out. Furthermore some of the funding should be directed toward organisations that promote cycling to disabled people.

17. Consultation with disabled and older service users – ‘Nothing about us without us’.

With billions of pounds being directed towards improving the transport network –TfA strongly urges the Mayor to involve disabled service users in the planning, developing and monitoring of services outlined in this MTS. Regular and genuine consultation must occur on a local borough wide and pan London level between disabled and older service users and transport providers and commissioners. Otherwise services will simply not work for us.

TfA is very disappointed at the axing of the quarterly ‘Getting There’ magazine which has been a victim of the financial cuts at TfL. This was done with no consultation and has deprived approx 100,000 disabled and older Londoners of well liked resource which functioned as a means communication between London’s transport providers and users.

The budget of this magazine we were told was £200k per annum - amounting to just £2 per user a year. This is drop in the ocean in comparison to other budgets across the TfL business.

TfA would also be interested to know the cost of the very glossy **inhouse** TfL surface transport magazine *Upfront* – in comparison to ‘Get Moving’.

Mobility Forums

For many years, TfA has championed the idea of borough wide **Mobility forums** as key arenas of engagement and consultation between service providers and service users.

Indeed the formation of mobility forums were included in the first Mayor’s Transport Strategy.

A number of boroughs have invested in mobility forums and they work towards bridging the gap between users and providers. However the situation is patchy across the capital with a deficit in consultation occurring in many parts of London. Indeed this is the case despite the fact the L.I.P process should include consultation

with disabled and older people and initiatives like the Disability Equality Duty.

A situation where every local borough had a functioning Mobility forum and sent a representative to a Pan London forum - would radically alter this and provide ample opportunity for disabled and older service users to communicate their experiences to TfL.

Lack of funds and resources are the key reasons as to why some boroughs are reluctant to set up mobility forums, despite an urgent need expressed by local disabled and older people.

We want the Mayor to work with London boroughs to set mobility forums and investigate ways to provide financial support to those boroughs who are interested in consulting with disabled and older service users.

Date: 1 June 2010

To whom it may concern

Investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network

The London Assembly's Transport Committee is investigating the accessibility of London's transport network and wants to hear from relevant organisations.

The investigation is focusing on the experience of Londoners who rely on the public transport network but whose mobility is restricted in some way. This includes disabled people, older people and parents with buggies and young children. The Committee is taking a 'whole journey' approach considering accessibility issues at each stage in a journey from planning the journey to undertaking the trip on different types of public transport such as buses, the Tube and London Overground rail.

The Committee wants to identify the extent to which current measures designed to improve the accessibility of Transport for London (TfL)'s services meet the needs of those with reduced mobility. It is also assessing the scale of the challenge in making the transport network accessible for the projected increasing numbers of people with reduced mobility.

The Committee will be holding two meetings on the topic, with the first taking place on 23 June 2010 to discuss the accessibility of the public transport network with relevant representative groups and people with restricted mobility. This meeting is taking place at 10am at City Hall and will include an opportunity for people attending to share their views and experience. The Committee is keen to hear from a wide range of groups and individuals at this meeting so please do pass details on to anyone else who may be interested. The second meeting will be in September 2010, when the Committee will put questions to Transport for London representatives.

The Committee will also be carrying out desktop research, and is seeking contributions from organisations and members of the public to inform the review. In light of the findings, the Committee intends to make recommendations to the Mayor and TfL for further steps to take to improve transport services for people with restricted mobility.

The Committee is now seeking written submissions to inform its investigation. At this stage, we would welcome receiving written views on the following issues.

Planning journeys

- How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?

On-line journey planner – only useful if you have access to a PC

Telephone helplines – most numbers are 084..., Majority of people now only use mobile phones, cost of calls too high, only benefits those with a BT landline. Helpline does not always give you the cheapest option

Telephone prompt services, can be confusing

Voice activated service – doesn't recognise words – time consuming and costly

Transport assistance scheme – Didn't know of its existence, needs marketing more

- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

Need to market Transport assistance scheme more, does information get sent out when applying for freedom pass?

Need local number where people can speak directly to an advisor

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

Some bus drivers do not take outside factors into consideration when dropping the ramp down eg: bins, lamp posts.

Some bus drivers will allow several people with buggies onto bus blocking access

Some Bus drivers do not take into consideration the needs of the passengers eg: pulling away from a stop whilst people are trying to get to a seat whilst juggling shopping, children, or older people that are unsteady on their feet

Tubes – don't have too much info, other than lifts very antiquated and not well sign posted. If out of action, people I have spoken with have not seen staff available to assist person in getting to platform

- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Review current targets set for staff

Have staff available when lift out of action at tube station

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Whilst some positive steps have been made to improve the system, it doesn't help those with mobility issues at bus stops/tubes where no improvements have been made.

Ramps on buses do not always work

There are still a lot of rails stations where there is a significant gap between platform and train

Tenants I have spoken with have also expressed concerns about the increased level of intimidation from young people on buses – can there be designated school buses?

If there are other key questions you think the Committee should address then please cover them in your submission as appropriate.

It would be helpful to receive any initial written submissions by **Wednesday 16 June 2010** so these might inform the Committee's meeting on Wednesday 23 June 2010. However, we will be accepting submissions throughout the course of the review. The final cut-off date for contributions will be 30 September 2010.

If you wish to provide a written submission or have any queries about the Committee's meeting or investigation, please contact me by email (ian.osullivan@london.gov.uk), telephone (020 7983 6540) or in writing (the address is listed at the top of this letter). I would also appreciate it if you could inform me if you, a representative from your group or a member plans to attend the June 23rd meeting so we can ensure that as wide a range of opinions are canvassed on the day as possible.

Please note that we may publish all written submissions we receive on our website, unless they are marked as confidential, or there is a legal reason for non-publication. However, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 we may be required to send out a copy of the written submission if a member of the public or the media request it, even if it has been marked as confidential.

Yours sincerely

Ian O'Sullivan
Assistant Scrutiny Manager

To whom it may concern

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The Committee is now seeking written submissions to inform its investigation. At this stage, we would welcome receiving written views on the following issues.

Planning journeys

- How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?
- **assuming one has the Internet. TFL is normally very useful**
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

Bus drivers often extremely UNHELPFUL – they drive as if on a racetrack without passengers Others are patient and will wait for people to reach the bus stop

- . What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

. Regular training and reminders that passenger safety matters

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility? Would love to find out where step-free access to stations of both kinds exists.
- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

PLEASE put in more escalators when tube stations are upgraded and lifts where possible. Forest Hill station has been transformed for me by its new lift. Not probably a TLF question, but the gap between train and platform is incredibly high at some stations. Trains have adopted the habit of drawing up as far as possible from the station entrance, which is infuriating if it is raining or one arrives at the last minute

If there are other key questions you think the Committee should address then please cover them in your submission as appropriate.

It would be helpful to receive any initial written submissions by **Wednesday 16 June 2010** so these might inform the Committee's meeting on Wednesday 23 June 2010. However, we will be accepting submissions throughout the course of the review. The final cut-off date for contributions will be 30 September 2010.

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Yours sincerely

Ian O'Sullivan
Assistant Scrutiny Manager

London TravelWatch's response to the London Assembly Transport Committee investigation into accessibility of London's transport network

June 2010



London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

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Executive Summary

London's transport network is becoming increasingly accessible, but there is much to do. London TravelWatch welcomes the London Assembly Transport Committee's attention on this subject and the opportunity to provide input.

- Accessibility improvements benefit all users.
- The bus service has the most potential to be truly accessible. This is because of the investment which has already been undertaken which means that all London's buses are low-floor accessible buses. However, currently only half the stops are truly accessible according to Transport for London's (TfL's) figures. London TravelWatch recommends that the investment in accessible bus stops is prioritised because it will enable the whole bus network to become fully accessible to transport users across London at a more reasonable cost in the current spending environment. By the end of the TfL Business Plan in 2017-18 it is planned that 65% of London's bus stops will be accessible. This figure was planned to be 75%, but the target was cut in the TfL Business Plan 2010/11¹.
- The London Underground has had a step-free programme that has increased the number of accessible stations. Over the period of the TfL Business Plan investment is planned to result in 26.7% of platforms being step-free. However, this target has been cut back from the previous year when it had been planned that 29% of stations would have step-free access by 2017/18².
- Softer measures such as staff training and information are generally good.
- The impact of the street environment should not be forgotten on. Just like able bodied pedestrians, mobility impaired users want a direct, continuous, level footway clear of obstructions with formal and informal opportunities to cross the street. Unlike able bodied users this is often a prerequisite of making any journey for the mobility impaired.

¹ TfL Business Plan 2010/11 to 2017/18, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Item06-TfL-Business-Plan-2010-11-2017-18.pdf>

² TfL Business Plan 2010/11 to 2017/18, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Item06-TfL-Business-Plan-2010-11-2017-18.pdf>

1 Introduction

London TravelWatch is the statutory watchdog representing transport users in London. Accessibility issues are a core part of our work and are reflected in all that we do. Our policies have been developed over many years with the support of research conducted by us and commissioned by us, contributions from organisations representing disabled users and the membership of our Board which has included disabled members. We consult on specific issues with members of our 'Public Transport Design Panel' which has members that are both elderly and disabled.

It is important to stress that improvements made in the name of accessibility for the disabled, will almost always benefit the general transport user. Low floor buses are easier for everyone to board and alight. Lifts and ramps for wheelchair users benefit those with heavy luggage and parents with young children. Uncluttered streets feel more comfortable for everyone.

This submission respond to the questions the Committee has posed in its call for information letter 1 June 2010 regarding access to mainstream transport services, but also other issues we feel it should consider in its scrutiny of the accessibility of the transport network in London. We have previously contributed to the Assembly investigation of London's Dial-a-Ride services.

1.1 The whole journey

Too often when considering issues of accessibility one immediately thinks of step-free access to the Underground or National Rail network. Whilst this is important and considered below London TravelWatch believes consideration of the whole journey is vital. Further information can be found in our past publications on this subject – see our website http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document_list.php.

By a whole journey approach we mean:

- The accessibility of information prior to and throughout the journey.
- The accessibility of the streets – clear of clutter, footways continuous and level, and bus stops that enable buses to get properly to the kerb.
- Staff trained to manage passengers' different needs.
- Step-free access from street level to train and not just to the platform.

1.2 London TravelWatch casework relating to accessibility

London TravelWatch is the appeals body for complaints made to transport operators in London. Between October 2009 and June 2010 London TravelWatch received the following numbers of appeals, direct enquiries contacts, and initials enquiries about topics relating to accessibility.

The majority of casework related to National Rail and the largest single category of casework relates to access to or within the station.

[Please note: as an appeals body we only receive a small number of complaints that have been dealt with by the various operators who have been unable to resolve them. We also redirect initial complaints in the first instance. As such our casework provides some interesting intelligence, but does not reflect all users' concerns]

Table 1 – Numbers of cases relating to accessibility between Oct-09 to Jun-10

Category of Casework Relating to Accessibility	Bus	Dial a Ride	National Rail	Streets	London Underground	Total
Access to/within station			7		4	11
Failure to pull into the kerb	7					7
Boarding refused or removal from service	1					1
Lifts and escalators					4	4
Station side entrance closures			6		1	7
Lack of disabled facilities on train/bus/other vehicle		1				1
Lack of disabled facilities at station/stop/pier/etc.			3			3
Pre-booked assistance not provided			1			1
Poor/no disabled access at station/pier/etc			1		1	2
Poor/no disabled access on/off train/bus/other vehicle			1			1
Wheelchair ramps	1					1

Category of Casework Relating to Accessibility	Bus	Dial a Ride	National Rail	Streets	London Underground	Total
Lack of information			1			1
Other	3	1	3	1		8
Total	12	2	23	1	10	48

2 The Committee's questions

2.1 Planning journeys

How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?

TfL complies or surpasses many of the standards in terms of the provision of information for journey planning. They have textphone facilities, with 24 hour a day human operator staffing. Accessible formats of tube maps are available. The provision of journey planning information is not raised as an issue through our appeals process.

However, London Underground in its role as station facility owner of National Rail stations, of which there are 21, for example West Brompton, does not take part in the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service (APRS)³. The APRS is part of the Disabled Peoples Protection Policy for National Rail which sets out how the interests of disabled users of trains and stations will be protected. This lack of integration between London Underground and the National Rail network mean that some of the benefits of these policies are lost.

At present the policies regarding the APRS are being reviewed by the DfT as part of the National DPPP⁴. London TravelWatch has commented on London Underground's DPPP as part of this process. London TravelWatch accepts that to incorporate London Underground properly into the APRS will be complex, but the coordination of National Rail and London Underground will enable a more integrated accessible transport network in London.

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

The integration of TfL's journey planner with that of National Rail Enquiries would allow the combining of information about the accessibility of the transport network to be available in one location for London.

³ The Assisted Passengers Reservation Service is a National Rail system to coordinate the assistance of elderly and disabled passengers.

⁴ The Disabled Person's Protection Policy is each statement by each train operator, Network Rail and London Underground as to how they will implement policies to assist passengers. It is presently very much National Rail focused.

2.2 Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

London Underground offers a turn-up and go service for passengers. London TravelWatch believes that London Underground takes the training of its staff in this regard seriously. TfL generally monitor its services with mystery shopping exercises to monitor compliance with its own standards.

The staffing of London Overground stations throughout the period of operation of services has been a great improvement for disabled and elderly passengers.

Our expectation is that London Overground, as part of TfL will have similar arrangements in respect of disability awareness training. Additionally London Overground, as part of the National Rail family, has a DPPP and is part of the APRS system and so will provide bespoke assistance in planning journeys, getting from the street to train, including assistance on and off of trains. Or, if this is not possible providing alternative travel arrangements, for example a Taxi to an alternative, accessible station.

London Bus drivers, as part of the contractual arrangements with TfL, are trained in disability awareness. However, there is a limit to which bus drivers can provide assistance for disabled and elderly. Again mystery shopping takes place to maintain driving standards and customer care. There are two key issues in relation to the accessibility of bus services:

1. Bus stops should have clearways that enable buses to easily reach the kerb in real life bus service operation and drivers that are trained to pull up close to the kerb.
2. Bus drivers should be properly trained to recognise disabled and elderly person's needs, understand hidden disability and have the skills to manage the bus and its passenger's needs.

From our casework postbag London TravelWatch are aware that some passengers feel bus drivers could offer a better service, for example we received seven items of appeals casework relating to bus drivers failure to pull up to the kerb. Wheelchair users also allege drivers deliberately pass them by to avoid having to deal with their special needs. That said when we meet ordinary users at our bus users surgeries we get much positive feedback from elderly and disabled passengers.

London TravelWatch conducts bus surgeries at which we take a bus into one of London's high streets. At these events we have been able to demonstrate to wheelchair users, that do not use bus services, how accessible buses are using the bus ramp. Consideration could be given to promoting the ease of use of buses for wheelchair users.

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Whilst we understand that there will be many complexities and cost in adopting the APRS system at the stations London Underground manages on behalf of the National Rail network we nevertheless believe this should happen. This may mean a cost to the train operators for the service provided. However, it would mean London Underground staff could assist passengers off of the train at West Brompton, for example. This cannot now happen and the train operator must supply a staff member or arrange alternative transport facilities such as a Taxi.

As mentioned above and discussed below – the implementation of generous length bus stop clearways, parallel to the road or bus stop borders where appropriate, across the bus network is a pre-requisite to facilitate the use of the bus network by disabled users in the same manner as able bodied passengers.

2.3 Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

2.3.1 Accessible bus stops

London is now well placed in terms of accessible buses. London has a comprehensive network of bus services and every bus in London is low floored and has a space for wheelchairs. This is an important achievement as buses will continue, for many years, to be the only form of public transport in London that can be accessible to almost all. As a result of the high costs and complexity the Underground and National Rail will take much longer to become accessible. Some stations may never be accessible.

However, according to TfL⁵ only 50.3% of London's bus stops are accessible. Accessible means that a bus stop has a legally enforceable bus stop clearway (the yellow box markings at a bus stop), the correct kerb height and unimpeded access to the bus from the pavement. From these figures it is clear TfL are doing well at 61% of its stops being compliant (although with a relatively low number of stops). Some boroughs are doing well, for example Kingston at 85%, but others are doing less well, for example Barnet at 31%. See Appendix A for the statistics of bus stop accessibility in London.

The recent improvement in the number of stops that are accessible is welcome. However, there is much to be done. We are pleased that the Mayor has identified the reporting of the number of accessible bus stops to him as part of the borough Local Implementation Plan (LIP)⁶ process.

TfL has a target of 65% of bus stops being accessible (according to its own criteria) by 2018. It should be noted that this target was reduced from 75% in cuts implemented in the 2010/11 Business Plan⁷. 65% is an improvement, but London TravelWatch wants to see much quicker progress, particularly as some elements of implementing accessibility measures are very cheap (marking out clearways and installing signs) and easy to implement. London TravelWatch recognises that highways works, such as raising kerb heights are expensive.

