

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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promoting quality public transport.....

House of Commons Transport Committee
 7 Millbank
 London SW1P 3JA

11th January 2013

Dear Sir,

EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGISLATION RELATING TO TRANSPORT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

TravelWatch NorthWest is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in NW England. We are pleased to give our views as follows to this inquiry.

The effectiveness of legislation relating to transport for disabled people: is it working? Is it sufficiently comprehensive? How effectively is it enforced?

The Equality Act 2010 appears to concern itself mainly with **accessibility** to taxis, public service vehicles and trains. Issues around information provision to cater for specific disabilities such as deafness/ blindness are not covered. Whilst there is provision in the Act for taxi drivers to have an obligation to assist passengers in wheelchairs there is also a need for bus drivers to be aware of disabled person's needs. Similarly train conductors.

The accessibility of information: including the provision of information about routes, connections, timetables, delays and service alterations, and fares.

Information in all its forms is crucial for people with disabilities and it is of course highly important for fully mobile passengers. On buses -

There has been a reduction of information at bus stops (now hopefully rectified) and the turning off of electronic departure displays at some bus stations in Lancashire. Bus stop information should be clear to the visually impaired and at head height. Buses should have large route numbers/destinations which are easier to read.

Wheelchair space should be adequate and as far as possible not interfere with passengers with children and prams/ pushchairs.

Deaf/blind people are reliant on drivers telling them when they are approaching their destination. This does not always happen. There should be audio announcements at least by drivers and, ideally, visual displays of upcoming stops. These steps would benefit all passengers. However such luxuries are notable by their absence in the North West. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Greater London.

There is a general problem of obtaining fare information about bus journeys in advance.

On the railways –

There are issues with the increasing size of mobility scooters and restrictions on their carriage on trains

There are still many stations on the rail network where passengers have to travel to a station beyond their destination to either leave or to cross the line by legal means and take a train back to their original destination so that they can satisfactorily exit. This is because many stations do not have level access to all platforms and the universal provision of this is slow in coming about. A visible programme of improvements should be on the agenda.

The provision of assistance by public transport staff and staff awareness of the needs of people with different disabilities

There is a general issue of buses not always drawing into kerbs and resulting difficulty for passengers with disabilities/ children etc

Also we would reiterate the point about bus drivers being more aware of disabled persons' (and for that matter all passengers') needs.

On the railways there are important issues about retaining staffing at stations. At most staffed stations problems for disabled passengers can often be overcome.

What can be learnt from transport provision during the Paralympics and how can we build on its successes?

We have no comment on this.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours faithfully

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary