

Transport and Accessibility for Older People

Wednesday 12th September 2018

Recommendations from focus group workshops – key points raised at the conference to be presented for inclusion in the mayor of London’s strategy on Transport. Note this will be in the format of an email to the Deputy mayor and will also feature as part of a media release

- The number of toilets currently available to both those travelling, and those who need them in order to go out in the public domain /both availability and type is an issue. A sticker scheme exists enabling greater awareness and access to toilets in shops, theatres, etc. – operating in Lewisham and Kilburn. This should be promoted further. There are very few places for severely disabled people to access toilets or have a shower, only one toilet is available in the Barbican square mile, for example.
- Pedestrian resting places are needed – not just seating, but also ‘stand and rest’ areas, as some individuals find it easier to stand and simply rest their upper body and then continue their journey
- More information should be publicised as to what is available – most people don’t know that TfL can issue a Green sign to vulnerable travellers which they can hold up when flagging a bus and which indicates to the driver that they need extra time. Also, it is possible to obtain a 'please offer me a seat' badge. TfL did say they are phasing in the introduction of covering a priority seat in a different fabric so that it stands out.
- **Training is needed for TfL and related transport staff to understand what these badges mean and how to behave when they are used**
- Bus shelters with seats are welcomed but the preference would be for them to be wider/more comfortable
Information about waiting times both via apps and 'indicator boards' are appreciated and it is requested that this is further rolled out
This also helps passengers who need a bit of time to manoeuvre out of a bus shelter.
- Buses should stop at all stops where someone is waiting i.e. we should not need to 'request', which is sometimes difficult for those with disabilities to do The new buses which can be lowered at bus stops are appreciated.
- Bus drivers need more training about how to ensure the elderly and disabled are able to travel safely and use the service. This includes parking close to the kerb and ensuring that all passengers are safely on or off the bus before it moves. With regard to the need to give wheelchair users priority over prams, the law needs to change so that drivers are given the power to insist on this. In the meantime, regular driver announcements as to the number of wheelchairs or prams on the bus may help, along with courteous prompts to passengers, i.e. please fold your pushchair to allow a wheelchair user access. It is good that there is some signage to this effect on some buses and this needs to be widened to include all. At present frequently drivers do not stop for those in wheelchairs if prams are already in place

- It was agreed that PAiL and other individuals would be happy to participate in any such training schemes for TfL staff and particularly bus drivers
- Access to Rail Information – there is a mentoring service for train travel – at King’s Cross, for example, but it has been reported that it is difficult to get in touch with them; if individuals have no access to ‘Apps’ – how do they get the information that they need; large print maps to be provided by TfL, as many individuals do not have access to the internet, especially older people. The TfL website could be more user friendly
- The Freedom Pass, and the Underground system is very much appreciated but there is some lack of clarity as to where the pass can be used in outer zones. The use of a this pass is vital to ensuring that pensioners are able to travel around London, and elsewhere, and to contribute to the economy. But there are some anomalies - machines at train stations issuing tickets are not able to factor in areas within London where no charge should be made. These can occur part way through a journey. This situation needs to change. We recommend that in all signage relating to stations it is made clear the boundaries for travel using a freedom pass
- The recommendation is that the Mayor takes over all travel in London.
- Long interchanges between platforms can be difficult; travelers would help
- Gaps between the train and platform, especially where there are differences in height, can be very difficult to negotiate
- Area maps around the city are considered very useful. It was felt these should be increased, and the text enlarged.
- To combat petrol and diesel pollution, more electric vehicles are needed and electric charging points need to be extended.
- **More support should be given to encourage car sharing**
- Disabled Badges - information on what help is available or an entitlement should be widely publicised through a variety of media, not just on line
- Pedestrians should be protected from cars/cyclists with more pedestrianised areas in city centres.
- To diminish pollution levels outside of schools, school buses should be reintroduced and/or roads blocked off in front at certain times of the day.
- Cycling is to be encouraged and more clubs to give free instructions to all age groups - set up by local authorities. But, above all, redesign travel routes to provide safer cycling lanes.
- Broken pavements, the lack of dropped curbs, and cyclists riding on the pavements are concerns
- Pedestrians are focussed on their phones and not looking where they are going; they need to be aware of other people and their surroundings
- Noise pollution – in the form of excessive rail announcements
- Community cohesion - Talking to people while travelling, whether public or Community (Community Transport e.g; Hackney Community Transport <http://www.hackneyct.org/>) – reduces social isolation and improves mental health and well-being

- The Low Emission scheme – to improve air quality by a measurable amount is welcomed. Air pollution prevents older people from going out; single occupant drivers in cars should use other means of transport or walk. Introduce alternate day driving scheme.
- Promote the wearing of badges to ensure that others can see that certain individuals are vulnerable – Behaviour campaigns from TfL ‘Be aware’.
- Bus drivers to give sufficient time for passengers to get on, and off; and to have specific training to ensure that they do this for everyone, as some people’s disabilities and mobility difficulties may not always be apparent. This needs to be supported by management allowing for more time on each bus journey to enable drivers to be more accommodating to the needs of disabled passenger
- Campaigns directed at passengers to raise awareness and improve behaviour
- Promote the use of Community Transport when main stream public transport is difficult to access. An example of this can be found at <http://www.hackneyct.org/> - Hackney Community Transport has been in the Borough since 1982, offering affordable and accessible transport to all local groups and organisations. There is a CT provider in most London Boroughs and this is certainly something that needs to be in the transport strategy as a recognised mode of transport. Both more funding, and promotion of CT needs to be put in place