London Travelwatch wants to see many more bus stops being accessible in a much shorter timescale than presently proposed by TfL. Indeed this should be a priority for Transport for London and the London boroughs over the next few years.

Mobility impaired passengers are not concerned about geographical boundaries, but they do need to know that if they get on a bus at one stop they will be able to get off at the end of their journey. To ensure rapid progress is made towards TfL's target we want the Mayor and TfL to set targets for the installation of bus stop clearways by boroughs. It is of concern that the devolving of transport funding to London boroughs, with a broad requirement to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy, may mean there may not be the focus of this very important issue.

Hail and Ride services are often not accessible to wheelchair users and those with impaired mobility although they are locally popular with users who find it convenient to stop the bus on demand. London TravelWatch supports TfL's view

⁵ TfL's latest statistics by local highway authority are appended below.

⁶ The Local Implementation Plan is an annual statement of intent of each London borough as to how it intends to use its transport funding allocation from TfL.

⁷ TfL Business Plan 2010/11 to 2017/18,

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Item06-TfL-Business-Plan-2010-11-2017-18.pdf>

that to fulfil the obligations of the DDA, as amended to include highway authorities', Hail and Ride services should be migrated to services with fixed stops, though simple bus borders⁸ may be appropriate rather than very long clearways.

Part time bus stop clearways are implemented by some London Boroughs. London TravelWatch believes this is not acceptable. Disability does not start at 7am nor end at 7pm and bus stop clearways must be operational for at least the hours of the day that bus services operate. Ideally they will operate 24/7 to encourage a culture of compliance with kerbside restrictions.

At some locations bus stop lay-bys are implemented. Whilst it is theoretically possible for a bus driver to pull into a properly designed lay-by in practice it is more difficult. Bus stop clearways parallel to the road and bus stop borders are much preferred both from an accessibility perspective and a bus service performance perspective.

Some bus stops are located on steep inclines. This will often mean that even where a ramp can be deployed the bus will still be inaccessible. These locations should be avoided for bus stops and alternative locations identified.

2.3.2 Ramps on buses

The introduction of ramps onto low-floor buses has meant buses are now theoretically accessible to wheelchair passengers.

We know from our casework postbag that the consistent operation of bus ramps is a continuing challenge to bus operators and to TfL. There is a gap in terms of the perception of the performance of bus ramps and TfLs assessments of their reliability. This is an area where more work would be welcome to better understand why this is the case.

2.3.3 The wheelchair space on a bus

The regulation of the wheelchair space on London's buses is clear – it is first and foremost for the use of wheelchair passengers, but there is nevertheless dispute over how this space is managed. London TravelWatch has considered this issue at length and supports TfL in its policy with respect to the conflict between wheelchair users and buggy users, i.e. it is a wheelchair space that buggy users

⁸ A bus stop border is an extension of the footway in to the carriageway to allow bus drivers to approach the kerb in a manner that will allow a bus ramp to extend onto the footway. They will often require less kerb length than a conventional stop and so may be appropriate in areas of high parking demand.

may use it is free. Buggy users are not subsequently asked to alight the bus to make way for a wheelchair user.

The adequacy of the size of the wheelchair space is challenged by some users. Indeed an appellant of ours has made this case with respect one particular design of bus. Following a site visit with us TfL have agreed to revise their specification upwards.

The argument is often made by wheelchair users that they would like to be able to travel together with a wheelchair using companion. Indeed this was discussed with TfL as part of our design panel event to contribute to the design of the New Bus for London. It is our understanding that this has been considered, but the space requirement means it will not be possible.

2.3.4 Priority seating

Priority seating is valued on all modes of transport and it is often sensibly allocated near the entrance to the vehicle. However, it is often only demarked with a sticker and so may be used unknowingly by other passengers when there is a potential user standing. London TravelWatch believes the status of priority seats could be much enhanced by simply highlighting their status as shown in the photograph below.



2.3.5 Step-free stations – from street to train!

In thinking about step free stations London TravelWatch is clear that where possible this should be step-free from street to train, not just street to platform.

London Underground's step-free station initiative has undoubtedly benefitted mobility impaired passengers. It should also be recognised that this programme has benefited all passengers generally, as it improves general access and delivers increased capacity. Please refer to our previous submission on overcrowding to the London Assembly

It is therefore disappointing that this programme has been reduced with only 26.7% of the network having step-free to platforms by 2017/18. This was reduced from 29% in the 2010/11 Business Plan⁹. That said it is recognised there will still be some progress as the various major projects, Crossrail, Olympics, Thameslink etc. progress.

Not all step-free initiatives are about major infrastructure. Many are small scale schemes often led by the local authority. Given the economic circumstances one would hope that there continues to be work of this nature.

This scrutiny is focussed on TfL services, but for completion Assembly members should be aware that the DfT, under its Railways for All scheme funds step-free projects at National Rail stations. Appendix B details the Railways for All stations in the London area. Support from the London Assembly and Mayor for the continuation of this programme would be welcome.

⁹ TfL Business Plan 2010/11 to 2017/18,
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/Item06-TfL-Business-Plan-2010-11-2017-18.pdf>

3 Other issues

3.1 The pedestrian environment

The provision of accessible infrastructure, better information and trained staff are vital to creating an accessible transport network, but so is the accessibility of the route to or from the bus stop or station.



Just like able bodied pedestrians, mobility impaired users want a direct, continuous, level footway clear of obstructions with formal and informal opportunities to cross the street. However, unlike able bodied users this is often a prerequisite of making any journey for the mobility impaired.

From observation much of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) has either entry treatments or dropped kerbs along its length, but there are some locations where this is not so. On borough roads there are still locations without continuous level footways.

Pavements are used to store rubbish, advertise goods and services, park bikes, park cars, sell merchandise etc. Some of it is planned and some randomly located. Navigating the streets in a wheelchair or walking frame is difficult enough. Having to negotiate all manner of clutter on the pavement makes life so much more difficult for disabled users.

London TravelWatch has welcomed an initiative by TfL to investigate whether some of these highway obstruction issues could be better managed by the boroughs. We understand a pilot with Wandsworth has been successful, but are unsure whether other boroughs are to follow this model.

It is clear from observation that pavements remain cluttered and could be more proactively managed in terms of highway obstructions by TfL and the local highway authority.

When consulted London TravelWatch objects to local highway authorities that legalise pavement parking, reducing the footway width to less than DfT guidance¹⁰ of 2 meters.

The Mayor and TfL are promoting a better streets agenda. London TravelWatch hopes that some of these issues may be addressed as part of these policy initiatives.

¹⁰ Inclusive mobility, DfT, 2002

Appendix A – Accessible bus stops, by highway authority.

Totals ALL London - P13 2009/10

The following breaks down the current state of all Bus Stops included in the audit. A total of **17476** Bus Stops; **2157** on the TLRN and **15319** on Borough roads

This includes all Bus Stops reported as DDA compliant since the completion of the audit

Borough	Overall (Forecast - 50%)					TLRN					Borough						
	Total Audited stops	Total Compliant	% Compliant	Total	Total Compliant	% Compliant	Require Time Plates	Require Kerb Height Adjustment	Require Cage	Require Impediments Move	Total	Total Compliant	% Compliant	Require Time Plates	Require Kerb Height Adjustment	Require Cage	Require Impediments Move
All London	17476	8743	50.03%	2157	1324	61.38%	20	420	65	499	15319	7419	48.43%	3476	4285	3078	2776
Barking & Dagenham	372	212	56.99%	23	11	47.83%	7	1	1	3	349	201	57.59%	22	65	24	70
Barnet	816	274	33.58%	73	41	56.16%	0	12	1	22	743	233	31.35%	351	309	288	152
Bexley	578	297	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	578	297	51.38%	123	150	107	92
Brent	594	264	43.49%	31	25	80.65%	0	1	1	4	553	229	41.41%	52	192	104	139
Bromley	1040	412	39.62%	68	37	54.41%	2	12	4	18	972	375	38.58%	395	256	348	180
Camden	452	218	48.23%	77	42	54.55%	0	16	0	20	375	176	46.89%	34	114	39	108
City of London	140	101	72.14%	40	28	70.00%	1	3	4	8	100	73	73.00%	13	13	14	5
Croydon	982	352	35.85%	113	48	42.48%	2	53	5	22	899	304	34.88%	348	379	280	108
Ealing	701	359	51.21%	56	37	62.71%	0	10	0	15	642	322	50.18%	67	185	74	144
Enfield	556	236	42.45%	55	42	76.36%	0	5	1	11	501	194	38.72%	153	183	113	102
Greenwich	669	330	47.21%	60	47	78.33%	0	7	0	8	639	283	44.29%	129	217	51	107
Hackney	420	255	60.95%	108	59	54.63%	0	29	6	25	312	197	63.14%	10	77	19	39
H&F	270	145	53.70%	9	6	66.67%	0	1	0	3	261	139	53.26%	60	33	28	58
Haringey	364	213	54.06%	64	38	59.38%	0	16	0	17	330	175	53.03%	52	89	0	70
Harrow	368	252	63.32%	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	398	252	63.32%	44	63	59	66
Havering	859	219	33.23%	18	16	84.21%	0	1	0	2	640	203	31.72%	378	201	330	94
Hillingdon	740	354	47.84%	23	13	56.52%	0	4	0	9	717	341	47.56%	178	192	172	125
Hounslow	657	262	39.88%	86	51	57.30%	0	24	2	19	588	211	37.15%	178	220	188	108
Islington	350	219	62.57%	83	50	60.24%	0	25	3	12	207	169	83.30%	4	61	8	51
K&C	262	112	42.75%	37	20	54.05%	0	10	0	11	225	92	40.89%	6	62	8	51
Kingston	387	322	83.20%	39	26	66.67%	0	6	3	5	348	296	85.06%	3	27	13	28
Lambeth	574	296	51.57%	216	122	56.48%	2	33	9	64	358	174	48.60%	31	118	37	92
Lewisham	598	360	60.20%	157	120	76.43%	2	11	5	27	441	240	54.42%	20	173	21	46
Merton	432	245	56.71%	55	35	63.64%	0	9	2	12	377	210	55.70%	0	72	81	81
Newham	522	256	49.04%	14	11	78.57%	1	0	2	1	508	245	48.23%	137	110	121	98
Redbridge	504	196	38.89%	48	34	73.91%	0	5	0	8	458	162	35.37%	266	113	200	104
Richmond	470	158	33.62%	32	13	40.63%	0	6	0	16	438	145	33.11%	192	130	81	75
Southwark	620	438	70.65%	144	96	66.67%	0	24	6	27	478	343	72.06%	22	79	29	52
Sutton	346	269	77.75%	43	30	69.77%	0	7	0	9	303	239	78.88%	14	23	18	43
Tower Hamlets	428	265	61.77%	102	59	54.90%	0	24	4	28	327	209	63.91%	11	53	20	69
Waltham Forest	501	261	52.10%	6	4	66.67%	0	1	0	1	495	257	51.82%	68	139	82	74
Wandsworth	502	363	70.32%	179	129	72.07%	3	17	4	42	323	224	69.35%	11	44	17	60
Westminster	521	207	39.73%	93	38	40.89%	0	47	2	30	428	169	39.49%	103	143	112	105

NB: The above figures do not include the **1480** Bus Stops that were not a part of the audit due to either being not valid Bus Stops (Dead Bus Stops, Hail and Ride etc - c1100) or inaccessible due to road works (c400)

NB: It has been assumed that any cage length greater than 0m would qualify for DDA compliance. However some anonymous figures have been identified and Colin Buchanan have been asked to investigate. This may have a negative impact on the current numbers of DDA compliant Bus Stops.

Appendix B – Railways for all stations in London

2006 - 2009	2009 - 2011	2012 - 2015
		Elstree & Borehamwood
Balham		Alnmouth
Blackheath		Berkhamsted
		Bingley
Cheadle Hulme		Brockley
Clapham junction		Bromley South
Denmark Hill		Camden Road
Earlsfield		
Fazakerley		
Haslemere	Dorking	Gospel Oak
Hazel Grove		Hassocks
Herne Hill		Hatfield
Hooton	Finsbury Park	Hemel Hempstead
		Henley in Arden
	Forest Hill	
Kew Gardens		
		Honor Oak Park
Kingston		Ilford
Lewisham		Laindon
	Grove park	Leighton Buzzard
		Leominster
		Limehouse
	Highbury and Islington	Morpeth
Orpington	Horley	
Oxted		New Eltham
Pitsea	Keighley	New Malden
		Orrell Park
Purley	Littleborough	
Putney		
Sandhills		

Shipleigh	Marple	Shirley
Sleaford		St Erth
Staplehurst	New Cross	Stalybridge
Streatham Hill	New Cross Gate	Swanley
Strood	Northfield	Tilbury Town
	Norwood Junction	Tottenham Hale
Three Bridges		Walthamstow Central
		West Hampstead Thameslink
	Staines	Worcester Park
	Streatham Common	
	Thornton Heath	
	Tulse Hill	
	Twickenham	
	Vauxhall	
	West Byfleet	

Ross Jardine

From: Ian O'Sullivan
Sent: 16 June 2010 12:17
To: Ross Jardine
Subject: FW: Speake Information for London Assembly Meeting - June 23rd

Ian O' Sullivan
Assistant Scrutiny Manager
Transport Committee

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* Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail or its attachments.

-----Original Message-----

From: Geraldine O'Halloran [mailto:Geraldine@Trainingforlife.org]
Sent: 16 June 2010 12:14
To: Ian O'Sullivan
Cc: Geoff Liddington
Subject: RE: Speake Information for London Assembly Meeting - June 23rd

Dear Ian

Thank you for sending the details for next weeks meeting. I have spoken to several of our members and basically the concerns are 1. New buses - there is an additional seat in the disabled space which restricts access.

2. Bus drivers either not stopping, or saying the access lift is not working or refusing to ask people with prams and pushchairs to move 3. Bus drivers lack of awareness or not bothering to provide any assistance and their rudness when you cannot respond to what they are saying.

4. Lack of communication for Deaf passengers even if the electronic information is working there is rarely any update. for example I was on a bus recently that had a faulty door but took up to Hackney Rd, on arriving some people started getting off when i looked at the electronic information it just said where the bus had stopped. Eventually after 5 mins someone got back on to tell me the driver was asking everyone to get off. The driver remained in his seat the whole time. Another similar example was on the Hammersmith and City line - no tubes were running the information was being announced over the tannoy - again after 20 minutes a station person rather crossly told me to leave the station.

5. Lack of access to tube.

Two of my colleagues are hoping to attend as well including Geoff who I have copied into this email. Geoff may have his own comments to add if so he will send them separately.

Regards

Geraldine O'Halloran
Centre Director

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Tuesday 15 June 2010

Dear Ian O'Sullivan

Investigation into the Accessibility of London's Transport Network

I am pleased to take up your invitation to inform you of the views of blind and partially-sighted people living and travelling in London. The National Federation of the Blind of the UK, through its London Branch, takes a particular interest in the public transport network of the capital. They intend to play a full part in your consultation with other users of London's transport.

With regard to journey planning, we believe our members find the telephone information and the one-to-one phone advice (I assume this is the mentoring) to be generally useful. The on-line journey planner is usable by

Accomplished blind computer users but it might be awkward for many because they find it difficult to fill in forms on the internet to specify times and destination owing to insufficient web design.

Apart from those who already use public transport to a greater or lesser extent, we feel there are many people in London newly experiencing sight loss who feel unable to venture out without the support of family members. This is increasingly serious as the Rehabilitation Services of Local authorities have been eroded over many years. This has a particularly negative adverse affect, as those requiring mobility training in an increasingly challenging pedestrian and transport environment are finding they do not received adequate training and support.

Step-free access to trains, low floor buses, audible announcements and assistance make it less arduous for them to begin to travel out. The audible announcements of stops and destinations on both trains and buses are regarded as now essential for blind and partially sighted passengers. They provide necessary information for those able to travel without assistance and are insurance for those whose assistance might let them down. The Federation welcomes this positive step towards improving transport services in such an inclusive way.

People use trains and buses at all times of the day and night so, if announcements are turned off or malfunctioning, they run the risk of missing their stop or connection and their distress may be worsened by the absence of other passengers to help at quiet times. This is more likely to impact on a blind or partially sighted woman travelling in the evening alone. This is a safety issue of concern to The Federation.

Where trains or buses have no announcements provided, their use is regarded as unpredictable at best. That is why the fairly recent installation of audible announcements as standard on London's buses is regarded as almost revolutionary by blind and partially-sighted people and this London standard is now sought throughout the country. Nevertheless, there are problems where speakers are too soft or too loud. We would hope and trust that any new types of buses brought into service in London would provide at least the same audible facilities. We wonder also if the new double-decker buses promised for 2011 will offer adequate accessibility, seating and comfort for disabled and elderly passengers, and for people with shopping trolleys.

The provision of assistance from London Underground staff (including meeting passengers off the train at their destination or change station) is essential for the majority of blind and partially sighted Londoners and visitors. It is vital when they make a new or rarely-travelled journey. The practical

helpfulness of London Underground staff is very much appreciated, with only a few citing of staff who have not been well trained to offer assistance.

There are also concerns about quiet stations where the ticket barriers are left unmanned and there is no way to summon assistance. This can be quite dangerous at all times of the day and is a particular concern for blind and partially sighted women travelling during the evening or at night.

If London Underground staff numbers were to be reduced, there is a real fear that there will be fewer people to provide assistance throughout the Underground and London Overground. Some blind people consider that they would not then be able to use the network at all for work or leisure. At present in the course of assisting passengers to and from station platforms, London Underground staff are being seen in a favourable light and is thus having higher visibility to the travelling public. We trust that disproportionate impacts will be seriously considered in any spending decision that may go before the Mayor, Transport Committee or Assembly Members – particularly with regard to the Public Sector Duty on disability and the specific requirements to involved disabled (including blind and partially sighted) people.

Many blind and partially-sighted people use the Taxicard schemes in London, particularly for travelling at night or because they have not found it possible to negotiate their journey by bus or rail. Their main concern is that they cannot read the taxi meter as a sighted passenger can. When taxis are booked by phone, they will invariably reach their passenger with some charge already ticked up. There is concern over widely differing charges for the same distance journey and uncertainty among blind passengers whether they can trust the driver. This is currently a potential problem for any taxi journey undertaken by someone who cannot see to read the meter.

Guide dog owners run the risk of having to wait long periods while ComputerCab or the Westminster provider seeks a driver who does not object to dogs. This is not acceptable, as it is resulting in some blind and partially sighted people being treated less favourably than their non disabled counterpart.

We are deeply concerned about the likely introduction of silent electric and hybrid vehicles. These appear to present blind and partially sighted at serious risk. The growth in charging points may provide an additional mobility issue for blind and partially sighted people living, working and visiting the capital Likewise, we are deeply concerned by the advent of share surfaces, presenting mobility to challenges and place them in vulnerable situations on streets that pedestrian and silent vehicles are being asked to share.

The Federation recognises that London faces uncertain economic times. In considering any public spending decisions, we would urge that concessionary travel for blind and partially sighted people is protected, as this will greatly assist with our continued economic and social participation throughout the capital.

My colleagues from our London Branch will be contacting you soon to book a seat at your meeting on 23 June 2010. If any of the points I have touched on here require more explanation, I am sure they will be happy to provide it.

In putting this submission together, these representatives together with London Branch members have contributed their opinions. Our members have engaged thoroughly, as access to the transport network in London is so crucial to our independence. However, if The Greater London Authority's Transport Committee would welcome further evidence, written or oral, I would be pleased to arrange for this to be considered within our limited resources.

Yours sincerely

Emily Brothers
President

Disability Backup minutes
22nd April 2010

Topic: Review of door to door services and personalisation

Present: 29 people attended

1. Introductions

The group introduced themselves and told their favourite hobbies

2. Jeannette Arnold, London Assembly Member North East London

Jennette asked all members present whether they were satisfied with the door-to-door services they used. Of the 20+ members present, no one stuck their hand up

There was however, a general consensus that services had improved over the past year. Nevertheless, the following complaints were shared with us by the forum:

Dial-a-Ride

- One lady has now been waiting for over a month to get her dial-a-ride user card.
- Dial-a-ride is only good when you take trips that you do regularly i.e. on a weekly basis, same time to the same location. However, as soon as you request some flexibility by doing a one-off trip or a trip that you do once a forth night, the service appears to be unable to cope.
- One user said she tried to use the service once, it never showed up for which reason she decided to give on DAR altogether.
- It often happens that 5 people arrive at the same location in 5 different DAR vans. This seems like a waste of resources.
- Drivers often fail to contact you if they run late and you have to call them. This is poor service to users and it would be courteous if they'd contact the user if running late.

- One user had a bad experience with the service when the driver couldn't find her place and just took off while she sat there waiting without any notice.

Taxicard:

- Sometimes the cab doesn't turn up and you end up phoning time after time
- There was a consensus that the taxicard booking service should ask users if they want a black cab or a minicab. For some users minicabs are difficult to get in and out whilst other experience difficulty getting in and out a black cab.
- Many users also felt it was difficult to recognise a minicab as such from your house when they're waiting outside your house. Also, you often expect a black cab and then fail to look out for a minicab
- Drivers should ring the front door upon arrival to notify the users rather than just sit in the car.
- Some drivers are great but others are terrible saying they'll pick you up around the corner and then just leave. Also, if you try to stop them at stations they drive off as soon as they see your disabled pass. It just seems that some drivers just don't like to take disabled passengers.
- Although the situation seems to have improved over the past year, there are some drivers who just refuse to help you out of the car and then when you ask just stand on the pavement staring at you struggling to get out. Or some are not very helpful when you ask them to get the step out.
- Communication in general between drivers and users could be greatly improved.
- One deaf member says she doesn't use any door-to-door service because it is too difficult to communicate with drivers. They never understand where she wants to get to.
- Drivers of minicabs hardly ever offer to help you out of the house or carry your bags or cases.
- It's often difficult to get through to the phone service.
- Services often arrive too late, sometimes as much as half an hour

Other services in Hackney:

- Royal London Hospital transport service is appalling.

- Hackney carriage is a great service with very good drivers who have been properly trained. Some are mobility impaired themselves.
- Lewis day minicabs is a good company which properly supports disabled users.

3. Paul Knipe, Tracey Sinclair and Phil Chatterton from Personalisation team, Hackney Council

-The group were asked about Personalisation. Firstly, it was clear that not many people knew what it meant.

-Paul explained the changes to adult social care:

- If you are receiving a care package from the council (like a carer) you will be able to have more control over the type of care you receive
- Instead of being given a carer from an agency, you can choose your own care, maybe a relative or friend, or using another service like going to the gym or hairdressers.
- You will have more control over your money so you can have a better outcome.

-Phil talked to the group about the social care hub

- The council are going to make a website of all the different places where you can get your services from
- This is for you, carers, social workers, voluntary groups and anyone!
- It will be similar to eBay, with peoples' feedback about the services and the costs
- It will also be available in other ways, not just online

-Tracey asked the group for feedback:

"I wouldn't be happy about costing; I'd want help to organise this even if I was able"

"When you become ill, you sometimes don't know what you want. You don't know what your service needs are"

"I know about myself, but I don't necessarily know what my needs are, or the services I need"

"Agencies are a problem sometimes"

"There needs to be more, clearer communications"

"Getting through to the Council switch board is difficult. Will it be quicker and easier in the new system?"

"The Council / social workers often fail to respond"

"I can be assertive and help others, but I find it difficult to be assertive on my own behalf"

"Self- assessment is a failure. It shouldn't focus on the negatives; I shouldn't have to imagine myself in the worst possible scenario to get the right support"

"There is lots of best practice elsewhere, such as Canada"

What now?

- We meet with Disability Backup every other month to continue these discussions
- we get together a group to review and work through accessibility issues for the web and Hackney Hub
- We can provide you with a list of things we need help with on a regular basis
- Disabled people need to know where to go for information. You can get help from us to get this right

Transport Focus Group

Present:

The purpose of this focus group was to investigate the following topics:

Blue Badges
Companion Badges
Freedom Pass
Dial a Ride
Taxi Card
National Railcard

The aim was to identify what issues the members had regarding these services and what Disability Backup could do to improve them.

Companion Badges (CB)

Companion Badges are similar to Blue Badges with the following differences:

They can only be used within Hackney
They are addressed to the car not the individual

The Companion Badge was introduced as a pilot scheme to try and combat blue badge fraud. It is felt that they have not been effective and the members felt that more clarification was needed about this service and whether it still existed. There was a fee for the service but now it is free. You can apply and be given the badge on the same day from the Parking Shop on Mare Street.

The action points regarding Companion Badges are:

1. To find out whether it is still a pilot or is it now a long term service? If it is long term can it be better advertised?
2. To ask why is the badge only applicable in Hackney? There are some streets in Hackney which are on the border to other boroughs, in these cases it is not possible to park on one side of the street.
3. What happens if your allocated car is broken?

Blue Badges (BB)

Blue Badges are an EU wide scheme that can be used in any borough (bar some London boroughs that have their own exclusive badge)

The Badges are allocated to the individual who can use it in any car. There has been a large amount of fraud with the Blue Badges and this is why Hackney launched the Companion Badge to try and curb this issue.

The main issue raised with the Blue Badge was that they need to be renewed every 3 years. The renewal process is as lengthy as the initial application. Individuals are required to complete an application form and pay a fee (thought to be £2) the individual is also asked to provide 2 passport photos at initial application stage and for the renewal. Blue badges are given from the mobility team on Morning Lane. The renewal process takes 6 weeks (same as the initial application) despite not needing a GP reference.

It is felt that the need for a GP reference is lengthy and also unnecessary. For example if you are receiving higher rate DLA and can evidence this, why should you have to rely on the GP referral? It is also felt that the GP may not know you very well, despite being disabled you may not visit the GP regularly or have a good relationship with your GP.

The action points raised regarding Blue Badges are:

1. Why do applicants have to constantly provide photos, can't the department keep a copy on file, or ask for more than 2 at the beginning? Alternatively why do they not have a web cam and keep the photos electronically?
2. Why is there only 1 officer processing Blue Badges, is this why there is a 6 week wait?
3. Why does the applicant have to come into the office to have the BB renewed? Why does the office make the application whilst the applicant is there? Can a page be sent to the applicant for signature and then the badge pre made for collection?
4. If a person is automatically eligible for the BB, then why is a GP referral also necessary?
5. Why does the renewal process take so long and require such work on the applicant side?

Freedom Pass (FB)

The freedom pass is a free photo card that allows the individual free travel within London. It is eligible for use on the buses, tubes, trams and DLR. It is also valid on some over ground rail.

The application process for the freedom pass is very similar to the BB and CB. It requires a GP referral (despite eligibility requiring you to be on higher rate DLA etc)

People have been refused BB but given a FP, it is interesting to see how common this is and why that would be.

The action points regarding Freedom Passes are:

1. To provide the Forum members with a map of accessible stations in London
2. To provide the Forum members with a map of where freedom pass is eligible, does it end in zone 5?

3. DBU to sign up to the 'getting there' magazine and pass on the information through DBU newsletter
4. **DBU to design 1 application form which could be used for BB, CB and FP. This to be taken to the Forum with the aim of presenting it to the council. The aim is to try and change the 3 applications so people only need fill one, get one GP referral etc.**

Taxi Card (TC)

The Taxi Card is a service which allows individuals to book black cabs. The taxi card provides you with a card which discounts your journey. For the first £12.50 of the journey, the individual only pays £1.50, anything over that the individual pays for.

The service has a poor reputation for being unreliable and difficult to book. It has also been said that the taxi drivers start the meter running from the time they leave the depot instead of the time they start the journey.

The action points regarding Taxi Cards are:

1. To contact Transport for all (charity regarding disability transport) and find out how we can get involved with their projects
2. To find out whether the meters are turned on at point of pick up or before

Dial a Ride (DaR)

Dial a ride is a transport service that you pre book to be taken to and from a destination. The service is free with a straightforward application and no GP referral.

DaR is operated through a computerised system which has been criticised for the poor running of this service. It is felt that DaR rarely comes on time and is difficult to book. It also regularly arrives with a large van or car to collect 1 person.

The action points regarding Dial a Ride is:

1. To contact TFL and find out what the future plans are for the service
2. To contact transport for all with our concerns and see how we can get involved with their work
3. To explore if DaR still operates a transfer scheme (where you can travel to another borough)

CAMPAIGN for ACCESSIBLE and RELIABLE TRANSPORT (CART)

c/o Max Reid: email:

34 Quebec Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4TT

**NB: This letter may seem to be written to wheelchair users alone.
It isn't. At one time or another it concerns all bus passengers.
Please stay with it and all will become clear.....**

BUT FIRST, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF

My name is Max Reid. I am in my early seventies, live in the London Borough of Redbridge, and am passionate about my work as a street musician. I have a spinal cord disease and use a manual wheelchair outside the house. I commute to work in Central London, but I often have difficulty with public transport.

The Underground, with the exception of the Jubilee Line between Stratford and Westminster, is virtually a no-go area for a wheeler. I have limited experience of rail services, but I can get from Ilford to Stratford or Liverpool Street fairly easily. (I know the Dockland Light Railway is very good, but I rarely use it).

However, I have a great deal of trouble with London buses. This is ironic, because according to Transport for London (TfL)'s publicity, every bus in service should have a working ramp leading to a space where a wheelchair has priority; and is operated by a highly trained driver with a special qualification which ensures that wheelers are at no disadvantage to ambulant passengers. (This is not out of the goodness of their hearts - they have a legal obligation to do so under the Disability Discrimination Act).

But it would appear that TfL and I do not inhabit the same planet.

Because my experience over more than eight years is that of problems, problems, and more problems. Either ramps don't work, or are too steep to negotiate without help, or in one spectacular case, practically hanging off; a wheelchair space that can need a three or more point turn to access, (irritating on a fairly empty bus - especially if the driver hasn't waited to see me settled before moving off - and almost impossible when people are standing in the area). Moreover, that space is for **wheelchair users** (under the DDA), but is often colonised by baby buggies, whose owners often refuse to fold them when I get on the bus.

The **driver's attitude** is then crucial. It can range from refusing even to **ask** the owners to fold their buggies, to agreeing that although he can't **make** them clear the space for the wheelchair, the bus won't be going anywhere until they do so.

Incidentally, did you know there is a maximum length and width to wheelchairs that are permitted on a bus? No? I thought you probably didn't. Yet there isn't

a similar restriction on the size of baby buggies, some of which are longer than an average wheelchair; and I have never heard of any large ambulant people being refused entry to a bus, even if they do take up most of a double seat.

Because there are so many separate bus companies, a wheelchair commuter can expect particular difficulties on different routes. The size and position of the wheelchair space varies greatly, and so does the angle of the ramp to the pavement. Bendybuses specialise in unreliable ramps and across the fleet the standard of ramp maintenance varies, and so does the level to which drivers are trained to be aware of wheelers' needs. If things get so bad that you have to identify the bus and the driver in order to complain to TfL, there is no uniformity as to where you can find the number plates, the fleet number, or the running order; nor whether the driver has to wear his number **visibly**.

The wheelchair space on at least one popular new bus, the Enviro400, is totally inadequate. In fact only one bus that I have used, (a single decker on route 296), has what I consider adequate space, ie. a space large enough to accommodate two wheelchairs.

"**TWO WHEELCHAIRS!**", I hear them cough and splutter at TfL HQ. "What will those cripples be demanding next?"

Well. Here's a novel concept for you TfL guys. Sometimes, a wheeler may have a **friend**, even **another member of his family**, who also uses a wheelchair; and they might like to go out somewhere **together** and **both travel in the same bus** - as I believe ambulant passengers expect to do.

I have been told that should I be so presumptuous as to carry a **bag** - as real people (ie. not the disabled) often do when they go **shopping** or to **work** - I should not expect to carry it on the back of my chair. (And where else, pray, can I carry it, and still propel myself?). Instead, I should take it off before trying to access the wheelchair space. And put it where? ... In front of me; where it takes up exactly the same amount of space overall? ... Beside me; blocking the aisle in breach of Health and Safety? ... Or maybe in the luggage compartment at the front of the bus? Fine - except that I can't get my chair through the aisle.

And the whole procedure in reverse when I want to get off.

The ramps are meant to be tested every morning before buses leave the garage and if they are faulty, the bus does not go into service. Sometimes the 'test' is in fact an electronic test to see if the circuit is in order, which by no means indicates that the ramp will actually work at a real live pavement.

It is the local authorities who have to ensure that bus bays are kept clear of parked cars. But TfL is responsible for specifying the length of the bus bay, and the bus operators are responsible for those drivers who can't be bothered to pull into the kerb at the bus bay, but insist on taking me to the next stop.

YOU MAY NOT BE A WHEELER, SO WHY SHOULD YOU BE

INTERESTED IN ALL THIS?

Because if I am fed up with TfL's totally inadequate response to my complaints, you might well be dissatisfied if you ever have cause to complain.

For more than six years I have been telephoning and writing, and even going to their offices in person, and for more than six years I have been getting idiot letters back. NB, I use the term 'idiot letter' for one which treats me as an idiot who has nothing better to do than invent incidents which never happened and then write in to complain. After all, the bus service is well-nigh perfect ... It must be ... It says so in TfL's publicity.

Six years of writing; about eighty letters; averaging one every five weeks. **And nothing has changed.** If anything, things are getting worse. I am now writing about once a month and reporting up to fourteen incidents per letter. TfL do not honour their commitment to reply to letters within fifteen working days, and have sometimes 'not received' letters; even those sent by recorded delivery.

But as I said before, this is not just about wheelers. At some time, most of you will be affected by the problems that wheelers have every day.

For example; **any owner of a baby buggy** who has been embarrassed by conflicting claims over the **WHEELCHAIR** space; which is just too small.

Anyone **whose bus journey has been delayed** because of a faulty ramp, or by an argument between a bus driver and a wheeler who has had the audacity to assert his legal right to travel on that bus, and not the one that's "only two minutes behind, Guv" ... And twenty (wet, windy and certainly weary) minutes later you might not be able to get on that one, either).

Come to that, any **bus driver** who is fed up with being at the sharp end of a problem which is not his fault, but arises because he has to drive a bus which is not fit for purpose; i.e. one with a poorly designed and minimally maintained ramp made out of substandard materials, leading to a ludicrously small wheel- chair space which inevitably causes timetable busting and totally unnecessary conflicts over priority claims to the area. And in the worst cases it is he who has to explain to a bus full of frustrated passengers why they've all got to get off the bus and wait for the next one.

Obviously, all **carers and escorts**. But also all **health professionals** who are concerned about the quality of life of their patients once they have left the intensive care and the rehab. units and are looking forward to playing their part in society once again.

So I am trying to organise an **independent** lobby of **all** bus users, not just wheelers, who have had unacceptable experiences and would like to see an

improvement in TfL's services. Unfortunately, the groups that sound (from their names) as if they would be useful, have either not answered my emails nor returned phone calls; or have advised me to write to TfL (!); or have made it clear that the problems of wheelers are low on their list of priorities.

So if you have read this far and think as I do that something needs to be done about these and perhaps other problems that **you** have encountered that I am not aware of, I would ask you please to do the following:

1. Write a letter to TfL every time you have, or witness, an incident. Yes, it's a chore, but if you don't write, TfL can claim that everything's OK. Don't be tempted to phone, (except to chase up a letter), because then you have no record if it goes missing.

To make a viable complaint, you need to report:

- (i) The **date and time** of the incident.
- (ii) The **route** number. (I also include the direction of travel).
- (iii) The **registration number** or the fleet number or the running order
- (iv) If you can get the **driver's number**, that's great, but it can be a bit intimidating to ask for it. Don't worry though, some if not all of the above will identify him.
- (v) **What happened**; why you and perhaps others were inconvenienced. And what you want done about it - an apology from the operator, (you'll be lucky); compensation, (you'll be even luckier). A smoothie PR letter from TfL is most likely.
- (vi) **Send your letter to:** London Buses, Customer Services,
197 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NJ,
or email: <Customerservices.buses@tfl.gov.uk>

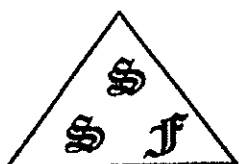
2. Keep copies of your letters and their replies.

3. Duplicate this letter and circulate it to any wheelers, their carers, or others you know who might be interested. I am particularly keen to hear from those wheelers who may have **given up trying** to use London buses because they have had trouble with the service and **the brush-off from TfL**.

4. Let me know of any people or groups I can contact who may be useful allies, eg. MPs, Local Councillors, Access Officers, OTs and Healthcare professionals; even **sympathetic** people working in the Bus service. **And especially anyone who can give us any publicity.**

5. (Optional) Let me know how you get on. (Contact details at the head of this letter). TfL follow the classic pattern of 'divide and rule'. They are a large organisation who work together. We are all disparate units scattered around the city. Only when we organise and work together will we have any chance of getting them to walk their talk. (Or should that be 'drive their jive'?).

WE WILL ONLY GET SOMEWHERE WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER



SUTTON SENIORS' FORUM

Reg. Charity No. 1080557

President – The Mayor of Sutton
Chairman Jill Gascoine-Becker

Ian O'Sullivan
Scrutiny Team
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14 JUN 2010
SECRETARIAT

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June 08th 2010

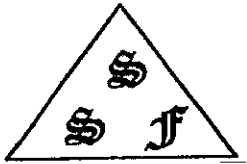
Dear Ian,

Further to our recent telephone conversation, I enclose a copy of our written report we would like submitted to the Transport Committee. Also enclosed is a copy of the Public Transport Bus Survey carried out by our affiliated organization 'Sutton Older Peoples Involvement Group' (Sutton-OPIG) which we feel is also relevant and we would like submitted.

Thank you for the invitation to attend the meeting on June 23rd 2010 and I, or a representative, will be delighted to attend.

Yours Sincerely

Chris Pennington.



SUTTON SENIORS' FORUM

Reg. Charity No. 1080557

President – The Mayor of Sutton
Chairman Jill Gascoine-Becker



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June 08th 2010

Report To The
Investigation into the Accessibility of London's Transport Network
By Sutton Seniors' Forum

On Buses the latest survey amongst 500 of our members showed that:

- 1) The Freedom Pass is the most useful asset they have.
- 2) Access to London's buses has improved out of all recognition over the past few years with all our local buses now being fully accessible.
- 3) The Audio & Visual 'IBUS' information service is most helpful. However it was remarked that an audio and visual announcement 'Please Remain Seated Until The Bus Has Stopped' would be appreciated. Although most feel they are given time to alight before the driver wants to close the doors, they still feel they must get up and walk towards the exits before the bus has stopped or the driver will not stop.
- 4) Bell pushes should be available at every seat position.
- 5) The needs of older people should be paramount in driver's minds and made an important part of their training. Drivers should be continually reminded not to pull away from a stop until passengers are seated. This is extremely important for the elderly and infirm. Having to grab a hand rail in order to avoid a fall can be extremely painful for an elderly person and cause injury that does not show up immediately which can leave on-going health problems.

SUTTON SENIORS FORUM IS A NON PARTY POLITICAL ORGANISATION

- 6) Bus Shelters, with seating, should be available at *all* bus stops.
- 7) Shelters at main stops to be made longer so as to give shelter to more passengers.
- 8) Bus Stops to be built out rather than lay bys. This would alleviate the problem caused by cars parking close to bus stops blocking the easy entry and exit from the stop and allow the bus always to be brought up to the stop level making for easy use of the ramp.
- 9) The electronic bus information system should be available at all stops in town centers and major interchange stops. At present the positioning seems to be very haphazard. It would also be useful in areas where only an infrequent service is available.

We have not done a survey on rail travel this year. However the accessibility to most stations in the London Borough of Sutton is extremely poor.

Although internet access is becoming used more by the elderly, this is very light amongst our members. Therefore we cannot report on this aspect.

Telephone help lines are on premium rate numbers. These should be made free for disabled and freedom pass holders.



Chris Pennington
Transport Representative & Vice Chairman
Sutton Seniors Forum

SUTTON
OLDER PEOPLES
INVOLVEMENT GROUP

BUS
TRANSPORT SURVEY

OCTOBER 2009

Conducted by:

Chris Pennington on behalf of Sutton OPIG

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DISTRIBUTION LIST

Paul Burstow M.P
Tom Brake M.P.
The Mayor of Sutton
The Older Peoples Champion, Sutton Council.
Cllr. Colin Hall (lead member for Environment & Transport)
Boris Johnson Mayor of London
Peter Howarth TfL
Belinda Danino TfL
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Susanna Bennett Deputy Director of SCVS
Accident Prevention Manager London General Bus Company
Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Greater London
Lynn Strother Greater London Forum
All members of Sutton Seniors Forum
Sutton Older Peoples Involvement Group
Carshalton Association for the Elderly (CAFÉ)
All other participating Older Peoples Groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must pass on my sincere thanks to Sutton OPIG member June Vaughan without whose many hours of painstaking work sorting and collating the entire returned questionnaire forms this survey would have taken so much longer to complete.

Also I must thank Joy Mills and Joan Martin for their invaluable support in all our transport projects.

And a special thank you to all the Sutton Seniors' Forum volunteers who turn up at our office to stuff the envelopes.

My thanks to all of you.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY

PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY

- A) To find the views of the older people of this area regarding Public Transport.
- B) To explore ways of improving Public Transport with special regard to the infirm and people with disabilities.
- C) To report these findings back to all concerned parties.

EXTENT OF THE SURVEY

The survey examines the experiences of older people traveling by London buses operating in the London Borough of Sutton.

THOSE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

Members of Sutton Seniors' Forum, Members of Sutton OPIG, SCILL, Carshalton Association for the Elderly and other groups within the London Borough of Sutton with responsibility for the elderly.

ASPECTS OF THE SURVEY

- 1) Safety
- 2) Usability
- 3) Access
- 4) Facilities
- 5) Staff Attitude.
- 6) Use of the 'Freedom Pass

CONCLUSIONS

- The take up of the 'Freedom Pass' is almost 100%. Those who did not have one were all under age.
- All respondents make good use of the pass. It allows them to get out and socialize. Without this they would be isolated within their homes unable to meet people, travel to shops and to visit relations.
- More attention should be paid to the positioning of bus stops. Many are obstructed by foliage from overhanging trees, making it hard to see approaching buses and for drivers to see the intending passengers.
- At night stops are not well lit and older people feel unsafe. The overhanging trees add to this problem.
- Where during the day only 44 respondents felt unsafe travelling by bus. At night 105 respondents felt unsafe. More uniformed police on the streets and on the buses at night together with CCTV and better lighting fitted at bus stops would help alleviate the feeling of being unsafe and vulnerable.
- The new 'fully accessible' buses are felt to be a great improvement. The low floor access is a great help, but the high steps they have to climb in order to reach a seat proves a great problem especially for those with movement difficulty.
- Most of the respondents found drivers courteous and polite. However the majority commented they were not given time to find a seat before the bus moved off.
- Nearly 20% of respondents felt they were not given enough time to get off the bus. Most felt under pressure to get up and walk to the exit before the bus has stopped.
- An announcement must be added to the visual and audible information system 'PLEASE REMAIN SEATED UNTIL THE BUS HAS STOPPED'.
- Bell pushes available at each seat position.

SUTTON OLDER PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT GROUP (Sutton OPIG)

GRANFERS COMMUNITY CENTRE, OAKHILL ROAD, SUTTON SM1 3AA

Reg. Charity No. 1080557

Tele 020 8401 2741

Email sutton-opig@tiscali.co.uk

BUS TRANSPORT SURVEY

	QUESTION	YES	NO
1	Do you have a 'Freedom Pass'		
2	Do You Use Buses (If the answer is no, please state why below)		
3	Which Routes do you most frequently use (please give No's)		
4	How often do you travel by bus (circle one) Daily Weekly Monthly		
5	Are they all Fully Disabled Accessible (If not please state which are not)		
6	Are all drivers/conductors polite and courteous		
7	Are you given time to find a seat before the bus moves off		
8	At a stop are you given enough time to alight from the bus		
9	Does your local Bus Stop have a shelter		
10	Is this stop kept in good condition		
11	Does it suffer from vandalism		
12	Are up to date timetables displayed at this stop		
13	Does your bus generally run on time		
14	Is the visual electronic bus information available at this stop		
15	Do you find this useful		
16	Have you travelled on a bus with the new onboard visual & audio information system		
17	Do you find this useful		
18	Would you like to see more added such as 'Please Remain Seated until The Bus Has Stopped		
19	When travelling by bus do you feel safe from attack		
20	Do you use buses at night		
21	Do you feel safe waiting a bus stops at night		
22	If not what could be done to make you feel safe (answer over page)		

Sutton Older People's Involvement Group

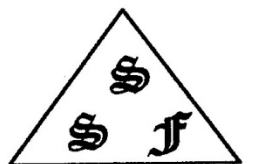
Bus Transport Survey Results

NOTE: Not everybody answered every question.

Number of questionnaires sent out: 500

Number returned: 192

	QUESTION	Number Answered	Yes	No	
1	Do you have a Freedom Pass	190	185	5	
2	Do you use buses (if no, please state why)	192	192	0	
3	Which routes do you most frequently use (please give nos.)	141			S1 S3 S4 38 73 80 93 115 118 123 127 134 151 154 156 157 164 213 243 280 293 401 407 410 413 420 455 463 470 480 X26
4	How often do you travel by bus :	137			
4a	Daily	80			
4b	Weekly	49			
4c	Monthly	8			
5	Are they all fully disabled accessible (if not, please state which are not)	118	98	20	S1 S3 93 280
6	Are all drivers/conductors polite and courteous	187	144	43	
7	Are you given time to find a seat before the bus moves off	187	91	96	
8	At a stop are you given enough time to alight from the bus	187	156	31	
9	Does your local Bus Stop have a shelter	191	132	59	
10	Is this stop kept in good condition	151	142	9	
11	Does it suffer from vandalism	152	59	93	
12	Are up to date timetables displayed at this stop	174	150	24	
13	Does your bus generally run on time	178	154	24	
14	Is the visual electronic bus information available at this stop	178	94	84	
15	Do you find this useful	142	135	7	
16	Have you travelled on a bus with the new visual and audio information system	187	165	22	
17	Do you find this information useful	156	148	8	
18	Same as No. 16				
19	Would you like to see more added, such as 'Please Remain Seated Until the Bus has Stopped	164	140	24	
20	When travelling by bus do you feel safe from attack	182	152	30	
21	Do you use buses at night	189	145	44	
22	Do you feel safe waiting at bus stops at night	145	40	105	
23	If no, what could be done to make you feel safe	28			Better street lighting - Better lighting at bus stops -- CCTV - More police on streets - More police on buses Bus conductors - Alarms on buses



SUTTON SENIORS' FORUM And SUTTON-OPIG



(Sutton Seniors' Forum Reg. Charity No. 1080557)

President – The Mayor of Sutton
Chairman Jill Gascoine-Becker

Sutton Senior's Forum & Sutton OPIG
Granfers Community Centre
73-79 Oakhill Rd
Sutton
Surrey SM1 3AA

Tele 020 8401 2741

Email suttonseniors@suttonseniors.co.uk
sutton.opig@yahoo.co.uk

02nd September 2010

BUS LOADINGS SURVEY **JULY 2009-AUG 2010** **REPORT**

Sutton Older Peoples Involvement Group (Sutton-OPIG), on behalf of Sutton Seniors' Forum, has recently carried out a survey on the local bus routes in the Sutton area based on recording whether passengers were given time to sit down before drivers pulled the bus away from the stop.

The survey was carried out by members standing at bus stops and watching whether passengers on the lower deck were given time to find a seat.

A total of 207 buses were checked. 77 (38%) of these did not give their boarding passengers time to sit before pulling away.

The survey was carried out for the following reasons:

- 1) When a bus pulls away before the passengers have had time to sit down causing them to grab a support rail can cause an injury which does not necessarily show or get reported at the time.
- 2) The passenger then attends their doctor or even the A & E department of their local hospital at a later date for treatment.
- 3) This has then caused pain and inconvenience to the passenger.
- 4) It has caused expense to the already strained health service.
- 5) These accidents could easily be avoided with more attention to this aspect of the drivers training.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Chris Pennington

Transport Representative Sutton-OPIG
Vice Chairman Sutton Seniors' Forum

*in \$ on Twp
the rule*

Alan Salter

From:
To:
Cc:

Sent:
Attach:
Subject:

Dear Enid,

Following our recent conversation on the Sutton OPIG/Sutton Seniors' Forum Bus Driver Behaviour Survey'. I have pleasure in attaching the results. We would be very pleased if you could have this published in Forum to Forum. We would also like to see if there is the possibility of other forums taking up this type of survey across the other London Boroughs. We will be willing to supply any information on this.

Thanks for your help.

Chris Pennington

Vice Chairman Sutton Seniors' Forum

Chris Pennington
Tele:

Mobil:
Email

No virus found in this incoming message.

Checked by AVG - www.avg.com

Version: 8.5.441 / Virus Database: 271.1.1/3111 - Release Date: 09/03/10 06:34:00

07/09/2010

BUS LOADING SURVEY

JULY 2009 – AUGUST 2010

RESULTS

Date Checked	No of Buses Checked	Time to Sit	
		Yes	No
28/07/2009	34	22	12
30/07/2009	21	14	07
18/08/2009	31	16	15
21/08/2009	30	18	12
01/07/2010	26	18	08
16/07/2010	17	09	08
11/08/2010	17	12	05
23/08/2010	02		02
23/08/2010	29	21	08
TOTAL	207	130	77

Wandsworth Older People's Forum

Registered Charity no 1096322

Chair: Tony Tuck

Hon Secretary: Liliias Gillies

WCEN, DRCA

Charlotte Despard Avenue,

London SW11 5HD

tel: 020 8672 5592

e-mail: wopforum@hotmail.com

mob: 07944 010245

RECEIVED

09 JUN 2010

SECRETARIAT

7th June 2010

Ian O'Sullivan
Assistant Scrutiny Manager
London Assembly
6th Floor, City Hall
Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Ian O'Sullivan,

Views to be submitted for 23rd June meeting.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure:

1. Too often the wheelchair ramp does not work.
2. Street 'furniture' extremely obstructive – particularly around Clapham Junction outside the station.
3. Clapham Junction itself – huge gaps and height differences between trains and platforms; lifts still not in place; rush hours positively dangerous for passengers going against flow of other travelers.

