

Breaking Barriers

Future of Transport for Older Londoners



Introduction

As a leading world city London aspires to social inclusion for all of its people. Part of that aspiration is a transport system which allows all Londoners to travel to take advantage of everything the city has to offer.

London has a dense public transport network, and making transport accessible is increasingly accepted as a key aim of transport planning. Initiatives have been taken to make mainstream public transport such as buses accessible, and provide accessible door to door transport for those who cannot use buses or the Underground. Many Londoners have found that the barriers of inaccessible travel which formerly restricted their lives have been broken.

Yet still many older and disabled Londoners find that the transport system does not work for them. Transport services are still not accessible to many people in practice, and many people report serious gaps between what is intended and what the system actually delivers.



A joined up system

Perhaps most importantly, there is still not so much a transport system as a series of separate transport services which, from older and disabled people's point of view, do not link up properly. Different modes of transport – buses, Underground, rail, taxis, door to door transport services, community transport, health transport, walking – need to link up seamlessly so that people with mobility needs can travel from their starting point to their destination, and return, without meeting barriers. Accessible transport hubs are needed to bring together the different modes of transport. What is the use of being able to board a bus for someone who cannot get to the bus stop? What is the use of being driven to a station and having step free access to the platform if it is then impossible to board the train?

Particularly for people who cannot use buses, trains or the Underground, transport services need to be much better integrated, more reliable and of higher quality. Dial-a-Ride, taxi-based services, health transport, community transport need to work together in a way which is clear to transport users and consistent across London.

Contents

- Page 2. Introduction
- Page 3. A joined up system
- Page 4. Impact of transport barriers
- Page 5. Older people as transport users
- Page 6. **Where we are and where we want to be: Buses**
- Page 8. **Where we are and where we want to be: Door to Door**
- Page 10. **Where we are and where we want to be: Health Transport**
- Page 12. **Where we are and where we want to be: Underground and Rail**
- Page 13. **Where we are and where we want to be: Freedom Pass**
- Page 14. Conclusion

Impact of transport barriers

Many older people find transport problems are a real barrier to taking an active part in society and living their lives to the full. Inaccessible transport can prevent people from taking part in social activities, volunteering, accessing educational, cultural and leisure opportunities, or using health and social care services. This has a huge cost for individuals in terms of their social involvement, quality of life and for many, their physical and mental health. Transport barriers reinforce social isolation for many older people. For some people, the result can amount to incarceration in their own home. There is also a large cost to society from reducing the involvement, activity and contribution of older people.

Our vision of the future is that inaccessible transport will no longer be a barrier to older people living full lives, contributing to society and receiving support if they need it. Older people and disabled people will have their transport needs met on an equal basis to other adults. All the barriers will be broken!



Older people as transport users

Over 15 per cent of London's population - nearly 1.2 million people - are aged 60 or over. Almost a quarter of a million people in London are aged 80 or over.

An estimated 530,000 disabled people in London are aged 60 or over and prevalence of disability increases with age

About 10 per cent of Londoners report reduced access to travel. This rate rises to 30 percent for Londoners over 60. Over 4 percent of those use wheelchairs on at least some occasions.¹

Wheelchair users make on average only a third of the number of trips of people with no impairments (combining all modes of transport), while people with hearing impairments also make far less than average.²

¹ Travel in London Report, Transport for London

² Travel in London Report, Transport for London



Where we are and where we want to be: Buses

Where we are

Buses are now accessible, with step free access, wheelchair spaces and ramps.

Drivers receive training in disability awareness and passenger safety

Various initiatives aim to increase passenger safety and improve journey experience

However:

Older and disabled people still experience safety issues such as falls and overcrowding, and unacceptable behaviour by other transport users (such as refusing to give up a seat for someone who needs it)

People still report eg "the ramp wasn't working", the bus did not pull up to the kerb or that the driver pulled away too fast when people had not yet sat down or were still climbing the stairs

Many older people still lack confidence to use buses because of safety or fear of crime and antisocial behaviour

Many older people still find the bus stop inaccessible or too far away



Where we want to be

All buses are both physically accessible and have a safe, accessible and welcoming environment on board.

Bus drivers are given refresher courses on disability awareness and passenger safety and show awareness of their duty of care to passengers

Bus drivers are able and willing to operate all the accessibility features like lowering or 'kneeling' the bus, turning on the audio visual next stop announcements, ensuring the wheelchair spaces are not occupied by prams and that wheelchair ramps are operational.

