

**Response on GLA Transport  
Committee  
23/06/2010**

**Subject: Accessibility on the Transport Network**

Miss Anne Newton

July 2010

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## Background Information

- a. To examine the extent to which current measures designed to improve the accessibility of TfL's services meet the needs of those with reduced mobility;
- b. To assess the scale of the challenge in making the transport system accessible for the projected increasing numbers of people with reduced mobility; and
- c. In light of the findings, make recommendations to the Mayor and TfL for further steps to take to improve transport services for people with reduced mobility and meet the challenge of increased demand.

## Introduction

With 2 years on the 27<sup>th</sup> July the London being the host of the Olympics and the increase of people with Disabilities wanting an independent life I feel that some parts of the Transport Network are not accessible to people with reduced mobility. I draw upon the webcam commentary of various groups that attended the Transport Committee meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010 and my own experiences and other events I have witnessed whilst travelling on Public Transport across London and the UK.

## 1 London Buses

### 1.1 Locations of Bus Stops

As a person who suffers from Dyspraxia and a Mobility Impaired person. Some times the bus stops are placed a distance from underground stations. Example Victoria Station the Victoria Street entrance a not step free and the bus stop is always crowded and the pavement is narrow. The location of the Big Bus Tourist bus is right outside the station entrance. On a couple of occasions when travelling from the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre to Victoria. I have had to ask other passengers to help me through the crowds and help me to the station entrance and sometimes to the gate line. Would there not be a possibility of relocating the bus stop nearer to the Tube entrance and moving the souvenir stand and Big Bus Stand to where the bus stop is. Because of the difficulty on this route I have now changed my route back to Moorgate

Plus they have moved the number 11 bus stop in Victoria Bus Station the location of where the bus stop has been relocated is not clear the underground staffs are constantly being asked where the stop has been relocated to. The 11 stop used to be in an ideal spot but apparently there as been an increase of buses going through the bus station.

How this would cause problem for others

People who are VIP (visually impaired person) may need more assistance to locate where the stop is now.

#### Enfield Issues

The location of the bus stop going down Lavender Hill Enfield has metal barriers leading down from the pedestrian crossing with 2 small convenience stores opposite with delivery lorries blocking the road . The timing on the pedestrian crossing may not be enough for people with reduced mobility especially if they are not accompanied.

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In the Transport Committee on the 23/06/2010 I agree with the following points raised

- Drivers are not willing to come close to the kerb
- Attitude of other Londoners
- Layout of the new route masters

## **1.2 Bus Problems**

### **1, 2,1 Bus Drivers**

When the drivers are not willing to stop close to the kerb it means that even when the bus stop is clear of lamp posts, bins etc. People with reduced mobility have to contend with not only other passengers leaving the bus but where multiple buses stop the passengers for that bus crowding across the pavement and sometimes just standing on the pavement talking to people they know. This makes it hard when your balance is bad stepping down onto the pavement and judging distances.

A positive occurrence with No 11 bus was the driver at the stop along the road from Westminster Abbey lowered the bus floor to make it easier for me to get on the bus.

#### **1.2.2. Buses and Priority Seating**

On buses people can see you have reduced mobility when you get on the bus people refuse point blank to give up their seats. Just because people do not have a walking stick does not mean they are able to stand.

On a number of routes in Enfield the Wheelchair space is used by either mothers or carers with push chairs or people standing. The only people that should be entitled to stand in that space should there not be a wheel chair occupying that space.

A massive issue London buses is the lack of seating on the lower level on Double Decker's. On Double Decker's as a person with restricted mobility I should not be expected to go upstairs. It is an issue when the school children especially from Secondary Schools are on their way to school and returning of an afternoon. School children use seats that are labelled for elderly people less able to stand and people carrying children.

## **2 Underground**

### **2.1 Staff and Customer Service**

The Underground staff are exceptional I have travelled a lot via Victoria and Westminster and Moorgate all of the staff are willing to help. The staffs at Victoria and Westminster always radios the control room to find out how long I have to wait for the next Circle line train. On the occasions that I have had assistance I have found the staff willing to help and some are pleased to be away from the gate line for a short time to assist. If there are cuts in customer service staff I feel this will have an impact on people with disabilities travelling on their own.

Whilst talking to one of the customer service members at Victoria whilst he was giving assistance to me he made me aware that London Underground were training staff in Disability awareness and how

### **2.2 Underground Lines and amendments made**

One criticism the Circle line terminating at Edgware Road is there any way they could alternate the train so every other train does a complete circle and not terminate at Edgware Road.

### **2.3 Station Access**

Lift to Ticket Office at Westminster not clearly signposted. On a Liberal Democrat visit to Parliament in October 2009 we had a few members who required the lift to the ticket hall had the evening standard seller of not informed us we would have been no wiser.

## **3 Over ground Trains**

### **3.1 First Capital Connect – Hertford Loop to Moorgate & Hertford Loop to Kings Cross (weekend service)**

#### **3.1.1 Customer Service and Staff**

They produce a Disabled People's Protection Policy which covers all the adjustments that the company make for people with Disabilities. According to the Policy all staff on first capital connect are given training on how to provide service for all people with Disabilities I travel on this line frequently some staff are willing to help others are not. The special assistance line has had an increase in calls which is a positive move to hear more people who require assisted travel is on the increase. A few times I have not been able to get through to book assisted travel for the journey I needed it luckily the staff now know me and know my needs. I have sent numerous emails complimenting the staff and also making a few complaints about being in a queue when phoning the assistance line.

#### **3.1.2 Stations and Announcements**

Announcements are not always clear at Moorgate but they do have screens it may be handy for visually impaired persons to introduce a verbal announcement

#### **3.1.3 Trains and Stations**

People in wheelchairs and people with push chairs have a big step down at many of the stations on that line. A few stations have a smaller step down and up to the train.

### **3.2 VIRGIN TRAINS – Euston to Birmingham New Street**

When travelling to Spring Conference in March 2010 I called in advance to book assistance they provided a buggy to transport me to the train. The staff assisted me onto the train and I had seat reservation.

Upon arrival at Birmingham New Street a member of staff was on the platform to meet me. The return journey was just as good apart from getting to Euston and the gap between the platform and the train was not easy for people with reduced mobility.

Otherwise no complaints. The announcement at Euston is clear and easily understood the departure boards are clear.

## **4 Recommendations**

- i. Disability Training increased for all public transport staff, noticing the signs that some one may need assistance or being more willing to help when assistance is needed.
- ii. Making all bus stops non request stops if people are waiting.
- iii. Better signage on buses for seats for the elderly and reduced mobility
- iv. More campaigns which make school children aware of the needs of people with disabilities , the elderly and other vulnerable groups on Public Transport
- v. Providing extra buses during school term times and ensuring that the problem areas have community police patrolling the area.
- vi. On London underground ensuring that the passenger is not left waiting on the platform and that the control room and end of journey staff are aware.
- vii. Better Announcements on all stations.

## **5. Conclusion**

A lot has been done to make the Transport Network accessible to all but there is still a lot of adapting to do. By training staff to be more aware it will make those that need assistance more willing to use public transport and less confined to their homes and not able to go out. More consideration needs to be taken into passengers with disabilities. For example announcements need to be made on Tube line where multiple lines come in on the same platform. In view of the Olympics coming to London in just over two years maybe multi lingual information points should be put in across the network.

- 2 AUG 2010



**BRITANNIA  
HOTELS**

Caroline Pidgeon  
City Hall  
London SE1 2BR

Dear Caroline

On your letter this week in the EL Advertiser you mention about walking. I am all for walking & do a lot of it myself. However, I feel very much on my guard, even on the pavement, because cyclists seem to think they have the right of way. I have fortunately only been run into once by a child but got badly bruised - if I'd have had very thin legs then I'd have been a goner. Cyclists need to ring a bell & pack in speeding. Along Cable Street it's a nightmare even very early in the morning. I actually saw 2 cyclists crash the other day outside St Georges Hall. You cannot separate cyclists & walking because there is nowadays no clear <sup>indicating</sup> what you are allowed to do. Things need tightening up here in London. Please tell the Mayor because in Birmingham my daughter was threatened with court appearance for cycling on a precast in Beales Green. She never did it again because I warned her about it. Where are the bells? Cyclists need to make a noise more to make themselves known to pedestrians (she was only little at the time). I really enjoy walking here in London even though I am 70 & partially sighted but I do take extra care all the time. I use my cat pram & take Oscar or Cruella, a walk every day in it & pushing that makes me feel safer & in the winter I put a light round the hood. Cyclists need to be dealt with if they act dangerously & their bikes impounded. Walkers do not feel very safe.

Yours sincerely  
Anne J. South

# Investigation into the accessibility of London's transport network

## 1. Planning journeys

1a. How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys like TfL's online journey planner, its telephone lines and its transport assistance scheme?

*Please see the enclosure*

1.b What further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to help people with restricted mobility plan journeys?

*Please see the enclosure*

## 2. Undertaking journeys – staff support.

2a. 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?

*Please see the enclosure*

2b. What further steps should the Mayor and TfL take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journeys?

*Please see the enclosure*

### **3. Undertaking journeys – physical accessibility**

**3a.** 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?

*Please see the enclosures*

**3b.** 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?

*Please see the enclosures*

**4. Any further questions or issues you feel the Commission should address?**

*Please see the enclosures*

The deadline for all written submissions is **30<sup>th</sup> September 2010**.

**Contact details:** [ian.osullivan@london.gov.uk](mailto:ian.osullivan@london.gov.uk) / tel: 020 7983 6540 / Ian O'Sullivan, Assistant Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Team, London Assembly, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2AA.



16/6/2010

Mr. Ian O'Sullivan  
Assistant Scrutiny Manager  
Scrutiny Team  
London assembly  
6<sup>th</sup>. floor,  
City Hall  
The Queen's walk  
London SE1 2AA

Dear Mr. O'Sullivan

**Re: Transport for people with Restricted Mobility**

I have answered to the questions of the questionnaire about the accessibility of London Transport Network which was passed to me in the Hammersmith and Fulham Disability Forum meeting and I am enclosing it with this letter, but I wished to bring to your attention some further important matters.

Sometimes in one day for various matters one has to go to different parts of London. Quite obviously using Public Transport will not take people from door to door and one has to walk some distance. Walking this distance can be very difficult or even impossible for majority of disabled people with restricted mobility. On these occasions using Dial A Ride or Taxi Cards would not be practical either and one has to use his/her own car. As you are aware even Blue Badge holders are not able to park in certain London Boroughs such as Islington, Camden, Westminster. People living in these areas have been issued with Green Badges. It is quite unfair that these Green Badge holders are able to park in any borough of London but Blue Badge holders are not.

This is a pure discrimination. It is no excuse to say that boroughs such as Islington etc. are more busy. In fact there are not enough Parking Bays for Disabled Residents in any borough, leave alone for other disabled from the other boroughs. I feel strongly that there must be more disabled

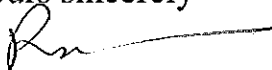
parking bays in public places such as High streets, shopping centres entertainment areas, near frequently visited places such as banks, some offices, near bus depots and undergrounds stations etc. In the residential areas some disabled bays to be allocated to certain residents who suffer with a very severe restricted mobility.

On the other hand I am sure you are aware that many people abuse the Blue Badges. I think people should use the Blue Badge if the holder of it is in the car and I think that the picture of the holder of the blue Badge must be on the front of the Badge in order that the Traffic Warden or even Police can see that and charge the abuser.

On the other hand I have been living in my present address as above for the last three years. Princes Avenue is between Gunnersbury Lane and Gunnersbury Avenue (A406 , North Circular Road). Acton Town Underground Station is located in the Gunnersbury Lane and Bus E3 runs in it but there is no public transport facility in the Gunnersbury Avenue. As you notice on the map of London, Princes Avenue is a very long road and majority of people who live near the junction of Princes Avenue and Gunnersbury Avenue are elderly and disabled. It is difficult for them to walk to Gunnersbury Lane in order to catch a bus to go to the shopping centre or hospitals. I have been discussing and writing about this matter to the TfL for the last three years but still I have got nowhere at all which is quite disappointing. In fact at least two numbers of buses must run in the Gunnersbury Avenue, one going towards the West Middlesex Hospital in the Isleworth and the other one towards Charing Cross Hospital in the Hammersmith because as I have mentioned above these disabled and elderly people do not drive and are not able to walk all that distance to get to the Gunnersbury Lane. These are pensioners who have paid their taxes for 40-50 years.

As I mentioned I have discussed this issue on many occasions with the TfL. I can give you my reference number in order that you could follow the case and hopefully the residents in the Princes Avenue will get what they deserve to have. The reference Number is: 56048/1/2/3 and I mostly have spoken to a nice lady called Alison.

Yours sincerely



Dr.(Miss) R. Roohanna

# **Investigation into the Accessibility of London's transport Network**

## **1. Planning journeys**

**1a. How useful are existing resources to help plan journeys like Tfl's online journey planner, its telephone lines and its transport assistance scheme?**

First we should have been asked whether there are enough facilities for a disabled to get to Public Transport. If somebody for different reasons is not able to get to a bus stop or Underground station what is the point of trying to get around by Public transport. For further explanation please read the enclosed letter.

**1.b What further steps should the Mayor and Tfl take to help people with restricted mobility journeys**

Once more I ask you to read the enclosed letter please.

## **2. Undertaking Journeys – Staff support**

**2a. 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?**

I have not seen any assistance at all. The guards etc. just stand there looking at you.

**2b. What further steps should the mayor and Tfl take to ensure staff adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their Journeys?**

To supply enough number of staff really. Often there is nobody in the buses or underground to help. Very often either I have hurt myself to try to get into buses or trains in the underground. On one occasion I fell while I was trying to get into train. If it was not for passengers, who helped me and pulled me in the train, perhaps I would have lost my legs. This happened in the Shepherd's Bush underground station Central Line and the reason is that there is a big gap in there and the wagons of the trains are much higher than the floor of the underground. This problem could be seen in many underground stations such as the District Lines of Hammersmith. On the other hand still in many underground stations such

as the Shepherd's Bush,(both lines) Chiswick Park, Turnham Green, and many others there are many stairs which is extremely difficult to climb up by people such as myself. In fact all these undergrounds are one of the busiest undergrounds. I am sure escalators/lifts could be installed in these stations. The one which has been installed in the Acton Town station is not very convenient. One has to walk quite a beat to get to it.

**AS YOU ARE AWARE DISABLED PEOPLE SUFFER WITH  
DIFFERENT LEVEL OF DISABILITIES.**

**SOME HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN WALKING BUT STILL TRY  
NOT TO USE STICK OR GO ON THE WHEELCHAIR AS THEY  
STILL WISH TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT.**

**3. Underground Journeys-Physical accessibility**

***3a. 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 over ground rail stations) met the needs of people with restricted mobility?***

I refer you to my answer of the previous question. Often the bus drivers park their buses quite away from the curbs. This makes it very difficult for many people with restricted mobility to get off the bus and then climb up the curb in order to go on the pavement.

***3b. What further steps should the mayor and TfL take to ensure the physical infrastructure of the transport system adequately support people with restricted mobility undertake their journey.***

I already have answered this question in my answers to the previous questions and please see my letter which is enclosed.

**4. Any further questions or issues you feel the commission should address?**

Please read my letter which is enclosed.

  
Dr.(Miss ) R. Roohanna

Date: 20/6/10

Dear Sir,

**Re:– How accessible is public transport in London?**

I am a 53 year old woman with restricted mobility due to osteo-arthritis in my spine and knees. I use a walking stick at all times.

This means that I have problems using steps and in standing for extended periods, especially on moving transport.

**1 how successful initiatives to improve the accessibility have been**

I am unaware, specifically, what improvements to the accessibility of buses and tubes have been.

Certainly the ability for some buses to lower their chassis is helpful, but only if the driver uses this facility and, most importantly, they bother to stop near enough to the kerb for this to be usable. I appreciate that there are times when they cannot get near to kerbs (due to inappropriate parking for instance) however, some drivers seem unwilling or unable to perform this basic driving skill.

Also helpful is the installation of lifts at Euston and King's Cross stations. However, this is only of help to passengers if they are working. Recently at Euston both the escalators from the main line train station to the tube and the lifts were out of action leaving me with no alternative but to use a long set of stairs.

The availability of lifts is rare so that if there are no working escalators I have to use steps.

My condition means that I have more difficulty going down a set of stairs than climbing up and I have noted that when only one escalator is working it is always the up one.

**2 'whole journey' experience of people with reduced mobility**

(the passenger experience from journey planning through using each form of transport including interchanges)

**Planning** – Using the TfL website to plan a journey is very user unfriendly.

**Buses** - For example, a simple bus journey from A to B which I can do on one bus can result in an illogical route using several buses going miles out of my way. To find the most straightforward bus route can take many attempts online. It is like getting directions from someone who has no knowledge of the local area. I tend to rely on the excellent paper bus route maps.

**Tubes** – I have to carefully plan which tube station I can reasonably access when making a journey as so many have no escalator or lift. My local tube station (Tottenham Hale) does not have a direct bus route link from my home. My next nearest tube station (Seven Sisters) has no step free access.

**Train** – I cannot use my local train station (Silver Street) although it is within walking distance because of the numerous steps to access the platforms.

**Journey** – Using the transport network

**Buses** – on my daily journey to work in Tottenham High Road (1½ miles from home) I frequently have to let buses (up to 6) go as they have no available seats downstairs. On most buses I cannot use the first 2 designated disabled seats as there is insufficient leg room (against the front left wheel bulk head).

Having got on a bus and got seated it is not uncommon, on my route from Tottenham to Hornsey, for the bus to terminate mid journey. This means getting off, often at an inconvenient location, and having to wait ages for another bus which may not have available seating.

**Tubes** – I usually have to go out of my way to use a tube station that is accessible for me. When this is impractical I experience pain and exhaustion for having to use numerous steps to access platforms. This is especially true when changing lines. For instance, I have learned never to use King's Cross or Holborn to change lines due to the amount of walking and stairs. So if, for example, I am travelling from Tottenham Hale to Waterloo, I have to go further on the Victoria Line to change at Oxford Circus onto the Bakerloo Line. This, multiplied up by the numbers who must also do this, must add considerably to the over crowding on tubes.

**Trains** – Having got on a train and got a seat I can then find myself in difficulties when getting off at my destination where large gaps and lack of steps from the train make exiting very problematic. As does the lack of escalator or lift at my destination station.

#### **Staff**

I would also like to add that the helpfulness of staff (bus drivers) can make a world of difference to the journey experience. This is generally good but can be very poor. For instance, drivers who routinely close doors quickly and without checking for passengers exiting. This is dangerous and means people like myself, with restricted mobility, have to shout out to ensure we do not get trapped on the bus or even worse in the closing doors.

Yours Sincerely

M J Wenham

**Patricia Bradbury**

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34 Riversdale Road

RECEIVED

17 JUN 2000

Ian O'Sullivan  
Assistant Scrutiny Manager  
Scrutiny Team  
London Assembly  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London, SE1 2AA

SECRETARIAT

Dear Mr O'Sullivan,

For about the last 3-4 years I have attempted to travel around London using London Transport Red Buses. I have taken the precautions of always avoiding the rush hour and only using the smallest of scooters. My latest one weighs only 112 lbs /50.5 kgs and at all times they have weighed considerably less than the standard powered electric wheelchair. Despite this about 20% of drivers still refuse me entry onto their bus.

