

**Accessibility Mystery
Traveller survey**

10106

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Research conducted by GfK

Executive summary

- Accessibility issues were mainly around lifts being out of service, malfunction of bus ramps, and a lack of information about obstacles and the location of taxi ranks
 - 61% of Dial a Ride (DaR) callers had their call answered first time
- Generally travellers found staff to be helpful and polite
 - The provision of information by staff was felt to be good although staff at the Travel Information Call Centre (TICC) did supply some information that was not as helpful as it could be
- From a customer point of view, hearing loops do not always seem to work
 - This may be due to training or staff familiarity as much as equipment functionality
 - When hearing loops are working they are clear
- Groups with less hidden impairments (wheelchair users and visually impaired travellers) received the most support where they felt it was needed

Booking & journey planning

- Generally assessors were able to book Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) and taxis successfully with few problems
- 90% of travellers were able to get through to the TICC first time, regardless of when they phoned. This was 61% for DaR.
 - In 84% of cases the callers got through to Dial a Ride within 6 attempts and achieved a successful booking
 - mobility impaired travellers experienced the most satisfactory booking service from DaR at 82%
- 77% of travellers received the information they requested
- The information from TICC advisors wasn't always accurate or helpful once the travellers were out on their journeys
 - This is particularly the case for wheelchair users and hearing impaired assessors. Both groups asked for information relating to their impairment (step free access/hearing loop provision)

“The member of staff was friendly but unfortunately the information they gave me was wrong since there wasn't a lift at Swiss Cottage”

Staff

- Overall the travellers experienced staff who were generally polite, helpful and informative
- Travellers on LU and some interchanges found the availability of staff an issue but once they were found, the staff were helpful
"The member of staff seemed eager to help and gave me information but perhaps could have gone into more detail."
- Taxi and PHV drivers appear less likely to offer assistance on boarding and alighting, particularly PHV drivers, although once aid is requested drivers are helpful and know how to use the appropriate aids



Bus journeys

- 97% of travellers were able to board the first bus.
 - If they were unable to board the first bus the majority were able to board the second bus
 - As a comparison, 100% of non-disabled travellers boarded the first time in the bus mystery traveller survey
- Just under half of those unable to board were due to problems with ramp deployment
- The majority of bus drivers assessed are lowering the bus – for both mobility impaired travellers and wheelchair users
- Most of the travellers have been able to hear or see the iBus although wheelchair users are unable to see it they can hear it clearly



Information and interchanging

- Physical barriers experienced included finding it hard to cross the road, accessing the information kiosk, lifts hard to enter or exit, obstacles such as the volume of people at entrance and exits etc
- Information at interchange locations was hard to find and, when found, travellers found it either hard to read or there were parts missing. However, all groups (with the exception of hearing impaired travellers) found announcements to be clear and easy to understand
- Travellers were more likely to have a more positive experience at Bus Stations compared to other interchanges
- Travellers found it difficult to find taxi ranks at interchanges but all were accessible



What is the journey experience for hearing impaired travellers?

- Hearing impaired travellers were most likely to experience difficulty in receiving appropriate support from staff such as facing the traveller to enable them to lip read, slowing down their speech or make more use of gestures or basic sign language
“The driver was wearing sunglasses even though it wasn’t sunny. This makes it hard to lip read as I need the whole face to lip read”
- Hearing loops are not always available or working when they are needed. However, where they are available they are clear and loud enough.

What is the journey experience for wheelchair users?

- Wheelchair users still occasionally experience problems with ramp deployment on buses
 - 5% of wheelchair users could not get on the first bus due to problems with the ramp
- Once on the bus wheelchair users also find that 50% of the drivers do not request that a space be made for them – when the traveller felt this was needed
- Wheelchair users are unable to see iBus but could hear it clearly
- Out of service lifts created obvious problems for these travellers. However, in the majority of cases ramps were where they were required and in reasonable condition
- Booking appropriate PHVs were an issue for this group and in some cases this caused long delays
- Booking DaR journeys were slightly lower than average for wheelchair users at 67%



What is the journey experience for visually impaired travellers?

- When staff were found most travellers found them to be very helpful and were the group most likely to experience appropriate support such as offering an arm to assist

“The member of staff approached me, agreed to help and interacted with me really well. They moderated their walking speed to suit me and took the initiative by offering to call ahead to get assistance for me.”



What is the journey experience for Mobility Impaired travellers?

- This group were most likely to have the best journey experience overall
- Bus drivers are lowering the bus more often which makes boarding and alighting easier
- Escalators were less likely to be out of service than lifts so mobility impaired assessors were less affected by a lack of step free access than wheelchair users
- This group did experience problems boarding and alighting taxis and PHVs but when they requested aid it was given successfully

“I thought that the driver could have pulled over closer to the kerb, to allow an easier exit. The step was quite high and difficult to get down.”



Strengths and areas for service development

Strengths to build on	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 90% of callers are able to get through to the TICC first time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all information provided by the TICC was helpful
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 97% of travellers are able to get on the first bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drivers do not always request a space is made for wheelchair users when appropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All taxi ranks were accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved signage for taxi ranks and where there are potential obstacles at interchanges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff are polite	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hearing loop availability



Objectives and methodology

- The survey objectively monitors aspects of the transport network for which the experiences of a disabled person may be different to that of a non-disabled person
 - to improve the management of performance and provide feedback to stakeholders and operators
- Assessments take place all over London, at different times of day and days of the week

Mode	Number of assessments
Bus	373
Underground	121
Taxi	95
Private Hire vehicle	65
Interchanges, including bus stations	222
Pre-journey call / email	212
Dial-a-Ride (booking only)	75

- Results are reported as the percent correct or 'appropriate,' depending on the topic



Re-development of the survey

- The AMTS (previously know as Disabilities MTS) was re-developed during Q2-Q3 2010
- This focused on gathering information multi-modally, reflecting how customers actually travel from door to door
- Key changes:
 - assessors with hearing impairments added throughout (previously they just assessed LU)
 - pre-journey information calls /emails added
 - assessment of interchanges, including bus stations added
 - re-focused Dial-a-Ride monitoring to only assess booking service
 - reduced number of assessments of buses, to build in some of the other modes above
 - Completely re-designed the traveler journey plans to cover London more fully