Timetables permit better driving practices which are safe for older and disabled people

More effective action is taken against illegal parking in bus lanes and at bus stops

All older people either have a safe, accessible bus stop within easy walking distance or can access "hail and ride" buses going through residential areas

Older people can see that issues around overcrowding, crime and antisocial behaviour on the bus network have been effectively addressed



Where we are and where we want to be: Door to Door

Where we are

Dial-a-Ride, TaxiCard and Capital Call have broken travel barriers for many older and disabled people a good deal of the time!

Assisted transport services are a vital lifeline for those people who cannot use public transport. The provision of assistance when boarding or alighting the vehicle is the crucial factor that ensures older people can use the service and get to where they want to be.

Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and Community Transport services all play a crucial role in ensuring that older people can live independent lives. Community transport provides local, community responsive solutions to transport inequality that often complement the wider public and statutory transport network, as well as empowering those who are unable to access transport solutions.

It follows that these services should not be seen as an 'add-on' to our public transport system – but as a properly funded and resourced integral part of it.

However:

The different services do not fit together coherently or consistently and there is a

postcode lottery of service provision and entitlement

There are problems with the reliability and quality of DAR, TaxiCard and Capital Call services.

"On two occasions recently my TaxiCard ride was delivered by a contracted Minicab firm. The drivers didn't know:-

- *that they were supposed to knock at my door to announce their presence*
- *how to fit wheelchair restraints so that I had a very uncomfortable journey*
- *how to fix passenger restraints*
- *the way to Covent Garden*

And they:

- *did not want to take advice from me about either of the above*
- *were rude to me and my carer.*
- *And so on !*

This hasn't normally been the case with black cab drivers" - TaxiCard user, 2009

Funding to provide a quality service for all who need it is not ensured in the medium to longer term



Where we want to be

Dial-a-Ride, taxi-based services and community transport form an integrated system, consistent across London, addressing issues of quality, quantity and reliability

There is ring fenced funding ensuring that the integrated service is sustainable and affordable to service users.

There is an accessible and transparent assessment and complaints system. Applications, appeals procedures and eligibility criteria are based on the Social Model of Disability.



Where we are and where we want to be: **Health Transport**

Where we are

NHS Trusts commission Patient Transport Services from London Ambulance Service and private providers

Transport links including for older people and disabled people, are considered in planning changes to health services

However:

There are serious and well-documented problems regarding the quality and reliability of PTS services in many parts of London, and a lack of enforceable common standards for providers

These problems drive many older and disabled people to use services such as TaxiCard for health appointments although this results in users running out of trips for social and day to day activities.

Older people and disabled people are not being involved sufficiently at an early enough stage in health transport planning so that provision of bus services, parking etc. does not meet their needs



Where we want to be

Patient Transport Services offer a safe, reliable and high quality service across London

Service users' confidence in PTS standards frees more capacity in other Door to Door services to meet their intended purposes

Older and disabled people are consulted and listened to early enough to ensure accessible transport of all modes to NHS facilities as they develop

New services (hospitals or polyclinics for example) are sometimes developed without consultation amongst older people or disability groups at an early enough stage.

The result in Redbridge has been that:

- There is no direct bus link between The King George Hospital and the new Queen's Hospital
- From the East of the Borough, it takes 3 buses to visit patients in the Heronwood & Galleon rehabilitation units in Wanstead
- A new polyclinic has been built with minimal parking in an area already dense with traffic

Redbridge is not the only area where such problems have been experienced



Where we are and where we want to be: **Underground and Rail**

Where we are

Currently 56 of 260 stations offer some type of step free access

There are plans to make 25% of the Tube network step free by 2010, with an evolving programme with targets to increase the number of accessible stations

However:

Tube accessibility is compromised by steps and obstacles from the street to the ticket hall, from the ticket hall to the platform and high steps and gaps between the platform and the train.

The accessible stations programme is threatened by funding cuts, and plans to create a 'foundation network' of accessible stations have been deferred due to funding constraints

Where we want to be

Full step free access and other accessibility aids like tactile paving and help points receive ring fenced funding

The maintenance of lifts and escalators is regularly completed to a high standard so that these crucial mobility aids are not 'out of service' for unacceptable periods of times.

As a result, in combination with other forms of accessible transport, disabled people can make the same range of journeys as other passengers.