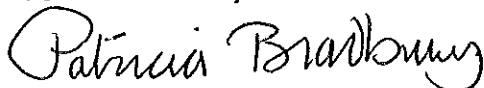
Reasons for this vary: *"You are not a wheelchair. You are driven by dangerous batteries. They will explode. You will damage my ramp. There is pushchair here already and they take priority and cannot move."* It actually is possible for me to share the space with a push chair which seem to travel with so many bags, that even without them, they are often much wider than me.

This has meant for me that I cannot ever really plan my journeys. I cannot know how long they will take as I can never be sure of getting on a bus when it comes and has room for me. Drivers have left me in the pouring rain and in the dark rather than allow me onto their bus. Sometimes it has been the other passengers who have insisted that I board or stay on the bus.

Every time I am refused passage by a bus driver. I have sent a post card to tfl but what's the point it is the bus operator who is at fault. I usually get some sort of reply which misses the point (I enclose copies of the latest.)

I regularly travel by SE Trains who have issued me with a pass (I enclose a copy). This tells their staff that its O.K. for me to board their trains. Why can't tfl do the same for the buses? So simple I have been suggesting this for several years.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Bradbury



11 May 2010

Customer Ref: 917007

Dear Ms Bradbury,

I am writing in response to your complaint to London Buses regarding the driver of route 4 bus refusal to let you board because of your mobility vehicle.

All our drivers are trained to carry out their duties in a professional manner at all times. The only reason for some drivers' reluctance to allow electric scooter on board is that they always cause the ramp to break down afterwards. The bus would then have to be taken out of service.

However, the matter will be passed to our Operating Manager to interview the driver concerned and give him guidance disabled passengers.

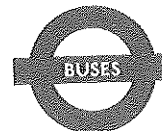
I apologise for the annoyance and inconvenience you were caused.

Yours Sincerely

*E. R. Elphat*  
pp Mr R Alexander  
Customer Services

11 400  
2. 600





Our Ref: 1006579858  
Date: 7 May 2010

**London Buses**  
Surface Transport  
Customer Services  
  
4th Floor - Zone G7  
197 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NJ  
  
Phone 0845 300 7000  
[www.tfl.gov.uk/contact](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/contact)

Dear Sir/ Madam

Thank you for your letter regarding bus 4. The Operator dealing with your case is Metroline who will be looking into the points that you have raised.

Under our customer services policy, we will do our best to respond within 10 working days. In most cases this is not a problem. However, should we take any longer than 15 days; we will write to you on day 15 with an update and also provide you with the likely timescale for a full response.

Please accept this letter as an acknowledgement to your letter.

If you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with your enquiry you may wish to contact London TravelWatch. This is an independent watchdog body, set up by parliament to represent the interests of passengers. They can be contacted at the following address:

London TravelWatch  
6 Middle Street  
London  
EC1A 7JA

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Steve Cattley  
London Buses

*Handwritten signature of Steve Cattley*

Ross Jardine, re. Transport Survey.

The best money ever spent on Transport in Croydon is the Tram System it is accessible to all, wheelchairs, buggies, shopping etc. We could do with more tram links

The worst thing transport allocated are buggies, some of which are huge, on buses.

I have been on buses when there have been four buggies causing obstruction for people getting on and off, which I think is dangerous. Older people with shopping trolleys are expected to move and make way for youngsters with their buggies.

I also thought space provided with priority for wheelchair users, but space is usually taken up with buggies so disabled cannot board. This system needs to be readdressed.

Mrs R. Bennett

RECEIVED

08 JUN 2010

**Ross Jardine**  
**London Assembly**  
**PP10,**  
**FREEPOST LON 15799**  
**City Hall**  
**The Queen's Walk**  
**SE1 2BR**

**7 June 2010**

**Dear Ross Jardine**

**You asked for comments on problems with Public Transport in Capital.**

**I have problems boarding and descending from trains at Clapham Junction. Platform 10 and 15 are worst. They are large gaps between trains and platform and step up and step down is too high.**

**It's too difficult for short people and disabled people. Hampton Court is another station with same problem. Last weekend there was a festival at Hampton Court Palace, but Network Rail only had 4 carriages. The people with children and family were crushed in carriages, just like sardines in a can, all the way from Hampton Court to Waterloo. There may be similar problems on Network Rail Trains at other places in London Area, but these two Stations I am more familiar with.**

**I do hope this is helpful for your research and perhaps you can manage to get Company to remedy these problems. There is no point of putting in lifts, if disabled persons cannot board trains.**

**Yours sincerely**

*Philomena Menton*

**Philomena Menton**

RECEIVED

29 JUN 2010

SECRETARIAT

I would like to make a comment on the habit of rate of Bus drivers who do not pull up to the kerbs at Bus stops.

I am finding it difficult to get on and off because of having to step into the road first.

I suffer with severe arthritis, so it has made me very wary of going shopping further afield.

Sometimes when it has been raining this makes it worse because it means stepping into puddles of water to get on and off.

I hope you can help with this problem as I'm sure it affects a lot of people.

Thank you

M Simmons

BARNSBURY RESIDENT

**LONDONASSEMBLYLABOUR**

**Valerie Shawcross AM**

Assembly Member for Lambeth & Southwark

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1A 2AA  
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000  
Minicom: 020 7983 4458  
Web: [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

**Our ref:**

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 30 June 2010

Dear Mr Wright

Thank you for your letter of 25<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and the notes attached.

Thank you for the comments made both in the letter and at the Transport Committee.

These will be fed into the Committee's discussions.

Yours sincerely



**Valerie Shawcross AM**

**Labour Assembly Member for Lambeth & Southwark**

From: Russell W L Wright

25<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Valerie Shawcross AM  
London Assembly Member  
Lambeth & Southwark  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Russ W L Wright', written in a cursive style.

You may not remember me, but you did give me the opportunity, at the recent meeting of your Transport Committee meeting, to speak for nearly two minutes on the subject of the provision of transport facilities for those with learning disability.

It appeared that I did not get through to you the particular points that I wished to make, which were:

1. Those with learning disability (not including learning difficulty – a quite separate group) make up, by far, the largest disability group in London, and in the nation.
2. Transport for London (TfL) spends huge sums of money on training, services and facilities for, for example, wheel-chair users, while providing nothing, in effect, for those with learning disability.
3. It is therefore about time that those with learning disability got the treatment that they deserved, both in view of numbers concerned, and their inability to fight their own corner.

I was rather surprised to discover that you appeared to be ill-informed about the realities of learning disability. I recall that I drew your attention to the omission of any mention of learning disability in the introductory note circulated to those at the meeting. I now note that that position is supported in the papers attached to the agenda for your meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010, in that the investigation by your committee should be specifically limited to meeting, "the needs of those with reduced mobility". No wonder that you had not engaged an organization with a primary interest in learning disability. No wonder that you did not even include the phrase – learning disability – in your summing-up. I have to assume that learning disability is a subject that you would prefer to keep well below the horizon.

You appeared upset that I should point out that Transportforall – Accessible transport is our right – only mentions the phrase, “learning disability” once in its website or “Get Moving” guide, and then within a quote from the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – a statement not contested by Faryal Velmi. That, I am afraid, is the reality of the situation. Organisations, purporting to represent disability overall, merely pay lip-service to their real responsibility to those with learning disability, a group that is unable to speak up for itself. You failed to provide proper representation at your meeting for this, the largest of disability groups, but it appears that you never intended to, anyway.

I make no apology for speaking out at your meeting, most particularly because your committee has, and you in particular have a duty to ensure that TfL provides a full and proper service, within the requirements of the DDA, for those with learning disability and, most particularly, to ensure that they, as a vulnerable group, will be carried, as the Act demands, in safety.

At your meeting I mentioned the “Three Cs”. If you feel that you might take up the cause of those with learning disability after all, I attach some notes on that subject.

Should you wish to discuss the matter further I would, of course, be very happy to meet you. If you prefer, contact me at [rwlwright@btinternet.com](mailto:rwlwright@btinternet.com).

I am sincerely  
Annette Wright

## **ACCESS FOR THOSE WITH LEARNING DISABILITY**

Those with learning disability deserve the same rights, the same opportunities and the same consideration as others with a disability, but their needs are different. At present, the focus is firmly on physical access; there is virtually no provision for intellectual access.

For those who find it difficult to even to define a problem, let alone frame the right questions, the provision of answers in the impersonal forms of maps, timetables, information sheets and announcements provides no solutions. The intellectual access needs of those with learning disability can be summarized under three headings. In this summary transport is the example, because that is the key to access needs, but the same principles can be applied to anywhere providing services, accommodation, recreation or work.

### **Communication.**

The key to providing access for those with learning disability is face-to-face contact. (At present no organization publicizes, or even provides contact points for the learning disabled, nor do the learning disabled have any means of representing their disability.) There is an absolute need for trained personnel to be able to understand and meet the needs of those with learning disability; transport systems should have staff trained to help people to plan and carry out their journey. (Just as National Trust properties should provide intellectual access to the construction, use and history of their establishments.)

### **Continuity.**

It is not enough for a transport system, a mainline rail company, for example, to conduct a learning disabled passenger from one mainline station to another. That passenger needs to be formally directed to the next stage in their journey, whether that is by train, underground, bus or taxi. The access system for the learning disabled must allow a traveller to complete their whole journey, not just discrete sections.

### **Crisis.**

A mere problem for others can be a crisis for those with learning disability, and that crisis can quickly turn into a disaster. In this context, even an unscheduled event, such as re-routing of transport, constitutes a crisis. In true crisis circumstances those with learning disability are unlikely to be able to comprehend or react to the circumstances. They need individual and informed care. Those in responsible positions must be aware of these travellers needing special care, and have the ability to resolve their problems.

RWLW  
25 Jun 10



Dear Val,

Seeing your letter in the Gazette, prompted me to drop you a note three weeks ago my Mum and myself were going to visit her brother in St. Paneras Hospital we were waiting for the 63 bus we had not sat down and the bus moved and Mom fell the length of the bus, we had to have the doctor home in case she had broken anything its taken its toll on her as she is Frail and 87 years. she is now on the mend and today it was the first time on a bus (it was nerve racking for us both). but we did it

(going back now Mum never broke any bones, but had a black tongue lump out of her wrist and could not sit down for nearly 3 weeks)

Today going home from Mums a lady in a wheelchair got on a No 38 there was a pram without a baby. They never fold a pram up. Years ago we could never get on a bus unless you folded a pram, or you had to walk.

I'm more alert now on a bus and it seems all buses go off before people sit down.

Thanks for listening

Janet Pitt

London Assembly Transport Committee  
PP10  
FREEPOST LON15799  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London  
SE1 2BR

RECEIVED  
28 JUN 2010  
SECRETARIAT

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

Dear Ross Jardine,

**REF: ACCESSIBILITY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

I struggle to board tubes, buses and trains due to reduced mobility. I had an injury on my right ankle 17 months ago. Unfortunately, since then my mobility has never been the same. Whilst I was using crutches and a walking stick, I found it cumbersome to use public transport as most drivers were never patient to wait for me in order to board the tubes, buses or trains.

The crutches and walking stick enabled me to be visible to other passengers and was offered a seat by some whenever I was on board.

Unfortunately, I still have problems with my ankle. It is horrendous halving to walk in stations with long walk ways for example Waterloo, King's Cross and West Ham. Prolonged walking causes more burning pain in my right ankle which leads to swelling.

The usage of many stairs also has the same effect on the right ankle. Steep stairs are worse as the affected tendon in my injured ankle becomes overstretched whilst using them. When this occurs, I experience excruciating pain and need to manage it immediately for example by sitting down and resting the ankle, using ice compression and listening to some music as it is a very stressful experience to undergo on a daily basis.

When lifts are out of service at train and tube stations, I have to change my journey which is always longer, frustrating, stressful and unfair. In the morning, it has an impact on my job as I arrive late as a result of this problem. Furthermore, I work with children so this in turn affects them too. My return journeys are also affected as the chances of getting a seat at all reduced and I spend most of my evening travelling home.

There's a lot more that London Transport can do to help me and many others with reduced mobility. London Transport should do the following:

1. Label stations with access for those with reduced mobility correctly [New stations on East London Line are labelled incorrectly as one has to climb many stairs before they get to a lift. This is useless for people like me.]
2. Modify labelling with a system that corresponds with the nature of access available e.g. different symbols for stations with lifts directly linked to

platforms and different ones for those with stations that do not have a lift directly linked to a platform.

3. Staff at stations should be ready with knowledge regarding alternative travel routes for passengers affected by the unavailability of a lift.
4. There should be interval announcements about lifts that are out of service at stations in order to minimise disruptions to passengers' travel plans.
5. There should not be a penalty to a passenger who has to go via a station beyond their travelcard as a result of lifts being out of service or general reduced mobility. London transport should work with health organisations in order to determine how this can be done and not be abused by people who do not have reduced mobility.
6. Information regarding lifts being out of service at certain stations should be cascaded to the public in similar ways as line closures or delays are via radio and television.
7. People with reduced mobility like me should give London Transport mobile numbers so that we receive free text messages about unavailability of lifts and escalators at stations.
8. People with reduced mobility should have a card (not card for disabled) that entitles them to a seat whilst on board. The majority of other passengers do not offer seats to people like me at all even when they have walking sticks or crutches!
9. There should be more benches at stations that already have them.
10. There should be benches at stations with long walkways to enable people like me to be able to rest before continuing with my journey.
11. Lever switches that enable the step at the entrance of buses should be installed in all new buses and those that have malfunctioned should be repaired promptly.
12. All drivers should be patient with passengers with reduced mobility and if there are seats available, they should wait for such passengers to sit down before accelerating or starting the bus.

Please confirm that you have received this letter. I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Ms C. Wekesa

Date: 20/6/10

Dear Sir,

**Re:– How accessible is public transport in London?**

I am a 57 year old woman with reduced mobility due to Rheumatoid Arthritis that affects my ability to hold on to grab rails, balance when standing and my energy levels (I get very tired, very quickly). This means that I have problems in standing and in walking or using stairs for extended periods, especially on moving transport. As a driver who has tried to use public transport more often I do find myself falling back on my car too frequently when buses and tubes cannot meet my needs.

**1 how successful initiatives to improve the accessibility have been**

I am unaware, what specific improvements to the accessibility of buses and tubes have been made.

I am aware that some buses can lower their chassis which is helpful to some, but only if the driver uses this facility and, most importantly, they bother to stop near enough to the kerb for this to be usable.

I appreciate that there are times when they cannot get near to kerbs (due to inappropriate parking for instance) however, some drivers seem unwilling or unable to perform this basic driving skill. I have seen disabled people, in wheelchairs, left to await another bus when a driver cannot lower the access step.

As I get very exhausted on a day out if I have to expend too much energy I do find the lack of escalators or lifts at tube and train stations a problem.

On a recent trip to the British Library I used King's Cross for the first time in ages and was pleased to see many new escalators and passenger lifts available.

At Euston however on a trip back from Manchester recently both the escalators from the main line train station to the tube and the lifts were out of action leaving me with no alternative but to use a long set of stairs. After a long train journey I really did not need this.

The availability of lifts is rare so that if there are no working escalators I have to use steps.

**2 'whole journey' experience of people with reduced mobility**

(the passenger experience from journey planning through using each form of transport including interchanges)

**Planning** – Using the TfL website to plan a journey is very user unfriendly.

**Buses** - For example, a simple bus journey from A to B which I can do on one bus can result in an illogical route using several buses going miles out of my way. To find the most straightforward bus route can take many attempts online. It is like getting directions from someone who has no knowledge of the local area. I tend to rely on the excellent paper bus route maps.

A recent example has been trying to obtain a route from my home to the new Hornsey Central Health Centre in Park Road N8 (about which I have written to the local PCT, my M.P. and TfL).

From my locality there is no direct bus to cover this relatively short journey. Not even 2 buses join up to complete the journey. The advice from those consulting local residents was "get the W7, it stops right outside". It was pointed out that at present it takes a long walk (especially if you have mobility issues), getting the 144 from Hornsey High Street to the junction with Park Road, then another walk to the centre (according to the TfL website – walk to Priory Road, get W3 to Tottenham Lane, then walk!). Either way it would take around 45 minutes with most of it walking as the 144 and W7 do not join up.

This leaves a large part of the potential catchment area with no direct transport. So if Dial a Ride isn't an option people will be encouraged to drive.

The response I got from TfL was less than satisfactory. Their advice to me is that the health centre is well served by the W7 and that I can get off the 144, walk along Park Road and get the W7 for one stop. Or, stay on the 144 part way up Muswell Hill; get off and cross Muswell Hill (where and how they fail to explain); walk 50 meters UP the hill to the W7 stop and get off at the health centre! Not only is this inconvenient and dangerous for elderly, immobile or ill people but costs 2 bus fares each way. They finish by saying there are NO plans to enhance services to the health centre.

So I can only access this local health facility (Polyclinic) by car.

Trying to find a sensible route by public transport to my local hospital (The Whittington in Highgate) is equally problematic.

Either the 144 to Turnpike Lane. Cross road and wait for the 41 and then a walk at other end.

Or drive to Park Road N8, get W5 (which recently and without notice changed its hail and ride stop places).

Or 144 to Turnpike Lane, then change at Kings Cross onto Northern Line to Archway – and a walk.

Attempting to get any route from the TfL website for this journey is not worth the effort.

**Tubes** – I have to carefully plan which tube station I can reasonably access when making a journey as so many have no escalator or lift. My local tube station (Turnpike Lane) is only accessible by stairs for any exit.

**Train** – I do not use my local train station (Hornsey) because of the problem getting there from my home (144, change and 41) and the steps to access the platforms. Apart from the safety of an unmanned station.

**Journey** – Using the transport network

**Buses** – when using buses I sometimes have to let buses go as they have no available seats downstairs. On most buses I cannot use the first 2 designated disabled seats as there is insufficient leg room (against the front left wheel bulk head).

Having got on a bus and got seated sometimes the bus will terminate mid journey. This means getting off, often at an inconvenient location, and having to wait ages for another bus which may not have available seating.

**Tubes** – I usually have to go out of my way to use a tube station that is accessible for me. When this is impractical I experience pain and exhaustion from having to use numerous steps to access platforms. This is especially true when changing lines. For instance, I have learned never to use King's Cross or Holborn to change lines due to the amount of walking and stairs.

**Trains** – Having got on a train and got a seat I can then find myself in difficulties when getting off at my destination where large gaps and lack of steps from the train make exiting very problematic. As does the lack of escalator or lift at my destination station.

### **Staff**

I would also like to add that the helpfulness of staff (bus drivers) can make a world of difference to the journey experience. This is generally good but can be very poor. For instance, drivers who routinely close doors quickly and without checking for passengers exiting. This is dangerous and means people like myself, with restricted mobility, have to shout out to ensure we do not get trapped on the bus or even worse in the closing doors. Also many drivers accelerate and brake too quickly leaving standing passengers in particular falling. Which is why I, with poor hand grip, cannot stand on buses.

Yours Sincerely

LP Ramm

From: Simon Craig Gray  
Sent: 15 July 2010 18:52  
To: Laura Warren; enquire@tfl.gov.uk  
Subject: Disabled access at Stanmore tube station

Attachments: BetterAccess.jpg

Dear Ms Warren and Transport for London

I am writing to you, Ms Warren, in your capacity as Scrutiny Manager for Transport issues in London.