Undertaking journeys - role of TfL staff:

1. Regarding point 1 above, staff informing wheelchair users they'll "just have to wait for the next bus, love." Not helpful or sympathetic.

Sincerely,



Su Elliott, admin, WOPF
pp Liliias Gillies, Secretary and Facilitator.

4th Floor
103 Cranbrook Road
Ilford
Essex
IG1 4PU

Tel: 0208 220 6000

Fax: 0208 478 4767

Email: admin@acredbridge.co.uk

Scrutiny Team,
London Assembly,
6th Floor, City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2AA

RECEIVED
12 JUL 2010
SECRETARIAT

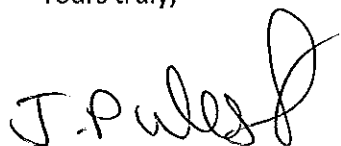
8th July 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find enclosed a written response to your investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network. The response was written by a member of Age Concern's Service User Panel, Voices of Experience.

I hope you will find her comments useful.

Yours truly,



Janet West (Co ordinator, Voices of Experience)

"Making more of life in Redbridge"

Planning journeys

The on-line facility is no help to many users who do not have computer access. My main aid has been a most helpful ring-bound guide "Getting around London". It is probably expensive to publish and distribute widely but I can only say that I have found having it to hand in the house whenever required a great help. As regards "assisted public transport" many travellers have mobility problems but do not meet the criteria for this service.

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL Staff

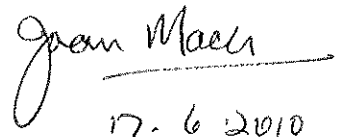
Bus drivers remain in their seats and are no help. They rarely draw close enough to the pavement to allow easy access – sometimes it is not their fault because other traffic is parked in their way. Station staff do answer queries but do not readily open barriers for those with mobility problems, who can get trapped in the barriers, and those with luggage. Staff should have practical training as to what it is like to be encumbered with luggage, buggies and children or just to have difficulty in moving.

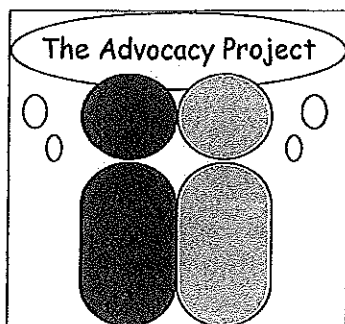
Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network.

Some of the recent upgrades on the Underground have made a most welcome improvement to getting around e.g. at Waterloo Station.

One major improvement required is at Leytonstone Station on the Central Line. This is a major interchange from Tube to bus for people, often very unwell or mobility impaired, to get to Whipps Cross Hospital. The steps at Leytonstone are steep and numerous but I have been told twice over the years that there are no plans to improve access from the ticket hall to the platforms.

THIS IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. Money was found to provide new difficult to build staff premises – why not lifts for passengers? `Escalators would only help a few people. Please can something be done about this problem. p


17.6.2010



The Advocacy Project
215 Buspace Studios
Conlan St
London
W10 5AP
2nd June 2010

Dear Sir or Madam,



We are writing to tell you about what it is like to use the bus if you have a learning disability.



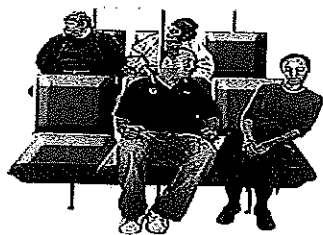
Bendy buses are always really packed. It's hard to get on and off them.



Some people are worried about travelling on crowded buses. Some people are worried about being pushed and pulled.



Bus drivers don't give you enough time to sit down before the bus moves.



Lots of people are worried about being bullied on the bus by other passengers.



No one likes being on the bus with school children. They are noisy: they talk loudly, play loud music and put their feet on the seats.



Bendy buses should be bigger so there are more spaces for wheelchairs .



Routemaster buses are not safe. You can fall off the open bit at the back of the bus.

Sylvia Aquarise
Yosief Senere
Robert Blomke
STEFAN MROZAK
Tracey

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Evidence to the London Assembly Transport Committee on the Investigation into the Accessibility of London's transport network

5 August 2010

- 1.1 Thank you for inviting the Council to contribute written evidence to the London Assembly's investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network. We welcome this investigation and look forward to some positive outcomes arising as a result of it.
- 1.2 In our response we have answered the questions sent to us by the London Assembly scrutiny team, as well as included additional comments that we believe are relevant to this investigation.
- 1.3 The Council hosts a Mobility Forum which meets four times a year. The Forum is made up of Council staff and representatives from a variety of disability groups in the Royal Borough, including some service users.
- 1.4 The evidence we are submitting has been brought to our attention by members of the Council's Mobility Forum and residents who have contacted the Council about issues that they have had accessing public transport.

Scrutiny questions

Planning journeys:

How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?

- 1.5 The TfL on-line journey planner is a useful tool for planning a basic journey. However, if a passenger wants more detailed information to plan a fully accessible trip, the journey planner does not provide all of the information they require. For example, the journey planner shows the stations that have step-free access however it does not show accessible bus stops. Therefore a passenger may be able to travel to a destination by Underground or National Rail but may not be able to complete the journey as the bus stop near the station is not accessible.

- 1.6 In the Council's response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) we supported the inclusion of travel-mentoring initiatives that assist mobility-impaired people to become accustomed to using the transport network. There is a travel-mentoring scheme operating in the Royal Borough which is funded through our Local Implementation Plan (LIP). Anecdotal evidence suggests that although people find the TfL transport assistance scheme useful, the scheme is very small and only available to a limited number of people.

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

- 1.7 We would like the TfL journey planner facility to show more information, such as which bus stops are fully accessible. The bus maps available on the TfL website should also show which stops are accessible along a bus route. The Council would also like to see more travel assistance staff available to mentor passengers.
- 1.8 The telephone number for the TfL Travel Information centre is an 0843 number. When this centre was first opened, the telephone number was an 020 number. 0843 numbers cost significantly more from most mobile phones than 020 numbers. Many people seek travel information when they are already on their journey and use their mobile phone to access this service. Many people with visual impairments are reliant on this service. We would like TfL to advertise an alternative 020 number for the Travel Information centre.

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff:

What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

- 1.9 Council officers have been told that London Underground staff are generally very helpful in assisting passengers, when they are available. However, passengers often feel that staff are difficult to find, particularly at quieter stations. A redistribution of LUL staff could help disabled people and those with buggies to use the system, as they rely on help getting on and off trains and up and down stairs. Although there are help points available, not all passengers know about these or where to find them. In addition, help points tend to be located on platforms and not in the ticket office area. With reducing numbers of ticket offices open, we suggest that LUL install a help-point or free phone connected directly to LUL staff, so that passengers with queries will be able to speak to a member of LUL staff and can be talked through using the machines available at the station.

- 1.10 However, this will not help those members of the public who are unable to use the ticket machines because they are physically incapable of doing so or having severe learning difficulties. We have also been told that even at stations with numerous staff members present, such as Earl's Court, the staff are not located on the platforms where mobility impaired passengers would most benefit from their assistance but are predominantly positioned by the gateline and in the ticket hall. We have been told by a resident with a visual impairment that they find the Underground system very difficult to use. This is because it is extremely difficult to read the destination boards on the platforms and on the front of the train. They also find it difficult to locate the exit at platform level when there is more than one tube line. This resident therefore largely does not use the Underground system unless she is travelling from one familiar station to another, with only one tube line involved. Providing LUL staff at platform level would assist passengers and encourage more use of the Underground.
- 1.11 We have been told that bus drivers are generally becoming more helpful in assisting passengers. We have received positive reports of drivers waiting until less mobile passengers are seated before moving off and using the relevant features on their buses to assist, such as 'dipping' the vehicle to minimise the gap between the kerb and the bus. However, there is room for improvement, particularly with drivers assisting wheelchair passengers. We have been liaising with a resident who is in a wheelchair. She has had continual problems in her local area as bus drivers often won't let her board if there are buggies in the wheelchair area. There seems to be some confusion amongst passengers regarding the rules of who gets priority in the wheelchair area on a bus, which sometimes results in wheelchair passengers being left at the stop to wait for the next bus. As buses have become more accessible in recent years, it is easier for less mobile passengers and parents with buggies to travel by bus. This has led to an increase in travel in both groups, particularly parents with buggies. In light of this, TfL should consider increasing the number of wheelchair spaces on buses to two.

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

- 1.12 We recommend that there should be a call button to summon staff to where they are needed, e.g. ticket hall, at the top and bottom of stairs, on platforms and on trains at LUL stations. The button on trains could be used to alert the driver that a disabled person either needs help (for example if in a wheelchair and the gap is too big) or is taking longer to get off, for example if they are on crutches.

- 1.13 We believe that there should be more publicity advising passengers about who has priority to use the wheelchair space on buses and drivers should receive more training about how to sensitively deal with any conflict that may arise between passengers with buggies and wheelchair users. Although the driver is supposed to tell parents to fold up their buggies to make room for a wheelchair, this can be difficult for a driver to do and sometimes they do not provide enough time for the buggy user to fold the buggy before asking them to leave the bus. More information on buses, either through iBus announcements or on board posters, could assist both the driver and the passengers by advertising the rules more clearly. We suggest that TfL add this issue to their "Being a considerate passenger" campaign on board buses.
- 1.14 In June 2010, the Mobility Forum received a presentation from First Bus about additional driver wheelchair training that they have been giving to their staff based at the Westbourne Park Garage. This training was arranged as First had received complaints from passengers about the way their drivers had been dealing with wheelchair passengers. First therefore decided to provide additional training and workshops for drivers. As part of this work, drivers were asked to board a bus in a wheelchair to understand more about the difficulties faced by wheelchair passengers. The Council was pleased to hear of this training and were encouraged that First took positive steps to combat a problem their drivers and passengers were facing. We suggest that TfL consider making additional disability awareness training part of the contract requirement for any routes tendered in future.
- 1.15 Bus companies should also set timetables so there is enough time in the schedule for drivers to offer assistance and wait until people are seated before driving off.
- 1.16 A member of the Council's Mobility Forum recently told us about a bus 'card' system which operates in Manchester. Visually impaired passengers who have difficulty seeing the number of the approaching bus simply hold out a card with the route number displayed and the driver will stop if required. This simple system could help many visually impaired passengers become more independent as they do not have to rely on other people to read the number or stop every bus that approaches the stop. Passengers are given a book of cards which contains each bus route available in their area. We suggest that TfL investigate this further as it appears to be a cheap and effective solution which could be rolled out across London. Having the bus number on the side of the bus at eye level rather than higher up, would also help visually impaired passengers at stops.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

- 1.17 The Council has heard that less mobile passengers find the new low-floor buses easier to use than older designs. They also appreciate the improved accessibility of bus stops in the Borough. However, we are often asked why there is not one common design in London, as passengers find some buses easier to use than others. For example, we have heard that less mobile passengers find the buses with the wheelchair/buggy space at the front of the bus very difficult to use as there are not many grab rails in the front area as they board the bus. They prefer the buses with the seats at the front, so they are able to sit down quickly before the bus moves off.
- 1.18 When routes are tendered, a new type of bus may start using the route. This means that sometimes, stops which were accessible are no longer accessible because the doors of the new bus are in different places. As a result, achieving accessible bus stops is a moving target for boroughs.
- 1.19 Wheelchair ramps have increased the accessibility of the bus fleet but only work when deployed onto a raised kerb height of at least 125mm. Single surface schemes, such as the Council's Exhibition Road scheme, by definition, do not have a raised kerb. The lack of a kerb makes it easier for wheelchair users to navigate the road space but make it impossible for these users to board or alight from a bus without specially raised platforms at bus stops. We recommend that TfL investigate redesigning the existing wheelchair ramps on buses so that they could be deployed directly onto the carriageway. This will become more important as single surface schemes become more prevalent.
- 1.20 Also for some buses, wheelchairs and buggies access the bus from the front and for others access is from the centre of the bus. It would be helpful to have consistency in this regard.
- 1.21 The Council is extremely disappointed that South Kensington and Ladbroke Grove stations have been dropped from LUL's step-free programme. It should also be a mandatory requirement that all new stations, or redeveloped stations, are step-free and it is a great pity that Shepherd's Bush station, which re-opened in 2008, does not have a lift.

- 1.22 The Council welcomes the introduction of on-board i-bus information and Countdown real-time passenger information at stops. This information is valued by those with visual and hearing difficulties. Bus companies should ensure that this system is in full working order before buses leave the garage. We look forward to i-bus information being available by text and over the internet early next year.
- 1.23 It is essential that when information is provided it is correct, so for example, when equipment is not working the default should be to show an error message or for the screen to be switched off as audio announcements alone will not help those who are deaf. This is a particular problem on the Underground network.

What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility to undertake their journeys?

- 1.24 The poor accessibility of the Underground network is a source of embarrassment for London and will be particularly noticeable when London hosts the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. We would like the Mayor to invest in some research to find cheaper ways to make the Underground more accessible than the several millions it costs at the moment.
- 1.25 Visually impaired passengers find it difficult knowing where they are when a bus turns short or breaks down mid-route. A button at every bus stop, which when pressed states the name of the stop, would help visually impaired passengers in these situations.
- 1.26 We would like TfL to decide upon a common design for a two-door bus for London and to consult boroughs and user groups before agreeing on a design. This will save boroughs having to re-visit bus stops which are made inaccessible due to a change in design of bus. We are not convinced that there is any need for a single door bus, as a single door simply increases boarding and alighting time, with no discernible benefit to passengers.
- 1.27 We would also like the Mayor to engage with disability groups, Boroughs and other stakeholders before putting the new 'bus for London' into operation. The Council has a programme each year to make bus stops fully accessible. We are extremely concerned that as we continue this work to make bus stops accessible for the existing dual or single door vehicles we will need to make further changes to accommodate the new three door bus for London.

Summary

- 1.28 TfL has made good progress towards a more accessible transport system but much more needs to be done. The lack of step free access on the Underground system, especially at highly used stations such as South Kensington is lamentable.
- 1.29 There is some tension between the needs of pushchair users and the needs of wheelchair users. In light of this, TfL should consider increasing the number of wheelchair spaces on buses to two. More information on buses, either through iBus announcements or on board posters, could assist both the driver and the passengers by advertising the rules more clearly. We suggest that TfL add this issue to their “Being a considerate passenger” campaign on board buses and make additional disability awareness training part of the contract requirement for any routes tendered in future.
- 1.30 We also recommend that there should be consistency in bus design – this would be beneficial to both passengers and local authorities, in terms of making bus stops accessible.
- 1.31 Whilst not specifically covered by the London Assembly’s questions, it should be noted that the cost of the transport system is a barrier to accessing it for many people in London.

Priorities for action

- 1.32 Our top priority for action is increasing step free access of the Underground system, and in particular South Kensington Station. However, we appreciate that given the budgetary constraints TfL are under, this is a medium to long term objective. In terms of quick wins, our recommended top three actions are:
- There should be a call button to summon staff to where they are needed, e.g. ticket hall, at the top and bottom of stairs, on platforms and on trains at LUL stations. The button on trains could be used to alert the driver that a disabled person either needs help or is taking longer to get off.
 - TfL should encourage bus companies to check that the on-board i-bus visual and audio information is in full working order before buses leave the garage. It is essential that when information is provided it is correct, so for example, when equipment is not working the default should be to show an error message or for the screen to be switched off as audio announcements alone will not help those who are deaf.
 - There should be more information on buses, either through iBus announcements or on board posters, to assist both the driver and the

passengers by advertising the rules regarding wheelchair use versus buggy use on buses. TfL should add this issue to their “Being a considerate passenger” campaign on board buses.

Other recommended actions for TfL:

- TfL journey planner should show more information, such as which bus stops are fully accessible.
- Bus maps available on the TfL website should show include which stops are accessible along a bus route.
- More travel assistance staff should be available to mentor passengers.
- TfL should advertise an alternative 020 number for the Travel Information centre.
- LUL should install a help-point or free phone connected directly to LUL staff, so that passengers with queries will be able to speak to a member of LUL staff and can be talked through using the machines available at the station.
- TfL should consider increasing the number of wheelchair spaces on buses to two.
- TfL should make additional disability awareness training part of the contract requirement for any routes tendered in future.
- Bus companies should also set timetables so there is enough time in the schedule for drivers to offer assistance and wait until people are seated before driving off.
- TfL should investigate bus cards for use by visually impaired passengers
- Having the bus number on the side of the bus at eye level rather than higher up, would also help visually impaired passengers at stops.
- TfL should investigate redesigning the existing wheelchair ramps on buses so that they could be deployed directly onto the carriageway rather than onto a raised kerb height of 120mm. This is important for access to single surface schemes, such as Exhibition Road.
- TfL should make step free access a mandatory requirement of all new stations or re-developed stations.
- TfL should conduct research to find cheaper ways to make the Underground more accessible.
- TfL should consider having a button at every bus stop, which when pressed states the name of the stop.
- TfL should agree a common design for a two-door bus for London and after consulting boroughs and user groups. This design should have the bus number on the side of the bus at eye level and also a common access point for wheelchair users and buggies.
- The Mayor of London should engage with disability groups, Boroughs and other stakeholders before putting the new ‘bus for London’ into operation.