Where we are and where we want to be: **Freedom Pass**

However:

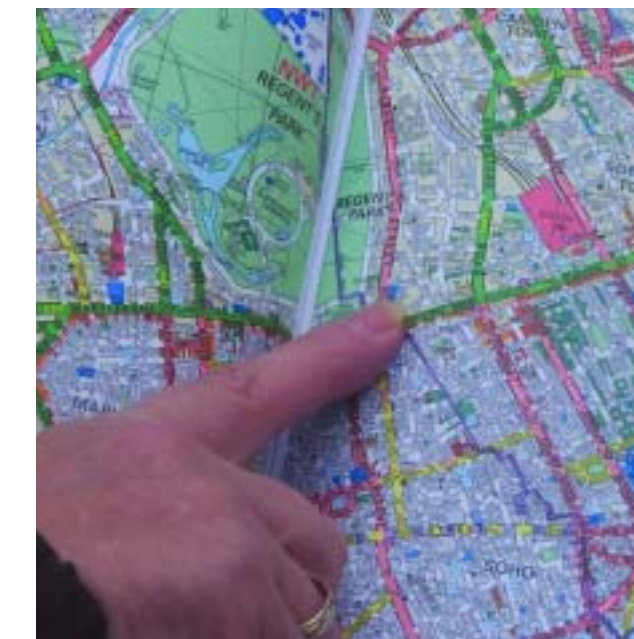
The Freedom Pass can be used only off-peak on most National Rail services within London

Clear information is not available to all older people and there is some evidence of confusion

"I recently had to replace my faulty Freedom Pass and noted that the form supplied at my local Post Office still had the 'old' time restrictions on use. Probably stock left over from the last renewal period but they claimed to have nothing else."

Furthermore, nowhere on either our local buses nor on the Tube have I seen any information about the extension to 24 hour usage. In fact, relatively few people seem to know - I found out from a friend and have now told others. Meanwhile local buses still carry information from 2008 about the extension of free bus travel country wide - useful but not as useful as the information about London. It really isn't good enough."

(as reported to Age Concern London, June 2009)



Where we are

The Older People's Freedom Pass can be used on Bus, Underground, DLR and London Overground services 24 hours per day

The Freedom Pass can be used on bus services in other parts of England with some restrictions

National older people's bus passes can be used on London buses

The Mayor and London Councils have committed themselves to the continuation of the Freedom Pass



Where we want to be

The Older People's Freedom Pass can be used 24 hours a day on all public transport within London

All older people aware of this situation thanks to a high profile public information campaign by the Mayor, Transport for London and London Councils

An example of the type of positive, joined up approach we would like to see applied to all transport in London could be taken from the Olympic Delivery Authority's Accessible Transport Strategy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

It aims to create a "Games network of accessible transport" bringing together accessible mainstream public transport such as buses, Underground and national rail, complementary transport such as Door to Door and community transport, provision of Blue Badge parking, accessible design of stations and facilities and encouraging walking. Best practice customer service is the aim across all transport modes.

The ODA intends to use all means of outreach so that disabled people, older people and all other passengers can access detailed information on their journey options.



Conclusion

We are aware that there have been many success stories in improving transport for older and disabled people in London. Over a long period many barriers have been broken. We are all the more determined to work with partners to tackle the remaining serious problems – such as poor experiences for many older people on buses, or failure by specialist services to deliver according to justified expectations. Older people's organisations and voluntary organisations can contribute to breaking barriers by acting as a link to enable involvement and consultation, and because we provide services such as community transport which can contribute to the integrated transport framework.

With the billions of pounds due to be invested in the transport network over the next ten years, it is crucial that older and disabled transport users are involved in the planning, designing and monitoring of transport services – including new services such as Crossrail, or new bus designs. Genuine consultation must occur on a local and London wide level to ensure that services are meeting the needs and aspirations of London's older and disabled citizens – "nothing about us without us".

What we want above all is for the London and local levels to work together to provide a coherent system of accessible transport across all transport modes. This would help us all break the remaining transport barriers to older people living life to the full and contributing to London.

July 2009



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শে তসনে आ दस्तাবেनली नडल आ एवधामां शेरती शरेव ती, ती नंबर पर होन करे सधवा नीवेला सरन्यामे अमारो संपर्क करे. आ सेवा माटे वडीवती बार्फ एवयु पडल.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज की कपी इस भाषा में चाहते हैं तो आप हमें नीचे दिये गये नम्बर आ पते पर सम्पर्क कर सकते हैं इस सेवा के लिए प्रशासन शुल्क लगेगा।

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਇਸ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਠਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਇਸ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨਕੀ ਮੁੱਲ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੈ।

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Registered Charity No. 1092198

Project sponsored by



LOTTERY FUNDED

Design by: ID Design Consultants