I am currently a temporary wheelchair user. Although I am based in Brussels, I am spending a lot of time in Bushey. Stanmore is the closest Tube station to Bushey.

Whilst Stanmore Station could, in theory, be described as having 'step-free access' between the platforms and the street, this involves two ramps and is, I would argue, impractical / impossible for people in self-propelled wheelchairs who would like to catch a bus.

The first ramp is a pedestrian ramp that rises gradually as you leave the station and then snakes down into the car-park and would be manageable by people in self-propelled wheelchairs. However, to get out of the car-park you have to use the (steep) ramp intended for cars to get up to the street level.

Given that Stanmore Station is being developed to add additional platforms why was the opportunity not taken to add a lift or at the very least escalators (some wheelchair users, like me, might be able to stand on the escalator if a station employee could support the weight of the empty wheelchair on it)? Indeed is such development work that does NOT take into account the realistic need of disabled people legal under the Disability Discrimination Act?

If TFL considers the station currently accessible for people with reduced mobility, I would be delighted to join a TFL manager in testing just how accessible it is by trying to self-propel a wheelchair from the station up to the street.

Whilst a lift would be an obvious solution, an alternative would be to continue the pedestrian ramp so rather than only snaking down into the car-park (i.e. having gained height on leaving the station you lose it again to enter the car-park and then climb again out of it) it carries on across a piece of apparent waste-ground and emerges somewhere near the top of the car ramp. Such an extended pedestrian ramp would still be a challenge for a self-propelled wheelchair, or for someone on crutches, but would avoid an unnecessary loss of height and having to climb the full length of the car ramp. Obviously the original snaking ramp could be retained to give step-free access to the car-park for people who come to the station by car.

Please find attached an adapted aerial photo of Stanmore Station showing my suggestion. The blue line shows my suggested route and the red line shows the current (longer, harder) route.

I await your comments to this suggestion with interest.

Simon CRAIG GRAY

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20 JUL 2010

London Assembly Transport Committee  
PP10  
FREEPOST  
LON15799  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2BR

**RE: BUSES W7 & W3 from/to Finsbury Park Station & W5 From/to Sainsburys's Harringey, London N4 also main line stations.**

I board the W3 bus at the first stop in Fern Park Road London N4 going towards Hornsey and the drivers do not seem able to pull the bus up against the kerb so getting on the bus in the road makes the step almost impossible, the same as getting off the bus at the end of Fern Park Road and Upper Tollington Park stops going towards Finsbury Park Station. Also the drivers do not want to lower the platforms.

The first W7 bus stop coming from Muswell Hill Broadway towards Finsbury Park Station is down a steep hill which is very icy in the winter. This stop needs to be moved up onto the Broadway nearer to the roundabout for level access. Again the bus drivers do not seem to be able to pull in against the kerbs and the drivers will not lower the platform.

With the W5 bus which I board in Oakfield Road at the corner of Carlton Road the bus is unable to pull up against the kerb as there are cars parked nearby. The yellow lines need to be extended there. The drivers on this route are always saying that their platforms will not go down lower or are not working. The bus stop at Sainsbury's supermarket needs to be moved nearer to the store entrance as there are busy roads to be crossed, this is not only difficult for the elderly but also people with young children and prams. The stop used to be by the store entrance.

On the hail and ride section of the W5 route there needs to be proper request stops. If a person is new to the route how do they know where to wait?. New drivers in particular do not know where the stopping points are and this causes arguments on the route delaying the buses. I was told by one driver that the bus has to stop at a T. junction, so it is not really a hail and ride bus that stops anywhere.

To travel to Hertfordshire on the main line over ground train service from Finsbury Park station requires going up three flights of stairs so I have to travel from Haringey over ground station as going down stairs is easier than going up stairs but still very difficult. I can go into Enfield Chase station on the main line but I have to come back from Grange

Park as there is a ramp there but this is very steep. The step from the trains to the platform is too high. How is an elderly person supposed to deal with this?

Could the main line over ground stations have a lift like the ones they have in library's as these are see-through and ideal for a claustrophobic like myself.

There is no transport on Christmas Day so people who do not have a family with cars have to spend the day alone. Also how about people who have to work on Christmas Day? Could there not be a service say every hour?

I do hope you can do something about what I have said in this letter. I have not included a name/address as I do not need a reply.

p.s. I travelled on the W5 bus today and when I asked the driver if he would lower the platform at the end of Harringay Park, Crouch End, N8 I was told he was unable to do so. Drivers need to realise that one day they will be elderly.

RECEIVED

13 SEP 2010

SECRETARIAT

1.9.10.

ian O'Sullivan,  
Scrutiny Manager,  
London Assembly,  
City Hall,  
London Sel 2AA

RE. Survey.

Dear Mr O'Sullivan,  
I should like to comment on your survey about the assistance given to restricted mobility customers on London Transport.

I am a blind person and find the assistance service, on the tubes, invaluable. Likewise, the spoken announcements on buses. It takes the uncertainty away from travelling. . I do not plan "on line" but find the advice I need from a person on your phone line. This is helpful.

The customer assistance is sensitive, realiable and indivual. It allows a blind person to negotiate safely the underground. Another plus is that it is reactive and so a journey can be spontaneous. The staff are well trained and good ambassadors for the company. Above all, they are, along with careful bus drivers, front line staff.

The assistance service is well regarded by visually impaired customers and it would be difficult to see a quality service remaining if staff numbers are decreased, especially, in smaller stations. Too many demands made upon one person. Revenue responsibilities, giving directions to visitors, safety issues and unexpected events.

I do hope Transport For London will retain this quality service with sufficient staff at stations. A Help Service via a machine to another station is not the answer.

With thanks

Yours sincerely,

Janet Stonehouse.

Your Ref: CP/NS

RECEIVED

31/8/10

SECRETARIAT

To: Caroline Pidgeon,  
Vice-Chair, Transport Ctte.,  
Leader, Liberal Democrat Group,  
London Assembly.

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Dear Ms. Pidgeon,

Re. our recent correspondence on Anica's buses  
and the noises they make.

This weekend, I rode on bus registration number  
LT03 MWK from Anica's Edmonton Garage. This bus had just  
re-entered service after a thorough overhaul by Anica themselves.  
And yet the brakes were still making this atrocious screech!  
If Anica doesn't attend to the brakes after a major  
rehabilitation, when will they attend to them?

I fear the answer is: after a serious  
accident has occurred.

We are, of course, waiting for TfL's response on  
this, as they only commented on the engine noise. No  
doubt they will whitewash it and explain it away as  
insignificant, but modern buses in a city that prides itself  
on its up-to-date bus fleet should not be making this  
noise.

I have now, incidentally, seen (or heard) this  
problem spreading to more recent buses in their fleet, whereas  
it does not happen with buses of similar age with other  
companies. I think it is cost-cutting by Anica at the  
expense of safety, and I would like something done.

Yours sincerely,

MSBaker NEW RADDS.

CATHERINE KENNINGTON

October 1, 2010

I have just found this paper, "among my souvenirs" - I am having a massive clearout. Here's hoping I am not too late!

I am very much "reduced mobility" although not in a wheelchair. I have a 3-wheeled walking frame, which folds, as I have no balance due to a stroke in the part of the brain that controls balance and co-ordination (the cerebellum). I have got written permission to take it on the bus. I do not use the Underground because of all the stairs.

I have found the bus drivers are mostly very helpful; some do not start until I am sitting down, and someone invariably moves to give me a seat. They also invariably lower the floor to help getting on and off.

Question 1 My routes are usually regular and I know them well. If I do not know the way somewhere, I ring 7222 1234, and they are always very helpful.

Question 2 Already answered.

Question 3 It has improved out of all proportion - it is now much easier to take my walker on the bus - (or it to take me?)

Question 4 I think he has done very well, but I wish he would hurry up and get rid of the BENDY BUSES, which are an absolute MENACE! I wrote the enclosed some years ago!

I do not have access to the Internet - I have no computer.

Sincerely,

*Catherine Kennington*

Catherine Kennington

*I have never needed to use the ramp*

MESSAGE TO T.F.L.

Your Bendy Buses are a CURSE

On London's streets, and, what is worse,  
It seems that they are here to stay.  
Were we consulted? Dear God, NAY.

Some early models - they caught fire,  
And yet it seems you still aspire  
To keep them going, even though  
They are so HATED. They're our foe!

They drag the cyclists off their mounts.  
It seems as though they're set to pounce!  
They are so long that when they turn  
They drag all with them! They don't learn!

They are so long they steal the stops  
From other routes along these hops.  
I was so ill when I found this -  
No sympathy for my crisis!!

I haven't heard a good thing said  
About these "Bendies" - they'e just DEAD!  
They're set to wipe the Routemaster  
From off our streets - O, what disaster!

Another point to say is this -  
A lot of people, they do miss -  
They do not pay their fares, and so  
For FREE a lot of people go!

The drivers can't contend with this!  
Because the length is so amiss.  
But something DOES need doing here  
To make sure fares are paid - that's clear!

Please get them off our streets, and so  
We can about our buisness go,  
And have no fear of all these things  
Coming at us, which mis'ry brings.

Please think again, dear T.F.L.  
Before you sound the final knell  
On other sorts of buses, which  
Have been in use without a hitch!!

April 2006

I have sent this to T.F.L. - had 2 letters back saying how  
marvellous the bendy buses are - no trace of being offended!  
Needless to say, I am not impressed!!

Unfortunately I cannot attend public meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> June so would like to share some thoughts.

- 1) Notices on buses highlighting seats prioritized for disabled people tend to be ignored; possibly as they are small and unobtrusive/invisible (of necessity no doubt as windows must be kept clear), or else passengers may not have English as their first language. For health and safety reasons (obscuring windows) I guess it is not possible to make notices more visible or multilingual, but PLEASE is there some way of highlighting awareness for passengers; my partner has reduced mobility and dislikes having to "demand" a seat; it feels confrontational and perhaps unsafe and disabled people should not have to do so. Some disabilities are visible, some are not, and disabled people should not, in the ideal world, have to justify their need?
- 2) The access work on Gipsy Hill Station seems to be taking a long time to complete; access to platform 1 is no problem but access to platform 2 is via rather a lot of steps which is hard for disabled people. Will there be a lift or level access at some point and if so when?
- 3) Access at West Norwood and Streatham Hill stations also seems to be problematic!"
- 4) It's a shame it was necessary to get rid of the "bendy buses" as seating on them for disabled people seemed much more user-friendly!

Best wishes,  
Petronella Hutchinson and Irene McCullough

---

Dear Ross,  
I am very sorry but cannot make the session.  
I have to be somewhere else at 12noon. Being reliant on buses and increasing unable to move without pain, I have to allow a great deal of time.  
The issues I would be raising is how to make bus travel safer in Islington.  
I have a badly split toe nail that is taking months to heal as well as very painful feet/ knees and spine- someone stood on my foot or hit it with a trolley as the toe has been badly bruised. So I and others are less and less able to use buses. Particularly along the Holloway Road.  
I used to use the Saturday Market at Archway but could not get onto a bus safely because there were so many people. So I don't get the wonderful fresh vegetables from Lincolnshire any more.  
Another member of Islington Disability Network agreed that she does not go to Holloway Road because the buses are so full that she is unsafe.  
I heard of a lady falling and breaking both ankles getting off a bus. Bus drivers do not pull into the kerb and so many people strain to reach the road surface in the gap between the bus exit and the road. This is often uneven or contains rubbish. Simply pulling up nearer the curb at bus stops would be such a help. This would help all members of the travelling public not just mobility impaired ones – travellers with large cases, parents/grandparents with children in buggies/pushchairs etc  
Thank you for the response. If possible could you include me in your mailing list so I have greater notice of events so I can plan and co-ordinate with other Islington Disability Network members who are very concerned about access to Public Transport. We have been asking for step free access to be available as promised at Finsbury Park and Highbury and Islington as well as, as many other Tube Stations as soon as is humanly possible.  
Thank you.  
God bless.  
Judith Wren

---

I saw in my local paper that you are looking into accessibility of the London transport system.

I have a baby in a buggy and am pretty much unable to travel on either the tube or the trains. There are virtually no ramps or lifts anywhere and if I do take the tube I usually have to struggle up numerous flights of stairs (or wait for a kindhearted stranger to assist me) which is physically exhausting. I also have a five year



old son who is autistic and has little sense of safety, so I can't use the escalator as I have to both control the buggy (or take the baby out, even if she's sleeping, and carry the pushchair) and ensure he is safe and holding onto the rail (an impossibility). Simply replacing one set of stairs or an escalator with a ramp - or installing a lift - would make things so much easier for me.

Stations which do have access are far and few between and if your destination is not accessible then they are pretty useless - you'd have to get off at a station you didn't necessarily want to disembark at just because there was a lift there - and presumably walk the rest of the way. That's hardly public transport! In the 21st century, when ideas about accessibility and disability discrimination have been around for decades, it's pretty shoddy that we're still even discussing these issues. Every station should be accessible to every Londoner - not just the young, able-bodied commuters who buy the annual Oyster cards and presumably rake in the most money. Parents and disabled people still have to pay - though heaven knows why when there is so little consideration given to their needs.

Things are so bad that I applied for a Blue Badge, which exempts you from the Congestion Charge, because of my autistic son but was refused on the grounds that he is able to walk (even though a trip on the tube with him can be a terrifying experience, with him running ahead while I try to manhandle the buggy up and down steps). So come the school holidays I won't be able to drive into London (too expensive) or use the tube - so we'll be stuck using the buses, which although easier in terms of access can take forever.

I hope you will make my feelings known to the public meeting at City Hall on 23 June. I'd like to get there myself, but the thought of the tube journey is just too offputting!

Many thanks, Lindsay Wright

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I have a travel pass but I am not able to use it often. Walking to the bus stop is very difficult for me and even if I can make it I would be afraid for the return journey. Once you get to a bus you are in grave danger of falling down as the bus will start off way before I am able to find a seat - if I can find a seat. I don't look obviously disabled. My partner who is clearly disabled often can't get a seat. One major problem is prams which are not folded up and make it difficult for people with mobility problems to reach a seat if it is available.

Mr partner can drive us to the underground where parking is always a problem. Handicapped parking is a bigger problem. At Newbury Park Station there is one handicapped spot where there used to be three outside the station. Inside the parking lot (even with vastly increased parking fees) getting handicapped spot which is relatively close to the is not easy if possible at all.

While using the central line we can only get off at certain stations and almost always have to use a cab to get to our destination.

We are fans of Leyton Orient and there used to be about 10 handicapped spots which you had to get to at around 12 noon for a 3pm kickoff. These have been eliminated to build more apartments.

Whenever there is any roadwork the first parking places to go are handicapped spots.

I think they talk about handicapped parking but never actually do anything about it.

thank you for listening to me.

Bill Moriarty

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Dear Ian - I have been advised of the event on 23rd June but am unable to attend.

However, I would like to register with you a few comments about the lack of accessibility to LUL services that is seriously affecting not only disabled people but those trying to cope with luggage, etc, particularly the elderly in the Borough of Harrow.

About eight years ago the previous regime at City Hall promised that lift facilities would be installed at Pinner, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Rayners Lane and Ruislip (all served by the Metropolitan Line) and we were shown diagrams of what LUL had in mind.

So far only Pinner station (which was only partially inaccessible) has obtained such facilities, and in that case there was a long delay between the construction of a footbridge and the installation of the lifts to go with it.

Due to lack of funding not only have Harrow-on-the-Hill and Rayners Lane (and Ruislip which is not in our Borough) now been deferred indefinitely, none of them seem to be afforded the classification of having any

degree of urgency when financial circumstances improve.

This has become a particular issue with regard to Harrow-on-the-Hill which is used by a large number of passengers, being served not only by LUL but by Chiltern Railways and is a heavily used interchange for both rail and bus passengers.

Later this year we are facing the introduction of new "S" type rolling stock on the Metropolitan Line that, amongst other things, has been designed to accommodate wheelchairs. These new trains are expected to be in service for at least 40 years. Surely LUL should act sooner rather than later in enabling these customers to be able to get to and from the platforms by introducing lifts, etc, for that purpose at key stations like Harrow-on-the-Hill (plus Rayners Lane, Ruislip, etc)? We cannot afford to waste the money spent on making our rolling stock user friendly for people with disabilities, etc, when they cannot reach it.

One further point affecting the Jubilee Line is the farcical situation concerned disabled access at Stanmore Station. Admittedly there is a form of access provided but this involves a lengthy and off-putting "route-march" from the car park. Harrow Council (and others) has been pressing for what we feel is a relatively inexpensive but more direct alternative facility from the booking hall but so far without success. This is a well used station for people travelling to and from events at the Wembley Complex as well as the O2 Arena and is certain to attract even more people attending the 2-12 Olympic Games.

I would be grateful if you could draw these matters to the attention of those concerned with enabling them to be resolved. Perhaps you could kindly let me know what response you get.

Yours sincerely - John Nickolay (Cllr LB of Harrow & opposition spokesman for Traffic & Transport)

PS - Between 2006 & 2010 I chaired the Harrow Traffic & Road Safety Advisory Panel and served on the London Councils TEC

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I welcome the report and scrutiny of this subject that the GLA is doing.

Obviously improvements on new build stations and the DLR in particular are welcome with more lifts and ramps etc not just for wheelchair users but the elderly in general, pram users and those with luggage.

Rather than the "physical environment" aspect please will the GLA very seriously look at extending the Freedom Pass boundaries further out than zone 6

to realise "real true accessibility" of places further out than London zones"

e.g on mainline trains to the Midlands, North and Northwest of the UK- Especially for the disabled, if not all the elderly Freedom Pass holding population.

I know there are arguments for the disabled railcard reducing fares by 34 percent but it still is a problem in terms of affordable accessibility, not just how easy it is/ or not to get on a train or bus per se.

Please will the GLA look at making the Freedom Pass- an ULTIMATE freedom giving pass to the disabled?

Many thanks

Liam McCue  
New Ventures PR

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Dear Ross

I understand from my local paper, Islington Gazette, that you are looking at accessibility of public transport.

Until her death at the age of 90 last year, I would often take my mother-in-law on buses in her wheelchair. Half the time the experience was good with helpful drivers and passengers. Half the time it was very poor with drivers refusing to stop for us or claiming they don't hear the special stop-bell for wheelchair-users. But the worst experiences were on the 43 bus route where it is policy not to allow wheelchairs on at all if there are buggies in the wheelchair space. Many 43 drivers refused to let us on as there was often a buggy onboard. This would disrupt our journeys and make my mother-in-law feel that she didn't have the same rights as other people to use public transport.

So the two most important things you can do, in my view, are:

1. Change this policy so that wheelchair users have the right to use the wheelchair space
2. Improve training of drivers to hear and heed the blue wheelchair bell

Thank you

Anne Cartwright

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Dear Ian O'Sullivan

Re your call for information for the London Assembly Transport Committee's investigation into accessibility, I append below a copy of a letter sent earlier this year from Audrey Brightwell, Spokesperson of the Harrow Partnership with Older People (POP) Panel to the Mayor of London.

The POP Panel is made up of 40 Harrow residents aged 50 plus. It meets regularly for information, discussion and consultation. This letter expresses concerns, disappointments and confusion about public transport accessibility in Harrow as raised at POP Panel meetings over past months. I do hope that the information in the Spokesperson's letter will be in a suitable format for input to the Investigation?

