

I haven't had time yet to go through the entirety of this in detail, but the following relating to transport barriers immediately come to mind:

It is no use making buses more accessible if there is not a way of ensuring that disabled people can use the priority seats without problems and with dignity afforded at all times. This is particularly crucial for people with hidden impairments such as myself. I had a severe MS relapse last year and at one point I had 24 bruises on my body at the same time because I could not get to use the priority seats on buses and tubes travelling to and from Dr and hospital appointments and did not have enough feeling or use of my hands to hold on to support rails.... Nobody offered me the priority seats as my impairment was invisible. Interestingly when I had a couple of days with a bandage on my wrist holding a cannula in, although nobody offered their seats, other standing people did at least allow me more room to hook my whole arm round the poles and grip it by my elbow to support myself

There has to be a way of policing/enforcing the fact that disabled people get priority on these seats at all times.

Also when catching the tube one day, I just beat someone with a suitcase to the priority seat and then had to endure another person next to me saying, it wouldn't hurt me to let the person with the suitcase have the priority seat. I replied that I was disabled and considered that a higher priority and then had to put up with "are you REALLY disabled, you don't look disabled, are you sure you are disabled?" for the rest of the journey. this does not afford me dignity.

Also you are not going to improve the life chances of disabled people such as wheelchair users getting back to work if the wheelchair space is not prioritised for wheelchair users - even in rush hour when buses are full. If I was currently a wheelchair user (and realistically its probably only a matter of time) I would not be able to commute to work on time by bus, as I live fairly centrally in London and the wheelchair area is always completely full of standing passengers by the time it gets to my area in commuting hours, and a lot of the time outside of commuting times. There should be clear signs saying that people that stand in these areas do so on the understanding that a wheelchair user ALWAYS has priority, even if there is no other standing space available. If they chose to stand there they do so with the risk that they will have to get off the bus if there is no other standing room to move to when a wheelchair user wants to use that area.

I have made both of these comments to TfL in the past

Well done on differentiating between impairment and disability in a social model context rather than the archaic medical model definition unfortunately used in the DDA

I will send any further thoughts once I have had time to finish reading it

kind regards

Sally Dixon.