

# Equality of Opportunity Committee

EOC(3)-14-10 : Paper 3

## **Inquiry into the impact of Welsh Government policy on the accessibility of transport services for disabled people in Wales – Evidence from Swansea Disability Forum**

Please find below response from 2 wheelchair users with our views on accessing public transport.

1. Please summarise your experiences as a disabled traveller.

### **How easy do you find it to travel locally and nationally?**

1. It's not easy to find out which bus routes are wheelchair accessible or there is no guarantee of a route being accessible, despite being told day before it would be? Some buses that are wheelchair accessible with ramps are sometimes fastened down which makes them unusable to use. Sometimes drivers offer to assist you on/off the bus but puts you and them at risks.

Information needs to be available in all formats and at bus stops low down to be able read it. Ideally real time information with audible should be available at all bus stops.

The FTR Metro only has one space yet has 3 spaces for prams. Means a couple in wheelchairs are unable to travel together on any local bus services. There is a visual display on the FTR Metro, but unable to see it from wheelchair space due to facing backwards.

2. Taxis are expensive and drivers not always trained to use the ramps. Drivers do not position the person in a wheelchair correctly e.g. facing backwards with straps and belt fasten round. But we accept with larger wheelchairs this is not possible. All taxis firms should have a text service to enable deaf/hard of hearing or people with speech impairment to book a taxi.

3. Community Transport you need to book in advance e.g. up to 2-3 weeks to make sure your booking is fitted in to the schedule. This service is not available after 5 pm week days and not at all at weekends. Basically disabled and elderly people are being denied access to social events, theatre or visiting family friends at these times? Surely this must have an impact to their equality of life?

4. Trains - Assistance needs to book in advance e.g. 24 hours.

## **What are the biggest barriers you have experienced in making journeys in Wales?**

1. Lack of accessible information.
2. Having to book in advance e.g. community transport
3. Drivers not always trained e.g. taxi/bus drivers
4. Some bus stops too far apart
5. FTR Metro audible announcements not being use.
6. Cyclists riding on pavements and pedestrian areas.
7. Prams on buses when trying to access the wheelchair space.
8. Swansea to Cardiff 100 express services as recently changed from being wheelchair accessible to non-accessible. Why?
9. Unable to use your free bus pass on all buses across Wales e.g. X40 Swansea to Cardiff and believe the service to Cardiff Airport, despite them being wheelchair accessible services?
10. Cold air on Arriva Trains due to air condition, unable to control it e.g. Trains to/from Manchester always feels cold in wheelchairs spaces.
11. There is no visual displays on First Great Western Trains e.g. next station will be.
12. Cant access the buffet car on First Great Western Trains.

## **What factors have made it easier to travel? For example, what difference have concessionary travel cards and community transport services made to you?**

1. Free bus travel if able to gain access on to a bus.
2. Raised bus stops
3. Portable ramps at train station to gain train access.
4. Information in large print available at all times
5. Having more than 1 more wheelchairs space on trains.

## **Have you had any particular problems or good experiences relating to a particular mode of transport, e.g. buses, coaches, trains, taxis?**

Please see above.

Also trying to use National Express services is pot luck if the route has a wheelchair space, then have to book well in advance and depends on size of wheelchair if able to travel.

Disabled toilets not always available to use on trains due to out of order.

## **How well integrated are transport services in your area? (For example, are there good links between bus and train services and are you able to park at or near your local bus stop or railway station if you need to)**

Swansea Train & Bus Stations will be better when the refurbishments are completed.

**What experiences have you had as a disabled pedestrian? The Committee is particularly interested in 'shared spaces' where pedestrians, cyclists and motorists use the same surfaces.**

It is dangerous to have share spaces with cyclists riding next to pedestrians particularly with elderly, visual, deaf and anyone who has a mobility impairment. Pavements are meant for people only !!!

**How do your experiences in Wales compare with your experience of travelling in other countries?**

1. In other areas of the UK they have Tram networks which are more accessible and inclusive for everyone including disabled passengers e.g. Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham.
2. London Transport Website easier to navigate <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/> to find out relevant travel with clear information. Traveline Cymru should be made more easier to use.
3. Some areas e.g. Manchester have Ring & Ride Services for door to door, wheelchair accessible transport, which is available 7 days from 8 am to 10.30 pm, which is much better to compared to what there is in the Swansea area. Door to door transport & accessible buses seems to be like a post code lottery.
4. Disability Equality Training to be regularly offered to all transport providers.

Accessible Transport should be easy to access for everyone across WALES.

Hope the above response is useful towards the consultation. Look forward to hearing from you, if you require further information.

All the best!

Pablo Rees & Lee Ellery  
Secretary & Member of Swansea Disability Forum