Thank you,  
Stephanie Sinclair  
*S J Sinclair*

Dear Boris Johnson,

#### Public Transport in Harrow

I am writing to express the concerns of the older people in Harrow about the lack of access to public transport systems. This is caused in some part because of the steep step entrances to the station platforms, lack of facilities to enable those who find climbing difficult to access the platforms, the need to extend journey times by the use of other transport systems to find an accessible station entrance which can be very demanding on an ageing body.

Older residents, although quite resourceful, do find it hard to use local transport facilities and often have to seek out those places and destinations with easier access in order to shop. Very often this means going out of borough as far as Uxbridge.

We would like to know the real reason for treating the London Borough of Harrow as a place of no account when it comes to sharing out resources.

Please note the following:

- Harrow has its fair share of older residents and those with access requirements.
- Harrow on the Hill station is hard to use because of steep steps.
- The same is true for those stations on the Jubilee line that are in the borough of Harrow.

- Bus transport links to the centre of Harrow are generally good but access, by bus, to places except the town centre can be tortuous because of the need to go into a town or local shopping centre and change buses. This particularly affects those living on the outskirts of the borough.
- Harrow missed out on a cross rail connection although at the time of route planning some residents had high hopes for inclusion in the route.
- The continual closure of the Jubilee line at weekends etc. is much resented as it prevents simple access to town, if one can climb stairs, and does detract from the quality of life.
- Harrow also has its fair share of areas of deprivation and the needs of these residents need to be attended to by the Government Office of London and City Hall as much as those who live in East London.

I would also like to add that as someone living on the borders of Harrow, Brent and Barnet I am mystified about the consultation that happened before the roads in the area before Queensbury Station, were altered or supposedly upgraded. I speak as a pedestrian, transport user and a car driver.

The car is needed as long as one can drive as it allows great savings in time. A journey that takes an hour by public transport can be completed in ten to fifteen minutes by car.

Yours faithfully,

Audrey Brightwell  
POP Panel Spokesperson

Our group the MS Society Harrow, I am the chair, are finding some of the internal changes to different lines of are longer walk than the change to the next station on the outside, sometimes there is no signage to tell you short cuts or better routes. This would be helpful, not enough seating if any between the different lines. No opportunity to buy or fill water bottles within the stations platforms.

The signage perhaps could be made clearer that if you are sitting in a disabled dedicated seat you must be disabled it is very embarrassing asking if you need the seat when clearly you need more than the child or able bodied person sitting there.

Wheelchairs are still not practical in parts of the underground and buses other countries do not seem to have that problem why do we.

yours sincerely  
Anne Diamond

Dear Mr Jardine

I read about this consultation in this week's Croydon Advertiser but the link given doesn't exist so I hope I am sending my thoughts to the right person.

I have the neurological disability ME/CFS which affects my mobility in terms of fatigue and muscle and joint pain. As I anticipate you are aware 2/3 rd's of physical disabilities which can seriously impact on mobility can be none visible e.g. cancers / MS / SLE / rheumatoid arthritis.

#### Trains

The main issue is the difficulty in accessing the stations – no lifts / escalators etc only step accessible. All the stations in my immediate vicinity – Crystal Palace / Norwood Junction have huge flights of stairs to get to the platforms which I can frequently not manage.

#### Busses

These are generally OK for me outside peak times.

The main issue if busy is not being able to get a seat even if you have a disability Freedom Pass – no assistance from the driver with this.

I have on more than one occasion been on busses where the driver has left a wheel chair passenger behind – i.e. not let them board.

I have also been on 227 bus where the ramp didn't work – so we all got off waited for another 227 – boarded and again the ramp didn't work – it was in Dec 2009. Passengers physically lifted the passenger on and off until he gave up and left.

I have also noted that drivers never ever take account of an elderly or disabled person needing to be seated to be safe before the bus moves off.

### Trams

I generally find the Croydon trams fine – they are all on the ground level and you can always get a seat.

### Tube

I only use the tube at the very last resort – due to poor air quality and overcrowding.

Again there is the issue of long walks between platforms and areas with too many steps for me.

I hope this is of use.

Regards

Christine J Hitrov

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased that the GLA has raised this issue about accessibility-In the bigger scheme of things I welcome what TFL are doing to improve lifts at stations and to keep these provided in new-builds such as the extension of the DLR and Overground/North London line.

However it isn't ONLY physical access to the network but practical and economic access to it.

We have been promised freedom pass validity BEFORE 0930 on trains by the Mayor but it STILL has not been delivered.

Why?

When will it be delivered?

Also why can't the Freedom Pass be TRULY UNIVERSAL and allow access outside London by train to further flung destinations.

It has to be remembered the taxpayer is subsidising privatised rail firms by millions of pounds, yet what do the Dept for Transport and TFL, the Mayor or London Councils get in return for their money?

The Mayor and Commissioner of TFL should put binding contracts in their subsidy and say if you are getting millions in public money, you will accept disabled freedom passes from London to other cities

e.g Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield, York and Leeds (all on DIRECT lines ex-London) and the Mayor should pressure the Minister for Transport, (it was Lord Adonis until the govt. changed -but whoever is in his shoes now and say do this!)

Many thanks

Elizabeth Wray.

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From: allen bergson  
Sent: 15 June 2010 13:09  
To: Ian O'Sullivan  
Subject: MORE

Busses still arrive without working ramps, some bus drivers treat us with contempt, and unfortunately some of the public do not like waiting a little longer for us to get on board. Also I have had problems with some people with children not wanting to collapse the buggies so I can get to the wheelchair space, and how can wheelchair users show their pass or pay when they cannot get near to the driver.

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On Overland trains I had to spend time in parcel vans as unable to get in to the public carriages, also the station toilets did not have working accessible loos, and this goes for the trains also.

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I have still not used the Underground trains because I cannot complete my journeys as there is lack of accessible stations, I am also worried about the different height in accessing the train and the different gaps in the platforms with different train lines.

Allen

From: allen bergson  
Sent: 15 June 2010 12:16  
To: Ian O'Sullivan  
Cc: Fred Allen  
Subject: accessible transport

As requested by Hillingdon Mobility Forum:

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Recently I have declined two trips on voluntary work as the organisers either could not or did not want to provide accessible Coaches for the group of us (I was the only one in a wheelchair)

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I have had many difficulties over the years with Dial-A-Ride when I want to attending meetings as they would take me but be unable to bring me back as it was after eight pm.

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Do you realise that if you have to travel in an electric wheelchair that does not fold for storage or you cannot transfer out of a wheelchair; your fare price will be higher than the airfare to Europe?

The latest trips by Black Cabs I have taken were for drug trials for the National Hospital Holborn, and the Doctors were given an estimate for picking me up of £35.00, when I phoned it was an estimate of £53.00. On the day it came to £71.20 but when the credit card statement came it was £80.11 one way, they explained that the extra was for booking fees and credit card charges (they will only guarantee to pick up wheelchair users if they use booking and credit card charges, not surprising).

Able body would not have to book Black Cab, so without the extras I think it would be £50.00 to £60.00 for cash. Black Cabs will not take cash bookings they want booking fees etc.

A trip in a Mini cab 5 miles costs £42.00 each way, without the extras waiting time, this happen two weeks ago and last year it was £21.00 each way by the same company. This trip I did coming home by flagging down

three Black Cab's (the first two said they did not have ramps) the charge for the trip was £16.00 by Mini Cab it would have been even cheaper.

A trip to Euston and return in a Black cab last year, about 28 mile round trip was £165.00. My Estimate for able body users is about £120.00

A trip by Black cab to Brent (one way, under 10 miles) with time added on for finding my bungalow was, £48.00. (There was £24.00 on the clock when he picked me up).

A trip from Kensington high street in adapted Mini cab to Pinner was quoted as £28.00 for a wheelchair but when they new that it could not be folded, they charged £42.00. It would have been £28.00 as that is their own quote

I waited 2 hours for the last Mini cab to pick me up from my destination, and the last Black cab I waited 1 hour, sometimes the black cabs will just not pick you up.

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For your meeting on Wed DAR had booked a black cab, and as he was given the wrong address there was £22.00 on the clock when he arrived and as he did not know where he could drop me off the final bill was £40.00 for a 4-mile journey, who pays for this?  
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Dear Caroline Pidgeon, It is 51 weeks since the last meeting and I would like to bring to your attention things that worry me, and items of concern reported by the community:

Dial-A-Ride:

In the last 51 weeks I have personally found that I have been able to be accommodated on a lot more trips, and the pick up times have all been on time, but the collection times have been bad, on three occasions over 45 mins late. The controllers do not tell us that they have rescheduled the pick up time, so when you phone them they say the vehicle is not late yet. When you phone again and tell them that the new pick up time is over 15 mins late they say they will phone you back, but the still don't so we end up phoning again (at prime mobile phone rates) which is unfair.

The time it takes to book a trip on the phone is very much improved, taking only a few mins.

The driver's attitude as always is fantastic towards the passengers, and they go the extra mile in all their

service to us, this should be noted.

On their behalf I would like you to look into their working conditions, as I think their union Unite is a waste of space and does nothing for them.

I brought to the committee's attention last year the unsuitable condition of the new buses in regard to walking passengers and the drivers, but i have seen no improvement or a reply on who and why this vehicle was purchased, see below.

*March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting 2009*

*The drivers and the public would like to know who was the person responsible for ordering the new vehicles for the following reasons: Also the journey times are increased by all theses issues and in some cases the drivers and passengers safety is at risk.*

- 1. It is too wide to get through some width restrictions bollards?*
- 2. Fixed wing mirror on near side makes it harder to manoeuvre with cars parked both sides of road, can be danger to pedestrians when trying to get close to kerb.*
- 3. Drivers Wing mirror hard to adjust, so both wing mirrors should be electric.*
- 4. When driving it is very hard to see side of vehicle because of drivers seat angle and height.*
- 5. Very unsuitable turning circle, bad turning lock.*

6. Very hard to judge whether to lower the bus because the doors get stuck on kerbs and then need to be taken out of service, and why was there no sensors fitted to warn the driver if the doors are going to hit the ground.

7. Ramp too steep for some wheelchairs when no pavement present, (parked cars)

8. Ramp cannot be used by walking passengers as too steep and no handrails.

9. Stepping down without lowering the bus is very difficult for most walking passengers much too high and no handrails.

10. Plenty of room to turn around a wheelchair in the bus but dangerous for walking passengers as no handrails to grab on to.

11. Why did Ealing Community Transport Drivers who tried out the vehicle reject it stating it was unsuitable and over priced even with the big discount offered (WHY?), bearing in mind that the cost of adaptations outweighed the discount.

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Since then I was told Westminster council rejected the use of this type of vehicle, and I have also seen how bad it performs in the snow. One driver just got out of the way after putting down the ramp when the bus slid towards her just missing her feet, I was also told that there have been accidents when the bus slid into objects after it stopping.

The fact is that every driver but one that I have questioned on the new buses over the past 51 weeks have stated that they do not like this bus, but my constant e-mails to Unite have resulted in not one reply, as I assume they are not interested in their Dial-a-Ride drivers. WHY?

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Capital Call:

Is now like the Taxi card system, which again I cannot find anybody who knows why this has been changed to a worst system, and some Councils are now not using Capital Call, was this why it was changed?

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Black Cabs:

On the Taxi Card are mainly useless as the cabbies are reluctant to take on the jobs when they can pick up cash payers on route, also all the ones I have used have not restrained myself or the wheelchair on the journey.

Only last week I was refused a trip when I approached a stationary cab, when he informed me that he had left his ramp at home. This has happened to me three times (maybe because it was raining on all those occasions and the poor driver would have to get out of the warm cab to get me in).

It is funny that the only good experience I have had in a Black Cab was in Jan when Dial-A-Ride sent me a black Cab for a meeting because they had no other vehicle for me, this time I was strapped in and the wheelchair was clamped (how much does this cost DAR?) It is also ridiculous that if I phone for a Taxi under the Council scheme I pay the pickup and the excess but on DAR black cab nothing.

You now have Capital Call nearly the same as the Taxi Card and DAR using Black Cabs for journeys also, so would it not make sense to combine all three under one management or is that common sense which politicians never use?

As stated before we would like a public enquiry into the purchase of the new buses and the competence of the management of DAR and not the internal enquiry that was agreed to by your committee last year, which I have still not seen the results.

Please note that because of the extra time the drivers have to spend on the new buses, on their journey times because of width restrictions and not being able to see the side of the bus plus not being able to get access to the kerbs because of parked cars etc, they are being constantly pressured by management and it has to



stop! If you can do one thing at today's meeting let it be to speak up for the drivers before they all leave DAR.

Allen Bergson: D-A-R user (ex- transport manager) \_allen7@sky.com

You maybe interested that to day a driver told me that out of the 29 news buses in his depot 14 were out of order and their engineers could not fix some of them.

I now know they are not buying anymore of these buses but I think we should know who authorised the purchase and if there was a financial gain to that person or was he just an idiot?

Also you should look into why, when I gave TFL all this information about the buses over a year ago, they did nothing.

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I HAVE A MEETING WITH TFL ON JULY 8TH ABOUT THIS PROBLEM

ALLEN BERGSON

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I'm a wheelchair user and on July 5, 2009, we'd arranged to go to a meeting near Euston, so, knowing that Kings Cross station was accessible, we looked at TfL's website and asked for a step-free route from Stratford. Central Line to Mile End, District Line to Whitechapel, Hammersmith and City to Kings Cross, it said. (Jubilee Line not working on Sunday.) Central Line to Mile End was okay. District Line to Whitechapel was okay. At Whitechapel a notice said if no Hammersmith and City train on the notice board, take first train to Aldgate East and get Hammersmith and City from there. So we did. We've now changed trains three times and are on the fourth train. As we got to - I think - Farringdon, an announcement said the train was not stopping at Kings Cross station, which was closed due to a person under a train. Right enough, train went straight through Kings Cross station. Next accessible station was Wood Lane. So we stayed on the train - not having much choice - to Wood Lane, where we got off and asked Information when Kings Cross would re-open. They didn't know. Later we got the train back to Kings Cross, it stopped there but our meeting was nearly over so we didn't get off. Then they announced the train was stopping at Moorgate and not going any further. Everybody got off. Two foreigners asked us how they could get to Liverpool Street. We said we didn't know, and they'd better find a member of station staff to ask. Luckily there were some staff hanging around and we asked them how we get to Aldgate.

"There's no easy way" said the staff man gloomily (because the halted train was occupying the platform and all the other passengers were having to go down and then up lots of stairs to another platform to catch the next train), then the driver of the train on the opposite platform hopped out of his cabin and said "They could get on my train, I'm Circle, back to Kings Cross, and catch another train from there." So we did. At King's Cross he hopped out again and pointed us to the other platform - "You get a train from there that'll take you to Aldgate." We just missed one, then the next one came in so quickly we didn't see what Line it was or where it was going, but got on it nevertheless - however the train had a voice which told us it was Hammersmith and City. We changed at Aldgate East and again at Mile End without any more trouble. At Stratford we were treated to the new lift on which you have to keep pressing the button to keep it moving, but we managed that all right and it got us up to the bit of platform where the Jubilee Line comes in.

So after going up and down over the line to the exit, we went for a bus. It being Sunday, there was a fairly long wait, then a 86 came. Ramp came out, then retracted itself. The driver tried FIVE times to put the ramp out, and it retracted itself each time. Meanwhile a 25 arrived behind, and left. But the next 25 worked perfectly and we got home at last. One and a half cheers to TfL, who didn't get us to our meeting but did give us an interesting afternoon and unexpected tour of Westfield.

Where I've had to ask staff, I've found them helpful.

I appreciate the small gap between train and platform on Jubilee and DLR lines. Elsewhere the gap is formidable and I guess there's no solution to that.

Ramps on buses are not yet reliable and often a source of frustration.

It can be difficult to hail the bus in the first place. Once in the bus, as a wheelchair user I find it impossible to communicate with the driver. Whoever is with me has to go to the front to tell him where I want to alight, and sometimes this is difficult when the bus is very crowded. An intercom system would be useful.

Some ramps are very steep. Some bus stops are inaccessible because of parked cars and narrowness of road, where the bus cannot pull in to the kerb.

When I was at West Ham station I asked a staff member about the possibility of travelling by train from that station to Southend. She explained travel would have to be arranged in advance –she would have to phone Barking Station. A staff member there would travel to West Ham bringing the ramp. There is no ramp at West Ham station. Clearly I would have to inform them of the exact time of my return to be sure the ramp was available at West Ham and had not been returned to Barking. Because of these complications I abandoned any plans re Southend. The lack of spontaneity in using trains is a great drawback.

The set-down points for taxis (e.g. at Stratford) should be clearly marked.

I feel door-to-door transport for many of us will have the advantage over using public transport for ease, safety and efficient use of time.

Elsa Beckett,

111B Windsor Road, London E7 0RA.

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Dear Sir,

I have recently received an invitation to the 2 meetings about transport and mobility and I would like to raise 2 points before attending the meeting on the 23rd June.

- I am now unable to use the overground trains from Grange Park Station, as the trains are too high. I am ok getting on, as I can pull myself up, but getting off is impossible.
- Buses still do not stop near the curbs which makes getting on & off very difficult. I have recently had a shoulder replacement and so can only use one arm at the moment. There must be other older people having this problem too. I am 82 years, so am no spring chicken!

Do I need a ticket to come to the 2 meetings? I am the official representative of The London Friendship Centre on LOPSG.

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Dear Caroline,

I enjoy reading the London Liberal Democrats Weekly Newsletter, as well as your own transport Newsletters.

My problem is one that faces all people who are disabled. I cannot visit places which necessitate a change from one Underground line to another because of the walking involved - including climbing stairs at some interchange stations.

It would be helpful if moving walkways could be introduced where long walking distances are involved on any station. At present I have to stop to regain my breath after walking a relatively short distance, and recently received aid as I could walk no further (I suffer from angina)

I have a disabled badge which is not accepted by the City of London, Westminster, and Kensington and Chelsea councils. Whilst appreciating that traffic is heavy in these areas, I have to visit them on occasions at places which are a long way from the Underground stations.

It is Russian Roulette whether one can find a disabled parking place in these areas, and could you possibly help us (all disabled people) on this matter by getting the ban lifted.

Thanking you in anticipation of your kind help in these matters,

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ray Kates

PS I shall be 86 this year.

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From: Odette Battarel  
Sent: 01 June 2010 16:43  
To: Ian O'Sullivan  
Subject: mobility Forum

Dear Sir/Madam

I am the manager of the Thomas Pocklington Resource Centre for blind people in Wandsworth. I talk to many blind and partially sighted adults who travel in London every day.

I would like to bring to your attention the problems we have with the tactile cones at traffic lights: Under the box where you press to get the green man there should be a metal cone that turns when the man is green indicating that you can cross the road. This is great and very useful and many blind and partially sighted people use them every day.

Unfortunately many are damaged and need maintenance but who is responsible for reporting this?

Well it seems that mainly those who use it. I now have the TFL number in my mobile phone but when I call they insist on knowing the name of the streets and I can usually tell them one or two but if it is a big junction with several roads and I say: send the engineer to check the whole junction, they do not seem to have that on their computers... but the irony is that they are asking people who do not see to read the names of the streets.....I cannot for example say well it is the first street on the right after the Sainsbury ... they need the name of the street....

