



Disability Rights UK



Out and about

# Transport – Buses and coaches

Accessible to me but restricted access



## Useful knowledge

Under the Equality Act 2010, transport must be accessible for all people, regardless of disability. There are special regulations under the Equality Act 2010 that deal with physical accessibility of transport modes; and the discrimination provisions of the Act deal with what happens getting on and off transport and when on it.

If you're discriminated against in transport because of your disability, your complaint would go to the local government in the case of taxis and minicabs, and the provider in the case of buses and trains. For taxis where you know which taxi company you used, you can also complain directly to the taxi company.

## Buses and coaches

Bus drivers are responsible for ensuring wheelchair users can access the wheelchair space on a bus, including making efforts to move people with buggies and luggage from the wheelchair space. There is no requirement for people occupying a wheelchair space to move, but the bus driver must take reasonable steps to ensure a wheelchair user can get onto the bus.

Buses are also required to have at least four priority seats available for people who need them. You have the right to ask people sitting in those seats to vacate them for you, or ask the bus driver to do so, although they may also be disabled people who need a seat.

Drivers are required to wait to ensure you are safely on or off the bus, and are safely seated or have your wheelchair safely parked before pulling away from the bus stop. They also need to stop the bus close enough to the kerb for the wheelchair ramp to work.

Drivers must make a reasonable effort to communicate with passengers, including if you are hearing impaired or have a speech impediment.

Drivers are not responsible for enforcing eligibility for freedom passes or disabled person's bus pass. If a bus driver refuses to let you on the bus with a disabled person's bus pass because you 'don't look disabled' they have violated your rights under the Equality Act.

## Useful skills

- Effective communication
- Negotiation skills
- Writing clearly
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Record-keeping

## Ways to assert your legal rights

1. If you're denied access to a bus that should have been accessible, you should complain to the bus company and the local transport provider, for example Transport for London or Transport for Greater Manchester.

You should firmly but politely explain how you were denied access to the bus. This could involve the driver refusing to lower the ramp so you can use a wheelchair, or refusing to believe you were disabled when you tried to use a disability concession ticket.

If possible, keep a note of the registration number of the bus and the bus driver's number. If there are any witnesses, see if you can get their details.

Politely but firmly explain how you were discriminated against, and what you would like the bus company or transport provider to do to ensure it doesn't happen again. This could include providing training to drivers or removing barriers from a bus stop that prevented you getting on or off in a wheelchair.

2. If you're not satisfied with the response of the bus or coach company, you may be able to take legal action. Taking court action can be a long, stressful and sometimes very expensive process and it is best to seek legal advice first. There are strict time limits for taking legal action under the Equality Act.

You will have six months minus one day from the date of discrimination to make your claim in the County Court. A court can allow an 'out-of-time' claim in limited circumstances. You can claim for compensation and a legal order for the service provider to make the reasonable adjustments you originally asked.

## You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

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| <b>Telephone</b>  | • 0808 800 0082                                |
| <b>Text phone</b> | • 0808 800 0084                                |
| <b>Email</b>      | • <a href="#"><u>through websites form</u></a> |