Ends

Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea

Evidence for the Investigation into the Accessibility of London's transport network by the London Assembly Transport Committee

ADKC (Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea) is a local disability organisation aiming to enhance opportunities for people with physical, sensory and hidden disabilities living or working in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. This is achieved through providing services like information and Advice, running a number of user groups, raising awareness of disability issues and championing the rights of disabled people.

We composed this submission based on evidence gathered in a number of ways. We carried out a large scale consultation with ADKC members and key stakeholders to look at the experiences of disabled people across a number of key services including health, education and transport. This is summarised in our 'Inclusive Kensington & Chelsea' document. This has recently been updated and key findings have been included in our response below. We have a quarterly user group called the Disability Network that meets with a panel of key services providers to debate the issues. In July 2010 the meeting was on transport. We also have an Access Group of trained local disabled people with a range of impairments who conduct access assessments of buildings in the Borough upon request. The below information is gauged from all these sources.

To underpin everything we say below, we request that the Social Model of disability is made explicit reference to, as this is in line with current thinking around disability. The below is a summary of the Social Model that could be incorporated into the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the London Plan.

The traditional view of disability is that it's the disabled person who is the "problem". The Social Model of Disability states that society "disables" people by putting up barriers (such as limited physical access and limited access to information) which prevent disabled people from being fully included within society. By removing these barriers we ensure that everyone, disabled or non-disabled, can participate fully in society on equal terms.

Questions

Planning journeys

- **How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?**

While the online journey planner is useful for planning a basic journey, it does not provide adequate detailed information to plan a fully accessible trip. For example, it doesn't show which bus stops are accessible.

- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?**

The TfL Journey planner should contain information about accessible bus stops. The information should be available in a wide variety of accessible formats as the internet is still not available to all disabled people. Rather, there should also be a local number that passengers can call to receive information from to plan their journeys. This should be a 0207 or 0208 number and not an 0845 number which costs considerably more to access.

More resources should be channelled into developing the Borough wide Travel Mentoring Scheme as currently this is a small scale scheme and only available to a limited number of people. There have also been issues concerned that it was more geared towards elderly people. More awareness should be raised about this facility. TfL should issue guidelines to local Authorities about who could benefit from the Travel Mentoring Schemes.

The bus maps on the TfL website should show which bus stops are accessible along a route.

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- **What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?**

Overall, we have received positive feedback about staff awareness of disability and members report improved attitudes amongst London Underground staff.

However, there have been continuous reports about the lack of awareness on behalf of drivers of London Buses.

Frequently there are reports of drivers pulling away from bus stops before elderly people or people with mobility impairments can sit down. There is still confusion about who takes precedence on buses- whether folded or unfolded buggies have priority over wheelchairs. Signage should be introduced onto buses to clarify this. As buses have become more accessible both wheelchair users and parents with prams have increased their usage of buses. TfL should consider introducing 2 wheelchair spots aboard buses.

The introduction of the help points is positive but often passengers don't know that these are available or where these are located. These should be better advertised. There should also be a help point in the ticketing area and not just on platforms. At quieter stations there is sometimes a shortage of staff, when no staff are available there should be a help point or phone number linked to staff to support people by talking them through using machines.

We have heard of instances where bus drivers, drop off passengers with visual impairments at inaccessible points or simply do not stop when requested and are set down at wrong bus stops as a result making it very difficult to orientate themselves. This should be made explicit in training that setting down passengers at wrong bus stops creates more than just inconvenience it can cause real issues for people with mobility impairments and can disorientate passengers with visual impairments.

Often people with visual impairments struggle to see displays on platforms and inaccessible signage means that exits and directions to other tube lines are difficult to find. More staff should be deployed at platform level to assist passengers with additional support needs.

There are also instances of people with invisible disabilities not being offered seats for disabled people. Drivers should be trained to understand invisible disabilities and intervene if a situation arises where people refuse to give up their seats.

- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?**

ADKC sits on the Royal Borough's mobility forum. We recently heard about some 'very successful' driver training organised by First Bus aiming to improve the awareness of drivers around the experience of wheelchair users. It is encouraging that First Bus provided additional training to tackle an area that passengers had complained about. However, upon closer investigation, it was disclosed that disabled people were not involved in the design or delivery of the training, the facilitators preferring instead to have drivers push themselves around in wheelchairs. This goes against the idea of 'nothing about us without us'. We recommend that disabled people are involved at all stages of planning and delivering training. All training should be timely and appropriately 'user-led'.

We would also recommend that TfL consider making additional disability awareness a contract requirement for any new routes tendered.

At the Mobility Forum meeting another member shared their experience of a new system introduced in Manchester, where visually impaired passengers are given a book of bus route numbers with the idea being they hold up the number of the bus they wish to board when they see an oncoming bus but cannot see which number it is. This could help more visually impaired people become more independent as they are not reliant on other people to read the bus numbers, it also means they won't stop every bus that approaches.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- **To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?**

Members report that the introduction of low floor buses and ramps has made buses easier to use. There are still incidents reported to us about ramps not working and drivers driving past wheelchair users at bus stops, when challenged they say the ramp doesn't work. It should be made explicit in driver training and refresher training that buses with faulty ramps should not leave the garage.

Step-free access at tube stations is a key issue and is dealt with in more depth later on. It should be a mandatory requirement that all new stations or stations that are re-developed should be step-free.

There should be more uniformity in the design of bus stops as different types of buses stop at the same bus stop and some buses are more accessible than others.

There should also be uniformity in the way that new buses are designed.

At the recent Disability Network meeting on transport, a member raised the point that more hand rails on bus doors were a good design feature and should be incorporated onto all new buses. Members also report that having seats near the front of the bus as one boards are helpful as this ensures they can sit down quickly before the bus moves off.

Disabled people report that buses are easier to use since the introduction of ramps on buses. Ramps however, are only effective when resting on a kerb that is of a height of at least 125 mm. Single surface schemes, such as the one scheduled for Exhibition Road which by definition remove kerbs, mean that it will not be possible to use a ramp.

We are opposed to single surface schemes as we believe the lack of kerb also poses safety risks for people with visual impairments and long cane users who are trained to navigate streets using the kerb as a separation from the street. Guide dogs are also trained to navigate the streets using the kerb. Removing it may mean that disabled people may not use areas that are 'single surface'. This means that disabled people, who feel unsafe using Exhibition Road will not go there, excluding them from an area that contains a high concentration of world class cultural institutions and museums. In our response to the London Plan, we have requested that there be meaningful consultation with local disabled people through disability organisations to ensure a suitable delineator (between the road and street) is implemented, in the absence of a kerb. Further, there should be a commitment to waiting the results from the 'real world' trials currently being conducted by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea on what the best delineator could be.

ADKC is pleased with progress towards more accessible information for passengers. In particular, the iBus on board information in both visual and audio formats makes information available to both visually impaired and hearing impaired passengers. This should be in full working order before buses leave the garage.

- **What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?**

ADKC recognises that there have been positive steps towards making the transport system more effective and accessible for people with restricted mobility. There is however still a lot more to be done.

The tube system remains largely inaccessible to large numbers of disabled people, particularly those with mobility and sensory impairments. In our response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy and The London Plan we have

requested that plans to make tube stations step-free go ahead. In Kensington & Chelsea two tube stations were scheduled to be made step-free (South Kensington and Ladbroke Grove) The TfL Business plan now states that due to 'decreased revenue' this will not go ahead. We ask that this decision is reversed as the tube stations concerned are located in areas of cultural significance. South Kensington allows access to Exhibition Road- an area with a high concentration of world class museums. Not having an accessible tube station restricts access to this for many disabled people. Ladbroke Grove is in North Kensington, an area with much social housing where many disabled people reside. It also lends access to Portobello Road an area where cheap fresh produce is readily available and acts as a 'hub' for the local area. The lack of accessible tube station here similarly restricts access for disabled people. We feel that disabled people should not bear the brunt of falls in revenue. Further, a reversal in this decision shows a commitment to full inclusion of disabled people. Transport continues to be one of the most important factors in achieving independence and allowing access to goods and services within the local community.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games will highlight the inaccessibility of the tube system as disabled athletes will not be able to use it. This is a source of embarrassment and is not in line with the Mayor's vision of a 'world-class' city. We invite the Mayor to fund more research into improving the accessibility of the transport system using innovative and creative ways that perhaps will not cost as much as current costly schemes.

Within Kensington and Chelsea there should be increased connectivity between the North and South of the Borough. We have heard of instances where a local disabled person who lives near Portobello Road in North Kensington has to catch 3 buses (1 of which leaves the Borough) in order to come back in and access the Chelsea and Westminster hospital in the South of the Borough. This poor connectivity needs to be addressed as it also creates isolated communities in the North of the Borough as transport cannot reach these.

There should be greater efforts to meaningfully engage with disabled people and seek their views in a non-tokenistic way.

This could partly be achieved by greater engagement with community organisations and disability groups who are frequently in direct contact with local people. They often have established user-groups and are a source of knowledge, experience and information.

This would be particularly welcome before the introduction of the new 'bus for London' as engaging with local community groups would tap into knowledge of the most suitable type of bus. We urge TfL to opt for a two-door design and to consult with user-groups, Councils and other stakeholders before introducing this. A one door design is not effective as it increases time needed for passengers to board and alight.

Effective consultation would also reduce the amount of retrospective work in terms of changes to bus stops that Councils have to make.

Getting the design right as early as possible should be a priority, given that we have an ageing population who will increasingly rely on public transport to remain independent and access community services. It is vital this transport is accessible.

Priorities

- **There should be increased step-free access on the tube system. Plans to defer making South Kensington and Ladbroke Grove step-free should be reversed, to make them accessible for all.**
- **TfL should make step-free access a mandatory requirement for new stations that are built.**
- **All training should be appropriate and user-led. This means disabled people should be involved at all stages of designing and delivering training.**
- **TfL should make additional disability awareness training part of the contract requirement for BUS routes tendered out in the future.**
- **There should be more resources invested in greater availability of staff at tube stations. There should be a button that calls staff to where they are needed.**

These are in addition to the actions and recommendations highlighted above.

Kate Pieroudis
Policy & Training Officer
Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea

Ann Macfarlane, OBE
Consultant Disability Services
16 Calder Court, 7 Britannia Road,
Surbiton. Surrey KT5 8TS

Mr. David Cameron, MP,
Prime Minister's Office,
10 Downing Street,
London SW1A 2AA

6th August 2010

Dear Mr. Cameron,

I am a wheelchair user, who spent much of the first twenty-five years in hospitals and other institutions. I am now an older person who has worked hard in the field of health and social care and believe strongly in putting as much into life as possible. It includes undertaking paid employment as well as volunteering in the third sector. I also appreciate the need to be prudent and understand the importance of supporting family, friends and neighbours.

Having lived much of my life dependent on family, friends and neighbours, there comes a point where it just does not work, where it leads to a lack of dignity, self-esteem, self-worth and not having a voice, being able to make choices and take control. That is why current legislation that focuses on people having money for personal assistance instead of relying on health and social care services that do not meet need, has been such a liberating factor for me. This choice has enabled me to take and stay in paid employment which, in turn, has enabled me to use resources to support my volunteering activities.

So I am writing to share with you just one of the knock on effects that cuts produce. In the last few weeks platform staff at main line train stations have been reduced to the point whereby it is virtually impossible to get on a train. Three days ago I went to Surbiton Station and, as usual, there were no platform staff to assist with a ramp onto the train. A train came into the station, the guard alighted, looked around, got back on the train having seen my situation, and the train went without me. A second train came in and left without me. I pressed the 'Information' buzzer and was told that as I had not pre-booked it was difficult to supply any assistance. When I got onto the third train I met two other wheelchair users and they were upset because station personnel were rude and told them in future to pre-book.

Mr. David Cameron

- 2 -

6th August 2010

I finally arrived at Waterloo late for my appointment. It is not having an impairment that is the issue, it is the barriers that disabled people confront every day that reduces a person to believing they are worthless.

I am therefore writing to say that, while I understand that measures have to be taken to prevent or minimise waste, it is necessary not to cut staff and services where it leaves some people severely compromised and unable to fulfil their potential or, indeed, to carry out their day-to-day responsibilities. These are situations that cannot be sustained by family, friends or neighbours and this is just one example.

Yours faithfully,

Ann Macfarlane

cc: Edward Davey MP,
21 Berrylands Road,
Surbiton,
Surrey KT5 8QX

The Customer Relations Manager,
Customer Service Centre,
South West Trains,
Overline House,
Blechynden Terrace,
Southampton SO15 1GW

MINUTES - Haringey Women's Forum Annual General Meeting
All Day - 16th June 2010 - Bruce Castle

11am - Volunteering Week - Meeting of Haringey Women's Forum (HWF) volunteers

Attendees - HWF Befrienders [Dipa, Sara, Elaine], Haringey Disability First Consortium (HDFC) 'Enabling Haringey' volunteers [Beryl, Stella D, Simon], Stroke User Panel (SUP) members [Undaro, Tess, Hannah Arbeid, Tristan Brice], HDFC Mystery Shoppers [Caroline, Pamela, Kieran] and project coordinators Clare Taylor (HWF) and Mhairi McGhee (HDFC).

People's experiences volunteering for these projects were shared. Attendees were asked to contribute to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of HWFs volunteer places, recruitment and induction.

13.30pm – 'Out and About' Haringey Disability First Consortium (HDFC) meeting on transport

Attendees - Faridoon Madon (HDFC), Simon Atkinson (HDFC), Etta Khwaja, Undaro (Bill) Bailey (SUP), Lauritz Hansen Bay (Age Concern), Beryl Dyer (HDFC), Bernice Hardie (WAVE), Tess Lancashire (Different Strokes) Darren Williams, Kenza Hamilton-Bauleffaa, Stella Doritis, Vicki Keeping (Scope), Dipa (HWF) Sara (HWF), Elaine (HWF) Karen Stuart, Matilda Lewis (Mothers & Daughters Support Group), Stella Weston, Sarah Weekes, Sarah Dyer, Pauline Campbell, Pamela Richardson (HDFC), Sara Canullo, Salli Booth, Tracey Proudlock, Caroline Page, Mr & Mrs Patel, Toby Kent (Haringey Council), Kieran Hart (HDFC), Lolita Jones (HALL), Richmond Kessie (Haringey Council) Tan Radan (Haringey Council), Manuela Toporoswka (Age Concern), Alan Wheatley (Green Party, Disability and Social Care), Anna Bragga (Green Party), Mhairi McGhee (HDFC).

Transport – Good Examples

Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and give an example of a good experience of transport/ mobility/ access. These are the examples given.

- Some friendly bus drivers - many had built up relationship with their regular drivers
- Certain routes (hopper buses/ park-and-ride) convenient and frequent
- Dial-a-ride were good with regular bookings
- Crime on some bus routes had dropped
- Many were grateful for their freedom pass
- Freedom pass can travel 20 miles outside London
- Bars removed from the wheeled space on buses
- Pleased with the new single decker buses, easier to get onto
- Com-Cabs were very helpful and had a good service
- TfL provide a service for the registered blind to help them access the right tube station
- TfL Travel buddies good service for long journeys
- "No good experiences at all"

Greater London Authority Consultation – Accessible Transport

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is accepting submissions until September about the accessibility of London Transport; MM will use the minutes of this meeting into this submission. The GLA are holding a public meeting at **City Hall on the 23rd June at 10am**.

The GLA consultation is going on until September, and using the following headings; planning journeys, undertaking journeys (staff), undertaking journeys (infrastructure). Enabling Haringey used the same headings to prompt the discussion.

Planning Journeys

How useful the existing resources to help plan journeys?

What further steps should be taken to help people with restricted mobility plan their journey?

Some group members found the website helpful for the buses

1. It doesn't list which stations are accessible on the journey planner webpage
2. Over half the group don't use the internet
3. Most use a map at home or go into the station, personal knowledge or ask for directions
4. Frustration at costs of making phone calls
5. Confusion at inappropriate/ unsuitable automated phone systems – test the service on those that will use it!

Planning Journeys – Accessible transport - Dial-a-ride/ Taxi Card/ Capital call

- **A person is only allowed to have two advance bookings.** Limits attendance at meetings/ events/ leisure activities/ hospital appointments.
- **Can't specify times or get a guaranteed pick-up.** Pickup time was not always available, which can impact on the way a person plans/lives their life
- **Organising activities advance bookings difficult, therefore how can you plan?**
Manuela from the Forum for Older People explained that they were trying to organise regular activities for elderly/disabled people, but would not be able to attend if no transport was available, therefore the activities would be cut if people were not able to get to the venue.
- **Don't use you lose.** Group members informed others that if the service was not used often enough they would cancel your entitlement.
- **Complain you get removed from the lists.** A number of examples were given of people making complaints and getting blacklisted'
- **Only works in borough.** "How many people only travel on the W4 bus route?"