The worst case is Clapham Junction, I have been phoning TFL for 4 years now and no results I am told that the whole Junction is due for renovation .... And 4 years later there are still no signs of a tactile cone that works!.. So I suggest that some temporary measures are taken at large Junctions during road works or awaiting renovation

I hope that these issues will be considered and a pedestrian needs safe access to a station or bus stop in order to complete their journey!

Regards

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Dear Ms Jardine

Sorry I pressed the send button before I finished this letter.

I was in London two weeks ago travelling via Euston mainline station to Stansted Airport. A day before I was due to travel I double checked on TFL website to see if I could get onto the Victoria line, either by Euston underground or St Pancras/Kings Cross Station. To find out St Pancras/King Cross. was accessible

I then rang up TFL to make double sure I could access the Victoria line from St Pancras/ Kings Cross underground station. As I was in an electric wheelchair and was told it was. Yes it was access able.

When I arrived at the station. I was told sorry we have only a goods lift and it can not take eclectic wheelchairs Surely a station is either access able for wheelchairs or not and the fore if there any restrictions should be added on the underground map next to the wheelchair symbol.  
I now find this coment very unreliable as if it a goods lift it would be made take a lot heavier things than a wheelchair.

As it hapend the Victoria line was out of action. But that's no't the point. Surely when you see a wheelchair simble on a train map it normally means its accessable for wheelchairs.

It remind me of the bus drivers who say the same thing even when its written in law. Was I yet again fobbed off about the lift or is the symol on the LTT map wrong. It has to be corrected. Pehaps you could have a simble saying theres a gap between the platform and the train and no ramp available as the trains are too frequent. (That is another excuss I've been given in the pass.)

Although I live in liverpool I would be willing to come down to the meetting if you think it would help, as I come to London a few times a year.

Yours Faithfully

Phil McLoughlin

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Hi Ross,

I work in London on a regular basis and have to use public transport. As someone with autism, arthritis and some co-ordination difficulties relating to this, I find public transport very stressful and often absolutely terrifying. It is almost completely inaccessible to me at peak times, thanks to the combination of sensory sensitivities, balance problems, lack of clear signage, jostling, lack of information etc. I recently got hopelessly lost at a rail station in London, for example. I also recently had to be rescued from near-disaster on the Underground by a very lovely group of teenage lads who could see I was distressed and confused.

It's a horrible, frightening and disempowering experience. We all want to do our best for the environment, but using public transport is a torture for me and I wish with all my heart that London were interested in helping. I can't even get anyone at the Mayor's office to respond, let alone care so far.

If there is something I can do to help, let me know?

Kind regards  
Ann Memmott

Adviser to the BSI on Buildings Access for autism & to the RICS on autism and buildings design  
Adviser to the Archbishops of the Church of England – learning disability and autism working group  
Working with the National Autistic Society

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Hi

I am a member of netmums a local website where people can add views and comments and I have found a comment on there about Transport for London and what we think.

I am a mum of 2 one which is very young can not walk who is in a pushchair, I normally drive, but this one occasion I had to take the bus with both my children, I was waiting for the No. 222 bus to come in Uxbridge Middlesex, I was waiting for a while when the bus came I put my arm out to get on and the driver shook his head to tell me "no you won't be getting on my bus" he carried on driving, I then had to wait for another bus to come when that bus arrived the driver said I can not let you on, I have a pushchair on the bus already I said I will fold it down and hold my baby but the driver said no, he didn't give me any other reason, he closed the doors and drove off, after being refused twice to get on the bus I phoned for a taxi to come and pick me up I can not believe I got refused to get onto 2 buses in a space of 30 mins. I will not be taking public transport again if I do I won't be taking my kids, my other son loves going on the bus and trains and other public transport because we normally drive everywhere.

I think its out of order that bus drivers don't let us on with pushchairs.

Wendy Delaney  
From West Drayton, Middlesex

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Impossible to use as well as Taxicard issues where leave you stranded because using old IT programmes & malicious policies. No one monitoring or addressing issues. Every borough is only allowing you to park in it so if you need to access other parts there is nowhere to park or ability to get there. When concerns the medical not available because Borough discriminating it is a health & safety risk

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Whilst I am happy with the trams why is it that you have to book 24 hours in advance to get assistance on a train – surely most mainline stations are manned during the day to provide this service.

Regards  
Jane Davey  
Croydon

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Hello,

I gather from MVSC that you are investigating experiences of public transport for disabled people. My experience as a wheelchair user is mixed between relief when it all works or frustration when it doesn't. Generally staff awareness of accessibility is poor for example last week a journey from Wimbledon to Kings Cross, I was informed the lifts were out at Kings cross and to get out at Russell Square, despite me saying I didn't think there was access there, I was told I checked and it will be fine. Getting out to only be referred to as "wheelchair-bound", asked could I walk up 20 steps and then told, don't know what to suggest! Luckily A friend and I worked out to get a train to Caledonian Road and then bus back. This is just one example.

Portable ramps on some underground stations and not others mean I nearly always need to travel with someone despite being an independent, autonomous adult. I once asked at Westminster, why they didn't have a ramp & was told "maybe if I complained", do I really need to for something so obvious?

On the whole I use buses, but again the lack of drivers awareness of what prevents the lift from operating properly amazes me. Locally new stops were designed but with fancy brick work leading to the curb, so the lift comes out, hits the edging and returns back. I usually have to explain to the driver to move to a better point for the lift to come out. Surely, first some liaising between the authority putting in the improvements and TFL should have pointed out that the lifts work best on smooth, tarmac surfaces and secondly, aren't the drivers made aware of how the lifts operate?

I get a sense of complacency from TFL because some improvements have been made. The mayor cancelling improvements to a number of stations is outrageous and unacceptable in 2010! This kind of saving costs more in the long term. Cut backs to capital call and the limits imposed on dial-a-ride really do not meet with the expectations & needs of disabled (particularly young) disabled people in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

I'm not actually much of a complainer and hope my comments are seen in a helpful way, but I guess I've demonstrated to myself that we've got a long way to go and it's some of the simpler things that make a real difference that are a frustration for a wheelchair user travelling in London. I also feel that cut-backs in terms of accessibility are unacceptable as it's fairly easy to demonstrate that it actually costs/saves money in the future & must be a priority. It will be a bit embarrassing in 2012 to have that kind of out-dated, poor access as a legacy?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I hope your investigation leads to positive changes & ACTION! Good luck.

Regards,

John Kelly

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Dear Ross,

It is difficult to get heavy luggage on to the luggage platforms provided on some buses - You have to lift it up and over the rails; this is a difficulty for the less able.

TfL are encouraging cycling, which in itself is very accessible to the elderly and infirm; it could be more encouraging if London's buses had bike racks. Why not try them on say the single deckers on routes going out of London and to the big London Parks? They provide for cycle carriage in New York and San Francisco - why not in London?

Bikes are not allowed on the Northern Line. Why not re-examine this policy? They are on other tubes.

The K5 is brilliant, allowing wheelchairs wherever, whenever. It is a lifeline to users - but it doesn't run on Sundays. Why not? TfL wants people to use their cars less - but there's only a K5 service on Saturdays, so people may feel the need to have a car for their freedom over the entire weekend.

Charles

Charles Barraball

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I do not have reduced mobility but I am concerned that, with the number of parents with pushchairs now using the buses, wheelchair users can be forgotten. For example I was on a 354 bus and there were two

pushchairs already on board. At the next stop someone in a wheelchair wanted to board but was told he could not as there were already two pushchairs. This is a (sometimes) unreliable 20 minute service so it meant the wheelchair user might have to wait at least another 20 minutes and possibly 40 before the chance came to board a bus. And of course the same thing might have happened again.

The carrying of pushchairs on buses has got quite out of hand. As a grandmother I used to use a Buggy (i.e. an easily fold up chair) to transport my grandchildren only five years ago. Now parents feel they have the right to use enormous three wheel affairs or the type that cannot easily be folded up if necessary and are affronted if the driver asks them to fold them up. I was on a bus only yesterday when there were FOUR pushchairs, making it very difficult for anyone to move past them - especially older people with a stick or frame. I only recently broke my ankle and had to use a stick for some time, so I know how difficult it is to manoeuvre round pushchairs.

Of course I support mobility for parents but things have gone too far. Could you not make a size restriction for these pushchairs (which are definitely not buggies) and ensure that drivers know that they should ask for them to be folded up if they cause an obstruction or - going back to my original point - a wheelchair user wishes to use the space intended for them. Perhaps manufacturers could be encouraged to put label on their pushchairs if they comply with transport requirements to be of a certain size and easily foldable.

Belinda Price, Beckenham.

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Dear Sir/Madam,

If I may raise a few points about the above areas which the GLA are scrutinising. It is not just about physical access to the network but about the cost-access to the network for disabled people who wish to maybe go further out than the Freedom Pass boundaries.

There is currently a huge investment going into promoting tourism outside London, in places like Yorkshire with their Welcome to Yorkshire poster campaign on London trains etc, Liverpool with a prospective bid for Cultural City and Birmingham but it simply "costs a mint" to get out there. There are NO ticket extensions from boundary zone 6 to places like Birmingham, Leeds, York, Manchester, Liverpool and compulsorily one must buy a LONDON to these places ticket. Hence the zone 6 is having to be paid for in addition to the entire route fare even if some disabled person has a freedom pass.

But what is the point of these counties or cities spending millions to say instead of London come up to see us when it then costs the earth to get there. One fare from London to York was almost £70 even with a third off for railcard holders.

Can the GLA and London Councils work with ATOC, individual rail firms like EASTCOAST, VIRGIN and East Midlands trains to bring about a set "Freedom Pass Rated" fare e.g £10 or £15 return if you hold a Freedom Pass and you can depart and return at any time to these outside London destinations.

Thankyou

Terence Jolley

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I would like to comment on the above. I am at present unable to climb stairs and this has opened my eyes to some of the difficulties in travelling across London. I find this very frustrating on the underground as everywhere are steps. Travelling on overground to Victoria, I could not get to the Victoria line without going

down steps. I noticed lots of people with luggage struggling up and down these steps. I had a case and could not get down the steps I had to get buses to Kings Cross which was very time consuming.

The other comment I have is that I am not a particularly tall person 5ft 8 but find the buses have very small seats which I cannot get my legs into. The layout varies from bus to bus but generally there are only a few seats deep enough. They have less legroom than a plane. I thought the population were getting taller not smaller.

thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

Sheila Black

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I am a 31 year old female professional and I live in Central London specifically because I like to walk to and from work, and very rarely take public transport, especially with recent price rises. As I have lived in the capital for a number of years I am very comfortable doing this, but have many friends who know the city less well, and therefore worry about getting lost while walking.

When I first started walking in London, I found the local area maps on bus stops incredibly useful. Recently these seem to be fewer, and there are more 'spider' maps of bus routes instead. If both could be available people may see how easy it is to get from one place to another on foot. It would also be useful to have more permanent maps like the ones in the City which show where you are, and local landmarks, in Westminster and other boroughs.

As part of an environmental initiative at my work recently we provided hand drawn 'personal' walking maps. These showed simple routes to and from train stations such as Waterloo and Euston. The maps were not to scale, but intended as a 'guide' with places of interest (and pubs!) to entice people to spend time looking at the city around them that gets ignored every day. Many people commented on how close stations were-and that it took the same amount of time to walk as to get the tube. Using the unusual sights as signposts meant that people felt walking was less of a chore, although I'm sure weather played its part!

You can probably tell that I am very passionate about this subject, and am keen to hear more about the project and take part in initiatives where possible.

Kind regards,  
Catriona Duncan

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## 1) Accessibility at Stations

An example:

If you have a wheelchair (or pushchair) and you want to go from Ruislip station then the line going into London is accessible. However when you return from London, the platform is not accessible due to the stairs on the overtrack bridge. Which means you have the most ridiculous situation where you can't get off at Ruislip and have to go all the way to Hillingdon or Uxbridge (accessible stations) and then change platforms and then travel all the way back to Ruislip so you can get off on the accessible platform at Ruislip. How ridiculous is it that disabled users etc have to make such a huge detour! Lifts must be installed at Ruislip station.

Another priority for lifts would be Harrow on the Hill station. Harrow on the Hill has a major shopping centre however if you are disabled you can't use the station due to the numerous stairs. If you want for example to go from Uxbridge to Harrow on the Hill, you can't use solely the tube as Harrow on the Hill station is inaccessible. You have to use 2 buses or tube and bus instead which takes a very long time. So non disabled people have a quick 19 minute journey solely by tube however disabled people have a complex 52 mins journey (tube and then bus to Harrow on the Hill) or 55 mins journey (2 buses for return journey as Ruislip station is also inaccessible for return journey).



Also Harrow on the Hill is an interchange station so it is very important to have lifts in it.

N.B. We mostly don't bother travelling on the tube within central London (e.g. from Great Ormond Street Hospital to the London Eye) as the tube accessibility is so poor. We use the Taxi Card system instead.

Recommendations:

- Ruislip station needs lifts so that both platforms are accessible.
- Put lifts in Harrow on the Hill station.
- Increase dramatically the numbers of accessible stations, particularly in the suburbs e.g. the Metropolitan Line.

## 2) Disabled Parking at Stations

Why are there so few disabled parking bays at accessible stations?

Examples

Uxbridge - No disabled parking spaces at all.

Hillingdon - only about 2 or 3 (sometimes they are all full).

Pinner - about 3 or 4 (usually always full).

We sometimes go from Pinner station (as my disabled child's school is nearby and we have to go for hospital appointments in central London). It's great now that Pinner station is accessible and it proves to be very popular with many disabled people, but there are so few disabled parking bays that they are always full when we try and use the station! However there are few people using the 20 minutes wait bays or the taxi bays. If you have a disabled child you can't just drop them off (like you can with disabled adult passengers) and then try and find a disabled space in a car park somewhere in Pinner.

Recommendations:

- Uxbridge - Introduce some disabled parking bays by the station.
- Hillingdon - Increase the numbers of disabled parking bays.
- Pinner - Increase dramatically the numbers of disabled bays at this popular station and not just the ones by the entrance, why not put some in the long stay car park as well.

### 3) Buses

In general we have had a very good experience with buses in London using a pushchair and wheelchair and have had few problems. In fact the drivers (especially on the A10 from Uxbridge to Heathrow Airport) have been very friendly and helpful.

However we have heard horror stories on internet fora and disability publications: ramps not working; people with pushchairs refusing to give up the wheelchair space; drivers refusing to stop when they see a person in a wheelchair; disabled bells on buses not working; people with a disabled child in pushchairs (not all disabled children use wheelchairs some will use pushchairs) being told to move by drivers to allow a wheelchair on even though they have explained to the driver that they have a disabled child in the pushchair; ...

I have noticed that on the A10 bus service which goes to and from Heathrow Airport, there are no proper luggage racks for suitcases and so passengers tend to put them in the wheelchair space! A complete nuisance if you are a wheelchair user or you have a pushchair as you have to get everyone to move their suitcases. Why aren't there proper luggage racks on buses to airports? Try looking at the 724 Harlow to Heathrow Airport (and vice versa) service - that has fantastic huge luggage racks.

Many bus routes to Heathrow airport e.g. A10, ... terminate at the central bus station at the airport and don't for on to Terminal 5. This is an absolute nuisance for disabled travelers and carers as you then have to get off the bus with wheelchair and suitcases, go all the way down to the Heathrow Express train and load up and travel then by train. It would be so much easier and quicker if the buses stopped at the Central Bus station AND Terminal 5. It's ridiculous because the 724 does stop at both but you can't use Oyster cards on it and the service is very infrequent and so locals just don't bother using it.

The 724 bus operator does not accept Oyster cards. Also it has recently changed the boundaries for their cheaper Explorer tickets so if you live in Uxbridge for example and you are going to for example to Watford or St. Albans you can't get the cheap tickets any more. Very bad news especially if you are a carer travelling with a disabled person.

Recommendations:

- Put large luggage racks on all buses that go to airports.
- Buses to Heathrow Airport (e.g. A10, etc) should stop at both the Central Bus Station AND Terminal 5.
- Get Green Line to accept Oyster cards on the 724 service (handy if you want to go from Heathrow Airport to Uxbridge for example).
- Get Green Line to extend the boundary for the Explorer Ticket so that those for example in Uxbridge can get then like they used to be able to do.

### 4) Taxi Card

In Uxbridge there didn't use to be a dedicated Taxi Card black cab so there was a huge waiting time for a Taxi Card black cab and also drivers would not be familiar with the area. Once had to wait over an hour for a Taxi Card black cab from Heathrow and when the driver arrived he didn't know the airport well and wasn't sure where to pick us up and didn't know the destination as it was in the suburbs and his map didn't cover it.

There one dedicated Taxi Card black cab in Uxbridge now. However there needs to be a lot more.

Yes there's the Capital Call service but you can't book online or ask for one as soon as possible. Also mini cabs are a lot more hassle for wheelchair users compared with a black cab which the wheelchair can quickly and easily be put on. Also black cabs are safer for disabled children as they can remain in wheelchairs or their pushchairs and the wheelchair/pushchair is chained to the black cab. In minicabs there are no children/baby car seats and so children have to sit on laps etc. which isn't very safe.

Stagecoaching is inconsistent across the boroughs e.g. Hillingdon Council - No stagecoaching allowed on the Taxi Card system however bizarrely it does allow it on Capital Call. Please get them to allow it for BOTH systems.

Recommendations:

- Dramatically increase the numbers of black cabs which use the Taxi Card system in the suburbs.
- Allow 'stagecoaching' for ALL councils on Taxi Card and Capital Call.
- Provide infant/baby/children car seats in minicabs if needed.
- Allow on-line bookings for Capital Call bookings.
- Allow 'as soon as possible' bookings for Capital Call.

## 5) Freedom Pass

Wonderfully my disabled child qualifies for this, which she will mostly use on the buses outside London (and some trains) as we now have to pay as our child is 5 years old. When she is older she will use it on the tubes and buses in London when she has to start paying.

It is very expensive for carers to travel to the numerous hospital appointments with a disabled person and also accompanying disabled people as their carer to other events, social activities, etc. Many carers in other parts of the country get a 'free companion pass' issued by their local council however carers who live in London don't get this. Living expenses and travel in and around London are expensive so why are carers in London not subsidised like carers in other parts of the country? Carer's Allowance is at such a low value (only approx. £53 a week) and many carers have given up work to look after their disabled relative. With this and huge living expenses in London, carers really should be given a free companion pass (Freedom Pass) like their counterparts in other parts of the country.

Recommendation:

Issue free Freedom Passes to carers. (i.e. for those who receive Carer's Allowance).

## 6) Tube Trains

We are really looking forward to the new Metropolitan Line trains being introduced. They look very accessible (compared with the inaccessible ones at the moment) and it'll be wonderful to have air conditioning on them.

Yours sincerely

Claire Goodbody (Mrs)

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One of the most frustrating things I find, as I am visually impaired guide dog owner, is that quite often bus drivers don't have the audible announcements turned on, as I've heard drivers saying they are annoying. But people like me need these announcements. I also find it a common place, that not all London Underground trains, have the audible announcements on either. It should be made a compulsory law, that all public transport has these announcements always on.

I have already emailed my local MP Heidi Alexander for Lewisham East, raising these issues.

The second point being, I know, that buses have the facility for young parents with prams and buggies, But when I'm on a bus with a guide dog, I object to them trying to make me move, as they want to get their buggy on. Why aren't they made to fold their buggy, and hold the child. I didn't ask to be visually impaired, and need my guide dog for mobility purpose. (You can't just fold or put a guide dog out of the way) like a buggy.

Why I'm on the issue of forwarding my views and complaints: I frequently come across pedestrian crossings, where the light doesn't work, or the rotating cone underneath the box doesn't work. TFL should be made to frequently check all their crossings, to make sure they are in full working order.

To make, TFL, councils and government aware of the issues people like myself face, I recommend that you spend a day blind folded, trying to negotiate, and get round London, to find out for yourself the difficulties and dangers faced. Instead of sitting behind a desk, and just trying to implement failures in the system.

David Steward

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I had a terrible experience in the 276 bus last Friday 18th June. It was around 11.30 a.m. I caught the bus at the first Amhurst Road bus stop where the bus comes in from Rectory Road area. The bus was full, standing room only. I stood by the "luggage" area, near the door, and held onto the handrails. Luckily I did, as the bus driver obviously stepped on the accelerator and raced off. If I hadn't been holding onto the rails, I would

have been thrown from one side to the other. As it was, though I held on tightly with both hands on different rails, I was still thrown from one rail to the other, so violently that my arms were getting hurt. I have problems with my left arm (and get osteopathic treatment for it), now my right arm was getting bashed, and I was worried that it would be damaged.

The whole thing happened very quickly, but I nearly fell, and a man opposite me immediately offered me his seat.

I wondered why I hadn't noticed such reckless driving in the past, as I do tend to take this bus when I go to Mare Street area. I realised that I was usually able to sit down, so I didn't notice as much. This is the first time I can remember having to stand.

I have osteoporosis, diagnosed 4 years ago after I had at least 2 fractures. I also have osteo-arthritis. I'm 70 years old.

The whole incident was very frightening, and I was in a state of shock by the time I got to my meeting – so much so that I managed to block the incident out for a while, as I was so traumatised. The same state of shock prevented me from thinking clearly at the time, or I might have been able to note the exact time, and got details of the bus or the driver.

I've noticed anti-speed bumps in some of the roads, but I don't think there are any in this particular patch.

Generally, from my perspective, buses and bus drivers are a mixed bunch. There are some awful drivers, some very bad-tempered drivers, and some really nice ones.

One thing I would appreciate is knowing where to get bus maps. They seem to have disappeared.

sincerely,

Flora Kerrigan

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I have to admit that our experience has been pretty bad.

1. The Bus wait time can be improved. For eg., H28 comes every 20 minutes in front of our house. During peak times, there are traffic delays and hence the wait times are more.
2. The travel in the tubes during peak office hours is something which can be improved by putting in more trains etc., It is stuffy, too many people on the tubes, no place to sit or stand.
- 3.

On an average every person is spending 2 to 3 hours a day in the public transport and anything which can reduce the journey time and make it pleasant would be a welcome.

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Regards

Girish and Chethana

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The British Polio Federation magazine mentioned that you are interested in experiences with the transport. Well here's mine.

I have two very bad legs, walk with a stick and cannot climb steps with any ease.

Having recently had to attend a family event in Croydon I planned out a journey with reference to information published on the internet. The plan was to arrive at St Pancras, use Thameslink to East Croydon southbound, and on the return use Thameslink to London Bridge followed by Northern Line to St Pancras, as the Thameslink does not run to St Pancras on a Saturday afternoon.

The southbound journey was uneventful, though I did feel that the ramp to exit the station at East Croydon (shown on the map with a wheelchair symbol denoting "step-free access") was rather steep for an unpowered wheelchair. I walk with difficulty and found it quite hard. I noted afterwards that, hidden away on the Thameslink website, this situation is identified, and assistance can be requested.

The return journey was somewhat different. The rail line at East Croydon is at such an angle that the train stops with its floor about 500mm above the platform. I don't call this "step-free access" It is an enormous step. Now it is possible that some form of ramp may be available, but I needed to catch that train so had to negotiate this step anyway. If there were signs advising of the situation I didn't see them.

London Bridge station is clearly shown with a wheelchair symbol on the underground map. To access the Northern Line I had to take a lift down one floor, negotiate a busy street market, descend the longest steepest escalator I have ever seen, followed by a short flight of steps. This is after asking for the disabled access at the information desk.

Arriving at the St Pancras I found no disabled facilities to arise from the platform. There are two lifts, a goods and a personnel, in an area not normally available to passengers, but it is not possible to ask for assistance as the intercom units appear to be programmed to respond to the call button with a message that you call is being diverted. It is only looking at the map more closely afterwards I see that the wheelchair symbols at St Pancras are not on the Northern line connection.

I will be sticking to the buses in future.

Regards  
Harry Burnham

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Dear Sir/ would it be possible to let people with pushchair get on the bus last to give old people a chance to sit down. So many old people fall over over because they are still trying to get to a seat after people have put their pushchair away. We know the drivers are supposed to let people sit down before they start but this is rarely the case. Sometimes you can not get past the pushchairs, so if you let them get on last this would be a great help (the pushchair people would always have a place for their pushchairs the driver

would not be letting them on if they did not)  
yours sincerely/ Jim South

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I live in Putney and am a member of Wandsworth Carers Centre and read about the Assembly's Transport Committee's investigation in their bulletin. I do not have a car, and rely on public transport. I wish to comment on the accessibility of London's transport network. I give some examples that I regularly encounter. These, no doubt, could be replicated throughout the network.

At 65 I don't know if I count as elderly, and I am not disabled, but am only 5ft tall and because of this I have struggled with London's transport for the 40 years I have lived here. The problems are steps and the gaps between train and platform edge.

I last worked near St James's St, and commuted using the Victoria Line from Green Park to Vauxhall, and overground train to Putney. I used to count the number of steps up from the Vauxhall underground, and then up to the train platform, and then again to the street at Putney. As I toiled up all these steps I used to think, this may be doing my heart a world of good, but what the hell is it doing to my knees? Boarding the train at Vauxhall platform 3 was scary, because of the height of the train and the wide gap between the platform edge and the train. I found that having to push my way on to crowded trains in the rush hour was frightening.

At long last platform 4 at Putney was raised, so I no longer fall out of the train if it pulls up there. But alighting at platform 1 at Wandsworth Town presents the same problem. I have to hang on to the rail and lower myself gradually. Sometimes helpful men waiting to get on as I get off almost pick me up to help me get down.

I cannot bear the thought of getting out at Vauxhall with luggage if I were using that route to get to the Eurostar at St Pancras.

Getting to Gatwick by train should be relatively easy, except for the stairs at Clapham Junction when changing platforms. Is there really no lift at CJ? As it is, it's primitive.

To get to the District Line at Paddington means dragging up and down flights of stairs.

If I come from Heathrow on the Piccadilly Line I get out at Hammersmith because there is a lift.

Getting round London by public transport is all right if you're all right. If not, it's a strenuous nightmare. Increasingly I try to rely on my knowledge of tube and train stations, thinking "where are there fewer steps?"

Regards,

Elizabeth Balsom

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I am a prolific user of buses, trams and over-ground trains. I am a wheelchair user with a powered wheelchair. I feel that we have the best surface transportation system in London over the rest of the UK. One has to thank the previous Mayor for London for that.

There are still some problems that need looking at which I feel that the present Mayor needs to be made aware of.

Firstly, we still have the original prototype bus with Deans ramps. When these ramps first came into use, they had serious problems with them in as much as they would come out on their own whilst the bus was moving. This has mainly been rectified.

Secondly, they are a one piece ramp that more often than not, fail to work properly. They either do not come out or once out, will not go back in. when they do come out, the floor above the ramp should drop down so the access is level, but this rarely happens and is very dangerous, especially for lighter weight powered wheelchairs.

Thirdly, when buses pull into bus stops, there is another problem. If they come too close to the pavement, the ramp will not operate properly in as much it will come out and then go back in straightaway. If this happens, the bus engine has to be turned off to reset the system. Because of this, it makes it very awkward for elderly and disabled ambulant passengers getting on because of the height.

Fourthly, the pavement can be a nightmare because if a paving stone is slightly raised, the edge of the ramp will hit it and go back in which in turn can blow the fuse which means the driver will have to call his garage and have an engineer come out to replace the fuse. If there is a wheelchair already on the bus, that passenger is then stuck on the bus until the engineer arrives which can be up to an hour or so. and finally (about the buses), the wheelchair space on some buses are totally inadequate for a wheelchair, especially on the prototype bus already mentioned above. My main experiences with this bus is with Arriva London South out of Thornton Heath Garage, although they are in other garages around London. Whenever Arriva buy new buses, they send all the older buses to Thornton Heath These buses need to be taken out of service as soon as possible.

As for the tram system in Croydon, there is nothing to be done to improve a superb system. Access is brilliant and the wheelchair space is excellent. All tram stops are fully accessible so no improvements are required there.

Over ground trains are all fully accessible although some trains are better than others for comfort to a wheelchair user.

The main problem is with accessible stations, although, if there is such a problem, one can book assistance with the train company and if that is a problem, they will take you to the nearest accessible station and provide you with a taxi to get you to the station you require. It is the same as with the return journey. (Or outward, if it is your home station).

The other problem with stations is the automatic ticket machines. They do NOT have the full availability of tickets for Disabled Passengers, which means we have to join a queue at the ticket office to get the ticket we require.

Underground stations are a serious problem. Some stations have had lifts installed from street level to either the booking hall or the platform. From there, there is NO access onto the train for powered wheelchairs because underground stations do not have portable ramps to get one onto the trains. (unlike mainline stations).

I sincerely hope you can use this information for your report. If there is anything I can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me for a more in-depth interview.

Regards and Best wishes.

RICHARD G DUTTON Esq

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I have arthritis and need to use a stick to walk with. My main use of public transport is the bus. Sometimes I find that I have to wait a long time at the stop and there is either no seat or a seat at child height.

A big problem is that drivers do not automatically 'kneel' the bus as they come to the stop. As a youngish person they seem to assume that I can manage the -to them -small step up. I also need to have help to get up and down from the seats - an extra 2 inches height on the seats would make life so much easier.

FAtigue is a major part of many disabled person's lives -so you end up either not going out of taking your car so you do not have to walk from the bus stop through the so common pedestrian shopping areas to reach Shopmobility - if there is one.

The underground is getting more accessible every year - but please always make sure that there is some sort of lift available. The ols disabled persons guide to the underground was brilliant with all the details it had of numbers of steps etc. Wheelchair accessible routes are often too far to walk. The new tube map does not have enough detail to plan a journey.

Have you actually tried to get a wheelchair into the spaces shared with pushchairs? Mine is too big for the gap so needs to travel folded - and people look at me oddly as I push a folded chair along whils leaning on my stick.

Jan Cantle



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I read with interest the article in the Hornsey Journal requesting information on access problems related to disability. I am a wheel chair user living in Crouch End where all the buses are wheel chair accessible which is wonderful. however, I also very close to quite a few tube stations none of them are wheel chair accessible. it is many years since I've been on the tube. I believe that this part of London is poorly served in wheel chair access to the underground and overground rail.

Yours sincerely,  
JOAN ROSS.

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Comment 1:

I have found the document I sent to Dave Prentice ( Via David Kippest). It does as I thought, by implication cast doubts on Dial a Ride, Taxicard and a lot more besides.

I am not at this stage going to read the document, like you I have too much else to worry me.

I handed the LOPSIG committee over to Anne Bryant and Bernard Cox was Secretary.

Below is my message to Unison

*I attended the Transport and Personalisation Conference on 20 May because it was drawn to my attention by the fact that the terms of reference and its intentions seemed vague. The issues of a practical nature that beset travel by the less mobile, be they disabled or merely old, is a field I have inadvertently become expert in these last 15 years for work I do on Safety and Mobility and Accessibility in the UK and as part of AGE The European Platform and as an adviser to the NPC.*

*It was soon apparent that the purpose of the conference was to allow a number of consultants the opportunity to sell their wares. The arguments they put forward for Personalised Transport were merely on an anecdotal and plausible nature, not based in my view based on fact or statistical evidence. If one were uncharitable they could be summed up as platitudinous crap.*

*There was little attempt to face the many practical aspects that this concept will face. Seamless travel it was not, and how you inject each "Personalised Travel Package" into what will be left of the Community Transport when this is fully implemented is not clear.*

*My question about the level of audit that would be in existence was not answered adequately. If there is not enough staff, adequately trained and adequately supervised with appropriate audit it will be merely yet another siphoning off of public money into private concerns with no advantages to the user. Moreover there are safety issues which need closer examination.*

*Many of the attendees were from Public Authorities and I sensed a great deal of hostility to the concept and heard criticism of its impracticability.*

*Many of the so called Experts were professionally unconvincing, one indeed proudly showed himself as a Chartered Member of Institute of Logistics and Transport (CMILT) and not as a Member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (MCILT) which I assume was the case. If they cannot get their qualifications correct what confidence can one have in the substance of the presentations that followed.*

*I have to say it was almost all perception and little reality.*

*The purpose of this note is for you to advise whoever within UNISON it is appropriate so to do of the detailed flaws that exist and the fact that Personalised Transport moneys will be muddled up with Personal Care and will be taken away from Council Control and Audit.*

*The Department for Transport seems relatively unconsulted on this and yet their organisations and the equivalents and County level will be affected. The areas of concern is the present funding and provision of Dial-a-Ride, Shopmobility and Community Transport. There has been a reduction already in the grants for Community Transport and as a consequence less provision. There were examples of where the Community Care Grant has cut severely and one presentation from Murray Seccombe, Chief Executive Community Transport was particularly telling.*

*I found the conference worrying but apart from a chat with Mark Dowd from Merseyside who was there have had no opportunity or resource to follow it up.*

*I truly hope that this notification is unnecessary and UNISON will have had a full report from one of the Attendees but I send it to ensure that it is not lost among all the other cuts that are taking place.*

Regards

Peter

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Comment 2:

I am happy for the message to go to the Scrutiny committee. It covers essentially the immediate difficulties with Community travel of which of course dial a ride is part of.

The broader aspects of accessibility of vehicles, of infrastructure, of information etc etc goes into a lot more.

So in a way these are two subjects. I am Chair of the newly formed Accessibility Forum (Yet to have its second meeting!) which is just starting within the Chartered Institute of Transport and that should tease out many more problems both for the "disabled" and for those with "restricted mobility" for the two are not exactly similar.

Insofar as we older people are concerned there is no use giving us theoretical inclusion if there are so many barriers within public transport that we cannot or dare not, venture into it.

Best wishes

Peter

---

I work for an older person charity in south Lewisham. Our main client group are older people who have become isolated. Many of these people have some form of physical disability due to the general ageing process.

Transport provision in each of the london boroughs I have worked for has always been a discussion point amongst older people. They sight inability to get around the borough as one of the reasons why they become isolated at home and lonely.

We are aware that some of our clients would be unable to travel on public transport anyway, however there are a percentage who were becoming isolated as they could not rely on the level of the service being consistent on public buses and we found out through the small survey we conducted that there was almost a 50:50 chance of the service being what they rated poor. Admittedly that meant that 50% of journeys were deemed good or excellent but they could not rely on a 1 in 2 chance of a 'bad' journey and therefore many stopped using public transport and therefore reduced there chances of going out during the week in some cases to 0. Obviously this had an impact on their quality of life. some started using Dial a Ride etc but really shouldnt be needing it. This in turn reduced the number of places available to other people who really couldnt use public transport. Consistency in driving was simply key to whether they felt able to use the buses or not!

Our survey showed that what was important to people was that the front step was always lowered, this often did not happen even when people requested it.

That people were given the opportunity to sit down before the bus moved off, the heavy braking was another problem and buses not pulling in to the kerb again was problematic and doors sometimes closing on people getting off the back of the bus. Another problem was that on some buses the walk from the front of the bus to the seats was 'great'.

The older people carried out their own survey on the buses and sighted training drivers into the ageing process and the needs of older people as very important and they felt this would help improve the situation. They felt so strongly about getting their point across in a positive way that they made a short film to illustrate their findings. The film was not about the driving skills generally but about the needs of older people and what makes a good and bad journey.

At first we found it very difficult to find someone at TFL to speak to early on in the project but with persistence Gary Murphy from TFL met with us and was very helpful in coordinating a meeting with the manager of Catford bus garage. We didn't want to moan and groan we wanted to say that 50% of journey's were a success and this was a great start but we wanted to see if this could be improved.

He agreed to arrange a meeting with the manager of Catford bus garage which is where some of the routes operate from in the Lewisham area.

The meeting was a great success, TFL was present and so were representatives from the training department, they found our film very clear and they asked to use it in training new drivers and in equal opportunities training for other staff.

Sadly as this project was not funded we do not have money to go back and see what people now think and whether the training video has had an impact and whether they are still remembering to use it. It would be good to speak to the drivers as well as the older clients now-maybe you could help us do this??. Obviously some of the problems outlined above can not be overcome easily- eg buses not pulling in to the kerb when cars were parked where they shouldn't. However there were many occasions where there seemed to be no reason why the buses didn't pull in to the kerb. We learned that lowering the front step was something that should always be done.

Another surprising finding was that many older people felt too scared to complain about a poor journey. They thought the driver may find out they had complained and this would affect them travelling by bus in the future.

We also found that most people did not know how to complain. Although we learnt during the process about the information board behind the drivers cab, many older people could not see the information from their seat and were unable to write it down. Getting off the bus took all their concentration and therefore they were unable to get the details. They asked for the information to be put on clear posters in the bus shelters or forms to be handed out on the bus and they collected as with the other surveys that were carried out. We didn't manage to bring about either of these changes as trials.

At the meeting at the bus garage we were told by TFL that they received relatively few complaints from older people so how could they do anything about it- admittedly a problem. I hear them all instead it seems!

I will send in a copy of the survey and a copy of the film we made and we look forward to hearing from you with your comments. If the video could be used at other bus garages to raise awareness this would be fantastic.

Lets face it, some people believe that disability is obvious and visible this is not the case. A percentage of drivers would not have relatives who are 'old' and therefore may not be aware of how balance becomes a problem as you get older and how the fear of falling has such an impact on people's lives.

If the video would raise a bit of awareness of the needs of older people that would be great. Through the project I learnt that many older people don't like to draw attention to their disability and therefore don't like to say out loud publicly, 'Please will you lower the step, for example' They really appreciate that the job of a bus driver is very hard and those who carried out our primitive survey wanted to thank those drivers who got it so right!

I will forward a copy of the older person's dvd and look forward to how it is received. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thanks

Kerry

Ageing Well in Lewisham-LCC,

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1. The bendy buses are good and easy to access for those who have reduced mobility like myself and the seating are not too low and they don't have those seats which you have to pull down (if one is not careful that person could fall down and injure themselves).
2. There should be more consultations with various disability groups and associations, they are the experts in what works best for them, especially if we follow on the idea of personalisation. I would like to be involved in some of these consultations on behalf of Edmonton.
3. The underground is not fully accessible especially in central london, the lifts are located a long way from the platforms and many do not have lifts and the same applies to the overground stations.
4. I would also like to consistency in parking signage, there are various rules for different streets in different boroughs, how is that fair for all? One becomes afraid of parking their car in some boroughs because you have to come out of the car to look for the meter which has the contact number for you to call to clarify exemptions for blue badge holders. Consideration should be given to the fact that those with BBs have mobility difficulties and are reliant on their vehicles to get around. Not everybody can remember which rules applies in each borough let alone those applying on your own road.