Undertaking Journeys (Role of Staff & Physical infrastructure)

How useful the existing resources?

What further steps should be taken to help people with restricted mobility plan their journey?

What's not working - overcrowding on buses, crime, servicing of ramps on the buses, more training for TfL drivers, managers, local depot in disability awareness, e.g. stopping abruptly, not waiting to make sure wheelchair users have their brakes on, assertiveness of transport users, knowing how to pursue complaints. Dial-A-Ride need training and complaints made.

Suggestions for improvements

- Complaints can come through the Enabling Haringey forum (3rd parties), so as to reduce the potential loss of service to already isolated/ vulnerable people
- Stop penalising drivers for late arrivals
- Training/ empathy for drivers, depot staff and managers
- Role-play in disability awareness.
- More CCTV/ conductors
- Parking by the kerb
- Let wheelchair users on the bus first for room to manoeuvre
- Stop ignoring passengers when trying to get on
- Alternative bus stops near the closed ones when any works are taking place
- Clear signs on the buses outlining how many buggies/ wheelchairs/ priority seating available on the bus to give the driver more control with awkward passengers
- Park correctly (even when another bus is there) so passengers don't have to risk walking into traffic or missing their bus.
- TfL review of bus stops to see if there disability friendly (height of timetables/ font size)
- Mayor to use Dial-A-Ride/ accessible transport for a week to review the service himself!

All these issues mean that people end up missing appointments, getting upset, giving up, becoming more isolated. People prefer to stay in "than get themselves in situations"

ACTIONS – Tracey mentioned that the TfL staff received disability training via Scope which she didn't think was up to scratch - Contact Scope about transport worker disability training. Contact local depot and managers about attending next meeting. MM to offer Mystery Shopper service to GLA/ TfL. HDFC Mystery Shopper Service - volunteers needed to pilot and develop the service. It is a way to review and rate services (a) to help improvements and reasonable adjustments and (b) and share the information with each other.

LBH - Market Development Team

Toby, Tan and Richmond from LBH are here to get opinions on transport and personalisation. Mhairi says it is important to ask for things even if they may seem impossible – once personalisation and direct payment become more widely available people will have the power to decide what companies exist. Toby from Haringey Council said the services provided are determined by demand, so if you're not happy let them know.

ACTIONS - LBH to distribute questionnaires. HDFC send copies of questionnaire with minutes.

Correspondence

Mhairi has sent a letter to North Middlesex Hospital on behalf of the forum, about the lack of disabled parking. They gave many reasons for this problem, but the person in charge of developing the site would like to meet with the group to talk about how to get special passes for regularly visits to the hospital and patient transport to the hospitals. **ACTIONS** – MM to invite North Middlesex to next meeting of 'Out and About'.

AOB

Tess Lancashire from Different Strokes explained that many of her group members had lost their freedom passes due to invisible disabilities, and asked about the criteria for qualifying for one.

ACTIONS - Contact Derma/ Tulay from HDFC's casework service (0208 889 6871) for support getting transport and other entitlements.

Tracey Proudlock had been commissioned to do some workshops on the London Accessible Housing Register, to make sure that London's housing stock is used appropriately for people with different needs. HDFC and Tracey will be jointly hosting the workshop on the 15th July.

ACTIONS – Notice to be sent out.

Alan said he was concerned about government policy taking people off of incapacity benefit, as how can people work if they can't get to work? Mhairi said that though we are in difficult economic times, we have to stand up as a community of people with additional needs for the services we are entitled to. If the government want disabled people to work, they have to provide the services to make it happen. If they want us to pay for our own services they need to provide services we are prepared to pay for. Caroline added that disabled people had already lost accessible adaptations to the tube service.

Mhairi thanked all for attending.

Date and venue of next meeting of 'Out and About' to be confirmed.

Date of next Enabling Haringey Meeting, 12th August 2010 (time and venue TBC)

IF YOU WOULD LIKE THESE MINUTES IN ANOTHER FORMAT PLEASE ASK

CALL MHAIRI ON 0208 885 4705 OR MICHELLE ON 0208 889 6871

RECEIVED

10 AUG 2010

Scrutiny Team

London Assembly

6th Floor, City Hall

The Queens Walk

London SE1 2AA

8/8/10

The accessibility of London's transport network

I wish to comment on one or two of the issues in the above investigation.

1. **Assistance provided by staff.** In this matter assistance is variable. On my local buses 394 and 236 the staff are excellent – extremely considerate and careful to see that I am seated before they move away. This is not the case in the West End and City when it is busy. I try to avoid these times but sometimes it is unavoidable. On such occasions I feel very insecure as I feel it is difficult for the driver to see me when I leave the bus at the exit point half way down the bus. I would like bus drivers to expect disabled people with sticks or crutches but not using a wheelchair to exit at the front of the bus.
2. Disabled does not mean just a wheelchair user who wants a ramp. A person with reduced mobility needs to be sure of a low step when they exit. Sometimes I have been stranded in the middle. The bus has parked far away from the kerb and I have to leap for it. Its very frightening.
3. The varying layouts of the different bus companies make it very difficult, but I doubt whether anything can be done about this.
4. Step free access is lovely but is not widespread on the tube. Its impossible to travel effectively without forward planning. The Journey Planner is good but sometimes I think they do not choose the best routes – and it is time consuming to use.

Yours sincerely



Annette Coombs (chair of the Regents Estate Pensioners Club)

To : Ian O'Sullivan
Assistant Scrutiny Manager

Investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network

Submission from the London Borough of Barnet Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

Planning journeys

- How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?

There was a general feeling that the journey planners were not helpful. Often the journeys suggested were longer than needed. Over half of our Members of Parliament of Barnet's Disability Parliament used some of the on-line support provided by the TfL website, but learning disabled MPs did not use the website at all.

Staff were not always found to be helpful – when people rang up for advice.

Providing journey planners at bustops would provide assistance.

- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

Some of things that the Mayor and TfL could do to make it easier for people with restricted mobility to plan their journeys could be:

1. Better signposting of accessible underground and overground stations.
2. Send out messages that London's transport network is for everyone to use and that it is a 'public' transport system.
3. Show examples of different types of people with restricted mobility planning and using London's transport network.

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

- What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

This is too inconsistent. Many disabled people do not feel confident about using public transport because they are not sure of the attitude of the staff.

For instance, many people with restricted mobility do not use the underground because they are not confident about using the escalators and sometimes the lifts are out of action.

Some people who travel with people with restricted mobility find that tube and overground train drivers do not wait for them to alight trains because they need more time to get onto the train and then to find seats. Sometimes people do find themselves falling over and hurting themselves.

It is difficult to ask station staff at barriers for advice because they are so busy trying to respond to able-bodied passengers with queries on their Oyster cards that you don't feel able to ask for help.

Too many underground station staff seem to just chat to each other and ignore passengers.

Sometimes bus drivers do not wait for people with restricted mobility to take their seats before they move off. In many cases people have stumbled and are physically hurt but also their sense of pride is wounded. This means that they do not want to use public transport.

One of our MPs for our Disability Parliament could not tap out his Oyster Card because of an evacuation at a station. The staff misled them by suggesting that the money would be refunded quickly but in fact it took much longer to be reimbursed.

There is still a fear amongst people for their personal safety and a lack of confidence that TfL staff would be willing or able to intervene or support people appropriately.

- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Staff need to understand what it feels like to use London's transport network as a vulnerable passenger or as somebody responsible for accompanying vulnerable passengers, then they would be more sympathetic and respectful.

Barnet also considered their experiences of using the Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard service. The Self-Advocacy Group were generally happy with the service believing it to be reliable.

However, concerns were raised that sometimes there were misunderstandings with the driver – for instance when a driver is late for a rendezvous sometimes the passenger has moved away from the agreed waiting place. Then the passenger often has to pay an additional amount of money for the taxi's waiting time even they had been waiting on time.

Often it was not possible to express a preference to use a local taxi rather than a Black cab which has higher fares. It would be helpful to have this information made more transparent.

GLH cab company were also felt to be unreliable transport source.

There was general unhappiness expressed about the drivers who provided a service through the Taxicard scheme.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

- To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

Generally there was acknowledgement that improvements had been made but people still felt that some of the progress was hampered by the staff – e.g bus drivers who didn't lower

platforms for people with access needs; failing to wait for wheelchair users to strap themselves safely in vehicles before the vehicles moved on.

- What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

Introduction of seat belts on buses for passengers to have the option to wear them – this is important for when the bus jolts.

Areas on tubes set aside for wheelchair users.

Replace the dot-matrix signs with higher resolution signs to improve visibility of information.

If you would like further information on these views please contact **Richard Harris** (Co-Chair of Barnet Learning Disability Partnership Board info@barnetpc.co.uk) or **Julie Pal** (Julie.pal@barnet.gov.uk).

Process

You may be interested to know that Barnet underwent a rigorous process to collect opinions from our learning disabled community.

Initially – your paper was presented to Barnet’s Learning Disability Partnership Board by the chair of the ‘People as Citizens’ subgroup to seek the board’s agreement to submit a formal response.

Responses to the questions are from: Barnet’s Disability Parliament MPs; our Speaking Up subgroup as well as the wider membership of both the Partnership Board and the Executive.

This work supports the work Barnet has been undertaking to promote disability equality following the consultation on our 2006/7 Disability Equality Scheme when our disabled residents identified transport as the improvement priority to enhance their quality of life and promote disability equality.

We recognised this was an improvement Barnet Council had to undertake with our transport partners.

Promoting disability equality

1. Barnet Council has adopted the social model of disability. It is committed to the 2025 vision that disabled people will have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society.
2. In 2006/7, disabled residents believed the council could do more to protect the rights of disabled people. They believe the top five services/issues to promote disability equality are: Transport (77%), crime and safety issues 58%), issues affecting

3. In 2007, Barnet Learning Disability Partnership Board developed an accessible third party hate crime reporting system initially for people with learning difficulties to report hate crime – and to increase their confidence of moving around a large borough.
4. In December 2008 a transport seminar was organised for December 2008 through a sub-group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board with Transport for London (TfL) and local partners including members of Barnet's disabled communities. The seminar aimed to influence public transport policy, increase disabled people's awareness of public transport options, and increase disabled people's confidence to make greater uses of public transport.
5. Almost 80 people attended from a range of care groups including learning disabilities, mental health, physical and sensory impairment as well as older adults. One of the comments fed back to TfL was that bus drivers regularly turned off the 'talking bus' thereby discriminating against people with visual impairments, learning difficulties or those unfamiliar with the bus stop locations. TfL committed to halting this bad practice. Following on from this seminar many of our disabled residents commented on the improvement of the 'talking bus' service.
6. In March 2009, as part of our compliance to promote race, disability and gender equality our single Equality Scheme challenged the organisation to test the impact of corporate priorities on Barnet's diverse communities. Aligned to the corporate priorities, the targets were identified by service performance lead officers who hypothesised that a target could have a differential impact on different communities. Analysis and segmentation of the data reveal an interesting picture which could be seen to be counter-intuitive to current social policy thinking. For example, the Council's priority to 'reduce the percentage of people feeling unsafe or fairly unsafe when it is getting dark' revealed that 42% of women and 44% of residents over 60 feel more unsafe compared to men (26%) and under 60s (31%), but there was no significant difference for disabled communities. Whilst this analysis would initially appear reassuring it raised further questions about disabled communities and their participation in wider society.
7. We are exploring this as part of our commitments towards delivering 'Valuing People Now' and increasing social capital. We will be commissioning a series of travel training sessions to be delivered by a local third sector organisation which will aim to increase the confidence of learning disabled people to use public transport at different times of the day. Direction of travel will be measured through baseline perception assessment which will be repeated in 12 months time.
8. Barnet is geographically one of the largest boroughs in London. Being able to travel around the borough with confidence and ease is a high priority for everyone. The council recognises this and in its role as a community leader is keen to reduce CO2 levels in the borough, free up road congestion on major highways and encourage different groups of people to consider using public transport rather than relying on personal motor vehicles or assisted travel where possible to carry out their daily lives.

9. Barnet's Local Area Agreement (LAA) called 'Promoting Success, Tackling Disadvantage' has identified 35 local priorities which the council with its partners believe will support Barnet's continuing aspiration to be a successful city suburb. These priorities are measured using a basket of national indicators with locally determined improvement targets. One of these is to enhance the employment opportunities for disabled people. Disabled people have told the council that if they were more confident about using public transport they could consider opportunities for paid employment which would improve their quality of life.^[1] We believe that being able to travel independently with confidence will better enable disabled people to make a commitment to accept paid employment opportunities. We believe that supporting disabled people in this practical way enables people to confront individual disadvantage and enhance their future life chances.
10. As part of this continued commitment we have developed a 'Going Places' project which supports learning disabled people who are independent travellers to become 'Volunteer Travel Assistants'. This is an exciting prototyping project that uses the travel training skills of people with learning disabilities to support their peers to travel to activities of their choice using public transport. The project is funded through Barnet Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and supported by Barnet Council's Community Support Team and Barnet Mencap.
11. The project was launched at an open evening where potential volunteers were invited. The event was well attended with a lot of enthusiasm for the project.
12. We have since recruited a number of people with learning disabilities with excellent travel training and social skills to attend the 'Going Places' training programme. Training has been provided by a number of local experts including speech and language therapists, Community Transport Police and Barnet Mencap. Training has covered a range of topics including effective communication and body language, keeping yourself and others safe in the community whilst using public transport and safeguarding. Future training will include First Aid, Makaton and managing epilepsy.
13. The next stage of the programme will be to launch the service and invite referrals. We are currently exploring additional funding avenues to extend the service.



How accessible is public transport in London?

September 2010

About The National Federation of Occupational Pensioners

1. The National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (N.F.O.P), formerly UNITE, the National Federation of Royal Mail and BT Pensioners, is the oldest and largest occupational pensioners' organisation in the UK, with over 88,000 members nationwide organised into 185 Branches.
2. We campaign on behalf of our members and older people more generally, on issues such as improving pensions, health services and social exclusion.
3. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the question: How accessible is public transport in London?

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4.

Introduction

5. N.F.O.P recognises that great strides have been made in improving access to public transport in London. The provision of level access on Victoria underground stations, and much improved information for disabled people using London Underground are good examples. Kneeling busses on many routes are welcomed. However more needs to be done.
6. N.F.O.P asked a broad spectrum of its London members about their experiences when travelling on public transport in their local areas of the city, as well as further afield. Our members in London are a good representative group when considering the needs of people with reduced mobility, or with disabilities such as deafness or loss of sight.
7. This response outlines the points that were made to N.F.O.P by our London members. There is degree of consensus between the respondents on what they saw as the biggest issues that confront them on a day to day basis.
8. The response also contains suggestions from members to ease problems that they encounter on a regular basis.
9. We hope that this response will be taken into account when planning any developments for public transport in London.

10.

Public transport concerns

11. Lack of space aboard buses

Many members expressed concern around the level of space on a bus, particularly when the presence of prams and pushchairs are taken into account. It was felt that on many occasions, the lack of room on a vehicle could make boarding and alighting quite hazardous. Several members reported that they had been involved or witnessed accidents on buses due to this issue, and many admitted that they are often concerned while travelling on the bus that they will not be able to alight at their stop due to lack of room to manoeuvre themselves off the vehicle.

12. Buses stopping too far away from the kerb

The majority of members who responded said that they often struggle with boarding and alighting from a bus when the driver stops too far away from the kerb. This problem is exacerbated when the floor of the vehicle is unable to be lowered, meaning that there is a large step up and down for the passenger. This is a real issue for disabled passengers or those with limited mobility, such as using sticks for support them when travelling around.

13. Lack of Sunday service on certain routes

The non-running on Sundays on some bus routes can often maroon individuals in their homes. Many of our more elderly members rely on the buses to enable them to go to church or spend time with their families at the weekend. The lack of a Sunday service often means that they are totally reliant on others on that day to take them where they need to travel.

14. Train platforms only accessible by stairs

Although this is becoming less common as a result of work being done, some members commented that their local train stations were only accessible by travelling down and up stairs. Obviously this is impossible for those in a wheelchair and is often extremely difficult for elderly people who rely on walking sticks or other mobility equipment. Most seemed unaware of the assisted passenger schemes.

15. “Meaningless” timetables

Many members commented that most of the bus timetables are virtually “meaningless”. This means that they never know when a bus is due, and often if they judge when to leave home to catch the bus by what the timetable says, they can be waiting a very long time. Although some buses have electronic displays which say when buses are due, not all are working or present at stops.

16. Passenger behaviour

Issues were raised around the behaviour of other passengers on public transport – particularly schoolchildren. Members often feel intimidated by groups of children who show little respect for other travelers. They will not always allow others to sit down or move on and off the bus. Some members pointed out that they appreciate the drivers’ attempts to resolve the situation, but that sometimes they are powerless.