Kind regards  
Miss Placida Ojinnaka  
Disability Officer for Edmonton CLP

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I am a wheelchair user who visited your city for the Emirates Cup game, Celtic v Lyon on Sat 31st Aug 2010.

I'm disgusted the amount of obstacles i had to get thru to get to the Emirates Stadium. A lift at Edgware where we stayed then after Edgware, Leicester Sq, no lifts, up n down stairs, then Arsenal, up n down stairs. If i was on my own, no way would i got anywhere. Even from platform to tube, friends had to lift me. On way back same again, even Kings Cross never had lift. Got no help at all from your unfriendly, ignorant staff

Surely with london 2012 for paralympics this is going be problem

I for one, until sorted wont be visiting your city again

Disgusted

Kevin Mackin

ps i travel all over Europe with Celtic and this worst city i been to for access.

---

I have mild MS and walk with a limp in my left leg. As a result I am not able to walk very far and get fatigued after a while. I find in particular I have to be very careful of stairs for fear of falling due to tripping, particularly going down them.

In terms of London's transport we live in St. Albans, about 20 miles north of London, but regularly come into the city. I used to travel in by overground train quite a lot but stopped because of my MS. The journey by overground is relatively straightforward but it's the tube system which is hard work.

The majority of stations involve going up/down steps to get to street level which tends to wear me out. Examples include Maida Vale, Oxford Circus etc.

We usually travel to Maida Vale, park the car using a blue badge, and catch the tube from there. If we have to do a lot of travelling around the west end, then I normally rely on black cabs.

I find the tube stations themselves are usually quite safe once inside them due to their smooth floors with no trip hazards.

I don't very often use the buses, but have found them pretty good when I have chosen to. Obviously, given the nature of my problem, there are no steps involved.

I think it's fair to say that in general, London's transport system is not disabled friendly.

I regularly travel over to Dublin and it's bus and tram systems are superb from a disabled person's point of view. Perhaps you should pay the city a visit to see how they do it.

Hope this all helps. If you need any further specific information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

bernard Gorman

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I am totally blind and have to travel accompanied in the underground. My main difficulty to attempt any journey alone is the noise level in platforms and escalators.

Not only are the announcements in the PA system unintelligible due to echo but more often than not I have to try and understand several simultaneous messages coming out of several speakers.

I believe that if the loud speakers were less powerful but better situated the echo problem would be eliminated.

Much smaller speakers studded on the platforms or at head high at fairly short intervals would make the messages much more intelligible. A wireless or Bluetooth system would accomplish this and bypass the cabling problems.

Please pass on this message to the planners in TFL to see if they consider my suggestion.

Thank you for any help you might be able to obtain on my behalf and the behalf of other blind people and of hard-of-hearing people.

Kind regards,

Guillermo.

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**I write not only for myself, but for many many of the Passengers that either have little mobility or just plain aged, I am both so I think I can speak for them all.**

**Getting on to Buses is now a fight to the death, and there will be some serious accident if the situation is not reviewed.**

**I of course talk about the fact that 99.9% of Buses do not stop at the Bus Stop....  
Sometimes one has to walk or in my case Hobble three bus lengths or more to alight.  
Often and not, the bus doors have closed and the driver completely blanks you and  
drives off.  
It is extremely frustrating to say the least.**

**I have a prosthetic limb and have much difficulty walking, so trying to get on a Bus,  
if it does not stand where it should. makes my life very Difficult.**

**Make all drivers stop at bus stops !!!!! not 30 metres away.**

David B. Valentine

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I recently visited London with my daughter, I use a wheelchair and had always thought I could not use the underground. I was very surprised and pleased to learn about the step-free tube stations. All went well because my daughter was able to help me, the only problem we had, was finding the lifts and tube lines, so I would ask to have more signage to indicate where the lift actually is, often tucked away in a corner not visible at first glance.

Also to have more signs of the underground tube lines, where you are at any point and where to go to.

Pushing a wheelchair up and down the platforms trying to find the right way is not easy!!

The buses were absolutely right, easy to board and room for the chair, easy to disembark, very good all round, no problems with the buses at all.

Many thanks for everything that make travelling easier for the disabled.

Lynette Sutton

MS fighter

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I write in response to the letter by Val Shawcross to MS Matters Issue 92 asking for comments about the accessibility of transport in London.

I don't live in London, but was a visitor for a week. I use an electric wheelchair.

First of all, some good features which you could stress for visitors to London: the taxis were all very easy to get into with my wheelchair, which is very large, and the drivers were all very helpful and friendly. Also, although I did not use the buses, so far as I could see they were all wheelchair accessible, which is much better than the situation where I live.

A couple of things that could be improved: the information about wheelchair access to some Tube stations didn't indicate whether I could use them with my electric wheelchair, which only goes up a very small step, or whether they were only wheelchair accessible for people with manual wheelchairs and someone to tilt them up when getting on to a train. Doubtless residents get to grips with this, but I couldn't, and a lady I spoke to about access who was supposed to know didn't seem able to be specific.

A second area where this information would be helpful is access to boats on the river. I wanted to go from Westminster to Kew. I tried phoning the boat company (association?) to ask about this, but didn't get a reply. Then I asked some people selling tickets at one of the piers, who told me that their pier wasn't wheelchair accessible, but the one at Westminster was. However, then when I wanted to get on a boat to go to Kew from the Westminster Pier I found the boat wasn't wheelchair accessible. Again, more specific information would be very helpful.

Obviously the ideal with both of these is that one could just turn up and use them the same way as people who can walk, but obviously an underground railway which started in Victorian times and boats which are doubtless quite old take a lot of time and effort to adapt. In the absence of this, however, knowing where one stands (or doesn't!) would be very helpful.

Best wishes

Mark Cowling

---

Dear Mr Jardine,

Looking on the web for information on how I could possibly help other disabled persons use the transport system more safely I noticed that you are asking for comments as to how the system could be improved.

As the e mail below (and many others show) I have been addressing this problem for many years after experiencing myself due to a disability how it could be improved for those with impaired mobility. However, the problems remain to this day.

With regard to buses simple procedures should be implemented which should be common sense to the driver but is all too often overlooked:

- 1) **Kneeling mechanism** (Not always working) should be used without the passenger having to ask, I have experienced disdain and embarrassment from drivers when I have asked for the bus to be lowered and often the bus is only lowered a bit, not the full amount.
- 2) **Kerbs**, kerbs are a simple but very necessary aid to any who experience difficulties lifting or stretching their legs, yet still drivers stop at a distance from the kerb which is difficult to stretch over.
- 3) **Allowing passengers to sit down**, for those with impaired mobility walking on steady ground can prove difficult now compound that with the difficulty of a moving bus add a walking aid and a bag of shopping and the journey is fraught with danger.

4) **Fast acceleration/deceleration**, sharp cornering. Sudden jolts and twists are a constant danger for those with impaired mobility often undoing weeks of healing.

5) **Signs designating disabled seats**, these always look like an after thought, they should be more prominent in the eye line of the person sitting there, whilst it is not mandatory to give up a seat for those with impaired mobility or pregnancy it would do no harm to highlight the priority of the seating.

I applaud the efforts to make accessibility to public transport easier and these are just a few comments from someone who has found himself having to adapt and noticing the things that could be improved.

I would like to get more involved in this issue and would welcome the opportunity, if you know how this may happen please forward any information to me.

Thank you

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--- On **Fri, 22/4/05**, mark grant <markgranto2003@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: mark grant <markgranto2003@yahoo.com>

Subject: london buses

To: mayor@london.gov.uk

Date: Friday, 22 April, 2005, 14:48

Dear Mr Livingstone,

I am impressed with your efforts to increase the reliability of London Buses, not so with the continuous and quite ridiculous price increases, however, the subject of this e-mail concerns what happens when the bus actually arrives.

Most of them are driven by boy racers who have no regard for the safety or comfort of passengers. From the moment one has showed ones pass or paid the fair the roller coaster begins. Even in Ne wham buses drive far to fast, why not govern the engines to the speed limit?

No time is allowed for passengers to sit down, before the bus pulls away violently causing inertia.



Have you ever tried to walk on a moving bus? Now add the disadvantages of carrying shopping, being infirm, aged, carrying children or walking with a stick. I recently saw a lady thrown to the ground on a bus pulling away, when it was quite obvious that she should have been allowed to sit down. She was using two crutches!!  
The same can happen with violent braking (also greatly increases wearing of brake pads)

Will it take a law suit before this point is addressed?

Further with regard to buses that can be lowered by the driver, why should one have to ask even when it is obvious? I use a walking stick and recently asked a driver to lower the bus, He did so but not before tutting and making me feel embarrassed.  
Surely buses should be by drivers automatically.

Now onto the subject of transferring between buses, very often passengers need to transfer to a bus that is in front of the one they are on, but so often when the buses stop there is never time to catch the bus in front as they seem more intent on getting away than picking up more passengers, a glance in the wing mirror might reveal to them the desperate customers running to catch their bus, but often even if they do manage to tap on the window the driver gives them a look that seems to say "Sorry I have already got the bus in gear"

A simple sign system, perhaps a toot on the horn from the bus behind would let the bus in front know there are passengers waiting to transfer.

Recently I noticed on a bus a sign giving telephone numbers for complaints or suggestions why is this sign only shown behind the driver, often obscured by another passenger, there is plenty of space put a couple more up. and this time maybe the registration number of the bus could be quite clearly shown, who deletes them, the drivers?

I realize Mr Livingstone that these points may seem trivial to someone only uses the Jubilee line so is always guaranteed a seat and a comfortable journey, but there really is more to improving the bus service than you think, in a ideal world you would address the issues, but I am sure to have wasted the last ten minutes writing to you.

Regards

Mark S Grant

PS, Signs at Stratford bus station E15 advise drivers to switch off engines when parked on the bus stands while resting, funny how they don't all bother, causing a stench filled station.

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It is quite disgusting that National Rail from Romford to Stratford has engineering works at the same time as the tube route Barking to Upminster on the bank holiday weekend of the 30th. We are left with replacement buses that "go round the houses" and make our

journey very unpleasant. The mayor's office should make them communicate with each other and agree to do engineering works alternatively. They have made it very unpleasant living in places like Havering. We no longer visit museums, concerts or events in central London and haven't done for a long time because of this practice. We have got "really cheesed off with it"! We gave up cards like our Tate card because of this attitude. We have had to give visiting art galleries altogether! We are exasperated by it and feel that we are being punished for living in Havering. How disabled people are meant to cope with this lack of mobility? Access to arts and culture is civilizing for our communities. We need a mayor who cares that our journeys are not made unbearable when trying to access them. Communication and planning could give us back our ability to move about reasonably pleasantly. Regards M.

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Some years ago a much needed bus was routed through our street it's number 354. This bus was marvelous it enabled me to get to Bromley without changing. Then this was scrapped and was replaced by a number 356 which goes from Upper Sydenham to Monks Orchard Road West Wickham. It does not pass a worthwhile shopping centre. To get to Bromley I now have to change buses getting a 356 to Elmer's End and then a 358 to Bromley alternatively a 356 to Lower Sydenham and then a 352 to Bromley. Even to get to Croydon I have to get a 356 to Elmer's End and then walk to the Tramway alternatively a 356 to Lower Sydenham and a 194 bus to Croydon. These are only a few of the connection possibilities but I still will have to change. Having walking problems it is impossible to buy anything as I cannot get on and off the buses easily carrying parcels of any sort. I have started to use taxis everywhere but this is very expensive and counter productive to having my Freedom Pass.

I used to belong to a club the U3A in Bromley but can no longer get there due to the bus conditions. This means that I am now isolated from friends who attend the club.

Please do not think I am the only one in my road Kent House Road BR3 1JY, it is a very long road with a large number of elderly folk like myself. We used to meet on the bus to Bromley and chat which was lovely now we never see one another. With the great amount of traffic through this road people do just not meet anymore and it can be quite lonely.

I have applied for this bus route to be changed to enable one bus either to Bromley or Croydon whichever would be simpler. I suppose Croydon since the bus already goes half way there at Monks Orchard Road. The answer is always the same that it is not possible. If in the future bus routes are revised could you please keep this request in mind. I am now sure that little can be done but I live in hope.

Yours M Hannen

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One of the problems on the Underground and some main line services is the vertical gap between the platform and the floor of trains.

Some trains do not have grab handles near to the doors to help disabled or elderly people to board and alight.

It has been reported that TfL has considered putting humps on the edge of the platform at the point the doors will open. That might have safety implications.

The problem is understandable when deep line and surface line Tube trains have to use the same platforms but some new trains seem to have a floor level that is not the best for the platform heights on their route.

Peter Eversden,  
Chairman,  
London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies

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I am writing about the difficulty of elderly people using public transport. I find the main difficulty is buses which do not stop near the curb even when there is enough room. This makes it difficult to lift shopping trolleys onto the bus and some people can't get onto the bus.

The no 377 is excellent as it always stops near the curb.

Best wishes,

Phyllis Baruch

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## SCOOTER GIRL CAMPAIGN

My name is Tanyalee Davis. I have a form of dwarfism, which has allowed me to reach the stellar height of 3 foot 6 inches tall. I have been a professional comedian for 20 + years. Thanks to my career I have been fortunate enough to travel and perform all over the world. I have never more disabled than being in the UK.

I use a 3-wheeled, dry-cell, battery operated mobility scooter (45 kilos in weight) because I cannot walk long distances. I do not drive a car so I'm forced to take public transportation such as the trains and buses. In the 7 years of touring from top to bottom of the UK I have run into problems with some train and bus companies refusing to let me on with my scooter. A few years back I arrived via train into Oxford from Reading for a show at Jongleurs Comedy club. The platform supervisor had not received a call notifying him that ramp assistance would be needed to get me off the train. The train ended up being a few mins delayed while he ran around to get the ramp. When I informed him that I would be back in a few hours to take the train back to Reading he said he would not allow me on the train because I was using a scooter than those were banned from the train. He didn't say banned from a specific train line he just said he wouldn't

allow me on. When I returned about 11:30PM the supervisor approached me with a book listing the policies for 1 of the train companies. The fact was that my scooter met the size parameters listed as acceptable for travel but the picture listed under not acceptable looked just like the scooter I was using therefore the supervisor refused to help me. He told me I would have to take a taxi at my own expense the 40 or so miles back to Reading. That was not an option. I was so devastated and distraught. I rang another scooter using, little person friend of mine and she checked the train schedule. She said there was a Virgin train coming thru at midnight and that they accommodated scooters. When that train pulled up the supervisor ran ahead of me to speak with the train guard. I scooted up behind him and got the guards attention. The guard himself got a ramp off the train and assisted me on the train while the platform guy stormed off. I ended up hanging out in the vestibule with the train guard and he asked me why the platform guy was telling him not to let me on the train. It was shocking!

I have too many incidents to list but most recently when I was in Edinburgh at the fringe (for only a few days) I waited 25 mins for the bus at 5AM in the pouring rain and 2 buses refused to let me onboard. Fellow travelers even pleaded with the driver to show some compassion because it was raining. I drilled him on why I was not allowed. I suggested I get out of the scooter and sit in a seat but he insisted that the company was not insured for scooters. He said the scooter could break down. The only way the scooter would break is if he crashed the bus! A lovely man even refused to get on the bus because I was not allowed and he didn't want me to stand all alone in the rain in the middle of the night. Eventually this kind man had to flag down a taxi for me because none of them would stop for me and I sat waving in my scooter.

I've done some research and found out when the policy against discrimination of people with disabilities was implemented; mobility scooters were not included because there were less popular in 1995. Since then mobility scooters have been made smaller and sturdier making them more popular for people who don't need to be confined to a wheelchair. Having a mobility scooter allows me to be independent! I need it to help get me from point A to B, and then I get out and walk.

I have been on buses or have been by bus stops when a woman has gotten on the bus with a baby pram this is double the size of my scooter and there was no argument. Just recently, after a bus driver refused to let me on the bus I saw 2 lads get onto a city bus with a dog that came up to my shoulders. It was not a guide dog but apparently that dog has more right to travel on public transport than I do. I'm after all just trying to get to work independently.

I am part of a comedy troupe called “Abnormally Funny People”. We are a group of mostly disabled comedians who were brought together to film a documentary for SkyTV in 2005. The show focused on the group coming together and putting on a seriously successful Edinburgh fringe show. Since then AFP has done many corporate gigs for the DRC, various political events as well as campaigns for disability and transport. I was part of the GoJo Campaign that encourages disabled people to take public transport. I stood on top of my scooter on a London City bus and told jokes for this campaign. Here is a link to 1 of the videos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzEPiK8g5Sg>

The ridiculous thing is that here I am trying to encourage people with varying disabilities to take public transport yet I get refused because the mobility device I use is not covered under the same mandate.

I was also commissioned through Abnormally Funny People to write a “day trip” blog for the Disabled Person’s Railcard website in May 2010.

I am now on a self appointed crusade. I want to become THE FACE of scooter people and demand that the policy gets updated to include scooters. I was featured in an ITV documentary called “Worlds Smallest People” and I just finished a pilot for the BBC on Comedy and Disability. I would like to use the wee bit of notoriety I have to get this issue to the forefront. With the Para-Olympics approaching it will be necessary not to leave anyone on a train platform or at a bus stop and it’s all about inclusion no matter what mobility issues they have.

If you can be of any assistance or have information, suggestions, questions, whatever please feel free to contact me on my mobile.

Enclosed is a photo on me on my scooter and one of me by myself.

Extremely independent,

Tanyalee Davis

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I have seen your article in July/August edition of MS Matters and feel I have to write to you about my excellent experience in London on Saturday 3rd July.

I was attending a small conference in Potters Bar, I live in Poole Dorset. I booked the train with South West Trains and all the connections across London.

At each stage of my journey I was well looked after and being in the wheelchair posed no problems. At both Waterloo and Kingscross I was met by helpful staff who aided that stretch of the journey. I travelled across London by Taxi as I felt this was the easiest way for me to meet train times. I would have used buses if time had permitted as London buses have never been a problem before. I travel to London once a quarter.

After each successful journey I always send a complimentary letter to the main organiser of my travel and I attach the latest letter to which I have received a kindly reply.

I find that a big smile to all workers in London goes along way.

yours sincerely

Rosalind Barton

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I am writing with regard to the above committee's investigation into the accessibility of London's Transport system.

I am visually impaired and frequently use the bus to get to and from work and to the local cinema on evenings and weekends. As a regular bus passenger I find the lbus system very useful to me.

However there are a few downsides to bus travel as follows:

1. At present there is no means of being able to find out when the next bus is due and more importantly, which route since the current countdown system does not have any form of audio announcement capability.
2. At present until 20 August 2010 my local bus stop (Earlsfiled Road - stops E and H) have been suspended due to EDF cabling works. Unfortunately I did not find this out until I was informed by a couple of passers-by (on the outward journey) and by an on-board announcement via the lbus system (on the return journey). I later found out via the tfl website the exact nature and duration of the suspension.

Unfortunately not everyone has access to the internet and I would suggest that the committee look into ways of informing freedom pass holders of suspensions/diversions in advance.

I look forward to hearing how TFL is going to improve things for visually impaired passengers..

Regards

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I am a blind person living in Shepherd's Bush London W12 and understand you are collating comments from disabled passengers about travel in London.

My experiences relate to travel on the Underground system, and vbuses.

1. I understand staff numbers on the Underground system is to be reduced by 800 posts. These losses relate to ticket office staff, and this will reduce the number of staff on duty at stations.