17. Ramps

Members pointed out that although ramps to access train stations and platforms are very useful, often they are misappropriated by other transport users, such as cyclists, who do not allow for other users to move along the ramp.

18. Size of ticket halls and barriers

Some members commented on the proximity of disabled ticket barriers to the ticket office in certain stations. This means that if there is a queue for the ticket office then disabled individuals have to ask passengers to move to be able to access the barrier.

19. Trains too far away from platform

Members were very concerned about boarding trains when there was a significant gap between the train and the platform. This is particularly difficult for those who use walking sticks or crutches. One member said that he finds the experience of boarding and alighting a train “very disconcerting and nerve-wracking”, particularly when trains are busy and many passengers are rushing and there is a very limited window of opportunity for an individual to board or leave the carriage.

20. Misappropriation of disabled/elderly seats

Often seats are not clearly enough marked as for disabled or elderly people, and even when they are then passengers are often sitting in the reserved seats when they do not meet the specified criteria.

Suggestions for development

1. Spend money on station works to use ramps to allow non-stair access to platforms where possible.
2. Use different colours for the seats designated for the use of the disabled/priority on ALL Transport.
3. Raise pavements at bus stops so that you do not have such a step up.
4. Train drivers stop closer to the kerb at bus stops
5. Wider ticket barriers and bigger entrance halls where necessary at stations.

Hammersmith and Fulham Disability Forum response to London Assembly Investigation on public transport and disabled people

1. Planning journeys:

How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys like TfL's online journey planner, its telephone lines and its transport assistance scheme?

On line journey planner

- As a deaf person I use Journey Planner and it is a great help. Information about tube weekend closures and stepfree access on the website and ceefax on TV is very useful. I do not telephone TfL or use the transport assistance scheme.
- It is not that useful if you can only travel by bus.
- Journey planner information needs to be kept up to date
- The TfL website does not allow the user to change colour causing problems for people with dyslexia, visual impairments and neuro-diverse spectrum.

TfL telephone lines

- The phone service is very efficient
- Recorded messages and options buttons on advice or information lines are not accessible to older people with a hearing loss
- Dial a Ride can be difficult to get through by telephone
- Dial a Ride – Some sound recorded messages are too fast which disabled people find difficult to follow and understand
- You can use Dial a Ride if you call at the right time
- Dial a Ride drivers should ring a few minutes before pick up to inform they're coming so people know they're definitely coming even if they are delayed
- Not all disabled people are able to access online resources

Transport assistance services

- The Transport Assistance scheme is very good
- The buddy scheme works well
- Availability of staff able to recognise when someone is in difficulty at tube stations and bus stations works well
- Blind people benefit from trained staff when navigating transport interchanges
- Comcab are mostly very good

What further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan journeys?

Journey planner

Members are under the impression that

- Real time information about buses on diversion is not available on the journey planner
- There is no option on journey planner for planning a journey only using buses. Not everyone can use the tube.

In fact if you know where to look by scrolling down the page there are different options and real time information for buses on diversion. We suggest that the London Assembly asks TfL to include the possibility of refining options at the top of the Journey planner page to prevent this happening.

Telephone lines

- Ensure there is an operator on advice or information lines to support older people with a hearing loss plan journeys or have queries and not just have recorded information or buttons for options.
- Ensure that message is spoken clearly and slowly so people can hear numbers and information

Transport assistance: see comments on staff support below

Other information for planning journeys

- Make it easier to find out about tube maps with step-free access: useful to know where lifts are
- Make it easier to ask for maps in a different colour or format on request
- Availability of lifts at all stations especially main line stations

2. Undertaking journeys – staff support:

What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

- Variable support
- All staff need to speak clearly: some are very good
- Occasionally, there is audible and visual information on buses and tube about delays and diversions that is much appreciated. Needs to be more widespread.

Bus drivers

- Bus drivers are often reluctant to put down the ramp and can be careless when braking
- Drivers should check ramps work and should not leave the depot unless their ramps are working
- Drivers do not come into the kerb every time; members report this happens frequently
- Drivers braking suddenly are a problem
- Some bus drivers understand the need to wait for older people to sit down before leaving bus stops
- Many drivers do not wait for older people to sit down which prevents older people from travelling on buses
- Many disabled people are unsteady on their feet, eg with a stick; it is important driver waits so they sit down first before driving off
- Not every driver lowers the bus on request
- Disabled people often cannot sit as disabled seats are taken by able bodied people who do not give them up

Tube staff

- As a deaf person whenever I have asked for help because I do not hear audible information on platforms, staff have always been helpful
- Staff at tube stations are very helpful when they ring ahead to another tube station to arrange for a blind person to be met or help them navigate the station to another line or the exit etc

What further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

- Better training for staff
- Ensure bus drivers to pull in close to the kerb every time not some of the time
- Always use real time information at all buses, stations and bus stops.
- iBus should always be loud enough and for tubes to never turn off announcements
- Work with boroughs to ensure cars are not parked at bus stops
- More support staff available to help people transfer between tube lines
- Ensure staff training on respect and dignity
- Ensure staff support people with poor balance or who are frail as part of their job
- Report back on annual surveys and questionnaires with feedback from the community
- To have some copies of maps for the tube and buses with different colour background
- Address hostile or unhelpful attitude by some transport staff towards people with hidden disabilities they cannot see

3. Undertaking journeys – physical accessibility:

To what extent have recent measures to improve the accessibility of the transport system (like the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations) met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

- There has been progress but not as much as we would like
- As a deaf person, I really appreciate visual information systems. Not all station platforms or all buses have them. It has transformed my life to know when the next train, station or bus stop is coming. As far as I know every station and bus has audible information.

buses

- TfL investment in the bus fleet has transformed my experience of local journeys, key bus routes are more frequent e.g. 94 and 220 and I drive far less. I only use the tube to travel from Hammersmith to central London but once there I walk, take a bus or use the tube.
- Accessible bus stops are great, both to make it easier to get on and off the bus as well as seats with arms and when they have accessible shelters.
- We noticed improvements to height of kerbs at Hammersmith bus station. If drivers pulled into the kerb every time we could get on and off more quickly.

tube

- Stepfree access where it is available is great. I have developed a phobia about escalators that means I am always looking for stepfree access that avoids escalators! Many people with buggies or luggage also use lifts.
- Handrails on buses and tube trains for getting on and off are absolutely essential and much appreciated.
- The new wide gates at tube stations are great: we need more of them.
- Some autistic people find bright lights, high pitched sound, bright and intricate / patterned seats uncomfortable.

London Overground

- Not all stations or trains have audible information, eg Kensington Olympia

What further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility undertake their journey?

Buses

- Audible information at all bus stops
- Consistent real time information about arrivals, diversions, disruptions and delays etc. at every bus, underground and overground train, station and bus stop
- Modify buses so it is not possible to brake too suddenly or go round a roundabout too fast so we fall over
- More wheelchair spaces
- more frequent buses
- Kerbs and height of buses needs to be looked at – difficult to get on and off easily every time
- 100% accessible bus stops by 2015 (the current target is 75% by 2017 which is too long to wait when every bus is already 100% wheelchair accessible)

Tube

- step free access at more tube stations; the current target of 28% by 2018 is not ambitious enough)
- have an automatic pull out step from the tube train to the platform to close the gap between door and platform
- more wide aisles

4. *Any further questions or issues you feel the Commission should address?*

- An audit of all kerbs and dropped kerbs to ensure they are constructed and maintained to national standards so it is easier to walk to the bus stop or tube station
- Members would like the Commission to investigate including large buggies and wheelchairs on public transport. Members resent being told that large wheelchairs or motorised scooters are not allowed when they see double buggies allowed.

We all value our freedom passes: without them we would be priced off public transport.

23 September 2010

RECEIVED 27 SEP 2010



ASSOCIATION of TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Valerie Shawcroft AM
 Chair of Transport Committee
 London Assembly
 City Hall
 The Queens Walk
 London
 SE1 2AA

21st September 2010

Dear Valerie,

Transport Committee Meeting on 9 September 2010

Thank you for your letter of 16th September and the points raised therein. You raise a number of points that arose from discussions at Committee and I address these below, together with some additional information which members may find useful.

- Audits of station signage and facilities.

At committee I mentioned the work that has been undertaken within the Stations Made Easy project. This included an access audit of all stations on the heavy rail network together with a subsequent access report for the relevant Train Operating Company/Stations Facilities Operator. These audits were undertaken in 2009 and TOCs supplied with relevant reports and documentation. In addition TOCs have made budget provision for additional station audits when changes occur to stations and these are appraised from an accessibility point of view.

As part of their franchise agreements all TOCs have an annual minor works budget of approximately £250K. This is used for continuous minor changes and upgrading such as better signage. In additions TOCs have made good use of the Department for Transport's Small Schemes Fund, part of the Railways for All programme. This programme is aimed at smaller projects and provides match funding for minor works up to a ceiling of £500K. Consequently TOCs are able to utilise either their own minor works programme budgets or draw upon external match funding when considering station improvements.

- Clapham Junction.

Our understanding is that work on installing lifts and improved access at Clapham Junction is well on the way to completion. I will leave Gary Tordoff to give full details as the work is being undertaken by Network Rail under the



ASSOCIATION of TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

Railways for All Programme.

Stepping distances are problematic but are outside the scope of the current Railways for All programme. As I mentioned we get round this by ramp deployment which is used by a range of passengers including wheelchair users, partially sighted passengers and older people.

- Bromley South.

This station was included in the list of stations where improvements will be delivered under Railways for All. My understanding is that work is now scheduled to be completed in spring 2012. However the detail of the work is better addressed by Gary Tordoff at Network Rail as Programme Manager.

- Passenger Assistance

During our discussions about Clapham Junction you commented that it would be unrealistic to expect visitors from overseas to book assistance when using the rail network. I should stress that whilst we recommend assistance is booked in advance of a passenger's journey we do, nonetheless, provide assistance to passengers who 'turn up and go'. We give priority to passengers who have booked in advance and provide other assistance as we can based upon demands on staff time. Last year about 1.2M journeys on the network involved booked assistance in advance with a further 800K journeys being supported on a 'turn up and go' basis.

We are in close discussions with the Olympic Delivery Authority regarding how assistance can be improved during the Olympic and Paralympics Games and are confident that appropriate arrangements will be made to meet the additional demands that may arise during the Olympic period.

I trust that the above points adequately address the queries you have raised and that you will not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David M Sindall', with a horizontal line underneath.

David M Sindall
Head of Disability & Inclusion
0207 841 8104

Consultation Response

Investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network (London Assembly) 17 June 2010

About us

We're RNID, the charity working to create a world where deafness or hearing loss do not limit or determine opportunity and where people value their hearing. We work to ensure that people who are deaf or hard of hearing have the same rights and opportunities to lead a full and enriching life. We strive to break down stigma and create acceptance of deafness and hearing loss. We aim to promote hearing health, prevent hearing loss and cure deafness.

Our response will focus on key issues that relate to people with hearing loss. Throughout this response we use the term 'people with hearing loss' to refer to people who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. RNID is happy for the details of this response to be made public.

Comments

RNID welcomes the opportunity to provide information to the London Assembly on their investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network.

One general point RNID would like to make is in relation to the use of the term person with reduced mobility (PRM). We believe it focuses attention only on people with reduced mobility, rather than encompassing the wide range of disabilities and problems faced by travellers. We would therefore encourage the London Assembly to refer to 'disabled people and people with reduced mobility' in order to ensure that all accessibility issues are considered.

Planning journeys

1. How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys such as TfL's on-line journey planner, its telephone helplines and its transport assistance scheme which provides one-to-one mentoring?

We welcome the variety of options available to access travel information for people with hearing loss in London. The online journey planner provides an excellent breadth of information that is accessible to people with hearing loss who have access to the internet. TfL also provides a telephone, textphone number and email address. However, the automated telephone system is often inappropriate for people with a hearing loss. For example, people with a hearing loss may need information to be repeated and they cannot request this on an automated system. If the call is made through Text Relay¹, it can be difficult for the operator to relay all of the information given for the options. Therefore we would urge transport providers to ensure that a variety of contact options continue to be provided so that people with hearing loss can find out information in a way that is most suitable for them.

2. What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan their journeys?

Some people with hearing loss may prefer to get information in person and whilst we recognise that staff are available in many locations throughout London, we do want to reiterate the need for staff to be deaf and disability aware. This includes simple communication methods such as looking at the person whilst speaking so that they can lipread you, speaking clearly and not too fast, and using a pen and paper when necessary. More communication tips are available from our website www.rnid.org.uk

Undertaking journeys – the role of TfL staff

3. What do you think of the assistance provided by staff on the public transport network such as bus drivers and London Underground staff to those with restricted mobility?

RNID believes that staff training should be a priority. As discussed above, all frontline staff should be aware of how to communicate with people who are deaf. Whilst some disabilities are immediately obvious, it is often not easily recognisable that someone has a

¹ Text Relay is the UK's text to voice relay service

hearing loss. It is, therefore, important that all initial training covers deaf awareness, including communication methods, emergency evacuation procedures and the use of technology such as induction loops and Text Relay. It is important that those involved in the design, planning and management are also trained to consider the needs of people who are deaf and hard of hearing and they are involved in their planning and reviewing processes.

4. What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility to undertake their journeys?

RNID believes that TfL needs to ensure that staff are carrying through their training into their work – for example, through mystery shopping exercises with people who are deaf and/or disabled.

The training systems should also be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that any new technology or equipment installed (such as induction loops) is included in the training.

Undertaking journeys – physical infrastructure of the transport network

5. To what extent have recent measures to enhance the physical accessibility of the transport system – such as the introduction of accessible bus stops, ramps on buses and step-free access at some London Underground and Overground rail stations – met the needs of people with restricted mobility?

Visual information screens are now available in many locations across the London transport network. This has improved access for people with hearing loss. Previous to this, information was often only available through audible announcements. However, we would urge TfL to further increase the coverage of visual information screens throughout **all** stations and vehicles, and to ensure that the information supplied is accurate and up to date.

The visual displays need to provide the same information as audible announcements – for example, next stops, final destination, change of platform and delays. Emergency information in particular also needs to be displayed as this is vital to people who cannot hear the audible announcements. We would also urge TfL to ensure that plans are in place for providing visual information in emergency situations or during disruption if visual screens are not available or not working.

The ibus system is an excellent innovation, with every bus in London now having visual displays and announcements on board stating the bus number and final and next destination. This makes a huge difference to people who are deaf, helping to make their journey easier and less stressful. As these quotes demonstrate, audio visual (AV) displays improve access to information and decrease the stress for people with hearing loss:

"On a recent trip to Hamburg, I went with my friend on several of the buses in that city and was surprised and delighted to see an AV display on every bus. It informed us of the whereabouts of the next stop throughout the ride and removed all sense of anxiety."

"When I have travelled on buses overseas, I have been impressed by AV screens that show the name of the next bus stop. This is probably helpful for people with normal hearing, too. Bus drivers don't always remember to tell you when you reach your stop, so AV displays give you some independence and reassurance."

We also welcome the plans to implement the Countdown 2 project, which will expand real time information. However, problems still exist, with a lack of visual information, for example, when a bus breaks down. Staff need to be aware that not all passengers will be able to hear the audible announcement by the driver.

6. What, if any, further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately supports people with restricted mobility to undertake their journeys?

We believe that public address systems need to be improved. Often, people with no hearing loss even struggle to understand these announcements. All announcers should be trained and evaluated before being allowed to make public announcements to ensure clarity of speech and that background noise is controlled and minimised wherever possible. Clarity of announcements is vital in emergency situations and during disruptions.

Induction loops should also be installed in key locations such as information desks, ticket offices, help points and in key locations where public announcements are made. Induction loops help people

with hearing loss to hear sounds more clearly by reducing the effect of background noise. Loops need to be installed in the correct locations, signposted, maintained and regularly tested, and staff trained in their use.

Help points (for example, those in the London Underground) are inaccessible to people who are profoundly deaf. They generally have loop systems installed for hearing aid wearers but there is no other option for communicating. Therefore, people with no hearing and/or no speech, are unable to access these help points. We would therefore encourage TfL to develop help points that are accessible to people who are profoundly deaf.

Finally, it is important for TfL to consider the acoustic environment of the London transport system. For example, when stations are refurbished or new areas are constructed, it is important to include acoustic treatments to reduce reverberation.

Conclusion

Whilst big improvements have been made in making the London transport system accessible to people with hearing loss, some issues affecting the accessibility of London's transport network for people who are deaf or hard of hearing still need to be resolved. This includes the provision of real time visual information screens, induction loops installed (working and signposted) and staff who are deaf aware.

Finally, we would like to highlight that where new developments are planned, the needs of people who are deaf must be taken into account. This includes the development of international rail travel and travel by the waterways, refurbishment of tube lines and stations. We hope that these developments will have accessibility issues considered from the beginning.

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