The service currently available to blind people travelling on The System is excellent and enables many of us to travel with confidence and in safety.

Many interchange stations are complicated and the possibility of falling down an escalator, or flight of stairs is very real. Falling onto the track is rather more serious, and would cause a train service to be suspended while the casualty is removed.

At present I am able to travel with confidence around the system, like other passengers. Although ticket office staff are not station assistants they provide back-up to platform staff, and can help in an emergency.

If the only person on duty is at the gate line, they cannot provide help to a blind person. This will deter many not to travel as the stress involved will be too great. Thus making The System inaccessible.

A reduction in staff presence will also deter some sighted people from travelling who feel vulnerable., especially at night.

I realise there are to be no redundancies but the gradual loss of staff through natural wastage will have an impact long term.

2. The gradual introduction of on-train automatic audio announcements is much appreciated by all blind passengers. However, drivers have the nasty habit of switching these off out of the central London area, and at off peak times. This is extremely frustrating as suddenly one is lost as to the current location of the train. It is rather like suddenly blacking out all the windows and doors for sighted passengers. They would shure start complaining!

3. On buses the same issue occurs. The I-Bus talking describers enables me to travel with confidence just like a sighted passenger. Some drivers turn off the system out of the central London area, and at night. I think they get fed up with listening to the messages, but fail to understand that blind passengers rely on talking information systems.

The talking I-Bus system has been extremely liberating to many blind and partially sighted passengers making bus travel relaxing and even enjoyable.

Prior to the system's introduction I would only use a bus if there was no alternative even if that alternative route by Underground took longer.

I hope you will take these comments forward in future planning to make transport around London even more accessible and doable as at present.

Best regards

I a i n Hopki n

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Since the takeover of the Gatwick Express by Southern Railway in 2008, the direct service from Kensington Olympia has been discontinued. I do not consider having to change at Clapham Junction an 'improvement', especially in view of the lack of lifts and number of steps up and down, to be negotiated with luggage.

This can be seen as the epitome of anti-competitive behaviour, obviously sanctioned by the Labour Transport Dept. as the price for taking on the Express service. To avoid the stairs, it leaves the poor passenger with just the one choice of Victoria, again with steps up from the tube which cannot be avoided.

I would like to know if this has ever been investigated as part of your brief to protect the passengers' interests, and if so, what was the outcome? Disabled passengers' interests are being ignored once again.

Regards....Peter Bailey

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I am writing following an article in my local NCT newsletter about a survey being carried out on how parents find travelling in London.

By and large, I am quite pragmatic about travelling around London with a pram. I understand that it is not possible for much of the London transport network (old tube stations etc) to be pram-friendly and accessible for people with reduced mobility. However, I do find it enormously frustrating when I see stations that could EASILY be made more accessible and are not. A very good example is my local overground station (Honor Oak Park - it is on the new london overground (east london line) and southern rail lines). At this station, there is gently sloping ground from the pavement outside the station to both the platforms at the station, yet when the station was recently refurbished, no "reduced-mobility" access was introduced to the platforms. This would be very very easy to do.....all it would involve is a pathway and an oyster reader. In fact, on one side, there is already a pathway that has been left to get overgrown.

Even more bizarre is that the ticket office was recently refurbished to include a low ticket window for those in wheelchairs and a wider barrier, but there is no way for those individuals to get to the platforms!

I would suggest that more pressure needs to be put those responsible to make train stations more accessible when it is very easy to do so.

I hope this helps with your survey.

Thanks, Karen Ledwich

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Dear Ross, As part of your work on accessible transport I would like to offer some views. I was made aware of the consultation via the NCT and am writing as a buggy user.



I live in south east London and make regular use of National rail, Buses, DLR and occasionally the Tube.

I find I do have to plan my journeys or make arrangements purely based on the transport system in London. For example if looking to meet someone or eat in the centre of town I know that the tube system is basically impossible for a buggy so would look to meet within walking distance of the terminus stations e.g. Charing Cross, Waterloo, London Bridge in order to be able to walk off easily. This means I have not been to Oxford Street in years as it is so difficult to access.

On a general basis I find the buses very good and the drivers helpful in letting the buggy on at the back door. The problem arises on the smaller buses run e.g. on the 132 route, that only have one door at the front and then negotiating to the disabled/ buggy space can be quite difficult. The only other issue that sometimes arises is that drivers will not let buggies on if there is a busy bus and people are standing in the disabled area. This is especially true at the end of the school day, and can make me late for my daughter. In many cases they could stand in the aisle and make space but the driver may not have a good enough view. I have been told by one that it was policy not to let buggies on buses during the school rush, but hope that is not the case. I have to work around this by deliberately going extra early or walking to avoid the problem.

The national rail is fine, but some of the train carriages are better designed than others. Those with narrow lobbies at the doors are quite difficult in rush hour as it is hard not to block other commuters access. The wider access carriages, with less seating, make it easier to position a buggy with less hassle to other commuters.

The major problems with interconnecting at Lewisham that I had for 2 years have now been solved by the introduction of the lifts which is good. However when the lift is broken you get back to the issue with large numbers of steps to get to the platforms, as the previous ramp access to platform 4 seems to be permanently closed. ( see below).

Other stations are not up to standard - e.g. Blackheath, so again I have to make my journey in alternative, possibly longer ways when I need to go there in order to avoid having to drag the buggy up steps as there is no alternative exit.

The DLR works very well and seems well designed for both carriages and access to platforms. Generally the problems with lifts are highlighted ahead of time but when not you do sometimes have 30 or 40 steps to deal with. It can be done but is hard work, esp going up.

Regards

Alexandra Boyle

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### **Bus accessibility**

Buses are not accessible because of poor queue discipline. I have seen Arab markets with more consideration for the elderly and infirm than the ghastly jostling gangs fighting for a place on rush hour London buses.

### **Underground accessibility**

The Underground is not accessible when its pampered employees are on strike. This isn't helped when empty buses are driving past commuters in "sympathy" – I've just seen this in Oxford Street with a 94 bus trying to knock down a protesting commuter.

This kind of "sympathetic action" is illegal and I would like to see TfL and its endless contractors take some robust action about it..

Here are my suggestions for you :

- 1) Let's have "right to work" legislation and an end to Soviet style collective bargaining.
- 2) From now on all TfL employees should be on individual contracts. Tell Bob Crow he is the Arthur Scargill of his industry.
- 3) Train 500 new train drivers or automate the Underground in the same way as the DLR.

London can't afford this sort of 1970s nonsense. After all we've got Gordon's deficit to pay off and we need to get to work!

Kind regards

George Lawrie

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I am writing in response to an article in Vision magazine.

For fully sighted people this is probably not a problem, but as the trains and the rest of the station are lit by fluorescent tubes, which provide a good level of lighting, the ramps between the concourse and platforms at East Croydon seem relatively dark and as a partially sighted person I find them difficult to negotiate after daylight hours.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barbour

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This is in response to a recent study on wheelchair /pushchair use on London buses.

I am a full time carer for my partner, I can't afford a car and tube travel is often a lot of trouble for us. We plan most of our trips on the bus but it is not easy!

My partner suffers from Ehlers Danlos Syndrome it's similar to a muscle wasting disease like MS. We are both quite young, in our early 30s and try to do as much as we can. My partner has limited mobility and so uses a wheelchair whenever she leaves the house.

Now to be honest I only have a few grumbles (but they are important ones) as I think buses and wheelchair access generally has improved from when I was a child as it should although I'm sure my partner would understandably point out more problems generally regarding access across London.

The first one is overcrowding and in many ways the most important! We regularly use the number 25 which travels from Ilford to Tottenham Court Road. It is a great bus in the area that it covers and we are regularly on it. The only problem is that as it is a bendy bus it tends to get a lot of people come on without paying and really suffers from overcrowding! I actually like the bendy buses apart from this problem.

You might ask how do I know so many people don't pay for the bus travel well quite simply you see so many people get on and not swipe an Oyster Card not all of them could have prepaid tickets. And, more importantly every now and then inspectors come on and they end up taking details of at least 4 or 5 people every time I have seen them and that is on ONE bus.

And, on top of all that, these buses tend to already be a lot quieter because word gets around that plain clothes inspectors are on and on that day the bus is bliss comfortable and not overpacked. So it only stands to reason there is some cause and effect that as soon as you start checking people the bus is less busy. Not to mention locally many people refer to the 25 as the 'free bus!'

To illustrate my point, the other day we could not get on a 25 bus and I ended up walking and pushing my partner in her wheelchair from Bow to Ilford (approx 4 miles). Simply because after waiving away 4 buses we gave up trying to get on. One bus did try to let us on but was so packed all the people's weight pushed the bus so far down the wheelchair ramp would not slide back up and EVERYONE had to get off and join the next bus. This was at 3:30 in the afternoon, so not exactly rush hour. The irony there was I had already spoken to the bus driver and explained we couldn't get on because it was already too busy,

The second point is buses being able to let us on or off. Now this has once or twice been due to the driver many of them are wonderful and we often make a point to say thank you to them as we are leaving the bus. But one or two have been a bit careless. Including one who could not align the bus up with an area of the pavement safe for us to get out at who eventually said: You'll just have to get out at the next stop! It's the stop right outside our street which we always get out at, so many other drivers have managed it no problems. But this particular one thought it was a good idea

to park and open the middle doors in front of the bus-stop. But even then I am more likely to blame the fact that it seems wherever you want to go in London all the roadsides are so littered. You have big wheelie bins, lamp-posts, shop stalls you name it! All on the side of the road or idiots parking there car in the way because clearly they are above normal parking regulations.

A lot of our issues boil down to other peoples manners I know that London Transport isn't directly to blame for this and please let me say in relation to so many of the drivers and staff I have met they do a wonderful job. What would help is more checks on unpaying passengers we hear all the time that travel prices are going up; my partner has free travel and that is fantastic but I pay to go everywhere with her why am I also paying for the 20 or so people on the bus with me that don't (indirectly - true but all the same)? By finding fare dodgers you will reduce overcrowding and increase revenue it's not fair that a handful of us are shelling out for travel that other people take for free!

Also there must be some way to have better control over areas where people get on and off buses. I'm forever dodging bins or sliding off the ramp trying to dodge a lamp post or something its dangerous.

Just my thoughts / concerns thank you for reading them.

Mr J.

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I would like to share some thoughts on the accessibility of public transport.

I have Ehler Danlos Syndrome, Hypermobility Type. This affects my ability to stand for long periods of time, causes chronic pain, exhaustion and, sometimes, my ability to walk. I can't grasp the grab rails well as my hands end up searing in pain and could potentially be damaged. There are other people with who are affected to a worse extent by this condition: have to use a wheelchair. I have found that overcrowding on the trains, buses, tubes (even during off peak hours!) means that I have to end up standing. This can lead to a joint popping out of place, falling over and extreme pain.

Because my disability is not easily seen by members of the public I am unable to gain the disabled seats- usually taken up by able bodied people (from what I can see).

I have also noticed that there have been times where people with buggies struggle to get on and off trains and find a place to put them too. The dedicated sections on buses end up being crammed with up to three at a time, then with another blocking the gangway.

The gaps between the tube trains and some stations are dangerous. It would be too easy for ANYONE to misjudge their step and cause injury. The doors of the tube close with no give for

the stray limb, and I have pulled an arm out of socket during the overpacked rush hour conditions due to this.

Stairs in nearly all underground stations make it almost impossible to use the tube on a day-to-day basis for me, and I have noticed the elderly and those with buggies (even with shopping!) struggle too.

I also believe that the frequency of buses should be increased during peak hours to allow for school children to get to school without taking up spaces otherwise needed for the elderly, disabled or other members of the public. I have also seen a lot of elderly people during these hours too, a lot of whom are left standing due to the fact there just aren't enough spaces.

It is truly a nightmare when I have to travel 1.5hours to work every day, and then face the same again on the way back. Going out at the weekend is sometimes weighted against by the hassle of being pushed around.

Public transport should be there to help get people from a-b easily, not to cause injury or make life even more difficult!

I hope that you can see some logic in these answers.

Yours sincerely,

Gabrielle Gorringe

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Good accessible transport 394 (single decker) route hard to get wheelchair in rail makes it hard to position wheel in correct position.

Conflict with pushchairs - confusion with priority with pushchairs.

Claire Maskall

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## 15 OCTOBER

Firstly, I would like express my appreciation for the opportunity to submit my comments regarding the accessibility of London transport.

Having just viewed the webcast of the public meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, I am left feeling that Mum's with buggies are a nuisance on buses. This feeling, however, was generated by other groups with mobility issues rather than the committee itself. As a mother with a very young baby, I find that travelling on the buses to be extremely

stressful. I try to walk whenever possible, but there is a time when walking is not feasible. I constantly worry if I am able to get on a bus and whether or not I can stay on that bus to my destination. I understand that wheelchair users get priority when it comes down to space, but does that mean that Mum's with buggies have to pay for another bus journey because they had to disembark the previous bus due to a wheelchair user? Also, many of us Mums have to get to appointments using a bus. When we are not able to get on a bus (or have to disembark a bus) because of space issues, the whole travelling experience becomes horrible. The sign on the bus states that we may have to collapse our buggies during busy times, but it is extremely difficult for us to do this while holding a newborn - our only option is to get off the bus. Buses need to be designed to allow both wheelchair and buggy users to be on the bus at the same time.

Also, just to repeat a point about the underground: the underground is not accessible for people with mobility issues. You may be able to start your journey, but you may not be able to complete it due lack of accessibility to the platforms. There needs to be at least two lifts (just in case one breaks down) to the platforms that accommodate individuals with a variety of mobility issues.

Many thanks,

Shayna Pearson

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I would like to comment on the accessibility of stations on the new London Overground East London Line. I live at Honor Oak Park and the accessibility at the station is a disgrace. I am a mum with a 3 month old baby and it is impossible to use the station with a pram, the staff refuse to help to carry the pram up and down the many stairs. When we are visited by elderly relatives it is also very difficult for them to use the station.

I believe it is vital that lift or ramp access is made available at Honor Oak Park.

Many of the other stations on this line also have very poor access including London Bridge where it is impossible to interchange to Charing Cross platforms without using the bridge. Again there is no ramp or lift access available which for a key London station is very poor.

Many Thanks

Katie Handley

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I recently took the underground from Heathrow Express to Shortland via Victoria. I had been on holiday in Russia and I broke my journey to visit my Son and Family before travelling back to Chester.

I am 72 years old and I had a suitcase 22kgs. I was astounded to find that I had to carry my suitcase up many stairs without any aid from station staff. I have just visited Russia and I am sure London could learn a lot from them!

The under ground has not taken any account of travellers with luggage since the last war. We are more like a third world country.

How many years do I have to wait to be able to again use the underground?  
It is no wonder we use our car. I suggest You give Boris a suitcase of 22kgs and see how he manages on the same journey.

Your comments would be welcome.

Regards

David Kent Chester

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I am Age Concern Tower Hamlets rep on the Pan-Disability Panel Transport Sub Group.

One of the items I keep bringing up on the Panel is the Bus drivers who do not pull in close to the kerb and lower the platforms.

I have recently tried out the new Overground Service Hackney to Croydon and find many stations are not suitable for people in wheel chairs, for a new system it is unbelievable that this could not have happened.

Barry Blandford

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It was quite absurd to build Stratford International Station 500m from Stratford Regional (Network Rail) Station.

It is even more absurd that there is not a direct footpath or traveller from one to the other.

It is even more absurd that there is a 15 to 18 minute service interval on the bus which winds a circuitous 3 km path from one to the other,  
making it necessary to allow 5 min (to get out to the bus station) + 18 min (possible wait) + 5 min (bus journey) + 1 min (unload and enter) = 29 minutes for the change, on top of any allowance for possible late running into Stratford Regional.

As it is necessary to have a reservation for most services from Stratford International, to be reasonably safe,

one would have to take a service to Stratford International scheduled to arrive 45 minutes before the scheduled departure from Stratford International.

Was this system designed by the airline industry to put people off using the train?

With a direct footway from the Regional main line platforms, the transfer between stations would take less than 10 minutes, and there would be no waiting for a bus.

What are you doing about this?

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Two years ago when I was working in Covent Garden, I used to arrive at the Charring Cross tube station roughly the same time every day. Quite often I used to see a young Guy wearing a smart suit sitting on the dirty escalator and dragging his folded wheel chair behind him. I remember thinking 'Why doesn't he get the lift? His suit is getting filthy!'. Fast forward two years and I have a five month old baby in his pram. I travel into Paddington on the over ground and then try to get the tube to Monument to meet my husband. I got totally trapped at Edgware road tube station. No lifts, no escalators no staff to help me with the pram. Foolishly I had assumed that supposedly being a major city of the world we would at least have figured out how to get lifts and escalators into our tube stations. My husband came to rescue me and in his expensive suit lifted the pram and carried it up and down all the stairs. I have realised now that if I want to be able to use the tubes at all there are only 2 stations I can get off and on at on the Bakerloo line and it is a similar story on most of the other lines. Now I realise why that Guy sat on the escalator. Undignified unnecessary and wrong.

You might say avoid London, it's not meant for you. You might say use the bus, but if they have 2 prams or wheelchairs on them they drive right past you, I've waited over an hour to fit on a bus before. London should be for everyone, let's hope visitors for the Olympics are pre-warned of the challenges they will face if they have wheels.

Come on get it sorted!

Regards, Helen Scott

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I see in my MS mag that you would like to hear from disabled public transport users.

I'm wheelchair-bound and visit London at least once a month. Having accessible buses is brilliant. They are better than the cabs and cheaper! The vast majority of drivers are really pleasant and helpful (quite a contrast to Northampton!) I have found that about one in four or five buses the ramp mechanism is faulty - or possibly the driver does not quite understand it. It's a shame that 2 wheelchair users cannot travel together as we can in NY or Spain.



The trains that I use are problem free - travelling to/from the terminals or on short trips to Wimbledon.

I have never braved the tube. I hear that stations are sometimes closed and I fear travelling eternally on the Central Line! I would have tried them last November when going to the O2 Arena but its station was closed.

A big 'hoorah' for the buses.

Kate

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Hi

I regularly support a wheelchair user on the buses, the ramp frequently doesn't work, which means either we have to wait for another bus or I have to attempt to manoeuvre her chair on myself, which contravenes manual handling regulations. The 322 bus appears particularly likely to be problematic. I have sent complaints to TfL about this, but received no response, and it continues to be an ongoing problem.

Having said that, the buses are a great improvement to how they were a few years ago. I would also say that our local train station (west Norwood) is very helpful, we don't book in advance to travel and it is always fine with them. I do think, however, that the need to book local train journeys in advance is difficult - other people don't have to do this!

What would be amazing would be if a person with a disability who needs a carer to accompany them should be issued with a freedom card that allows the carer to travel for free please. I don't think that this is an unreasonable request, given how reliant we are on public transport.

I hope this is helpful to you in planning further improvements.

Helen

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Ross,

One of the problems on the Underground and some main line services is the vertical gap between the platform and the floor of trains.

Some trains do not have grab handles near to the doors to help disabled or elderly people to board and alight.

It has been reported that TfL has considered putting humps on the edge of the platform at the point the doors will open. That might have safety implications.

The problem is understandable when deep line and surface line Tube trains have to use the same platforms but some new trains seem to have a floor level that is not the best for the platform heights on their route.

Peter Eversden,  
Chairman,  
London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies

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